Citizen-Informed Performance Measurement and Reporting in Local Government: Key Factors for Effective Democratic Governance

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CITIZEN-INFORMED PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: KEY FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

by

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Citizen engagement and performance measurement are concepts inherently in conflict with each other. Local government values citizen input and good governance. Simultaneously, the pressure of local government to be efficient and effective utilizing managerial techniques common in the private sector is intense. Due to challenges associated with the integration of performance measurement and active citizen involvement, initiatives in this area are sparse.

This study, using a mixed methods analysis, explored the research questions through examination of thirty-six units of local government that participated in the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation’s Government Trailblazer Program. This program provided a unique opportunity for exploratory research of whether active citizen participation enhances or hinders effective measurement of government performance. The second research question investigated necessary attributes for implementing Citizen Informed Performance Measurement (CIPM) that support democratic governance while maximizing efficiency in the areas of organizational commitment and leadership, public management skills,
citizen participation, the use of performance measures, citizen outcomes, and organizational experience.

Results of the study produced three themes: Citizen Perspective, Performance Measures, and Collaboration. Findings revealed that citizen perspective in performance measurement was most important, followed by collaboration. The affect of citizen involvement in performance measurement of specific programs and services was not as strong in agreement. The research revealed key attributes for a successful CIPM include commitment of elected officials, shared decision-making with citizens, public management interpersonal skills, the use of performance measures for program continuous improvement, increased accountability to citizens, and prior experience of municipalities actively involving citizens in government.
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Eileen L. Pierce
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .................................................................................................................. ii

LIST OF TABLES ............................................................................................................................ viii

LIST OF FIGURES ........................................................................................................................ vi

I: INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................... 1

- Background ................................................................................................................................. 1
- Statement of the Problem ............................................................................................................. 3
- Significance of the Study ............................................................................................................ 3
- Purpose of the Study ................................................................................................................... 5

II: LITERATURE REVIEW .............................................................................................................. 7

- Citizen-informed Performance Measurement ........................................................................... 7
- Definition of Performance Management ..................................................................................... 10
- Definition of Performance Measurement .................................................................................... 12
- Citizen-oriented Performance Measures ................................................................................... 16
- History of Performance Measurement ....................................................................................... 18
- Overview of Citizen Participation in Performance Measurement ......................................... 20
- Environment of Citizen-informed Performance Measurement .............................................. 32
- Attributes of Citizen-informed Performance Measurement .................................................... 36
  - Organizational Commitment and Leadership ....................................................................... 37
  - Public Management Skills .................................................................................................... 37
Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER

Active Citizen Participation ................................................................. 38
Use of Performance Measures ............................................................. 39
Citizenship Outcomes ....................................................................... 40
Organizational Experience .................................................................. 40
Summary ............................................................................................... 41

III: RESEARCH DESIGN ......................................................................... 44

Introduction ............................................................................................ 44
Research Purpose and Research Questions ......................................... 46
Mixed Methods Research Strategy ......................................................... 52
Sampling Design .................................................................................... 54
Quantitative Approach .......................................................................... 54
Methodology ............................................................................................ 57

IV: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS .................................................................. 59

Introduction ............................................................................................ 59
Limitations and Delimitations ............................................................... 59
Research Question 1: Does Active Citizen Participation Enhance or Hinder Effective Measurement of Government Performance? .................. 61

  Frequency Distribution of Hypotheses Agreement .............................. 63
  Central Tendency ................................................................................. 65
CHAPTER

Research Question 2: What Attributes Are Essential for Effective Citizen-informed Performance Measurement? ................................................................. 67

Frequency Distribution ............................................................................... 67

Organizational Leadership and Commitment ........................................... 67

Public Management Skills ......................................................................... 71

Citizen Participation ................................................................................... 72

Use of Performance Measures ................................................................. 74

Citizen Outcomes ..................................................................................... 76

Organizational Experience ........................................................................ 78

Qualitative Analysis .................................................................................. 79

Mixed Method Analysis of Themes ............................................................. 80

Theme One: Citizen Perspective ............................................................... 80

Theme Two: Program Measures ............................................................... 87

Theme Three: Collaboration ..................................................................... 90

Citizens Do Care ....................................................................................... 91

Structure ................................................................................................... 93

Resources .................................................................................................. 95

Elected Official Participation ................................................................. 96

Networking ............................................................................................... 97

V: CONCLUSIONS, SUMMARY, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .................... 99

Closing Summary ...................................................................................... 99
Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER

Research Question 1 .................................................................................................................. 100
Research Question 2 .................................................................................................................. 102
Conclusions ............................................................................................................................... 104
Summary .................................................................................................................................. 105
Recommendations for Future Study .......................................................................................... 106

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................................ 108

APPENDICES

A. Partial Extract of SEA Guidelines ......................................................................................... 118
B. Survey and Consent ............................................................................................................... 122
C. Interview Questions ............................................................................................................. 128
D. HSIRB Approval Letter ......................................................................................................... 130
LIST OF TABLES

2. Strongly Agree-Agree Cumulative Percentages of the Hypotheses ..........................64
3. Themes of CIPM Concepts ......................................................................................65
4. Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to Organizational Leadership and Commitment: Forced Rank Order ........................................................................68
5. Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to Public Management Skills: Forced Rank Order .............................................................................................................71
6. Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to Citizen Participation: Forced Rank Order ................................................................................................................73
7. Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to Use of Performance Measures: Forced Rank Order ............................................................................................................75
8. Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to Citizen Outcomes: Forced Rank Order ........................................................................................................................77
9. Importance of Attributes Related to Organizational Experience: Forced Rank Order .....................................................................................................................................79
LIST OF FIGURES

1. Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation........................................................................26
2. Citizen-informed Performance Measurement.....................................................27
3. Conceptual Model of Engaging Citizens and Measuring Results ......................58
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The focus on government efficiency is an old concept, but heightened interest in government performance occurred during the last two decades since the reinventing government movement in the 1990’s. As a result, private sector principles of efficiency gained momentum in the public sector. The values of customer satisfaction and responsiveness to citizens receiving services became the foundation of the public sector’s approach to providing services. Citizens soon took on the passive role of consumers as government provided services, and the product was a one-directional relationship with citizens.

The adoption of market-based principles by the public sector had benefits, but was limited in providing citizens information on results that mattered to them. Effectiveness and citizen satisfaction were values that also lacked attention. Concern grew about the threat of diminished democratic governance and the fear that accountability would be compromised. This caused a movement that resulted from distrust in government and the desire for more accountability. As a remedy to these conditions, increased citizen involvement where citizens actively collaborate with government emerged.

Citizen involvement in measuring performance, however, remains a challenge and is not widespread. It is the problem of the lack of integration of these two concepts that captured my attention for this study of communities engaging in citizen informed
performance measurement. According to administrative theory, the concepts are a good fit. However, efficiency theory claims they are at odds. It is the constant struggle of reconciling these theories, and the attempts of inspired communities to take on this task, that captured my interest.

My work as a public manager provided direct experience in both working with citizens, and reporting on the effectiveness and efficiency of federal grant funds. I worked with citizen committees and focus groups, and developed surveys to integrate the public’s point of view in outcomes and planning documents. This experience drove home the difficulty of achieving a delicate balance between both concepts and their divergent values, as well as working with the time-consuming nature of involving citizens. It also provided the opportunity to see democratic governance in action and to witness the impact of citizen involvement.

In addition to my work experience, I received a Certificate in Public Performance Measurement: Citizen Driven Government Improvement through Rutgers University’s National Center for Public Productivity. The twelve-credit certificate program was made possible through the support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. This program included current thinking, case studies, and research in citizen participation and performance measurement.

This study provided an opportunity to use my knowledge and experience to examine experiences of public managers and elected officials at the local level pursuing active involvement of citizens in performance measurement. My primary goal was to determine if CIPM was worth the effort. This prompted the primary research question: Does active citizen participation enhance or hinder effective measurement of government
performance? The second research question was designed to strengthen the primary question to investigate what features of CIPM stood out as most important for sustaining CIPM. The question was asked: What attributes are essential for effective citizen informed performance measurement?

Statement of the Problem

Active citizen involvement in performance measurement has not been widely practiced, and those communities that attempted to do so often failed to sustain the effort. The logic of involving citizens is supported from a democratic standpoint, but the idea of citizen participation is viewed as counterproductive to efficiency and responsiveness. The ideals of providing services efficiently and respecting the involvement of citizens in performance measurement are often regarded as a matter of choice. In other words, one cannot exist with the other. The lack of citizen involvement in performance measures in local government may be a product of this view.

Significance of the Study

Counter to the thinking that measuring performance with citizen involvement presents a clash of values, however, is the belief the concepts can indeed co-exist. Further, they are positively connected for improved government performance. The attempt to move beyond thinking democracy and bureaucracy are at odds was embraced by a select group of local governments committed to Citizen Informed Performance Measurement (CIPM). These entities were recipients of the Alfred T. Sloan Foundation Government Trailblazer Grants Program administered through the National Center for Civic Innovation (NCCI). The heart of the program encouraged public involvement in the
performance measurement process to advance citizen involvement in performance measurement and to produce performance reports with defined criteria.

The Sloan Foundation awarded grants to local units of government interested in Citizen Informed Performance Measurement, based on grant applications. Recipients were selected with the expectation the organizations would consider citizens as active stakeholders in measuring performance, and that established guidelines for successful CIPM would be met. Recognizing the diversity of grant recipients, the grant provided program goals rather than prescribing a specific course of action or strategy.

As a result, the level and method of citizen involvement varied. This dissertation is not intended as an evaluation of the Trailblazer program nor the NCCI as the program administrator. Rather, this study examines the perspectives of the Trailblazer participating units of government about the more focused question of the importance and influence of citizen participation in performance measurement.

Therefore, this study is distinctive because research had not focused on the effect of active citizen participation in the measurement and reporting of performance from the viewpoint of participants in a structured CIPM program using Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA) guidelines and objectives.

The government institutions involved in this study shed light on the importance of citizen involvement in government performance measurement. The primary research question was developed to investigate this point of view and to discover how citizen involvement mattered. As the grant name of Trailblazer suggests, CIPM is not common. Indeed, these communities blazed a trail for others to follow. In a sense, the Trailblazers
were pioneers on an unpredictable journey into virtually unknown territory. Lessons learned from this program serve to assist future Trailblazers along their path to CIPM success.

This study provided clarity on CIPM attributes required to successfully bring together practices of active citizen involvement with local government performance and its measurement. The second research question generated responses that determined desirable attributes for achievement of democratic governance within the realm of performance measurement. These areas included organizational commitment and leadership, public management skills, active citizen participation, the use of performance measures, citizen outcomes, and organizational experience helpful for a performance measurement program.

In addition, this research examined the experience of participants that determined important CIPM implementation qualities and sustainable elements. The results are useful for local government entities considering the implementation of a CIPM initiative, improve an existing program, and to provide experiential feedback for CIPM success and sustainability. The results of this research may also be used as a method to standardize expectations for CIPM.

Purpose of the Study

The term “performance” is based on the premise that the goal is efficient and responsive service delivery to the public. The study garnered information from local governments to validate literature professing the positive effect of citizen involvement on performance measures, and to determine whether involvement may actually hinder the process.
Citizen trust in elected officials and government administrators is also examined, as active citizen involvement demands some level of relationship building and collaboration. Citizen participation (Bouckaert & Van de Walle, 2003) influences trust in government. Citizens are expecting demonstrated accountability of government operations. Improved public understanding of the organization’s ability and knowledge of obstacles to become more efficient, effective, and responsible with resources, increases trust (Halachmi & Holzer, 2011).

The second research question “What attributes are essential for effective citizen informed performance measurement?” was asked to define the relationship between citizen participation and performance measurement to clarify what is necessary to support democratic governance while maximizing efficiency. Literature encompassed many attributes, and those presented in this study are all worthy of consideration. However, to provide a better sense of what is truly critical, the survey was crafted with the goal of identifying those attributes that rose to the top in terms of importance and are considered essential foundations for program success and sustainability.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Citizen-informed Performance Measurement

Since the 1990s, the public sector has experienced gained momentum for measuring performance. This focus on performance measurement emerged in response to internal and external pressures to measure government performance and increase accountability to citizens. To respond to the pressures, government began to adopt private sector values and practices to improve efficiency (Marshall et al., 1999). The external pressures to privatize public services, reduce spending, and increase public accountability, pushed government to become more results-oriented (Poister, 2003). Internal pressures to produce cost-effective services and to provide data for strategic planning processes, quality improvement programs, and reengineering processes (Vinzant & Vinzant, 1996), elevated the importance of performance measures and other management tools to provide baseline data and evaluate effectiveness (Poister, 2003).

This preoccupation with efficiency, however, caused concern about the purpose of government services. Fear escalated that government might be more occupied with production than with the process through which outputs are produced (Alford, 2002). This is one reason the citizen participation movement emerged simultaneously with performance measurement. Distrust in government, and the desire for citizen involvement in governance (Ho & Coates, 2004), created an advocacy for citizen involvement based on the premise that citizen participation improves the relevance of performance.
measurement (Yang & Hsieh, 2007) as well as enhancing democratic governance (Epstein, Coates, & Wray, 2006).

Interest in the movements grew, but it was not until the 1990s that the role of citizens in government performance was seriously considered (Ho & Coates, 2002). Mimicking the private sector caused the citizen to primarily take the passive role of a consumer (Marshall et al., 1999) entitled to the best services their tax dollars can buy (Peters, 2001). The continued emphasis on economic theory greatly influenced public administration. The struggle to gain efficiency while involving the public to provide services in contemporary society is complex (Kettl, 2002) and put the two movements in a precarious balancing act.

The market-based model, reflected in elements of New Public Management (NPM) (Kettl, 2002), did not support democratic self-determination and moved away from a collaborative model of public administration (Marshall et al., 1999). The demand for efficient services was a possible threat to democratic governance (Terry, 1998) and meaningful citizen involvement in performance measurement (Marshall et al., 1999; Yates, 1982). The result was limited practice to include meaningful citizen involvement in performance measurement (Wray & Hauer, 1997).

Communities choose whether to involve citizens in decisions on what to measure and what results to report. A collaborative endeavor toward measuring government performance requires a balance with the force of efficiency from the perspective of the private sector (Marshall et al., 1999). This type of effort is described by a variety of nomenclatures, citizen metaphors, and participation methods. The National Center for Public Performance (NCPP) through Rutgers University has a certificate program entitled
“Citizen-Driven Government Improvement,” that was once referred to as “Citizen-Driven Government Performance” and “Citizen-Driven Performance Measurement.” One of the program courses uses the term “Citizen-Driven Performance Improvement,” and a previous course was titled “Citizen-Driven Performance Measurement.” Other terms used to describe these combined concepts include “Citizen Engagement in Performance Management,” “Citizen-Based Performance Measurement,” “Citizen-Centered Performance Measurement,” and “Citizen- Initiated Performance Assessment.”

Some initiatives are government based, and may or may not have participation with external organizations or groups. Other initiatives are citizen-based and are a product of non-partisan civic organizations or non-profit organizations, such as the Jacksonville Community Council, Inc. (JCCI) which is supported through donations and relies on volunteers. By definition from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation,

Performance measurement and reporting are “citizen informed” under the following conditions:

- When the government involves the public in developing measures that citizens care about;
- When the government involves the public in deciding how performance will be reported; and
- When the government obtains and takes seriously feedback from the public on performance reports.

Performance measurement and reporting are citizen-based when managed outside government, normally by a non-government organization, although cooperation with the government is preferred (Foundation, 2008).
While one might quibble about the relevance of the proper descriptive phrase, there are variations to the meanings of each, particularly due to the substantial differences of performance measurement and performance management. In the former, citizen involvement is limited to measures of performance. However, citizen engagement in performance management may include involvement with budgeting, strategic planning, project implementation, or analysis of overall performance (Folz, Abdelrazek, & Chung, 2009). Citizen Informed Performance Measurement, defined here as the measurement of governmental performance and accountability to citizen needs and wants with their participation, hereafter will be referred to as CIPM.

Definition of Performance Management

The terms “performance measurement” and “performance management” are often incorrectly used interchangeably. Although related, it is important to understand the difference.

The goal of performance measurement is to show how government works rather than focusing just on what it does (Schachter, 1997). The goal of performance management is to use performance measures to manage performance through budgeting, allocating resources, strategic planning, decision-making, and reporting (Ammons, 1995; Bernstein, 2000; Clay, 2002; Dupont-Morales & Harris, 1994; Melkers & Willoughby, 2001). Performance management encompasses a wide range of activities and is known by other terms such as results-driven government, performance-based government, governing for results, performance-based budgeting, outcome-oriented management, reinventing government, the new public management, and the new managerialism (Behn, 2002).
While efficiency was historically the focus of government performance, program and performance budgeting became the object of increasing interest between the 1900s and 1940. In 1949, the Hoover Commission called for performance budgeting to focus on accomplishments and cost of service (Rivenbark & Kelly, 2000). In 1965 President Johnson instituted the planning-programming-budgeting system (PPBS), followed by President Nixon’s Management by Objective (MBO) in 1973, and President Carter’s Zero-Base Budgeting in 1977 (Downs & Larkey, 1986). Lack of interest during the 1980s caused decreased momentum for performance management until renewed interest in the 1990s with the Reinventing Government and New Public Management Reforms, and the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 that required federal agencies to develop performance-based budgets (Mikesell, 1999).

The literature on performance management has a strong focus on budgeting, particularly at the federal and state levels, focusing on expected levels of performance and assisting with budget estimates (Wang, 2000). Local units of government, traditionally based in line-item budgets, do not address efficiency or effectiveness like performance-based budgeting even though many municipal budgets include performance information (Clay, 2002). The emphasis on performance information was directed to financial concerns of how much money was spent and how to reduce cost for providing services (Heinrich, 2002). During the last twenty years, performance management expanded its role within budgeting to be used with other management tools such as strategic planning (Bryson, 1995); quality management programs and reengineering processes (Cohn Berman, & West, 1995); and benchmarking (Bruder, 1994).
Definition of Performance Measurement

Performance measurement is the foundation for performance management. It has been defined as the following:

Performance measurement: A process of assessing progress toward achieving predetermined goals, including information on the efficiency with which resources are transformed into goods and services (outputs), the quality of those outputs (how well they are delivered to clients and the extent to which clients are satisfied) and outcomes (the results of a program activity compared to its intended purpose), and the effectiveness of government operations in terms of their specific contributions to program objectives (Gore, 1993).

Performance measurement is the ongoing monitoring and reporting of program accomplishments, particularly progress towards pre-established goals, typically conducted by program or agency management. Performance measures may address the type or level of program activities conducted (process), the direct products and services delivered by a program (outputs), and/or the results of those products and services (outcomes). A ‘program’ may be any activity, project, function, or policy that has an identifiable purpose or set of objectives. (GAO, 2005).

Outputs measure what the service or program produced in terms of units through activities. There are four types of performance output measures – workload, which is the volume of units per service; efficiency, which is the cost per unit; and productivity, which quantifies inputs and outputs in ratios. Another type of output is a service quality
measure. This type of measure evaluates a service by measuring timeliness, customer satisfaction, distribution, and appropriateness for the need or request (GASB, 2003).

Outcomes represent results that indicate whether the inputs, activities, and outputs are having the desired effect (Walters, 2007) and address the degree of effectiveness of a program or service (Williams, 2002). Outcome measures may have a short-term objective, referred to as initial or immediate outcomes, or outcomes can be set in terms of interim, or long-term measures. Immediate outcomes are usually easier to track and are expressed in terms of ratios or percentages (GASB, 2003).

The definitions of performance measurement may vary, but the goals are the same: efficiency and effectiveness. While this may seem straightforward, performance measurement for the public sector is complex and has preoccupied scholars and practitioners for years. The results of government programs are often difficult to measure (Brown & Pyers, 1988). In the private sector, profit is the ultimate measure of success. Government programs, however, seldom have a clear-cut quantitative measurement for the values of outputs. This is due to differences in objectives, organizational characteristics, and the obstacle that governmental managers perceive performance measurement primarily from a negative standpoint (Brown & Pyers, 1988).

Despite the challenges, efforts were made to provide guidance for government entities. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) was formed in 1984 to establish accounting principles for state and local governments (Brown & Pyers, 1988). In the 1990s GASB also encouraged service efforts and accomplishments reporting to broaden financial reporting to include “data that attempt to measure the economy and efficiency of services or program, and data designed to measure the effectiveness and
results of services or programs‖ (GASB, 1986). The International City County Management Association (ICMA) has also offered guidelines for measuring local government performance (Ammons, 1995). At the federal level, the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 demanded the reporting of measures to monitor the performance of agency goals with increased emphasis on citizen needs (Heinrich, 2002).

The Trailblazer Program uses GASB criteria, initially developed from previous research efforts (2003). The development of the criteria was from “primary sources of ideas that were critical to the development of the initial set of suggested criteria were the 2000-2001 GASB citizen discussion groups; the work of the Urban Institute, the CCAF, and the Mercatus Center; the GASB SEA task force; and selected state and local government performance reports” (p. 29). Work continues to be updated by GASB in this area, but for the purpose of this research, and the reference for this project during the timeline of the grants, the sixteen criteria from GASB (2003) were used. A summary of the guidelines is located in Appendix A.

Defining performance measurement and providing guidance helps to clarify the concept, but it is just as important to know why performance measurement is meaningful. Clarence Ridley expressed the importance of measuring government activities over 60 years ago and his reasoning is relevant today. He stated that measuring performance is important since public business is not operated for profit and there must be some form of government appraisal (Ridley & Simon, 1938). Since the public sector cannot focus on profit as a measure of success, the main purpose for measuring performance is to increase
government efficiency, to be responsible to the citizenry for what it does with tax dollars, and how well it does it.

Performance measurement is rooted in the “principle of efficiency” purpose to achieve maximum results with limited resources. This is a combination of economic theory (providing services for the least cost) as well as administrative theory (producing results in the public interest) (Dupont-Morales & Harris, 1994). Despite challenges, efforts have been made to provide guidance for government entities to measure performance with both theories in mind. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) was formed in 1984 to establish accounting principles for state and local governments (Brown & Pyers, 1988). In the 1990s GASB also encouraged Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA) to broaden financial reporting to include “data that attempt to measure the economy and efficiency of services or program, and data designed to measure the effectiveness and results of services or programs” (GASB, 1986). The International City County Management Association (ICMA) has offered guidelines for measuring local government performance (Ammons, 1995:1). At the federal level, the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 demanded the reporting of measures to monitor the performance of agency goals with increased emphasis on citizen needs (Heinrich, 2002). However, in the public sector, achieving maximum results is not easy. It is burdened with intangible deliverables based on social goals and political issues that bring values into the picture (Simon, 1947). Focusing on just efficiency and other performance measures may result in program changes that ignore political consequences and repercussions (Meier & Bohle, 2007).
Efficiency in the public sector is not a simple ratio of unit cost and inputs. It brings a conflict of values for democracy, participation, vision, and quality and must be measured in terms of these competing values (Carroll & Frederickson, 2001). As a result, performance measurement not only needs to address financial accountability, but also accountability for performance, accountability for fairness (democratic governance), and accountability for incorporating citizen interests (Kearns, 1996; Cohn Berman, 2005).

The problems of government are increasingly difficult and citizen participation is essential to make tough funding choices and to secure political support (Benest, 1997). In addition, decentralization is putting the burden on local governments to increase its capacity to provide for citizens. Pressure is being put on government to act more like a business and show its success by the “bottom line.” Yet, the “bottom line” for government is outcomes of its services to citizens including efficiency, effectiveness and citizen satisfaction (Kettl, 2002). All this must occur while also being accountable to the public (Ammons, 1995).

Citizen-oriented Performance Measures

Being accountable to the public means giving them meaningful information about government performance. It means more than doing what should be done, it reflects how well government is doing what is should do (Callahan, 2007). GASB addressed the desire of citizens to have information in terms of outcomes. Citizens want to know results of the goals and objectives stated by the organization. To properly make this shift, the results government reports should be those most important to citizens (Callahan, 2007) rather than traditional bureaucratic measures that tend to focus on activities and outputs.
Recognizing this, government reporting has shifted from financial accounting to “results-oriented government” which became prominent in the 1990s.

Not only do citizens expect results, they often prefer specific information, such as crime rates, about regions or neighborhoods (Epstein et al., 2006; Hatry, 2006). This can be done with aggregated data in instances where there are several programs sharing an outcome, or by segmenting data by geography (Hatry, 2006). Citizens and interest groups often like data presented this way to assist with policy agendas. Epstein et al. (2006, p. 103) states the reasons for this include wanting services more efficient to lower taxes; advocacy for specific populations or neighborhoods; and to provide community-based direction related to quality of life issues. Stated another way, citizens want results they care about, and government should respond by providing data the citizens can use (Epstein et al., 2006).

To determine what results citizens want, government should involve them, according to Cohn Berman’s (2005) work with government performance initiatives. For example, the number of street segments paved in New York City was measured, but roadway smoothness was not considered. Smoothness was the important factor to citizens. As a result, rather than just tracking the amount of road repairs, an index was implemented to provide citizens with smoothness scores. The index provided citizens better information with road quality measures rather than reporting measures of outputs.

Unfortunately, performance reporting alone will not necessarily improve public perception of government. There are external factors, such as the media (Stillman, 1996), quality of life issues, and economics that can influence public opinion (Glaser & Denhardt, 2000). Perhaps the strongest influence of all is personal experience with a
service. Therefore, reporting performance alone may or may not improve public perception. To make a good case, there are several factors to consider when reporting results to citizens, which is also outlined by GASB (2003). In particular, the report should state key measures, goals, context around the analysis of the data, and who was involved in establishing the goals and measures.

History of Performance Measurement

The efficiency and effectiveness of government have long been areas of interest. Frederick Taylor's pioneering work with productivity and efficiency was the seed of performance measurement. Many principles of this theory of scientific management are still valid today. He believed that productivity was the key to eliminate the ills of society. The art of performance management, according to Taylor (1911), is having work done by people in the best and cheapest way.

Influenced by Taylor’s scientific management theory, the New York Bureau of Municipal Research was established in 1907 to focus on concerns with government performance. The organization spun off from the nineteenth-century urban-reform movement that was concerned with corruption and government inefficiency. The Bureau was comprised of citizens and was funded by private organizations. It studied government functions and results to determine how it could be more effective. The organization’s mission was to increase awareness of government effectiveness and to identify bad management causes. The Bureau intended to apply Taylor’s principles of scientific management to bring business efficiency to the public sector (Dahlberg, 1966).

Throughout the century, reforms have continued to have a similar interest in government performance. *Measuring Municipal Activities* (Ridley & Simon, 1938)
expanded previous work with a look toward outcomes and benchmarking rather than just inputs and outputs. After World War II, government expenditures increased threefold. It was no longer feasible for many government organizations to measure minutiae of government expenditure. This caused a lack of interest in measuring outputs until the Hoover Commission in 1949 (Williams, 2002) that focused on performance budgeting, accomplishments and cost of service.

As new administrations came into office, so did new budget reforms, all seeking to be more efficient. Then, Watergate and President Ford’s lack of interest in performance measurement caused momentum to slow in the 1970s (Downs & Larkey, 1986). During the 1980s, the intensity of interest in performance measurement stalled as a result of the perception that the data was neither meaningful nor worth the effort it required to gather measures (Poister & Streib, 1999). Despite waning interest, tracking government performance at the state and local level has been active with 47 of 50 states instituting performance-budgeting requirements (Melkers & Willoughby, 2001). Many local governments are active in the International City and County Managers Association’s (ICMA) Center for Performance Measurement, or are attempting to institute performance measures on their own.

However, despite continued interest, use of performance measures is limited. Poister and Streib’s (1999) study revealed that 38 percent of the cities they surveyed used performance measures. A study by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (1997) showed that 53 percent of the 900 responses stated some form of performance measures, with only 23 percent responding that the measures were used for strategic planning, resource allocation, or program monitoring.
Performance measurement literature dates from the late 1800s, with Woodrow Wilson and his concern for worker accountability. The ensuing progressive movement translated accountability into efficiency that eventually came to mean financial accountability (Bouckaert, 1992). By the mid-20th Century, performance aligned with program budgeting in the 1960s, and program evaluation in the 1970s (Poister & Streib, 1999). Harry Hatry produced publications supporting the use of performance measures (1999); authors have discussed the value of performance measurement (Wholey, 1999); and others have discussed its obstacles (Ammons, 1995; Kravchuk & Schack 1996).

Overview of Citizen Participation in Performance Measurement

Citizen involvement in government performance is not prevalent (Wray & Hauer, 1997), yet involving citizens in a collaborative process may enable an organization to develop measures on services important to citizens, improve communications between citizens and government, improve performance, and increase accountability (Marshall, Wray, & Epstein, 1999). However, governments tend to focus on efficiency and measures of service outputs without being viewed in the larger context of democracy and the public interest (Boyne, 2002; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2001).

The reform movement that emerged with reinventing government in the 1990s (Gaebler & Osborne, 1992; Gore, 1993) shifted values even further to elevate efficiency (Glaser & Denhardt, 2000). This movement, based on private-sector principles (King & Stivers, 1998) (Vigoda, 2002a), centers on how customers can be satisfied. Administrators provide services, and citizens are the recipients. This model locks citizens into a passive role of consumers who express themselves primarily through complaint or
satisfaction surveys. The most important value of public agencies in this model, much like the business arena, is responsiveness to citizen requests (Vigoda, 2002a).

As the reinventing government movement and New Public Management (NPM) paradigm gained momentum, the citizen participation movement simultaneously emerged, challenging the passive role given citizens. Citizen discontent and mistrust of government had grown (King & Stivers, 1998; Ney, Zelikow, & Kings, 1997). The solution for increasing accountability and trust in government has taken the form of increased and more direct citizen involvement. In contrast to NPM, the New Public Service model places citizens at the center of government in collaborative structures where citizens participate in more active roles while sharing interests and responsibility (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000).

Citizen participation is vital to government performance because the success or failure of governmental response is nearly entirely based on public perception (Schneider, 1995). Citizen values affect government performance more than neutral, expert principles (Putnam, 1993). Even if public perception is entirely subjective, positive government performance depends on positive citizen perception (Kweit & Kweit, 2004).

Citizen involvement in performance measurement allows citizens to help produce and influence the services that affect them most directly. Outcomes in the form of citizen satisfaction, accountability, increased trust, and transparency, are critical to effective performance (Halachmi & Holzer, 2011). Performance measurement is a method to collect and track data to clarify desired outcomes and to measure the level of their attainment (Wray & Hauer, 1997). Citizen participation in determining the measurement indicators of those outcomes is essential. Wray and Hauer (1997) state:
Citizens can act as powerful partners in quality-of-life and performance measurement efforts. Although these efforts are in the beginning stages in many communities, engaging citizens in the process can lead to better results. Involving citizens in performance measurement can help rebuild their sense of responsibility for communities. It can encourage greater citizen interest in the governance of their communities and in the results of that governance - an important element in rebuilding public trust (p. 4). Over the long term, active and meaningful citizen participation can help communities learn more about their visions, values, and priorities and about how to improve their quality of life.

The conflicting values and goals of performance measurement and citizen participation imply that the divergent interests may keep these concepts apart. This is evidenced by the lack of integration of the concepts to truly engage citizens in measuring performance (Vigoda, 2002b). Literature emphasizes the importance of citizen involvement in performance measurement systems (Epstein, et al., 2006; Ho & Coates, 2004). Ironically, performance measurement has traditionally been an internal process. Measuring government performance in terms of responsiveness conventionally implied a passive, unidirectional approach to providing services. However, a more active bi-directional approach implies collaboration between government and citizens (Vigoda, 2002a).

Transitioning from a traditional passive citizen role in government performance to an active citizenry in performance measurement systems may certainly be a challenge. Indeed, while there is support for the concept of public involvement, many administrators are either ambivalent or find it too problematic (King & Stivers, 1998). There also exists
a conflict between the concepts of performance, efficiency, and effectiveness on the one hand; and responsiveness, equity, and shared governance on the other (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2001). Unlike the private sector, government must consider social welfare, equal opportunities, and the fair distribution of public goods (Vigoda, 2000).

Literature also presents the view that collaboration with citizens may be contradictory to the essence of bureaucracy and its quest for efficiency (Thompson, 1983; Kweit & Kweit, 1981). Values associated with democracy such as equality, participation, and individualism conflict with the focus on efficiency, restrictions, specialization and the impersonality associated with bureaucracy (Vigoda, 2002). Thompson (1983) succinctly states that democracy does not suffer bureaucracy gladly. However, bureaucracy’s goal for efficiency may in turn not suffer democratic participation gladly.

Considering the challenges to balance the two concepts, citizen participation and efficiency, the focus of this study is to observe communities engaged in CIPM to determine the value of citizen involvement in developing and reporting performance measures while acknowledging the extra effort required. In addition, the research will explore the value of attributes required to implement and sustain CIPM.

For most of the 20th century, performance measurement centered on financial accounting focusing on ways to reduce the cost of providing services, emphasizing efficiency and financial accountability (Callahan & Holzer, 1999; Heinrich, 2002). However, as the public’s discontent with government performance increased, the demand for more information in the form of results or outcomes also increased. Efforts to improve reporting of effectiveness as well as efficiency evolved (Whooley & Newcomer, 1997).
It was the 1990s when a significant resurgence blossomed. The renewed interest in performance measurement resulted from taxpayer revolts, privatization of public services, legislative initiatives, and the devolution of responsibilities to local government (Poister & Streib, 1999). The shift toward results-oriented government hit full force as evidenced by Gaebler and Osborne’s (1992) reinventing government movement in 1992, the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, and Vice President Gore’s National Performance Review.

With this shift, public managers and elected officials have increasingly realized they need to be accountable to citizens. Being accountable implies responsibility for one’s actions (Roberts, 2004); that activities and actions are linked to specific results (Behn, 2003); and the results are linked to goals that have been set (Kelly, 2002). Accountability beyond internal stakeholders, means communication and reporting involves citizens and other stakeholders (Epstein, 1988). Ideally, government should be reporting results to citizens; enhancing accountability and responsiveness; increasing efficiency and effectiveness; and increasing citizen confidence (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2001).

Reporting to citizens, however, may still isolate citizens from deliberation (Fiorino, 1990). A more involved citizenry should be extended to include more public empowerment. Scholars suggest citizens should be involved in government performance measurement activities (Ho and Coates, 2002; Holzer and Yang, 2004) to enhance government performance and democracy.

It wasn’t until the latter part of the century that academic interest in performance measurement emphasized outcomes from a customer perspective (Epstein, 1992; Gaebler
& Osborne, 1992) and began addressing citizen involvement in government performance (Callahan, 2005; Smith & Huntsman, 1997; Ventriss, 1989). The idea of citizen involvement in performance measurement has progressed from viewing the customer in a passive role (Gaebler & Osborne, 1992) to more authentic, active participation (King & Stivers, 1998; Cohn Berman, 2005).

Active citizen participation is recognized as ideal (King & Stivers, 1998), but determining how much participation is enough is debated. Some theories favor indirect involvement, and rely on a representative form of government. Direct democracy puts citizens as owners of government (Callahan, 2007). The debate will continue. For the purposes of this research, a continuum of citizen involvement is presented. There may be appropriate opportunities for either stance.

Passive participation takes the form of voting, attending a public hearing, or providing input after an administrative or political decision has been made. This traditional model is a closed process that gives citizens virtually no role. In an active model, citizens are proactive, they own the process, and the citizen role is dominant. King and Stivers (1998) refers to proactive participation as “authentic.”

The movement toward authentic participation strengthens democracy through participatory processes that nurture public talk, civic judgment, and citizenship (King & Stivers, 1998). Active citizenship is viewed with more substantive consideration for ethical and sociological implications. Therefore, government actions are to be guided by citizens (Roberts, 2004). Expanding the definition further, citizen participation is a term for citizen power that is more inclusive of the “have-nots.” Arnstein (1969) illustrates this conceptualization of power in the “ladder of participation” (Figure 1).
8. Citizen Control  Citizen Power
7. Delegated Power  Citizen Power
6. Partnership  Citizen Power
5. Placation  Tokenism
4. Consultation  Tokenism
3. Informing  Tokenism
2. Therapy  Nonparticipation
1. Manipulation  Nonparticipation

Figure 1. Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation (Source: Arnstein, 1969)

Literature on citizen participation specifically related to performance measurement is limited because there is a lack of inclusion of citizen involvement in the performance measurement process (Melkers & Willoughby, 2001). In a study of cities by Poister and Streib (1999), results indicated that only three percent involve citizen groups in developing performance measures. It is important to note the word “involve” means varies. Clear lines do not delineate the continuum of involvement (Kinney, 2008) and the interpretation of what is the proper amount of citizen participation is open.

A 2008 GFOA study cited by Kinney (2008) illustrated the most common form of citizen involvement is reporting, which is unidirectional and passive. As governments gain experience they begin to use citizen feedback in the process, becoming more bi-directional with information flowing back and forth. Next, the third stage, citizen informed performance measurement, represents a high level of direct involvement by
citizens, but is not frequent with fewer than 5% of GASB’s survey results falling in this area. The fourth stage, citizen informed performance-based decision-making, represents an even more intense participation, and again a small percentage of less than 1% surveyed practicing is this stage. The curve from basic performance reporting to authentic citizen participation drops dramatically, and shows CIPM efforts to be rare (Kinney, 2008). See Figure 2.

*Figure 2. Citizen-informed Performance Measurement (Source: Kinney, 2008)*

Literature that focuses on government performance from an external perspective includes the areas of accountability, reporting to citizens about government effectiveness, and improved citizen confidence (Ammons, 1995; De Lancer & Holzer, 2001, Parr & Gates, 1989; Downs & Larkey, 1986; King & Stivers, 1998). The emergence of citizen involvement in government performance has brought academic interest to the ideal of
preserving democracy and determining the role of the citizen in a democratic society (Box, Marshall, Reed, & Reed, 2001; Gibson, Lacy, & Dougherty, 2005).

Documentation on citizen participation specifically related to performance measurement is limited because there is a lack of inclusion of citizen involvement in the performance measurement process (Melkers & Willoughby, 2001). Despite numerous reasons for supporting CIPM, the challenges are plentiful, including institutional barriers and lack of resources.

In performance measurement, involving and being accountable to the public has traditionally occurred through reporting information, as performance has been most closely associated with efficiency and financial accountability. However, an increased focus on citizen participation implies greater public involvement with performance measurement than just receiving information.

Citizens are demanding more accountability as a result of diminished trust in government, and a desire to be recognized and included in public decision-making (Parr & Gates, 1989). Additionally, no matter how well government efforts produce measurements, citizens respond to their perceptions of performance, which often do not correlate with established government measures (Van Ryzin, 2007).

The linking of citizens and government performance is an increasingly important concept for governance (Marshall et al., 1999). Society is being reformulated in that citizens and interest groups are getting involved directly with public policy and decisions that affect the community. The traditional controlling role of government is changing to embrace public interaction and involvement Denhardt & Denhardt, 2001).
However, the definition may be expanded in that accountability includes democratic governance, which requires incorporating citizen interest (Behn, 2001). The movement toward citizen participation suggests a strengthening of one of America’s core values – democracy (Barber, 1984). Participation satisfies the needs of the public and provides a balance to the power of interest groups that have dominated representative democracy (Wang, 2001). Through involvement, citizens can become informed on key issues and become responsible for their local governments and communities as no one agency or government can solve all problems (Benest, 1996).

While both democracy and efficiency are government objectives, the goals may easily conflict with each other. As Callahan states, it is a “contested concept” (2006, p. 153) and the question is “determining how much participation is enough” (p. 153). From another point of view, Wichowsky and Moynihan assert that concepts of performance measurement and citizen involvement are not at odds but should be integrated (2008). Callahan (2007) expertly describes the dilemma:

Those who advocate greater citizen participation do so for a variety of reasons: to promote democracy; build trust; increase transparency; enhance accountability; build social capital; reduce conflict; ascertain priorities; promote legitimacy; cultivate mutual understanding; and advance fairness and justice. Those who express caution and concern about direct citizen participation raise the following concerns: it is inefficient, time consuming, costly, politically naïve, unrealistic, disruptive, and it lacks broad representation. In addition, they argue that citizens lack expertise and knowledge; that citizens are motivated by their personal
interest, not the public good; and that citizens can be passive, selfish, apathetic, and cynical (p. 157).

The reasons given for contrasting views are points well taken in either camp. In terms of results, public entities are expected to be efficient and effective, yet the values of democracy contrast with modern bureaucratic structure (Vigoda, 2002a). Operating in the managerial state of the market model of administration overlooks social issues that affect society such as racism, poverty, and disability. These issues become individual problems rather than being considered through substantive democracy (Marshall et al., 1999).

The focus on democratic governance brings into play another element of results and outcomes other than just program or service impact. The term “citizen outcomes” was used by Wichowsky & Moynihan that means “measures of the impact of a policy on the individual’s role as citizen” (2008). This considers how policy design and implementation affect citizen behavior. Citizen feedback is a result of interactions between government and citizens where end outcomes may include civic engagement, participation, and trust (p. 909). Traditional philosophy does not appropriately consider citizenship outcomes (King & Stivers, 1998) in these terms remaining rooted in the subjective virtues of measuring results.

In addition to efficiency, effectiveness, and consideration of civic engagement, government is also expected to be responsive. The definition of responsiveness often refers to the speed and accuracy that government provides services. This definition, based on a marketplace view, infers a passive, unidirectional reaction to the people’s needs and demands. It also implies a result of lower participation, and less collaboration with
citizens (Vigoda, 2002b). Glaser and Denhardt (2000) defined responsiveness in a survey as being composed of two items: that government is interested in what citizens have to say and that government can be trusted to honor citizen values. This changes the scope of responsiveness to include some level of citizen involvement. Being responsive means listening to citizens, reacting to and communicating what they say, and doing something about it (Matthes, 2008).

In response to dealing with citizen attitude and the fast-paced changing world, are reforms like Reinventing Government and the New Public Management (NPM) where government is compelled to become a competitor in the marketplace, viewing citizens as customers, and refocusing on efficiency (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2001). The New Public Management movement values self-interest and individual satisfaction (Kamensky, 1996). Both reforms have been criticized, questioning the validity of citizens as customers (Frederickson, 1992; Pollitt, 1990). The customer metaphor devalues citizens and does not represent the government’s relationship with the public (Alford, 2002).

The New Public Service (NPS) movement challenges this value by elevating citizen participation in favor of an active citizenship and assumes that citizens are concerned more with the public good. Citizens participate in a strong democracy in a manner this is less focused on self-interest than the “citizen as customer” model. The NPS aligns with the NPM in that values such as efficiency and productivity should be ignored, but rather should be placed in the larger context of democracy (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). Participation satisfies the needs of the public and provides a balance to the power of interest groups that have dominated representative democracy (Wang,
2001). Most important, the participation in decision-making is how public beliefs and values can be realized (Yankelovich, 1991).

Environment of Citizen-informed Performance Measurement

The ideal of democratic governance in performance measurement is tempered by environmental factors that affect CIPM. Reduced budgets, the media, systemic issues in the tax structure, disheartening social issues, and negative personal experiences with government, are ultimately linked and influence the perception of government. The level of citizen participation required to mitigate negative perceptions and build positive relationships is a consideration and exceptional challenge for communities implementing CIPM (Glaser & Denhardt, 2000).

Citizen participation has experienced tensions inherent to the institutional structure of government: politics versus administration, bureaucratic expertise versus citizen access, and representation versus participation (Nelson, Robbins, & Simonsen, 1998). Citizens are major stakeholders in performance measurement along with elected officials and public administrators, yet citizens are often uncertain of their roles (Wray & Hauer, 1997). On one hand, they are to respond to politicians. On the other hand, they are often placed in the position to be more closely associated with administration. As a result, their interests are defined either by administrators or politicians and citizen interest is not distinct. Instead, it is absorbed into government rather than linking all interests together (Nelson, et al., 1998).

Many administrators believe citizen participation to be “problematic” by increasing inefficiency, and causing delays in making public decisions (King et al., 1998). In addition, administrators see themselves as experts and can be territorial by
resisting to the sharing of information or to letting citizens close to the process. This creates a symbolic participation that can do more harm than good (Arnstein, 1969).

Administrators and politicians can also hold the view there can be too much public involvement, concerned that it is interfering with their work and ability to govern the governed (Vigoda, 2000). Participation efforts often do not work because a system based on expertise and professionalism does not provide an environment where participation can thrive. The reluctance to give up power can shut the door on a more democratic participation. Often, citizen input is not valued since the public is perceived as not having enough knowledge and today’s problems are too complex for the public to understand (Walters, Aydelotte, & Miller, 2000).

While these opinions exist, there is support for CIPM and the recognized importance of citizen involvement. Ho and Coates’ (2004) project with Des Moines, Iowa’s Citizen Initiated Performance Assessment (CIPA) included a survey to city staff during the project soliciting feedback on CIPA. One comment was “You have to be measuring the right thing. In addition, the real value is to take what is happening from my perspective and compare it with the citizen’s perspective.” Another statement focused on the importance of citizen involvement during tight fiscal times proclaiming “the ability of citizens to be involved is critical to government survival as we become leaner. They need to know what services cost, and we need to know what their tolerance levels for services are.”

Another considerable challenge for active participation is the availability of resources. Citizen participation requires extensive time commitments (Lawrence & Deagen, 2001; Dawe, 2007) and a collaborative process slows down decision-making
that may have implications for additional cost (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). Not only is participation time-consuming, it is complicated and emotionally draining (Walters, et al., 2000). Often government experience with citizens is contentious due to the nature of enforcement, and dealing constantly with complaints (Cohn Berman, 2005). Effectively involving citizens also requires funds for planning, training and technical assistance as well as sufficient staffing (King & Stivers, 1998).

Government is not alone in contributing barriers to CIPM. Citizens may also present their own barriers. It can be difficult to recruit and retain citizens for performance measurement as time constraints due to career and family can limit participation (Ho & Coates, 2004). In addition, citizen engagement is more likely to occur when there is dissatisfaction. For others, it can be a matter of economics being unable to take time off for deliberation or having transportation issues. As a consequence, representation may be slanted toward the more affluent (Roberts, 2004). This is one reason surveys tend to be the participation method of choice, rather than more personal engagement such as focus groups. Swindell and Kelly (2000) point out citizen surveys are a means of “overcoming the well-documented socioeconomic bias associated with other forms of citizen participation” (p. 31).

The CIPM experience in Des Moines, Iowa illustrates these issues. Intense, long term commitment is much more challenging than a small time commitment. The city devised a complex structure to be inclusive, yet the project eventually stalled and began to rely on surveys for participation (Sanger, 2005). Des Moines also experienced that those interested in the project were those that had more resources. While there was a
dedicated group to the project, they missed things that were important to parts of the community that did not come to light from their perspective (Sanger, 2005).

In contrast, The Dayton, Ohio Quality of Life Indicators Project (QLI) project has been successful for years in garnering representation from different parts of the city to create inclusiveness, input, and authority to amend indicators. This is a rather large-scale project, much more complicated than the Trailblazer program, but it is an example of an effort with heavy citizen involvement through seven Priority Boards. The Quality of Life Indicators Project was formed to engage citizens to influence government policy and neighborhood life (City of Dayton, OH, 1999).

Citizens may also be perceived as apathetic due to the lack of willingness for involvement. Although, it is argued that citizens are apathetic because they feel impotent and ineffectual in government (King & Stivers, 1998). Citizens can also be cynical and distrustful, thus preferring to keep a distance from government (Cohn Berman, 1997; Callahan, 2000; King, 2002). Van Ryzin (2007) points out that citizen satisfaction with, and the perception of government performance is linked to trust, and is more complicated than objective data presented on a scorecard.

An example of an effort actively involving citizens was Hartford Connecticut’s City Scan Project, which was conducted through the nonprofit organization Connecticut Policy and Economic Council (CPEC, 2000). The project provided tools for neighborhood groups and others to use as accountability measures, and to determine which measures neighborhoods should prioritize. This large-scale project required open meetings and formal training sessions. Staff also provided ongoing education on government functions and performance measurement.
This kind of involvement is difficult to consider as local government budgets tighten and the question of whether the funds could be better used elsewhere is asked (King & Stivers, 1998). In fact, City Scan was not originally well received by local government. Leaders found it difficult to provide the time the project required. However, this project moved forward in Hartford mainly through private funding and community support that enabled citizens, through the use of high technology, to help the city maintain its public spaces, provide effectiveness measures, and to encourage grass roots involvement that worked beside government to act on community issues. (http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~ncpp/cdgp/cases/hartford/teaching%20case.pdf).

On a more optimistic note, the emergence of e-government, that provides information and services 24 hours per day, seven days per week (Norris, Fletcher, & Holden, 2001), can increase trust by improving interactions with citizen and their perceptions of responsiveness (Halachmi & Holzer, 2011). E-government and information technology advancements have also produced positive results in terms of increased productivity (Norris & Moon, 2005). The technology of e-government and the increased use of social media provide more self-service for citizens. In terms of feedback and response, technology also provides a method for constituents to provide input without the inconvenience of attending meetings or depending on schedules.

Attributes of Citizen-informed Performance Measurement

CIPM initiatives work actively with citizens in addition to data, which, Van Ryzin (2007) points out, is much more complicated. There are common key features to be considered that stand out in literature as essential for any CIPM system to successfully implement and sustain an initiative. The following attributes are not all-inclusive, but

36
provide a foundation for consideration in CIPM implementation: organizational commitment and leadership, public management skills, active citizen participation (level of citizen involvement), the use of performance measures, citizen outcomes, and organizational experience.

Organizational Commitment and Leadership

Leadership is an essential component for performance measurement sustainability (GFOA, 2008). Organizational commitment and leadership supporting CIPM can be shown in different ways. Energetic leadership to change behavior and thinking of CIPM stakeholders means the difference between having a performance measurement “system” and an active performance leadership “strategy” (Behn, 2002). CIPM must have top leadership support, adequate resources, and a means to publicize the system to enhance sustainability of a CIPM (Broom, 2004).

This leadership can be shown by providing staff support, resources for citizen involvement, performance measurement training, and reporting tools such as website features and paper reports published with the citizen as the target audience.

Public Management Skills

The commitment to involve citizens in performance measurement brings the necessity to share power, and government leaders that are effective do so by facilitating and connecting participants to share decision-making. Rather than driving the process, public managers need to be responsive and adaptive to the expectations of citizens. (Callahan, 2007; Epstein et al., 2006, Nalbandian, 1999). As a result, public managers
need interpersonal skills that assist with coordination, collaboration, deliberation, conflict resolution, and consensus building (Callahan, 2007).

Technical skills are as important as interpersonal skills. In addition to other factors, a successful performance measurement system must have an ongoing training system (Emerson, 2002). Levine (2010) cites the importance of combining these different skills: “Knowledge and information are important, as are acts such as voting and volunteering. But neither knowledge nor action is satisfactory without civic skills and civic engagement” (p. 1).

Callahan (2007) notes the changes in roles due to administrative reform when the reform is “outward looking” (p. 188) as a result of government distrust. This condition causes citizen interest to increase, and the organization and administrators must have the ability to “collaborate and generate consensus” (p.188).

Active Citizen Participation

The public assesses government performance differently than governments (Cohn Berman, 2005). Measures of performance should be driven by citizen priorities and should indicate results that are of interest to the public and that relate to public needs and priorities (Wray & Hauer, 1997; Epstein et al., 2006). CIPM requires active participation with dynamic and deliberative processes where citizens have an opportunity to influence outcomes and make a difference (King, Feltey, & Susel, 1998).

There are a variety of tools and techniques that may be used for citizen involvement, as well as various perceptions about the role of citizens. CIPM efforts need an agreed-upon clarity of participant roles and objectives (Yang & Callahan, 2005). While it would seem ideal to involve citizens at all levels of government performance
activities, experience shows it is a difficult practice to pursue. Communities must be strategic in using citizens as a resource (Sanger, 2005).

It is also important that citizens involved in CIPM reflect a diverse representation of the community (Dawe, 2007). Citizen interests can differ, and those different interests should be represented or the consequences can “undermine an entire problem-solving process, cause decisions to lose legitimacy or be challenged in court, and leave community problems to fester as conditions get worse” (Epstein et al., p. 44). In addition, citizen participation in a CIPM must be followed-up with action by elected officials or public administrators so citizens feel their time is well-spent and has impact on services or policy (Ho & Coates, 2004; Bjornlund & Okubo, 1999).

Use of Performance Measures

Organizations often have a substantial amount of data available, but it has to be put to use to be relevant use in a results-oriented government (Poister, 2003). Performance measures provide objective, relevant information on programs or services that can be used to improve program or service effectiveness, improve policy decision-making, improve accountability, assist with budget allocations, develop goals and objectives, and are used to evaluate service (Lancer Julnes, 2005; Poister, 2003). Callahan (2007) points to Robert Behn’s list of eight purposes that even more specific: evaluate, control, budget, motivate, promote, celebrate, learn, and improve.

However, performance measures have traditionally been used to measure workload data with a focus on outputs rather than measuring effectiveness (Swindell & Kelly, 2000). This establishes a barrier for use of performance measures in decision-making, particularly if the measures are not suitable for that purpose. This can cause
“resistance of local managers to be held accountable for results” (p. 34) and further stall ideals of CIPM to use measures.

Citizenship Outcomes

“Citizen outcomes” is a term Wichowsky and Moynihan (2008) used to describe “measures of the impact of a policy on the individual’s role as citizen.” They state this is from a policy feedback theory developed by Mettler and Soss, in which opinion and behavior are functions through interactions between institutions and citizens. These researchers propose that some policies have measurable effects on citizens in terms of participation. Normally, performance measures reflect the outcomes of a program’s efficiency. However, citizen outcomes in terms of value added for policy, political efficacy, social capital, and participation in government, reflect the value of democratic governance (Wichowsky & Moynihan, 2008).

Other citizen outcomes resulting from citizen engagement in performance measures include democratic deliberation, increased participant knowledge and understanding of issues, and trust and accountability (Lukensmeyer & Torres, 2006). Communication of information about government performance also increases accountability, particularly when citizens are involved in the measurement process (Ho, 2007; Wang, 2001).

Organizational Experience

The success of CIPM may be impacted by the experience of an organization with actively involving citizens in government initiatives requiring a partnership with citizens; measuring service and program performance through an established system; having a
credible reputation in the community regarding citizen trust and satisfaction with services; and with shared decision-making where citizens take ownership of decisions. Citizens form opinions based on perceptions, prior expectations, and high performance levels that leads to trust in government (VanRyzin, 2007). Trust is a product of establishing working partnerships with citizens (Sanger, 2005) and maintaining a credible reputation based on accountability and transparency. Measuring program performance and increased experience in setting targets and goals, makes government more comfortable to start using information from citizens to establish priorities and targets, rather than simply reporting results to citizens (GOFA, 2008).

To meet the demands of administering CIPM, there must be an environment of intellectual, cultural, and institutional infrastructure to support citizen engagement. This includes the proper use of resources and flexibility to adapt to each unique environment (Gibson, et al., 2005). Organizational experience with collaboration, trust, and networked relationships are most useful in an environment of accountability, versus a compliance-based approach (Callahan, 2007).

Summary

Efficiency and effectiveness of government have been areas of interest for a long time, from Frederick Taylor’s theory of scientific management to the current paradigm of results-oriented government. Performance measurement is a process to obtain information on efficiency to determine progress toward reaching goals and to show the extent of the effectiveness in terms of results for products or services.

Government performance has traditionally responded by reporting performance data with a focus on financial accounting. This has been an internal process with
information primarily directed toward public officials and administrators. In recent decades this response has expanded to include more than financial efficiencies. While government is expected to be efficient it is also expected to be responsive.

Responsiveness is the speed and accuracy that government delivers services. However, responsiveness also includes an interest in what citizens have to say about performance. Citizens focus on results and responsiveness, while traditional government measures focus on workload and output (Kreklow, 2005).

The strengthening of public involvement and incorporating public interest has suggested that accountability include democratic governance. Increased citizen demands for more results and accountability include a desire to participate in performance measurement and decision-making rather than just being recipients of information. Citizens may assume various roles and can be involved at different levels of intensity, from passive to active. Despite the increased interest in involving citizens in performance measurement, the reality is that public involvement is limited. There are numerous advantages identified for CIPM, but they exist in a quagmire of barriers that present difficult challenges for success.

The literature illustrates benefits and advantages of CIPM, presents models for process, and shows conceptual frameworks for managing performance that provide a foundation for CIPM, but there exists a gap on the impact of this collaboration on measuring performance. This paper will focus on a segment of the foundational framework where citizen participation and performance measurement intersect.

This study will address whether active citizen participation enhances or hinders adequate government performance measurement by analyzing how citizens may directly
influence performance measures, and by analyzing key attributes considered important for a successful CIPM program while supporting democratic governance.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

Citizen involvement in performance measurement is often supported in theory, but transitioning from a passive to active citizen role in government performance is not widespread. Work to improve on citizen involvement in this area has brought to light two models of public engagement in performance measurement. One model is government based and is a partnership among citizens, public officials, and public managers. Since local governments have greater interaction with citizens than at the federal level, there is more opportunity for citizens make a difference in the services provided to them (Box, 1998). An example is the Des Moines “Citizen-Initiated Performance Assessment” project.

Another model is independently based and nonprofit organizations that measure outcomes through collaborative partnerships, such as the Boston Indicators Project (Ho, 2007). The nonprofit organization manages the effort with cooperation of local government, but operates with more autonomy. Often, these types of projects focus on longer term outcomes that involve more than just government service measures. For this reason, performance measurement efforts utilizing the second model are often referred to as “community indicator” projects.

This study focused on a specific local government-based program known as the National Center for Civic Innovation’s (NCCI) Government Trailblazer Program (2003-
The projects were funded through the Alfred T. Sloan Foundation’s program *Making Municipal Governments More Responsive to Their Citizens*, launched in 1994. The purpose of the program was to “promote acceptance of citizen-based and citizen informed measurement and public reporting of municipal government performance”, and included a large grant to the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) that led to the work of Suggested Guidelines for Voluntary Reporting of Service Efforts and Accomplishments Performance between 1997 and 2004 (GASB, 2010). The goal of the Program was to encourage local and state governments to prepare performance reports using Governmental Accounting Standards Boards (GASB) criteria, and to actively involve the public in performance measurement processes. In addition, the Association of Government Accountability (AGA) launched its Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA) Program with grant support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation of New York City (http://www.agacgfm.org/performance/sea). Several participants in the SEA Program received grants from the Trailblazer Program.

Thirty-six local units of governments that participated in the Government Trailblazer Program (2003-2008) were targeted in this study. The target population for the study included elected officials and public managers as key informants for the participating communities and whose blended views represented the perspectives of each of the 36 units. Elected officials approved or participated in a performance measurement process involving citizens in the municipality for which they served. Public managers assisted with design, implementation, approval of, or participation in the performance measurement process that actively involved citizens.
Research Purpose and Research Questions

The Trailblazer Program represents the theory of the “Effective Community Governance Model” (p. 3) from the book Results That Matter authored by Paul Epstein, Paul Coates and Lyle Wray (2006). CIPM is also based on the concept that collaboration among elected officials, public managers and citizens brings tangible benefits to government performance, particularly by improving the development and reporting of performance measures that are significant to a community. (Wang, 2001; Callahan, 2000). These benefits, however, come with a cost of implementation and sustainability challenges.

The purpose of this study was to provide guidance for CIPM initiatives to promote democratic governance while measuring government performance. The purpose, driven by the reality that benefits and disadvantages of CIPM are both significant, directed the focus to the primary research question: Does active citizen participation enhance or hinder effective measurement of government performance?

Citizen participation in performance measures is deemed important because it is the perception of citizens that determines the success of governmental response, and they are important stakeholders whom should be involved. Callahan (2007) summed up effective governance related to performance measurement by stating “Appropriate, relevant, and objective measures of performance can be developed when citizens are meaningfully involved in defining performance targets and in framing and shaping performance indicators” (p. 215). Despite this view, active involvement is not widespread. Limited resources, and the belief this function has traditionally been and should remain a function of government administration, continue to be prevalent.
This research focused on active citizen participation in performance measurement on the development, collection, tracking, or evaluation of data that indicate attainment of desired outcomes. The analysis determined the effects of active citizen participation on the measurement of government performance; and revealed the necessary attributes for an effective citizen-driven performance measurement initiative. This study did not encompass citizen involvement in performance management activities, such as budgeting and strategic planning, but did provide insight on the preferred use of performance measures.

The primary research question got to the heart of the debate of whether citizens positively impact the measurement of government performance. Does active citizen participation enhance or hinder effective measurement of government performance? The public sector now views citizens as stakeholders and valued customers of services rather than viewing them just as taxpayers or residents (Epstein, et al., 2006). With this view, citizens should have effective mechanisms for developing measures and evaluating performance. There should be an optimal flow of information between citizens and government (Kathleen & Martin, 1991), and the opportunity for citizens to become directly involved with government performance measurement.

As ideal as it sounds, improved communication and implementing methods for citizen participation have efficiency costs, and admittedly takes longer because it is complex. Still, citizen involvement nurtures opportunities for enhanced effectiveness (Glaser & Denhardt, 2000). It is the decision of the community to balance the priority of efficiency with effectiveness, with the tenet of democratic governance to determine the appropriate level of citizen engagement in measuring performance.
The participants of the Trailblazer program and this study were encouraged to step up citizen involvement, and each community determined what type of citizen involvement was appropriate and manageable. In addition, communities determined the roles of citizens and expectations from their involvement.

Often, resources such as staffing influenced just how much effort went into focus groups and other means of citizen involvement. Some communities relied on staff with a full workload to be the champion for performance measurement. This is often the case with smaller communities and those facing budget issues. In some instances, third party facilitators were hired to coordinate surveys, focus groups, and communication to citizens.

Recognizing the challenges, and armed with tools and guidance, the move toward effective CIPM with this population group drove to the question of whether active citizen participation enhanced or hindered effective measurement of performance. The following hypotheses were generated to develop the survey questions. The survey instrument is provided as an appendix to the document for reference.

Hypothesis 1: Citizen participation enhances the quantity of data collection.

Hypothesis 2: Citizen participation results in measures that reflect what citizens define as good program or service performance.

Hypothesis 3: Citizen participation results in citizen-defined measures of satisfaction with the quality of government programs and services.
Hypothesis 4: Citizen participation results in measures that evaluate programs and services most important to citizens.

Hypothesis 5: Citizen participation results in citizen-defined ideas of getting the best value for their tax dollars.

Hypothesis 6: Citizen participation results in measures that express citizen-defined benefit for the community rather than just what is good for individual citizens.

Hypothesis 7: Citizen participation results in measures described in language easily understood by citizens.

Hypothesis 8: Citizen participation results in measures that evaluate programs and services with a history of performance problems or complaints.

Hypothesis 9: Citizen participation results in measures of high budget cost programs and services.

Hypothesis 10: Citizen participation makes the performance measurement process take longer.
Hypothesis 11: Citizen participation in performance measurement increases citizen trust of government managers.

Hypothesis 12: Citizen participation in performance measurement increases citizen trust of elected officials.

Hypothesis 13: Citizen participation in performance measurement increases consensus of various participant viewpoints of the purpose of performance measures.

The second research question determined the level of importance for attributes in CIPM from the point of view of participants whose experiences were within a similar program. The question explored the relationship between the concepts of citizen participation and performance measurement by going a level deeper and asked: What attributes are essential for effective Citizen informed Performance Measurement? This question focused on optimal conditions for CIPM to increase democratic governance and improve the effectiveness of citizen involvement in measuring performance.

The literature revealed six conditions, termed “CIPM attributes” in this research, as important for an effective and sustainable program. The questions and response choices are reflected in the survey in the appendix. The attributes are:

- Organizational leadership and commitment: institutionalized through dedicating staff time; securing funding; committing elected official participation; adopting a written policy or resolution; and forming positive links among citizens, elected officials and public managers that support CIPM.
• Public manager skills: required to actively involve citizens through facilitating collaborative meetings; facilitating meetings that are productive, organized, and respectful of time; developing and maintaining citizen partnerships with interpersonal skills; changing the process when necessary with flexibility; building consensus among process participants; and demonstrating performance measurement knowledge.

• Active citizen participation: involving citizens through representation of community diversity; making decisions through shared authority with citizens; defining citizen roles early in the process with citizen agreement; training citizens in performance measurement; and involving citizens in more than one aspect of the process.

• Citizen outcomes: reflected in positive relationships among citizens, elected officials, and public managers; citizen education about government programs and services; improved performance measure quality; increased government accountability to citizens; increased trust in elected officials; increased trust in public managers, increased respect for citizen involvement by elected officials and managers.

• Use of performance measures: to assist public performance through changing and influencing public policy; continuously improving programs and the organization; assisting officials with budget decisions; communicating program or organizational results to the community; problem-solving specific issues that measures may bring to attention; and advocating change to a program or service.
Organizational experience: that impacts the success of CIPM through possession of previous experience actively involving citizens with government initiatives and building partnerships; measuring service and program performance through an organized structure already in place; having a credible reputation in the community by gaining citizen trust and providing good services; and a philosophy and history of sharing decision-making with citizens.

Mixed Methods Research Strategy

The research for this study was conducted using mixed methodology, an approach that combines the precision of quantitative data with the depth of understanding that qualitative methods offer (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). The mixed methods strategy was selected to confirm and corroborate findings, and to provide equal priority to both quantitative and qualitative methods (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). The benefit of this strategy is the ability to offset the weaknesses of using a single method and to strengthen the interpretation phase of the project (Creswell, 2003).

The quantitative approach of mixed methodology used surveys to provide general answers to the research questions. A survey of administrators and elected officials provided the response data to answer the research questions. The National Center for Civic Improvement (NCCI) contacted Trailblazer representatives about the plans for the research prior to the survey being administered. In addition, potential respondents were sent a written and electronic notice informing them the survey would be forthcoming. Surveys were made available via e-mail, web access (SurveyMonkey.com), and a paper copy was mailed with a return self-addressed, stamped envelope. The various methods of response were used for participant convenience and to provide multiple opportunities to
bring the survey to the attention of proposed respondents. All prospective participants received both the paper survey and the on-line survey. Those that did not respond within the first two weeks received a reminder notice via e-mail. A reminder notice was sent repeatedly to those that did not complete a survey for three months until no more responses were received.

The perspectives of respondents was used to represent the views of participating local units of governments by finding the mean of the responses of those officials in cities with multiple respondents. In 26 of the organizations there was only one respondent; in six of the organizations there were two respondents; one city had three respondents; and two organizations had four respondents. In all units of government, there was at least one respondent charged with implementing and managing the city’s CIPM program.

Standard deviation tests of the cities with multiple respondents indicated close coalescing around the mean, thereby indicating close agreement among the multiple respondents with most of those organizations. This suggests that securing the mean response for multiple-respondent organizations reflects an accurate view of that city’s perspective on CIPM.

The qualitative portion of the mixed methodology consisted of semi-structured interviews with survey respondents willing to participate in a brief interview. This method was chosen to allow participants to express their opinions and views in their own words (Esterberg, 2002) providing rich context to the quantitative portion of the research (Marshall, 1985.) Each interviewee was asked the same set of six open-ended questions. The open-ended nature of the questions allowed the interviewees to expand their
responses about CIPM based on personal experience. The responses were categorized by common themes that emerged from the responses (Creswell, 2003).

**Sampling Design**

The nature of this study indicated a nonprobability sampling design as appropriate for an exploratory study to be tested in more depth by future research (O’Sullivan, Rassel, & Berner, 2003). Nonprobability sampling does not involve random selection, but the sample is representative of the population. In this case, the survey of Trailblazer Program participants is representative of the CIPM initiative. The selected communities were all participants in the program and represented the population of those involved in CIPM (O’Sullivan, et al., 2003).

The Trailblazer Program was the CIPM initiative selected because it fulfilled the research criteria of organizations that actively involve citizens in performance measurement, and report performance information in accordance with the GASB service effort and accomplishment (SEA) guidelines. Therefore, inclusion of CIPM efforts outside the Trailblazer Program was not within the scope of this project.

**Quantitative Approach**

The original goal of the survey was to obtain a total of 216 responses from six participants each from 36 organizations with a target of three representatives from each of two categories (administrators and elected officials), to counter individual respondent bias. The design was based on Likert and forced ranking scales. Surveys were sent to all elected officials, Trailblazer contacts, city/county managers, assistant city/county managers, and financial and auditing staff of each community. However, it appeared the
task of completing the survey may have been deferred to Trailblazer designated contacts “as the experts” of the program. Of the total 216 respondents sought, a total of 50 surveys were received: 40 from administrative contacts and 10 from elected officials.

Initially, measures of central tendency and a cross sectional design was used to find relationships and show trends (O’Sullivan et al., 2003). It is an appropriate design as the subjects were geographically dispersed and were participants in the program during a specific timeframe. The intent was to gather information on attitudes about CIPM, embark on exploratory research, and to test hypotheses for further research (O’Sullivan et al., 2003).

Several characteristics of respondents and communities were examined to determine significance to the study. Community population and geographic location of the units of government were investigated and showed no results. Respondent position (elected or appointed), longevity in the position, longevity in working in government, and longevity in performance measurement, were also analyzed and yielded no results. Since these potentially intervening variables had virtually no impact on the results, the analysis was not included in this study.

Further consideration of the preliminary statistical tests indicated the appropriate unit of analysis to be each unit of government, resulting in N=35. The database consisted of 36 units of government (cities, counties, or other units of local government). Responses were received from 35 of the 36 organizations surveyed, leaving only one targeted unit of government not represented. The community response better represents the nature of the data, and the high response rate provides a strong case for generalizability as the CIPM program purports to represent national CIPM efforts moving
forward. After determining that the units of government were the units of analysis (rather than individual participants), central tendency provided adequate quantitative analysis. Therefore, cross-sectional analysis was excluded.

The survey instrument used a Likert scale for the first section of the survey consisting of thirteen statements to address the primary research question of whether active citizen participation enhances or hinders effective measurement of government performance. The Likert scale was chosen as it is often used to measure opinion where respondents pick the option that mostly closely aligns with their view. The scale represents an ordinal level of measurement, meaning the items are ranked. Participants used the scale to rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement (O’Sullivan et al., 2003). Each statement had a selection of six possible responses as follows: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, and don’t know.

Due to the nature of the second research question, designed to determine essential attributes for effective citizen informed performance measurement, every response could have potentially been considered “important.” Therefore, to avoid biased results, in addition to averting a potentially increased “neutral or don’t know” response rate, a forced ranking scale was used to produce an ordinal value when items were ranked relative to one another (Alreck & Settle, 1985). Furthermore, the forced ranking scale gathered representative data that illustrated a broader perspective of opinions from each community.

Responses for the second research question regarding essential attributes for effective CIPM were requested in forced rank order from most important to least important for all choices given. There were five areas explored: commitment and
leadership, public manager skills, active citizen participation, performance measurement use, citizen outcomes, and organizational experience. The survey supplied the responses (no more than seven) and participants rated the options in order of most important, with number one (1) being most important.

Methodology

The primary and secondary research questions are partially based upon the Model of Effective Community Governance, which also represents the foundation of Epstein, Coates, and Wray’s (2006) book, Results That Matter. The model is comprised of three elements of governance: engaging citizens, measuring results, and getting things done. It illustrates citizen participation in the development of public policy decisions, strategies, resources, and actions to carry out the decisions (Getting Things Done). Citizens may also assist by assuring that results are meaningful and matter to the community (Engaging Citizens), and may be involved in the method to determine whether desired results are achieved (Measuring Results) (Epstein et al., 2006, p. 3).

The intersections of the three elements are described by Epstein et al. (2006), as points where “advanced governance practices” occur (p. 7). Ideally, the common point of intersection with the three circles is where communities are “governing for results” (p. 9). When this occurs, information is provided on community outcomes, there is a feedback mechanism for results, and collaborations are results focused.

The portion of the model used for this study focuses on “Advanced Practice 3 – Citizens Reaching for Results: Alignment of Engaging Citizens and Measuring Results” (p. 8). The qualities of practice results includes opportunities where increased citizen engagement occurs with citizens having multiple roles and expectations in the process;
deciding what results are measured and which reflect citizen priorities; and providing concerns through their knowledge of the community.

This research will focus on the area that intersects between engaging citizens and measuring results as performance measures provide the foundation of “getting things done” and performance management activities (Figure 3). This model provided the basis for development of research questions on the effect of engaging citizens in performance measures and the required characteristics to optimize the alignment.

*Figure 3. Conceptual Model of Engaging Citizens and Measuring Results (Source: Results That Matter, 2003)*
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The data sources for this study included a survey instrument and semi-structured interview responses. The statistics program Predictive Analytics Software (PASW) 18 (formerly known as SPSS) was used to perform the quantitative analysis. Interview transcriptions were categorized by theme and reviewed for patterns (Berg, 1998). The final analysis integrates the qualitative and quantitative data in accordance with mixed methods research.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study reviewed the communities involved in the Government Trailblazer Program for the purpose of providing a reference for communities interested in a democratic governance model of performance measurement using specific goals and reporting guidelines. Surveys were directed to public administrators and elected officials involved in the program. While these are only two of the three major stakeholders in CIPM, (citizens excluded), the research provides valuable perceptions of those engaged in CIPM. In addition, the feasibility of obtaining citizen response was poor due to lack of access and amount of time that passed since involvement. The proposal for this research did not intend on gathering citizen feedback. Future research could be enhanced should the opportunity to compare responses across the three groups involved with CIPM be presented.
The response rate of the 36 targeted communities was high with at least one response from a Trailblazer representative for each community (except one). The second research question limited the number of attributes (conditions) researched to make the survey manageable and to focus the scope of inquiry. The researcher chose the following: organizational commitment and leadership, public management skills, citizen participation, use of performance measures, citizen outcomes and prior organizational experience.

Some participants did not respond correctly to the rank-order instructions in the second section of the survey. Although an appropriate use for this survey, forced ranking has some weaknesses. The number of items to be ranked should be no more than ten or it can be burdensome to the responder and potentially increase error (Alreck & Settle, 1985). In addition, the risk in using forced ranking is that some respondents may not follow directions properly and rank several items with the same number, or miss a number in the sequence. To mitigate such errors, the ranking choices in this survey consisted of no more than seven items and the electronic survey would not allow more than one numbered response per choice.

Despite efforts to mitigate incomplete responses, several responses in the electronic survey were left blank or only one response was indicated rather than ranking the choices. The five paper surveys (the results of which were manually entered into SurveyMonkey) were also completed incorrectly as items were not ranked in order of importance.
Research Question 1: Does Active Citizen Participation Enhance or Hinder Effective Measurement of Government Performance?

Variables were designed to address the primary research question: Does citizen participation enhance or hinder effective measurement of government performance? Participants representing the 35 units of government included in this research, were asked to respond to the thirteen hypothetical statements/hypotheses indicated in Table 1 using Likert’s scale ranging from 1-6 as follows: 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) neutral, 4) disagree, 5) strongly disagree, and 6) don’t know.

The thirteen hypothetical statements were developed and structured using popular CIPM concepts that describe the effect of citizen involvement in the development and reporting of performance measures. In an effort to answer the research question, an examination of survey responses revealed trends and presented themes. The following explains how the data was organized.

The Likert scale used to collect data for the variables offered participants the opportunity to respond either "neutral" or "don't know." Because the scale does not force respondents to rank their opinion, allowing these response options are powerful in determining individuals’ strength of agreement/disagreement especially when considering participants who either don’t have an opinion or lack the information/knowledge to accurately respond (Robbins, 2009).

There were 50 responses to the survey resulting in some units of government represented by more than one respondent. To accurately represent each of unit of government, those organizations that had more than one response was addressed by calculating an average score, resulting in a total of 35 scores tested.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis Number</th>
<th>Hypothesis Survey Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Citizen participation improves the quantity of data collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Citizen participation results in measures that reflect a citizen's point of view about good program or service performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Citizen participation results in measures that evaluate citizen satisfaction with the quality of government programs and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Citizen participation results in measures that evaluate programs and services most important to citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Citizen participation results in citizen-defined measures of getting the best value for their tax dollars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Citizen Participation results in performance measures that express citizen-defined benefit for the community rather than just what is good for individual citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Citizen participation results in measures described in language easily understood by citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Citizen participation results in measures of programs and services with a history of performance problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Citizen participation results in measures of high budget cost programs and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Citizen participation makes the performance measurement process take longer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Citizen participation in performance measurement increases citizen trust of government managers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Citizen participation in performance measurement increases citizen trust of elected officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Citizen participation increases participant agreement of the purpose of performance measures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frequency Distribution of Hypotheses Agreement

To further explore and understand the data responses, frequency distributions were executed using the thirteen variables solely using Likert scale responses “Strongly Agree” and “Agree.” The following Table 2 Strongly Agree-Agree Cumulative Percentages of the Hypotheses illustrates that three of the hypothetical statements yielded cumulative percentages greater than 85%. These three variables surround a common theme of customer-centric values as a result of citizen involvement in the development of performance measures as follows: reflection of the citizen’s point of view on programs and services; evaluation of citizen satisfaction with programs and services, and evaluation of programs and services most important to citizens (Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4). This finding may indicate a trend surrounding the importance of the CIPM attributes, especially those relating to citizen perspective.

In terms of citizen outcomes, the statement that citizen participation takes longer (Hypothesis 10) reflected a cumulative percentage of 80 % of overall agreement. Responses regarding citizen informed performance measurement and an increased trust in public managers (Hypothesis 11) was slightly higher than that of elected officials (Hypothesis 12) with responses of 73.5% and 65.7% respectively. The hypothesis that citizen involvement increases the consensus on measures used (Hypothesis 13) presented a cumulative agreement of 82.9% overall. These variables may suggest that collaboration is influential toward trust of government and positive relationships.

The citizen-centric question of whether citizen participation results in measures described in language easily understood by citizens (Hypothesis 7), showed 82.9% of the respondents agreed overall. The quantity of data collected due to citizen involvement
Table 2

Strongly Agree-Agree Cumulative Percentages of the Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Point of View (n=35)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>91.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Satisfaction (n=35)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>88.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Most Important (n=33)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Language (n=35)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Agree on Purpose (n=35)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Takes Long (n=35)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Trust Manager (n=34)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>73.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Trust Official (n=35)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>65.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Quantity of Data (n=35)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Best Value (n=34)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Community Benefit (n=35)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Performance Problems (n=34)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>High Cost (n=35)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Cumulative Percentages are based on “agree” and “strongly agree” responses only.

(Hypothesis 1) however, was not as high in percentage as only 62.9% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Variables with a common theme surrounding program measures, high cost (Hypothesis 9) or performance problems (Hypothesis 8), yielded a significantly low cumulative percent of agreement. The table concludes that 71.4% (Hypothesis 9) and 70.6% (Hypothesis 8) of participants did not respond in agreement to the statement, but rather answered “neutral,” “disagree,” “strongly disagree,” or “don’t know.”

Additionally, responses focused on measuring whether citizen participation in performance measures expressed benefit for the community versus the individual (Hypothesis 6), yielded similar results where only 60% of participants were in agreement and 40.0% responded “neutral,” “disagree,” “strongly disagree,” or “don’t know.”
Central Tendency

Central tendency was used to report the position of the 35 organizational responses relative to agreement with the hypothetical statements. The central tendency measure of choice for this study is the mean. The mean is used most frequently as a measure of central tendency when computing ratio and interval data (Robbins, 2009). The usefulness of the Likert scale and central tendency measures is to provide a general idea as to which direction the average belongs.

The following themes as illustrated in Table 3 Themes of CIPM Concepts became prevalent upon examining the means and the nature of the questions. The Average Mean row represents the combined average mean associated with the corresponding theme.

Table 3
Themes of CIPM Concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Neutral/Don’t Know Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizen Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Point of View</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.8666</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.9523</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Most Important</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0352</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Best Value</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.4459</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Community Benefit</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.6926</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0809</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1789</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Measures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Quantity of Data</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.4880</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Performance Problems</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5556</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>High Cost</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.2283</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.7573</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Takes Long</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1831</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Trust Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.4068</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Trust Official</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.6737</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Agree on Purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0809</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.336</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If individuals respond "neutral" to a hypothesis, the researcher can assume the participants have no interest, no opinion, or are perhaps undecided regarding their opinions. By allowing participants to respond using "don't know," the researcher is actually providing individuals with limited exposure or knowledge to the subject the opportunity to express this (Robbins, 2009). The Neutral/Don’t Know Responses column addresses the extent to which participants either remained neutral or did not know the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the hypothetical statement. Without administering statistical tests, these values suggest an overall agreement to each of the hypotheses.

The closer the values are to 1.0, the stronger the agreement is to the hypothetical statements. The values ranged from 1.8666 for “citizen point of view” to 3.2283 for programs or services with high costs. The category of “citizen perspective” had the closest average mean of 2.1789 indicating stronger agreement for the category than “program measures” or “collaboration.” However, “collaboration” is relatively strong in agreement with “citizen perspective.” The theme “program measures” indicated a value of agreement, but not as strong as the other two themes.

It is interesting to note that the two statements with the most frequent occurrence of “don’t know” and “neutral” were program measures related to programs or service with performance problems, and trust of elected officials, indicating either a lack of knowledge about the statement, or lack of opinion regarding the statements.

Summary of Findings

Descriptive statistics were initially used to examine the survey responses of elected officials and public administrators. Analysis of the individual responses did not
produce any statistically significant outcomes, due to the small number of responses (50). However, it was discovered that due to the nature of the data, and the fact that 35 of the 36 communities surveyed provided responses, that using the government entities as the units of measurement was more appropriate and representative of CIPM efforts. The result was the development of themes based on central tendency. The analysis revealed the theme “citizen perspective” was highly supported in agreement, followed by “collaboration.” The third theme, “program measures,” was the least in agreement that citizen participation in performance measurement resulted in measures of programs of high cost and those that are problematic.

Research Question 2: What Attributes Are Essential for Effective Citizen-informed Performance Measurement?

Frequency Distribution

Organizational Leadership and Commitment

Table 4 Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to Organizational Leadership and Commitment illustrates responses to the concept that a level of commitment is required by the organization, elected officials, and government managers for a successful CIPM initiative. The Trailblazer Program encouraged grantees to obtain a level of commitment from elected officials and leadership. The commitment ranged from the simple act of approving application for the grant, to adoption of a policy, to more direct participation during the program implementation such as participating in focus groups.

Reflecting the guidelines for CIPM, respondents chose commitment of elected officials (32.3%) as most important to support and sustain CIPM through defined leadership and commitment efforts. This is particularly important for programs in
| Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to Organizational Leadership and Commitment: Forced Rank Order |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Commitment of elected official participation in the performance measurement process | 32.3% (10) | 12.9% (4) | 29.0% (9) | 19.4% (6) | 6.5% (2) | 0% (0) |
| Dedicated staff support and supplies to implement and sustain CIPM | 27.3% (9) | 45.5% (15) | 12.1% (4) | 9.1% (3) | 61% (2) | 0% (0) |
| Allocation of government funds to support CIPM | 12.9% (4) | 22.6% (7) | 29.0% (9) | 19.4% (6) | 12.9% (4) | 3.2% (1) |
| Creation of positive relationships among elected officials, managers, and citizens | 12.5% (4) | 18.8% (6) | 18.8% (6) | 34.4% (11) | 12.5% (4) | 3.1% (1) |
| Secured external funding to support CIPM when necessary | 0% (0) | 3.1% (1) | 6.3% (2) | 6.7% (3) | 28.1% (9) | 53.1% (17) |
| Adoption of a written policy or resolution that shows commitment to CIPM | 0% (0) | 3.0% (1) | 21.2% (7) | 24.2% (8) | 24.2% (8) | 27.3% (9) |

government where there is constant movement of elected officials. Adoption of a formal policy fairied less important in comparison. This may be due to the passive nature of adopting a policy, even though respondents admitted value in the action of a written commitment.
Dedicated staff support ranked second as most important. The program required a point person to administer CIPM, and in some cases, this meant a dedicated position. Others assigned oversight of the project to a staff member that already had a workload outside of performance measurement, particularly for those recipients that were smaller government entities. Grant funds were never used to support staff wages or benefits, but were used for software, supplies, or planning. Sustaining the momentum of a program takes more than a declaration of support. The structure of the Trailblazer Program included having a central contact person. However, meeting CIPM goals requires resources to administer and monitor the project, and perform activities presented in CIPM guidelines.

Resources (funding) are usually required to support staff and supplies to enable successful program implementation. Often, programs are not implemented due to budget constraints. It was anticipated that external funding, such as this grant would be of great importance for the decision to forge ahead with such a project. Interestingly, the least important choice was to secure external funding to support CIPM. This is most likely due to the Trailblazer grant’s small dollar amount (around $13,000) to provide an incentive to kick-start the program. The amount was enough to provide incentive, but not enough for continued sustainability. The program design urged sustainability without the need of external funding, with a goal that CIPM would become a part of the organization’s culture.

The survey allowed the opportunity for participants to include a choice not provided in the survey. As a result, the following suggestions were made. First, an additional method to show commitment would be participation in a regional or national
group to focus on standards for government key performance indicator development, implementation, and tracking. The response indicated this type of participation encourages benchmarking and sharing of best practices that are critical to CIPM sustainability.

Second, a suggested response was to include the importance of commitment to make the results of the measures available to the public. The plan of reporting measures was a key element of the Trailblazer Program. Most Trailblazer groups produced a printed document, which often was made available on the web. In another instance, the web was the only tool used for reporting measures. However, the NCCI expectation was to produce a report, and the fact it was all on-line in once instance caused a bit of discussion on the proper form of reporting. However, the community maintained that flexibility of updating the web in a timely manner, and avoiding printing costs in tight budget times was more than adequate for reporting.

A final suggestion in this section noted a successful program should commit to honest and accurate performance measures with detail on actions planned to resolve areas not meeting set standards of performance. Incorporated in this thought, is the importance of training department managers and key staff on the benefits of performance measurement and how it may be used for continuous organizational improvement. Honest and accurate information will occur when managers have trust that this is the purpose of performance measures, rather than measures being used in a negative way.
Public Management Skills

Table 5 Importance of Public Management Skills illustrates responses to the concept that public managers require certain skills to actively involve citizens in

Table 5

Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to Public Management Skills: Forced Rank Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 (most important)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6 (least important)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills to develop and maintain citizen partnerships</td>
<td><strong>37.2%</strong> (16)</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting facilitation that is productive, organized, and respectful of time</td>
<td><strong>30.2%</strong> (13)</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration of performance measurement knowledge</td>
<td>6.7% (2)</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility to change the process when necessary</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td><strong>37.5%</strong> (12)</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting facilitation in a collaborative manner by advising the process</td>
<td>12.5% (4)</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td><strong>28.1%</strong> (9)</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus-building among process participants</td>
<td>12.5% (4)</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td><strong>20.9%</strong> (9)</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
performance measurement. The Trailblazer Program emphasized authentic citizen participation, resulting in widespread use of focus groups or teams facilitated by the organization. One participant indicated that the survey should have included skills in citizen engagement processes and techniques to properly conduct focus groups or develop citizen surveys. Another tip is to keep the meetings reasonably light in nature by interjecting humor at appropriate times. Of all attributes, clearly interpersonal skills and meeting facilitation rose to the top with 37.2% of responses as most important. It is noted that these are staff skills, but elected officials could use the same skills if they were highly involved in CIPM.

Organizations were aware of possible pitfalls while engaging citizens. Obstacles can include limited citizen time commitment and lack of interest in various performance measures versus an issue of individual interest. However, there was recognition of the necessity to respect citizen input, and to develop meaningful interaction to maintain positive citizen relationships, resulting in a more successful CIPM. This is supported by the high importance (30.2%) given to meeting facilitation that respects the quality of time citizens spend on CIPM.

Citizen Participation

Table 6 Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to Citizen Participation illustrates responses to the concept that citizen involvement in performance measures can vary with different processes and levels of involvement. The choices given focused on the role and composition of citizen representation in CIPM. Tying for most important were the concepts that citizens involved in CIPM should represent the diversity of the community (48.4%) and that citizen roles should be defined early with citizen agreement.
Diversity of citizens participating in the program is important to represent different points of view of how government delivers services. Communities may suffer from involving those that are familiar or willing to spend time involved in similar efforts, without clearly representing the voice of the community as a whole. As one respondent stated, often communities fall back to including “the usual suspects” rather than making a concerted effort to diversify the pool of participants. However, another suggestion somewhat countered the ills of the “usual suspect” phenomena as those are often the citizens most interested and involved with their communities.

Table 6
Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to Citizen Participation: Forced Rank Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
<th>1 (most important)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 (least important)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizens have shared authority in making decisions</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens represent the diversity of the community</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen roles are defined early with citizen agreement</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens are involved in more than one aspect of the process</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(11)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens are trained in performance measurement before participation</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clearly defining the role of the citizens involved in CIPM clarifies the process and sets expectations for the participants. In performance measurement, there are many points of entry for CIPM, and levels of involvement, such as providing input on types of measures, development of performance measure wording, assisting with collection of data, to reporting measures. Whatever level of involvement is chosen, a suggestion was that defining expectations must occur early in the process, and be visible and clear throughout the entire engagement of citizens.

Least important (31%) was that citizens needed to be trained in performance measurement. This may also be due to the fact that citizen time is limited, and performance measurement knowledge may be considered irrelevant to obtaining their input. Similarly, 36.7% chose as near least important, the need for citizens to be involved in more than one aspect of the process. By narrowing down the commitment of time asked of citizens for their participation, CIPM is less likely to suffer from participant fatigue and dropout and may be the reason for the results.

Use of Performance Measures

Table 7 Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to the Use of Performance Measures illustrates responses to the concepts that performance measures are tools used to improve public programs and services. Options were given on how performance measures are used. The response with a strong measure of importance (63.3%) was to use performance measures to continuously improve programs and the organization. This choice may include, but is not exclusive to, measuring program quality, service effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, and cost control. This also forces program managers to quantify the program results. In this regard, performance measures are used
for incremental improvements to programs and services that are less disruptive than transformational changes and may present a greater degree of debate.

\textit{Table 7}

Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to Use of Performance Measures: Forced Rank Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>1 (most important)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6 (least important)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuously improve programs and the organization</td>
<td>\textbf{63.3%} (19)</td>
<td>20.0% (6)</td>
<td>10.0% (3)</td>
<td>6.7% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate program or organizational results to the community</td>
<td>21.4% (6)</td>
<td>\textbf{25.0%} (7)</td>
<td>14.3% (4)</td>
<td>21.4% (6)</td>
<td>10.7% (3)</td>
<td>7.1% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist officials with budget decisions</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>20.0% (6)</td>
<td>\textbf{36.7%} (11)</td>
<td>26.7% (8)</td>
<td>6.7% (2)</td>
<td>10.0% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solve specific issues that measures may bring to attention</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>10.3% (3)</td>
<td>\textbf{27.6%} (8)</td>
<td>24.1% (7)</td>
<td>\textbf{27.6%} (8)</td>
<td>10.3% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate change to a program or service</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>3.6% (1)</td>
<td>10.7% (3)</td>
<td>25.0% (7)</td>
<td>21.4% (6)</td>
<td>\textbf{39.3%} (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change and influence public policy</td>
<td>3.4% (1)</td>
<td>10.3% (3)</td>
<td>17.2% (5)</td>
<td>13.8% (4)</td>
<td>24.1% (7)</td>
<td>\textbf{31.0%} (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to incremental program improvement, the least important choices were those more transformational in nature, such as advocating a change to a program or service (39.3\%), or changing or influencing public policy (31.0\%). Typically, these types
of changes are more political in nature, or may be driven by a greater sense of urgency where decisions need to be made more quickly. In these instances, performance measures may not be a primary factor in deciding change. In addition, it is possible the communities in this study have not focused efforts on these uses of performance measures.

Citizen Outcomes

Table 8 Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to Citizen Outcomes illustrates responses to the concept that involving citizens in performance measurement can result in various outcomes and benefits. One of the historical objectives of performance measurement is to provide increased government accountability to citizens. This purpose was supported with the 41.4% response of this concept being most important. The next important concept at 34.5% was citizen education and understanding about government programs and services. While these two outcomes are different, they are related as CIPM strives for citizen trust in terms of accountability, and citizen knowledge of performance information is a necessary step toward understanding the wider scope of government performance.

The idea that performance measurement improves trust in government held middle ground in importance of the choices available with public administrators fairing a bit more positive than elected officials. While CIPM ideally seeks a result of improved
Table 8

Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to Citizen Outcomes: Forced Rank Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>1 (most important)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 (least important)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased government accountability to citizens</td>
<td>41.4% (12)</td>
<td>20.7% (6)</td>
<td>17.2% (5)</td>
<td>17.2% (5)</td>
<td>3.4% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen education and understanding about government programs and services</td>
<td>20.7% (6)</td>
<td>34.5% (10)</td>
<td>17.2% (5)</td>
<td>13.8% (4)</td>
<td>10.3% (3)</td>
<td>3.4% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive relationships among citizens, elected officials, and public managers</td>
<td>17.2% (5)</td>
<td>6.9% (2)</td>
<td>27.6% (8)</td>
<td>20.7% (6)</td>
<td>3.4% (1)</td>
<td>20.7% (6)</td>
<td>3.4% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased trust in public managers</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>9.3% (3)</td>
<td>9.3% (3)</td>
<td>41.9% (13)</td>
<td>12.9% (4)</td>
<td>25.8% (8)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased trust in elected officials</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>11.1% (2)</td>
<td>16.7% (3)</td>
<td>33.3% (6)</td>
<td>38.9% (7)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased respect for citizen involvement by elected officials and managers</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>12.2% (5)</td>
<td>7.3% (3)</td>
<td>9.8% (4)</td>
<td>17.1% (7)</td>
<td>12.2% (5)</td>
<td>41.5% (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved performance measure quality</td>
<td>3.6% (1)</td>
<td>14.3% (4)</td>
<td>17.9% (5)</td>
<td>17.9% (5)</td>
<td>14.3% (4)</td>
<td>10.7% (3)</td>
<td>21.4% (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
relationships with the public, politicians, and public servants, it is interesting to note that although citizen trust of government was relatively important, increased respect for citizens was least important (41.5%). Also least important was the impact of citizen involvement to improve the measures used for program quality. The two least important choices were either not priorities for the communities, or from the perspective of government, just not that critical. Future study of how citizens would respond to these choices would provide an important perspective.

Organizational Experience

Table 9 Importance of Attributes of CIPM Related to Organizational Experience illustrates responses to the concept that organizational experience may impact the success of citizen informed performance measurement. Prior experience in actively engaging citizens (51.6%) was chosen as the most important aspect of organizational experience for a successful program, according to the Trailblazer communities. This reflects the belief that citizen involvement is a desirable key concept for CIPM.

Authentic citizen participation also advocates shared decision-making with citizens. This did not rate highest in importance related to organizational experience. However, it was the most important concept in terms of citizen participation. This may be due to the difficulty of citizen involvement at such a high level, as it involves relinquished control from politicians and managers. Further, traditional citizen involvement rarely considered citizens in the role of decision-makers.

Of the four choices, having a credible reputation in the community (32.3%) was ranked least important. This may be due to the fact that reputation is subjective and
vulnerable. In addition, reputation is a perception dependent on actions and beliefs. Reputation itself is not an action.

Table 9

Importance of Attributes Related to Organizational Experience: Forced Rank Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>1 (most important)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4 (least important)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actively involving citizens with government</td>
<td>51.6% (16)</td>
<td>25.8% (8)</td>
<td>16.1% (5)</td>
<td>6.5% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring service and program performance</td>
<td>25.8% (8)</td>
<td>35.5% (11)</td>
<td>12.9% (4)</td>
<td>25.8% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared decision-making with citizens</td>
<td>6.5% (2)</td>
<td>16.1% (5)</td>
<td>45.2% (14)</td>
<td>32.3% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a credible reputation in the community</td>
<td>19.4% (6)</td>
<td>25.8% (8)</td>
<td>22.6% (7)</td>
<td>32.3% (10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative Analysis

The experiences of Trailblazers could not be captured by survey alone. Therefore, interview questions were asked to reveal a more personal view of involvement in CIPM based on direct experience in the program, and are located in Appendix C. Of the 50 survey respondents representing 35 communities, 11 agreed to be interviewed and four of those were elected officials. Two of the interviewees represented the same unit of government. All interviewees were asked the same questions to describe the Trailblazer experience of their community. The interviews provided an opportunity for more
information on direct experience with a CIPM initiative, and how participants perceived the impact of citizens when involved in measuring government performance.

Based on the data from the central tendency analysis, the following themes developed as common areas. The interview responses supplemented the findings and supported the themes. In particular, the theme in highest agreement with hypothetical statements and reinforcing the positive value of the first research question is citizen perspective, followed by collaboration. The theme in least agreement, program measures, also showed compatibility between the survey data and the opinions of participants representing their communities during the interviews.

Mixed Method Analysis of Themes

This section will weave information from the quantitative section into three corresponding themes that emerged from the hypotheses statements, CIPM attributes, and interview responses. The themes are 1) Citizen Perspective; 2) Program Measures, and 3) Collaboration. As confidentiality was assured, the source of interview comments is not revealed in this research. Direct quotations or comments will be referred to by number (1-11), and designated by “EO” for elected official or “PA” for public administrator.

Theme One: Citizen Perspective

This theme presents analysis and feedback on the concept of citizen perspective as a result of citizen participation in CIPM. Perspective (point of view) and perception (impression) are closely related, and as presented in the literature earlier, the success or failure of government is based on the principal of perception (Schneider, 1995).
Six hypothetical statements were citizen-centric in nature and are included in this theme. They reflect citizen perspective by stating citizen participation results in measures that:

- Reflect a citizen’s point of view about good program or service performance (Statement 2),
- Evaluate citizen satisfaction with the quality of government programs and services (Statement 3),
- Evaluate programs and services most important to citizens (Statement 4),
- Are citizen-defined for getting the best value for their tax dollars (Statement 5),
- Express citizen-defined benefit for the community (Statement 6), and
- Are described in language easily understood by citizens (Statement 7).

Statistically, this theme had the lowest average mean score of 2.1789, meaning the group had the highest degree of agreement among the three themes. In addition, statements 2-4 and statement 7 had the highest cumulative percentage of agreement, and the fewest instances of responses that were Neutral/Don’t Know.

On the other hand, the statements regarding best value for tax dollars, and whether measures reflect citizen-defined community benefit rather than individual benefit had a high Neutral/Don’t Know response rate of 15 and 18 respectively. This could be attributed to confusion about the question, that the statements were too subjective or too broad, or that the respondents had difficulty in determining how the statement applied to them or their community.

Overall, interview responses clearly supported the importance of statements in this theme, and it was not surprising responses indicated measures developed with citizen
involvement result in reflecting citizen perspective. The influence of citizen perspective is supported by a philosophy of democratic governance and effectiveness of measures and programs, rather than focusing on efficiency. The following narrative demonstrates the cohesiveness of the quantitative and qualitative data toward this end.

Citizen perspective was expressed in several ways, from citizen crafted performance measures to citizens being the audience for performance reports. Clearly, the Trailblazers were made aware that citizen perspective would be a focus because of criteria they followed for reporting performance (GASB, 2003). For example, PA1 admitted “previously our audience was the legislature and staff so we weren’t really thinking about it from the public perspective.” After receiving the grant, PA1 indicated the highlight of involvement was “it made me think more about asking the people we serve what they want to know, and how we should report that out, and what their experience is.” Similarly, PA5 stated, “it’s always good to get back to your roots, your constituents.” A public manager from another community was in agreement and stated,

When we’re playing in a specific playground, we don’t necessarily recognize what everybody else outside of that playground is doing, and as government employees we were just chugging along thinking we were doing everything and even though we were tracking performance, we were using it in-house…not recognizing that the citizens had a whole other focus, like smoothness of the street, collecting trash at 6:00 a.m. All we cared about was that the trash was picked up. By virtue of that, it changed the way I looked at things.

In terms of language and citizen perspective, PA3 shared an interesting story about the pride executives and council members had in their AAA rating score, a measure
of their financial stability. When focus groups were organized with citizens, it was evident the AAA score was meaningless. People in the group said, “Why triple A? Is that worse than a regular A? You know, a AAA battery is smaller than a AA.” It was this response about the use of acronyms and jargon that made the county consider citizen perspective and translating work into “plain English.”

Another example of using language of the citizens versus government was a story about confusion at work sessions on what certain terminology meant. When administration realized this, they stopped and had an exercise to clarify meaning. As a result, according to PA5,

When they spoke in their own words, citizen perspective, what they communicated was richer, deeper, vibrant and more meaningful than when they use our language. When they use our language, it diminishes their ability to communicate. When we listened to them and worked hard to listen to their language before we translated it to the jargon we use, it really spoke more about…the diversity of thought in the room.

From an administrator point of view, PA5 noted he has been on different sides of the budget process and finds it amazing that departments fall back to “pre-defined or presumptively important stuff” when the organization, “just like citizens” need accomplishments described “in plain English.” He commented further,

It is amazing how hard it is for folks to – how do I describe it – I don’t want the tombstone description of what you do or what you did as a department, help me understand it in human terms. What really is the essence of this thing? What’s the story we need to tell? It’s a tough task for folks who may have great networks of
citizens engaged in what they do, but still haven’t learned to translate that into a story. Not just a series of cold metrics.

He continued to share his organization engaged “big ticket” consultants to show performance information in the budget. But in the end, outputs, activities, and workloads went into the budget and a different report was developed targeted to citizens. “You need a separate space outside the budget to tell the story and to get into more of the nuance of the measures.” The importance of “telling a story” was recurring throughout the interviews.

Another advantage of focusing on public perception, is questioning whether government assumptions are correct. EO1 indicated management had a notion of what was important to citizens, but ultimately, found they were incorrect. A different response from another community was also a surprise to officials and management. EO2 was taken aback when they asked citizens what they would like to know. They said, “carry on with what you’re doing and when we don’t say anything, don’t discount that…if we’re upset we will let you know.” This is consistent with Callahan’s (2007) statement “When citizens are satisfied with the public sector and the overall implementation of public policy, they seek less active involvement in the deliberative process and are likely to be content as customers and clients of government” (p. 183).

Confirming the differences that can occur in point of view, PA10 said citizens always have a different perspective than staff when it comes to what they see in the city and what they’re reading about in the newspaper.” This example of the influential nature of environmental factors on public opinion is referenced in literature (Stillman, 1996, Glaser & Denhardt, 2000).
A similar view on public opinion expressed by PA6, “I’ve come to learn that they [the public] have a completely different focus than we have and we all measure completely different things… but wouldn’t it be nice if they had a bird’s eye view into how heard we really try.” That being said, PA 6 followed up with a cautionary statement. If you’re tracking just because the citizens want something tracked, that doesn’t necessarily make sense if there’s not a purpose for it. When you go into a citizen group or format, I think that both they and the government need to know why exactly you’re looking for input from them. Otherwise, sometimes if you have really strong citizens, they can band together and almost run the government when the every day citizen has no voice.

This comment about representation is echoed by E03, concerning inequity in public involvement when participants are hand picked for convenience or familiarity, and are not representative of the whole community. “Focus groups should not be the cast of usual suspects.” This attitude was prevalent among participants that responded to the CIPM attribute of citizen participation. Results showed that 48.4% of responses chose the attribute “citizens should represent the diversity of the community” as second most important (following shared decision-making) of citizen participation attributes.

There is a tendency to view representation in terms of the public, but in CIPM, where all stakeholders should have an opportunity to provide perspective, an elected official disappointedly stated,

We weren’t involved…I don’t think the council was explicitly ever asked to be involved…it’s been largely done by the administration who again, didn’t involve us. So, when I heard they were doing focus groups with citizens, I don’t mean to
sound peakish, but I was thinking, well I do a focus group every two years, I go out and shake hands and knock on doors, so when they didn’t involve people who actually have to run for office in the process of figuring out what might be on the minds of citizens, I thought, hmmm. You may have missed something there—we may have been able to help you or at least provide some insight.

Stakeholder perception matters in CIPM. A public manager stated, “[it is] important for citizens to understand what the challenges are, and also to understand what the metrics are [for the organization].” He continued, “Citizens need to know every step.” Although this was an opinion shared from one individual, it is worthy to note the rank order survey statement with a choice “citizens are involved in more than one aspect of the process” was one of two statements ranked least important in the category of “citizen outcomes.”

In terms of specific measures, E01 indicated the program started with measures without consideration of what the public was interested in. The realization occurred that obtaining measures people care about takes a long time to work out, but the measures need to be understood and useful in order for the public to reference them. This sentiment is reinforced by Callahan (2007) in her statement “the relevance of performance measures increases when managers incorporate citizens’ perceptions” (p. 67). In another community, EO3 noticed their program measures had a tendency to be more controlled by administrators. As a consequence, they did not necessarily identify what should have been measured. This attitude, Arnstein (2008) cautions, may be harmful if the participation is symbolic. In addition, performance measures should also be meaningful to the public, and have to demonstrate value (Ammons, 1995). In an amusing analogy,
EO1 said “just because you have a thermometer in your refrigerator, there’s no reason to write down the temperature every day.”

Theme Two: Program Measures

Performance measures are tools and are not useful unless used for a specific purpose. These tools provide government data to manage and continuously improve programs and services (Callahan, 2007), and to evaluate programs (Poister, 2003). The following presents the quantitative analysis in context of the theme, supported by qualitative narrative.

This theme includes three hypothetical statements regarding measures of program evaluation where citizen participation in performance measurement results in measures:

- That improve the quantity of data collection (Statement 1),
- Of programs and services with a history of performance problems (Statement 8), and
- Of high budget cost programs and services (Statement 9).

The statements represent measures that can assist in evaluating program efficiency (high cost, responsiveness, low performance) in contrast to outcomes of effectiveness. Data collection by citizens is also included, as some CIPM programs enlist citizens to collect data. In this section, measures of efficiency rarely came up in the interview conversations, as the focus tended to be on citizen point of view, reporting to citizens about how well (effectiveness) programs are doing. There were no questions directed specifically to this theme as the interviews were intended to give context to the survey instrument answers. Therefore, the limited conversation on this theme is not surprising even though efficiency measures are important.
The quantitative outcomes are briefly reviewed first. The average of means in this theme is 2.7573 meaning the theme had the least amount of agreement (strongly agree and agree) of the three themes. There were a large amount of Neutral/Don’t Know responses, with a total of 20 for statements 8 and 9, and 13 for statement 1. This infers respondents may not have had enough knowledge about the programs being measured in terms of finance or functional issues, or simply did not feel strongly that citizen participation affects measures of efficiency.

A high response rate at 63.3% indicated strong agreement that the primary use of performance measures is for continuous improvement of programs and the organization. Rated second highest in importance with the communication of program results to the community at 25.0%.

Thoughts from those interviewed revealed the following. First, PA 3 made a reference to efficiency.

People always ask, “Oh, are you more efficient because of this program?” I don’t think so, but we didn’t put much energy into that. We weren’t focusing on efficiency, we were focusing on alignment, improved understanding, and doing better at our jobs, so we were more focused on the effectiveness side of the equation. In the [current] economy, I think we’ll be focusing a little bit more on the efficiency piece. But realistically, starting with efficiency is not a sexy place to start – it’s not an easy place to get people engaged.

Although, PA3 stated the program validated the community was going in the right direction in terms of measures. The benefit of the Trailblazer Program was that it improved the practice of performance measurement and energized the desire to pursue
CIPM. PA7’s response was more practical and stated it was a success because “we finally have measures” and since they are a growing community can “justify the need for more resources.” However, there was no indication in the interviews that problematic or high cost programs were priorities, nor was the question specifically asked. This could be related to staff knowledge of programs that fall within the description of high cost and problematic, or strategic planning that did not consider these options.

Developing and managing measures is not an easy task, nor is there one best way to design a performance management system. Most communities do not have dedicated staff for CIPM, and those designated for program oversight are doing so while maintaining a position not exclusive to this work.

The attribute that ranked second within the leadership category with a percentage of 45.5% was dedicated staff support and supplies to implement and sustain CIPM. Structure, in terms of human resources to carry out CIPM also revealed interesting comments. Some larger communities have staff dedicated to performance measurement. PA10 referred to these people as “performance measurement geeks” whom, in terms of implementing CIPM, “puts a whole new perspective on how much you can do.” Reality, however, presents that performance managers are rare, and the duties often fall on staff that simply don’t have the time to dedicate to measures and CIPM in a manner they would like.

In addition to human resources, measuring performance requires organization and structure for making sense of the measures, making them more understandable to citizens, and to reinforce accountability, transparency, and trust. The Trailblazer Program, including the use of SEA criteria, provided structure and guidelines to
implement CIPM. A foundation in performance measurement can provide communities the ability to move in a direction they want in measuring performance.

Several responses indicated an established performance measurement system was in place prior to applying for the grant. One elected official stated it was easier to involve citizens in an existing structure, as it is critical to know what is going on internally before having a serious discussion externally with the public. PA2 stated,

Your internal system has to be right before you can go out the public – you have to have a true vision of what you’re looking at from the inside before you get feedback from anyone else…attempting to bring in citizen participation without an established true performance metric system is not effective.

Theme Three: Collaboration

Collaboration means partnering with elected officials, public managers, and citizens in CIPM. It implies a positive relationship among stakeholders formed with trust as a result of accountability and transparency. Collaborative partnerships in CIPM imply working toward common goals and consensus on what is right. Three hypothetical statements grouped by collaboration and citizen outcomes represent this theme as follows: Citizen participation in performance measurement

- Increases citizen trust of government managers (statement 11),
- Increases citizen trust of elected officials (statement 12), and
- Increases participant agreement of the purpose of performance measures (statement 13).

The average of means in this theme is 2.336, meaning the theme had a strong tendency toward agreement (strongly agree and agree) and was close in agreement to the
first theme at (2.1789). However, compared to Theme 1, this category had a greater incidence of Neutral/Don’t Know responses. Of the four statements, Statement 8, “makes the process take longer,” had the fewest in this category with eight. Statements 11, 12, and 13 had fifteen, fifteen, and sixteen Neutral/Don’t Know responses respectively. The responses in this category may be due to respondents using personal experience to provide perspective on the answer; being unsure of generalizing on the subjective statements, or simply did not know. Citizen outcomes were favorable in terms of trust in government officials and trust in public managers, which may result from positive collaboration experience.

Supporting the notion of trust through accountability, survey responses regarding citizen outcomes chose “increased government accountability to citizens” at 41.4% to be the most important statement. The connection between citizen outcomes and collaboration is discussed in the following subsections.

Citizens Do Care

Collaboration with citizens is goal of democratic governance and CIPM. While there may be hesitance, for reasons of fear, time commitment, or difficulty, impressions of a more substantive outreach to citizens were remarkably favorable. As PA4 stated,

I always felt fairly strongly that it was important on a conceptual basis, what this did is it drove it home on a more practical basis, they when they [citizens] drive it, it does have a lot of value and their ownership is dramatically greater in the outcome. …There’s been a lot of ownership around that. More than I expected, and their level of involvement was the reason.
Similarly, PA3 shared observations from the night of a focus group meeting. In fact, he said they all had an “epiphany” that night. He recalls,

I was always a little skeptical that the public cared that much…I was amazed, and truly, the cockles of my heart were warmed by the level of interest, personal interest that people took in these issues…all of them were acknowledging this is important that the county do this kind of work, to talk to us about how efficient and effective they are being…They are paying attention to what’s important…When asked, people really did care. We knew as professionals it was the right thing to do, an important thing to do, but getting that resonance from the people that were participating, that really kind of gave me new faith that it was really worth, and not that was just the right thing to do…To see the public directly responding was very personally rewarding.

Contrary to this experience EO1 stated it was a challenge involving citizens, but the program reinforced his thinking about its importance. However, he shared, “The bigger challenge for us has not been providing the opportunity, it’s been getting people to take advantage of those opportunities…We’re finding that our citizens don’t really want to come out to meetings…It’s a government for and by the people, but what happens when the people don’t show up?” To accommodate, EO1 said they began using character preference surveys and have experienced good results. He continued to explain a positive realization,

I think a lot of us had this image or this perception that people think the government is inefficient or that citizens feel that they’re not getting their money’s worth or things along those lines and we’re actually finding here that our
folks think that we are operating fairly efficiently. They don’t think we’re as transparent as they would like which…now we’re trying to figure out how to go about providing that transparency because the traditional means that you would use – they’re really not interested.

In addition to risking public indifference, there are other cautions regarding collaboration with the public. EO4 warns,

When asking for citizen involvement you’ve got to be careful. If you don’t watch what you’re doing when you’re asking for citizen involvement, your well-intended survey of citizen concerns or input can easily be turned around and used as a hammer against you.

The only time it [collaboration] is challenging is when you have folks that don’t understand the basics, making honest input on less than comprehensive and less than accurate data, that’s when you run into a problem. Then you find yourself having to correct the citizens, and then they say, here you go, government trying to tell me I’m wrong, when in fact they are.

Structure

Collaboration and trust are also based on goals and expectations. EO4 indicated an area of constant improvement with CIPM is “managing expectations to the degree that the goals and objectives of the program can be widely publicized and clearly articulated before the program starts…setting and defining expectations is where I would say this program and any program that is customer-centric is going to benefit.” In terms of goal setting, PA1 indicated it would have been ideal to have their goals in place, such as benchmarks, and “what are we actually trying to accomplish.”
It is recognized that CIPM costs more to administer, no matter the source of funds. Describing the extra cost required to involve citizens one administrator acknowledged it was worth the cost but, “in the current climate,” it is not “practical to do it the way it needs to be done well” especially in terms of allocating staff time for citizen engagement. PA4 indicated it was worth the effort to do an intense outreach, but more on a “periodic basis,” like every three to five years. The effort could be less intense in some years, like providing an annual survey. Another administrator agreed with this statement acknowledging the changes year to year for input may not be that significant to require such a vigorous effort to involve citizens and indicated the desire to maintain consistency in measures for trends and benchmarking.

Elected officials also responded positively despite costs required for CIPM. EO1 thought the cost was negligible and the community leverages means to encourage participation, such as piggybacking on other efforts to obtain citizen input. EO4 acknowledged greater time was required for citizen participation, but admitted they needed to do a better job with involving citizens anyway. EO5 stated no knowledge of cost and time required, and said no one complained about how much time it took. He continued, “whatever it cost and whatever time was involved was probably well worth it because municipal governments need to have a better sense of how people perceive what they’re doing.”

One elected official, however, was a bit more cautious in indicating it was too early in the program to commit to the statement that it was worth the cost to participate in the program. The proof that the program would be a success, he said, would be “in how the data is used and if it’s used the way it needs to be.” Yet, he was optimistic about the
program because there was a “strong commitment from elected officials and administration,” particularly from key leaders in the organization.

Resources

Commitment sometimes comes in the form of funding. Two public managers (PA3, PA1) and one elected official (E02) stated it provided an opportunity to participate in CIPM when they otherwise may not have been able to pursue such an effort. Two elected officials and two public administrators stated the availability of grant funds was also a catalyst to pursue CIPM. Another public manager stated the monetary aspect of the grant resulted in the ability to produce a better report.

One attribute of leadership and commitment presented in the survey was to secure external funding to support CIPM when necessary. This ranked the lowest priority at 53.1%. It is interesting to note, however, that despite its ranking, the availability of external funds was the impetus for participation in the Trailblazer Program, without which, there may have been little or no consideration for delving into CIPM with the vigor the program expected. However, philosophically, CIPM should be important whether or not external funds are available.

No matter how opinions vary, the reality exists that funding support for CIPM is an element for success. One administrator commented,

The effort [Trailblazer Program] was worth it, but in the current climate it’s not practical to do it the way it needs to be done well. …to sit face to face with the people being impacted by our services, and to allocate both the staff time and the travel…it’s just not practical right now….If it weren’t for this grant we wouldn’t
have had the opportunity to speak directly to people. PA1 General funds would have been seen as poor stewardship.

Another administrator also commented on the usefulness of resources. PA4 admitted “I’ve been a one man show for ten years. Also the grant provided money to conduct an intense outreach – the money was there. It’s not appropriate on an annual basis for our community.”

From an elected official point of view, E04 also indicated the importance of receiving additional resources for something so important.

It comes down to money, man. With anything within reason, short of stimulus money that’s coming out of our grandchildren’s pockets, as long as it’s been through a vetting process of our collective congress I’m glad we’re able to receive it and put it to good use.

Elected Official Participation

In contrast to external funding ranking as least important, the attribute considered most important in terms of leadership and commitment that reinforces collaboration was commitment of elected official participation in the performance measurement process (32.3%). Unfortunately, EO3 pointed out the elected body was not adequately involved in CIPM. He stated,

Although they [administration] participated in this process, they’ve yet to brief the city council on the process or the results of the process and they put the report of the first assessment on the city website, but never briefed the council…if you aren’t communicating with the body that supposedly gets elected to provide oversight of city government…it suggests that you really don’t understand who
you should be communicating with and how you should communicate with them…ownership – the administration has done a poor job of sharing the ownership of the process. If the elected officials don’t have a sense of ownership in the process, then ultimately what they find, it’s going to be an uphill battle to convince the council to do something differently based on what they learned in the process…the people who run for office are owners of the governmental process, maybe not the only owners, but they are important owners and they should be involved because otherwise your process isn’t as strong as it should be.

Another official also admitted engagement was limited, specifically, only through approving the grant. EO4 was comfortable with this as long as staff felt strongly enough to bring it to council, and it wasn’t going to cost the taxpayers any money. He admitted council didn’t spend a lot of time on it and relied on professional staff’s recommendation to receive the funding. This individual was also well versed in performance metrics and further explained he tried to champion metrics and dashboards for several years to no avail because the council did not understand it.

Networking

Trailblazers meet annually at a conference with representatives from other communities, and also have the opportunity to join a listserv to communicate with each other about the program and to stay informed about their progress. When asked what they liked best about the program, it was a surprise that networking with each other was touted as one of the best aspects of the program.

Citizen trust, building relationships, and partnering to make CIPM the best it can be is apparently affected by a tangent collaboration – one of networking with peers in
similar programs. It was networking that was most educational and rewarding to participants. Indirectly, this was training, where the exchange of thoughts and ideas contributed to public manager skills in CIPM. This feedback showed the importance of increasing public manager knowledge through interaction with peers. In fact, “interpersonal skills to develop and maintain citizen partnerships” was considered most important for public management skills (37.2%), followed by “meeting facilitation that is productive, organized, and respectful of time (30.2%).”

There were other reasons networking was beneficial and a main highlight of the program, including learning from others, sharing information on programs, and obtaining new ideas. EO2 shared what was best was “…the opportunity to share stories and experiences with others, to learn from others.” PA3 commented,

…to share with people from different jurisdictions, orientations, and backgrounds. I always walk away humbled… and amazed by all the creative and innovative work that everyone brought. I always walk away with new ideas, something else we should be doing, or some new bar that I didn’t know existed, much less how high it had been raised.

Other interviewees, whom thought the networking provided invaluable benefits in their quest for a successful CIPM, expressed similar sentiments. For example, EO5 and PO3 concurred a benefit of networking was not only the opportunity to share what worked, but just as important, what didn’t work.
Government has struggled to balance the demands of the citizen participation movement responding to citizen distrust in government (Ho & Coates, 2004) with the growing force of economic theory responding to fiscal scarcity (Kettl, 2002). The battle between efficiency and democracy tests local governments in the face of declining resources and increased expectations. Citizen Informed Performance Measurement (CIPM) is a solution for increasing accountability with more direct citizen involvement while addressing the market-oriented pressures to provide services (Marshall et al., 1999).

CIPM contends the two forces are not so conflicting and that engaging citizens actually leads to better results (Wray & Hauer, 1997). Despite this view, actively involving citizens in performance measurement is not widely practiced. The Trailblazer Program provided a unique opportunity to study local governments involved in CIPM with a common platform of adhering to the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA) standards.

Considering opposing views of the impact of citizen participation on performance measure development and reporting, this study addressed the question “Does active citizen participation enhance or hinder effective measurement of government performance?” The research considered the conflict of efficiency (Vigoda, 2002b) with
the ideals and benefits of democratic governance by producing results in the public interest (Dupont-Morales & Harris, 1994).

There is no perfect model for measuring government performance, but there are common elements to be considered within the context of a community’s environment. It is recognized that maximizing efficiency while supporting democratic governance is destined to be a challenge. To further define the relationship between citizen participation and performance measurement, the second research question was asked, “What attributes are essential for effective Citizen Informed Performance Measurement?” Through this research, insight and guidance are provided for local governments implementing or sustaining CIPM.

Research Question 1

The primary research question asked: Does active citizen participation enhance or hinder effective measurement of government performance? Thirteen hypotheses were used to answer this question. The descriptive statistics (cumulative percentage) presented demonstrate the truth of the statements as perceived by elected officials and public administrators representing their communities involved in CIPM. For the purpose of this study, 50% or greater was used as a condition to consider agreement with the statement.

Hypotheses 1-7, and 11-13, support that active citizen participation enhances effective measurement of government performance. Hypotheses 8 and 9, Citizen participation does not enhance effective measurement in the areas of programs that are costly or have performance problems, as evidenced by Hypotheses 8 and 9. Hypothesis 10 hinders effective measurement of performance due to the fact the process takes longer. The hypothetical statements and results for agreement are as follows.
Hypothesis 1: Citizen participation enhances the quantity of data collection.

59.2% Agree

Hypothesis 2: Citizen participation results in measures that reflect what citizens define as good program or service performance.

89.8% Agree

Hypothesis 3: Citizen participation results in citizen-defined measures of satisfaction with the quality of government programs and services.

89.8% Agree

Hypothesis 4: Citizen participation results in measures that evaluate programs and services most important to citizens.

95.7% Agree

Hypothesis 5: Citizen participation results in citizen-defined ideas of getting the best value for their tax dollars.

62.5% Agree

Hypothesis 6: Citizen participation results in measures that express citizen-defined benefit for the community rather than just what is good for individual citizens.

51.0% Agree

Hypothesis 7: Citizen participation results in measures described in language easily understood by citizens.

72.3% Agree

Hypothesis 8: Citizen participation results in measures that evaluate programs and services with a history of performance problems or complaints.

25.5% Agree (A greater percentage disagreed with the statement).
Hypothesis 9: Citizen participation results in measures of high budget cost programs and services.

26.5% Agree (A greater percentage disagreed with the statement).

Hypothesis 10: Citizen participation makes the performance measurement process take longer.

67.3% Agree

Hypothesis 11: Citizen participation in performance measurement increases citizen trust of government managers.

70.8% Agree

Hypothesis 12: Citizen participation in performance measurement increases citizen trust of elected officials.

58.3% Agree

Hypothesis 13: Citizen participation in performance measurement increases consensus of various participant viewpoints of the purpose of performance measures.

61.2% Agree

The study grouped these statements into three themes: Citizen Perspective, comprised of Hypotheses 7, 4, 3, and 5; Program measures, comprised of Hypotheses 1, 9, and 8; and Collaboration, comprised of Hypotheses 11, 12, and 13. These themes allowed integration of qualitative data and narrative with quantitative results to provide a more meaningful synopsis of the data.

Research Question 2

Research question two asked “What attributes are essential for effective citizen informed performance measurement?” This research question ranked the importance of
statements describing CIPM. It is noted that all responses are most likely important, but the forced choice strengthened the argument for CIPM factors that surfaced as critical to the success of a program. The following statements are those respondents ranked most important in the context of how the survey question was presented. These attributes considered most important in the rankings were as follows:

1. Citizen Informed Performance Measurement (CIPM) is defined as performance measurement and reporting that involves the public. For effective and successful CIPM, a level of commitment is required by the organization, elected officials, and government managers. The most important attribute is the commitment of elected official participation in the performance measurement process.

2. Public managers need skills to actively involve citizens in performance measurement. Two attributes most important are: interpersonal skills to develop and maintain citizen partnerships; and meeting facilitation that is productive, organized, and respectful of time.

3. Citizen involvement in performance measures can vary with different processes and levels of involvement. The most important attributes of citizen participation are that citizens have shared authority in making decisions, and that citizens represent the diversity of the community.

4. Performance measures are tools used to assist public performance in different ways. Two most important uses of performance measures are: to continuously improve programs and the organization; and citizen education and understanding about government programs and services.
5. Involving citizens in performance measurement can result in various outcomes. The most important citizen outcome is increased accountability to citizens.

6. The experience of an organization may impact the success of Citizen Informed Performance Measurement. For CIPM to be successful, the organization must have appropriate prior experience in actively involving citizens with the government.

Conclusions

The study answers the primary research question with overall support that citizens enhance effective measurement of government performance. Survey responses and interviews clearly support this view, with the exception that citizen involvement takes longer, and does not affect measures for programs of high cost or are problematic. The following conclusions are presented:

- Citizen participation in performance measurement results in measures that reflect citizen perspective on government performance.
- Citizen participation does not have significant impact on specific program measures.
- Government leadership needs to commit and participate in CIPM.
- Public managers require interpersonal and meeting facilitations skills for CIPM.
- Citizens involved with CIPM must represent the diversity of the community.
- Citizens involved with CIPM must have shared authority in decision making.
- The primary use of performance measures should be for continuous program and service improvement.
- Performance measures should be reported to the community.
CIPM results in increased accountability to citizens.

Organizations with prior experience actively involving citizens with government will find it beneficial when implementing CIPM.

Citizens really care about performance measurement.

Citizens and government leaders have different perspectives on measuring performance.

Citizen involvement increases the consensus on measures used.

Government organizations with an existing performance measurement structure will find CIPM easier to implement.

A small investment of funding can be an effective catalyst for CIPM implementation.

Elected official engagement in CIPM should be more intense than just approving a grant, or program startup.

Networking with peers is important for public managers that are responsible for CIPM to gain knowledge of CIPM that may be used for improving their own program.

An extensive citizen outreach for CIPM may be more appropriate if conducted every three to five years, rather than annually.

Summary

Involving citizens in the development and reporting of performance measures can be a double-edged sword. Citizen Informed Performance Measurement advocates “authentic” citizen participation, yet the realization is that staff and funding resources are scarce. There needs to be a commitment from the community to support democratic
governance, and to weigh its value in terms of altruistic benefits to society with the
demands of efficiency. This study enhanced the notion that democracy is equally
important to economics, and that the two theories do not need to exist in conflict.

Recommendations for Future Study

The results of this study provide opportunities for further research. It is
recommended that future research of Trailblazer Program participants or similar efforts
be conducted through case studies. This would provide the timeliness required for
gaining citizen perspective on the process. Future studies could resemble the nature of
this research with the addition of citizen perspective if input was received during or at the
end of the citizen involvement. The following opportunities are also recommended for
further research:

- A time-series evaluation of program sustainability post-grant award
- Research on the impact of citizen involvement on efficiency measures
- Research pertaining to the philosophy of democratic governance versus
economic theory
- Research on public management skills offered in curriculum pertaining to
citizen engagement skills
- Research on the measurement of citizen outcomes
- Research on the viability of e-governance to replace dynamic, traditional
means of citizen participation
- Evaluation of funded versus non-funded CIPM programs
- Effectiveness of dedicated staff support for performance measurement
- Attitudes of public administrators toward CIPM, including variables of
length of time working in government and performance measures

- A small amount of seed money was instrumental in launching communities toward CIPM. Government institutions should review their philosophy on democratic governance while balancing issues of efficiency, and consider the benefits of a small investment for implementation and sustainability.
REFERENCES


Emerson, B. (2002). Training for performance measurement success: An effective training program can help get performance measurement off the ground and sustain the system as it matures into a catalyst for government accountability and improvement. *Government Finance* (18)2. 22-24


Appendix A

Partial Extract of SEA Guidelines
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING STANDARDS BOARD (GASB)
SERVICE EFFORTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS GUIDELINES

1. **Purpose and scope** – The purpose and scope of the report should be stated clearly. The statement of scope should include information about the completeness of the report in its coverage of key, major, or critical programs and services.

2. **Statement of major goals and objectives** – The report should clearly state the major goals and objectives of the organization and the source for those goals and objectives.

3. **Involvement in establishing goals and objectives** – The report should include a discussion of the involvement of citizens, elected officials, management, and employees in the process of establishing goals and objectives for the organization.

4. **Multiple levels of reporting** – Performance information should be presented at different levels (layers) of reporting. The relationship between levels of available performance information should be clearly communicated and should include how the user can find information at the different levels reported.

5. **Analysis of results and challenges** – The report should include an executive or management analysis that objectively discusses the major results for the reporting period as well as the identified challenges facing the organization in achieving its mission, goals, and objectives.

6. **Focus on key measures** – The report should focus on key measure of performance that provide a basis for assessing the result for key, major, or critical programs and services; and major goals and objectives of the organization. An
external performance report should be concise, yet comprehensive in its coverage of performance.

7. **Reliable information** – The report should contain information that readers can use to assess the reliability of the reported performance information.

8. **Relevant measures of results** – Reported performance measures should be relevant to what the organization has agreed to try to accomplish and, where possible, should be linked to its mission, goals, and objectives as set forth in a strategic plan, budget, or other source.

9. **Resources used and efficiency** – Reported performance information should include information about resources used or costs of programs and services. It also could report performance information relating cost to outputs or outcomes (efficiency measures).

10. **Citizen and customer perceptions** – Citizen and customer perceptions of the quality and results of major and critical programs and services should be reported when appropriate.

11. **Comparisons for assessing performance** – Reported performance information should include comparative information for assessing performance, such as to other periods, established targets, or other internal and external sources.

12. **Factors affecting results** – The report should include a discussion of identified external and internal factors that have had a significant effect on performance and will help provide a context for understanding the organization’s performance.
13. **Aggregation and disaggregation of information** – Reported performance information should be aggregated or disaggregated based on the needs and interests of intended users.

14. **Consistency** – Reported performance measures should be consistent from period to period; however, if performance measures or the measurement methodology used is significantly changed, that change and the reason(s) for the change should be noted.

15. **Easy to find, access, and understand** – The availability of an external report on performance and how to obtain that report should be widely communicated through channels appropriate for the organization and intended users. Performance information should be communicated through a variety of mediums and methods suitable to the intended users.

16. **Regular and timely reporting** – Performance information should be reported on a regular basis (usually annually). The reported information should be made available as soon after the end of the reporting period as possible.

*Source: Governmental Accounting Standards Board Suggested Criteria for Effective Communication (2003, p. 36-39)*
Appendix B

Survey and Consent
You are invited to participate in a research project titled "Citizen informed Performance Measurement and Reporting in Local Government: Key Factors for Effective Democratic Governance." This research is intended to address whether active citizen participation in performance measurement enhances or restricts government performance and to clarify desirable performance measurement process attributes. Dr. James Visser, and Eileen L. Pierce are conducting this research as part of the dissertation requirements of Ms. Pierce at Western Michigan University, Department of Public Affairs and Administration.

This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your replies will be completely anonymous and you are not required to provide your name on the survey. If you choose not to answer a question, simply leave it blank. Returning the survey in the stamped envelope provided indicates your consent for use of the answers you supply. You will also be asked to participate in a 30-minute telephone interview. Again, your responses will remain anonymous and will not be associated with your name. You will have an opportunity to review comments in the dissertation prior to approval.

If you prefer to complete the survey on-line, e-mail epierce@grcity.us, with “request survey” in the subject line and send. You will receive a direct link to complete the survey on-line.

If you have any questions, you may contact Dr. James Visser at 269-387-8937, Eileen L. Pierce at 616-240-6191, the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the vice president for research at 269-387-8298.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. Please proceed with the survey.
1. Performance measurement systems that include active citizen participation may have an effect on the final performance measures used. Please check the box of the response that best indicates your opinion of agreement with each of the thirteen statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Citizen participation improves the quantity of data collection.</td>
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<td>b) Citizen participation results in measures that reflect a citizen's point of view about good program or service performance.</td>
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<td>c) Citizen participation results in measures that evaluate citizen satisfaction with the quality of government programs and services.</td>
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<td>d) Citizen participation results in measures that evaluate programs and services most important to citizens.</td>
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<td>e) Citizen participation results in citizen-defined measures of getting the best value for their tax dollars.</td>
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<td>f) Citizen participation results in performance measures that express citizen-defined benefit for the community rather than just what is good for individual citizens.</td>
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<td>g) Citizen participation results in measures described in language easily understood by citizens.</td>
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<td>h) Citizen participation results in measures of programs and services with a history of performance problems.</td>
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<td>i) Citizen participation results in measures of high budget cost programs and services.</td>
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<td>j) Citizen participation makes the performance measurement process take longer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>k) Citizen participation in performance measurement increases citizen trust of government managers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>l) Citizen participation in performance measurement increases citizen trust of elected officials.</td>
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<tr>
<td>m) Citizen participation increases participant agreement of the purpose of performance measures.</td>
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</table>
Directions:
There are choices in the rows (alphabetical) that describe the statement in bold print.

- Check the box under the number “1” in the row next to the statement that you think is most important.
- Check the box under the number “2” next to the statement you think is the next important, and so on with “5,” “6,” or “7” being the least important of all statements.

Only one response per column is allowed. For example, if you believe response c) is most important, you would check the box in row “c” under column “1.” If you do not believe a choice is important at all, leave the row blank.

1. Citizen informed Performance Measurement (CIPM) is defined as performance measurement and reporting that involves the public. For effective and successful CIPM, a level of commitment is required by the organization, elected officials, and government managers. Actions taken to carry out this commitment include...

   | 1(most important) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6(least important) |
---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
a) Allocation of government funds to support CIPM | | | | | | |
b) Dedicated staff support and supplies to implement and sustain CIPM | | | | | | |
c) Commitment of elected official participation in the performance measurement process | | | | | | |
d) Creation of positive relationships among elected officials, managers, and citizens | | | | | | |
e) Adoption of a written policy or resolution that shows commitment to CIPM | | | | | | |
f) Secured external funding to support CIPM when necessary | | | | | | |

Optional: I suggest the following action(s) to show commitment not presented in a-f:

2. The following statements identify skills public managers may need to actively involve citizens in performance measurement. Public manager skills include...

   | 1(most important) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6(least important) |
---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
a) Meeting facilitation in a collaborative manner by advising the process | | | | | | |
b) Meeting facilitation that is productive, organized, and respectful of time | | | | | | |
c) Interpersonal skills to develop and maintain citizen partnerships | | | | | | |
d) Flexibility to change the process when necessary | | | | | | |
e) Consensus-building among process participants | | | | | | |
f) Demonstration of performance measurement knowledge | | | | | | |

Optional: I suggest the following action(s) to show commitment not presented in a-f:
3. Citizen involvement in performance measures can vary with different processes and levels of involvement. The following statements represent attributes of citizen participation that may be found in citizen informed performance measurement projects. In CIPM...

   a) Citizens represent the diversity of the community
   b) Citizens have shared authority in making decisions
   c) Citizens roles are defined early with citizen agreement
   d) Citizens are trained in performance measurement before participation
   e) Citizens are involved in more than one aspect of the process

Optional: I suggest the following action(s) to show commitment not presented in a-e:

4. Performance measures are tools used to assist public performance in different ways. Performance measures are used to...

   a) Change and influence public policy
   b) Continuously improve programs and the organization
   c) Assist officials with budget decisions
   d) Communicate program or organizational results to the community
   e) Problem solve specific issues that measures may bring to attention
   f) Advocate change to a program or service

Optional: I suggest the following action(s) to show commitment not presented in a-f:

5. Involving citizens in performance measurement can result in various outcomes. The benefits include...

   a) Positive relationships among citizens, elected officials, and public managers
   b) Citizen education and understanding about government programs and services
   c) Improved performance measure quality
   d) Increased government accountability to citizens
   e) Increased trust in elected officials
   f) Increased trust in public managers
   g) Increased respect for citizen involvement by elected officials and managers increases

Optional: I suggest the following action(s) to show commitment not presented in a-f:
6. The experience of an organization may impact the success of citizen informed performance measurement. For CIPM to be successful, the organization must have appropriate prior experience in...

(a) actively involving citizens with the government
(b) measuring service and program performance
(c) having a credible reputation in the community
(d) shared decision-making with citizens

Optional: I suggest the following organizational experience(s) not presented in a-d:

Participant Information

You are a(n)
- Elected official
- Public manager

Your government is a
- City
- County
- Other (please specify)

What is the title of your position?

How long have you been in your present position?
- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

How long have you been working in government?
- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

How long have you been working with performance measurement?
- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

Would you consider participating in a telephone interview to be conducted at your convenience?
- Yes
- No

You would prefer
- to be contacted by Eileen Pierce via phone
- to be contacted by Eileen Pierce via e-mail
- 6-10 years
- to initiate the interview arrangement by calling Eileen Pierce at 616.240.6191
- to initiate the interview arrangement by e-mailing epierce@grcity.us

If you will participate in a telephone interview, please provide contact information below.

name:

work phone:

cell phone:

e-mail address:

Thank you for your participation! Please return the survey in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided.
Appendix C

Interview Questions
Citizen informed Performance Measurement and Reporting in Local Government: Key Factors for Effective Democratic Governance

Western Michigan University, Department of Public Affairs and Administration
Principal Investigator: Dr. James Visser
Student Investigator: Eileen L. Pierce

Interview Questions for elected officials and administrators

Would you consider the CIPM program you were involved in to be a success? Why or why not?

Is CDPM worth the extra cost and time to accommodate citizen participation? Why?

How did your involvement affect the way you feel about government program efficiency and effectiveness?

How did your involvement affect the way you feel about the importance of collaboration between government and citizens in performance measurement?

What would you have changed in your experience with performance measurement?

What did you like best about your involvement?

Would you consider the CIPM program you were involved in to be a success? Why or why not?
Appendix D

HSIRB Approval Letter
Date: September 10, 2008

To: James Visser, Principal Investigator
   Eileen Pierce, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 08-08-03

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "Citizen-informed Performance Measurement and Reporting in Local Government: Key Factors for Effective Democratic Governance" has been **approved** under the exempt category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: September 10, 2009