

AN INQUIRY OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

A Thesis

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by

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Abstract  
of  
AN INQUIRY OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE  
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John Gildea

Over 40 years ago, Sacramento County implemented what are now known as Community Planning Advisory Councils (CPACs) where citizens would have a means to keep abreast of local projects, be a sounding board for County staff and project managers, and ultimately provide input to future hearing bodies. CPACs have gone through several structural transformations since their inception; however, the current CPAC model of citizen participation in Sacramento County is proving to be inefficient and CPACs are acting out of their intended scope as community sounding boards. This thesis seeks to discover how Sacramento County can best implement the legally mandated citizen participatory process in local governance. I used a criteria alternatives matrix (CAM) analysis as well as interviews with members of all key stakeholder groups to evaluate three alternatives. Results from my CAM analysis found bolstering education of CPACs on County processes to be the best alternative. I conclude the thesis by comparing my alternative to a County staff proposal that was submitted to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors at the same time this thesis was written.

\_\_\_\_\_, Committee Chair  
Robert Wassmer, Ph.D.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements .....	vi
List of Figures.....	ix
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background / Overview.....	3
Environment .....	10
Conclusion.....	15
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	16
The Schism Between Citizens and Local Government.....	16
Citizen Engagement from the Point of View of Citizens.....	23
Citizen Engagement from the Point of View of Public Officials.....	27
Equity Concerns within Citizen Participation .....	29
Citizen Participation and Land Use Planning.....	31
Conclusion.....	33
3. METHODOLOGY.....	34
The Eightfold Path.....	34
Criteria Alternatives Matrix .....	37
CAM Analysis Scoring Rubric.....	40
Interview Process of Stakeholders.....	41
4. CRITERIA ALTERNATIVES MATRIX ANALYSIS .....	44

Alternative 1- Limit Items to Two Hearings .....	44
Alternative 2- Bolster CPAC Education on County Processes .....	48
Alternative 3- Decrease the Number and Size of CPACs .....	51
CAM Analysis .....	53
Conclusion.....	55
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	57
The County Proposal .....	57
Trade-Offs .....	58
Limitations and Implications for Future Work.....	61
Discussion.....	62
Conclusion.....	63
Appendix A. International Association for Public Participation’s “Public Participation Spectrum”.....	64
Appendix B. Outline of Proposed Amendments to CPAC Functions and Operations .....	65
Appendix C. CPAC Proposal Workshop Summary .....	67
Appendix D. Interview Questions .....	79
Appendix E. Qualitative CAM Regarding CPAC Alternatives for Sacramento County.....	80
Appendix F. Quantitative CAM Regarding CPAC Alternatives for Sacramento County .....	82
References .....	83



LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
1. Sacramento CPAC Areas and Supervisorial Districts .....	6

## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

Northern California's Sacramento County is the most populated County within the Greater Sacramento Metropolitan Area six-county region (Sacramento County, n.d.). There are currently seven incorporated cities within the County: Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Isleton, Rancho Cordova, and Sacramento; there is also unincorporated Sacramento County which makes up a significant portion of the total County population. As of January 2018, Sacramento County reported 38% of its total population as residing within the unincorporated county (Sacramento County, 2018). For reference, Sacramento, the most populated city within the county with 325,000 people more than Elk Grove, the County's second most populated city, made up 33% of the County's population (Sacramento County, 2018). This population gap between the unincorporated area and Sacramento city was wider in 1970, where the unincorporated population was 50% of all of Sacramento County's population.

As 50% of the county's population did not reside within incorporated cities, these residents did not receive many opportunities to voice their opinions and get involved in local land use decisions impacting their varied neighborhoods. To alleviate this, in the mid 1970's, Sacramento County implemented what are now known as Community Planning Advisory Councils (CPACs) where citizens would have a means to keep abreast of local projects, be a sounding board for County staff and project managers, and ultimately provide input and a recommendation for approval, approval with conditions, or denial to future hearing bodies such as the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

Since their inception, CPACs have gone through several structural transformations ranging from number of councils, level of support from the County, and disbanding altogether. However, the current CPAC model of citizen participation in Sacramento County is proving to be inefficient and CPACs are acting out of their intended scope as community sounding boards. As such, my primary research question is: How can Sacramento County best implement the legally mandated citizen participatory process in local governance? I hope to find a better method of public participation than what currently exists in Sacramento County. The existing model consists of 14 Community Planning Advisory Councils, which have between 5 and 15 community members that are limited to two two-year terms (Sacramento County, n.d.). Each CPAC covers a different area of Sacramento County, and their purpose is to gather community response to proposed projects within their respective areas.

The genesis of this project largely stems from my involvement with my employer, the North State Building Industry Association. I was able to view firsthand the issues with CPACs in Sacramento County and I was interested in improving this process. My work experience, coupled with my education in Public Policy and Administration, has motivated me to find best practices for public participation that I hope could be applicable across various jurisdictions. My audience is the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, as they have the capacity and ability to make changes regarding the CPAC process. Within the topic, the issues that I am investigating are threefold: (1) why is the process inefficient?, (2) who is finding the process ineffective?, and (3) how can we improve the existing process? I investigate these issues by both exploring what

Sacramento County is doing to address and go beyond the Brown Act, and by summarizing other studies in my literature review. By developing a framework of best practices, my hope for practical application is to improve the current citizen participation process and help get projects approved or denied at a faster pace than what currently exists within Sacramento County.

In this Chapter I will provide a background and overview of the CPAC model in Sacramento County by explaining the County's existing approach to public participation, listing stakeholders, and outlining inefficiencies with the current process. Additionally, I will detail the political, social, and economic environment surrounding Sacramento County and CPACs. This information will inform readers of the CPAC process and provide context for my Chapter 2 findings.

### **Background/Overview**

In California, the Ralph M. Brown Act (Brown Act) requires that governmental entities post notice of meetings and agendas of topics to be covered and provide public access to said meetings (Brown, 1953). Its purpose is to keep the general public informed of decisions that agencies make that may impact them; in this sense, this is a mechanism to keep public officials, either elected or appointed, in check and not allow them to freely decide what is best for their constituents (Brown, 1953). In Sacramento County, this means that, at the very least, Planning Commission (PC) and Board of Supervisors (BoS) meetings are subject to the Brown Act. As unincorporated Sacramento County's population is nearly 600,000 as of 2018, this could potentially lead to extremely lengthy and expensive PC and BoS meetings if any given agenda has contentious topics that are

opposed by members of any number of affected communities (Sacramento County, 2018). To avoid this outcome, Sacramento County has implemented CPACs. CPACs add another level of bureaucracy that projects must go through and CPAC activities take place after initial review by the Project Review Committee, but before going to other hearing bodies which include the Subdivision Review Committee, Zoning Administrator, County Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors (Sacramento County, 2017).

### **Sacramento County's Approach**

Since the unincorporated county held the highest population of citizens among jurisdictions within the County in 1970 at 50%, it was important for Sacramento County to give them a voice in the decision-making process for projects that affected them (Population.US, n.d.). The areas of unincorporated county did not fall within the jurisdictions of any of the cities, and the populations were spread out across the County. As such, there were differing cultures and neighborhood concerns for different areas of unincorporated county. Unincorporated citizens still had a desire to have a voice in local land use decisions. To respond to this desire and to foster a citizen/government partnership, Sacramento County created CPACs in the mid 1970's, which were formerly known as both Community Councils and Community Planning Commissions (Nauman & Koehler, 1983). These CPACs were advisory to county agencies while encouraging citizen participation in the planning process and acting as a local sounding board for new proposals offered by County staff (Nauman & Koehler, 1983). There were originally nearly 20 CPACs, one for each unincorporated area with an adopted community plan, and each CPAC had their own representative council comprised of citizens living within

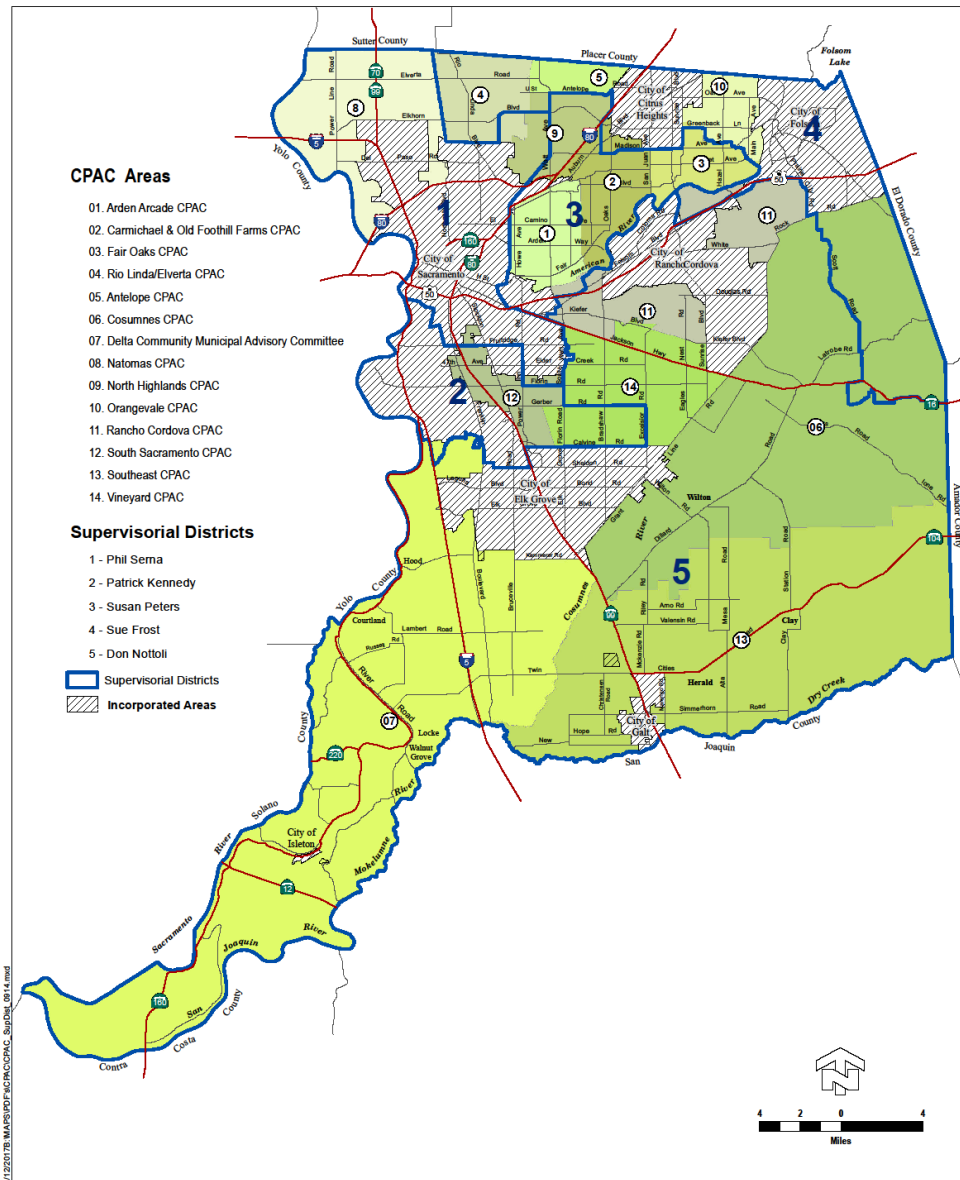
each CPAC area. This step was taken to give control back to those communities, to provide orderly and effective growth of each area, and to simplify and refine problem areas so that future hearing bodies could concentrate on larger unresolved issues (Nauman & Koehler, 1983).

The purpose of CPACs is to brief citizens on projects taking place in their communities, where citizens may provide input and comment and ultimately provide a recommendation of approval or denial to future hearing bodies (Sacramento County, n.d.). There have been several iterations of CPAC structure, but as of 2019 there are currently 14 distinct CPAC regions throughout Sacramento County. Each CPAC is allowed a council of local citizens that ranges from 5-15 members, and this council has authority to vote on recommendation of project approval. Any citizen within the jurisdiction of a CPAC may apply to be on the council, and the County Supervisor of each CPAC appoints members to fill the council seats. Council members are given a binder of training materials, and each of the 14 CPACs has their own binder. Most binders highlight the importance of the CPAC, the Brown Act, and meeting conduct and protocol (Sacramento County, n.d.).

In CPAC meetings, which typically occur once per month but occasionally happen twice a month, project applicants typically present their item to the CPAC which is followed by time for the CPAC and attending citizens to voice their questions and concerns. County staff are tasked with taking note of community concerns and forwarding comments to the County Planning and Environmental Review to add to staff

reports for the PC and BoS if applicable. These comments, along with the voting recommendation of a CPAC are taken into consideration by those hearing bodies.

**Figure 1. Sacramento CPAC Areas and Supervisorial Districts**



Whether or not a project is approved at the CPAC level, it can move on to the next hearing board for approval as necessary, since members of the CPAC do not have any legal authority to hold up a project at the community level. However, if a project is denied at the CPAC level, the CPAC board can appeal said project at higher levels of government for free—the appeal fee is waived by the County. This structure gives more power to local citizens, as the appeal fee in Sacramento County is \$3,935 at the Zoning Administrator, \$4,062 at the Planning Commission, and \$4,138 at the Board of Supervisors (Sacramento County, 2019).

### **Stakeholders**

The CPAC process affects a variety of stakeholders. Sacramento County government has a few parties: the Subdivision Review Committee, Zoning Administrator, County Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and staff that attend CPAC meetings. Then there are the Sacramento County citizens who reside within the 14 different CPAC zones. Finally, there are the parties that have projects that are subject to CPAC. These can range from developers of large greenfield projects, to small infill developers, to independent citizens attempting to add a granny flat. It will be important for me to consider all these stakeholders throughout this thesis, as any potential change I suggest will impact some, if not all, of these stakeholders in some fashion.

### **Inefficiencies**

The following section will detail the various inefficiencies in the CPAC process: delays in project approval, meeting cancellation rates, and the fact that CPACs presently go above and beyond the Brown Act.



### ***Delays in Project Approval***

Sacramento County has sporadic minutes and agendas available online, which is what I will use as the basis for my findings in this section. Of the significant project delays throughout 2017-2018, the average delay time took projects seven months (Sacramento County, n.d.). These delays can come about in a few ways. CPACs currently employ more power than they have the legal right to by way of necessitating some projects to come back for review when more information is available, such as drainage studies. This may force a project lead to come back months later when the drainage study is completed, and ultimately cost them more money to have to return to CPACs for approval rather than moving on to the next hearing body. For bigger projects, this can be an issue because any delays can have fiscal impacts in the long run; this could scare off developers from working within the County again and inhibit future investment and potentially not meet County goals.

### ***High Meeting Cancellation Rate***

Over the January 2016-March 2019 period, 42.15% of all CPAC meetings were cancelled across the 14 CPACs (Sacramento County, n.d.). The Natomas CPAC had the most cancellations, with 76.9% cancellations over the 39-month span (Sacramento County, n.d.). The CPAC with the fewest cancellations, Carmichael/Old Foothill Farms, still has a 20.1% cancellation rate (Sacramento County, n.d.). Usually, CPACs end up cancelling meetings either due to lack of quorum, or lack of topics on any given agenda. If there was one project that intended to come in at a certain date, any cancellations would be inconvenient and potentially fiscally damaging.

The challenge with the CPAC cancellation rate is that there are several variables to account for in attempting to improve the percentage of meetings held. If no are projects going to a CPAC, then there is not a major issue as no project is to be held up. However, if a meeting is cancelled due to a lack of quorum and there was a project is delayed, then the issue lies in the accountability of CPAC members to attend their meetings and fill their roles as appointed council members. Each CPAC has its own reasons why meetings are cancelled coupled with their distinct demographics, which makes it difficult for the County to implement a blanket fix to alleviate meeting cancellations.

***CPACs Presently Go Above and Beyond the Brown Act***

While the CPAC structure in Sacramento County empowers citizens and shortens PC and BoS meetings, a few issues have arisen with this structure. The original intent of CPACs was to facilitate and promote citizen participation early in the planning process where it is easier for project applicants to hear and respond to local concerns (Sacramento County, n.d.) The primary purpose of a CPAC is to gather community response to proposed local projects, and to be an advisory board to subsequent hearing bodies (Sacramento County, n.d.). However, some CPACs have started asking project applicants for documentation that would not necessarily be ready at early stages of the planning process, such as environmental impact reports or drainage studies before providing input or final say on a project. While these are important documents, necessitating these documents before a final recommendation is made is outside the current scope of CPACs and is better suited at the Planning Commission level—both timeline-wise and knowledge-wise. By the time a project presents to the Planning Commission, these

documents need to be completed and are expected to be presented at this level of hearing body. However, if a CPAC starts demanding this documentation, projects could potentially be delayed months if they are expected to return with an environmental impact report. Additionally, CPAC members are not expected to understand technical documents and their implications, so they would need to be explained to the members that do not understand them by either the project applicant or County staff, which amounts to further delays.

As it stands, CPACs are a body that does not legally need to exist within Sacramento County; they were created to involve unincorporated citizens in the local land use process, but this level of involvement is not legally mandated. County Supervisors may not want to remove citizen involvement to this degree and only allow them to be involved at the Planning Commission level and higher, as this would likely upset their constituents and additionally extend the length of their other hearing bodies' meeting times due to the lack of CPAC involvement. However, there are certainly inefficiencies within the current process that have room for improvement. At the present, CPACs have the capability to weaponize endless debate and continuations to act as a local filibuster by calling for unlimited continuations.

### **Environment**

In this section I will go over the current political and social environment within Sacramento County and conclude with some economic factors that I believe play a part in restructuring CPACs.

## **Political Environment**

Politically, CPACs effectively bring democracy closer to citizens. CPAC meetings act as a way for local community members to directly have their voices heard regarding projects that will impact their community. This relationship works both ways—CPAC meetings also allow project managers to explain the extent that their project will impact the local community while also taking in community feedback that they may not have considered or known about. CPAC members currently vote to approve or deny recommendation for project approval, which gets sent to the PC and BoS for their review. CPAC meetings also serve as a mechanism to obtain a free appeal of a project if a project is recommended for denial. This allows for equity for citizens who may not have the ability to pay for the roughly \$4,100 appeal fee that Sacramento County currently has at the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors level (Sacramento County, 2019).

Additionally, CPACs alleviate workload and public scrutiny from the PC and BoS. They act as a buffer and a failsafe in case there are any local citizens upset with a decision made at these levels. By having their own meeting, CPACs effectively cut out lengthy citizen involvement elements at PC and BoS meetings which makes these meetings run more smoothly. This also allows planning commissioners and county supervisors to cite the results of CPAC decisions if citizens are upset regarding an approved project. They can fall back to either a ‘recommend approval’ result, or in the event of a ‘recommend denial’ result, explain how the project may have changed based on citizen comments or even how the project will benefit the community or County as a whole based on County goals that the citizen may not be aware of.

The current CPAC structure promotes an environment where project backers cater to limited community interests to ensure support and approval. Citizens may not be aware of County goals regarding housing or may succumb to NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) and insist that projects be built elsewhere. This could potentially lead to stalemates within CPACs for affordable housing projects, which the County needs but local citizens may not want in their neighborhoods. Such stalemates would keep a project in limbo until they received a final say, but CPACs are currently able to continue projects until further meetings. They can do this by insisting a project must present documentation such as an environmental impact report, which is often not prepared at the CPAC stage. This ultimately inhibits larger community and regional projects, especially if a contentious project impacts a larger area which forces project managers to attend multiple meetings across more than one CPAC jurisdiction.

### **Social Environment**

CPACs are meant to serve as public opinion sounding boards for project leads to cooperate with to ensure that any given project does not clash with the ideals or culture of the impacted community. The Councils themselves may hold up to 15 members, but as of March 2019, across the 14 CPACs, each one has 6.79 members on average with only one CPAC holding more than 10 members (Sacramento County, n.d.). This implies that the councils are not particularly competitive to serve on, that the positions themselves are not prestigious enough to draw in a larger percentage of each communities' population, or that citizens generally do not know or care about this opportunity to serve their communities. Meeting agendas and location information must be distributed in advance

ala the Brown Act, which Sacramento County does both through their website and through email notifications to subscribers.

While County staff distributes information regarding CPAC meetings and agendas, another study would need to be done to determine if the current model is effective. However, if the case is that many members of the community do not care about the projects that happen in their neighborhood, then the issue may be that the Councils themselves are fully representative of their communities. If the CPACs consist of members that only have the time, resources, or personal agendas to serve on them, then they may not be completely representative. As meetings are scheduled to happen monthly, citizens of lower socio-economic status may find it more difficult to attend CPAC meetings, which Maciag (2014) finds to be the case in public meetings; a commitment to serving on the Council could be a larger ask for those that already have difficulty attending meetings. Additionally, there is always the threat of NIMBYism in these Councils to hurt or stall projects in areas, which Archibald (2018) found to be the case for affordable housing projects in a case study done in Seattle, Washington.

### **Economic Environment**

With the political and social environment of Sacramento County mapped, it is important to consider the economic factors that impact, and are impacted by, CPACs. Sacramento County currently has housing goals determined by the State mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) targets (SACOG, 2015). For background, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) works with the several Councils of Governments (COG) around that state to calculate regional

housing needs in each COG jurisdiction (California Department of Housing and Community Development, n.d.). Once HCD and COGs agree on assessment targets, the COG takes over responsibility for allocating housing amongst the cities and counties within their jurisdictions (California Department of Housing and Community Development, n.d.). Sacramento County falls under the jurisdiction of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) which has determined the number of housing units needed throughout the region in an 8-year cycle plan called the Regional Housing Needs Plan (RHNP) (SACOG, n.d.). The current plan spans from 2013-2021 and specifies housing targets for four income categories: very low income, low income, moderate income, and above moderate income (SACOG, n.d.).

Across the Greater Sacramento Area, jurisdictions are far below their RHNA goals and most are not on track to hit the goals outlined by the 2013-2021 RHNP. Unincorporated Sacramento County only has 2,610 housing permits of their 13,844 RHNA goal through 2017, which accounts for 18.8% (California Department of Housing and Community Development, 2018). Additionally, most of these units come in at the moderate and above-moderate income categories; only 3.6% of the housing required by RHNA are met in Sacramento County's very-low income and low-income brackets. This has implications for revenue to the County as of January 2019, when Governor Gavin Newsom proposed to withhold SB1 transportation funding from jurisdictions that fail to reach their RHNA goals (Dillon, 2019). This incentivizes the County to push more low-income affordable housing through the approval processes of CPACs, PC, and BoS at a quicker rate. However, the current CPAC environment does not allow for fast-tracking

for these types of projects, which may stall at the citizen level. Additionally, the need for very-low and low-income housing may be met with strong NIMBYism.

Along with potential SB1 funding loss, there are time delay costs of projects to consider and the implications of those delays. Along with the time delay to participants in the CPAC process, projects delayed at the CPAC level can cost developers more money, which typically disincentivize them to work within Sacramento County. This, in turn, inhibits future investment in the County by bigger developers that hope to build in the County if they know that they will likely get stalled at the community level. With fewer housing prospects coming into the County, it would be difficult to reach RHNA targets without further incentivizing developers and planners to work in the region.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I gave a brief background and overview on the CPAC process within Sacramento County, which included a general description, stakeholders, and inefficiencies. I also detailed the political, social, and economic environments surrounding CPACs as they currently stand. In Chapter 2 I will present key findings from my literature review. In Chapter 3 I will state my alternatives, which are based on my findings from Chapter 2; additionally, I will identify my criteria for measuring my alternatives and outline my methodology for analysis. In Chapter 4 I will provide analysis, summarize, and contrast my alternatives. Finally, in Chapter 5 I will provide recommendations and conclusions based on my analysis and findings while addressing implementation.



## **Chapter 2 - Literature Review**

There is an extensive and evolving canon of existing literature regarding best practices for citizen engagement. I have drawn out four themes that I found to be most relevant to my study in Sacramento County. In this literature review I will discuss the following four themes synthesized from the literature: (a) the schism between citizens and local government, (b) citizen engagement from the point of view of citizens, (c) citizen engagement from the point of view of public officials, and (d) equity concerns in the citizen participatory process. After I discuss these themes, I will examine how citizen participation is used regarding land use planning in some cities around the U.S. and within Sacramento County. Relevant literature draws on a variety of methodologies, including surveys, regression-based studies, and meta-analysis—all of which I will use to inform my selection of methodology and criteria in examining best practices for citizen participation. I will then conclude by summarizing the important findings.

### **The Schism Between Citizens and Local Government**

The concept of making citizens an important stakeholder in government decision-making has bled into the prevailing thought of jurisdictions that have attempted to craft strategies to strengthen modern democracy (Florina-Maria 2010; Kathi & Cooper 2005; Koontz, 2005; Naranjo-Zolotov, Oliveira, Cruz-Jesus, Martins, Goncalves, Branco, & Xavier 2018; Maier 2001; Yang & Callahan 2007). Truman and Reisig (1996) identify the use of participative governance, or the aspect of governance that emphasizes democratic engagement through deliberative practice. They reference the 1970's concept of New Public Management (NPM), which is a movement that focuses on using private-

sector approaches to run government. Some common themes of NPM include: separating politics and administration, competition, accountability, and a focus on customers—in this case, the public that government serves. Denhardt and Denhardt (2007) expand on this in their response and critique of NPM, *New Public Services (NPS)*, which focuses on government running like a democracy and not like a business. One of the key aspects of NPS is that citizens should be actively involved to ensure a democratic form of government, whereas in NPM, some private sector practices may clash with public sector ideals and values (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2007).

Despite the use of participative governance, there are still gaps in satisfaction for citizen participation in local governance among both citizens and public officials. One reason for this could be explained by the International Association of Public Participation's (2014) "spectrum of participation" framework which details five levels of public participation, all of which have differing participation goals and varying degrees of impact. The five levels are inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower—starting from the lowest level of impact on a decision to the highest respectively (IAP2, 2014). This framework can be used to explain many of the discrepancies between measured success of citizen participation by citizens and public officials; if both groups are not in agreement over which level of public participation the public is at, then there are bound to be disagreements on success. For example, a qualitative study done in North Carolina by Berner, Amos, and Morse (2011) found that elected officials thought public hearings to be an effective method of consulting with citizens, but that citizens in those jurisdictions did not find public hearing to be an effective method and that they did not

feel like they were in the consultation level, much less the informative level. Yang and Callahan (2007) provide one possible reason for this phenomenon by finding that citizen input is less likely to be considered in strategic decision making despite the use of citizen involvement mechanisms. This discrepancy underpinned a basic lack of understanding between citizens and public officials over the proper level of public participation.

### **Citizen Distrust in Government--The Case for Respect**

A common theme in research on public participation relates to general citizen distrust in government (Berner et al., 2011; Putnam, 2000; Yang & Callahan, 2005 & 2007; Zvestoki, Shulman, & Schlosberg, 2006). This distrust is distinct from, but possibly tangential to, the general trend of citizen apathy towards governance and civic responsibility (Putman, 2000; Evans, 2015). One source of friction in citizen participation is that citizens do not feel like their opinions matter in the eyes of public officials (Berner, et al., 2011; Bolland & Redfield, 1988). Citizen engagement stems from the belief that citizens should have a say in decisions that impact their lives, and thereby legitimizing government decisions by ensuring that citizen voices are heard (Denhardt, Denhardt, & Blanc 2014). City administrators routinely make decisions that affect citizens, and when decisions are made that citizens did not endorse or did not participate in, they start to look unfavorably upon their elected leaders and government officials (Kathi & Cooper, 2005). Yang and Callahan (2007), in a regression analysis, make a distinction between the use of participation mechanisms and the implementation of citizen input to influence real decision making. They found that public hearings, citizen advisory boards, and other participation mechanisms were widely adopted but were

seldom used by public administrations to have much meaningful impact on decision making (Yang & Callahan, 2007). It appears that hosting participation mechanisms is much easier and more commonplace than involving citizens in strategic decisions since the latter requires more administrative attention (Yang & Callahan, 2007).

This ties into another cause for a lack of involvement, where citizens have concerns about their opinions making little to no difference in their communities (Berner, et al., 2011). Berner, et al. (2011) found that citizens were concerned that the citizen participation process was just in place to give the illusion of participation and that their opinions ended up not making a difference. King, Fetley, and Susel (1998) suggest that people might be more willing to participate in discussion if they feel like they have real opportunity to influence administrative processes and outcomes. This is evidenced by Yang and Callahan (2005) who use surveys and statistical analysis to find that the public is more likely to get involved in their local governments once they realize that their opinions and points of view are truly incorporated in the outcomes of governmental decisions. Kathi and Cooper (2005) in their literature review and model analysis found that neighborhood councils, in conjunction with appropriate processes and mechanisms, were a successful method for citizen participation at a local level. The processes and mechanisms they found helpful included using both moderators and facilitators to assist citizens in deliberating issues with the intent of developing a plan to deal with specific issues (Kathi, et al., 2005).

### **Government Opinions on Citizens--The Importance of Education**

While citizens do not always look kindly upon government, public administrators do not always view the public in the best light either. During the Carter administration, staff ended up discrediting a lot of public testimony regarding solar energy due to the opinion that solar energy was too technical for the public to have anything useful to contribute (Kathi, et al., 2005). This stems from an opinion that participation is actually a hinderance to administration when it comes to complicated and specialized topics because it would take too much time to explain things to the public, and in return, policy makers would be receiving half-baked opinions from largely uneducated masses (Kathi, et al., 2005). This mindset leads agencies to put minimal effort in to designing and enacting their legal obligation to involve the public. Yang and Callahan (2007) also find that some public administrators see citizens as lacking competence, expertise, interest, and time for any meaningful conversation—and that the citizens who regularly participate on a topic are promoting their own agendas and are then not representative of the entire community. They also find that, as a result of individual citizens lacking expertise on various topics, citizens can feel powerless when put up against bureaucratic regulations and government in general (Yang & Callahan, 2007).

A noticeable trend is a lack of knowledge from the public on issues that public administrators might be facing. Bolland and Redfield (1988), in their citizen participation study using blended qualitative/quantitative methodology with interviews and a Monte-Carlo simulation, found that regarding citizen participation in education, the urban reform movement led to a separation between policy and administration. This resulted in an

information gap between administrators and the general public. The literature has shown that this gap has persisted for several decades, and that this gap can lead to citizens feeling that they lack education, training, or expertise on community topics (Yang & Callahan, 2007; Lachapelle & Shanahan, 2007; Berner et al., 2011). In their literature review, Evans and Campos (2012) found that when modern participatory governances attempt open government, many public agencies release a lot of technical information for the public to sort through. While transparent in a sense, the “information dump” method does not necessarily generate positive outcomes without any context or further clarification to people not in the know. To alleviate this, Evans and Campos (2012) found that public managers should consider changing from data-dominated transparency efforts to more analytical methods via offering a context for why and how certain data may be relevant. Agencies can do this by shifting indicators of successful effectiveness to levels of citizen engagement and addressing user needs (Evans & Campos, 2012). Zolotov, Oliviera, and Casteleyn (2017) take this further by using a weight and meta-analysis investigation of 60 quantitative research studies on e-participation to conclude that some of the best indicators of successful e-participation are: perceived usefulness, attitude, social influence, trust, effort expectancy, trust in government on intention to use, as well as perceived ease of use and intention to use. Furthermore, Kim & Lee (2012) use an interview and survey questionnaire and structural equation modeling to find that (a) satisfaction with e-participation applications themselves had a positive effect on government transparency, (b) e-participants that perceived positive individual

development through e-participation assessed government as more transparent, and (c) assessment of government transparency was positively linked with trust in government.

Evans and Campos (2012) also found the “data dump” method could be a problem at the agency level—agency staff may simply lack the skills necessary to contextualize and synthesize information to educate citizens about certain projects. Yang and Pandey (2011) find that educating citizens is a common theme among recommendations in literature, but that this takes time and delays any significant policy-making decisions. However, a lack of knowledge does not equate to ineptitude. It is not the role of the public to be fully versed in every policy topic. King, Feltey, and Susel (1998) note that incompetent citizens should not be pushed out, but that the participatory process can involve education and competence in a topic and that citizens have a right to express their opinions regardless of their competency.

This appears to be a cyclical process of negativity feeding into further negativity. Citizens are not knowledgeable on a topic, which leads to public administrators assuming public input is not valid or important, which leads them to make decisions while largely disregarding public input, which leads to public distrust in government. The distrust urges the public to get involved and project their opinions, which can be seen as trivial by public administrators if they already feel that public opinions are not important. Yang and Pandey (2011) find that there are frustrations from both citizens and administrators regarding citizen involvement, and that the way to effective participation eludes many public entities. However, some evidence suggests that citizen participation can only be assisted by a reciprocal trust between people and institutions through perceived costs and

benefits, emotions, sense of community, trust in institutions, and cognitive closure (Mannarini et al., 2010).

### **Citizen Engagement from the Point of View of Citizens**

#### **What Matters to Citizens**

Design and implementation of citizen involvement strategies often leave much to be desired by citizens. As far back as 1988, even with NPM, citizen participation was found to be largely ineffective in shaping public policy (Bolland & Redfield, 1988). A decade later, King, et al. (1998) reported citizens feeling isolated from the public administration process. Even though citizens were concerned with local and national issues, they felt like the government was forcibly distancing them from any public processes. Nearly two decades after that study, Yang and Callahan (2007) found that citizens were often frustrated by bare-minimum participation efforts done by public officials which fed into more displeasure towards government. There is a clear disparity in level of participatory methods and citizen expectation, and this section will detail the friction between citizen and local government by identifying how each group may understand and define effective citizen participation.

Mannarini, Fedi, & Trippetti (2010) dove deeper into the socio-psychological aspect of community involvement using linear regressions and found that participants were influenced mostly by personal cost/benefit analyses and positive associations with involvement. This study found that motivation was a strong driving factor in participation, and that the benefits (e.g. satisfaction, sense of belonging, social status rewards) would have to offset costs (e.g. energy level, time consumption, interest) in



order for citizens to actively participate. Additionally, positive feelings rank highly in influencing levels of participation, which include feeling like the participant had their opinions heard, sense of belonging in a larger community, and being ultimately satisfied with the experience itself (Mannarini, et al., 2010). These results suggest that once a citizen participates with their government and finds some satisfaction in that process, they are more likely to return and continue fostering relationships and having a sense of place within their community.

A study that focused on identifying how citizens, administration, and elected officials view effective citizen participation found that citizens most valued (a) citizen feedback being followed by feedback from administrative staff or elected officials, (b) communication and cooperation from local government regarding jurisdictional objectives and specifying what kind of citizen feedback they were looking for, and (c) opportunities to be heard earlier in processes (Berner, et al. 2011). A theme among responses includes a need for transparency, which Florina-Maria (2010) finds to be a key factor in meeting citizen involvement. Berner, et al. (2011) also found that higher levels of transparency allowed citizens to become more engaged in local governance.

Berner et al. (2011) found that citizens felt that their opinions were not truly sought by government, that their opinions may not have made a difference in the decision-making process, and that there were no appropriate means of having their voices heard. The citizens felt a lack of empowerment and legitimacy in their involvement, in which Haikio (2012), in a 26-study cross analysis, states that power relations, such as the citizen and local government relationship, become legitimate when they are rooted in

shared beliefs, values, and expectations. A difference in these concepts can lead to tensions regarding the structural integrity and legitimacy of a government/public partnership (Haikio, 2012). Leino & Pelotomaa (2012) address legitimacy in their empirical case study analysis by finding that incorporating locals' knowledge into decision-making can lead to legitimacy in the local setting. Bryson, et al. (2012) in their synthesis on public participation and implementation to evidence-based guidelines find that establishing legitimacy between internal and external stakeholders is crucial to building trust and ensuring that the participation process is authentic. Ultimately, citizens want a legitimized structure of participation where they can find time to participate, their time and opinions are respected by decision-makers via transparency, and that they receive early communication from their government in order to make qualified decisions.

### **Role and Responsibility of Citizens in Local Governance**

Across a number of studies, the prevailing theme for citizens' role and responsibility within their community depends on the culture and needs for each community. Yang and Callahan (2007) found that different regions in the United States varied in citizen involvement efforts due to differences in bureaucratic responsiveness to participatory values, stakeholder pressure, administrative practicality, political culture, and social capital. In one North Carolina study, Berner, et al. (2011) interviewed elected official, administrative staff, and citizens to find that an effective citizen should be a community advocate, be educated on issues, and be able to educate the community easily on local topics. The results of this study found that public officials held citizens to a high

standard in being “effective”, which brings up the fact that public officials and citizens should work together to define what effective citizen participation looks like.

Lachapelle and Shanahan (2010), in their qualitative study on citizen participation and effective board training programs, found that regardless of community values, one example of an effective public board was built on statutory information, principles of good governance, and utilizing good meeting techniques in order to foster effective participation and cohesion with other participants. Bolland and Redfield (1988) also studied effective meeting principles and found that both: (a) a common understanding among board members of broad goals and (b) a specific structure in the citizens’ role, can be helpful in defining the type of support needed by citizens. This harkens back to the IAP2’s “spectrum of participation” framework (IAP2, 2014); if the citizens’ level of participation is outlined and commonly understood by both public and local officials, the participatory process will likely run more smoothly.

Yang and Callahan (2005) conclude that, in order to improve citizen involvement, citizens themselves should urge elected officials to push for more opportunities to participate. There are also other methods of getting this message across. Kathi and Cooper (2005) highlight an example of a secession movement in Los Angeles in the late 1990’s where citizens were not satisfied with their city hall. Ultimately, the city issued a charter amendment that created neighborhood councils to decentralize several processes. This resulted in a Department of Neighborhood Empowerment that continues to seek citizen participation and a more responsive government. This just goes to show the power that citizens have regarding local decisions and highlights the importance of community

input. That said, Wassmer (2007) explains that Los Angeles only provided these neighborhood councils \$50,000 in annual funding to address each council's needs. As such, Wassmer (2002) states that in 2002, Los Angeles voted to further decentralize government and effectively allow the San Fernando Valley area to secede from Los Angeles citing issues on local control over local resources, smaller and more efficient government, and more accountability from local officials. The vote failed, receiving 33% support when it needed 51%, but it highlights the role of citizens continuing to make their voices heard when they feel improperly represented by their elected leaders. Sacramento County, seemingly in an effort to curtail any secession movements and keep the unincorporated county intact, reinstated Community Planning Councils in 2005 and shifted some decision making to the local level (Wassmer, 2002).

### **Citizen Engagement from the Point of View of Public Officials**

#### **The Challenge of Public Participation for Public Officials**

While it is easy to understand the public's frustration over the participatory process, their frustration is rarely due to a lack of trying by local government. Local government typically understands the value of public participation and makes an effort to incorporate citizen involvement into the decision-making process through some form of open government or participative governance (Bryson, Quick, Slotterback, & Crosby, 2012; Florina-Maria 2010; Lachapelle & Shanahan, 2010; Yang & Callahan, 2007). However, effective citizen participation remains largely difficult to implement due, in part, to our representative democracy where citizens depend on their elected officials to speak and act on their behalf (Kathi & Cooper, 2005). Governments have attempted

alternative methods to include citizens in participatory processes to varying degrees of success, including electronic-governance (Aristeidou, Scanlon, & Sharples, 2016; Kim & Lee, 2012; Naranjo, Oliviera, & Castelyn, 2017; Naranjo-Zolotov, et al., 2019). While electronic-governance is a whole different topic with its own qualifiers of success and participation metrics, Kim and Lee (2012) and Naranjo-Zolotov, et al. (2019), through a regression analysis, find that a few of the challenges remain the same in valuing social capital, level of altruism, and trust in local government.

Yang and Callahan (2007) found that elected officials have a constituency to please, and that they can appear responsive to their constituents by calling for transparency and accountability in government. In contrast, they also found that involving citizens in decisions is challenging and requires varying degrees of administrative attention depending on the level of citizen participation (Yang & Callahan, 2007). This notion carries on through work by Berner, et al. (2010) who found that 86% of elected officials surveyed felt that they actively sought input from citizens, but 92% of city staff surveyed felt that citizens did not understand some of the technical aspects of more heavy topics, which would necessitate more work from city staff to prepare separate documents for citizens to be able to digest. This work does not even bring up the concept of creating a system of citizen engagement, which largely falls upon staff as well.

### **Role and Responsibility of Public Officials in Local Governance**

Despite the friction between citizens and local government, there is hope for institutional change. Yang and Callahan (2007) found that public managers have a large role in determining the level of citizen input from a community, in that favorable

attitudes toward the process tend to positively influence administrative decisions to involve citizens in administrative processes. Lack of citizen involvement in an area could be determined by attending local meetings or reviewing said meeting minutes; if this is the case, public managers could deal with barriers to citizen input. For example, if a lack of participation is due to a lack of trust in local government, public managers could alleviate this by implementing authentic participation with clearly defined results to improve trust (Yang and Callahan, 2007). Yang and Pandey (2011) also point out that adopting heightened citizen involvement is an organizational decision, and that those growing pains may in part influence why implementing heightened citizen involvement measures are so difficult to sell to an organization. However, Bolman and Deal (2017) state that organizational culture is a product and process where members within an organization share basic assumptions on how to solve problems as well as core beliefs, values, and customs. If any of these values line up with better community input, then perhaps an organizational change towards better citizen input is possible.

### **Equity Concerns within Citizen Participation**

Citizen input can be perceived as the “square peg that public administrators try to squeeze into the round holes of government” (Denhardt, Denhardt, & Blanc 2014, p. 377). Along with an absence of participatory input, there exists a phenomenon where all too often, avenues of public participation are comprised of the same subset of individuals on a regular basis. Yang and Callahan (2005) perform a study on assessing citizen involvement efforts where this phenomenon is an entire unit of measurement. They found that 85% of respondents from smaller communities thought that the same group of

citizens participated in administrative decision making on a regular basis, and this number jumps to 89% for participants in larger communities (Yang & Callahan, 2005). Yang and Pandey (2011) also find that participant involvement is not often representative of the entire population. Maier (2001) in their case study analysis found that involvement is a continuous struggle, and that interest groups that participate in planning and decision making often end up having more power over less educated individuals. With this lopsided representation in mind, it can be difficult to create equitable participation. There appears to be a fine line between getting people to meetings and maintaining their engagement, and then bringing in new people with different perspectives who also feel the same sense of satisfaction and representation in participation. Yang and Pandey (2011) also find another difficulty in that there may be a negative correlation between competence and representativeness—if one has an audience of competent citizens, then that group will likely not be representative because the more competent citizens tend to be more educated and wealthier in general. This works inversely as well—if one has a representative audience, then the overall level of competency may be lower (Yang and Pandey, 2011).

Bente Florina-Maria (2010) describes social inclusion as the process where people more susceptible to being socially excluded or at a higher risk of being poor are given opportunities and resources to participate in the societies they live in. This is especially important in citizen participation, where a small minority can improperly represent that community as a whole. When jurisdictions craft their citizen participation metrics, they must consider their populations that may be unable or intimidated to attend meetings,

such as single parents or citizen minorities. Florina-Maria (2010) in her analysis of citizen participation and satisfaction metrics goes on to state that inclusion of minorities in participative processes leads to more efficient participation as community concerns are defined by both the majority and minority of the community. This inclusion leads to better democracy, as good governance should be designed to reduce exclusion and promote inclusion (Florina-Maria, 2010). Berner, et al. (2011) corroborate this idea by finding effective participation to involve advocacy for the whole community, as opposed to being for the individual. Effective participation appears to require real participation by minorities, and community-wide goals in mind for all participants.

### **Citizen Participation and Land Use Planning**

Now that I have considered the needs from both citizens and public officials in the citizen participation process, I will discuss the true effectiveness that the process has on land use planning and the impact that a citizen advisory committee can have on policy making. Fleischmann and Pierannunzi (1990) used discriminant analysis to find that citizen advisory boards can have a significant effect on the rulings of governing bodies in rezoning cases, even when the planning commission is purely advisory. Koontz (2005), through interviews and document analysis, highlights the importance of collaboration in local planning efforts with citizens, local government, and potentially broad collaborative groups. Koontz (2005) found that despite often not having much legal authority, citizens were better equipped to push for policy change when they were provided high levels of education, income, prior networks relating to land use, and concern about land use topics. Additionally, Koontz (2005) states the importance of providing citizens context in land



use planning decisions in addition to providing them resources; his study showed that citizens who were provided a local jurisdiction's broad land use efforts were better equipped to handle particular land use planning efforts, such as farmland preservation.

Niemeier, Grattet, and Beamish (2015) additionally highlight the importance of citizens understanding broad contextual topics in their mixed-method approach using qualitative archival data and a quantitative examination of outcomes. In their study, Niemeier, Grattet, & Beamish (2015) investigate the Sacramento Area Council of Governments' (SACOG) "blueprinting" which provided a forum to citizens, public officials, and business elites to discuss regional smart growth strategies and principles as a guide for local development. As SACOG is a metropolitan planning organization, they have limited authority to force local governments to adopt one uniform approach. However, SACOG was able to draw out 1,800 citizens in 17 community workshops, including *citizen planners*, or individuals either representing civic organizations or individuals who lived in impacted areas of the region. The study found that the "blueprinting" may have had middling effects on long-range planning efforts regarding climate change and transportation due to SACOG's limited legal authority, but the fact remained that nearly 2,000 citizens who had an interest in climate change and long-range planning were equipped with knowledge to ostensibly go back to their communities with to inform their local planning decisions.

Wassmer (2007), through using regression analyses of survey results, found that Sacramento County residents that had heard of the County implementation of Community Planning Councils (CPC) were more likely to rate their community's quality

of life higher than those that had not heard of CPCs. Additionally, Wassmer (2007) found that citizens who had heard of CPCs were more likely to support land use decisions made at their local level as opposed to the County level. These findings show that the CPCs, now CPACs, increase resident's desires for local control. This exemplifies the importance of equipping citizens with the knowledge of broad long-range planning goals of both the local area and the whole region, in order to make educated land-use decisions.

### **Conclusion**

This literature review covered the four primary topics I found within the literature surrounding citizen participation which were: (a) the schism between citizens and local government, (b) citizen engagement from the point of view of citizens, (c) citizen engagement from the point of view of public officials, and (d) equity concerns in the citizen participatory process. Finally, I discussed the extent and effectiveness of citizen participation in land use planning. Defining success is difficult at a broad level as each jurisdiction has differing cultures and needs. Ultimately, successful citizen participation comes down to identifying a system that works for both citizen and public officials, clarifying what role citizens and public officials will play, and trust. In the following section, I will explain my methodology for the remainder of this thesis.

### **Chapter 3 - Methodology**

In this Chapter, I will explain the methodology I used to inform my analysis regarding citizen participation in local governance. I will begin by explaining Eugene Bardach's (2012) "Eightfold Path", which is the approach I used to guide my policy analysis. Following this, I will describe the Criteria/Alternatives Matrix (CAM) which I used to judge my proposed alternatives because I believe this is the most efficient method to consider the various alternatives I have drawn from my literature review. After that, I will explain and justify the criteria I have selected to weigh my alternatives, and I will close with an explanation of the scoring metric I will use in my CAM. Finally, I will conclude by describing the stakeholder interview process I used to analyze my CAM; I will introduce specific stakeholders, my interview process, and the questions I asked stakeholders.

#### **The Eightfold Path**

Bardach's (2012) Eightfold Path is a tool that policy analysts can use to view issues from the lens of a practitioner. The Eightfold Path steps are designed to assist in the problem-solving process, and some steps can be taken out of order or repeated depending on the context of the policy issue (Bardach, 2012). This section will outline the Eightfold Path and serve as background for my CAM methodology.

Bardach's (2012) first step in analyzing a policy topic is to define the problem; this serves to guide the scope of work that needs to be done in the evidence-gathering phase, which is the second step. As a reminder, my primary focus of study is: "How can Sacramento County best implement the legally mandated citizen participatory process in

local governance?” In this problem definition phase, Bardach (2012) cautions against including the solution in the problem definition. As my thesis aims to suggest alternatives for Sacramento County, I intentionally do not name any potential solutions within my statement.

The second step is to assemble some evidence, which Bardach (2012) states is for three practical purposes: (a) assessing the nature of the problem being defined, (b) assessing the features of the policy situation being studied, and (c) assessing existing policies that could be applied to said policy issue so that the analyst does not need to reinvent the wheel. Bardach (2012) reiterates the importance of reviewing available literature, which I have done in my Chapter 2 literature review.

Bardach’s (2012) third step is to construct the alternatives, or policy options. In this step, Bardach (2012) suggests starting with comprehensive alternatives but constantly refining and ending up with focused alternatives that are modeled in the system where the problem is located; in this case, my alternatives will be modeled specifically for Sacramento County. In designing policy alternatives, Bardach (2012) suggests considering targets and budgets, checking personal assumptions that may influence alternatives, and considering the design of both the final state of the proposed system and the steps needed to get from the current model to the proposed model. I will make sure to take all of these considerations into account when designing my alternatives for citizen participation in Sacramento County.

Bardach’s (2012) fourth step is to select the criteria that will be used when assessing the alternatives crafted in step three. Bardach (2012) states that this step is the

most important for considering values and philosophy in policy analysis, and that the most important evaluative criteria should be whether the projected outcome will solve the policy issue. That said, Bardach (2012) notes that any proposed change will likely have outcomes on the world that should be considered by policy analysts as some outcomes will not be desirable. Bardach (2012) suggests both popular (a) evaluative criteria—such as efficiency, equality, and process values, as well as (b) practical criteria—such as legality, political acceptability, and improvability. I end up using several of these criteria in my own analysis in Chapter 4.

Bardach's (2012) fifth step is to project the outcomes and impacts of the proposed alternatives, which includes realistic analysis of outcomes instead of optimism. Bardach (2012) cautions against undesirable side effects that I will have to consider in my analysis such as moral hazard, levels of regulation, and renting—or interests that seek to profit by not having a lot of competition. I will have to consider these hazards carefully given my employment at the BIA, who's builder and developer stakeholders can stand to profit off unchecked alternatives.

The sixth step that Bardach (2012) suggests is to confront trade-offs, as some of my proposed alternatives will likely score better in some criteria than others. Bardach (2012) emphasized focusing on the projected outcomes over the alternatives themselves, along with weighing the relative importance of each criteria in a manner that is consistent throughout all criteria. I will use a CAM analysis to address this weighing process in my analysis, which I will describe in the following section.

Bardach's (2012) seventh step is to decide on an alternative as if I was the decision maker, even if that may not be the case. Bardach (2012) suggests using the "Twenty-Dollar Bill Test", or asking why my proposed alternative is not happening already if it is such a good idea. This is commonly due to failing to consider resistance by stakeholders committed to the status quo or the lack of a policy entrepreneur to take the mantle and make significant changes (Bardach, 2012).

The final step of Bardach's (2012) Eightfold Path is to tell your story, or to be able to adjust findings based on differing audiences. Bardach (2012) suggests giving the story a logical flow and tailoring the story with each audience's interests and abilities in mind. In my case, my audience is Sacramento County residents, so I will be tailoring my story as if I were presenting my findings to them personally.

### **Criteria Alternatives Matrix**

#### **Criteria to Evaluate the Alternatives**

When considering the Eightfold Path's steps, I believe that the criteria alternatives matrix (CAM) is an appropriate tool to analyze and compare alternatives. A CAM is especially fitting with the fourth step of selecting criteria, the fifth step of projecting the outcomes, and the sixth step of confronting the tradeoffs between alternatives. A CAM can effectively take into account my criteria, allow me to fill in spaces projecting outcomes, and succinctly show both an analytical and numeric comparison of how well the alternatives compare relative to each criteria.

Munger (2000) frames the CAM tool as a method of organizing the process of analysis when considering several alternatives. As a CAM is a matrix, alternatives are

listed on one side in rows and criteria are listed on the other in columns. This creates several boxes that policy analysts use to identify and differentiate between various pros and cons, weighing each alternative against each criterion. Each criterion is weighted based on the policy analyst's understanding of the values of the audience they are speaking to—in this case, they are weighted based on my understanding of the residents' values in Sacramento County.

I will fill out each cross-section between criteria and alternative, and ultimately score them against each other. I will then multiply these scores by each criterion weight, so that every box in the matrix has a value. Following this, I will add values among each alternative. Typically, the alternative with the highest sum is the alternative that is suggested by the policy analyst. Munger (2000) identifies a key difficulty in comparing alternatives in that assumptions often must be made in terms of trade-offs between alternatives; policy analysts must be capable of framing the CAM in a way that their audience can understand and relate to, while simultaneously accurately capturing their audiences' values so that their weights are agreed upon.

The CAM that I fill out in Chapter 4 will consider criteria evaluations based on my understanding of Sacramento County's values on: (a) political feasibility, (b) cost effectiveness of the overall county planning process, and (c) Sacramento County citizen equity. These criteria were based on Bardach's (2012) "Eightfold Path", specifically, Bardach's evaluative criteria suggested for projecting outcomes of policy alternatives.

### ***Political Feasibility***

The first criterion is political feasibility, or to what extent each alternative is feasible when considering legality and political coalitions. Bardach (2012) suggests that political feasibility is a combination of both (a) too much opposition and (b) too little support. This is important regarding the alternatives because County Supervisors have constituents to please, and any change in citizen power may influence how constituents view their elected Supervisor. Supervisors are not likely to openly endorse any change that would take away citizen power, as citizens would likely not want to vote for an incumbent that sought to take away citizen influence. Alternatively, any option that would increase citizen power would likely bode well for Supervisors to publicly endorse. This criterion will weigh the most of the three criteria, as County Supervisors ultimately have the final say in any proposed alternative to the current CPAC system.

#### ***Cost-Effectiveness of the Overall County Planning Process***

The cost-efficiency of the overall County Planning Process criteria has to do with monetary cost along with considerations of stakeholder time and effort. Bardach (2012) considers cost-effectiveness to be the maximization of public interest. It will regard not only the financial cost of each alternative to the County, but also consider the opportunity cost of choosing one alternative over the current CPAC process. Along with monetary cost to the County, which will include staff time, this criterion will consider dollars in delays and time to implement action items along with citizen time spent in activity. Because the alternative chosen will have monetary feasibility as its largest deciding factor, cost-effectiveness will weigh the second most of the three criteria.



### ***Sacramento County Citizen Equity***

Bardach (2012) states that the equity or equality criteria can be viewed from differing perspectives, which is why I want to specify who I intend to serve with my equity criteria. Sacramento County Citizen Equity is my final criteria which will take equality and fairness for citizens throughout Sacramento County into consideration. It will gauge the extent to which a project will fairly serve the goal of what the citizen input process is intended to accomplish, based on the County's society and environment. This criterion will consider those who stand to benefit from a change in County citizen participation processes as well as those who may lose out on any changes to the current participatory structure due to socio-economic status, time of meetings, and current CPAC structure. Due to County Supervisors and staff having the power of any alternative reform and the fact that cost is a significant consideration, the citizen equity criteria will weigh the least of the three.

### **CAM Analyses Scoring Rubric**

The CAM analyses are rated from one to five on a Likert scale, with a 1 scoring the worst and a 5 scoring the best. Regarding political acceptability, a 5 will represent an alternative that Sacramento County residents are fully satisfied with regarding what each criterion represents, and a 1 will represent an alternative that does not satisfy criterion at all. Regarding cost effectiveness of the overall planning process, a 5 is expected to cost the same, or fewer, amount of dollars and time to stakeholders as the current CPAC process, while a 1 will not be feasible in terms of monetary cost and time to implement. Regarding Sacramento County citizen equity, a 5 will equitably serve all affected regions

and populations within those regions, and a 1 will represent a lack of representation from affected parties or unfair representation.

This quantitative CAM that I have described will follow a qualitative CAM where I will verbally outline my projected outcomes of each criteria/alternative cross-section. Based on my qualitative CAM analysis, I will then grade each alternative against each criteria using the scoring rubric above, and ultimately end up with a numerical score for each alternative which will inform my final, suggested alternative.

### **Interview Process of Stakeholders**

I have interviewed 3 key stakeholders in order to better inform the results of my CAM analysis. Since Sacramento County residents are my primary audience, my original intention was to interview residents across various CPACs. This would have been done to gauge the importance of my selected criteria and use their information to select my weighing criteria. However, in late 2019, Sacramento County staff went to both the County Planning Commission and the County Board of Supervisors with a sweeping CPAC reform package which included a CPAC Proposal Summary, a report where County staff visited all 14 CPACs with proposed amendments to CPAC functions and operations and received comments from all CPACs, which went above and beyond the information that I intended to gather (SacCounty.net, 2019). Included in the proposed amendments to functions and operations were elements from all three of my proposed alternatives along with additional changes to county code and bylaws. I will be using both documents to help inform my CAM, both of which can be found in Appendices B and C.

With this updated information, I individually interviewed three stakeholders who could weigh in on both my individual alternatives, as well as the combined alternative that County staff had proposed. I interviewed a County staff member, a seated CPAC council member, and a private developer that had experience with bringing agenda topics to CPACs. I relied on their expertise to help provide feedback on the political feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and citizen equity of all alternatives to inform the weights of my CAM analysis. I asked questions such as: (1) In general, do you believe that it takes too long between the time that a CPAC project application is submitted and when it is approved/rejected?, (2) Do you have any ideas on how to reduce the length of time between submission and approval within the CPAC?, (3) If you have multiple ideas on how to reduce this delay, what criteria would you suggest to evaluate whether one idea is better than another?, (4) I have thought of a few alternatives to the current CPAC process. Please let me know your thoughts on these alternatives as they stand, and (5) As of this year, the County has been working to reform CPACs independently from my research. Their proposal contains elements from all three of my proposed alternatives. Please give me your thoughts on this alternative. Some questions had sub questions or follow-up questions; a full list of questions can be found in Appendix D.

With County-run interviews from both citizens of Sacramento County and personal interviews from County staff, a CPAC council member, and a private developer familiar with the CPAC process, I am better equipped to inform my weights and scoring for my quantitative CAM criteria. This will also assist my qualitative analysis to more accurately consider the desires of those stakeholders. That said, I conducted too few

interviews to draw strong, concrete conclusions. For the purposes of this thesis, my sample will suffice with the consideration that future studies should conduct more interviews to gain more conclusive points of view from the differing stakeholders.

## **Chapter 4 - Criteria Alternatives Matrix Analysis**

In this Chapter I will analyze my three alternatives by utilizing the Criteria Alternatives Matrix (CAM) criteria previously outlined in Chapter 3, which were: (1) political feasibility, (2) cost-effectiveness of the overall county planning process, and (3) Sacramento County Citizen Equity. The three alternatives I will analyze to improve the current Sacramento Community Planning Advisory Council (CPAC) process are: (1) limit items to two hearings, (2) bolster the education of CPACs on County processes, and (3) decrease the number and size of CPACs. I plan to apply the criteria above to examine and weigh critical aspects of each option before forming a recommendation.

The remainder of this chapter contains sections on my alternatives and how well they align with/support each of my criteria. I conclude this section with an analysis of the prior sections and a recommended alternative.

### **Alternative 1 - Limit Items to Two Hearings**

My first alternative is to limit items to two hearings. This alternative effectively guarantees that any items that come to the CPAC cannot be continued more than once and puts the onus on CPACs to (1) efficiently get through their agendas and (2) have enough members show up for a quorum during any given meeting month. This alternative focuses on quickly getting projects through any potential delays that the CPAC could have such as not meeting a quorum, not meeting due to not having enough items on the agenda or using continuations as a tool to stall projects. If this happens, those projects are forced to wait until the next CPAC meeting date a month later. This alternative potentially benefits both the hearing items and the community. Project applicants can

come to the CPAC very early in their application process and hear the concerns of the community, such as parking, drainage, etc., and walk away from that meeting with a list of community concerns. The project applicants can then address those problems individually or defend why they would choose not to address an issue at the second CPAC meeting around the time when they are ready to move on to a higher hearing body—usually the Planning Commission. By that point, project applicants should have any environmental documents completed, so they would be able to communicate how they have addressed the community’s concerns or not. This also gives some responsibility to community members. If they have any concerns regarding a project in their community, then they should come out to the initial CPAC hearing and voice their concern or have a representative do so. That way, the second meeting can be focused on how the concerns were met and be less likely to be continued to another meeting—at least one month later. That said, this alternative would need to include an extensive informational campaign to Sacramento County residents in an effort to educate and promote participation with the new process. This alternative would ensure a project is not held up at the CPAC level in perpetuity and would eliminate continuations as a tool for NIMBYs to drive projects away.

### **Political Feasibility**

In considering this alternative’s political feasibility, I had to consider whether the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors (BOS) would accept this option. I believe that the BOS would be amenable to this alternative for two reasons. First, this option does not take away power from BOS constituents. While it does not empower them more, CPACs

would still retain the right to vote on projects and the process would continue to allow communities to voice their opinions on projects. This alternative simply speeds up the CPAC process, so that projects can be completed more quickly than they currently are. This ties into the second reason why the BOS would likely allow this alternative. The State of California recently updated their Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) numbers, and the Sacramento Region was assigned 153,512 units to build over the next eight years within four income categories ranging from very low to above moderate (SACOG, 2019). The local metropolitan planning organization, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), released their draft RHNA methodology menu which recommended assigning unincorporated Sacramento County 21,272 of these units (SACOG, 2019). Unless the County plans to build these units themselves, they will rely on builders and individuals to help achieve these goals. Cutting down on the bureaucratic process could likely encourage builders to stay within Sacramento County and not take their work elsewhere by showing that the County is assisting with this process. This process improvement would effectively help achieve the County's RHNA target. I believe that this alternative is the second-most politically feasible of my alternatives; though this option does not hurt County supervisors, there could potentially be some blowback based on some comments that the CPACs had when County staff presented their own alternatives (Sacramento County, 2019). I am assigning a score of 3 for this reason, which means that the alternative moderately fits the criteria.

### **Cost-Effectiveness of Overall County Planning Process**

This alternative would cut down on the number of meetings the CPAC would hold. While County staff would still have to prepare reports, this alternative would cut back on staff time dedicated to attending an unknown number of CPAC meetings, so their time could be better spent on other tasks. From a project applicant point of view, fewer meetings means that CPAC can get to higher hearing bodies more quickly, which means that they will be able to break ground sooner. From the community's perspective, the real cost is time. They may now have to dedicate more time, at any meeting, to have their voices heard, but hopefully less time overall driving to an unknown number of CPAC meetings on any particular hearing item. I think that this is the most cost-efficient of my three alternatives, so I am assigning this alternative a score of 4 on how well it fits the cost-effectiveness criteria, which means that the alternative ranks somewhat strong in this criterion.

### **Sacramento County Citizen Equity**

From an equity standpoint, this alternative is a double-edged sword. Limiting items to two hearings makes it easier for those who would not be able to continuously keep up with any number of meetings on any item; knowing that there are only two meetings could help with their schedules so they do not have to gamble on which meetings they could have the biggest impact in with their voice. Additionally, the first meeting would ensure that the project applicant hears their opinions so that their voice would be addressed by the time the second meeting was assigned. Alternatively, this hurts those who are wholly unable to attend meeting dates on items they want to voice



their opinion on. If an individual is unable to attend the first meeting, then they would have to send a representative to voice their concerns or miss out on this vital input process. This alternative could potentially hurt individuals with severe time constraints. Due to the nature of this alternative benefitting some and not others, I am assigning a score of 2, which means that the alternative is somewhat weak in fulfilling this criterion.

### **Alternative 2 - Bolster CPAC Education on County Processes**

My second proposed alternative is to improve the education given to CPAC board members on both County goals and concerns, along with reiterating the CPACs role in the decision-making process. The focus of this alternative is more on the council members—educating and empowering them to make decisions that better their communities and preparing them to defend their positions to their community members. An educated council would know the County’s priorities and concerns and would be able to make decisions based both on their specific area’s concerns along with the overall County as a whole. These could take the form of the annual mandatory education seminars put on by County staff, where CPAC councilmembers are updated/reminded of County considerations.

### **Political Feasibility**

I believe that this alternative would be appealing to the County BOS for two reasons. First, this alternative does not take anything away from CPACs in terms of voting power, quantity, or control. This is important because any change the BOS would make would likely not take away power from citizens as to keep their votes in future elections. In fact, this alternative would empower the citizens with knowledge that they

might not have otherwise—a behind-the-scenes examination of County concerns and problems that CPAC councils may not have realized before. This is the second reason I believe this alternative is politically feasible. These empowered CPAC councils would have more tools to make better informed decisions for both the County as a whole and their portion of the County as well. These Councils would be able to explain County considerations to upset citizens and better address citizen concern at the CPAC level instead of potentially bubbling up at Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors meetings. For these reasons, I am assigning this alternative a 5 for its political feasibility, which means that this alternative strongly fulfills this criterion.

#### **Cost-Effectiveness of Overall County Planning Process**

Among my three proposed alternatives, I believe that this proposal is the least cost-effective from the County's perspective. Staff would be assigned the role of conducting organization, outreach, and event management for the proposed annual education effort. This would cost the County time and money, more so in the initial phases of creating and implementing this new protocol. Additionally, there would be a sustained cost with every new CPAC council member if they do not join just before one of these education seminars as they would need to be caught up to the new higher standards expected of CPAC council members. Completion of education would be mandatory for CPAC members, otherwise they would face consequences that could range from an inability to vote on agenda items to forced removal. From the project applicant perspective, this alternative has the potential to cost them less time. A better educated CPAC council would potentially be better equipped to understand an applicant's value to

their community and the County as a whole and be able to relay this notion to any neighbors that could be upset about it. This could result in fewer continuations, and ultimately cost a project applicant less time and money. I foresee this alternative having a time-consuming startup but a relatively simple upkeep process, as once the education protocol is set, staff would just have to update each section with any updates since the last education seminar. As such, I will score this alternative a 2, which means that this alternative is somewhat weak in fulfilling this criterion.

### **Sacramento County Citizen Equity**

I believe that of my three alternatives, this proposal is the most equitable to Sacramento County citizens. Better educated CPACs would be able to consider the needs of entire communities, and not just neighbors of any one project. This harkens back to my literature review section on the importance of education for citizens, where Berner, et al. (2011) found an effective citizen to be a community advocate, be educated on issues, and to be able to educate the community easily on local topics. Without the education component, Yang and Callahan (2007) found that often times, citizens that regularly participated on a topic promoted their own agendas and were not representative of their communities as a whole. The County should avoid solely presenting technical information to sort through, known as the *information dump*. Evans and Campos (2012) found this to not necessarily generate positive outcomes without also providing context and further clarification for those that need it. That said, not all training is equal, and substantial care is needed to see effective results. These educated CPAC councils would have a higher awareness of the communities that may not be present at CPAC meetings

and would be able to speak for them in their absence. These new councils would be able to see big-picture regional goals, as well as community goals, and could be a voice for those that are not able to speak. Alternatively, they would also be able to see when a project would not benefit the community at large and would be able to defend that opinion against project applicants. Considering how equitable I believe this alternative is, I have given it a score of 4, which means this alternative is somewhat strong in fulfilling the criterion. I would have given this alternative a greater score if the education bled down to the community level, however since this alternative depends on the CPAC council to follow through on acting for the greater good, I did not rate it any higher.

### **Alternative 3 - Decrease the Number and Size of CPACs**

My final alternative is to decrease the number and size of CPACs; in other words, decrease the number of CPACs from 14 to 10, and decrease CPAC councils from the current upper limit of 15 council members. Some of the rural CPACs in the southeast county could be combined, as well as some of the smaller, denser CPACs in the eastern and central County. This alternative is the most audacious of the three as it would require a complete structural overhaul of the CPAC councils. However, my intention in considering this alternative is that fewer, smaller CPACs would lead to more consistent meetings that do not cancel, and CPAC councils comprised of members that (1) actually want to be on the councils representing their communities and (2) are the most qualified of the individuals that do apply. This, in turn, would speed up the approval process of projects in CPACs since the meetings would be more consistent and be comprised of individuals that understand the needs of their communities.

**Political Feasibility**

I think that this alternative is the least politically feasible of my three alternatives, because from the point of view of the BOS, this option takes power away from their constituents and effectively reduces local control. Fewer CPACs means that each CPAC would oversee larger areas of land, and fewer council members means that fewer individuals would have more power over increased areas of land. This means that there would be more concentrated power in this structure. Additionally, there is the potential for less diversity of stakeholders on the CPAC council with smaller councils. This may not necessarily be the case because the CPAC selection process could account for this, however I cannot deny the possibility. As this is the least politically feasible alternative, I have scored it a 1, which means that this alternative is weak in fulfilling this criterion.

**Cost-Effectiveness of Overall County Planning Process**

Though the political feasibility has a bleak outlook, the cost-efficiency of this model would benefit the County financially. With fewer CPACs, there would be fewer CPAC meetings which equates to spending fewer resources on meeting locations, administrative time, and travel time. This alternative would also lead to fewer cancelations, since the larger regions would take on a larger portion of project applicants. This means less bureaucratic redundancy in constantly rescheduling meetings and dealing with delays. Because of this, from the project applicant perspective, this alternative would be beneficial as well. Applicants would be more likely to be heard when originally scheduled and would have a more qualified council to discuss their project with. Due to

the cost-efficiency of this alternative, I have scored it a 3, which means this alternative is moderate in fulfilling this criterion.

### **Sacramento County Citizen Equity**

Though this alternative may be cost-efficient, I believe that this is the least equitable to Sacramento County citizens of my three alternatives. I think that this alternative may lead to people that may not be directly affected by a certain project muddling CPAC meetings, as it may be so far removed from their previous district that they may not have the general area knowledge of the needs and wants of a neighboring community. I believe that increasing the area of a CPACs jurisdiction could potentially blend communities that have differing cultures and expectations that would need to be addressed in the structural change done at the onset of this alternative. This could lead to longer meeting times if CPAC members need to be informed of community concerns they do not understand. Additionally, longer meeting times may reduce attendance as the public may not want to sit through projects that do not directly impact their communities. As this alternative is potentially the least equitable, I have scored it a 1, which means this alternative is weak in fulfilling this criterion.

### **CAM Analysis**

Based on my analysis and scoring, I can score each alternative against each other by adding the values I assigned to each alternative within each criterion, seen in Appendix C. It is important to note that, at this point, I have weighted each criterion as I believe that not all three criteria are equal. The criteria were weighted based on both my literature review as well as limited interviews with a staff member at the County level, a

CPAC council member, and a developer who has regular experience submitting agenda items for CPAC review. The weights must add up to “1” and are weighted as follows: Political Feasibility= 0.3, Cost-Efficiency=0.3, and Equity=0.4. The County staff member I interviewed considered varying criteria when reviewing CPAC reform ideas and stated that equity was the most important (County Staff Member, personal communication, December 18,2019). Part of this reason could be that they believed the BOS would not be inclined to pass any reform ideas if they were not equitable to their constituents. The developer with CPAC experience informed me that they found County citizen equity to be the most important criteria as well (Developer, personal communication, December 18, 2019). He based that off the fact that much of the north County is underdeveloped and that there are inequities among individual CPACs for land use distribution; the developer foresees the County overdeveloping in these underdeveloped lands to compensate for RHNA growth and NIMBYs in more developed CPACs and that there is an inequity balance there (Developer, personal communication, December 18, 2019).

The CPAC council member I interviewed found County equity to be the most important as well, but because they felt that an overwhelming majority of the County does not know what CPACs are or the importance they play in community-building; they found equity for those without the knowledge that they even had a voice in this process to be very important (CPAC council member, personal communication, December 27, 2019). For this reason, I weighted equity as the highest of my three criteria at 0.4. Political feasibility and cost-effectiveness are weighted lower than equity, but equal to each other. The County Staff Member (personal communication, December 18, 2019)

found budget to be a higher priority than political feasibility. However, a Sacramento County meeting in December 2019 made it clear that political feasibility is very closely tied to the Supervisors' view of equity to their constituents, as the BOS was split on whether or not to accept staff recommended changes to the CPAC process until hearing from disgruntled members from more rural CPACs who did not feel that the proposed changes were fair to them as their areas faced different issues from other, more urban CPACs (saccounty.net, 2019). For this reason, they will be weighed the same, at 0.3 each.

Appendix B is a qualitative CAM which summarizes my analysis into easily digestible boxes with my criterion and weights on the x-axis, and my alternatives along the y-axis. Appendix C is a quantitative CAM which has the same axes as those in Appendix B, but the boxes only have the scorings that I have given each box. On the far-right side are the total scores of my three alternatives. Appendix C shows that my second alternative, bolstering the education of CPACs on County processes, scores the highest and is therefore my recommended alternative to CPAC reform.

### **Conclusion**

In this Chapter I outlined three proposed alternatives to Sacramento County's current CPAC process: (1) limiting items to two hearings, (2) bolstering the education of CPACs on County processes, and (3) decreasing the number and size of CPACs. I detailed the extent to which each alternative fit the criteria I defined in Chapter 3, which were: (1) political feasibility, (2) cost-effectiveness of the overall county planning process, and (3) Sacramento County Citizen Equity. After detailing how well the



alternatives fit each criterion, I scored each section and provided a total. Based on my analysis, I found bolstering the education of CPACs on County processes to be the best alternative of the three that I selected, limiting items to two hearings the second best alternative, and decreasing the number and size of CPACs to be the least effective alternative—primarily due to the fact that it is the least politically feasible and the least equitable to Sacramento County citizens. However, it is important to acknowledge that my CAM analysis is a subjective tool, and that my limited interviews with stakeholders do not allow me assured confidence on their points of view as a whole. In the next Chapter I will provide recommendations and conclusions based on the analysis done in this Chapter and address potential implementation of my selected alternative.

## **Chapter 5 - Conclusion and Recommendations**

In previous Chapters I sought to answer my initial question of “How can Sacramento County best implement the legally mandated citizen participatory process in local governance?” by giving an introduction, literature review, methodology, and CAM analysis. In this Chapter I will discuss the existing County CPAC reform plan, how their plan compares to my proposed alternative, the trade-offs of each, a discussion of the limitations and implications of my work, and conclude with a final discussion on CPACs.

### **The County Proposal**

In 2019, the County of Sacramento proposed a revised framework for how CPACs would work. Included in this framework were over a dozen proposed changes related to administration, purpose/function, and training. Administration changes included a seven-member Council, term limits, removal from office after three consecutive unexcused absences, a one-member quorum, and for CPAC members to vote on advisory comments rather than approval/denial of a project (Sacramento County, 2019). Some Purpose/Function changes included specifications on planning items going to CPACs but kept the number of CPACs at 14. Training changes included on-boarding training for new members prior to their first meeting, Chair and Vice Chair training, and an online training module. County staff brought the list of proposed changes to each of the 14 CPACs for comment and review by the members of each Council. This feedback was compiled by County staff, who then brought the proposal to the County Planning Commission, who passed the action item. The item then went to the County Board of Supervisors, where the proposal was denied. During the meeting, the CPAC reform topic

became tied to the housing crisis in the County due in part to housing advocates calling for reform as well as discussion on the recently passed Housing Crisis Act of 2019 which aims to speed up home building in California, and the Board of Supervisors directed County staff to come back in a few months with a list of issues impacting housing creation in the region that might be easier to tackle. I will go into a more detailed explanation of this decision in the Trade-Offs section below, which will offer some analysis on how the County staff proposal result could have compared to my CAM analysis findings. Following that section, I will discuss limitations and implications for future work on the topic of CPACs, which will include any shortcomings of my work as well as suggestions for how my work can be improved upon in the future.

### **Trade-Offs**

My CAM analysis concluded with a recommended course of action to bolster the education of CPACs on County processes. Doing so would incur some tradeoffs, which I have partially outlined in the analysis. There would likely be several costs involved in this process for a few stakeholders. Sacramento County would pay time and administration costs to develop an education program as well as organizing a training day/dates to ensure that all 14 CPACs have access to the information. One component of this effort would include determining what information to relay to the CPACs that would be relevant to the County's mission, vision, goals, and overarching planning policy. CPAC members would need to spend more of their time completing the course or program that the County puts together, and they would need to be able to determine if the wants of the community are in alignment with the needs of the County as a whole.

The County proposal was multifaceted in its approach; it sought to address several issues at once with its 21 recommended changes within three general categories, including bylaw and ordinance changes. It is understandable that the County would want to prepare a large package for the County Board of Supervisors to approve, as their time is important, and it is easier to address all of the CPAC issues at once rather than over the course of several meetings. However, I personally attended the meeting, which is also available on the Sacramento County website (2019), and I believe that approach was the downfall of any substantial CPAC changes.

Members from two of the 14 CPACs came out to testify against a few of the 21 changes, and they said that there were substantial differences between rural and urban CPACs that County staff had not addressed in their sweeping CPAC proposal changes, such as meeting protocol, quorum, continuations, and the fact that development is specifically designed not to be a part of one such CPAC (Sacramento County, 2019). The members who testified came from these more rural CPACs and their points were valid and received very well by members of the Board of Supervisors; one Supervisor claimed that his mind was changed by the testimonies of the members that came out that afternoon (Sacramento County, 2019). Another issue that came up at the meeting was the recently passed Housing Crisis Act of 2019, which states that a housing project that complies with a General Plan cannot exceed five public hearings (S.B. 330, 2019). There was confusion among the Board on whether or not a CPAC meeting constituted a meeting or a hearing, and if housing projects that went to the CPAC would count against this total (Sacramento County, 2019). The issue that arose is that if CPAC meetings count

towards this five hearing limit, then housing projects that were forced to come back a second time to be approved at the CPAC level would only have three more hearings between the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. This is potentially a detriment to projects that need continuations at the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors level, as any additional meetings with a CPAC would take away more than one continuation and force a potential denial due to noncompliance and the inability to return to a higher hearing body. Due to this confusion and the testimonies of the rural CPAC members, the Board of Supervisors withdrew the motion and staff was requested to return in the coming months. However, as of mid-June 2020, there have been no updates regarding CPAC reform strategies or code changes. It appears that the trade-off of bundling sweeping CPAC changes at once to save time with the Board of Supervisors did not pay off. Perhaps if County staff had split the proposals over two meetings some of the changes would have been able to take effect, at least changes that would have impacted the more urban CPACs where more development was happening. Alternatively, if the County had decided to stick with just one type of change, such as the training/education aspect, that may have been generalizable to all CPACs to be approved in one meeting. I think that if the County had adopted my proposal back in December 2019, County staff could have spent a few months developing a framework for what to include in education workshops, how to administer them, and begun to set a precedent for future expectations of CPAC education. It is also possible that more housing projects would have been submitted in this time. If more builders and developers knew about

Sacramento County's commitment to getting more housing built by limiting time in CPACs, then they may be more inclined to start projects in the County.

### **Limitations and Implications for Future Work**

Despite the work that I have done to address this topic, it is important to acknowledge the fact that my work has several limitations in scope. First off, this study could have been more robust in its stakeholders. While I was able to interview individuals from all of my stakeholder groups, I did not conduct enough interview to say that the points of view that I posited were fully generalizable to the majority of members within each stakeholder group. I believe that my interviews were able to provide some insight into the opinions of the various stakeholders, however it was difficult for me to draw concrete conclusions from what I gathered. In future studies I would suggest interviewing several members of each stakeholder group so that claims about conclusions drawn from stakeholder interviews could be more assured.

In line with my previous limitation, I found it was difficult to get in contact with various County officials due to my precarious position of being both a graduate student viewing the topic with an impartial eye, while also working for an organization that represents the interests of residential and commercial builders in Northern California that was actively working to reduce the delay in building approvals caused by CPACs. I would caution future work on the topic to come from individuals that are truly impartial to the results of any CPAC reform, and if possible, not know any of the County Supervisors/staff that they wished to interview in advance. I believe that it was difficult

for the County staff member that I interviewed to be completely open with me as they already knew me in a professional capacity.

Yet another limitation of my work was that I was unable to see the County CPAC proposal change process through to the end. While I had hoped that the County would have approved the proposed changes at the Board of Supervisors meeting that I attended, that did not turn out to be the case. As I stated earlier, as of mid-June 2020 the topic of CPACs has not appeared on any Sacramento County Board of Supervisors agendas. I was unable to see if the County changes would have influenced the perception of CPAC meetings from all stakeholders. In future studies, I would suggest interviewing stakeholders who were aware of the process before and after any changes had been made, assuming that changes will be made eventually. This would allow the researcher to assess whether Sacramento County had successfully taken steps to improve the legally mandated citizen participatory process in local governance.

### **Discussion**

My work on CPACs is one small part of a larger context in Sacramento County. There is no “correct” method to implement public participation in local governance; while the CPAC methodology may have worked more smoothly for the County in the past, I found issues with project delays in their meeting minutes that I validated with an interviewee who had multiple experiences with delays at the CPAC level. I went to several CPAC meetings where disgruntled neighbors cited traffic and parking concerns against projects that would have likely been a benefit to their communities, such as after-school facilities and churches. As long as there are NIMBYs, I believe that CPACs are

currently the best tool that the County has to be a front-facing information/sounding board for citizens to both be heard and also informed on why their grievances are fair, but to also consider the broader picture. In a CPAC meeting I attended, over 40 individuals came out to testify against a church being built in their neighborhood. The CPAC moved to approve the church go on to the Planning Commission despite the multitude of concerns, and there were several individuals who were upset by this decision despite the CPAC Chair trying to assuage concerns. The process is supposed to work for the people, yet the councilmembers are also people who live in the communities they represent. I believe that it is a disservice to communities to not educate these CPAC councilmembers so that they may better serve their communities. This is why I stand by my CAM proposed alternative of bolstering education of CPACs.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this thesis is to assess Sacramento County's current method of citizen participation in local governance and to provide an alternative to their current CPAC process. Through my literature review, interviews, and CAM analysis where I weighed three alternatives against three defined criteria, I concluded that the best way for Sacramento County to improve their CPAC process was to bolster the education of CPACs on County processes. Though there would likely be a heavy start-up cost, the benefits to all stakeholders would hopefully outweigh the costs in the long run. In this final Chapter I compared the proposed County alternative to my alternative, considered the trade-offs of both, and detailed the limitations of my work as well as outlined considerations for any future studies on the topic.




## Appendix A: International Association for Public Participation’s “Public Participation Spectrum”

### IAP2’S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM



The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Appendix B: Outline of Proposed Amendments to CPAC Functions and Operations

PC ATTACHMENT 2

**Outline of Proposed Amendments to CPAC Functions and Operations**

	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>CURRENT CODE OR PRACTICE</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED OPTION</b>
<b>Purpose/ Function</b>	What types of items are considered?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PER items or as determined by PER</li> <li>▪ Other County items</li> <li>▪ Items recommended by individual Board members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PER items as directed by the Development Code</li> <li>▪ Items as scheduled by the COB with concurrence from the entire Board</li> </ul>
	Purpose of Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recommend approval or denial of PER projects</li> <li>▪ Forum for input for PER initiatives</li> <li>▪ Community forum for other County business</li> </ul>	Forum for community review of projects and advisory recommendations based on neighborhood compatibility
	Number of CPACs	14	No change or consolidation.
	When are items heard?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PER Current Planning Projects                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Following a determination of a complete application</li> <li>○ Based on continuances or requests for further information (environmental reviews) can be later in the project</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ PER Other Projects/Initiatives – Outreach schedule devised by project manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private planning entitlement projects and PCNs with complete applications. A project may return if project description changes or material modifications are made to the project.</li> <li>▪ Other County Planning Projects or Initiatives – Outreach schedule devised by project manager</li> </ul>

Appendix B (cont.): Outline of Proposed Amendments to CPAC Functions and Operations

PC ATTACHMENT 2

<b>Administration</b>	Number of members	Varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seven members</li> <li>Three 2-year term limits imposed</li> <li>Allow for transition period</li> <li>Removal from office after three consecutive unexcused absences</li> </ul>
	Quorum	Majority +1 of members seated	One member required to conduct business
	Officers	Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary	Chair and Vice-Chair. Eliminate Secretary position as COB attends.
	Bylaws	14 separate bylaws/procedures	One common set of bylaws
	Voting	All options pursuant to Roberts Rules of Order (Note: <i>Advisory voting around since 1975</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CPAC members vote on advisory comments conveyed via transmittal form to PER staff and the hearing body based on project's community compatibility</li> <li>CPAC can vote to elevate hearing authority from ZA to COPC</li> <li>CPAC no longer has free appeal rights from COPC to BOS</li> <li>Continuances only with the concurrence of the applicant</li> <li>COAs suggested, however applicant must agree to COA before action</li> </ul>
	Outreach & Noticing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Courtesy mailing to all property owners within 500 feet of subject property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Courtesy mailing to all property owners and site addresses within 500 feet of subject property. (Note: <i>Postcard advising attendees to sign up for further notifications</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Training</b>	Training for members to effectively participate in CPAC meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Appreciation and Training event for members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-board training for new members, prior to participating in first meeting</li> <li>Chair/Vice-Chair training</li> <li>On-line training module</li> </ul>

## Appendix C: CPAC Proposal Workshop Summary

PC ATTACHMENT 3

**CPAC Proposal Workshop Summary**

Date	CPAC	Comments Received
May 22, 2019	Rio Linda/Elverta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No concerns about restricting agendas to planning items only.</li> <li>▪ Worried that proposal diminishes the CPAC and community's voice, and wants to retain ability to vote yes or no on a project.</li> <li>▪ Understood applicant concerns and complaints about timing of reviews.</li> <li>▪ Agreed with the concept of CPAC review to happen early in the process.</li> <li>▪ Did not agree that any CPACs be consolidated with others. One member thought the Natomas CPAC should be consolidated into the Rio Linda/Elverta CPAC.</li> <li>▪ Majority of members thought the CPACs should have at least five members.</li> <li>▪ Comfortable with term limits, but interest in allowing CPAC terms to extend if no interested community members in the vacancy.</li> <li>▪ Members did not like the idea of a one-person quorum, but were comfortable with a three member quorum.</li> <li>▪ Members stated they would appreciate regular updates on when items they considered were going to the hearing authority.</li> <li>▪ Majority of members did not like the idea of not being able to continue items to request further information from the applicant. Interested in recasting the Appreciation Event to highlight examples of good projects throughout the County.</li> <li>▪ Concerned with losing the ability to elevate the hearing authority with a denial vote and the free appeal. Members suggested the free appeal could have a higher threshold – 2/3 vote. Also, members made comments about the high cost of the appeals for concerned neighbors.</li> </ul>

## PC ATTACHMENT 3

Date	CPAC	Comments Received
May 28, 2019	North Highlands/Foothill Farms	<p>Note: Only two members were present for the workshop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not interested in consolidation of any CPACs. Members believed the North Highlands/Foothill Farms communities make sense to be combined and it currently works.</li> <li>▪ Members were comfortable with the approach of voting on the Project Referral and not the project.</li> <li>▪ Not concerned with losing the ability to elevate the hearing authority or free appeals, as they were not aware of the CPAC filing for free appeals in the recent past.</li> <li>▪ Supportive of the proposed changes to courtesy noticing to renters as the North Highlands/Foothill Farms community had a number of tenant occupied properties.</li> <li>▪ Members were concerned with apathy in the community, and indicated that they struggled with quorums in the past and getting new members.</li> <li>▪ Appreciated that the Board and staff were looking to make changes to the CPAC process.</li> </ul>
June 4, 2019	Orangevale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Concern about not reviewing non-Planning items. Specifically mentioned that DOT presentations made to CPAC were helpful to know what was happening in the community.</li> <li>▪ Members felt it is difficult to make a recommendation on items without having technical studies but understood the need to streamline development proposals.</li> <li>▪ CPAC was comfortable with their review happening early in the process, but not ok with it being limited to comments only on neighborhood compatibility.</li> </ul>

PC ATTACHMENT 3

Date	CPAC	Comments Received
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members wanted to continue to vote on projects, and were concerned that if there was not a vote how dissenting opinions would be handled by staff and the hearing bodies.</li> <li>▪ Comfortable with term limits, but want to ensure that members can stay on after term limit until new members are appointed.</li> <li>▪ Understood the concern about lack of quorum at meetings, and were supportive of a two or three member quorum for business to occur. Objected to items being discussed if there was only one member present at the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Members were fine that detailed minutes were not being taken, but wanted to make sure the action summaries were posted.</li> <li>▪ CPAC unanimously did not think that getting rid of free appeals was a good idea. Members did not believe they abused the free appeal option, and suggested that the number of appeals could be limited to a certain number per year.</li> <li>▪ Members were concerned about not being able to add conditions to projects that they thought would make projects better.</li> <li>▪ Supportive of additional noticing proposal, and suggested the County look into using Next Door and other social media platforms for outreach.</li> <li>▪ Members enjoyed the Annual Appreciation event and wanted to see it continued.</li> </ul>
June 5, 2019	Fair Oaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Concern with limiting review to Planning items, and mentioned efforts on traffic issues on Oak Avenue that was helpful to the community. Also, wanted to ensure they would continue to see Zoning Code amendments.</li> <li>▪ Members were comfortable with term limits, but wanted to ensure that if there were no applicants that members could stay.</li> </ul>

PC ATTACHMENT 3

Date	CPAC	Comments Received
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understood that making quorums has been an issue in some areas, but did not think that a one-member quorum was a good idea. Members suggested that two or three members to conduct business was preferable.</li> <li>▪ Concern with the voting proposal and thought it was important to state who voted yes or no, and was the only way to deal with conflicting recommendations.</li> <li>▪ The free appeal should be retained by CPACs, and the group could only think of two instances where they used the appeal for community wide issues. Suggested that there be a limit on the number of appeals.</li> </ul>
June 6, 2019	Antelope	<p>Note: Meeting included a number of new members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members wanted to continue to vote on items, and not just have their comments transmitted.</li> <li>▪ Concern expressed about a one-member quorum and stated that three would be a better number to establish a quorum.</li> <li>▪ Members liked the idea of providing the courtesy notice to renters.</li> <li>▪ Members thought they should be able to continue on the CPAC until a replacement person was appointed.</li> <li>▪ No problem with removal of CPAC members after three consecutive absences, but wanted better definition of what was an excused absence.</li> <li>▪ Favored a review when materials are complete rather than too early in the process.</li> <li>▪ Concern that the proposals to remove the ability to elevate the hearing authority and appeal decisions has the effect of "watering down" community engagement.</li> </ul>

## PC ATTACHMENT 3

Date	CPAC	Comments Received
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understood the concern with continuances and agreed with proposal, but thought more items may be recommended for denial.</li> </ul>
June 12, 2019	Delta	<p>Note: 11 members present at meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DMAC stated that the issues in the Delta are unique, so they should be treated differently in this process.</li> <li>▪ DMAC members believed they were unique because of State oversight in the Delta and their role in providing input to State agencies. Also, given the various Special Development Plans and rural forums in the Delta, their role is different.</li> <li>▪ Members indicated they were opposed to almost all of the provisions in the proposal.</li> <li>▪ Commented that they liked the DMAC as a forum for community issues, especially given the rural setting in the Delta.</li> <li>▪ Concern with a "one bite at the apple" approach, and desired their review to be iterative. They mentioned that this process had served them well in the past where items returned to the DMAC on multiple occasions before being recommended for approval.</li> <li>▪ Members were not in favor of revisions to the approach for the free community interest appeals.</li> <li>▪ Widespread concern with the proposal to not vote on items. Members stated that if there was no vote on items, there was not a need for the Council.</li> <li>▪ Members did not like the proposal to reduce the number of members as they enjoy great participation, and have unique communities that comprise the Delta. Also, the area is geographically vast. They suggested that they retain the 11-member body.</li> <li>▪ Not supportive of term limits as the DMAC appointments are until a member resigns.</li> </ul>



## PC ATTACHMENT 3

Date	CPAC	Comments Received
		<p>Members believed that generous term limits is a good thing for continuity and stability, and that turnover on the DMAC would cause things to fall apart.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Did not want the Secretary position removed from the Bylaws, and requested that there be advanced notice to the Chair before all meetings.</li> <li>▪ Requested to hear additional entitlement types, including Minor Use Permits as storage of equipment was not minor in the members' opinion.</li> </ul>
June 13, 2019	Natomas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members generally agreed that early reviews of items was appropriate.</li> <li>▪ Some members did not think some more minor requests (i.e., parcel maps) were being reviewed by the CPAC</li> <li>▪ Agreement on the proposal to eliminate the ability to continue items as to not have a spin cycle on development proposals.</li> <li>▪ Although the members were comfortable with a lesser quorum to conduct business, they were not in favor of a one-person quorum.</li> <li>▪ Members thought Planning should utilize social media platforms for noticing (i.e., Next Door). They were in favor of enhanced noticing procedures to tenants, and wanted it to be for all areas, not just Environmental Justice communities.</li> <li>▪ Understood the need to move away from project votes, and instead replace with transferring advisory recommendations. Also, members seemed comfortable with the approach that they were not "conditioning" projects, but were offering recommendations that could result in Conditions of Approval.</li> <li>▪ Members felt that the CPACs should continue to have the free community wide appeal if it is for a good reason.</li> </ul>

## PC ATTACHMENT 3

Date	CPAC	Comments Received
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wanted to maintain the ability to elevate the hearing body to Planning Commission for items that were controversial.</li> <li>▪ Comfortable with removing the Secretary position and appreciated the professional clerking being done by the COB's office.</li> <li>▪ Members really appreciated the focus on training, and also hoped that more would be done electronically.</li> </ul>
June 19 <sup>th</sup>	South Sacramento	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members were not sure why there was uncertainty about their recommendations being advisory.</li> <li>▪ Understood concerns with continuances.</li> <li>▪ Members wanted to maintain their ability to appeal decisions and did not believe they often filed appeals. Like right to appeal</li> <li>▪ Questioned if the Board valued the role of the CPAC, and wanted to better understand the reason to make changes to the process.</li> <li>▪ Majority of members did not have an issue with only reviewing planning items, and not reviewing other miscellaneous items.</li> <li>▪ Members wanted to have the ability to keep members on the CPAC after they were termed out as long as there continued to be vacancies on the CPAC.</li> <li>▪ Understood issues with quorum and the need to move items forward, but felt that a one-member quorum would lessen the influence of the CPAC's recommendations.</li> <li>▪ Members were comfortable with eliminating the Secretary position.</li> <li>▪ Excited about including residents (renters), not only property owners in the courtesy mailings and believed that it was important for South Sacramento.</li> <li>▪ Members wanted to institute a more formal process to report back on what happens with items that were reviewed by the CPAC.</li> </ul>

## PC ATTACHMENT 3

Date	CPAC	Comments Received
June 20 <sup>th</sup>	Cordova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Should be able to consider items of general community interest and not only planning items.</li> <li>▪ Members stated it was impractical to get full Board direction to refer community level non-planning items to the CPAC.</li> <li>▪ Strongly believe should vote; they are clear that it is an advisory recommendation only. Could not appeal if no vote.</li> <li>▪ Should retain ability to appeal. They can represent community interests when needed without cost (\$4K) for a private appeal.</li> <li>▪ Do not support a reduction from the current eight members to seven members.</li> <li>▪ Quorum should be three (not one).</li> <li>▪ Understand the need to move items forward when no quorum as is current practice.</li> <li>▪ Ok to eliminate the Secretary position.</li> <li>▪ Mixed input related to timing. Want the ability to consider information from a CEQA document if that technical information would be relevant to their decision (e.g. Bradshaw Landing, Franchise Tax Board). Believe they need to retain the ability to continue an item for additional information if warranted (e.g. Riverstone Square).</li> <li>▪ Support the proposal to expand courtesy notices to include residents (renters), not only property owners.</li> </ul>
June 27 <sup>th</sup>	Southeast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members stated that they used to hear a lot of issues (e.g. roads, SMUD items, etc.) and believe that it was a venue for the community to hear about issues because downtown Sacramento was too far away attend meetings.</li> <li>▪ Believed that planning encompasses more than just zoning, especially in the rural areas, so should have other topics on agendas</li> </ul>

## PC ATTACHMENT 3

Date	CPAC	Comments Received
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understood the issue with quorums as there have been issues at Southeast, and were comfortable with current practice of forwarding non-controversial items to the hearing body with comments received at meeting when there was no quorum.</li> <li>▪ Thought that more marketing or advertising should be done to recruit new members to the CPAC, including local papers, etc.</li> <li>▪ Comfortable with term limits, but would like members to stay on until other interested persons are identified.</li> <li>▪ Did not believe the Secretary position is needed if they rely on the Clerk.</li> <li>▪ Believed that a feedback loop on projects was important, including when projects are going to a hearing.</li> <li>▪ Comfortable with early reviews of items and a "one bite at the apple" approach, but wanted items with a scope change to come back to CPAC. Also, agreed that projects with an EIR should be a more deliberative process.</li> <li>▪ Wanted to ensure voting stayed the same, and believed it is necessary to vote on proposals to send consensus to hearing body.</li> <li>▪ Members wanted to keep the ability to elevate the hearing body and have free appeals. They did not believe it happened often, and when it did happen, it was for a good reason.</li> <li>▪ Wanted to keep the ability to continue items when there was incomplete material.</li> <li>▪ Members were comfortable with the approach of denying with conditions if the applicant was not interested in making changes at the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Ok with a mailed notice to renters, but concerned about increased costs to applicants.</li> </ul>

## PC ATTACHMENT 3

Date	CPAC	Comments Received
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members appreciated the trainings and would like to see more.</li> </ul>
July 17 <sup>th</sup>	Carmichael/Old Foothill Farms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Concern about limit to hearing items early and want flexibility to consider information from an EIR.</li> <li>▪ No objection to seven member limit.</li> <li>▪ No objection to removal after three unexcused absences.</li> <li>▪ Should be a three person quorum and continued if lack of quorum. Should allow one CPAC continuance even if applicant objects.</li> <li>▪ Want to retain ability to elevate (bump) the hearing body from ZA/SRC to COPC.</li> <li>▪ Ok with no Secretary position and with consistent set of by-laws.</li> <li>▪ Retain ability for CPAC to have no cost appeal. This is not a problem as they do not abuse this right.</li> <li>▪ Support the proposal to expand courtesy notices to include residents (renters), not only property owners.</li> <li>▪ Members expressed concern about providing recommendations without reviewing the environmental document, and without some of the information, they may recommend denial more often.</li> </ul>
July 24 <sup>th</sup>	Cosumnes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members had general questions about the origins of the proposal.</li> <li>▪ Do not support a limit to planning topics only and should retain ability of CPAC to act as a community forum. Example is administration of the mining cents-per-ton program.</li> <li>▪ Want flexibility in regard to whether items are heard early in the process or later.</li> <li>▪ Support the proposal to expand courtesy notices to include residents (renters), not only property owners.</li> </ul>

## PC ATTACHMENT 3

Date	CPAC	Comments Received
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do not support very low quorum; should be higher (e.g. three), or, could require a higher quorum for significant projects.</li> <li>▪ Do not support a limit of seven members. Should be able to expand to a greater number if interest.</li> <li>▪ Do not support proposal to remove members for absences.</li> <li>▪ Do not support term limits.</li> <li>▪ Should retain ability to vote on an advisory recommendation.</li> <li>▪ Ok with no Secretary position, however, the Chair should retain ability to approve the notes or referral write-up. Also, need to be able to find the referral on-line after the meeting. Some concern about the adequacy of Clerk notes.</li> <li>▪ Strongly believe should retain ability to file no cost appeals. They do not abuse this and it is rarely used.</li> <li>▪ Want to retain the ability to continue items. Potential for applicant abuse if no continuance by applicant simply accepting a denial and moving to the next hearing "downtown".</li> <li>▪ CPAC should be able to ask for Conditions of Approval.</li> <li>▪ They preferred the older appreciation events rather than the more recent training events. They support on-board training or orientation.</li> </ul>
July 25 <sup>th</sup>	Arden Arcade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand need for some consistency in rules/by-laws between the CPACs.</li> <li>▪ Should retain the ability to vote on an advisory recommendation.</li> <li>▪ Retain the CPAC appeal. Articulated that this is preferable to third-party appeals.</li> <li>▪ Support the proposal to expand courtesy notices to include residents (renters), not only property owners.</li> </ul>

## PC ATTACHMENT 3

Date	CPAC	Comments Received
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Believe that the CPAC takes its review role with great seriousness and provides valuable input into the process.</li> <li>▪ Did not agree with term limits.</li> <li>▪ Ok with generally early input, however wanted to ensure that projects that come to them are complete and ready for review.</li> </ul>
August 6 <sup>th</sup>	Vineyard	<p>Note: Meeting facility was not available and meeting was held outdoors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members appreciated that most items they considered were Planning items, but still wanted to have special presentations as long as they were related to development.</li> <li>▪ Discussion on the timing of review indicated that members preferred to consider items early in the process, but also wanted to know that technical studies were complete.</li> <li>▪ Members were interested in a more proactive process to remove members that were not attending the meetings, and believed that it would help to make a quorum at meetings.</li> <li>▪ Appreciated efforts to make administration of CPACs consistent with Bylaws and removal of the Secretary position.</li> <li>▪ Opposed all changes related to voting procedures, removing the ability to elevate hearing bodies, and elimination of the free community interest appeal.</li> <li>▪ Supported the proposal to expand the courtesy notices to residents (renters), not only property owners.</li> </ul>

## Appendix D: Interview Questions

### Thesis Interview Questions

#### Questions

1. In general, do you believe that it takes too long between the time that a CPAC project application is submitted and when it is approved/rejected?
  - a. If so, what are the specific problems generated by this too long of time?
  - b. If not, why do you feel that some stakeholders would feel that way?
2. Do you have any ideas on how to reduce the length of time between submission and approval within the CPAC?
  - a. Can you anticipate any resistance that may arise when pursuing each of your ideas on how to reduce time between submission and approval/rejection?
3. If you have multiple ideas on how to reduce this delay, what criteria would you suggest to evaluate whether one idea is better than another?
  - a. I have thought of some criteria myself, (*and I am glad to hear that some of them lined up with yours*). Could you please rank them in terms of importance? Ties are perfectly acceptable. I am happy to elaborate on each criterion.
    - i. Political feasibility.
    - ii. Cost-effectiveness in terms of shortening the delay the greatest at the lowest cost in dollars and stakeholders' time.
    - iii. Preserving fairness in the process to neighborhood citizens and potential developers in the neighborhood.
4. I have thought of a few alternatives to the current CPAC process. Please let me know your thoughts on these alternatives as they stand; again, I would be happy to elaborate on each of my proposed alternatives.
  - a. Limit items to two hearings.
  - b. Bolster the education of CPACs on County processes.
  - c. Decrease the number and size of CPACs.
5. As of this year, the County has been working to reform CPACs independently from my research. Their proposal contains elements from all three of my proposed alternatives. [At this point I would give them a handout of the proposal by Sacramento County]. Please give me your thoughts on this alternative.
  - a. Do you feel that this combination alternative is stronger than any of my individual alternatives?
  - b. In this combined alternative, do you foresee any tradeoffs in terms of the criteria I listed earlier?



## Appendix E: Qualitative CAM Regarding CPAC Alternatives for Sacramento County

	<b>Political Feasibility (.3)</b>	<b>Cost Effectiveness on Overall County Process (.4)</b>	<b>Sacramento County Citizen Equity (.3)</b>
<b>Limit Items to 2 Hearings</b>	Sacramento BOS would likely be amenable to this alternative because of (1) this alternative not taking away power from their constituents— CPACs still have voting power, and (2) faster housing growth to aid state-assigned RHNA targets. This alternative encourages builders and developers to continue work within Sacramento County.	County staff still must prepare reports, but 2 hearings cuts back on staff time spent at an unknown number of meetings for any given project; this time can be better utilized on other County tasks. Project applicants get to higher hearing bodies sooner, and break ground sooner. The community saves time driving to hearings they have input on.	Citizens have an easier time planning for a max of two meetings on any given hearing item they have input on. The first meeting would ensure that their voice is heard by project applicant, the second meeting would address those concerns. However, this hurts those wholly unable to attend meeting dates and those with time constraints.
<b>Bolster Education of CPACs on County Processes</b>	This alternative also does not take any power away from CPACs; rather, this empowers CPACs with knowledge on County concerns and issues that they might not have had otherwise. CPACs can make better informed recommendations on hearing items, which could quash citizen issues at this hearing body and ease hearing items at PC and BOS meetings.	Staff is assigned task of organization, outreach, and event coordination of education outreach efforts to CPACs. Additionally, there is a sustained cost with every new CPAC councilmember that joins later than the education seminar. Project applicants may save time not having to explain their value to the community to the council, which could lead to fewer continuations.	Better educated CPACs could better grasp the big picture value of projects to their communities and County as a whole. CPAC members could have heightened awareness of communities not present at meetings and be a better voice for those individuals, especially when only neighbors of a proposed project come out to speak against it.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Decrease Number and Size of CPACs</b></p>	<p>Sacramento BOS may see this alternative as taking power away from their constituents, which may garner resentment. Additionally, this alternative reduces local control. This alternative grants fewer people more power over larger areas of land that they may not have knowledge about. There is also the possibility of less diverse CPAC councils.</p>	<p>Fewer CPACs would mean fewer resources spent on meeting arrangements, admin time, and travel time. Fewer meetings would be canceled, since larger regions would deal with a larger portion of project applicants, which cuts out some bureaucratic redundancy in canceling meetings—which is beneficial to project applicants.</p>	<p>CPAC meetings could be muddled with people that may not be directly affected by a certain project since the larger CPAC areas would lead to some council members making recommendations on areas not originally within their communities. Communities would blend together that may not have similar cultures or community expectations and could lead to longer meeting times.</p>
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## Appendix F: Quantitative CAM Regarding CPAC Alternatives for Sacramento County

Scoring: 1- Weak    2- Somewhat Weak    3- Moderate    4- Somewhat Strong    5- Strong

	<b>Political Feasibility (.3)</b>	<b>Cost Effectiveness on Overall County Process (.3)</b>	<b>Sacramento County Citizen Equity (.4)</b>	<b>Weighted Totals</b>
<b>Limit Items to 2 Hearings</b>	<b>3 (.3) = .9</b>	<b>4 (.3) = 1.2</b>	<b>2 (.4) = .8</b>	<b>2.9</b>
<b>Bolster Education of CPACs on County Processes</b>	<b>5 (.3) = 1.5</b>	<b>2 (.3) = .6</b>	<b>4 (.4) = 1.6</b>	<b>3.7</b>
<b>Decrease Number and Size of CPACs</b>	<b>1 (.3) = .3</b>	<b>3 (.3) = .9</b>	<b>1 (.4) = .4</b>	<b>1.6</b>

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