The SFU & City of Surrey Transportation Lecture Program: Measuring its Impacts on Participants

by

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of the SFU and City of Surrey Transportation Lecture Program (TLP) on its participants' capacity to engage in local government and governance, contributing to an assessment of how broad-based civic education programs such as the TLP contribute to more collaborative and engaged local citizenship. Using in-depth interviews with eight program participants, as well as additional interviews with city and SFU staff, the study finds that participants had positive experiences and left the program with useful information, perspectives and relationships, but that they do not necessarily reflect the broader community or contribute to democratic participation more broadly. Programs like the TLP contribute in a piecemeal way to greater engagement by participants, but further development is needed to determine longer-term democratic goals.

Keywords: Citizen participation; civic engagement; citizen academy; transportation planning; Surrey, BC

Dedication

To my loving partner: Ian.

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It takes a village to write a thesis, so they say.

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"The only trick of friendship, I think, is to find people who are better than you are—not smarter, not cooler, but kinder, and more generous, and more forgiving—and then to appreciate them for what they can teach you, and to try to listen to them when they tell you something about yourself, no matter how bad—or good—it might be, and to trust them, which is the hardest thing of all. But the best, as well."
— Hanya Yanagihara

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Chapter 1.   Introduction

The City of Surrey is one of the fastest growing municipalities in British Columbia. Between 2006 and 2011, Surrey's population grew by 18.6% adding more than 73,000 people, reaching a total population of 468,251. Surrey projects that by 2031, it will be home to over 680,000 people (The City of Surrey Engineering Department, 2008, p. 20). As such, Surrey has recognized that unmanaged growth can have detrimental effects on the city's quality of life (The City of Surrey Engineering Department, 2008). In particular, transportation poses one of the city's most significant challenges.

In 2008, Surrey released its *Transportation Strategic Plan* (TSP)*, which is the City's long-range planning document that "sets out the vision, objectives, proposals and priorities for transportation in Surrey in the future. It also shows how transport, in its widest sense, has a part to play in key policy areas such as the environment, land use, economy, safety and health" (The City of Surrey Engineering Department, 2008, p. 6)

The TSP emphasizes that an "informed and engaged public" is important to improving the city's transportation system and states that,

> Success in delivering the objectives of the Plan will rely on the involvement of the public and stakeholders as partners, as well as clients ... By joining with others to create change, rather than imposing it on them, the City can both inform and learn. A robust and continuing dialogue with the public will improve the City's understanding of what their needs and expectations are (The City of Surrey Engineering Department, 2008, p. 25).

In particular, the TSP identifies a "more active City role in education and promotion in relation to transportation" (The City of Surrey, 2008, p. 2). In 2010, as a result of this policy direction in the TSP, the City of Surrey partnered with Simon Fraser University and launched the SFU and City of Surrey Transportation Lecture program, a 10-week course intending to educate and inform citizens and other stakeholders such as local business

groups on the work that Surrey's transportation department does (City of Surrey Engineering Department, 2010).

1.1. Research Question

This study will investigate how the SFU and City of Surrey Transportation Lecture Program (TLP) impacted its participants with regards to their capacity to engage in local governance and government. As such, I will examine participants' perception of citizen-government relations, the knowledge exchanged between the participants and the urban professionals who run the program, and how participants operationalized their acquired knowledge and skills. Additionally, this study will aim to consider what this type of engagement practice may mean for both citizens and administrators in urban planning processes such as implementing the City of Surrey's Transportation Strategic Plan.

1.2. Research Significance

While this study specifically aims to answer what impact the TLP has had on its participants, it will also respond to the assumption made by the City of Surrey that better informed and more active citizens add value to government policy and decision making and that the TLP is an approach to doing this. Currently, municipal governments spend a significant amount of time and resources to meet their obligations to engage their citizens in important plans, projects, and decisions (C. King & Cruickshank, 2010). In the Auditor General of British Columbia's 2008/2009 report on public participation, they found that "Governments are increasingly engaging the public in a range of public participation activities in order to be more transparent and demonstrate that significant decisions have been made with external views in mind" (Auditor General of British Columbia, 2009). In this way, citizen participation may provide legitimacy to governance processes (Healy, 1998).

However, anecdotal and academic evidence suggests that even with the best of intentions, many current engagement practices do not result in better or increased citizen participation and, on the contrary, current practices tend to result in disillusionment on

both sides (Innes and Booher, 2007). Common North American public participation techniques, such as public hearings, are 'formalistic' one-way avenues of communication and practices where the plans or decisions have already been made and it is the citizen's role to react; fervent opponents or proponents of the plans, measures, or issues being discussed are the only people who attend public hearings (Innes and Booher, 2007). The outcome of this engagement practice is that there is a reinforced false dichotomy of 'them' versus 'us' and no sense that everyone is actually working toward a solution on the same problem. Sherry Arnstein succinctly summarizes the dilemma of what happens when participatory exercises fail to communicate clear expectations of processes, roles, and outcomes: "what citizens achieve in all this activity is that they have participated in participation" (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217).

In response to this outcome, many practitioners have suggested that collaborative participation or collaborative governance is part of the solution to issues of poor citizen engagement (Forester, 1999; Healy, 1998; Sirianni, 2009). These collaborative approaches emphasize "collaboration among stakeholders in policy development as well as delivery, widening stakeholder involvement beyond traditional power elites, recognizing different forms of local knowledge, and building rich social networks as a resource of institutional capital through which new initiatives can be taken rapidly and legitimately" (Healey, 1998, p. 1531). With respect to empowering citizens to work collectively and in partnership with government, Callahan and Yang state that the only way for a collaborative relationship to occur is for citizens to "learn about the functions of government so they are aware of opportunities, as well as constraints" (Callahan and Yang, 2005, p. 4). Further, they find that training for both citizens and administrators is a fundamental pre-requisite to meaningful public participation (Callahan and Yang, 2005). Sirianni adds that it is also critical that public administrators see themselves as "civic educators" because the policies they create impact citizen behaviour and knowledge (Sirianni, 2009, p. 39).

An important premise of the TLP and similar programs is that rather than engage citizens on specific projects or one part of a single issue, it may be better to provide on-going and more broad-based civic education that can also build relationships and skills. In this regard, the SFU and City of Surrey Transportation Lecture Program could be a tool for local governments to educate and inform focused groups of citizens and influence

citizen capacity to engage local government and therefore the TLP may be part of a solution to help cities and citizens achieve their goals with regards to both better citizen participation and better policy outcomes.

While the City of Surrey's program is not collaborative governance *per se*, it may provide citizens with this civic training pre-requisite. The TLP positions city staff as "civic educators," which could be a step towards this sought after collaborative governance approach or governments may take advantage of these capacity building exercises and co-opt citizen movements or establish allegiances with citizen participants to manipulate them for their own agendas. As such, these participation exercises may be organized to (re)enforce the government's intended or desired outcomes/positions and, in this way, citizens may only be empowered to uphold existing power structures and policies rather than being given the capacity to create new ones or oppose them.

Chapter 2.   Literature Review

This discussion will begin with an overview of the literature that will present the context in which the TLP was created by highlighting the ideas and debates on what citizen participation is, how it relates to urban planning and this program, why it is a 'necessary' thing (or not), and the problems therein. Next, I will discuss the literature on civic capacity with emphasis on its recursive relationship with citizen participation in which participation is a means to build capacity that then can encourage more participation. I will also speak to how capacity building is not an objective exercise and that capacity can be built or biased to both support and oppose power. Additionally, I will consider how learning is an important part of capacity building that can impact individual behaviour and the ability of citizens to engage in government and governance but that learning can also be structured to include or exclude groups or individuals. Lastly, I will review existing literature on citizen academies to get an understanding of their history, structure, and purpose(s) as this is the method of citizen engagement that the City Surrey has chosen to employ as part of the citizen participation strategy of the Transportation Strategic Plan. By situating the TLP in the context of citizen academies, I will be able to understand the range of possible impacts programs like these may have and what their limitations may be, and, overall, how this investigative project may add value to existing research.

2.1. Citizen Participation

As mentioned above and in Chapter 1, the concept of citizen participation is important in understanding the TLP because the idea of citizen participation and its merits are central to what the City of Surrey is attempting to accomplish with the TLP. This section will attempt to explain the concept of citizen participation and understand some possible motives of the City of Surrey in employing this program.

Diane Day (1997), in her literature review on the issue of citizen participation in urban planning, finds that in order to come to any understanding of citizen participation and how to conduct and facilitate it, planners must also have a strong understanding of the intricacies of democracy, its theory and practice and issues of representation (Day,

1997). There seems to be some consensus in the literature on citizen participation that meaningful and consequential citizen participation is one of the pillars of effective democratic/local governance (de Souza Briggs, 2008). That is, citizen participation can be broadly understood as a necessary means through which citizens can exercise their democratic rights in an extra-electoral manner to influence decisions made by either government or non-governmental organizations that impact them in the time between elections, and even for governments that a citizen would not support at election time; it is a citizen's chance to influence governance systems that affect them (Arnstein, 1969; Day; Fung & Wright, 2003; de Souza Briggs; Cupps, 1977).

The act of participation is also strongly tied to ideas about citizenship. In classic definitions of citizenship, citizens are relegated to the realm of the political, as opposed to the administrative, so that their role is largely defined by participating or voting in elections. In this definition, administration is the set of objective and non-political processes where political will is implemented by professionals and bureaucrats, leaving citizens with no significant role (C.S. King, 2011). However, academics, citizens, politicians, and civic administrators seemingly agree that this idea of political representation is ineffective in accomplishing the central principles of 'democratic politics' as it fails at "facilitating active political involvement of the citizenry, forging political consensus through dialogue, devising and implementing public policies that ground a productive economy and healthy society, and, in more radical egalitarian versions of the democratic ideal, assuring that all citizens benefit from the nation's wealth" (Fung & Wright, 2003, p. 3). Indeed, much of the literature on citizen participation finds that citizens can play an important role in administrative decisions and processes and they are demanding more opportunities to be able to do so, in particular at the municipal and regional level (King & Cruickshank, 2010; Sirianni, 2009).

In the Metro Vancouver region, there have been some recent notable examples of these principles put into practice. In 2010, the City of Surrey initiated the Community Consultation Project to "refine and formalize the City's engagement processes with residents, which is becoming increasingly important as the population of Surrey continues to grow" (City of Surrey, 2011). In 2012, Vancouver city council approved the creation of the Mayor's Engaged City Task Force with a mandate "to provide recommendations on how to increase Vancouverites' sense of belonging and inclusion, deepen their electoral

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engagement, and address frustration regarding access to municipal decision making" (City of Vancouver 2014). Regardless of the particular process, citizen participation is seen to have intrinsic importance closely connected to democratic values. In these cases, too, citizen participation is a prescribed solution to the "wicked problems" of civic life. Ultimately, as Day notes, citizen participation is also an inherently contested concept: "there is considerable confusion about what participation looks like in practice, and little consensus about what exactly citizen participation is supposed to accomplish" (Day 1997, p. 422). Specifically, there is tension between the idea that planning should be a bureaucratic activity that favours objective technical expertise and that it should be a democratic social and political system for expressing and addressing citizens' needs and desires (Day, 1997).

Stephen Cupps addresses this tension in citizen participation and argues that while broadened citizen participation can address issues of the representativeness and responsiveness of political and administrative bodies, increase citizens' sense of political efficacy, and act as a check on the abuse of administrative discretion, unconstrained public participation can result in "poorly conceived, unrepresentative, and costly policy decisions" (Cupps, 1977, p. 478). He suggests that politicians and administrators can be pressured by citizen groups to make decisions too quickly and without sufficient evidence for the sake of appearing receptive and responsive to citizen concerns. Citizen groups can also suffer from questionable representation and legitimacy as poorly structured processes can result in a "tyranny from below" in which vocal parochial interests may heavily influence outcomes that affect the larger community (Cupps, p. 480; de Souza Briggs, p. 308). Cupps goes on to argue that, "administrative policies ought to be guided more by reasoned analysis, systematic, long-range planning, a sensitive accommodation of present social and political needs to future ones, and the best available information, than by the passion or persistence of public interest spokes-men" (Cupps, 1977, p. 484). In this way, Cupps subscribes to the classical definition of citizenship in that citizen participation is best kept to a minimum and out of the administrative realm. In addition, he also does not acknowledge the failure of the "rational planning ideal" to resolve the great urban challenges of our time and that in many cases this approach exacerbates them or creates new ones (de Souza Briggs, 2008). Since governments, administrators, and planners, by intention or by default, have traditionally favoured historically privileged socio-

economic communities, improved participation is seen to be a way to equitably address a wider array of public interests (de Souza Briggs, 2008).

Another pervasive perspective of citizen participation comes from Sherry Arnstein. For Arnstein as it is for de Souza Briggs and others, citizen participation can be a means to bring about social reforms and equity to fix inherently inequitable systems; however, Arnstein argues that participation exercises that do not redistribute any power, that is, give citizens the ability affect the outcome, are 'empty rituals' and only really allow citizens to participate in participation. Arnstein states that, "citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future" (Arnstein, 1969, p. 216). To illustrate her conceptualization of citizen participation, Arnstein notoriously devised a 'ladder' in which each rung represents the degree to which citizens have decision-making control in a given process (see Figure 1.1).
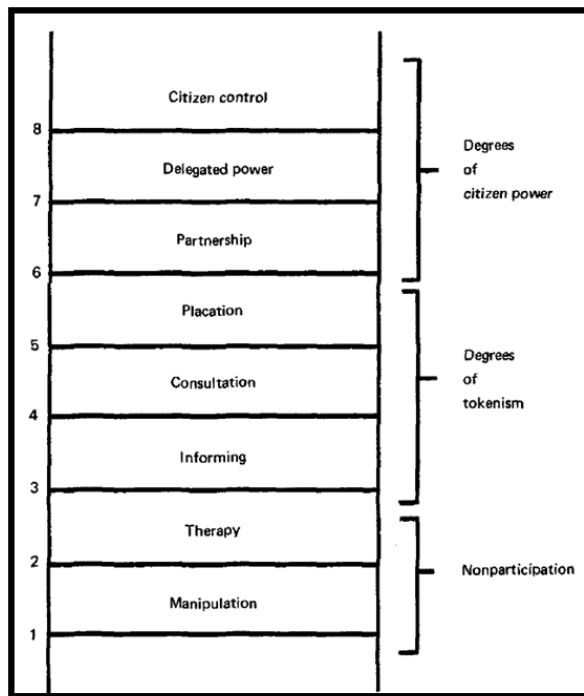
Figure 1.   Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

Arnstein's ladder frames participation as a struggle between policy-makers and citizens and thus oversimplifies participation by conflating means and ends by situating citizen

control as the only ultimate aim of citizen participation (Tritter and McCallum, 2006). Indeed, as Tritter and McCallum argue, Arnstein "sees no relationship between the aim of an involvement exercise, users who participate and the methods adopted to involve them" (Tritter and McCallum, 2006, p. 162). This is problematic since different forms of participation may be perfectly valid and required to serve different purposes or different groups of people. Further, Arnstein does not recognize that some participation processes, which do not necessarily redistribute power, can address the obstacles to what she calls "genuine participation" such as trust or capacity (Tritter and McCallum, 2006; Arnstein, 1969).

While the TLP and citizen academies are programs that look to build trust and capacity, they fall between "non-participation" and "degrees of tokenism" on Arnstein's ladder because these programs provide participants with little or no measure of decision-making power in them. However, these programs can provide opportunities for learning that cannot only create or transform relationships but also "[unveil] new definitions of problems, new or once-obscured preferences, and better options for actions" (de Souza Briggs, 2008, p. 305; Heal, 1998). In addition, Tritter and McCallum found that when diverse individuals with different socio-economic situations and lived experiences are involved in participation processes together, their participation allows them to "break down boundaries, share experience, and build understanding" (Tritter and McCallum, 2006, p. 164). As Arnstein never followed up on her landmark essay, it is unclear whether she did not consider these components of public participation as an oversight or whether, perhaps working from a more structural perspective of government and power, she saw them as ultimately meaningless in the real politics of city building.

Further, engagement processes that involve learning work better when different sources of knowledge are respected and where 'professional knowledge' is not treated as more important than local, indigenous or other forms of knowledge. De Souza Briggs adds that "inclusionary groups and processes, which blend different sources of knowledge and disseminate knowledge too, can generate better, more actionable ideas than top-down, exclusionary, technocratic planning" (de Souza Briggs, 2008, p. 40). King and Cruickshank argue that when government marginalizes 'other' ways of knowing and doing, the policies they create can "not only impose conditions as if from the outside but influence peoples'

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indigenous norms of conduct so that they themselves contribute, not necessarily consciously, to the government model of social order" (C. King & Cruickshank, 2010, p. 8). These points are particularly important because programs like the TLP and citizen academies, which deal in specific kinds of knowledge curated by city staff with agendas, can be structured as one-way vehicles of information dissemination. Indeed, even in the title of the program, the word lecture traditionally indicates a linear, one-way flow of information and learning.

If citizen participation is considered an important and necessary facet of democratic life and local governments want to engage their citizens on a whole array of issues that affect them, then the experience of citizens participating in these activities deserves to be explored. In this way, this thesis seeks to understand the impact of participation in the City of Surrey TLP on citizen capacity to engage in matters of urban governance specifically addressed in the TLP, such as the city's Transportation Strategic Plan, as well as more generally.

2.2. Civic Capacity: A Prerequisite to Participation?

Civic capacity is considered both the extent to which people and organizations in a community are "capable of collective action on public problems," and also the extent to which they apply this capability (de Souza Briggs, 2008, p. 13). Ricardo Morse builds on this definition and says that, "One might alternatively refer to this capacity, then, as capacity for democratic self-governance or collaborative governance" (Morse 2012, p. 83).

William Galston's examination of American civic beliefs and knowledge (moral evaluations, attitudes towards government, and trust in institutions and in each other) and trends in American civic behaviour (voting, volunteerism, and participation in political parties and in social movements) found evidence that there is a strong connection between civic knowledge and civic capability (Galston, 2007). There are scholars who emphasize the importance of this relationship with the notion that citizens are created since they do not inherently have the ability to fully participate in democratic society; democratic skills and habits, such as the ability to "organize, communicate, engage in collective decision making, and think critically and reflectively" are learned and developed

through practice (Campbell and Catlaw in King, 2011 p. 37-38). In this way, participation itself can also be seen as an effective means to build civic capacity (skills and knowledge), which then may beget more and better forms of participation.

Dr. Behrang Foroughi, in examining the Tenant Participatory System at the Toronto Community Housing Corporation finds that informal learning – learning that occurs outside of a formalized or institutionalized curriculum – that participants experience helps to "(1) enhance individuals' knowledge; (2) develop individuals' social and political skills; (3) improve individuals' attitude toward self, community, and polity; and (4) further individuals' social engagement and practice" (Foroughi, 2013, p. 48). Foroughi finds that this particular participatory process provided these low-income and marginalized citizens with new skills in communication, negotiation, and facilitation, as well as a deeper sense of engagement with and commitment to their communities, which he argues is the evident effect of the learning that helps build tenants' civic capacity (Foroughi, 2013). However, while informal learning through participation may be one way to help develop capacity, the incorporation and inclusion of formal learning in participatory processes is another.

For instance, in a participatory budgeting process in the city of Guelph, Ontario, administrators organized regular workshops and discussions, often facilitated by the local government, on topics such as accounting, municipal laws, conflict resolution and facilitation (Pinnington, Lerner, Schugurensky, 2009). This, coupled with the skills that participants gained from experiential or informal learning, "increased [citizens'] capacity to run meetings and facilitate decision-making, developed a knowledge base about funding and collaboration with the city, and integrated new participants into the process" (Pinnington, Lerner, Schugurensky, 2009, p. 472). In this way, informal and formal learning can complement one another but formal learning may provide a more structured entry for citizen participation by building the knowledge and skills aspect of civic capacity.

Another key aspect of civic capacity arises from the ideas of collective action and collaboration. In order for these activities to occur, there needs to be more than just knowledge, but also 'relational resources': appreciation, trust, and communicative skills (Healy, 1997). Healy states that relational resources are an important dimension of what she calls "institutional capital" which is the social infrastructure for "place making" or the

ability to improve the qualities of places (Healy, 1997, p. 1541). Healy goes on to explain that where these relational resources exist, "information, knowledge and understanding can flow around among stakeholders. Where it does not, contributions to debate, however well-intentioned, will tend to be perceived as the promotion of self-interest or constructed in adversarial terms" (Healy, 1997, p. 1541). These resources and the positive relationships they create can help form networks that not only assist one in knowing the right people and provide favourable connections but these networks can also be mobilized to develop and deliver policy objectives (Healy, 1997).

Policy-makers and citizens alike have recognized the need to create arenas which can act as learning environments that will build civic capacity with regards to its different aspects as discussed above. As such, many cities in the United States have implemented Citizen Academies to provide training and education to citizens in order for them learn about the functions of their local government (Morse, 2012).

2.3. Citizen Academies

Citizen academies aim to provide citizens with "comprehensive hands-on learning experiences that give residents an opportunity to interact with city management staff and learn about the challenges facing local government" (Callahan and Yang, 2005, p. 4). Citizen academies are relatively recent phenomena. According to Ricardo Morse, they began to appear in the late 1990s, a decade which saw the "ascendance of collaborative governance" when it became widely accepted that city staff should work with citizens in an open and collaborative manner in order to produce better and more transparent policy outcomes (Morse, 2012, p. 82). As of September 2012, Morse found that there have yet to be any systematic studies of citizen academies in the United States to date; however, his study shed light on these programs, detailing the different forms they took and what their stated goals and objectives were so that further analysis and research could be conducted.

The basic notion of the citizen academy is to impart knowledge to its participants on how local government works. Many programs also emphasize reciprocal knowledge exchange so that city staff may also learn from citizens in return. While reciprocal

knowledge exchange is not mentioned by the TLP, it is referenced as an important aspect of citizen participation in the overall Transportation Strategic Plan as quoted in Chapter 1. Further, by providing knowledge, citizen academies encourage citizens to participate in local government and, in some cases, prepare citizens for community leadership positions. Lastly, administrators see citizen academies as a way to improve community relations, as participants can also become program ambassadors. While all the programs have expressed these themes in some way, they vary in the extent to which each goal is represented and executed. Morse displays these as 'basic' and 'advanced' variations in the table reproduced below in order provide a frame of reference from which to measure potential impacts that these programs may have.

Table 1.   Purposes and Goals of Citizen Academies (Morse, 2012, p. 90)

Basic	Advanced
Knowledge	
Equip citizens with basic information about local government. Help citizens who participate in local government become better informed.	Help staff learn more about citizen perspectives on local government service. Citizens learn about key issues facing the community.
Involvement	
Encourage increased citizen involvement. Citizens learn about how they can get more involved in local government.	Explicitly prepare participants for service on boards and commissions. Cultivate community leadership in neighborhoods and the community at large.
Community Relations	
Participants get to know and improve lines of communication with public officials. Participants can become informal ambassadors for local government out in the community.	Participants engage in dialogue with other citizens and local government officials. Community-building among participants themselves as well as with staff.

Morse's research also offers a glimpse into what a typical citizen academy looks like:

Typical Program
• Started within last five years.

- Single local government, produced solely in-house.
- Offered once annually, with application process, cohort group attending multiple sessions, graduation ceremony at end.
- Extensive curriculum; on average, eight 2.5 hour sessions.
- Number of applicants close enough to target enrollment that usually everyone is accepted; small waiting list if necessary.
- Cohort of 20-25 participants.
- Mean reported program budgets $2,000[USD]; median $1,600[USD].

Typical Citizen Academy Program (Morse, 2012, p. 89).

Typically, the citizen academy is more prolonged and more involved than other engagement processes that cities undertake. Rather than focusing on one project or issue, citizen academies aim to take a holistic approach, covering more and broader topics over a longer period of time, and thus requiring a significant commitment from participants. Morse concludes that the academy model of citizen engagement has three potentialities with regards to capacity building:

1. Citizen academies can improve the skills and knowledge of citizens with respect to engaging in community affairs.
2. The more citizen academies emphasize avenues and opportunities for participation, the greater the impact they will have on developing leadership and active participation among citizens.
3. The more citizen academies facilitate community-building and dialogue, the more impact they will have on developing the social capital and "space for dialogue and collective action" dimensions of civic capacity (Morse, 2012, p. 95).

Unfortunately, Morse's study does not analyse the impacts citizen academies may have on their participants. He concludes that this task would "require verification from additional empirical research, but anecdotal evidence suggests that citizen academies have great potential for building civic capacity" (Morse, 2012, p. 95). The literature that assessed these kinds of municipal efforts in the United States highlighted the issue of distinguishing 'allegiance building' versus 'capacity building'. In another study, Adam Marcus found that, "government officials tended to view the academy as a way to build political capital and disseminate information on government's behalf…" (Marcus, 2007, p. 78). He observed that government officials and program staff seemed more interested in teaching citizens rather than learning from them. Research on Citizen Police Academies (CPAs), a model of citizens academies targeting citizen involvement in community policing specifically, suggests that while they are effective in producing participants with a more

positive view of police and the work they do, it also finds that those likely to participate in CPAs already have favourable views towards police to begin with (Brewster et al., 2005). Thus, it is possible that these types of programs may be missing their intended audiences and intended outcomes. They may be more of a public relations exercise and not one necessarily meant to build civic capacity at all: an approach heavily favouring a governance-at-a-distance agenda where communities are "governmentalized" or engaged "for government to achieve policy implementation, public acceptance and operationalize programs, while giving communities a false sense of having been involved in the process" (C. King & Cruickshank, 2010, p. 26).

Citizen academies may have limited effect on policy or decision outcomes "because [the Citizens Academy] does not devolve any decision-making powers from government to citizen…there is no follow-through, no muscle, hence no assurance of changing the status quo" (Marcus, 2007, p. 105). However, citizen academies may build civic capacity and empower citizens to create or join formal structures such as boards or committees, places where they may wield more influence and decision-making powers (Morse, 2012).

The scholarly literature and data on citizen academies is scarce and as such, the analysis of citizen academies remains incomplete. This overview provides some detail on these civic engagement programs and their core concepts. This will be used as part of the framework that will help me analyze the City of Surrey and SFU Transportation Lecture program. For instance, Morse's research provides me with guiding points and key concepts to look for in my own research. Understanding these concepts of a citizen academy is important when looking at the impact, potential, and limitations for enhancing civic capacity and citizen participation.

In conclusion, the literature discussed here shows that citizen participation gains its importance from its connection to democratic values and an understanding that citizen participation can intrinsically result in better government policy and decision making outcomes, especially at the local level (Sirianni, 2009; Healy 1998). Further, this literature looked at the idea of civic capacity or the ability of citizens to participate and be engaged in civic activities. In this regard, and most importantly, the literature found that learning

and therefore knowledge is important to ensure that citizens are capable of meeting the challenges of deliberation and collective problem solving. Citizen Academies are one model cities use to try to facilitate learning and relationship building between administrators and the public they serve. However, their intention and outcomes are often unclear. Programs like these have a mission to build citizens' capacity to engage in governance and government, but there is a tension between objectives to create a critically engaged public and to build support for particular policies. Further study is necessary to explore these issues in more depth.

Chapter 3.   Methodology

To answer my research question, I collected the majority of my primary data from semi-structured in-depth interviews with both participants of the Transportation Lecture Program and Simon Fraser University (SFU) and City of Surrey staff who helped create and deliver it. Interviews were chosen as the main research method in this study because they allowed me to understand the nuances of an individual's attitudes, feelings and beliefs whereas a different method such as a survey may not have provided me with enough in-depth data nor the freedom to probe into an individual's experiences. While a survey was initially considered, I deemed it an impractical method given the complexity of the questions and the scope of this project.

3.1. Staff Interviews

I conducted interviews with the people responsible for creating, operating, and administrating the TLP. It became clear that their decisions and thoughts about the TLP's purpose, structure, and goals would help me better understand the development and administration of TLP and how I can better measure or understand the impacts the program has had on participants. Each interview was contacted using publicly available contact lists and in total, I conducted three interviews: one interview with staff from SFU and two interviews with staff from the City of Surrey. For the purposes of providing anonymity, I have assigned each interviewee a pseudonym. Additionally, the views expressed in these interviews may not be representative of their organizations as a whole and are the results of reflecting on the situation at a particular moment in time, that may have since changed.

I asked these interviewees about their role with the TLP and how and why they got involved in addition to if they could recall how and why the program started and who the program was intended to serve. Further, I asked them if they thought the TLP was successful in achieving its intended goals or objectives.

3.2. Program Participant Interviews

I interviewed participants in the Transportation Lecture Program who took part from 2010 to 2014. The City of Surrey assisted my research by serving as the intermediary between me, the primary researcher, and the TLP's past participants, by forwarding along my correspondence to them. This was necessary because under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, they cannot provide me with personal contact information of TLP participants unless they were given express permission to do so. In exchange for this assistance, the City of Surrey is acknowledged as a supporter of the research project; however, the City of Surrey did not request to review these research findings and as such their support had no impact on the findings.

In total, to aid in recruiting for this research, staff at the City of Surrey sent out 126 emails to past TLP participants, of which 10 emails were undeliverable. Out of a possible 116 participants, this initial invite garnered 17 responses of participants willing to be interviewed for a possible response rate of 15%. Of those 17 participants, only two respondents were female. This is not representative of the total pool of participants considering almost 40% of total participants are female. In order to obtain better female representation in my research, I used snowball sampling whereby I asked my interview subjects to refer me to additional female participants. This method garnered three additional female participants bringing the total respondents to 20. Of these 20 respondents, I conducted interviews with five male and three female participants for a total of eight interviews.

The table below highlights the year the interviewee participated in the TLP as well as some demographic information that I also considered relevant to this research, such as age, sex, city of residence and employment, education level and employment type.

Table 2. **Interview Participants**

Interview	Program Year	Age	Gender	City of Residence	City of Employment	Education Level	Employment Type
1	2010	49	Male	New Westminster	Vancouver	Master's Degree	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
2	2011	31	Female	Vancouver	Vancouver	Master's Degree	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
3	2012	39	Male	Surrey	New Westminster	Bachelor's Degree	Public Administration
4	2013	24	Male	Richmond	Richmond	Bachelor's Degree	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
5	2013	27	Male	Vancouver	Burnaby	Bachelor's Degree	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
6	2014	29	Female	Surrey	New Westminster	Bachelor's Degree	Public Administration
7	2014	25	Female	Richmond	Richmond	Bachelor's Degree	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
8	2014	54	Male	Richmond	Surrey	Bachelor's Degree	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

In addition to these demographic questions, I asked the interviewees questions regarding their motivation for taking the TLP, their expectations of the program, and questions that attempt to understand how the program impacted the interviewee. In order to answer my research questions, I divided my interviews into three distinct sections: attitudes, knowledge, and behaviour. In the first section, I asked the participants if they think the TLP changed their attitudes towards City of Surrey staff, transportation policies, and the City of Surrey in general. In the second section, I asked participants if they believed the TLP improved their knowledge of how the City of Surrey operates and what role city staff has in transportation planning. In addition, I also asked if they have a better understanding of the City of Surrey's transportation context within that of Metro Vancouver. In the last section of my interviews, I asked participants about their behaviour prior to and after taking the TLP. Specifically, I asked participants if they participated in 'civic' activities such as going to municipal open houses, contacting city staff or municipal leaders, talking to others about civic issues, if they've volunteered with community organizations, or if they vote.

3.3. Data Analysis

Each interview took about 30 to 45 minutes to complete and all were done in person at a location chosen by the interviewee. I recorded all my interviews electronically and I transcribed the relevant portions afterward.

I used a "grounded theory method," which is an inductive approach to research (Babbie and Benaquisto, 2014, p. 309). This means that as I collected my data and analyzed it, I compared it with previous findings in a recursive process. From the concepts that I discovered, I was able to determine broader categories, properties, and hypotheses for my data, leading to theories about the TLP and its impacts on its participants.

For participant interviews, I input these transcripts into web-based qualitative data analysis software called Dedoose. In Dedoose, I coded important concepts in addition to taking memos. After each successive interview, transcription, and coding/memoing exercises I was able to identify patterns that informed additional and refined coding of concepts and other key ideas.

Chapter 4.   Analysis: Program Design

This section will explore the program's creation, structure, and operation through interviews that I conducted with its creators and administrators. Through their thoughts, expectations and experiences in designing and operating the TLP, I will be better able to situate the experiences of the participants within the parameters set by Simon Fraser University and City of Surrey staff.

4.1. The Portland Model

In 1992, Portland city commissioner Earl Blumenauer asked the Portland Office of Transportation (now Portland Bureau of Transportation or PBOT) to find a way to train Neighbourhood Association transportation committee members on city and regional transportation policies. Rick Gustafson, a transportation consultant and former executive officer at Metro, Portland's regional government, offered to develop and teach the program (Johns, 2005). PBOT structured its program's curriculum around introducing various topics led by policy and decision makers, planners, and engineers. Over the duration of the 10-week course, participants work on a transportation project of their choice and at the end of the program, participants present their projects to a panel of reviewers that include the Director of PBOT, the Mayor of Portland's Transportation Policy Advisor, members of Portland's Planning Commission, and citizen advocates. After its initial trial, PBOT partnered with Portland State University (PSU) to open the Traffic and Transportation Program to PSU's students and the general public.

PBOT states its program is "designed for the neighbourhood activist, new or experienced, who wants to make a difference in traffic, transportation issues in Portland" (PSU, 2014). PSU charges tuition for the course but the city offers scholarships to citizens to cover the majority of the course's costs in order to make it accessible to the community. Since its inception, with about 45 people per session and two terms per year, over 1,000 people have taken the course.

The City of Portland is widely seen as leader in urban sustainability, particularly in transportation. "Val", an SFU staff person, cites the "broad base of informed people embedded throughout the city" created by programs such as this as an essential part of how Portland was able to create this reputation.

4.2. The TLP's Beginnings

This section will explore how and why the City of Surrey and Simon Fraser University started the Transportation Lecture Program. To gain this insight, I asked staff from each organization about their involvement in and perceptions of the genesis of the TLP.

As said in Chapter 1, the City of Surrey was looking to engage Surrey citizens on urban planning and transportation challenges facing their rapidly growing city. Vince Lalonde, the General Manager of Engineering at the time, reached out to SFU Surrey campus Executive Director, Joanne Curry, because he was interested in creating a speakers series in Surrey, similar to those that SFU City Program offers at the SFU Vancouver Campus. These free lectures focus "on hot-topic urban issues [and] feature prominent speakers from around the world" (Simon Fraser University, 2015). Concurrently, Curry was looking to increase SFU's presence in the South of Fraser region at its Surrey Campus that opened in 2006. Gordon Price, Director of SFU's City Program, suggested that instead of a speaker's series that they create something more akin to Portland's Traffic and Transportation Program (see Chapter 4.1). Price was familiar with the Portland program because he had been a guest lecturer there for over a decade.

In 2009, Lalonde observed Portland's program in person and in January 2010, he brought forward a proposal to the City of Surrey Transportation Committee. He sought a partnership with Simon Fraser University to create a Transportation Lecture program, partially based on Portland's program and the rationale for Surrey's program was that:

- Transportation is a key issue with the public;
- Component of overall strategy to better inform and engage the public;
- Reduce 'single issue' debates in front of Council;

- Stimulate public interest, improve understanding and engage in 'smart' dialogue;
- Engage community and stakeholders – educate and inform;
- Broaden public understanding of transportation challenges, strategies and opportunities;
- Challenge and change perceptions;
- Create informed advocates for smart or sustainable transportation and planning; and
- Improve profile/status for CoS

(The City of Surrey, 2010a)

The committee voted to endorse the program and suggested the City ensure adequate funding for the program (The City of Surrey, 2010a).

Based on the "Portland Model" (Chapter 4.1), this program would educate, engage, and inform citizens and stakeholders (as opposed to Portland's intended audience of neighbourhood activists) on a "range of transportation issues, including roadway planning, the relationship between transportation and land use, and the operation and management of [local and regional] transportation systems" (Simon Fraser University, 2014). Each session in the course is led by transportation practitioners from the City of Surrey, other City staff, and external local and regional agencies (such as the regional transportation authority, TransLink; the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure; Metro Vancouver; and the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC)). Programs like the TLP can be found throughout the United States under the names of 'Citizen Academies' or 'Planning Academies' (Morse, 2012). These programs typically cover more than just transportation issues and examine the many functions of local government. "Val" at SFU rhetorically asked, "Why don't we have some way of at least informing people about how city hall works?" Indeed, it is not wholly unexpected that Val, working for a major university would approach particular problems with an education lens.

"Jordyn," a staff person with the City of Surrey who was involved with the development of the TLP, recalls that they saw the potential value in this longer-term engagement program: that by educating citizens they could reduce tension and misunderstanding between staff and citizens, thus making their work easier over time.

Vince felt [a program like Portland's] was a really good platform for what he sees as a growing connection with our citizens and our residents. It was just a good news, positive thing for us to do but at the same time

there was a level of motivation [for us] behind it because in front of council transportation issues often dominate every kind of land development application: extra traffic, "why haven't you put a sidewalk in?" "We need traffic calming," "this extra development is going to make the neighbourhood unsafe." It was all very single issue and without context so this [program] was an attempt to go out to some stakeholders and our citizens to say, "yeah, when you see something brought to council and a decision is made by council or recommendations are made by staff, there's usually a story behind it and never a very straight-forward story" – The trade-offs, the push and the pull, the funding, the legislative authority to do things. (Jordyn, 2015)

"Braidy", another City of Surrey staff person who helped develop the TLP, acknowledged that when Lalonde first presented the prospect of the TLP they were fascinated by the TLP's positive possibilities but also hesitant at the additional work involved for them:

We thought it was a great idea. We supported the concept of it and it seemed it had been very effective in Portland so we were both excited by the prospect of it while we also understood it would be a lot of work. So that was the challenge as we were already really busy. (Braidy, 2015)

Jordyn echoed Braidy's concerns regarding their capacity to operate this type of program but also spoke to how they the TLP has since become normalized in the work that they are doing:

[The TLP] is no different from any other work that we do here in the transportation section. Surrey is quite a lean organization when you compare us to other municipalities staffing-wise. There's not really any fat. That applies to both transportation division, and my section, as well. We have a population of half a million people plus or minus and … my equivalent team in somewhere like Vancouver is probably four, five or six times bigger in terms of staffing. That gives you the context of when we take on an initiative like this, we do have to do a little time-out and think about how we're going to make this happen, do we have the resources. Yes, it's more work, you can't deny that but we do see the value in it, we do believe that it's part of a bigger conversation and direction that we want to go in our community. We made it happen. (Jordyn, 2016)

The interviews with Surrey and SFU staff align with Surrey's policy directions expressed in Chapter 1 of this research regarding the role of the City in relation to 1) a better-informed and more actively engaged public and 2) a City that has an active role in education and promotion in relation to transportation. Indeed, there seems to be a shift in

the understanding of what the role of City staff is. For Jordyn, rather than seeing the TLP as "scope creep"[1], they see it as a necessary part of the work staff do in order to be successful planners and administrators. In this sense, the TLP may be more about reducing the frustration of staff by minimizing obstructions (re: angry citizens) than offering citizens more or better involvement in the planning or decisions they make but that also does not preclude both these things from happening either.

4.3. Partnership between the City of Surrey and Simon Fraser University

The previous section spoke to how and why the partnership between the City of Surrey and SFU developed but this partnership is more than just a matter of convenience. Val at SFU specifically spoke about the importance of the partnership between PBOT and Portland State University and applied this to their understanding of the TLP's operating partners:

> The idea … of a joint program between the university and the city in order to bring people from the community into a neutral place so that they could begin to understand how the city works and have some interaction with senior staff was so that it wasn't an antagonistic relationship from the beginning … This neutral ground, in which you weren't dealing with the particular issue that the neighbourhood was anxious or upset about, took the antagonistic relationship out and so it was a chance for a much more informative, two-way relationship. This allows you to get to a remarkable level of detail and so [participants] definitely come out of it with a much better understanding of not only how things work but more importantly, why. What the trade-offs are, what the challenges [staff] face are, how cities work … (Val, 2015)

Based on their experience and understanding of Portland's program, this SFU staff person believed that it was essential for citizens to perceive that the program was held in a neutral space and hosted in part by a neutral party. This sentiment conveys a few interesting ideas. First, it suggests that places like City Hall are poor places for citizens, elected officials, and city staff to meet and interact. As Val points out above, they perceive that the relationship between citizens and city staff in that space is based on antagonism

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[1] A common term used in project management that refers to uncontrolled changes or continuous growth in a project's scope and is generally considered harmful.

or opposition to one another. One reason for this perceived relationship dynamic might be that City Hall is a place where citizens pay taxes, issue complaints, and speak for or against city decisions and thus a citizen's relationship with City Hall is couched in remonstration. Additionally, City Hall is the seat of municipal government, where citizens direct their hopes, dreams, fear, and anger in local elections so one's relationship with City Hall, the physical space, is influenced by City Hall, the politicians and their agendas. Further, this value that Val places on neutrality, frames the antagonistic relationship between the City and citizens as dysfunctional and presumes that antagonism or opposition isn't valuable. Indeed, the belief that antagonism which prevents valuable and much needed learning that citizens require seems to be an important underlying philosophy of the TLP[2].

Second, Val's sentiments imply that a university, in this case Simon Fraser University, *is* a neutral space for citizens and city staff to meet. This notion is suspect and disregards the idea that a university is also a place fraught with tension and competing interests. Like all spaces, SFU's spaces come with preconceived and lived personal interpretations and experiences attached to it for every individual. For instance, the average cost of attending a Canadian university in 2015 was $6,191 which makes post-secondary education financially unattainable for many, and thus a space of exclusion based on economic status and class (CBC, 2015). Therefore, low-income individuals who resent this exclusion may feel unwelcome and opt to never participate in a program in university space.

While Val at SFU might hold these attitudes around the importance of SFU as a neutral space, the City of Surrey actually only held the TLP at the SFU Surrey Campus once in 2010. The City of Surrey subsequently moved the program to its new and nearby City Centre Library from 2011 to 2013 and then to Surrey's new City Hall, located on the same plaza, in 2014 where City of Surrey has held the program since. In general, City staff wanted to host the program in City Centre for its accessibility by transit but actually never specifically envisioned SFU campus as the ideal space. For Jordyn at the City of

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[2] It should also be noted that from the time the TLP launched in 2010 until 2014, Surrey City Hall was located in an area not served well by transit around 11 kilometres outside Surrey's city centre. Even if Surrey staff wanted to hold the TLP at City Hall then, it would have been a logistically poor choice.

Surrey, they felt that holding the TLP at City Hall was a positive move and that by moving the program into that space better serves the objectives of the program:

> It never really occurred to me to think about [SFU as neutral ground]. I think it's because we have made it very clear that the stated objective of this program is to talk about what happens at City Hall. This is a City of Surrey program … it's all about how we are making decisions in this building. So, I don't see [moving the program into City Hall] as an issue at all. You could almost argue it's completely the opposite: it's us actually opening the doors of city hall and getting people in and giving them direct access to staff that they wouldn't normally have. I would say it's the opposite of a problem: it's actually us being transparent and open and very non-threatening. (Jordyn, 2015)

It is interesting to note that City of Surrey staff do not necessarily disagree with SFU staff person's perception that City Hall is a place associated with negative experiences. In fact, city staff even referred to City Hall as an "ivory tower," an epithet normally, and perhaps ironically, reserved for universities and academic communities because they are perceived as places where people talk or theorize about problems without any practical experiences to inform their discussions. However, the statement above gives the impression that city staff believe that by hosting the program at City Hall they can demystify, destigmatize, and transform it into a positive space for citizens. A question that naturally follows this then, is if SFU does not physically host the TLP what else does this partnership provide the City of Surrey?

SFU handles the administration and some logistics of the TLP with regards to registration and enrolment (when the City of Surrey moved the program to city-owned buildings, the Library and City Hall respectively, SFU no longer handled room bookings). Other than this and the reference to a limited oversight role, SFU does not contribute directly to the operation of the TLP; however, the City of Surrey gains access to SFU's "brand" since they co-present the program, in title at least.

> In terms of logistics, this partnership is an interesting one because it's the City of Surrey and SFU Lecture Program but SFU doesn't have a lot of input, really. We have their blessing, if you like, in terms of what we're presenting isn't crazy but the content is created, designed, and delivered, by Surrey. Gordon Price's presentations bookend the program and are useful [at the beginning as] it sets the tone and the theme and at the end he does a nice wrap up. SFU helps us administratively, in terms of

registration and stuff like that. It's a 90% Surrey initiative. It's helpful to have the SFU involvement because it helps give credibility to what we're doing. (Jordyn, 2015)

[SFU] handles the registration, room bookings – just the mechanics – and also [this partnership comes with] our brand, not a small thing. (Val, 2015)

Indeed, as mentioned above, SFU's brand is "not a small thing" and even contradicts the earlier assertion of SFU's neutrality since brands are full of values and meaning. SFU is, by some measures, a well-regarded post-secondary institution. For instance, in 2015, QS University Rankings placed SFU as the 11th best university in Canada and Maclean's Magazine placed SFU as the top comprehensive university in Canada (QS Top Universities: Worldwide University Rankings, 2015) (Maclean's, 2015). For Surrey, the SFU brand provides the TLP with legitimacy and credibility, which is something that the City of Surrey brand alone cannot do. Indeed, one staff member spoke about how the City of Surrey was perceived when they first started the TLP:

Surrey was the dirt on the shoe in terms of it's a crappy place; nobody wanted to live there. It was a bit of a joke. (Jordyn, 2015)

For Surrey, the SFU brand is key to attracting participants (both lecturers and lecturees). Additionally, these statements speak to a level of trust and respect that the university garners among staff at Surrey. Perhaps, the necessary "neutral ground" that SFU staff spoke to is not so much a physical space but rather an intangible one that acknowledges that the program has the blessing or oversight of a well-regarded university.

It goes back to Surrey's reputation and the fact that people [are interested in what] we're doing and so I see, and this is going to sound somewhat crass, but the SFU involvement and even if it's very minor, is important to us because … people like to see an educational stamp, an institutional stamp that this is legitimate. It means we will continue to have people interested [in the TLP] who may ordinarily not be because it may come across three or four amateur presenters who really don't know what they're talking about but as soon as there's an SFU link people are going to go, "Oh well, it obviously has got something going. SFU is a respected institution!" … I think it helps us just from a branding, promotion, and legitimacy angle; it doesn't do harm, it does good. (Jordyn, 2015)

Lastly, City staff see their partnership with SFU on the TLP as a starting point for future collaboration. For Jordyn, they strongly believe that municipalities should have

formal relationships with universities whereby they can both benefit from research and development. Certainly, this partnership arrangement seems to meet SFU's stated ambitions to bring a higher profile to the university at their Surrey campus by establishing a strong relationship with City Hall and founding the groundwork for further cooperation between the two organizations.

> [I] think we are building a relationship with SFU at other levels beyond this program. Whether from a city shaping [aspect], in terms of our downtown [plans] and what SFU's place is going to be in that in terms number of students, faculty, buildings, aligning [those things] with what [Surrey] wants our downtown to be – that [relationship] is just getting stronger and stronger. So, I suspect this program has done no harm or has been a stepping-stone towards those bigger relationships; those higher order relationships. I always think a great municipality is the sort that actually has a very formal relationship with someone like an SFU. We want to build [relationships], from a policy perspective and service delivery perspective, community safety [and] road safety [perspectives]. (Jordyn, 2015)

Jordyn is alluding to a relationship between Surrey and SFU that utilizes each organization's unique capacities in a beneficial arrangement: The University has legions of students and academics doing research in many areas relevant to the City's needs and interests and the City can provide SFU a laboratory of sorts. This concept exists at the City of Vancouver in the form of CityStudio, a partnership between the City and several post-secondary institutions that they implemented to "experiment with the ways cities are co-created, while teaching students the skills needed to collaborate on real projects in Vancouver with City staff and community stakeholders" (CityStudio, 2015). The City of Surrey has already begun to develop these relationships. In 2014, the City of Surrey committed $240,000 of funding for the University of British Columbia's School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture Master of Urban Design Program in which "students will examine real-world issues such as transportation, land use and community development, partnering with Surrey to come up with innovative solutions, and sharing those solutions with the international design community" (SALA, 2014). The TLP may be part of a growing trend of municipalities partnering with universities and other academic institutions, which warrants additional study.

In many ways, the partnership between Surrey and SFU is a convenient arrangement given their respective needs and proximity to one another; however, for

Surrey, it is also part of broader re-branding, perception changing, and city-building exercises.

4.4. Objectives, Content and Structure

While the previous section outlined the nature of the partnership between the City of Surrey and Simon Fraser University, it also briefly spoke to each party's responsibilities in the operation of the TLP. This section will focus on the program's content and structure and therefore it will speak to the intentions and objectives of Surrey staff in designing and operating the TLP.

4.4.1. Objectives and Audience

In July 2010, Gordon Price, former Vancouver City Councillor and director of Simon Fraser University's City Program attended a session of Surrey City Council to report on the newly created SFU & City of Surrey Transportation Lecture Program noted the following:

- SFU & City of Surrey Transportation Lecture Program is the first time a course of this nature has been offered in Canada. It is a tremendous opportunity for the region. Staff will create and evaluate the curriculum.

- The SFU and City of Surrey Transportation Lecture Program will start in October 2010 as a 10-week course, three hours each week. There will be a fee for the course to encourage participant commitment. The registration fee is $300 and there will be a [$250] scholarship available to help offset the expense and make it accessible to individuals from all backgrounds.

- The premise of the course is to give people broad ideas of the transportation issues faced in the community and region as a whole (The City of Surrey, 2010b).

From my interviews with both SFU and Surrey staff, it was clear that there was a desire for Surrey staff to educate participants on technical and theoretical knowledge related to transportation and urban planning. More specifically, Surrey created the TLP with intent to focus their attention on Surrey residents. While they state they are looking

to attract the "general citizen" to participate in the TLP, it seems more likely they are looking for residents who are already somewhat civically engaged, who participate in community advocacy, and attend city-led open houses or City Council meetings, but who, in staffers' view, lack information or awareness on how decisions are made at City Hall.

> We get lots of issues that [people bring] up at our council meetings where it's clear that the individuals are not fully aware of the facts, the information, and the considerations that go into decisions at city hall and so that was the target audience: the general citizen and possible advocates. (Braidy, 2015)

Further, Surrey staff wanted the TLP to incorporate the experiences of Surrey's engineering and planning staff to enable citizens to relate to and empathize with staff and the challenges they face in the work that they do. Surrey staff situate themselves as objective individuals with a desire to good work that do not deserve the hostility or antagonism they face in "trying to do their job."

> When we were creating [the TLP], it really was mainly to get people to understand that there are so many considerations in every decision [we make] and that it's not as simple as saying, "I want to do this!" and you go and make it happen … We did, again, want [participants] to understand the scope and the scale of what we do and what we are involved with while also educating them on the basics – the basic understanding of transportation because with a lot of the [participants], they clearly didn't have that basic understanding. (Braidy, 2015)

> We're not academics, we're just people who have a job and at night we try and do our best to pass our knowledge on, our experience on and experiences on in a very non-academic way but something that's hopefully accessible. (Jordyn, 2015)

From the interviews, it's clearer that City staff designed TLP to exchange knowledge in mostly one direction; from staff to citizen. While staff try to position themselves as relatable and "non-academic," their statements still create a hierarchy of knowledge and understanding with sentiments that echo Stephen Cupps' idea of the role of city staff: to be the rational, objective, and steadfast planner and administrator not easily swayed by the passion and persistence of the public (Cupps, 1977, p. 484).

4.4.2.   Structure

This section will detail how Surrey staff intended to achieve their objectives in the structural and curriculum design of the TLP.

Between 2010 and 2014, the TLP generally consisted of ten, three-hour sessions over nine to ten weeks.[3] While staff made slight changes to the TLP and its sessions each year, the program's content generally focused the following key points[4]:

- Providing an overview of transportation planning from both a City of Surrey and a broader regional/Metro Vancouver context;
- Explaining the connection between land use planning and transportation planning;
- Providing an overview of transportation systems funding, operations, and maintenance;
- Holding site visits in Surrey neighbourhoods to explain how planning theory works (or doesn't) in practice;
- Including group or individual projects and presentations, debates, and or other interactive role-playing exercises.

[3] In 2011, there were 11 sessions.
[4] In 2012, the TLP was divided into two parts, 5 sessions each.

Figure 2.   Sample TLP Course Overview from 2014 (Sessions 1-6)

Within the TLP curriculum, staff included specific activities such as the site visits and the role-playing exercise for participants to stay interested and engaged but also to minimize attrition. Further, they hoped these activities would allow participants to operationalize the knowledge they acquired over the term of the program but also allow participants a chance to debate each another and voice their own views. With regards to building capacity, staff spoke to the idea that these participants would develop speaking and presentation skills.

> [We wanted] to keep people coming back each week … One way to do that was to bring in a variety [of activities] so it's not just lecture, lecture, lecture. That's why [staff] presented; we had guest speakers, we did the bus tour, we got the participants to go away and go, "Now it's my turn to think about

what I've heard, build on what I've heard, disagree and debate with the group about what I've heard." It's an opportunity for people to have the floor and debate some of the things they've heard or build on or give a different perspective to things and that is one of the core aspects of the program that we want (Jordyn, 2015)

I hope it's helpful for people just from a personal and professional development perspective to stand up in front of people and give an opinion. (Jordyn, 2015)

The objective is the same throughout, it's simply to get them involved, get them to be thinking about and trying to apply what they've learned through the course. (Braidy, 2015)

While Jordyn spoke to the idea that these aspects are central to the design of the TLP and that they were "for [staff] to be challenged and to think about new things," they are arguably secondary to the importance staff place on the knowledge the program provides.

4.5. Summary

The City of Surrey understands that as a rapidly growing municipality it will face more challenging and contentious urban transportation and land-use issues, made only more difficult by Surrey's lack of a positive reputation and an established urban polity. Surrey staff envisioned the TLP as one avenue to address this by communicating with residents about the complexity of transportation issues and the factors that City staff consider before making decisions. As part of a trend toward more formal partnerships between local governments and post-secondary institutions, Surrey leveraged Simon Fraser University's reputation and some of its resources to develop a program that would contribute to changing perceptions of the City to a more positive and progressive brand. While participants are encouraged to put the knowledge they gain into action by participating in local democratic processes, this goal is subordinate to others; the program's main purpose is to educate participants in the challenges City staff face and to reduce conflict and antagonism in local debate.

Chapter 5.   Analysis: Impact on Participants

5.1. Program Participant Information

As the TLP can be described as an initiative to create a better "informed and engaged public" and is also explicitly described as a "unique learning opportunity for citizens, professionals, and stakeholders," it is important for this research to first look at who is actually participating in this program to see who this program is reaching (The City of Surrey Engineering Department, 2008, p. 25) (City of Surrey, 2015).

Since the program's inception, the TLP has not attracted the type of participant – those who lived or worked in Surrey and who staff would consider a layperson yet somewhat engaged citizen – in the proportions that staff had hoped for. Staff stated that when they started the program, they had hoped TLP participants would be at least 80% Surrey residents. Based on some simple data collection staff conducted for registration purposes, the TLP has yet to come anywhere near that goal. Between 2010 and 2014, only 46% of participants were residents of Surrey compared to 54% who resided elsewhere in Metro Vancouver (See Table 2).

Over the same period, about 39% of the participants identified as female versus 61% who identified as male (See Table 3). Three interviewees identified as female. Of the eight participants I was able to interview, only two were residents, but neither worked in the City of Surrey. One non-resident I interviewed worked within Surrey.

Table 3. **Participants by Surrey Residents vs. Metro Vancouver (MV) Residents**

Year	Surrey residents	MV residents
2014	12	10
2013	9	20
2012	14	9
2011	9	15
2010	13	12
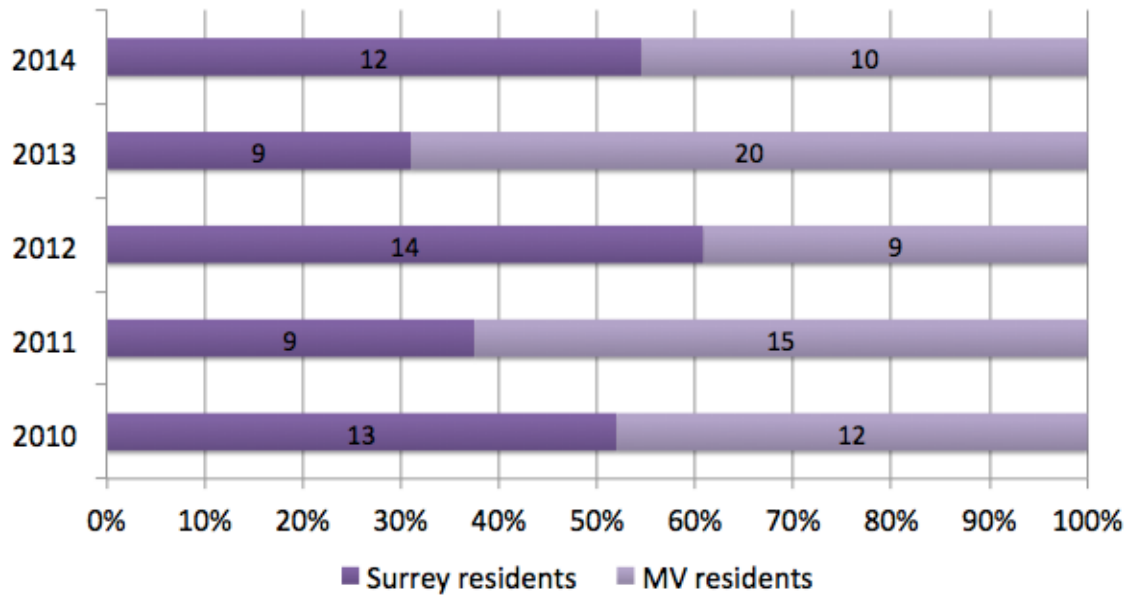
Table 4. **Participants by gender**

Year	Male	Female
2014	10	12
2013	13	16
2012	15	8
2011	15	9
2010	25	5
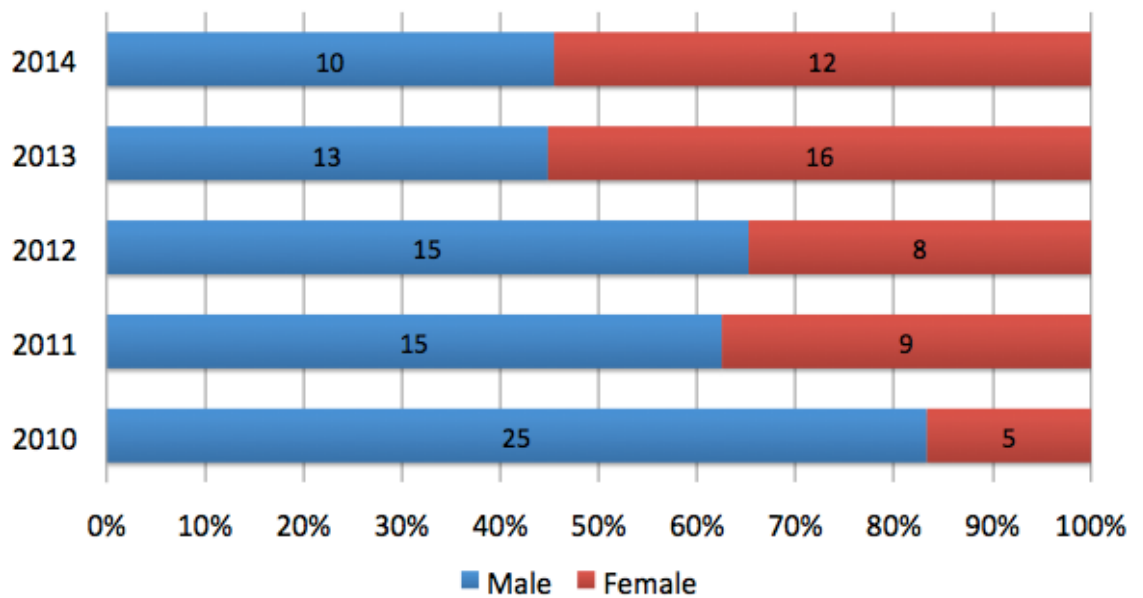
Despite staff's concerted efforts to target their desired participant demographic through advertising and outreach, the TLP has clearly attracted a good proportion of people who lived or worked outside of Surrey and who were what staff referred to as consultants or other people who took the TLP for professional reasons:

> … We put a huge effort into getting the citizens of Surrey. We contacted every single community association: People you think have an interest in civic affairs. We put ads in the papers. We used social media [and] our website. We went out and said, "There's this fantastic course [that] you can just spend once a week in the evening and find out how your taxes are being spent!" It's been really difficult to get people to come. We've had some success. A good number of [participants] lived [in Surrey] but were also consultants or whatever it might be. They weren't just someone who took the kids to school [and] was curious about why transportation is chaos outside the school everyday -type of people. (Jordyn, 2015)

> Initially, because we didn't get the numbers we thought from the community, and it was going to be a tougher sell; I was a little concerned about it. [That gap has] been filled in by this professional class. (Val, 2015)

In 2012, staff implemented a two-tiered registration scheme for the program, which offered a lower fee to Surrey residents and charged a higher fee for people who lived elsewhere (see Table 4). The reasons for this change were to incentivise more participation from Surrey residents and to acknowledge that Surrey residents already contribute to the program's operation through taxation. Further, in 2012 only, staff kept the deposit of participants whose employers paid for their registration fee, which points to an understanding that staff saw a trend that many participants were taking the TLP for professional development reasons.

Table 5. **Registration fees and incentives by program year**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Surrey Resident Registration Fee	$50 plus $250 deposit	$50 plus $250 deposit	$30 plus $100 deposit per module	$31.50 plus $100 deposit	$20 plus $100 deposit
Incentives	Deposit returned with 80% attendance	Deposit returned with 80% attendance	Deposit returned with 80% attendance if not sponsored by employer	Deposit returned with 80% attendance	Deposit returned with 80% attendance
Non-Surrey Resident Registration Fee	$50 plus $250 deposit	$50 plus $250 deposit	$60 plus $100 deposit per module	$63 plus $100 deposit	$105 plus $100 deposit
Incentives	Deposit returned with 80% attendance	Deposit returned with 80% attendance	Deposit returned with 80% attendance if not sponsored by employer	Deposit returned with 80% attendance	Deposit returned with 80% attendance

Even with a change to the TLP's registration fee structure, the TLP struggled to attract staff's ideal participants in the proportions they were hoping for. While the registration fee for Surrey residents is modest, this cost and other associated costs like parking, transit or childcare, in addition to the significant time commitment, still represent barriers for many. However, staff mentioned some success when speaking about the Surrey residents they did manage to attract to the program:

> [One year], one of the Surrey residents happened to be on the board of trade. To me, that's a really nice kind of person you want. They care about their community; they're a resident. They live and they work and they recreate here. But they also have a real stake in the community: this person runs a business and there's jobs and stuff. So that to me is the perfect participant in some ways. (Jordyn, 2015)

Based on staffers' statements on the program's challenges in this regard, in addition to the information they provided in Chapter 4.4.1, it is more apparent that they were searching for people who not only have a vested interest in Surrey but also who might be in leadership positions or influential in their community. A reason for striving to attract individuals such as the one described above is that these types of people can increase or deepen the impact of the TLP by being able to spread their learning (or the perspectives of city staff) beyond themselves to their respective networks, which could be many and diverse. From the perspective of the city, these networks can also provide useful connections, which they can organize to advance the city's own policy intentions.

All of the interviewees had at minimum a bachelor's degree and either worked in "public administration" or "professional, scientific and technical services" as defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 2007 (Statistic Canada). Interviewees perceived that those who took the TLP with them tended to be people who lived outside of Surrey and whose professional career was working within a municipal government (public administration) or in transportation, engineering or other professional fields (professional, scientific and technical services). Based on the way this was described by my interviewees, this gave the TLP cohorts a different character than what would be expected of a citizens group that should be constituted of a more representative, non-professional cross section of Surrey. Moreover, even though it would seem contradictory to the networking and professional development purpose for which many of the participants took the TLP, some of these participants saw the lack of non-expert citizen participation as a drawback to the overall performance of the TLP.

Our class was a bunch of professionals. (Interview 2, 2011)

There were probably a few people who were pretty new to some of the topics. There was a really broad array of people there. But I think most, 90% had some interest going into it in transportation and city planning but people came from a pretty broad spectrum. There were health people there, engineers, planners; I think we had a police officer there. Advocates, too. (Interview 5, 2013)

There was at least one person … who was taking the course as a citizen so she had a different perspective than I did … It would have been great if there were more people like her in the program because my sense is

most of the people were professionals and people with transportation interests. (Interview 1, 2010)

I was actually shocked. It was kind of marketed as very resident specific - even the price was different if you were a resident. So, I figured that you'd have a lot of that but I found it was very much professionals. They had some people, some running for Surrey city council that have now that have been elected, we had some people that were working at other municipalities. Actually, some that have kept in touch and are doing work for the City of New Westminster, so that's kind of interesting, as well, where we see each other after the fact. But, I found it more professional driven versus residential side of it which I had expected … I think there might have been two residents [of Surrey]. (Interview 6, 2014)

This study's interviews and the limited quantitative data the City of Surrey collected confirm that a significant number of people in their program cohorts were not from or have a limited connection to Surrey. The participant interviewees also perceived their peers to be taking the TLP out of professional interest, relating to their employment, as opposed to civic interest, relating to their role as a resident or citizen of Surrey. Indeed, if a large proportion of the TLP's participants are "outsider" professionals who are already engaged and informed, as opposed to the "neighbourhood activists" that the Portland program aims to attract, then it raises questions about the degree to which the City of Surrey is achieving its goals of engaging and informing the public as stated in its Transportation Strategic Plan. On the other hand, Surrey now has a network of professionals across the Metro Vancouver region, who theoretically better understand transportation and land-use issues – from Surrey's perspective.

… Even though we are getting lots of people from Vancouver and other places, I think the direction we are going in and … the way we're approaching trying to be progressive, is consistent with Vancouver and we're very different and at a very different stage [comparatively] but I think it is a positive message across the region and by having these people involved, it's kind of like building your base and out of that, it will continue to help increase a positive, sustainable approach to transportation and planning. I think there's value, to me, and I think for the city, just in creating that broader base, broader awareness, and I think it will continue to grow. It's making those building blocks. (Braidy, 2015)

I think from Surrey's point of view, [the TLP] has been an amazing opportunity because now you've got professionals throughout Metro Vancouver who understand Surrey from the City's point of view. That is a

great advantage, I think; that [Surrey's] issues are not the second tier [compared to Vancouver]. (Val, 2015)

Whereas Portland is the "500-pound gorilla – the only big player [in its region]," Surrey has so many other voices to contend with (Val, 2015). So the TLP creates other possibilities and does achieve some objectives for the city, including a more respectable reputation and an improved profile. It could be a significant accomplishment for Surrey to gain stature in a region of 21 municipalities, where regional planning and cooperation is an important facet. For instance, Surrey's voice in both professional and popular circles could carry more weight in the negotiation with Vancouver and its region for transit infrastructure investment.

5.1.1.   Motivation

The interviewees heard about the TLP from two main sources. Three were referred to the program by their peers who had previously taken it, while the other five were referred to the TLP through electronic mailing lists related to SFU's City Program, or from a website, particularly the City of Surrey website and Gordon Price's urban planning and transportation focused blog[5].

> I had a mentor at work that I kind of discussed with that I'm interested in getting into transportation planning. He had had taken the course in the previous year and said it was a really good thing to take. (Interview 5, 2013)

As mentioned in Chapter 5.1, all interviewees have some professional connection to municipal government or to transportation planning already so it follows that these are the sources that referred them to the TLP. Additionally, this professional connection or interest in transportation planning and a specific determination to improve upon their existing knowledge relevant to their work, motivated the interviewees to opt in once they saw the opportunity. For example, one interviewee, a transportation coordinator for a local university, "thought it would be useful to know how Surrey does its planning" to gain relevant knowledge and insight to advance their individual or their employer's objectives.

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[5] As a City Councillor in Vancouver, Gordon Price started an online newsletter called Price Tags. He has continued to publish a blog that serves as a forum for urban issues in Vancouver that is well read and regarded by urban professionals and engaged citizens.

I was doing a little bit of transportation; we had just adopted our master transportation plan [in a different municipality in which the interviewee works] at the time and I did more of the front end, actually at that point I was more front end work versus the technician level so I did a lot of the open houses and set-ups for that, not so much the technical components behind it all. So, I wanted just to learn a little bit more in regards to the transportation planning realm. (Interview 6, 2014)

I've been interested in transportation for quite some time. Being an economist, we're really in favour of things like road pricing and more efficient programs such as distance based insurance, trying to tie your usage of an automobile to direct costs, dealing with externalities. I think [my motivation for taking the program] was largely sort of being an economist, having an interest in transportation, and teaching this course on urban issues. (Interview 1, 2010)

I'm a member of the Transportation Advisory Committee [in another municipality] and at that time, I was on it for about 8 months. I figured there'd be some takeaways from [the lecture program] to bring to the committee. (Interview 4, 2013)

The above interview excerpts highlight how the TLP fits into these participants' current interests or professional career and how they used the TLP as a professional development opportunity. There were those who, while looking for a learning opportunity, also sought to participate in the TLP to develop their professional resume for professional and or academic goals. The TLP offers access to professional networks, information, and education for a nominal monetary and time cost, compared to more traditional academic programs. Two interviewees specifically used the course to enhance their resumes for potential job applications and for their applications to graduate school.

I've considered an education and career in the planning profession for a few years now. I'm just exploring a little bit although I'm working in a [related] field … It was one way to explore it … I'll be moving to Toronto next year for a Masters of Planning at Ryerson. (Interview 4, 2013)

It was 2013, I had applied my first time to go for my masters and I wasn't accepted so I was kind of looking in that next year to do anything I can to [improve] my resume a little bit and so I entered into the course… (Interview 5, 2013)

While interview subjects 4 and 5 didn't know for sure if taking the TLP made a difference in their successful applications to graduate school, they both agreed that they

felt like it did. These interviewees are among the younger participants, age 25 and 27 respectively, and therefore earlier in their careers than others, where resume building may be of equal or greater importance to the learning opportunity. Surrey staff remarked that the TLP is "like a version of volunteering only more useful" (Jordyn, 2015). Indeed, the TLP on a resume may be used as a means to additional learning opportunities.

While interviewees' motivations and expressed interests do not go as far as seeking an activist kind of engagement with the City of Surrey, in which they have a 'bone to pick' or a policy agenda to pursue, interviewees not only want to learn for the sake of learning, but also want to meet people in positions of power. The TLP can be a step towards something else and perhaps, the next step to knowing the actors who plan and make decisions at city hall is to actually engage them and seek influence through them.

> It's an area that I have a little bit of knowledge in but it would be, I thought, a great opportunity to enhance my knowledge. Transportation is an important part of land-use planning in Metro Vancouver. (Interview 8, 2014)

> I wanted to learn something new and I wanted to get to know the people who were actually in charge of building the city. (Interview 4, 2013)

For the most part, participants saw the learning contained in the TLP as instrumental, contributing to their personal goals of higher education, professional networking or career development. The TLP offered them a low-cost opportunity to gain these benefits. Still, the TLP can allow participants to gain knowledge to effect change in their community too. The learning component of the TLP – and, indeed, the networks that the program cultivates as well – may contribute in unexpected ways to participants' future engagement with civic issues, even if this is incidental to the main motivations they have for participating.

5.2. Impact on participant perceptions

When assessing how the TLP impacted participants' perceptions or attitudes toward City of Surrey staff, half of the participants that I interviewed mentioned that they had pre-existing professional relationships with City of Surrey staff or were formerly or currently employed in Surrey's or other municipalities' public administration. I found that

these interviewees had positive perceptions and attitudes towards city staff. This often took the form of either empathy or an appreciation and understanding of the nature of the work that municipal staff undertake in transportation planning. These participants for example, noted the complexities of balancing the political agendas of elected officials, the reaction of the public and the confines of internal bureaucracies. Indeed, those who currently or previously worked for a municipality stated that they could easily relate to and thus sympathize with City of Surrey staff. Therefore, these interview subjects cited that they had either no change in perceptions or that their pre-existing perceptions were reinforced after taking the TLP.

> For me this is a little different because most of the people who had been delivering the lectures on the city side I knew them from before; they were my colleagues [when I used to work for the City of Surrey]. (Interview 3, 2012)

> I did an internship in [Surrey's] sustainability office and so I already had a positive view of the City of Surrey staff. Living in Vancouver, you hear a lot about Surrey being a huge growing population and how progressive the City of Surrey actually is and this sort of reinforced it …You'll often hear people complaining about how horrible the roads are or something but don't realize how much work goes into even maintaining or repairing or like introducing 'complete streets' or something. (Interview 7, 2014)

> I don't know if it changed [my perception of city staff] that much. I've been dealing with city staff as part of my job [representing the residential development industry] for quite a while … I appreciate the amount of knowledge they have and the amount of work they do. If anything the program enhanced my impressions of them and my perceptions of them even from before the course; they DO know a lot of things … If anything it amazed me how much detail does go into [their work] that doesn't really get out into the public … The public don't see necessarily the micro planning or the macro planning. I was impressed by the amount of work that goes into it and the amount of detail that's involved. We were talking about intersection planning and incorporating HOV lanes or bus lanes, the b-line bus lanes and how much these different factors impact how an intersection is designed so that it can accommodate all these different things that are happening as you walk to work safely. It was very impressive the way that these plans are constructed and the amount of detail that goes into them. (Interview 8, 2014)

> It's hard for me [to say that my perception of city staff changed] because I work in municipal government so when I hear people go off on the perception of staff, I know what it's like. (Interview 6, 2014)

While it is probable that participants with pre-existing relationships to the City of Surrey or its staff have negative perceptions or experiences, those participants may have not been willing to share those experiences or partake in this research. Further, it is also possible that this group of people are excluded from participating in the TLP during the participant selection process; however, individuals who do not view city staff favourably are probably unlikely to commit to a 9-week program.

For the remaining four interviewees who did not have a pre-existing relationship with the City of Surrey or its staff, some stated they started the TLP with negative perceptions of Surrey but that their experience in the program resulted in positive perceptions of both city staff and the City of Surrey. These interviewees expressed surprise at how 'progressive' city staff seemed to be in light of the negative references that Surrey accumulates through local media attention ('big city full of strip malls'; 'ghetto').

> I'm not in Surrey that often but my impression of Surrey was that it's just a big city full of strip malls – it's auto-oriented – and so hearing city staff talk about the plans to build the library, to bring city hall to Surrey City Centre, it was really eye-opening and gave me a better appreciation of the efforts of what Surrey was doing. Certainly, it gave me an appreciation for how city staff has to balance different interests. Being a citizen, I think everyone complains about city hall … the program certainly gave me a better appreciation of their difficulties and how city staff balance different interests within their city. (Interview 1, 2010)

> I got to experience first hand the opportunities and limitations of the planning world and seeing why things move so slow sometimes, why some things work and why some things don't and how different departments in the same city governments have very different opinions - that was an eye opener. I found City of Surrey staff to be much more progressive than I thought they would have been. That was after seeing their work and what's in the pipeline of what's being built in Surrey … Just the fact that their transportation department seem to not just be preference accommodating as much of Surrey's landscape and streets would seem to suggest but they seem to be preference shaping and how they handle traffic, especially for what they had in mind for King George Boulevard; First the renaming of that and the consideration that they might even reduce the number of travel lanes on that. I thought that was progressive … I wasn't aware of the scale of growth that's planned for Surrey. That kind of changed my perceptions of what they're doing and what challenges they face. (Interview 4, 2013)

> Yeah, I'd say it definitely did [change my perceptions]. There's never any real reason to go to Surrey if you're not going to school there and I didn't

know anyone in Surrey. I've never done anything but drive through it and you hear bad things so you kind of get the impression there isn't much of a reason to go out there but then you get out there you see what they're doing around Surrey City Centre, you talk to the staff and get to see all the things they're working on. I was very impressed with what Surrey is doing and by the staff that were running the program. I left the program thinking I definitely would like to work for Surrey just because they seem to really have their stuff together and learning about how much Surrey is going to grow and everything too, and how much change is going to be there. (Interview 5, 2013)

It did [change my perception]. Completely. Actually, before the class I had never been to Surrey. There was a tour of the city centre that I remember a lot and just seeing the neighbourhood and the layout. Most of all, what I liked was you see that some people that are actually putting time and effort into planning at the municipality … I remember, they were staying [after work to deliver the program] and not getting paid was a very interesting thing for me. [They must have been] very passionate to be doing that. That was opposite of what I thought about staff before I started the program: I always felt like people work in public mostly because it's an easier job. [The program staff] were very passionate about their jobs … Actually, I did not know that the neighbourhood in Surrey used to be a ghetto [Whalley/Surrey City Centre]. I saw how it has been transformed. That is now what I actually remember about Surrey. So if you asked me, "What do you think about Surrey?" I'd talk about that. (Interview 2, 2012)

'Progressive', while a subjective term, seems to connote a perceived binary between the urban and suburban. In the region, Vancouver, the urban, serves as a definition of 'progressive' action or vision: a city that is proactively reducing automobile dependence, seeking dense development patterns, openly addressing challenges such as climate change, etc. In contrast, Surrey, viewed as suburban, serves as the definition of passive or regressive action: increasing road capacity and seeking sprawled development patters, thus increasing automobile dependence and apathetic towards addressing climate change. Indeed, as Interview 4 cites above, they expected Surrey staff to be regressive in their transportation planning actions and policies, a view based off of their limited experiences of Surrey, a city they saw as auto dependent and sprawling because of "preference accommodating" policies and city practices. However, this participant's perception of staff was substantially contested and changed when they learned of the challenges that planners face and that staff is actively pushing what this participant sees as a "progressive" agenda. An interview with one of the TLP's

administrators confirms that staff also perceive they are having a transformative effect on participants' perceptions of Surrey:

> People have walked into our classes with a view that Surrey only cares about the car. There's a lot of cars out there, don't get me wrong. But we are looking at that and saying, well that's the reality of Surrey today but that doesn't mean that's what Surrey will look like in five years, ten years, twenty years from now. We're getting things in place to move away from cars and people are genuinely surprised when they hear Surrey staff talk about pedestrian priority, spending x-million dollars on cycling infrastructure, or having a policy on transit priority. So people have walked away going, "wow!" (Jordyn)

Further, participant perception of the City of Surrey has a connection to one's perception of the people who plan it and vice versa. How one views planning staff is similar to how one views the city – as one's views shift positively about staff, they also do for the city, which, in a very limited sense, is the physical manifestation of the work planners do. Although Surrey staff have said in interviews that the positive effect of the TLP on Surrey's reputation was not necessarily an explicit outcome, they are pleased that it is happening. Indeed, as mentioned at the end of Chapter 5.1, Surrey could stand to benefit from this perception and reputation shift.

> The City [of Surrey], I would say the transportation division in particular, its reputation within the region has gone up. We always benchmark ourselves against other municipalities informally going, "are they doing a better job than us?" "are we doing new initiatives?" "are we pushing the envelope more?" It takes 10-weeks telling people what you do, "blimey, we do quite a lot - wow - we're pretty good at what we do. We're not perfect but god, wow!" And one of the real benefits has been our reputation both with other municipalities, other politicians, other people look at what Surrey's doing and go, "that municipality is really cool for what it's doing!" "It's doing something different, something better, something ahead of others." That's very pleasing. That's been unexpected. (Jordyn)

Regardless of whether an interviewee had a previous relationship with the City of Surrey or its staff or not, they all expressed both an appreciation for and empathy with city staff based on an existing or newly learned understanding of the challenges that Surrey faces as a rapidly growing city and their understanding of staff's capacity to face these challenges. In particular, the participants highlighted both the technical and

political/negotiation/mediation roles of staff, as valued skills to "balance" the varying public interests of the city.

5.3. Learning: Impact on participant knowledge

While the degree to which each interviewee's prior familiarity with the content that the TLP covered varied, all of the interviewees had professional or personal connections to municipal government or to transportation planning. All interviewees expressed that the TLP provided them with a positive and valuable learning experience and that their expectations were met or exceeded based on their motivations to participate (see section 5.1.1).

During the interviews, I asked the participants if the TLP improved their understanding of: 1) Surrey's municipal operations (its functions and services); 2) the role and the work of city staff in regards to transportation and city planning; and 3) municipal and regional transportation systems. All interviewees stated that their knowledge with regard to these particular questions did improve from taking the TLP.

5.3.1. Big Picture, Finer Details, and the Value of Expertise

Some interviewees emphasized the breadth of knowledge that was introduced to them. They also expressed that while the TLP provided them with a "bigger picture" of transportation planning they also also felt that they were treated to "exclusive" and finer detailed information not normally given to "public' "audiences. Interviewees attributed this experiential outcome to the fact that the program uses guest speakers from other City of Surrey departments and external agencies that deal with transportation such as Translink and ICBC.

> There were speakers from different departments. From land use to traffic operations and also even talks from people from outside of the City of Surrey and I learned quite a lot. (Interview 4, 2013)

> Overall, my experience was pretty good. I thought it was a really well balanced series. They had a lot of in classroom lectures but they brought

in a lot of speakers from different departments and that gave me a lot of perspective on sort of how things operate. (Interview 7, 2014)

What really stood out ... I can't remember who the speaker was but he was talking about transit ... the six D's of transit[6]. It gave me a better appreciation of what...it's more than just having a pocket of population density. That alone, is not necessarily what would make transit successful. (Interview 1, 2010)

I was glad to see the role of ICBC. For example, how they contribute to improving the road infrastructure when they see that investment is going to promise them that there will be a reduction in accidents. So that was something that I did not know. I think, you know, every speaker or lecture or person who participated in [the TLP] brought something to the table so that information that was brought was so valuable. (Interview 3, 2012)

We had Chuck Mahron[7] come in and give a guest lecture. His stuff probably had the biggest impact on me and I had a little knowledge of his stuff beforehand but after [the TLP] I started following most of his writing. His presentation is one of those things you see and it seems immediately obvious afterwards but it was this thing that just didn't quite click in your mind before. (Interview 5, 2013)

There's some of the … more of the details of transportation planning. When they were talking about planning an area for both cars and people and bikes and transit … there was this session where a Translink planner was there and was talking about, "this is how you plan a bus route." Details that the general public just doesn't get. We got to see the Surrey traffic centre it was very interesting … behind the scenes knowledge/experiences. (Interview 8, 2014)

[6] "Destinations, Distance, Design, Density, Diversity, and Demand" from "The "Six Ds" of Transit-- Oriented Communities" in Transit--Oriented Communities: A Primer on Key Concepts by Translink http://www.translink.ca/-- /media/Documents/plans_and_projects/transit_oriented_communities/Transit_Oriented_Comm unities_Primer.pdf

[7] Chuck Mahron is a Professional Engineer licensed in the State of Minnesota and a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). He is the founder and president of Strong Towns, an organization whose mission is to "support a model of development that allows America's cities, towns and neighborhoods to become financially strong and resilient." From http://www.strongtowns.org/

5.3.2. Site visits

A feature of the TLP that 7 of 8 interviewees repeatedly mentioned when I asked them about what they learned during their time in the program was the site visits and tours. For instance, interviewees seemed to appreciate the experiential aspect of a visit to the East Clayton neighbourhood, an award winning sustainably designed suburban neighbourhood[8]. They discussed how this visit helped them to visualize and understand the complex work that city staff is trying to accomplish, particularly, the unanticipated challenges that this 'progressively-designed' neighbourhood currently faces.

> I did really enjoy doing the East Clayton site visit because I certainly had read about the progressive things that neighbourhood had in its planning and it was really good to be there and see some of those things but also realize that there's still lots of challenges despite higher density, despite the change in house form and street network. So that was really valuable. Especially having city staff, having professionals join us on that and really point some of the issues out. So that was valuable. (Interview 1, 2010)

> I really like the day that we went around and actually looked at the projects. I think that was really useful...just getting a feel for what some of this stuff looks like you can see it on paper a million times and it's not quite the same. (Interview 5, 2013)

> I was kind of expecting it to be more lecture-style, which it was, but I also found it pretty hands-on, and I really enjoyed their tours, too. It's one thing to see about it or hear about it in a classroom but to see in person and to do the walking tours, it felt a lot more applicable … like the walking tours and a bus tour where they brought you to different areas of the city and explained how things came to be and what they were trying to do to improve those areas. (Interview 7, 2014)

The participant in Interview 1 above also found it valuable that the planners responsible for the East Clayton project accompanied them on the tours and got to hear those planners' experiences directly as it may be relevant to their professional development interests. For instance, TLP participants may be able to access staff experience, and thus learn the "truth" in planning processes, in a more intimate

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[8] East Clayton won the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Sustainable Communities Award in Residential Development in 2006: http://www.fcm.ca/home/awards/fcm-sustainable-communities-awards/past-winners/2006-winners/2006-residential-development.htm

atmosphere where they may be more comfortable to share information that the general public may not have access to.

> What I really liked was the field trip, whatever you want to call it. That was great. Just going to the different areas and seeing the problems ... So for me just knowing what problems we have in [Surrey] and actually I'm working on a parking study [in a neighbouring municipality] that has a lot of the same issues that they're having in Clayton Heights. We're having a lot of the same issues where in our neighbourhood, mind you, is an older neighbourhood but we're looking at potentially bringing laneway housing there and we're looking at the two transit stations, a hospital, so it's kind of when we went out there when I'm sitting in my meetings here and going, well, "Surrey had this and this is what they've done." I took a lot from that and I really liked just going around that day. (Interview 6, 2014)

Interview number 6, quoted above, even stated that the site visit experience was directly relevant and useful to a transportation project they were working on in a neighbouring municipality. For this participant, Surrey has become a useful example to learn from. The larger consequences of this is that the TLP possibly improves the prominence of Surrey among its neighbours with regards to what it has to offer in terms of knowledge and experience. Indeed, this realization seems to happen in interview 2 below, where their comments seem to suggest that they had not expected there to be much happening in the cubicles of Surrey City Hall:

> There was a tour of the City centre that I remember a lot and just seeing the neighbourhood and the layout. Most of all, what I liked was you see that some people are actually putting time and effort into planning at the municipality... (Interview 2, 2011)

Additionally, two interviewees mentioned how the tour of Surrey's traffic operation centre gave them an understanding of and value for the "hard work" that staff do at this infrastructure hub but also how the tour illuminated the complex and technical inner workings of Surrey's transportation systems, as suggested by the participant from Interview 8 above.

> They took us down into the transportation operations centre and it's quite interesting how that functions and I think a lot people took away from that, the hard work that's put into it… (Interview 6, 2014)

We got to see the Surrey traffic centre it was very interesting - behind the scenes knowledge/experiences … Just the tour of the traffic centre was pretty cool and that alone showed all the different things that come out of that traffic centre: the ability to adjust the traffic flow, the duration of lights, left turns and that type of thing, and, I think, importantly the ability to adjust things when there's an accident when you want flow to go around accidents...and the ability to assist ICBC or an injured party during an accident. (Interview 8, 2014)

5.3.3.   Group Project and Presentations

As part of the TLP, participants research and present on a small group project related to transportation to staff and their peers in the last session of the program. Most of the interviewees mentioned that this was a positive experience for them. Some of the interviewees specifically spoke about the value of the project and presentation as a useful way to further explore a topic that interested them and to also collaborate with the other TLP participants and, as the following interviewees discuss, allowed them to socialize and network.

> Most of the program consists of listening to lectures, asking questions, there isn't a lot of interaction amongst the students but with the group project you do get to talk to others more [in developing a group project together] … you also get to see everyone else's presentation as well. I thought that was a very valuable part, they should never sort of cut out. (Interview 8, 2014)

> It gives you a chance to collaborate a little bit more because you're doing it with a group of people where you go in and talk to people before hand and you get to know them a bit but to have that at the end where you work in a little group and kind of collaborate is very helpful. (Interview 5, 2013)

Only one interviewee mentioned that while they saw potential benefits of the project and presentation, they personally didn't find this portion of the TLP particularly useful for them.

> I think there's a lot of potential with the project portion of the course but I think what you get out of it really depends on the topic that you're assigned and the team members that you work with. Particularly for me, I thought I got myself into ... I chose that topic but I was involved in goods movement that's the field I was working in at the time, I thought it would be relevant. In the end, I don't think I gained too much from that project. (Interview 4, 2013)

Further, two interviewees mentioned that they perceived the TLP and specifically participant presentations as a useful way for City of Surrey staff to learn from participants or at least be exposed to different opinions or ideas.

> It was great having some diversity of perspectives in the students so it certainly seemed to me there were a few instances where the staff sort of appreciated comments that some of us made and it did seem that perhaps it allowed for them to open up their perspectives. (Interview 1, 2010)

> [Staff] legitimately seemed interested in the presentations that people were giving. But it seemed like they were genuinely listening and I think that the topics that they chose, they presented a list, and I think most of the topics they had on there were things they were internally working on at the moment so that kind of - doing that expresses that they're interested in what we have to say. (Interview 5, 2013)

While, these interactive exercises could provide Surrey staff with an avenue for learning from participants, during interviews staff could not easily recall if they had in fact learned anything from these activities. However, this does not mean staff learning did not occur but perhaps that staff learning is secondary to the participant experience. Further, for participants, it may be just as important they perceive that staff are interested even if they might not be.

5.4. Impact on participant behvaiour

In order to understand the TLP's possible impacts on participant behaviour, I asked the interviewees if they engaged in civic activities, such as attending open houses, contacting city staff or politicians, speaking to others regarding civic issues, volunteering, and voting, prior to taking the TLP and if their behaviour changed after taking it. I also asked them if they could attribute any behaviour change to the program.

As a result of the interviews, I found that these participants already engaged in many of these civic activities prior to taking the TLP mostly due to the nature of their professions and thus also engaged in these activities after the fact, as well. Further, a few interviewees who said that their behaviours changed after taking the TLP did not necessarily want to attribute the change in their behaviour to the TLP.

I don't know about my behaviour because of my job, I have this sort of level of activity that I engage in – that I'm already involved with. Far more than the average person I would guess. (Interview 8, 2014)

I'm certainly much more open to contacting the staff in my city about issues but I don't know if I could attribute that to this course. I mean, it may be because I have been volunteering for HUB[9] for quite some time and through that, I've become a little bit more knowledgeable about issues and more willing to contact staff. So, it would be hard for me to say this course contributed to any change in behaviour. It probably did to some degree. (Interview 1, 2010)

I don't think [it changed my behaviour] much, actually. I volunteered for the [transit] referendum but I can't say if [the TLP] was the reason for it. (Interview 2, 2011)

5.4.1.   Speaking up?

A majority of interviewees did say that their behaviour did change, following their participation in the TLP, when it came to contacting city staff or politicians and speaking to their peers about civic issues.

Yeah, I'd say [my behaviour has changed]. I definitely hadn't [contacted staff] before. Afterwards, I've got a blog and things like that and I definitely try and influence them if I can in any way with that … As far as civic engagement goes, I've done a 180 there. I probably never...it'd be zero or next to zero before the program. I think I was probably moving in that direction anyhow but after the program … I'd say I'm really involved. I'm out at a lot of [events] and there are developments happening and I know about it. (Interview 5, 2013)

As a result of this course, I was able to offer my insights to them. On Scott Road and 104th Avenue in Surrey, you will see a marked crosswalk where there isn't a let-down.10 So I was able to take some pictures and forward them the city and ask them, "Hey, can you do this thing?" We can't realize the walkable city if the infrastructure that we need and aspire to have is not there … Again, this is as a result of taking the TLP because it opened up my mind and eyes to be able to see what it takes to be able to walk, cycle,

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[9] HUB (formerly the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition) is a charitable organization, originally established in 1998 as a non-profit to address cycling issues in Metro Vancouver.

[10] A let-down is where a sidewalk meets the roadway to provide access to pedestrians, usually at intersections where one might want to cross the street.

and drive around in the city given [the Transportation Strategic Plan] they have. (Interview 3, 2012)

I think I took a more active role afterwards and I contacted politicians more often … I became more active on social media on urbanist issues and I used to not care about issues related to South of Fraser before and now I do. I have friends who live there. I do, once in a while, post things and I talk to them [more about transportation issues]. So, indirectly [my activity] could change opinions. (Interview 4, 2013)

I definitely do think there's been a change in my behaviour. Since taking the lecture program, I've tried to get involved in my own city. So, I know that they have standing committees and so I was applying to a few of them, although they are full right now. Even just talking to my own friends when they're complaining about streets and stuff, I definitely have a new perspective on it. (Interview 7, 2014)

[The TLP] informs the things you do on a daily basis. When you have discussions with people about policy or about planning or about transportation or about transit or about road planning, you find yourself referring to a little bit [of the TLP] here, a little bit there, and you pull little bits of that knowledge that you gain over that 10 weeks into your discussion, into your thought process. (Interview 8, 2014)

5.5. Networking

One aspect of the TLP that interviewees spoke about was the ability to network or develop relationships with fellow participants, City of Surrey staff, and the guest presenters. Interviewees claimed that they benefited from networking. The benefits that they cited were related to their occupations such as getting to know "the right people" who could provide them with information, and other personal and professional connections. In this sense, networking is an expansion of one's social network with the practical aim to further one's career or advance one's own professional or personal interests. Further, this makes networking at the TLP about assembling connections for the purposes of gaining or leveraging power rather than establishing interpersonal relationships with other participants or facilitators. Indeed, TLP participants gain insight to the network of individuals who have influence in Surrey with regards to transportation planning and policy.

[The TLP] was also a great thing for networking, I thought, as well, for meeting new people and seeing where they're at … I made some great contacts at the city and, being a municipal worker myself, it was great to email [City of Surrey staff I met at the TLP] sometimes and such just to ask work-related questions … Yes, I think that [networking] was a big benefit … I contact staff a little bit more now but not so much with the problems that I'm having in my neighbourhood or whatever it would be but more to kind of just gauge or pick their brains on some of the projects that I've been working on [for work at the neighbouring municipality] … I left [the TLP] with a couple of business cards and I've found it's easy to contact these [municipal workers, contractors, and consultants] who I know now if I have questions. It's great to know these people. I don't know about you, but I feel more comfortable calling SNC Lavelin now that I know someone there as opposed to before just going, "Hi, I just have a really quick question for you." Now it's kind of like, "Hey so-and-so, just curious…" So for me, the networking is what I took from [the TLP] the most … (Interview 6, 2014)

The networking aspect of it was really helpful for me … I think if I hadn't done the lecture program I probably wouldn't have gotten in such good contact with the city [of Surrey] especially with the referendum because [my employer] did our own [pro-transit] campaign and the City of Surrey definitely they had theirs. [The City of Surrey] had reasons why they were really pushing for [a successful "Yes" campaign] and so by connecting with them we were able to share a lot of resources[11] and I think it really drove our campaign. (Interview 7, 2014)

I attend meetings of the Surrey Development Advisory Committee[12] [as a member] and you know there's there some of the people who were speaking during the lectures attend those meetings so it's actually a nice way to sort of develop a sort of contact and a relationship with them … it's a lot easier when you know the person, they know who you are and then they see an email come up or they get a phone message, whether it's them calling you or me calling them it's much easier to respond … people are just generally quicker to respond and communicate with someone they already know. (Interview 8, 2014)

One interviewee talked about the importance of the TLP as a networking opportunity for future employment, too. He stated that this, for him, was the "true value" of the program.

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[11] Resources mean marketing strategy and marketing materials for a "Yes" campaign in the 2015 Metro Vancouver Transportation and Transit Plebiscite.

[12] The Development Advisory Committee establishes and maintains a channel of communication between staff and members of the development industry in Surrey.

…As far as establishing some [ongoing] connections, I'd say I've got maybe 4 people that I regularly talk to that I met in the program … I've got a few people at the City of Surrey who I pestered for jobs and I have connections there now, I'd say. [Staff] at the City of Surrey definitely know who I am and I have at least one person there who's gone to bat for me trying to help me out [in finding a job at the City] …The best part of [the TLP] is the networking aspect because I'm a person who thinks the standard networking event is almost useless: You go in and shake someone's hand and say, "Hey this is my name what's your name, what do you do, this is what I do." [The TLP] is a way, in my mind, where you get to go in and meet people who are working in your field and actually collaborate and do some work and interact and discuss things and as far as the real value of the program I'd say is a networking thing. (Interview 5, 2013)

One point of interest is a comment made in Interview 2 whereby the interviewee perceives the networking aspect as a way for professionals to make inroads at city hall in order to be better recognized and to potentially sell their services.

[After taking the TLP], interacting with City staff was better in because they know who you are now so when they hear your name, they have an image, especially with so much happening in the City of Surrey with transportation planning...and it gives you more credibility … I think the truth is that the consultants come expecting to sell their expertise to the city. (Interview 2, 2011)

Chapter 6.   Conclusion

The SFU and City of Surrey Transportation Lecture Program contributes, in a piecemeal way, to participants' greater engagement in local governance and government. This study finds that the participants in the program have had positive experiences and leave with useful information, perspectives and relationships, but that they are also persons who are already somewhat informed and engaged and are not representative of the broader community. The program meets the City of Surrey's goals to increase their profile and to impart understanding of the multiple factors that influence transportation planning on its participants, but these goals do not necessarily extend to enhanced democratic participation.

The City of Surrey developed the Transportation Lecture Program in the context of shifting views on the relationship between citizens, participation and government in cities. It is part of a trend begun in the 1990s of governments developing more collaborative governance models that seek greater engagement and participation of citizens in local decision-making. A rapidly growing urban population and a corresponding increase in the salience of urban land use and transportation choices challenged the prevailing view of local governments as service providers, whose decisions were based on technical requirements rather than public preferences. It also responds to more recent perceptions that citizens require greater knowledge of how and why government and governance works for them to not only understand and articulate their complex urban desires but to also affect change with their governments.

As the word lecture conveys, the TLP disseminates knowledge mostly in a one-way fashion; lecturer vis-à-vis audience. If the TLP is only a tool for staff to educate already-engaged citizens in order to develop a common understanding of city issues and suppress opposition, however "uninformed", then the democratic principles from which this program was born are thrown into question.

While this research intended to explore how participants were impacted by a program that the City of Surrey designed specifically for Surrey residents, these conclusions also perhaps begin to point to the question, who does this program really

serve? Certainly, it can be said that the City of Surrey and the staff who run the TLP have gained just as much from the TLP as its participants. Indeed, it may be the City who is building capacity to make change by establishing a "progressive" reputation/brand and a network of people and professionals who might be more sympathetic to the City's agendas and who could be mobilized to support the City's efforts. Indeed, if the goal of the program is to create a homogenous base of support for the city's agenda (however progressive!) then little value is being added to the participation process for either the city or the citizens: the end result only supports one point of view and does not create opportunity for alternatives.

Based on this superficial interpretation of the program, rather than an exercise in citizen participation, the TLP is, at best an exercise in public relations and at worst, therapy for embattled staff. As this research has found, there is a marked change in participant perception with regards to how they view city staff and, by extension, the City of Surrey.

Table 6.   Summary table of the values and roles of city staff amongst participants

	Technical Role	Political Role	Social Role
Citizen views prior to participating in the TLP	To facilitate existing expressed resident demands.	To facilitate the demands of City Council and developers.	Not very accessible; 'just a part of the bureaucracy'.
Citizen views after participating in the TLP	To facilitate Surrey's growth by implementing a progressive urban agenda.	To advise City Council on best practices and engage in long-term strategic thinking, mediation, and negotiation between complex competing interests.	Open, transparent, caring, and approachable.

The TLP has shown that there is consistent interest in this type of programming in Metro Vancouver. This study finds that the City of Surrey and the participants of the TLP both find the program a worthwhile pursuit, which is not insignificant; it has allowed citizens to build knowledge and both citizens and staff to build relationships. While participants are motivated by individualistic goals, the impacts from their experience in the TLP could be wide-ranging as they now carry the information and understanding they gained during the TLP with them in their day-to-day lives. Casual conversations with friends about transit

now come with a different perspective. Participants' neighbours are concerned about traffic calming and now they know exactly which transportation policy to review and who to speak with at the city. TLP participants potentially have additional resources and positive relationships that are not only useful in knowing the "right people" and provide favourable connections but they can equip and mobilize these networks to develop and deliver policy objectives.

While the TLP alone does not completely resolve the problems of citizen participation, it may be part of a broader constellation of actions cities might undertake to reach their goal of collaborative governance or something close to it. The program itself alone, as this study discusses, may better suited as a prerequisite for additional forms of citizen involvement. Currently, there is not a clear trajectory for citizens or the City to follow after a program session ends and raises some questions worth asking in future studies: what do participants do next? What does the city do with a cohort of hundreds of program alumni? How do they go from broad based learning to specific action?
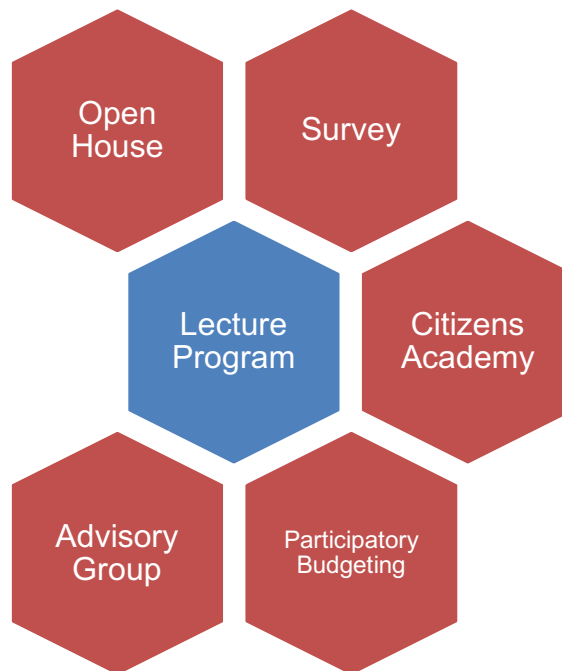
Figure 3.   Constellation of citizen engagement practices

The City of Surrey may want to examine where the TLP fits within its existing citizen engagement practices (see Figure 3) and what it can do next to deepen them. Firstly, it

may be helpful for citizens if the City could map out the ways in which they could engage in governance, what each type of engagement is for and the roles of citizen and government in each instance. Further, if the City wanted to advance the current engagement work they are doing, they could establish a more fulsome Citizens Academy that explicitly prepares residents for leadership roles in their communities. Additionally, the City could establish some form of participatory budgeting, thus satisfying Sherry Arnestin's quest for citizen power.

Lastly, no matter how they design citizen engagement, city governments will need to wrestle with the tension that exists between their role as technocratic, rational and objective administrators, the ideals of democracy and what the purpose and objective of citizen involvement is. If democracy is inherently agonistic, then the people who run our cities cannot merely reduce the problems of citizen participation to ignorance and misunderstanding on one side. Perhaps then, the role of the "civic educator" is to prepare us all for better informed conflict?

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