

## Fund for the City of New York: Street Smoothness Project Case

### Teaching Notes (for use in Management Decision Making)

#### Class Use Objectives

As a case addressing citizen participation in the development of performance measures, it informs students on the development and implementation of ways to increase citizen input in government decisions. Instructors may use this case to familiarize students with how citizen participation in other areas of government affairs (e.g., how to keep city streets cleaner) can be introduced, promoted and implemented in a community. This case also provides the opportunity to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of citizen participation in the activities of government.

#### Discussion Questions

1. How important is citizen participation in developing ways to keep New York City streets free of dangerous potholes and bumps? Has it been effective?
2. To what extent does “management” dominate the decision making process? To what extent are the elected and other political officials receptive to citizen participation?
3. A decision was made to involve the citizens from the five boroughs of New York City. But, in the borough of Manhattan, most residents do not drive. In other boroughs, such as Staten Island, most residents own cars and drive. Should all the boroughs been treated equally? How would you address these discrepancies?
4. Certain measures were specifically taken in New York City to increase citizen participation? What other steps could have been taken?
5. Does something like a street smoothness project lend itself more readily and easily to citizen input than say a citizen review board for police departments, which seek to ensure that citizens’ rights are not being violated by police officers? What makes some activities are more amenable to citizen participation than others?

#### Possible Activities

1. Check online to learn what other forms of efforts are underway in New York City to foster greater citizen participation. How have these programs been developed and implemented?
2. Provide recommendations to New York City on how it can improve the Street Smoothness Project. What if anything should be done differently (e.g., how should performance data be collected and disseminated?)
3. Citizens' responses to four questions served as indicators in developing the measures for performance. Develop a different set of questions that might serve as indicators in developing performance measures. Justify why these questions would be more effective.