Despite the widespread use of collaborative governance in the U.S., there is little evidence about whether the direct involvement of citizens and groups actually improves the public’s assessments of governmental decision-making. We examine this question by conducting a series of survey experiments about the composition of collaborative transportation governance. Experiments reveal that involving non-governmental actors in public decision-making only consistently enhances assessments of public decision-making when private citizens as opposed to individuals representing business groups and organized interests are included in the arrangement. The public prefers citizens with experience and expertise, but not with organizational affiliations. In spite of the populist appeal, without electoral accountability, respondents remain reluctant to delegate power particularly if the collaborative governance body has taxing or regulatory authority.