Developing the measures of comparison:
Community Indicators Consortium

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Data Availability

• U.S. Decennial Census
  – Comparable tables for the Nation down to the Census Tract and Block Group areas
  – Basic demographic tables down to the block

• American Communities Survey (ACS)
  – As of 2010 produces yearly data for small areas down to the Census Tract level (5 year running average)

• Economic activity data
  – Economic and Agriculture Census (every 5 years)
  – Bureau of Economic Analysis (yearly)
The issue for local planners is not data availability, but...

- Designing useful indicators
- Measuring change in specific areas of local concern
- Pulling together data from multiple federal sources, published at different geographic levels
- Integrating local data and knowledge to track issues, then develop and evaluate programs
- Compare themselves to similar communities in order learn and share successful approaches effectively
Common issues – Common problems

• Providing the local story
  – Focusing on local issues
  – Providing critical local information
  – Developing local solutions
  – Selling the story to the funders and the public

• Dealing with local constraints
  – Lack of funding
  – Problems with administrative data or lack of local data
  – Limited staff and often limited expertise
Community Indicators Consortium

• Advance the art and science of indicators;
• Facilitate the exchange of knowledge about the effective use of indicators;
• Encourage development of effective indicators;
• Foster informed civic and media discourse about local, regional, national, and global priorities
How they work

• Lack of time and travel funds
  – Annual conventions that make use of technology to include those unable to attend
  – Integration of conference and working session with real outcomes
  – Focused webinars during the year
  – Web based community to share work, indicators, solutions, and tools
Conference

- Broad coverage
- Integrating approaches
- Networking
- Preparing for work during the year
Webinars

• Focused on and issue or tool
• Often having a case study approach
• Approaches to working with indicators
• Dozens over the course of the year
This webinar will focus on the City of Revelstoke's Public Participation Master plan, which brings together a model of community interaction for both agencies and community groups. Their proposal is to articulate major planning objectives in the City's recently adopted comprehensive plan, and working with partners develop sound and robust decision making on at the street level. To gain credibility and effectiveness the plan will facilitate the formation of a community wide steering committee and several community groups. The community groups will help fashion community feedback on a wide variety of planning elements including land use, transportation, environment, parks and recreation, climate change and housing. The public participation plan will develop the community interaction dynamic and help regional decision making. A later phase will help the measurement and analysis of community indicators. Important outcomes will be community groups that help City Council implement all comprehensive planning elements - i.e. - transportation, people, land use, environment, etc.
"Using Visual Methods to Communicate Sustainability Concepts"

• **Burr Stewart,** Director of Performance Reporting, Association of Government Accountants

Sustainability is a complex topic that defies clear description with words and numbers alone. This Webinar will present the principles of how people process visual information, and share examples of simple and complicated visual methods to convey sustainability concepts to the public. The concepts include why sustainability matters, the levels of collaboration, how to compare various reporting standards, and how to connect planning to action. Burr Stewart has been developing and using exhibits for communicating sustainability strategies for over fifteen years, first as a strategic planner with the Port of Seattle, and recently as a sustainability and strategic planning consultant.
"What are Community Information Systems?"


Community Information Systems are web-based solutions, often providing a range of end-user functionality from simple reports to more sophisticated analytical and data visualization tools. They are generally aimed at both internal staff within a community foundation (executive directors, programme officers, communications managers and philanthropic services) and external users (community groups, local businesses, politicians and community planners). They provide direct access to an evidence-base improving decision-making and ultimately supporting improvement in quality of life of local communities.

Community Information Systems (CIS) bring together a wide range of social, economic and environmental data and information often in the form of performance indicators around objectives like:
- Communicating outcome measures to citizens, stimulating public debate and building confidence in progress towards societal goals.
- Widening the use of data by citizens and public officials to support decision-making, improve policy and target resources.
- Monitoring the health, social well-being and sustainability of communities through the management of Quality of Life indicators.
- Providing a wider local intelligence context to key performance indicators for government officials.
- Local community goals
Indicator Projects

- **Submit Your Project**
- Listed here is a selection of indicator projects. CIC does not claim involvement or endorse any projects, but we find these interesting and informative. Use the submit projects button above to tell us about additional projects to include and notify us of broken links at database@communityindicators.net. Be sure to see the winners of the annual Community Indicators Awards program by looking at our Awards page.
- In addition to these indicator projects, CIC also hosts a Working Group on Integrating Community Indicators and Performance Measures. See the CI-PM section of our website for more information about the project and examples of places where Community Indicator Projects are being integrated with Performance Measures to improve the use of information in collaborative community decision-making.
Minnesota Compass

- Geographic Scope (The level of geography at which the indicator data is collected): Municipality, County, Metropolitan, Multi-County, Sub-State Region, State/Province
- Issue Areas: Children/Youth/Families, Economy, Education, Employment, Environment, Equity, Governance, Health, Housing, Land Use, Population, Public Safety, Transportation
- Keywords:
- Project Description: "Minnesota Compass measures progress and inspires action to keep quality of life high in regions and communities throughout our state. It tracks trends and provides analysis, community commentary and strategies for tackling an issue. The initiative measures indicators across a variety of domains, including aging, civic engagement, early childhood, economy and workforce, education, environment, health, housing, immigration, public safety, and transportation. It also provides an extensive demographic information and highlights the issue of disparities, identified as a major threat to the well-being of our state. In addition, Compass tracks long-range trends and provides analysis, community commentary and strategies for tackling an issue. Compass is funded and governed by a consortium of foundations across the state and is led by Wilder Research, a division of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation in Saint Paul."
What can be learned from CIC?

- Review of activities provides a good sense of the issues concerning local planners and non-profits
- Leverage the group as a means of bringing them into the international discussion
- Learn from their successes in terms of developing an on-going dialog and system for exchanging knowledge by creating a virtual learning community