United Growth’s Revitalizing Neighborhoods Indicator Project

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http://www.city-data.com/picfiles/picc32475.php
Acknowledgements

Carol Townsend - MSU Extension
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Presentation Outline

- Ideal Neighborhood Indicator Project
- Geography
- Maclaren Indicator Analysis
- Review United Growth’s Sustainable Goals
- Strong Indicator Examples
- Weak Indicator Examples
- Conclusions
Ideal Neighborhood Indicator Project

United Growth
- Revitalizing Neighborhoods Committee
  - Kent County
  - MSU Extension
- Ideal central city neighborhood for 2030
- Indicator Project – 19 indicators
  - Applied to two neighborhoods
    - Eastown
    - Belknap Lookout
Why are indicators important?

- Neighborhood Indicator definition:
  - Determine conditions that exist and whether the direction is consistent with community goals
  - Determine if the neighborhoods are progressing socially, economically, and environmentally

- Holds people accountable
- Builds consensus for an action strategy
- Example: Bike Lanes
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Geography: Belknap Lookout

- Includes Census Tracts #13 and #14
- Includes a small section north of neighborhood boundaries: Plainfield Ave to Sweet St
Geography:
Eastown

- Includes the Census Tracts #24 and #33
- Includes Aquinas College
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Maclaren Indicator Analysis

- Virginia Maclaren – University of Toronto
  - “Urban Sustainable Reporting”
- Standard assessment tool
- Seven Characteristics
- Maclaren Matrix

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Review of United Growth’s Sustainable Goals

1. Neighborhoods Are Vibrant, Economically Sustainable Communities

2. Every Neighborhood Is A Mixed-Income Neighborhood

3. A Full Range Of Transportation Modes Exist

4. Neighborhoods Are Green And Environmentally Sustainable

5. Empowerment, Human Connectedness, And Social Justice Are Prominent Features In The Neighborhoods
Goal 1. Neighborhoods Are Vibrant, Economically Sustainable Communities

- Indicator 1.1 – Residential and Commercial Properties are fully occupied
- Indicator 1.2 – Quality Neighborhood Schools
- Indicator 1.3 – Density has increased
- Indicator 1.4 – Neighborhood Elementary Schools
- Indicator 1.5 – Neighborhood Businesses are locally owned

http://www.ccamuseum.org/Vacant_lot-web.JPG
Goal 1. Neighborhoods Are Vibrant, Economically Sustainable Communities

Future Suggestions

- Neighborhood members count vacant lots, local businesses
- Define local business
- Future indicator – mixed use buildings

http://farm3.static.flickr.com/2009/1503176683_80a3ee6c2c.jpg

http://gothamgazette.com/graphics/lot.jpg
Goal 2. Every Neighborhood Is A Mixed-Income Neighborhood

Indicator 2.1 – One-Third Rental Housing is available

Indicator 2.2 – Permanently Affordable Housing Units

Indicator 2.3 – Economic Diversity

Indicator 2.4 – Housing is Accessible

Indicator 2.5 – Racial Composition mirrors the City of Grand Rapids

Source: http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_NcZTGCbn73A/SPasxfj0CMI/AAAAAAAAABo/3Rk_EQqjgvU/s200/MixedIncomeNeighborhoodRally.jpg
Goal 2. Every Neighborhood Is A Mixed-Income Neighborhood

Future Suggestions
- Zero Step Program
  - does not work as indicator measure
- Track racial and economic demographics in local elementary schools
Goal 3: A Full Range of Transportation Modes Exist

- Indicator 3.1 – Public Transit is Accessible
- Indicator 3.2 – Redevelopment is occurring around Transit Corridors
- Indicator 3.3 – Every Street has a Complete sidewalk on both sides of the Street
- Indicator 3.4 – Bike Lanes are Common
- Indicator 3.5 – Residents have become less car dependent
- Indicator 3.6 – Residents with Disabilities can easily access the entire neighborhood

Source: http://www.voga.org/Bike_Touring.jpg
Goal 3: A Full Range of Transportation Modes Exist

Future Suggestions:
- Change indicator: “Residents have become less car dependent”
  - Add different methodology
    - participation levels of public transit
    - frequency of public transit lines to neighborhoods
- Track emission standards and pollution levels
- Make “Resident with disabilities can easily access the entire neighborhood” a separate goal
Goal 4: Neighborhoods are Green and Environmentally Sustainable

Indicator 4.1 – Residents support Locally Grown Food

Indicator 4.2 – Green Space is Accessible

Indicator 4.3 – Street Canopy reduces Greenhouse Gases

Source: http://greendev.developmentplaybook.net/database/images/display/sb4720d928d50d3.jpg
Goal 4: Neighborhoods are Green and Environmentally Sustainable

Future Suggestions:
- residents should survey
  - farmer’s markets
  - know proximity to green space and parks
- replace indicator “Street Canopy Reduces Greenhouse Gases”
- track LEED-certified buildings
- measure energy consumption through kilowatt hours per capita

http://www.rprogress.org/images/B_Sus_Indicators.jpg
Goal 5. Empowerment, Human Connectedness, and Social Justice are Prominent Features in the Neighborhoods

**Indicator 5.1 – Strong Citizen-based Organizations are active**

Source: http://www.nwlinacs.org/oreven/TRK_group.jpg
Goal 5. Empowerment, Human Connectedness, and Social Justice are Prominent Features in the Neighborhoods

Future Suggestions
- track voter participation
- regularity of community newspapers
- high levels of book circulation at the local library
- empowerment survey
- look at Community Development Block Grant funding
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Goal 3: A Full Range of Transportation Modes Exist

3.2 Redevelopment is occurring around Transit Corridors

**Measure:** Number of new/improved building units

**Method:** Count # building permits within ¼ mile of Transit Corridor

**Indicator Strengths:**
- Data is regularly updated
- Transit Corridors are relevant in future
- Easy to track development
- Development Center Activity & Performance
- City of Grand Rapids website

http://www.thinkfullcircle.com
Goal 3: A Full Range of Transportation Modes Exist

3.4 Bike Lanes are common

**Measure:** Increasing number of streets with complete sidewalks on both sides of street

**Method:** Count number of streets with complete sidewalks

- Count total mileage of these streets

**Indicator Strengths:**
- Information easily available
- Updated regularly
- Data is easily understood
- Can be used for future comparisons

http://blog.mlive.com/arpers/2008/08/bike-ride-crop-300.jpg
Goal 1: Neighborhoods Are Vibrant, Economically Sustainable Communities

1.2 Quality Neighborhood Schools

**Measure:** Test scores are equal or surpass the state average

**Method/Source:** Michigan Educational Assessment Program scores online

**Indicator Flaws:**
- Education could be its own goal
- Hard to compare to state, easy to county
- Can be interpreted differently
- Standardized tests are criticized
- MEAP could change standards or testing process
- Need to be complemented with other measurements

http://info.detnews.com/
Goal 2: Every Neighborhood is a Mixed Income Neighborhood

2.2 Permanently Affordable Housing Units

**Measure:** House Prices

**Method used**
- US Census
- Calculate
  - Median house price
  - Median household income
- Mortgage calculator

**Indicator Flaws:**
- No housing is Permanent
- Interest rates change
- Mortgage terms vary
- Property taxes not included in payments
- Dependant on third party website

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<th>House Prices</th>
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<td><strong>Eastown</strong></td>
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- Actively work towards making neighborhoods sustainable
- Work with community leaders to identify the neighborhood’s unique conditions
- Must develop comprehensive and concise goal titles
- Define specific objectives for each indicator
- The Maclaren analysis proved to be an efficient way of choosing proper indicators and should be used for possible future additions
- Help to attract talent, jobs, and investment in Kent County
Thank you!

- Thank you to all who helped with this project and thanks for your time!

- Questions?