

|||REDEFINING PROGRESS||| || |



PROCEEDINGS OF THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY INDICATORS CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 3-5, 1998
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

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INTRODUCTION

The first California Community Indicators Conference convened community, civic, and public-sector leaders from throughout the state to identify social and environmental health outcomes for our communities and to learn effective strategies for implementing measures of progress in social health, social and environmental justice, and environmental integrity.

The conference was organized along three tracks designed to meet the theoretical and practical needs of community leaders: (1) "Geographic Information Systems for Planning and Community Building," (2) "Frameworks for Sustainability," and (3) "Indicator Applications: Moving Indicators into Action."

In addition, five plenary sessions explored community-level issues: (1) "Learning from History: What Makes Indicators Effective"; (2) "Strategies for Engaging the Media and the Public in Community Change"; (3) "Indicators, Community Building, and Social Change: Strategies for Addressing the Prosperity Gap"; (4) "Metropolitics: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability"; and (5) "The Role of Foundations in Growing Indicators at the Grassroots Level: The Colorado Trust's Statewide Community Index Project."

PARTICIPANTS

Conference participants included sustainable development, social justice, and environmental leaders; political activists and advocates; health advocates; social researchers; urban planners; municipal leaders; grassroots organizers; foundation program directors; educators; labor representatives; staff from over 32 community indicators projects throughout the state; and newcomers interested in learning how to get started.

Following is a list of conference presenters: Dr. Judith Innes, University of California at Berkeley; Dr. Ross Conner, University of California at Irvine; Dr. Marina Alberti, University of Washington at Seattle; Amy Dean and Chris Benner, South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council and Working Partnerships; Nick Bollman, the

James Irvine Foundation; Winnie Chu, the Community Foundation Silicon Valley; Terri Bailey, the Piton Foundation; Doug Easterling, the Colorado Trust; Maureen Hart, Hart Environmental; Beryl Magilavy, Sustainable City; Ted Heintz, U.S. Inter-Agency Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators; Dean Kubani, City of Santa Monica; Deborah Silver, City of Pasadena; Elisa Maser, Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency; Cheryl Taylor, Urban Strategies Council; Patrick McGuigan, Providence Plan; Carl Anthony, Urban Habitat Program; Larry Orman and Shawn Simpson, GreenInfo Network; Eliot Allen of Criterion, Inc; Bruce Silverberg, Silverberg and Associates; Dr. Mary Bitterman, KQED; Rob Elder, *San Jose Mercury News*; Amy Horne of the Sierra Business Council; Curtis Johnson, CitiStates Group; Martin J. Landers, Yampa Valley Partners Indicator Project; Michael Stanley-Jones, Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition; and Minnesota State Representative Myron Orfield. The following Redefining Progress staff also made presentations: Maureen Kennedy, Executive Director; Kate Besleme, Community Indicators Project Director; Mathis Wackernagel, Indicators Program Director; Craig Rixford, Systems Administrator; Clifford Cobb, Senior Fellow; and Jonathan Rowe, Senior Fellow.

GETTING TO RESULTS: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES OF THE COMMUNITY INDICATORS MOVEMENT

The first day of the conference was dedicated to reviewing lessons from the past, the successes and challenges of current indicators projects, and innovative strategies for using data to motivate communities and improve outcomes. The indicators movement has learned a great deal in the past few years about strategies for developing relevant information, uncovering currently collected but no longer relevant data, engaging stakeholders, and forming dynamic coalitions of stakeholders in a framework that naturally results in community accountability and responsibility.

DAY ONE OPENING PLENARY SESSION—LEARNING FROM HISTORY: WHAT MAKES INDICATORS EFFECTIVE?

WHAT ARE INDICATORS?

Indicators are simply quantitative information, or data, tracked over time. For example, unemployment statistics are a measure of the actual number of people in the workforce (those not disabled and seeking work) that are presently unemployed.

Recently, scholars have pointed out that some of the statistics we have relied upon in the past no longer have relevance in our changing economy. For example, although household incomes in Silicon Valley are up, the reason for the increase is that many people are working more than one job, and those jobs typically have no insurance or other benefits. The result is that although incomes are up, the quality of life has declined. Indicators are important because they are our road map to progressing toward healthier communities. However, we need to understand not only what exists but why.

Cliff Cobb introduced an important distinction among indicators that helps to frame the link between indicators and action. Descriptive indicators name and quantify problems to help us understand where we are now, but do not lead to change themselves. Prescriptive indicators help us identify root causes and the impact of existing assumptions on which potential policy decisions are based. To be most effective, the indicators movement must begin to ascertain the underlying root causes of problems so that it can better understand the relationship between existing policies and potential policy decisions or changes that might improve the health of our communities.

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING INFLUENTIAL INDICATORS

Utilizing information as a means of influencing policy and changing society is an idea that has been around for a long time. Although it was assumed that data and

statistics would motivate, they only served to document or model what existed; in most instances change did not occur as a result of more information.

Recommended strategies include:

- Begin with the end in mind: Identify a small number of short- and long-term community objectives. These objectives should balance and reflect community values, interests, and needs.
- Build broad-based indicators partnerships that agree on measurements, methods, and meanings. Influential indicators emerge out of inclusive partnerships comprising representatives of government, business, researchers, community members, as well as data producers and users.
- Link indicators closely to policy to ensure effectiveness. Indicators can then be used to assess performance relative to that policy.

STRATEGIES FOR CHOOSING VALUABLE INDICATORS

Influential policy, performance, and rapid feedback indicators are measures that reflect directly on existing policy and delivery of governmental services, that monitor direct business interaction with the community or community conditions, and that guide individual decisionmaking. To be effective, indicators must have the support of the community, business, and government. Additionally, data producers, data users, and experts must all agree that the selected indicators are a valid and valuable measurement. In order to effect change, there must be a community imperative to act. Finally, indicators must directly assess performance relative to policy, with a mechanism whereby indicator information impacts policy discussion and the policy decisionmaking process.

DAY ONE SESSION WORKSHOPS

TRACK 1: GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR PLANNING AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Using GIS to Integrate Indicators into Community Decisionmaking

What is GIS? Geographic Information Systems is a powerful computer software that converts spreadsheet data into multi-layered maps in which points, lines, and polygons provide links between the data and its visual representation. Users must match available data to geospatial map areas (census tracts, etc.) and thereby "populate" maps with matching data, eliminating overlaps and verifying ("ground truthing") the data maps. A variety of data can be used to populate geospatial maps, among which are census data (demographic data, household composition, size, income, etc.), housing permits, economic factors (new or lost jobs, average wages, etc.). Data maps are layered from the bottom up: natural features, census tracts, roads, land ownership. GIS can be used to (1) analyze and recommend public policies, (2) create maps that educate and involve people, (3) enable detailed research on key issues and places, and (4) improve organizational focus and effectiveness for both internal and external uses and users. The result is revealing and compelling imagery that is useful in influencing public policy discussions.

In the past, GIS was technically complex and difficult to use. Now, however, GIS software is more user-friendly and much more data is available at low or reasonable cost. Recommended GIS software include ArcView or MapInfo (about \$1,000 each). Good GIS software include: Maptitude, Microsoft Map, Business Map, or Street Atlas TOPO! (about \$100 each). Various public agencies and private companies now offer public data over the internet, including the U.S. Census Bureau, ESRI, and many others.

Special Presentation: National Indicators of Sustainable Development

The White House Inter-Agency Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators (SDI Group) presented its draft report, *Sustainable Development in the United States: An Experimental Set of Indicators* (draft for final review: 11/24/98) for discussion and comment. The report detailed the over 40 experimental economic, environmental, and social sustainable development indicators the group has developed over the past four years. The SDI Group considers this to be an important first step toward a national discussion of sustainable development.

The goal of the SDI Group is to continue refining and developing these and other valuable measures of progress toward a healthy national community, and they hope that community indicators project staff and others who are interested will contribute to this work-in-progress.

TRACK 2: FRAMEWORKS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The Ecological Footprint in Action: A Tool for Planning toward Sustainability in Our Lives, Communities, and Regions

Dr. Wackernagel, director of the Indicators Program at Redefining Progress, explained the "Ecological Footprint" concept as a tool to document the amount of land consumed to support our current way of life. This tool reveals how much productive land and water is necessary to support production and absorb waste products within a given area, based on both the population and the material standard of living. Nature currently provides an average of 5.5 acres of bioproductive space for each person. In the year 2050, that will be reduced to 3 acres per person. Already, humanity's footprint may be over 30 percent larger than what the Earth can offer (that is, the carrying capacity of the Earth). While the average American uses 25 acres to support his or her lifestyle, Canadians live on 25 percent less and Italians live on 60 percent less.

Constructing Sustainability Indicators for California: Developing Better Ways to Measure Community and Statewide Progress

This hands-on working session provided participants with a review of key definitions including community capital, carrying capacity, and sustainability. Traditional measures for the environment (water and air quality and natural resources), economy (stockholder profits, production, and jobs), and society

(education, health, poverty, and crime) were re-examined through the lens of sustainability. Finally, the concepts of community linkages and driving forces-state-response framework were also reviewed. This background information served as a framework within which participants worked in small groups brainstorming, analyzing, and evaluating a matrix of sustainability indicators across domains (environment, economy, society, and other). Participants interested in improving existing indicators were asked to bring a one-page list of local indicators to share with the group. Small-group session work was reported back to the entire group for a hands-on collaborative learning experience.

TRACK 3: INDICATOR APPLICATIONS: MOVING INDICATORS INTO ACTION

Evaluating the Impacts of Sustainability and Quality of Life Indicators in Local Government

While community indicators can create a climate conducive to social change, implementing a sustainability plan is ultimately a function of politics. Session panelists from San Francisco, Pasadena, and Santa Monica related their experience in implementing indicators projects as leverage for achieving improved sustainability and health performance.

Three essential elements are necessary to effect community change toward sustainability: a factual basis establishing the need for change, political support for fundamental change, and an administrative structure in which change can occur. Of these three, only political will can by itself generate change. Objective measures (indicators) can be critical to achieving the essential political support. Objective data can permit elected officials to make decisions in the public good rather than giving in to noisy constituencies' demands. A strategic indicators implementation plan must be combined with an action plan comprising data collection and public education activities to coalesce the necessary political support that is a prerequisite to effecting real change.

Using Neighborhood Indicators for Community and Political Change

This session featured speakers from three organizations, all of which were engaged in moving indicators to action: the Piton Foundation, the Urban Strategies Council, and the Providence Plan.

Using GIS, the Piton Foundation mapped Colorado's geographic diversity (rangeland, mountains, resort and urban communities) and overlaid it with state ES202 employee data by industry and wage categories. The foundation is now adding additional layers of information, including hospitals, schools, child care, and availability of social services throughout the county. It is also focusing on mapping Denver neighborhoods to identify geographic areas that experienced job loss or gain, as well as race, class, and poverty issues. In partnership with city planners and data experts, the foundation makes this information available to the public for use in solving neighborhood problems.

The Urban Strategies Council's project, "Our Youth Violence Initiative," started from the premise that young people are an asset. The council held a conference to explore youth violence issues, focusing on at-risk kids as well as those already involved in the juvenile justice system. They also talked to kids in prison, teen mothers, and teens in gangs and evaluated census data, juvenile justice system data, and the teen idleness rate. The council found that race, color, and class issues were significant enough to merit special focus. They discovered that youth were only able to access resources through the juvenile justice system. The Urban Strategies Council succeeded in using this data to inspire and focus public attention on the needs of Oakland's youth, ultimately resulting in the passage of Measure K, which set aside 2.5 percent of general funds for youth and village "Beacon School" centers where young people can access programs and make opportunities for themselves.

The Providence (RI) Plan created and maintains a data warehouse that has as its goal a focus on "my house, my block, my street, my neighborhood." They seek to make information "real" (that is, not just a point on the map) to the citizens of Providence. The Providence Plan originated through a joint city and county effort. This joint support gave them the credibility to resolve privacy issues by collecting data at the residential level but reporting it only at the aggregate level. The University of Rhode Island helped a great deal with database management and technical issues. Community agencies who share their data have unlimited access to and use of the database.

DAY ONE CLOSING PLENARY SESSION—STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING THE MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC IN COMMUNITY CHANGE

Plenary session panelists recommended that the community indicators movement find out which local editors and reporters cover economic city or county development, land use, and sustainability-related topics. Once these are identified, community indicators project (CIP) staff need to cultivate these relationships and provide the media with information that is not riddled with jargon. By serving as experts whom local journalists can consult when they are covering stories relating to sustainability issues, CIPs will serve as honest brokers of information for the community.

If the goal is to raise awareness about a project or a trend that needs to be addressed, it is wise to remember that indicators are not the story. They are tools that help us understand the story. Provide the reporter with some basic facts and information as background data and then share a human interest story that illustrates what you are trying to accomplish. Like Ralph Nader, make the journalist look good, give the reporter a piece of the story by giving them "leads." Provide the journalist with a reference to a local expert. Most important, identify a person for whom changing a particular community outcomes makes a difference. If there are related issues already in the news, strike while the iron is hot. Call the reporter to provide additional information that she may not have had when she wrote the story. CIP staff must create alliances with media personnel in order to get the story out.

DAY TWO PLENARY SESSIONS

PLENARY SESSION ONE—INDICATORS, COMMUNITY BUILDING, AND SOCIAL CHANGE: STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING THE PROSPERITY GAP

The 1997 updated Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) documented the increasing income disparity, with declining wages among the poor (those in the lowest income quintile) and increasing income among the rich (those in the highest income quintile). Redefining Progress is particularly concerned with both distributional equity (in the present time, are wages and profits equitably distributed?) and intergenerational equity (that is, are we mortgaging the future?), issues that the GPI was designed to illuminate.

Working Partnerships, based in the Silicon Valley, took a critical look at existing economic indicators and concluded that some data currently being collected doesn't have continuing relevance in the valley's changing workplace environment. For example, headlines state that income is up, but what the headline doesn't capture is the fact that people are working three jobs instead of one—all without health insurance—and that there is an increase in hiring temporary and part-time workers. In "Growing Together or Drifting Apart?" Working Partnerships found that occupations having the most job openings provided average earnings of less than \$10 per hour, and many were less than \$6 per hour. Although productivity is increasing (a prerequisite to wage increases) wages remain relatively flat. Where is the money going? To CEOs and stockholders: CEO salaries were up 400 percent, while low-end workers' wages were down 6 percent.

In Silicon Valley, a living wage for a single adult requires a full-time job at \$8 per hour, and a one-child single parent household requires a full-time job at \$12 per hour. Working Partnerships found that 54 percent of jobs didn't pay enough. As a result, people have multiple jobs, are doubling up on housing, living on credit, or filing for bankruptcy. Working Partnerships seeks to translate data into action, not simply by publishing reports, but by training and empowering the future leaders in the valley.

PLENARY SESSION TWO—METROPOLITICS: A REGIONAL AGENDA FOR COMMUNITY AND STABILITY

As the more affluent members of the population move to the suburbs, poverty becomes concentrated in largely urban areas. One consequence of this concentration of poverty is a declining tax base and insufficient funding for public safety, public works, schools, and other services. As a result, the level of public services often declines, leading to other negative consequences (for example, an increase in crime) that further impact settlement patterns.

Solutions are limited. Sales or other new taxes would impact those least able to pay and would have low yield; gentrification moves the poor out with no place to send them and nowhere for them to go. Very few communities are able to increase their tax base by attracting young, upwardly mobile couples with large disposable incomes.

Minnesota State Representative Myron Orfield proposes a new strategy, known as tax-base sharing, for transforming our nation's metropolitan regions into healthy communities. Tax-base sharing regionalizes the tax base, decreases the ability of business to play communities against each other, and permits long-term planning. Carl Anthony discussed Bay Area initiatives that focus on the economy, the environment, and equity. These initiatives involve the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development, Urban Habitat, the Bay Area Council, and the Association of Bay Area Governments.

PLENARY SESSION THREE—THE ROLE OF FOUNDATIONS IN GROWING INDICATORS AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL: THE COLORADO TRUST'S STATEWIDE COMMUNITY INDEX PROJECT

Representatives from the James Irvine Foundation, the Colorado Trust, the Community Foundation Silicon Valley, Yampa Valley Partners' indicators project, and a community evaluator discussed the role of foundations in the development and evaluation of indicators projects. The role of foundations is to provide a general structure within which to work, to showcase national models, provide operational support, request realistic expectations while being flexible in setting deadlines, and provide networking and peer-learning opportunities.

The Colorado Trust funds a statewide community indicators project. One of their grantees is located in northwest Colorado's rural Yampa Valley. This project encourages community issues to bubble up from small-town communities and uses their vision to enable them to achieve true progress. The Yampa Valley project

recommends evaluating and selecting indicators according to whether existing data was accessible, reliable, valid, and based on sufficiently sensitive measures inclusive of and balancing community interests across indicator categories, or domains. The Community Foundation Silicon Valley used data to help achieve community goals, looking at the condition of children, the commitment of people to the area, volunteerism, safety, and crime, among other issues. The project sought to link the prosperity of Silicon Valley to the experience of low-income neighborhoods, focusing on neighborhood concerns and meeting whenever it was convenient for community members.

DAY TWO SESSION WORKSHOPS

TRACK 1: GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR PLANNING AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Community Mapping for Social Justice

Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition representatives explored the demographic relationships among communities of color, neighborhoods with a high population density of children and families living below the poverty level, and the ratio of renter- to owner-occupied properties in Santa Clara County by examining new California Superfund toxic release inventory and groundwater contamination maps. These maps are used by the Toxic Coalition in campaigns to provide basic information to higher-risk communities, to hold polluters accountable for toxic waste discharges, and to lobby for and provide input on proposed and undertaken remediation activities. A group exercise helped participants identify community concerns, goals, and specific objectives related to a particular geographic area, issue, and the target audience necessary to effect the desired change.

TRACK 2: FRAMEWORKS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

A Paradigm for Sustainable Society: Using the Societal Impact Matrix as a Tool for Decisionmaking

Architects, Designers, and Planners for Social Responsibility developed the Societal Impact Matrix as a road map for understanding and recapturing a holistic view of life. This matrix provides a check list for demonstrating how a particular policy, action, or project may or will affect the greater society, as well as a blueprint for comprehensive decisionmaking. In this matrix, the columns describe how policy

inputs (whether by government, business, or individual action) can impact societal needs, many of which are rarely if ever considered when policy decisions are made.

The rows of the matrix identify the domain and describe how policy decisions impact societal needs. The intersection of a row (societal domain) with its corresponding column (policy domain) reports the intended policy objective. The bottom row, or the "Legacy," describes the ultimate result of a society's decisions by reporting what will be inherited by future generations.

The matrix reports on fifteen societal needs and policy domains which are paired according to needs and policy, including: land/land use policy; water/water resources policy; food/agricultural policy; shelter/housing policy; productive activity/economic development and trade policy; energy-fuel supply/energy policy; health/public health policy; culture/cultural policy; education and literacy/education policy; information/communications policy; mobility/transportation policy; civil society and community/social development policy; environmental quality/environmental policy; personal and domestic security/judiciary and law enforcement policy; national security/defense and national security policy. Cells are read as "the impact of [a policy] on [a need] is that it [cell that intersects row and column]." For example, "the impact of Transportation Policy on Energy/Fuel Supply is that it affects the consumption and conservation of scarce resources."

This matrix is the first of many layers which seeks to correlate policy and societal needs. The designers hope that others will undertake similar projects using this paradigm for creating a sustainable relationship with the earth.

TRACK 3: INDICATOR APPLICATIONS: MOVING INDICATORS INTO ACTION

Indicators as a Tool for Regional Planning and Building Public/Private Partnerships

This workshop explored two models for regional-level indicators development: the Business Council's Wealth Index and Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency's Quality of Life Indicators. Both models have implemented an indicators project and incorporated the concept of sustainability and measurement into local and regional planning efforts. The Truckee Meadows Quality of Life indicators project arose out of and facilitates regional planning efforts to mediate and monitor community growth and development. One of the main functions of the project is to review and evaluate proposed land development projects for their probable impact on quality of life indicators. In addition to defining and measuring quality of life and aiding in

the regional planning process, the project also integrates citizen participation into regional growth management planning and ensures that quality of life indicators are incorporated into the regional plan—all of which ultimately improves the Truckee Meadows community's quality of life.

CONCLUSION: CHALLENGES FOR THE COMMUNITY INDICATORS MOVEMENT

NEED FOR GREATER PARTICIPATION BY GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS

One of the challenges to implementing influential policy indicators is the need for greater participation of government representatives and business in indicators coalitions. This creates the context and framework necessary to link more closely policy and performance indicators with governmental and political accountability and action. The involvement of government and business in the community indicators project is directly related to public support of the issues and the community indicators movement. When an imperative call to action emerges in the community, local government and businesses will respond. Therefore, the challenge is to help projects educate their communities, reveal and highlight public support, and facilitate the involvement of government and business.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Projects can engage the public by appealing to the media with stories about people and issues. In these stories, indicators should be used as the background information, as tools for explaining the experience of the community. The real strengths of the community indicators movement—the information collected about our communities and the project staff—can become reliable sources of information for media personnel. Through human interest stories about community accomplishments, we can engage and challenge the public to seek even greater achievements. Projects must face the challenge of educating, encouraging, and mentoring project staff in creating alliances with news media that can engage the public.

NEED FOR PRESCRIPTIVE AS WELL AS DESCRIPTIVE INDICATORS

While descriptive indicators help us understand where we are now, of equal or greater importance is where we would like to be tomorrow and how we can get there. Only prescriptive indicators will help us answer those questions. Therefore, CIPs need to delve into those hard "how" and "why" questions. For example, a Hawaiian community interested in increasing employment tested their hypothesis that increasing tourism would increase jobs by measuring the relationship between tourism and jobs. They discovered that the key to increasing jobs was diversifying the economy, not attracting more tourists. Community indicators practitioners face the challenge of designing indicators that are relevant to the changing global economy, reflect important quality of life conditions, and prescribe future economy and policy directions.

NEED FOR COMMUNITY INDICATORS PROJECT LINKAGE

Several sessions dealt with the need to link California indicators projects. The suggestion was made that perhaps a future indicators conference could deal with how to reduce segmentation and duplication of efforts among projects. Redefining Progress was credited for providing opportunities for formal and informal linking. Indicators projects in Southern California met to discuss collaboratively measuring and tracking indicators in their region. There was discussion of a state-level indicators project that could, among other things, adopt a comprehensive set of indicators across regions and throughout the state. There was interest in a preliminary meeting between California community indicators projects and business and state-level governmental leaders to explore, discuss, and identify the intended outcomes of such a project. Redefining Progress has been approached by numerous experienced community indicators project leaders who would like to provide technical assistance, conduct additional workshops, and explore opportunities for collaboration and linkage between projects. Our challenge is to create the statewide framework within which to discuss and implement collaboration and linkage across projects and throughout the state.

APPENDIX 1: CONFERENCE EVALUATION

Evaluations revealed that participants felt that the conference was very well organized,¹ session topics were timely and relevant,² and speakers shared new insights.³ Additionally, participants felt that there were ample networking opportunities and that sessions were designed to encourage active learning and participation. When asked what part of the overall conference was most liked, participant answers fell into three general categories: question and answer opportunities, presentation content, and networking opportunities. Praise was given to presenters Judith Innes, Clifford Cobb, Larry Orman, Eliot Allen, and Rob Elder. The content was characterized as being "forward thinking and engaging." Participants suggested less detailed information and more focus on the larger picture; "more nuts and bolts of doing"; more hands-on presentations, especially in GIS workshops; more of and more time for an interactive style engaging participants and sharing project-level information.

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1. \bar{M} = 4.6 on a scale of 5.0.
 2. \bar{M} = 4.5 on a 5.0 scale.
 3. \bar{M} = 4.5 on a 5.0 scale.

APPENDIX 2: ACTION ITEMS FROM LEARNING CIRCLE EXERCISES

Participants related their goals for the conference as well as the challenges that they faced in their community indicators projects.

Q: What are your primary conference goals?

A: Participants' primary goals included learning from other indicators projects; understanding the relationship between declining inner city areas and unmitigated growth in the suburbs; learning how regions use indicators as tools for managing growth; understanding how data (and specifically GIS) can be used in evaluating and improving community conditions; learning about strategies for building consensus; becoming part of a network of indicators projects; and exploring the linkages among local, regional, and national indicators projects.

Q: What are the challenges currently facing your project?

A: Project challenges fell into two practical categories: building an inclusive indicators framework, and facilitating the emergence of indicators valued by all stakeholders as well as by experts.

Building an inclusive framework:

- How do you get people to listen?
- What strategies are effective for involving all voices in the community from vision to action?
- What strategies are effective in developing a clear framework for a sustainable community without getting lost in the detail of indicator selection?
- What strategies are effective for linking the scientific community with citizens and policymakers?
- How can we integrate indicator feedback mechanisms into strategic planning and policy development, implementation, and change over time?

Emergence of agreed-upon influential, valuable, and valued indicators:

- What strategies are effective for developing understandable and usable community indicators?
- What strategies are effective to ensure that indicators reflect community values and concerns?
- Are there "headliner" indicators that effectively communicate the key quality of life elements?
- Is there value in developing and using a common set of comparable indicators between projects?
- What strategies are effective for conveying the importance of indicators to the community?