Global Sustainable Urban Development Indicators (GDI): HUD and White House Working Group

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OECD Working Party on Territorial Indicators
29 November 2010
Paris, France
GDI Overview

- Developed during World Urban Forum, March 2010 due to urbanization discussions and effects
- Partners from World Urban Forum uniquely positioned to collaborate in the United States and internationally – multi-sector, diverse, urban and rural mandates
- U.S. cities and agencies taking ambitious steps toward sustainable development
- Working group co-led by the White House Office of Urban Affairs and HUD
- Aim to develop indicators that demonstrate the progress that American cities are making toward sustainable urban development and inform supportive policy, planning and investment.
GDI Overview (cont’d)

- Penn State professors and PhD students participating in working group and leading analysis
- American Planning Association staff and working group members coordinating closely with Penn State team
- Initial analysis from Penn State presented to subset of working group two weeks ago
- Working group members attended World Urban Campaign meetings in Shanghai, China to present materials, leading to interest in process for China
- Working group members attended launch of Sustainable Urban Housing Competition in early November, leading to further interest in partnering on GDI for Brazil and Latin America
GDI Goals

Goal 1:
Scan North American indicators and outcomes which evaluate successful sustainable urban development and revitalization strategies.

Goal 2:
Match these metrics in context of global best practices.

Goal 3:
Submit suggestions on potential common language, normative principles, and universal benchmarks around sustainability.
Indicators will:

- Adhere largely to political jurisdictions, i.e. cities.
- Be informed by international research and understandings, but tailored to domestic needs.
- Apply broadly, to American cities and metropolitan areas of all sizes and locales.
- Relate primarily to data that cities already collect and/or are interested in and motivated to collect over the long term.
- Be simple, few, and succinct, but supplemented with contextual information.
### Elements necessary for sustainable urban development:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension of Sustainable Urban Development</th>
<th>Social Wellbeing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Health</td>
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<td>• Safety</td>
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<td>• Local or civic identity/sense of place</td>
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<td>• Access to decent – affordable – housing and services</td>
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<td>• Access to public recreation and open space</td>
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<td>• Access to a variety of transportation options</td>
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<td>Economic Opportunity</td>
<td>• A diversified and competitive local and regional economy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Transportation and other infrastructure coordinated with land use</td>
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<td>• Growth plans that leverage existing assets</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Access to capital and credit</td>
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<td>• Access to education, jobs, and training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Quality</td>
<td>• Efficient land use</td>
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<td>• Use of renewable resources</td>
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<td>• Waste/pollution minimization and management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Climate change and natural disaster mitigation, adaptation, and resilience</td>
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<td>• Carbon efficient, environmentally sound, transportation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• A diverse natural environment and functional ecological systems</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Sources of Indicator Information & Data

Institutional (1)

- Columbia Univ. + Yale Univ. – 2010 Environmental Performance Index

Non-Profits / NGO (9)

- CAP, ICLEI + USGBC – STAR Community Index
- GBCA (Australia) – Green Star
- Global Reporting Initiative – Sustainability Reporting Guidelines
- International Institute for Sustainable Development
- Urban Ecology Coalition – Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators Guidebook
- USGBC – LEED ND
- The World Bank – Global City Indicators Facility
- ACSE – Sustainability Action Plan
- International Sustainability Indicators Network
- The World Bank – Sustainable Development
Sources of Indicator Information & Data

Private Organizations (3)
- ASLA + Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center – Sustainable Sites Initiative
- PricewaterhouseCoopers – Cities of Opportunity
- Siemens – European Green City Index

National / Municipal Governments (9)
- Abu Dhabi – Estidama
- European Foundation – Urban Sustainability Indicators
- Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project
- Houston Sustainability Indicators
- Minneapolis Sustainability Indicators
- Portland Planning and Sustainability
- Santa Monica Sustainability Plan
- Whistler Monitor Program
- Sustainable Seattle
Scale of Focus

- Whistler Monitor Program
- Santa Monica Sustainability Plan
- Portland Planning and Sustainability
- Minneapolis Sustainability Indicators
- Houston Sustainability Indicators
- Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project
- Urban Sustainability Indicators - Euro. Foundation
- Estidama - Abu Dhabi
- Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators Guidebook
- International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
- Sustainability Reporting Guidelines
Principles of Sustainability

Number of Systems

- Brundtland
- Promote Awareness
- Urban Migration / Human Settlement
- Informed Municipal / Private Investment
- Green Building
- Smart Growth
- New Urbanism

Whistler Monitor Program
Santa Monica Sustainability Plan
Portland Planning and Sustainability
Minneapolis Sustainability Indicators
Houston Sustainability Indicators
Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project
Urban Sustainability Indicators - Euro. Foundation
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Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators Guidebook
International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
Sustainability Reporting Guidelines
General Observations: Sources and Indicators

• Many Indicator Systems are not SMART?: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Repeatable, Timely

• Measurable?
  – Surveys sources inaccessible (Fortune 500 CEOs)?

• Repeatable?
  – Custom datasets that need to be purchased?

• Timely?
  – One-time survey?

• How many indicators have we reviewed?
  – 139 Environmental – 44 Not SMART
  – 126 Social – 63 Not SMART
  – 70 Economic – 22 Not SMART
Indicator Makeup

- The number of SMART indicators is skewed towards Environment and secondarily Social. Economic indicators are more narrowly defined.
- Few indicators overlap categories.
- Transportation is a common theme among each category, but is seen more in environment and social.
- A large number of indicators currently being used do not meet the SMART standards or have an obvious nexus with the three categories.
- Some indicators are used commonly – especially ones that come from readily collected administrative data.
Example: Environment Indicators

First cut yields 95 SMART indicators.
24 Single-dimension, 71 Multi-dimensional.

- A large number of indicators, most of which are multi-dimensional. Overlap is an issue, need to pare down to the few SMART-est indicators.
- Ratio of single- to multi-dimensional indicators also shows a lack of specificity. Particularly concerning where an element has few indicators, overall (e.g. diverse natural environment, above).
- Rating and index systems (e.g. LEED, SSI) are comprehensive, but very specific.
## Example: Environment Indicators Framework Element

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efficient land use</th>
<th>Use of renewable resources</th>
<th>Waste/pollution minimization and management</th>
<th>Climate change and natural disaster mitigation, adaptation, and resilience</th>
<th>Carbon efficient, environmentally sound, transportation</th>
<th>A diverse natural environment and functional ecological systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Single-dimensional Indicators covering the area:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Multi-dimensional Indicators covering the area:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
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</table>
Next Steps for Working Group

Short Term (Dec/Jan)
- Revisit indexed systems (e.g. LEED, SSI).
- Pare down existing list: Review indicators in each category for overlap and double counting.
- Supplement with additions: Add indicators that speak to underrepresented elements.
- The objective is to maximize information and minimize the number of indicators, i.e. create a ‘lean and mean’ indicator system.

Longer Term (Jan/Feb/Mar)
- Complete indicator crafting/selection and present to working group.
- Select several American cities in which to pilot the new system.
- Apply new indicator system to selected cities paying particular attention to data availability and ease of use.
Contact Us:

Office for International and Philanthropic Innovation (IPI)

- Visit on the web!  [www.huduser.org/mpi](http://www.huduser.org/mpi)
- Sign up for electronic updates:  [www.huduser.org/portal/ipi/elist.html](http://www.huduser.org/portal/ipi/elist.html)
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