Using Quality of Life Indicators

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Aligning Purpose and Measures

- If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. (Maslow)
- Economics counts what’s countable …. But is that what counts? (unknown)
- We are what we measure. It's time to measure what we want to be. (Sustainable Measures LLC)
Our Role as Change Agents

Indicators chosen can—

- Shape inquiry
- Define scope of problem-opportunity
- Influence breadth of responses

Whose diagnosis and on what basis?

Treating systemic challenges versus superficial symptoms
A Lesson Learned

Village of Rock Springs Economic Leadership Development
Community or Economic Development

- 75% of Americans under 28 believe a “cool city is more important than a good job” (Ryan)
- Young people “insist they need to live in places that offer stimulating, creative environments” (Florida)
- Young people want: a place to raise a family; safe streets; affordability; good schools; and scenic beauty (Andresen)
Quantitative and Qualitative

Beyond assembling a host of indicators based on data sources
- Over time
- Comparative

Opportunity to assess community values with qualitative data
- Levels of importance (weighting different indicators)
- Levels of satisfaction
Broad Indicator Best Practices

- Community Change Collaborative—Annie E. Casey Foundation; Bush Foundation; CDS
- Community Indicators Consortium ([http://www.communityindicators.net/](http://www.communityindicators.net/))
  - Encyclopedia of Quality of Life Research (Michalos)
- Guide to Sustainable Indicators (Hart)
- Kewaunee County Quality of Life Report (Bernhardt and Wise)
Community Capital: the natural, human, social, and built capital from which a community receives benefits and on which the community relies for continued existence.
Kewaunee County Quality of Life Indicators

- Arts & Culture
- Community
- Health
- Home
- Learning
- Natural Environment
- Recreation & Leisure
- Safety
- Self-Sufficiency
- Work
A New Old Idea: Community Capitals

Cornelia Flora, Jan Flora, Susan Fey, Mary Emery
Community Capitals

**Natural Capital:**
Air, soils, water (quantity and quality), landscape, biodiversity, scenery

**Cultural Capital:**
Values, language, rituals, tradition, dress, heritage, celebration

**Human Capital:**
Self-esteem, education, skills, health, creativity, youth, diverse groups

**Social Capital:**
Leadership, groups, bridging networks, bonding networks, trust, norms of reciprocity

**Political Capital:**
Inclusion, voice, power, responsiveness, efficacy

**Financial Capital:**
Income, wealth, security, credit, investment

**Built Capital:**
Water systems, sewers, utilities, health systems, transportation, housing

Cornelia Butler Flora, Mary Emery, Susan Fey and Corry Bregendahl
Community Capitals and Quality of Life Indicators

- Natural...environment, recreation and leisure
- Cultural...arts and culture, community
- Human...education, health, home, learning
- Social...community, learning, safety, self-sufficiency
  - Bonding & Bridging
- Political...community, safety
- Financial...home, self-sufficiency, work
- Built...home, environment, recreation and leisure