NNIPCamp Columbus, June 19, 2013

Session 1 – Looking at Fire/EMS Data

Led by Matt Kachura – Baltimore

Notes by Maia Woluchem

Present: Devin Keithley, Peter Tatian, Erica Raleigh, Liza Morehead, Tom Warshauer, Steve King, Michael Schramm

In Baltimore—tracking of crime and safety has focused on crime. What’s missing is the other side of arson, vacant property, etc. The safety aspect can be related to this—

Fire dept pushes to check door-to-door smoke detectors, for example.

What they hope to do is work with fire and EMS—Discussion will revolve around what sort of indicators they can track to do this. Uses, difficulties, successes, etc. Matt’s trying to learn—

Devin: Crime data is missing in Columbus as it relates to property. Police data is related to incident reports, and because arson is related to the fire department, it’s tough to get data on this. And arson is sort of isolated in that it’s the only one related to fire. It’s extra leg work to go to the FD to break out that data.

Tom: Crime data is usually available in poor neighborhoods. And now we have Fire Dept. One of the data points is related *only* to fire service, not to EMS. We need to disaggregate this: kitchen fires, arsons, etc. Rich neighborhoods are thinking all the resources are going to poor neighborhoods, for instance. Disaggregating data is important—suicide is high in rich neighborhoods but it’s not disaggregated. Kitchen fires are in both poor and rich neighborhoods. So we can tease out certain issues by thinking about things broadly. EMS is important—Older people in rich neighborhoods, poor people getting to the hospital. This can tease out aging and place issues. False alarms, as well. This can create a greater picture.

Only Erica, Tom and Liza have current relationships with the Fire Dept. in their town.

Liza is doing analysis for FD as it relates to property. One of the things they need to get at is safety and trust. “Safe People” is an indicator—It tracks crime data and recidivism. We try to get at how people are and how they feel. That involves trust of public agencies. Do fire and EMT’s fit into this? They’re not looking at it now but they want to be.

Matt: Sometimes some neighborhoods have faster response times than others. The issue here is perception—crime is concentrated in certain areas, especially with “The Wire” perception. Showing hotspots helps with disproving that. Fire data can tell you response times.

Peter: DC issues include leadership with fire and EMS—Are they being adequately responsive? Policy discussions focus around this. We haven’t accessed that data although the data *may* be out there. So what would we do with it if we could access that data?

Matt: Best practices is a goal of this forum.

Peter: There’s a city-wide GIS consortium, it’s not required but lots of people are involved. Some of the challenges here are *interpretation*. Is reporting an issue? Is the population the most important?

Devin: Code violations may also be important. (Building code).

Michael Schramm: One of the issues with this may be that the only way violations are found is if they’re reported. Sincere difference with owner-occupied and renter-occupied property as well.

Steve: EMS recording injuries in the home could be related to building as well. Conversations with the fire department show that they don’t collect data very well.

Tom: They know the response time of every call. They use that to talk about locations of departments.

***Identified issues:*** Does the FD collect adequate data? Property-related issues?

Steve: We’re working on a healthy housing study that should be related to the fire department. 100-record dump by the FD is expected.

Michael: Are they collecting data like a police report?

Erica: Times are important in fires. The national center requires them. In Detroit—they report census tract (dubious), address, lat/long, the type of fire, suspicious fires, the arson data is potentially dubious, but the FD knows because they can smell it. Fires are connected to vacancy. We need to be concerned about protecting people rather than these buildings though. 4-minute response times for trucks is standard. Overlay that with census and you can tell what you need to. Ann Arbor has a lot of places that don’t get 4 minute standards.

Problem: In Detroit, vacancy is huge. But they put out the fires on vacant houses so it’s a terrible safety hazard. Especially since some of those structures are still lived in—squatters.

So things that are important in requests: trucks, time, type of fire/incident, structure type, vacant/occupied

***According to Matt:*** leveraging relationship, disaggregating data, response times, data officers to “push” department, interpretation of data, different types of trucks

Erica says getting the data is really important

Important to getting the data—Start at the bottom if you’re trying to get favors (Says Michael). Problems—they’re union. Erica—In Detroit, there are lots of streams—the commissioner, the chiefs of department (who come from the ranks), the union, seargant, lieutenant, captain, chief, etc. Talking to the union or the sergeant is helping.

Schramm—What happens to fire on the interstate? In Cleveland, a truck will come to block traffic.

Devin—In Columbus, it’s the same. Matt says the same in Matt as well. Schramm says it’s an unnecessary use of resources.

Steve: From conversations in Cali, they made an offer to clean up the data *for* the fire department. That’s a good entrance—you give us the data, we serve your purpose as well. Peter says this boils down to helping the FD be better at what they do. What’s the bigger picture?

Tom: Says disaggregating helps to fix this. For example, we find that vacancy and arson are problems. Maybe determining that the elderly need more resources. Targeted education is an example of a result. For example, grease in sewers causes a blockage. There is an opportunity for GIS to help people in neighborhoods help each other.

Erica: Crowd-sourcing (Adopt a hydrant) helped to involve community in fixing hydrants. Maybe looking at foreclosure in relation to fire. That’s the NNIP framework—combining and looking for correlations can help to develop relationships that can be important in causing change and holding leverage.

Speaking of standards: National Database of Structural Fires

There are some standards regionally perhaps.

Tom: Room to look at businesses in addition to residential

Liza: EMS data can be used to track the homeless as well—Another potential use.

Erica: EMS data on shooting victims can show some potential early intervention points. As in getting kids into other activities when they’re 11 or 12—before they get into crime between 13 and 19. HPA laws are important though

Matt: Shouldn’t this all be public data? Aren’t there reports of fire data, police reporters, newspapers, etc.

Peter: Accessibility is a problem here.

Next Steps:

Peter—Compiling what different places and people are doing. (Ex. Steve).

Potentially assisting to complete the loop between the housing department and fire data

Issue Area on the NeighborhoodInfoDC, NNIP, etc