**DATA IN DEVELOPMENT:**

**INDICATORS OF PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

Friday morning, 10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

NNIP includes indicators of physical environment in its [Shared Indicators Framework](http://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/activities/projects/nnip-shared-indicators-system), but the topic has not been discussed in depth by the network at a partnership meeting. This broad category encompasses the quality of the physical environment, environmental infrastructure, and use of energy resources. The [draft shared indicators framework](http://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/library/catalog/nnip-shared-indicators-system-draft-framework) states neighborhood goals in this area as: “developing and sustaining a pleasant living environment; one that is functionally efficient, physically attractive and free from pollution. An additional goal is to enhance general accessibility via improved connections to the local transportation system.” Common examples of specific measures include acreage of open space or the percent of land that is impervious to rain, but partners could also construct measures of how individual behavior, like participation in recycling programs, reporting storm drain clogs or energy consumption. See the next page for the list of indicators included in the shared indicators framework.

In this session, we will learn about the indicators that two organizations are using to describe the state of the environment in their area. Our speakers will discuss how they selected and created these indicators, and challenges to updating these indicators over time. They will also discuss the potential audiences and partners in using the data to track and improve environmental conditions in their communities. Each presenter will have 15 minutes to share their work and then Erica Raleigh (Data Driven Detroit) will moderate a 30 minute plenary discussion.

**Presentation 1**: Matthew Kachura, Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance (BNIA)

* Matthew will discuss BNIA’s increased emphasis on sustainability measures which they went through a process to identify new indicators and collect new data for their release of their community indicators project, Vital Signs 11.

**Presentation 2**: Tom Warshauer, City of Charlotte, Department of Neighborhood and Business Services

* Tom will discuss the creation of the City’s 17 variables in their Environmental Dimension in their Quality of Life Report (QoL). The QoL report covers 464 neighborhoods with 80 variables in 8 dimensions. These environmental variables challenge conceptions of neighborhood value, enable neighborhoods to see themselves and track progress, and help policymakers determine where to aim resources.

**Questions for Discussion:**

* What types of local data sources are available for indicators of the physical environment? Are there sources of information that are more universal across cities?
* Which indicators created from local data might represent the “low-hanging” fruit in this topic area?
* What are ways neighborhoods are using the information?
* Is the data being used to drive policy or resource allocation in your community? How?
* Are there potential cross-site activities or projects that relate to this area?

**Physical Environment – NNIP Shared Indicators Framework (2012)**

**Character of the built environment** (available in Census/ACS data)

* Density (housing units per square mile)
* % housing units in single-family structures
* No. of census blocks per square mile

**Parks, open space, tree cover** (local data, a few partners hold this data)

* Acres of park and recreation land inside the neighborhood per 1,000 residents (Boston, Washington)
* Acres of park and recreation land within a 3 mile radius
* Acres of tree canopy inside the neighborhood per 1,000 residents (Boston, Washington)
* No. community gardens per 1,000 residents (Boston, Baltimore)

**Pollution levels**

* No. hazardous waste sites/1,000 residents (*local data*)
* % of days the air quality index is good (*local data*)
* Toxic release level (from Toxic Release Inventory)

**General accessibility**

* No. of bus stops per acre (*local data*)
* Distance neighborhood centroid to rail transit stop (*local data*)
* Average travel time to work (minutes) (*ACS*)
* % of commute trips by car, truck or van (*ACS*)
* % of commute trips by public transport (*ACS*)