**NEIGHBORHOOD DATA TO SUPPORT REGIONAL COLLABORATION AND EQUITY**

1:45–3:45 – Wednesday afternoon

**Background**

While most NNIP members focus on urban neighborhoods in central cities, the problems and opportunities of cities are increasingly regional in nature. Issues of demographic transition, housing policy and homelessness, aging infrastructure, crime and gang violence, education and youth engagement do not respect jurisdictional borders. Successfully addressing these issues often requires a regional approach that begins with a common set of data that can benchmark the current situation, follow trends, track progress, and empower community groups to press for change. A sizeable number of the local partners in NNIP are already working at the regional level and have made important contributions to the field.

Furthermore, our recent discussions about equity have not specifically addressed the importance of *geographic* equity that manifests as differences in access to public services among jurisdictions within a region and an unequal distribution of the benefits and burdens of rapid growth or decline. Geographic inequality can breed distrust, heighten social tensions, and create conflict regarding regional public policy. Manuel Pastor and Richard Voith have taught us that suburban and city futures are linked and that more equitable regions are also more prosperous.

Moreover, many of our strategies for addressing urban issues involve influencing markets: labor markets, housing markets, and markets for good and services. These markets operate within a regional context. Most people will cross jurisdictional boundaries to work, to shop, and to access services. Many institutions such as workforce boards, nonprofit organizations, and metropolitan planning organizations already operate regionally and require regional data at the neighborhood level to understand and diagnose issues that affect regional systems and markets.

Portland, Oregon is home to Metro, the only regional government agency in the U.S. whose governing body is directly elected by the region's voters. Metro was established in 1992 with voter approval of its charter. The Metro Council consists of a president who is elected region wide and six councilors who are elected by district every four years in nonpartisan races. They serve nearly 1.5 million people in Clackamas, Washington, and Multnomah Counties in Oregon. The Metro Charter gives Metro a broad set of responsibilities in regional land use and transportation planning, as well as management of regional parks and facilities and the management of solid waste.

**This Session**

This part of the program will be chaired by **Sheila Martin**, Director of the Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies at Portland State University (NNIP’s Portland Partner). She will begin by reviewing the overall session and introducing a presentation on NNIP’s perspective on regional issues (5 minutes).

* **Holly St. Clair** of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) in Boston will summarize the work of NNIP partners at the regional level to date and the aspirations the partnership has expressed for work at this level in the future. As an illustration, she will briefly describe MAPC’s recent study *State of Equity in Metro Boston* and how it is being used to influence policy in that region. (10 minutes presentation – plus clarifying questions)

Sheila will then describe the purposes of the panel session focusing on development issues in the Portland region, and introduce the panelists: (panelists 15 minutes each – plus clarifying questions between presentations).

* **Ethan Seltzer,** Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at Portland State, will discuss the evolution of metropolitan government in Portland reviewing the motivation behind its structure and its benefits and challenges in the context of trends in metropolitan governance in other metropolitan areas nationally.
* **Rex Burkholder,** Metro Council District 5, will discuss the major region-wide issues Metro has been facing in recent years, including: affordable housing (making density more palatable) and equity (steps toward making the benefits as well as the burdens of growth equally shared). He will offer ideas about the role of data in managing these issues (including his views on impact of Portland’s first Regional Equity Atlas and how similar data might be developed and used in the future).
* **Denny Doyle, Mayor,** City of Beaverton, will focus on the development challenges of one of the region’s rapidly growing first tier suburbs that is also experiencing a dramatic increase in the racial/ethnic diversity of its population. Mayor Doyle will also discuss the kinds of data that might help in addressing these challenges and how it could be used most effectively.

The panel presentations will be followed by a period of discussion facilitated by Sheila (45 minutes).

* NNIP partners will ask the panel for further clarification about the regional policy and data agenda in Portland and about its broader implications
* The panel will ask NNIP partners for their ideas about how they might develop and apply data more effectively

At the end of the session, we will ask the three Portland panelists to offer wrap-up comments.