

16 August 2012

To Stephanie Jennings, Lane Livability Consortium
From Michael Howard, Ian Foster, Paul Hicks, Paul Leitman and Steve Rafuse, Community Planning Workshop
SUBJECT SUMMARY OF DATA SYNTHESIS WORKSHOP

Introduction

On Monday, 30 July, the Lane Livability Consortium hosted a Synthesis Workshop in the Bascom-Tykeson Room at the Eugene Public Library between 2 and 5 PM to discuss issues around data. This included issues about accessing data, gathering and sorting data with limited financial and human resources, identifying opportunities to increase data sharing in the region, and considering how to organize and understand increased amounts of data.

Twenty-eight individuals representing fourteen agencies and organizations within the Eugene-Springfield area attended the workshop. The participants represented a cross section of public agencies and nonprofit organizations with interests in planning, transportation, housing, economic development, and health issues. A list of attendees is attached to this memo.

The meeting was led by Stephanie Jennings from the Lane Livability Consortium and Michael Howard, Ian Foster, Paul Leitman and Steve Rafuse from the Community Planning Workshop. Carolyn Burke, Jason Dedrick and Chris Pryor provided guidance for the workshop structure.

Objectives

The primary goals of this workshop were to:

- Develop a picture of our changing data needs to achieve agency and community goals
- Consider how to organize ever increasing amounts of data and sort it for meaning
- Identify interconnecting data needs and gaps
- Brainstorm challenges related to accessing, sharing and using data
- Consider actions taken by other regions to support data development and sharing
- Identify opportunities to address identified issues through other tasks of the Lane Livability Consortium

Identifying Participants Interests

The participants were asked to introduce themselves and describe what they hoped to achieve from the workshop. Below is a compilation of participant responses, followed by the frequency of responses in parenthesis:

- Discover ways to cooperate on data gathering and sharing (regional data storage) in order to decrease duplication of effort (3)

- Learn more about, and discuss a systematic approach, for the collection of data and its uses (3)
- Discuss Health Data that is available and needed (Comprehensive Health Assessment, Active Transportation) (3)
- Discuss how to use data more persuasively, to best tell the intended story (2)
- Agree on what data says/ transfer data to knowledge (2)
- Discuss ways to appropriately use statistics to avoid misrepresentation (1)
- Discuss methods of using data as a driver towards progress (1)
- Discuss shared data needs (data that is needed across, overlapping, the core areas) (1)
- Prof. Sandoval wanted to learn what is most useful for practitioners to receive from his research related to Latino Indicators (1)

Starting the Conversation

Chris Pryor of United Way, Dan Reece of PeaceHealth and Gerardo Sandoval of the University of Oregon began the conversation about data by presenting information related to their own work and experience compiling and using data. Answering the following questions started the conversation:

1. How their agency is using data, why it is important, and how their needs are changing.
2. Who wants access to data and why?
3. How does data help us get to the outcomes that we want?

Chris Pryor reported on United Way's efforts to gather key indicators and statistics about Lane County in the Leading Indicators Report, which focuses on trends in health, income, education, and other community trends. He stressed the importance of going beyond just measuring perceptual data by telling the story of what the aggregated information means, and that stories can be thought of as data with passion. Similarly, he also shared his feeling that we spend too much time trying to gather more information in an effort to put the puzzle together and not enough on understanding and analyzing the data that is already there. An important question is whether we focus on gathering more data or developing new tools for understanding the data that we already have available.

Dan Reece spoke about the development of the Community Health Assessment, and how data is important to the health care industry. He discussed the prevalence of illness data and lack of health data. Two key events are triggering a change in data collection: (1) the Affordable Care Act that requires a Community Needs Assessment and the implementation of an improvement plan; (2) the changes to the Coordinated Care Organizations (CCO), which will change how healthcare is organized and funded and the requirement for a needs assessment and improvement plan (same as stated above). The changes include a much more comprehensive view of health which is incentivized through a health finance program. The Lane County CCO is the Trillium Community Health Plan (URL: <http://www.trilliumchp.com>).

Gerardo Sandoval reported on his Latino Indicators Project (Task 2.3 of the LLC work program). Through open-ended and interactive workshops hosted at an elementary school in Springfield and Whiteaker Elementary in Eugene, Dr. Sandoval collected information about what the local Latino community considers to be important livability indicators. These indicators include: need for safety and security, access to community gardens and other public spaces, and perceptions regarding isolation from the greater regional community (lack of inclusivity). His work focuses on more qualitative aspects of data in an attempt to collect stories alongside traditional quantitative data.

Following the opening remarks, there was a short conversation about regional data among the group. The following ideas were expressed in this discussion:

- The problem is not the lack of data. One challenge is the unmanageable amount of data, which prevents public agencies from effectively sorting through and understanding the information. Additionally, some of the data used by agencies are not entirely adequate for what the agency needs to do. Attendees expressed a need for more organization and simplicity of the data to facilitate their daily work.
- Data has a trust issue. Since data can be manipulated and used to misrepresent reality, people must be cautious on how it is used and interpreted.
- Data should be a puzzle, not a mystery. All the information we need should be available, and we only need to put it together (like a puzzle). Data should not be something we need to go out and find (like a mystery).
- Data must tell a story. Agencies should use data to tell a story so that the public can easily digest and understand the information, rather than become encumbered with statistics and data (i.e., develop a story out of conditional data that interacts with behavioral aspect). Funders are keenly interested in data synthesis (and cooperation among agencies).

Gaps, Opportunities and Challenges

Following the short conversation, the attendees broke out into four groups. Each group, discussed the gaps, opportunities and challenges of data.

Gaps

Among the four groups, there were common themes about data gaps within the Eugene-Springfield area. These gaps are a lack of knowledge about data collection and management, time and financial constraints, and partnerships with other agencies.

- **Lack of knowledge about data collection and management of data:** Agencies know what information they want, but they do not where the data is stored or who they should speak with to get that data.
- **Time and financial constraints:** A lot of money and time are required when data needs to be collected. These temporal and financial gaps are difficult to fill, especially in times of financial hardship.

- **Interagency partnership:** A lack of communication and collaboration between agencies concerning data collection and use creates inefficiencies. Also agencies are unaware of what data has already been collected and each agency has different methods in which the information was gathered.

Opportunities

The groups also identified opportunities with data in the region. These opportunities ranged from the availability of data, public health reform, regional clearinghouses, and using data to tell a story.

- **Availability of data:** There is a large amount of data out there, and various new technologies that allow data to be easily collected or obtained.
- **Public health reform:** Changes in the public health sector have meant an increase in the amount of data collection related to public health. The Community Health Assessment, the Community Health Improvement Plan, and Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) are various health-related efforts undertaken in recent years.
- **Regional clearinghouse:** Attendees referenced the opportunity to have one agency coordinate region-wide data management efforts. A centralized “clearinghouse” could provide the region with a “one-stop data hub” that could be made available to store data that can be used across disciplines. LCOG and United Way were suggested as examples of agencies that could be the regional data-keeper. The concept would involve some centralized management; however, various agencies and individuals would contribute data.
- **Using data to tell a story:** People are more likely to respond to a story, emotion and feelings rather than a list of statistics. To support the various efforts of regional agencies and to provide context to the work they are doing, data can be presented as a story. The public will be able to associate with stories and understand the reasoning for the work being completed.

Challenges

The attendees of the workshop also identified the challenges faced by regional agencies concerning data. This included staffing limits, determining community needs, cost of data and transparency.

- **Staffing limits:** For the amount of data that is available, and the need to be able to manage that data, there is not enough staff time to have someone devoted solely to data. Most staff today are overworked and there are limited opportunities for data partnerships with other agencies.
- **Determining community needs:** In order to serve the community, public agencies need data and information about who the community is, what their needs are and what they want from their local governments. This itself poses a challenge because of the need for community surveys and other tools to assess public opinion.
- **Cost of data:** Collecting, managing and updating data is extremely expensive. In times of fiscal austerity and limited revenues, agencies do not have the capacity to devote resources to data.

- **Transparency:** There is a need to provide sources for data, information on how the data was collected and the how the data was interpreted. Due to the possibility of manipulating data and skepticism, increased transparency will ensure accuracy.

Next Steps

The following were identified as next steps and opportunities for the Lane Livability Consortium and the region to pursue in the future:

- **Cross-disciplinary discussions are invaluable for the region.** More networking and coordination opportunities will only improve long-term outcomes for each agency. Some innovative ideas for such collaboration opportunities are to have regular luncheons, meetings or wine socials.
- **Create an inventory** of what data already exists, what is being collected, and what data each agency would like to have. This will form a baseline understanding of the region's data needs.
- Use the opportunities arising in the public health sector to spur structural changes in other Core Areas and other planning fields.

Identified Planning Team for Next Meeting

The following people expressed interest in planning the next meeting:

- Carolyn Burke, City of Eugene
- Ellen Currier, Lane Council of Governments (recommended)
- Jason Dedrick, City of Eugene
- Angela Phinney, Lane Council of Governments
- Chris Pryor, United Way (Eugene City Council, Ward 8)
- Mike Sullivan, City of Eugene

Data Sharing Workshop List of Participants

| Name | Organization |
|---------------------|---|
| Megan Banks | Lane Council of Governments |
| Barb Bellamy | Eugene School District |
| Theresa Brand | Lane Transit District / point2point Solutions |
| Carolyn Burke | City of Eugene |
| Anne Celovsky | Lane County Public Health |
| Stacy Clauson | Lane Council of Governments |
| Karen Clearwater | Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) |
| Nora Cronin | St. Vincent de Paul |
| Jason Dedrick | City of Eugene |
| William Ellis | City of Eugene |
| Michael Engelmann | City of Springfield |
| Felicity Fahy | Eugene Water & Electric Board |
| Karen Gillette | Lane County Public Health |
| Len Goodwin | City of Springfield |
| Courtney Griesel | City of Springfield |
| Jennifer Jordan | Lane County Public Health |
| Heather O'Donnell | City of Eugene |
| Abigail Ofori-Amoah | Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation (NEDCO) |
| Angela Phinney | Lane Council of Governments |
| Chris Pryor | United Way (Eugene City Councilor, Ward 8) |
| Dan Reece | PeaceHealth |
| Mark Rust | Lane County |
| Gerardo Sandoval | University of Oregon |
| Sandy Shaffer | City of Eugene |
| Mike Sullivan | City of Eugene |
| John Tamulonis | City of Springfield |
| Paul Thompson | Lane Council of Governments |
| Kurt Yeiter | City of Eugene |
| Sarah Zaleski | City of Eugene |