

FINAL SUMMARY REPORT
Florida Community Indicator Index Grant
Florida Center for Community Design and Research

Faculty: Naomi Oliver - PI
Kyle Campbell - Co-PI
Kevin Archer - Co-PI

INTRODUCTION

A number of communities across the nation have implemented indicator systems to help them to assess the current state of their neighborhoods and to identify trends that have developed over time. A similar system, if implemented in the Tampa Bay Area, could aid local officials and citizens both to better understand the existing quality of life experienced in neighborhoods and to allow community stakeholders to make more informed development decisions. In order to examine the feasibility of creating a neighborhood indicator system for the Tampa Bay Region, funding was provided by the University Community Initiative at the University of South Florida to allow for a collaborative effort led by the Florida Center for Community Design and Research and included the participation of faculty from the Department of Geography, the College of Arts and Sciences' University Community Initiative, and Tomorrow Matters!, a local citizen's group.

The overarching and long-term vision for this project is the development of an indicator system that measures quality of life at the neighborhood scale. This neighborhood indicator system would be accessible through the internet and include interactive maps and accompanying data. The goal is to assist in the democratization of information by allowing various community stakeholders, including citizens,

government, business representatives and academics, to utilize the indicator data as a tool for community development and decision making.

The work completed for this grant focused on the feasibility of the creation of a neighborhood scale indicator system for the Tampa Bay Region, as well as the identification of an appropriate methodology. In this report, we discuss literature related to indicator systems, the methodology used in this project and the results of our study. Finally, we present some of the issues that must be considered in developing an indicator system in the Tampa Bay area as well as a suggested course of action for future work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a significant amount of literature that is devoted to the many aspects of indicator work ranging from academic journal articles to basic how-to guides. Reviewing the literature, there are a number of terms that are frequently used and important to understand, such as “indicator”, “indicator system” and “benchmarks”. Much of the literature also reveals that it is important to define the purpose, focus, and scale of analysis when developing an indicator system. It is also important to determine what forms of input are most appropriate for the study. A number of cities, such as Milwaukee, Denver, and Camden have developed neighborhood indicator systems that have yielded positive results. Furthermore, there are specific quality of life studies that have aided community development; for example, Jacksonville, Florida.

For the purposes of this project, an indicator is defined as a measure that reflects the status of some social, economic, or environmental system over time (Tyler Norris Associates et al, 1997). Indicators can be used to represent the overall condition of a particular phenomenon or to track progress toward specific goals. Indicators can function

as a tool that aids officials in making their day-to-day policy decisions. By providing detailed, timely data, indicator systems also inform local governments as they grapple with the trend of increasing responsibility bestowed upon them by state and federal governments (Clark, 2000, Gates, 1999, Gold, 1996). However, indicator studies not only service government agencies, they also enable citizens to better understand their community's state of affairs, gauge progress, and set goals (Maclaren, 1996, Sawaki, 1996, Sharpe, 2000).

Often, a number of indicators are gathered as an indicator system to provide information regarding the overall quality of life experienced in a community. An indicator system can be defined as "A set of actors or entities bound together by a set of rules and relationships...A system's health is dependent on the health of the whole pattern, which can sometimes be reflected (and thus measured) in the status of a key part of the system," (Tyler Norris Associates, 1997). Several communities have developed detailed neighborhood indicator systems (Besleme & Megan, 1997, Tyler Norris Associates et al, 1997, Schiller et al, 2001). These systems can support government officials in their need to understand conditions that exist in their neighborhoods, as well as in their attempt to identify elements that may have contributed to the creation of those conditions (Hart, 1998).

At times, indicator data can be used as benchmarks, or data collected in relation to one or more issues that are viewed as a baseline and then compared with data collected to measure the same issues in the future. Benchmarks can also function as reference for "best practices" in communities (Tyler Norris Associates, 1997).

Indicator studies serve many purposes that include representing the overall condition of a particular phenomenon (White House, 2002), tracking progress toward goals (Oliver, 2001, Jacksonville Community Council, 2000) and assessing the usefulness of programs (Council, 1996). Some indicator systems are developed as performance measures to track the progress of community programs working toward neighborhood development or improvement (Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators, 2002, Oliver et al, 2001). Other indicator systems may focus on one particular topic or subset of data and produce a detailed set of measures for that specialized area. One such example is the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics report (1997), which examines issues related to the health and status of children and families across the nation.

Another focus of indicator studies is the holistic exploration into overall quality of life. Many studies attempting to determine existing conditions in a community or neighborhood take this approach. Examples of this are the Quality of Life in Jacksonville study (Jacksonville Community Council, 2000) and the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance (2002). In these instances, the measures are typically defined in a manner that encompasses all of the factors that can affect the human condition in place. In this sense, indicators are, “A measurement that reflects the status of some social, economic, or environmental system over time...” (Tyler Norris Associates et al, 1997).

An indicator study’s selected benchmarks can vary greatly depending on the focus of the desired analysis, ranging from health related indicator studies (Benbow et al, 1998, Schwartz, 1998) to education benchmarks (Lentz, 1998) to solid waste disposal community indicators (Baud et al, 2001). Examples of the wide range of topics are found in studies that address issues such as water quality, birthrates, education levels, housing,

agriculture, and economics (McCook, 2001). Most studies acknowledge the inability of an indicator system to cover all quality of life issues, but identify the possibility of developing a system that utilizes indicators that are "...useful (provides guidance toward community improvement)" and that reflect "a combination of idealism (what we would like to measure) and pragmatism (what we are able to measure)" (Jacksonville Quality of Life, 2002).

A study's selected set of indicators is largely dependant on the scale at which it takes place (Sawaki, 1996). Traditionally, indicator studies have used a regional (The Council, 1996, Greater Philadelphia First, 1999, Sustainable Seattle, 1993), county (Campbell et al, 1997, Josephine County Enterprise Community Coordinating Council, 1995, The Commission, 1985), or city scale (Husing, 2000, Garoogian, 2000). Though reports at the scale of a region or county can be useful, they tend to mask conditions that may exist at the neighborhood level (Sawicki, 1996, Kingsley, 1999).

Neighborhood indicator systems can be an important tool for urban planning. Current studies in urban planning emphasize the importance of "community" or "neighborhood" planning principles (Schneider, 1997, Murtagh, 1999). Neighborhood indicator systems can assist in performing some of the planning and policy decisions taking place in an environment that focuses on the detailed neighborhood scale. The Urban Institute (1999) has suggested studies at the neighborhood scale can contribute to overall community development and improvement. For example, after implementing a neighborhood indicator system in Cleveland, it was discovered the distribution of city funds did not necessarily match the communities in most need of assistance, and the assistance provided by officials did not always match the requirements of residents. This

led to a reassessment of the city's strategic plan and the successful application for funding from the Federal Empowerment Zone Enterprise community program (Urban Institute, 1999).

One spatial and logistical challenge posed by the choice of neighborhood as a scale of analysis is the delineation of neighborhood boundaries. An individual's concept of a neighborhood is relative to their experience and daily activities. For example, neighborhood boundaries drawn by business owners compared to those drawn by residents would probably vary greatly (Galster, 1960). For the purposes of establishing stable boundaries that can be tracked over a period of years, several of the neighborhood indicator projects in existence utilize boundaries that were predefined by local municipalities. When those are not available or prove to be insufficient, studies typically employ the use of census tract boundaries (Kingsley, 1999).

One critical item contributing to the success of any indicator system is the inclusion of multiple stakeholder input. Stakeholders can be citizens, government representatives, business leaders, or non-profit organizations, and the participation of each group facilitates the development of a system that will provide useful information to assist the community at large in constructing more informed decisions (Hart, 1998). Stakeholders can assist all phases of the project but they are important to the selection of locally relevant indicators that will serve a wide audience (Quality of Life in Jacksonville, 2000, Sustainable Seattle, 2000, Hart, 1998, McCook, 2000). Some indicator studies have been directed strictly at the citizen level, such as the Data and Policy Analysis Group in Atlanta. Others have focused on serving the interests of government leaders when they are making policy decisions, as reflected in the White

House's Economics Statistics Briefing (2002) that provides information related to current Federal economic indicators. In a quality of life analysis that touches on a number of topical areas, input should be collected by a number of participants. Examples of studies working to collect data from a number of participants include the Providence Plan (2002), the Quality of Life in Jacksonville study (2000) and the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance (2002).

During the development of a neighborhood indicator system, it is necessary to assess the possibility of generating a list that ranks or indexes neighborhoods based on the conditions that exist in each. This issue has both supporters and detractors. Some individuals who support the creation of a ranking system argue that rankings get public attention and can be entirely valid and useful as long as a study states its purpose, its methods, and remains consistent (Savageau, 2000). However, those who oppose ranking argue that indexing is a difficult task to undertake, and there are arguments that ranking should not be attempted due to the fact that no two people will prioritize a set of issues in the same order (Smith et al, 2001). Furthermore, ratings could create rivalries when it is unnecessary (Savageau, 2000).

There are numerous communities across the nation that have successfully implemented neighborhood indicator systems. The indicator projects in Milwaukee, Denver and Camden are representative of the positive impact a neighborhood indicator system can have. One example of an indicator system that has led to policy change can be found in Milwaukee. This indicator study, performed by the University of Wisconsin, illustrated "both the magnitude of the problem of lead poisoning citywide and its spatial

pattern” which led to a change in regulations regarding lead paint hazards in the city (Urban Institute, 1999).

In Denver a neighborhood indicator system is maintained by the privately run Piton Foundation that has a mission of “Providing opportunities for families and children in Denver to move from poverty and dependence to self-reliance” (Piton Foundation, 2002). The Denver Westside Neighborhood Leadership Program established a relationship with the Piton Foundation where Piton representatives offered training sessions to emerging community leaders. Graduates from this program have gone on to do such things as create programs to assist in stabilizing lower income families with a high mobility rate, motivate expansion of recreational and sporting activities in the evening hours at the local recreation centers, provide an impetus for the funding of a youth arts recognition program, and develop programs that encourage citizens to vote and provide explanation for key issues in the community (Urban Institute, 1999).

The Center for Social and Community Development at Rutgers University assisted the Camden Churches Organized for People in analyzing data related to vacant houses and crime. It was determined that there was a strong link between the vacancy rate experienced by individual neighborhoods and their corresponding crime rate. As word spread about this correlation, efforts were stepped up by local agencies to rehabilitate or seal-up vacant properties (Urban Institute, 1999).

Though set at a regional scale, one example of a Florida community that is working to define and measure their own quality of life through the use of an indicator system is the city of Jacksonville. The city of Jacksonville defines quality of life as “a feeling of well-being, fulfillment, or satisfaction resulting from factors in the external

environments” (Quality of Life in Jacksonville, 2000). This program started in 1985 and led to the Community Agenda project a decade later that focuses on human-services programs. The city has also set goals for the improvement in many of the measures tracked by the Quality of Life project by the year 2005. Each year the data is examined to determine if progress has been made toward each goal, providing data that can assist officials in evaluating whether certain programs or policies are effective or in need of adjustments.

METHODOLOGY

The approach taken with this project had several steps, which included a literature review, two community forums, a project webpage, individual interviews, and an academic critique. These methods were highly interdisciplinary and collaborative, a necessity when developing a system intended for multiple stakeholders.

The first method used within this project was a literature review, completed in the fall of 2001. Through the process of reviewing literature related to indicator systems, various projects across the country were examined, as well as academic papers that discussed these systems. The inclusion of a literature review in this project was a crucial step in understanding indicator work completed elsewhere. When attempting to develop a system for the Tampa Bay region, it is important to ensure that we do not start from scratch, but instead, learn from the successes and failures of other projects.

The second phase in this project was the organization of two community forums. The purpose of these forums was to include the perspectives of citizens and government leaders regarding the issues important to the Tampa Bay region. In preparation for these forums, the faculty partners from the Florida Center, Geography and the College of Arts

and Sciences University Community Initiative met with the community partner, Tomorrow Matters! to develop a timeline for the project and schedule the appropriate format for stakeholder input. It was determined that rather than hold separate meetings with government leaders and citizens, as outlined in the grant proposal, a meeting would be held that included both groups.

On November 14, 2001, a community forum was held at Hillsborough Community College – Davis Island that had approximately 50 people in attendance. The attendees included participants from Hillsborough County, Pinellas County and Manatee County. These participants represented a wide mix of stakeholders including citizen activists, professional planners, business owners and government leaders. At the meeting, the participants were assembled into smaller groups of 10-15 people, with each group focusing on different topics. These small group sessions were facilitated by graduate students from the USF Department of Anthropology. The topics discussed included: arts and culture, diversity, education, infrastructure, environment, physical and visual design and health.

Following the forum on November 14, it was determined a second community forum was necessary in order to address some of the topics that were not covered in the first meeting. With the assistance of our community partner, Tomorrow Matters!, the second forum took place on February 7, 2002 at Hillsborough Community College – Davis Island. Attendance at this forum included citizen and government representatives from multiple counties that included Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pasco. Again, the participants were arranged into smaller groups to allow more detailed discussion. Members of Tomorrow Matters! facilitated these groups. The topics which were

discussed included: economics, infrastructure, social systems and community involvement. A summary of the concerns and suggestions discussed at both forums are presented in the results section of this report.

The third step undertaken with this study was the creation of a website for the project (<http://www.communityatlas.org>). The purpose of this website was to enhance dialog with the public and community stakeholders. The information provided on this website includes all of the documents summarizing each of the project related meetings, a list of potential indicators discovered in the literature and developed through community input, and an online "feedback" survey form that allows individuals to provide direct comments to the Center regarding the project. The website also provides links to indicator studies underway across the country. This website is currently a starting point for the ultimate vision for this indicator work and will eventually include interactive online mapping and corresponding data pages related to neighborhoods across the region.

A fourth method of this project gathered further feedback from stakeholders through personal interviews with USF faculty members and community leaders. The purpose of this approach was to collect opinions concerning the usefulness of an indicator system in west central Florida. During January and February 2002, a staff Anthropologist, contacted community leaders and USF faculty members and interviewed them with a survey instrument (See Appendix A). Sixteen interviews were conducted in person and through telephone conversations. As part of this interview process, individuals were requested to outline important community issues within their respective geographic areas.

The final method utilized in this project was a meeting with faculty members, allowing them to provide an academic critique of the project. The purpose of this meeting was to receive an evaluation of the work conducted so far, as well as elicit ideas for further work. This meeting included a group of eight USF faculty members from the departments of Anthropology, Library Science, Architecture, the Jim Walter Partnership Center, the Center for Scholarship in Action, the College of Arts and Sciences Community Initiative and the Florida Mental Health Institute. The meeting took place on March 1, 2002 at the USF campus. At this meeting the project findings from the literature review and community forums were presented. Following this, faculty members were asked a series of questions. These questions concerned specific aspects of the project, such as the possibility of a ranking or indexing system, the project at large, and indicators within each person's respective area of expertise. A summary of this meeting is discussed in the results section of this report.

RESULTS

Through the course of this project a number of research methods were undertaken in order to both determine the feasibility of developing a local neighborhood indicator system and to identify which topics are of greatest concern to local stakeholders. The results of these methods (community forums, interviews, faculty critique) have assisted in understanding issues of importance to the Tampa Bay Region and items for consideration in the development of an indicator system.

The community forums held on November 14, 2001 and February 7, 2002, which included participation from citizens and government representatives, resulted in constructive comments from citizens, government representatives and professional

planners regarding the development of an indicator system and priority issues within the community. Also, the *Tampa Tribune* featured an article about the community forums and the project on November 24, 2001 (See Appendix B). The main concerns expressed by the participants are summarized in Appendices C and D.

It was determined that one valuable way to provide and solicit information related to the project was through a website dedicated specifically to this effort at <http://www.communityatlas.org>. On this website, all of the materials produced in this project are provided, as well as links to other resources related to indicators. This site has a “Talk to us About the Project” section that allows people to provide feedback through an online survey. Through this feedback form we have received a range of comments regarding issues that people would like to see the indicator system address. Some of these issues include disabilities, sense of community, land use, transportation, and animal overpopulation.

During interviews conducted with USF faculty members and community members, participants were overwhelmingly in support of the development of a neighborhood-level indicator system. However, some were concerned with the availability of certain types of data and the required effort to obtain particular data. The issues that were of most concern to the interview participants included: housing, employment, civic engagement, transportation, family structure, schools and the amount of open space.

During the meeting with the faculty, which took place on March 1, 2002, many issues were discussed regarding the development of a neighborhood indicator system. A principal topic of discussion was which issues might be most beneficial to include in the

indicator system. A few of the faculty members present suggested that the project be framed in a way that allows for comparison with other cities across the United States; essentially, the use of an overarching structure that includes issues that are important to all communities. Some faculty suggested the inclusion of issues such as housing, economics and health.

A second concern addressed during the faculty meeting was the possibility of developing a ranking system for quality of life within neighborhoods. Those present at the meeting had diverse opinions regarding this issue. Those who did not support the idea expressed concerns that a ranking system could negatively impact neighborhoods, one example being an affect on property values. The people present who supported the development of a ranking system argued that we are living in a world that operates on ranking, therefore it is necessary to frame issues in this manner. A suggestion was made that if a ranking system were pursued, then the focus should be on specific issues, not the overall quality of life. Additionally, it was recommended that caution should be taken so that the rankings themselves do not state that certain neighborhoods are better than others.

The faculty members present at the meeting provided general suggestions for future work to develop the indicator system. One idea was to work more closely with agencies in the Tampa Bay area that are also pursuing the development of indicator systems, such as the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission. A second suggestion was to choose particular neighborhoods to act as demonstration sites. By focusing on particular areas, assistance might be provided to neighborhoods that would be able to utilize the information. Furthermore, it was discussed that the development of

demonstration sites would aid in the pursuit of additional funding for the project. A third point addressed during the meeting was the use of network analysis to better understand quality of life in neighborhoods, specifically civic engagement and personal connections intra- and inter-neighborhood.

DISCUSSION

By following each of the methodologies outlined above, we identified a number of issues that appear to be important to the process of developing an indicator system. These topics include a clearly defined focus and scale of analysis, the participation of multiple stakeholders, the possibility of ranking neighborhoods. There are also a few general lessons learned that will guide future neighborhood indicator work.

Much of the literature seems to confirm that issues that confront neighborhoods and communities are multi-faceted, thus the focus of the study should be holistic in nature, which led to the selection of “quality of life” as the primary theme for our project. For this project, we have identified quality of life as the topic for analysis. For the purposes of this study, quality of life connotes the “level of enjoyment and fulfillment derived by humans from the life they live within their local economic, cultural, social, and environmental conditions” (Tyler Norris Associates et al, 1997). This definition was selected according to its identification of the major factors that affect quality of life in neighborhoods, while acknowledging that quality of life is a personal condition – a feeling of enjoyment and fulfillment – that may be different for each person in a neighborhood. By adopting this as the focus of our project we are able to approach the study in a holistic manner, which addresses the number of factors that affect the conditions that exist in neighborhoods. This definition may be expanded and clarified in

future phases of this indicator project to include the interconnectedness between the economic, cultural, social, and environmental conditions.

Regarding the scale of inquiry and boundaries, we have chosen the neighborhood as the unit of analysis. The success of various neighborhood scale indicator studies across the nation lend credence to the selection of this scale of inquiry. As presented in the literature review, the use of this smaller scale can help to identify trends that are masked at the county or regional level (Sawicki, 1996, Kingsley, 1999). Furthermore, it has been suggested by studies that the presentation of data at the neighborhood scale can contribute to overall community development and improvement (Urban Institute, 1999). Both the literature and work performed through the efforts of other community indicator systems seem to suggest that it would be most appropriate to collect data at the most detailed scale available, and then aggregate the data to fit the boundaries selected for the project. By providing information at a more detailed scale, the indicator system has the potential to be more effective than city-wide or county level data. Attempting to define neighborhood boundaries can be a lengthy process that does not produce a result that reaches much consensus. In light of this, many studies have elected to utilize census tract boundaries or neighborhood boundaries that were previously identified by municipalities. We have not yet defined the neighborhood boundaries for the region, but plan to do so in the next phase of developing an indicator system.

The importance of including multiple stakeholders has been a critical component in the development of this system. Since the participation of multiple stakeholders can assist in the development of a system that can provide information to assist the wider community (Hart, 1998), we have included people from a variety of backgrounds. These

participants have included citizens, government officials, non-profit representatives and academicians. These stakeholders provided diverse perceptions of issues of importance and needs of the community.

The possibility of developing a ranking system for neighborhoods, including the positive and negative aspects, has been discussed among the research team and with the faculty members participating in the critique. We have determined that a static ranking system will not be a primary focus for future phases of indicator work. It would seem most useful to do some auxiliary analysis based on the indicators produced in the study that would rank neighborhoods according to individual issues and attempt to bring attention to community problems that way. This agrees with much of the literature. While many disagree with doing an overall ranking of neighborhoods in a community, several researchers point to the advantages of doing a limited amount of ranking for specific issues such as access to health care or the transportation network or the number of violent crimes.

In conclusion, there are four principals demonstrated that can guide the development of an index. The first point is the importance of focusing on a neighborhood scale of data collection and presentation with indicator projects. This level of analysis seems to provide the greatest catalyst for change on individual communities in a municipality or region. Second, there is an increasing number of indicator systems that have been implemented across the country, and it is important to observe the various successes and failures that they have experienced in their work. If possible, it is best to utilize the framework set in place by other studies and adjust according to specific local issues as appropriate. A study such as the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators project

would provide an excellent model to start with. Third, the development of an indicator system can be a very complicated and lengthy process and it can be difficult to create the entire system at one time. It is better to select specific issues to address one at a time, such as economic development, or the environment. And lastly, it does not seem to be appropriate for the researchers to pursue an a priori overall ranking system for all of the neighborhoods included in their study. However, some other form of ranking based on specific area of interest, or allowing stakeholders to each individually select items that are most important for them to rank may be appropriate.

In considering each of these points, and with a certain amount of knowledge related to local agencies' information support systems that are currently in place, the feasibility of the development of a neighborhood indicator system for the Tampa Bay Region is definitely assured. Success will only depend on securing the proper funding and collaboration between agencies and departments in order to present information that would serve a variety of audiences that would include citizen, business, and government interests.

FUTURE WORK

A continuation of this project will require collaboration with other local agencies such as the Hillsborough County City/County Planning Commission and the Hillsborough County Children's Board. Before any additional work can be completed on the development of a local indicator system, there is a need for an in-depth needs and capabilities assessment with local agencies that will determine what sort of information they require in order to make more informed decisions, in addition to what sort of information currently exists and can be provided. The most appropriate path for future

work appears to be the selection of specific topics that can be developed individually and then integrated into one system. For example, the educational component of the indicator system could be developed, and then the creation of the environmental component could take place, etc. Also, one item that was left unresolved by this study was the definition and delineation of neighborhood boundaries, which is one of the first items that will need to be addressed in the next phase of this work.

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APPENDIX A: Interview Questions

- 1) What do you think are the most important issues and indicators to include in the neighborhood index?
- 2) What is your assessment of the list of indicators provided?
 - Should any issues and/or indicators be moved?
 -
 - What issues and/or indicators should be added?
 - What issues and/or indicators should be removed?
- 3) Are you interested in being involved with the development of this neighborhood indicator index?
 - Receive summary of academic input
 - Attend an academic forum to discuss the issues and indicators
 - Implementation phase

APPENDIX B: Tampa Tribune Article

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SECTION: SOUTH TAMPA, Pg. 6

LENGTH: 488 words

HEADLINE: USF Strives To Put Local Stats Online

BYLINE: B.C. MANION, bmanion@tampatrib.com; Reporter B.C. Manion can be reached at (813) 259-7150.

BODY:
QUICK INFORMATION TO QUALITY OF LIFE

DAVIS ISLANDS - Imagine being able to sit at a computer, hit a few keystrokes on the keyboard and find out the unemployment rate in your neighborhood.

Want to check the quality of schools, or find out hot spots for crime? Click on other items listed.

This is the kind of information that may one day be available in a project being led by a research team at the University of South Florida. The initiative, called Florida Community Indicator Index, aims at giving people quick and easy access to information on a variety of quality of life indicators.

The project is still in its infancy, said Kyle Campbell, director of the Florida Center for Community Design and Research at USF.

"Our goal is to develop an indicator system for neighborhoods that will measure quality of life issues," Campbell said. "This is a pilot program we hope to take statewide."

Such a system could be useful to neighborhood leaders, government planners and elected officials and business owners, said Naomi Oliver, a USF research assistant who is leading the project.

The idea is to have the information easily available at one spot, said Campbell.

The project would be similar to one that Campbell helped develop to create an atlas of Hillsborough County lakes. The atlas contains information about the lakes gleaned from myriad sources.

APPENDIX B: Tampa Tribune Article

The quality of life index would likely take about two years to develop, even if money were no object, Campbell said.

The work being done now is being supported by a \$25,000 grant from USF's Community Initiative.

Additional grants will be sought, but may be more difficult to obtain in light of the additional demands that philanthropic organizations are facing because of the attacks Sept. 11, Campbell said.

Other organizations involved in the project are Hillsborough Community College and Tomorrow Matters!, a grass-roots coalition of citizens, organizations, businesses and government.

The researchers held a community forum on Davis Islands to seek community input on what topics to include in the index and how they should be measured.

Participants broke into small groups to tackle the task, but concluded at the end of the session that they needed more time.

The results of their work will be posted at <http://www.fccdr.usf.edu/> to solicit additional community feedback. Another forum also will be held for participants to finish their work.

The next step will be to take the proposed topics to a panel of university experts to get their ideas on how to proceed with the research, Campbell said.

Some possibilities to broaden community input include direct mail solicitations or telephone interviews, he said.

Dena Leavengood, of Tomorrow Matters!, said it's important to include people on the front end of such efforts.

"It's important for people who live in a community to have a voice in what happens," Leavengood said.

APPENDIX C: November Community Forum

COMMUNITY INPUT FOR INDICATOR SELECTION

NOVEMBER 14, 2001

COMMUNITY FORUM AT HCC - DAVIS ISLAND

Top issues and indicators chosen for the following topics:

ARTS/CULTURE

- Visual and performing Arts
 - a) Public/private art programs
 - b) Attendance at art events
 - c) Resources available to support artists
- Artists
 - a) # of artists and artist space
- Religion
 - a) Community events or programs sponsored by places of worship
 - b) Membership of churches / religious centers
- Museums
- Humanities

DIVERSITY

- Race, ethnicity, national origin
- Socioeconomic status
 - a) Population according to income
 - b) Education level
 - c) Types of homes
- Family structure
 - a) # of people living alone
 - b) # of non-related households
 - c) # of extended family in household
 - d) # of group homes

APPENDIX C: November Community Forum

EDUCATION

- Informal Learning
- Libraries
- Life-Long Learning
- Schools

- Quality of learning environment
 - a) salaries and benefits of teaching
 - b) qualifications of teachers

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Traffic
- Mass Transit
- Water
 - a) Quality
 - b) Availability
- Recreation (i.e., Playgrounds / Swimming pools)
- Utilities (i.e., Power)

ENVIRONMENT

- Air
 - a) air quality index
 - b) prevalence of asthma (medical records)
- Water
 - a) ground water quality
 - b) drinking water quality
- Ecosystems
 - a) number of parks and trails
 - b) integrity of ecosystem

APPENDIX C: November Community Forum

- Pollution
 - a) pesticide use and source
 - b) health effects of toxicity

- Land
 - a) ratio of open space to developed land
 - b) codes written for the protection of trees

VISUAL/PHYSICAL DESIGN

- Open Space
- Revitalization Efforts
- Landscaping/Streetscape
- Urban Reform/City Plan
 - a) Public access to open space
 - b) Ability for children to walk to library
- Regional Form/Shape

HEALTH

- Healthcare
- Fitness
- Wellness
- Senior Services
- Nutrition

APPENDIX D: February Community Forum

COMMUNITY INPUT FOR INDICATOR SELECTION

FEBRUARY 7, 2002

COMMUNITY FORUM AT HCC - DAVIS ISLAND

Top issues and indicators chosen for the following topics:

ECONOMICS

➤ Housing

- a) Property values
- b) Type
- c) Location
- d) Zoning
- e) Stability (turnover)

➤ Jobs

- a) Salary range
- b) Type
- c) Unemployment Rate
- d) Skills
- e) Telecommute

➤ Business

- a) Growth
- b) Types
- c) Number
- d) Annual income
- e) Zoning
- f) Regulations/permitting

➤ Growth

- a) In-fill/density
- b) Population
- c) Tax-base

➤ Socio-economic

- a) Median income
- b) Cultural/ethnic diversity (ethnicity)
- c) Education
- d) Employment
- e) Age distribution
- f) Demographics

APPENDIX D: February Community Forum

- **Crime**
 - a) Property
 - b) Drugs
 - c) Prostitution
 - d) Personal

INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Transportation/Access**
 - a) Road types
 - b) Accessibility
 - c) Pedestrian
 - d) Bikes
 - e) Condition through streets/connectors (mass transit)
 - f) Volume and frequency
 - g) Shelters
 - h) Urban vs. rural
- **Utilities**
 - a) Powerlines
 - b) Consumption/disposal
 - c) Availability(septic)
 - d) Communication lines-cable/DSL taps
 - e) Wells/ gray water
- **Facilities/Institutions**
 - a) Types
 - b) Availability
 - c) Distance
 - d) Multi-use
 - e) Libraries
 - f) Police (# of calls)
 - g) Schools
 - h) Amount of use
- **Density**
 - a) Growth management
 - b) Size of families/unit
 - c) Green space
 - d) Planning
 - e) Dwelling units/space
 - f) Zoning

APPENDIX D: February Community Forum

- g) Available vs. Unavailable
 - h) Developed/undeveloped
 - i) Types of space/allocation of space
- **Parks**
- a) Recreation
 - b) Trails
 - c) Green space
 - d) \$
 - e) Accessibility
 - f) Types of use availability
 - g) Amount of use
 - h) Maintenance budget

SOCIAL SYSTEMS

- **Government**
- a) Timelines of response to “problem”
 - b) Safe Roads
 - c) Voter turnout in neighborhood
 - d) Taxes
 - e) Elected Officials attending community meetings
 - f) # of calls to police from neighborhood
 - g) # of calls for emergency services
 - h) # of Complaints about “public works”
- **Schools**
- a) # of schools (grade levels)
 - b) Public and Private
 - c) Teacher/Student Ratio
 - d) Test Scores
 - e) Extra Curricular opportunity
 - f) Drop Out
 - g) # of who graduate
 - h) # of kids in school
 - i) # of who goes to higher education
 - j) # of students bussed out of area
 - k) Discipline-suspensions
 - l) Teen Pregnancy
 - m) Drug Busts
 - n) # of parents involved in school activities
 - o) Sportsmanship
 - p) # of students and parents taking civics

APPENDIX D: February Community Forum

- **Environmental Safety**
 - a) Air Quality
 - b) Amount of green space
 - c) Water Quality
 - d) Conservation/Recycle
 - e) # of power lines
 - f) Industrial Toxic Sites
 - g) Ratio of cars to people
 - h) Wildlife habitats
 - i) Safe play areas for citizens
 - j) Distance from airport

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- **Volunteerism**
 - a) # of groups
 - b) # of members
 - c) Ease of access to information
 - d) # of hrs
 - e) # of types (opportunities)

- **Associations**
 - a) # associations
 - b) # members
 - c) # types
 - d) Meeting Attendance
 - e) Dues structure

- **Communication (Multimedia)**
 - a) National broadcasting
 - b) Neighborhood List-Serve
 - c) Newsletters
 - d) # of homes with computers
 - e) Subscribers to Newspapers
 - f) Subscribers to Internet
 - g) Neighborhood inserts
 - h) Kiosks
 - i) # letters to editor
 - j) Citizen petitions
 - k) Diversity of Media
 - l) # of phones
 - m) Mail delivery
 - n) Village Commons
 - o) Post Office