

Briefing Notes No. 3

In Defense of CI-PM Integration — Views from Elected Officials

April 30, 2012

Introduction

One of the goals of community indicators-performance measures (CI-PM) integration is to advance the role of local elected officials in the CI-PM process and the benefits CI-PM offers to them. During our exploration of CI-PM integration, we found noteworthy instances of elected officials providing leadership in this area. They recognize the hurdles and offer sage advice to overcome them.

Background — Recent Comments from Elected Officials

Performance measurement is considered a best practice in the public sector with most state and local governments incorporating some aspect of performance measurement in their operations. Similarly, citizen engagement is a hallmark of governance in this country. Engagement may involve citizen surveys on specific topics, testifying at public hearings, and citizen complaint processes. Some local communities have community indicator programs that track and report changes in community conditions. Marrying up community indicators (CIs) and performance measures (PMs) allows people to measure how well a program is running, or how well a service is being delivered with regard to the interests and goals of the community. Ideally, their integration should also allow public officials to use that information in fulfilling their expectations and responsibilities.

The Community Indicators Consortium (CIC) has documented several CI-PM integration programs and the role of public officials in them. In states and localities such as Virginia and Albuquerque, legislators have adopted legislation that provides the mandate setting the stage for CI-PM integration. The elected executive may be required to submit budgets that reflect the goals established from the CI-PM program, prepare public reports reflecting achievement of the goals and otherwise ensure a system is in place per legislative intent. Legislators are expected to review results in public meetings and provide support for citizen groups that are a

key linkage of the community's expectations to government's policies and services. Leadership by executives is uppermost in implementing performance management systems throughout the executive branch. They are generally the ones who design the details of these systems and dedicate the resources to achieve their intent (see CIC's Real Stories for the roles of legislators and executives in cutting edge CI-PM programs; www.communityindicators.net/communities-of-practice,ci-pm-integration,real-stories).

In preparing this paper, we interviewed four elected officials who are advocates and users of CIs and PMs. Their insights illustrate some of the challenges and opportunities of CI-PM integration for public officials.

Comments from Assemblyman David Bobzien, Nevada Assembly District 24

Assemblyman Bobzien was first elected in November 2006, and was most recently the Chief Deputy Whip for the 2011 Nevada legislative session. He was a member of Truckee Meadows Tomorrow's (TMT) Quality of Life Task Force 2005-06 to update the community's indicators, and also a member of the CI-PM Integration Working Group for this project. More information on Bobzien's background can be found at: leg.state.nv.us/Assembly/Current/Assembly/Bobzien.pdf.

"Community indicators reflect the collective and personal values of community stakeholders, and we rely on the regular measurement of myriad economic, social, and environmental benchmarks to inform public policy and realize the vision for our communities, state, and country. The provision of credible, non-partisan data helps identify stakeholder priorities and the strategies and objectives achieved through planning and initiatives. Our effectiveness is strengthened by sustained collaboration of governmental and agency staff with grassroots volunteers who advance operational efforts and implementation, respectively. In northern Nevada, Truckee Meadows Tomorrow has worked with

Briefing Notes No. 3

CI-PM Integration — Views from Elected Officials

elected officials, government staff, agencies, and not-for-profits to integrate community-identified indicators into government and organizational strategic planning, community-wide programs, direct services, and results-based reporting to affect change.

Specifically, indicator integration into performance management offered insight into the community's concern about economic development. Joining indicators with performance management has been a catalyst for discussion and initiatives that support job creation and protection. Stakeholder concern about loss of open space and potential for damage to residential developments fueled pursuit of public funds to restore operation of shuttered fire departments and preserve employment for firefighters and other fire prevention efforts in the City of Reno and Washoe County. The City of Sparks is funding the construction of a recreational park for children with special needs in response to quality of life concern for the community's most vulnerable citizens. In addition, the integration of health and wellness data stimulated an impressive collaboration of representatives from Washoe County School District, government agencies, and not-for-profits to address and reduce suicide ideation and attempts, bullying, substance abuse, and sexual behaviors of middle and high school students.

Nevada public policy has been and will continue to be shaped by the credible data that proffers community stakeholders' perspectives and priorities and allows us to create the community and the state in which we live, learn, work, and play.”

Comments from Jay Fountain, Stamford, CT Board of Representatives and former Assistant Director of Research for the Government Accounting Standards Board

Representative Fountain is a nationally recognized expert in public performance reporting. In association with the Government Accounting Standards Board, he pioneered research associated with the establishment of Service Efforts and Accomplishments Reporting guidelines (www.seagov.org/index.shtml). More information on Fountain's background can be

found at: www.linkedin.com/in/jayfountain

According to Representative Fountain, elected officials often do not know much about CIs or PMs, much less the value of their integration. Or, if they do know about them they are often hard-pressed to know how best to put them in context and make them truly useful. He observes that, for the most part, city officials are not thinking about operating efficiencies and effectiveness of services provided within their jurisdictions. To engage them, he explains, this perspective must begin to change. Elected office-holders need to understand their role in a new way: improving service delivery by tracking performance while also monitoring the ways in which a service does and does not reflect what the community wants and values. Fountain contributed to the CI-PM guidelines for elected officials (see below).

Comments from Amber Waldref, City Council Member, Spokane, WA

Councilmember Waldref's interests in CI-PM began when she was involved in the Spokane indicators project (www.communityindicators.ewu.edu/). More information on Waldref's background can be found at: www.amberwaldref.org/about-amber/

After being elected to the city council, Waldref led and promoted efforts to establish performance measurement in the city including alignment to the budget process. This involved educating and getting support from her fellow councilmembers and the mayor, which she did. A pilot project was started to identify indicators based on the city's comprehensive growth management plan. During this process, city officials realized they needed to first identify the desired strategic outcomes.

Before a new strategic plan was developed, elections resulted in new councilmembers and a new mayor. Waldref confirmed with them that strategic planning and performance measurement was a good idea. So began a new round of negotiation and collaboration via a council and mayoral committee. Waldref's emphasis was on establishing and reaching agreement on the vision for an outcomes-based budget that is tied to community indicators using a logic model approach. Others wanted to get moving with establishing measures. This was reflected with the

Briefing Notes No. 3

CI-PM Integration — Views from Elected Officials

new mayor initiating performance measurement training. Because of the dichotomy in perspectives, the committee disbanded. Waldref's observation is that the other officials feel she is too "pie in the sky" while she is concerned they are "in the weeds." Moving forward will take time -and education.

Waldref recommended to the council chair that the council establish its own strategic plan. She suggested that this can be initiated by increasing the value of the council's regular study sessions. Waldref's hope is that the members will discuss and agree on strategic objectives to address the Spokane community's needs and develop a policy plan to set that direction. Building trust with the mayor in this process will be important, according to Waldref.

On a positive note, the Priority Spokane (PS) initiative is a good example of how local officials (from business, government, nonprofits, and school district) are using indicators and measurement to "move the meter" on reducing school dropout rates. For example, an early warning system in middle schools was designed and implemented to reduce absenteeism. The research PS conducted showed that absenteeism during this period is a critical indicator of school dropout rates. By identifying the risk factors and leveraging funds available, a 16% increase in high school graduation rates has been achieved (to 68%). Now Priority Spokane is working on next steps with intervention programs in the high schools. Waldref noted that foundations are excited to support their efforts, because the data shows significant progress in achieving the desired outcome.

Comments from Fred Jarrett, Deputy County Executive, King County, Seattle, WA

Jarrett is a former state legislator, local elected official, and Boeing executive. Since coming to King County in 2010 after Dow Constantine was elected county executive, Jarrett has been leading change in the executive branch and promoting it countywide. This includes developing a performance oriented budgeting approach and applying LEAN techniques to achieve efficiencies and necessary cost savings (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lean_Manufacturing). [See

Municipal Research Center's recent interviews with Jarrett at insight.mrsc.org/2012/04/26/king-countys-new-management-failing-forward-and-other-good-ideas/ and insight.mrsc.org/2012/04/26/a-conversation-with-fred-jarrett-part-2-lean-principles/]

When asked about what works to achieve improvements in government performance and community outcomes, Jarrett's response is "start with the end in mind." That is, ensure the desired end result is being accomplished vs. measuring the effort to get there. His advice to other public officials is to make a long-term commitment to performance improvement. Leadership should energize the effort at each step of the way. To get other public officials in the jurisdiction engaged as partners, Jarrett believes they should also care about performance improvement and how it connects to what they are trying to accomplish in their respective capacities. It is easier to get alignment of different efforts when leaders are on the same page in their appreciation of performance and community outcomes. This cannot take place unless officials have access to good data. Data forces officials to confront biases and move forward from the status quo.

Though we all recognize how hard it is to achieve focus on and improve results, what is most challenging to Jarrett is just how long it takes to achieve these changes. Leadership and patience for the pace of change are key.

Based on the varied experiences of these knowledgeable officials and our related research on CI-PM integration, we offer guidelines on: How to better engage officials in CI-PM integration; how to help them make better use of CI-PM; and the benefits CI-PM confer upon state and local governmental officials and governance.

Guidelines for Engaging Officials in CI-PM Integration

Getting office-holders interested

1. Help them see that PMs help them do their job and respond to their constituents.
2. Provide officials with information that helps them find areas and programs that need attention. This information should be detailed and data-

Briefing Notes No. 3

CI-PM Integration — Views from Elected Officials

driven. Show officials how community indicators in combination with performance measures might help point them to whether a program should be reduced, cut, or expanded.

3. Define for them their potential responsibility over the goal of well-executed services that meet the expectations or aspirations of their communities. Encourage them to think of their responsibilities in this new way.

Making CI-PM understandable and useful

1. Make CIs relevant to elected officials. Show them how findings relate to them and their role. Tailor the framework to meet them where they are.
2. Make CI-PM data and analyses useable and understandable to an elected official. Information should be presented in a way that does not require special knowledge of the inner workings of a given department or program.
3. Help them use data. They do not have the time to figure this out on their own.
4. Explain what PM actually means and how to use the information. This requires providing a context. Show elected office holders how the framework or a particular analysis applies to what they are dealing with.
5. Make information available at the right time and make new and updated information available over time.
6. Praise officials who use CI-PM. Allow them to get recognition for working with this model. Try to get the press to take note.

The benefits of CI-PM Integration

Information generated through this process can be used by elected officials to:

1. Track progress.
2. Identify questions that need to be addressed about past and proposed outcomes. Officials like to ask questions. CI-PM Integration gives them the tools and information to ask the important questions.
3. Look for the right information for a given issue.
4. Improve budgeting decisions.
5. Make better policy decisions.
6. Encourage staff to make service improvements.

7. Provide incentives to contractors and grantees to improve service results.
8. Provide better two-way communication between residents and media. Residents will change the dynamic if they are talking about measurable results.
9. Improve strategic planning.
10. Determine more accurately what in their cities needs attention.
11. Think in terms of targets and whether they are met, not met, or are exceeded. This leads officials to ask informed questions about why a goal is not met.

Conclusion - Next Steps

The officials who use CIs and PMs and promote their integration embrace public participation in governance, want government to achieve desired outcomes, and value accountability. Next steps to engage more public officials in CI-PM are:

1. Find one or, ideally, more than one elected official that is interested.
2. Use CIs and PMs that give information that is of interest to the elected officials.
3. Help officials see how to make use of this information.
4. Help officials understand how to raise good questions based on CI-PM data.
5. Help officials know how to get more information.
6. Provide officials support and assistance to sustain the use of CIs and PMs.

Briefing Notes No. 3

CI-PM Integration — Views from Elected Officials

Bibliography

- CIC's CI-PM Educational Brochure: www.communityindicators.net/system/medias/95/original/EducationalBrochure.pdf?1285096395
- Association of Government Accountants: www.agacgfm.org
- ICMA Center for Performance Management: http://icma.org/en/icma/priorities/performance_management
- Performance Reporting for Government SEA Reporting: www.seagov.org/
- Public Performance Measurement and Reporting Network: <http://ppmrn.net/>
- CIC's Indicator Project Database: www.communityindicators.net/projects

Acknowledgements

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation provided funding for this project. The contents of this document are solely the responsibility of the CI-PM Steering Committee and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Community Indicators Consortium or the funder.

About the CI-PM Integration Project

In the fall of 2008, CIC received a multi-year grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to continue CIC's work to integrate community indicators and performance measures. The purpose of the grant was to promote, advocate for, and develop a community of practice around CI-PM integration, and for engaging citizens and other key community stakeholders in the process. We hope you will share your experiences seeking to improve community outcomes, citizen engagement, and public trust through integration of community indicators and performance measures. We welcome your ideas, interest and involvement, and can be contacted via CIPM@communityindicators.net.