United Growth's Revitalizing Neighborhoods Indicator Project

UNITED GROWTH
For Kent County

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Presentation Outline

- Ideal Neighborhood Indicator Project
- Geography
- MacIaren Indicator Analysis
- **Review United Growth's Sustainable Goals**
- Strong Indicator Examples
- Weak Indicator Examples
- Conclusions

Ideal Neighborhood Indicator Project

United Growth
- -Revitalizing Neighborhoods Committee
  - -Kent County
  - -MSU Extension
- -Ideal central city neighborhood for 2030
- -Indicator Project – 19 indicators
  - -Applied to two neighborhoods
    - -Eastown
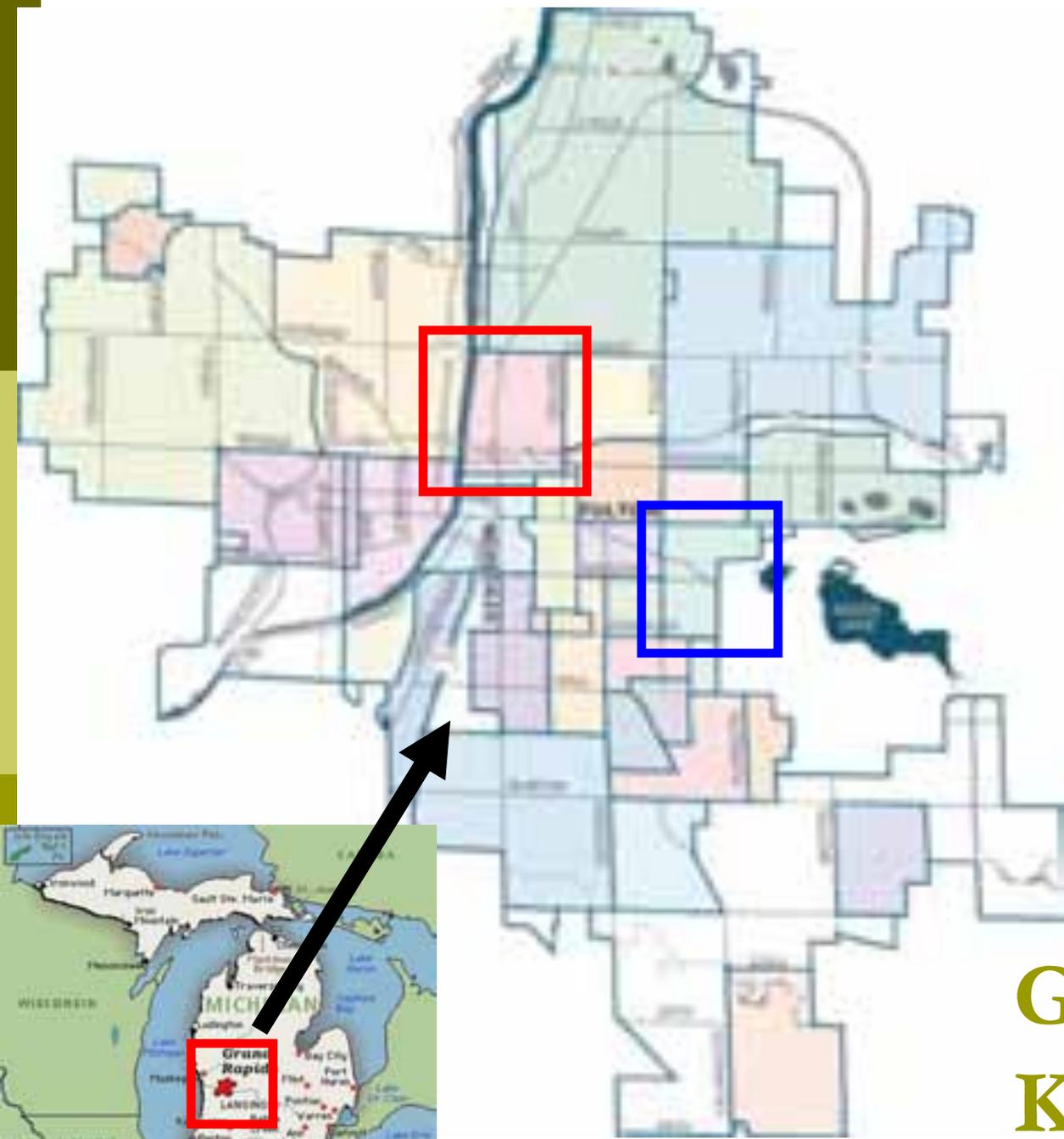   - -Belknap Lookout

Why are indicators important?

- Neighborhood Indicator definition:
    - Determine conditions that exist and whether the direction is consistent with community goals
    - Determine if the neighborhoods are progressing socially, economically, and environmentally
- Holds people accountable
- Builds consensus for an action strategy
- Example: Bike Lanes

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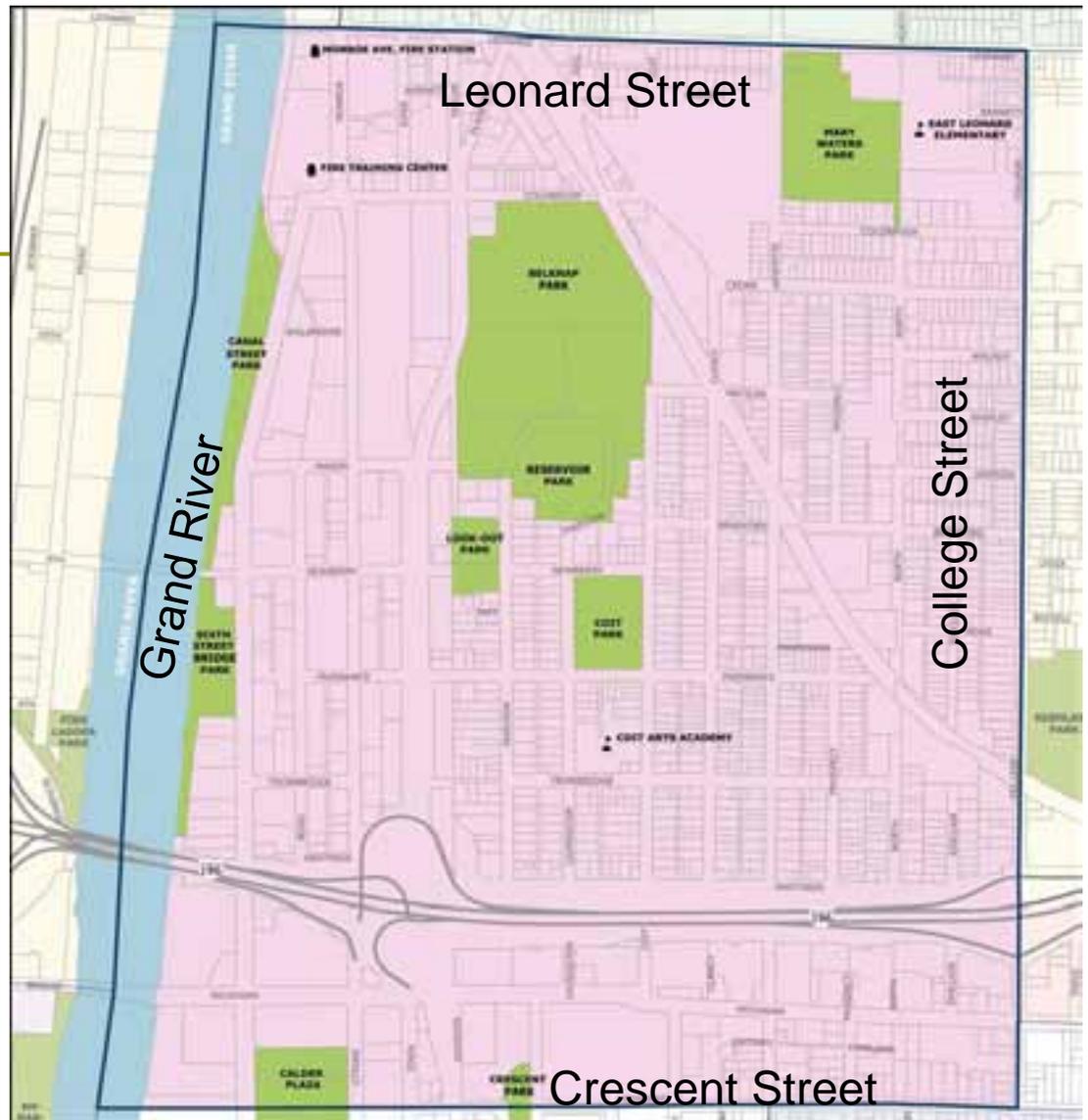- Weak Indicator Examples
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Belknap Lookout

Eastown

Geography: Kent County

Geography: Belknap Lookout

- Includes Census Tracts #13 and #14
- Includes a small section north of neighborhood boundaries: Plainfield Ave to Sweet St

Geography: Eastown

• Includes the Census Tracts #24 and #33

•Includes Aquinas College

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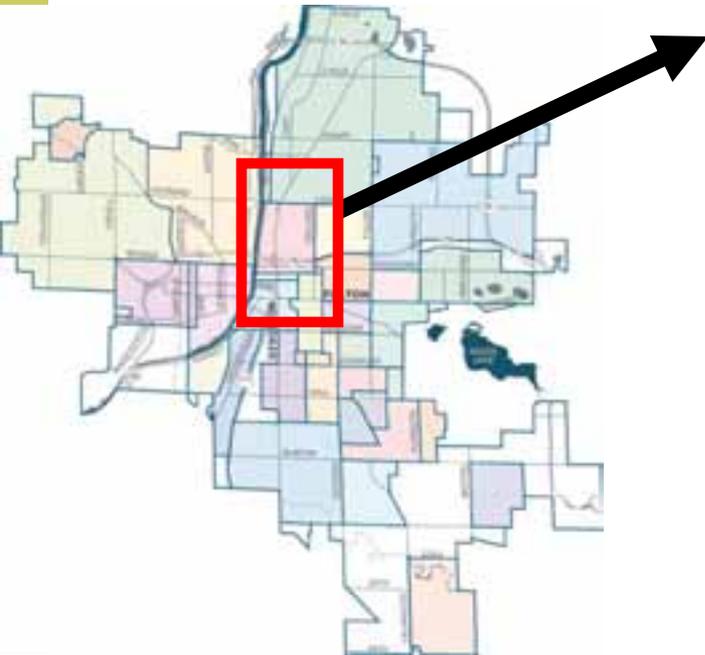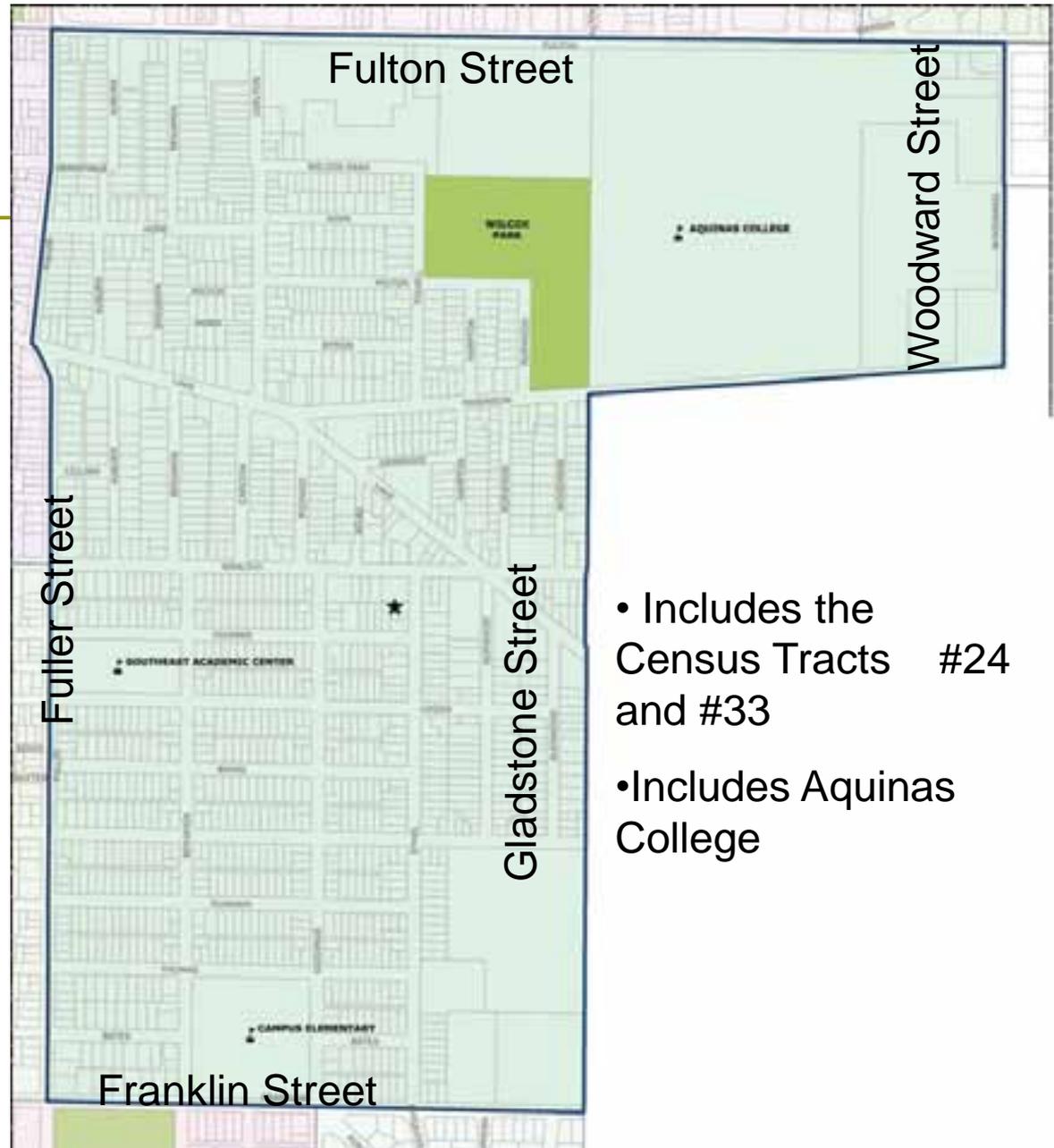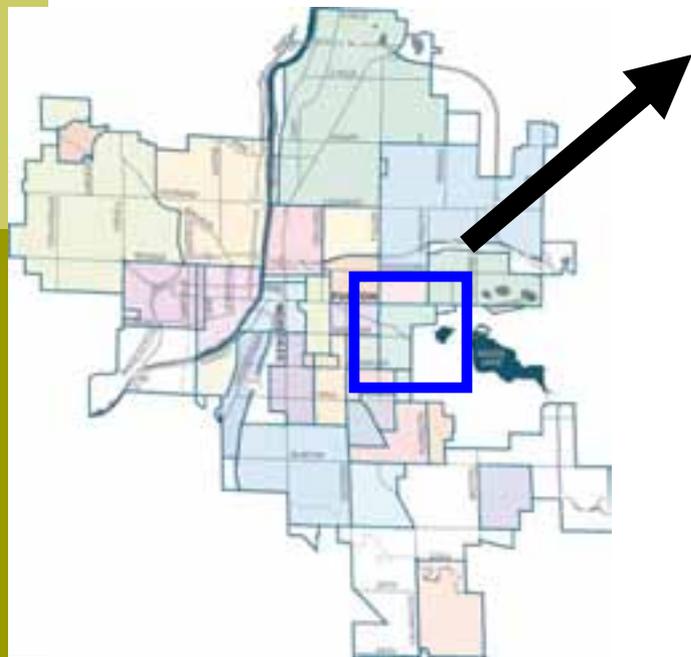- Strong Indicator Examples
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Maclaren Indicator Analysis

- Virginia Maclaren – University of Toronto
  - "Urban Sustainable Reporting"
- Standard assessment tool
- Seven Characteristics
- Maclaren Matrix

	Yes	Inconclusive	No
Easy to understand	X		
Data easily available			X
Relevant		X	
Forward-looking	X		
Congruence	X		
Practicality	X		
Replicable			X

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Review of United Growth's Sustainable Goals

1. Neighborhoods Are Vibrant, Economically Sustainable Communities

2. Every Neighborhood Is A Mixed-Income Neighborhood

3. A Full Range Of Transportation Modes Exist

4. Neighborhoods Are Green And Environmentally Sustainable

5. Empowerment, Human Connectedness, And Social Justice Are Prominent Features In The Neighborhoods

Goal 1. Neighborhoods Are Vibrant, Economically Sustainable Communities

Indicator 1.1 – Residential and Commercial Properties are fully occupied

Indicator 1.2 – Quality Neighborhood Schools

Indicator 1.3 – Density has increased

Indicator 1.4 – Neighborhood Elementary Schools

Indicator 1.5 – Neighborhood Businesses are locally owned

http://www.ccamuseum.org/Vacant_lot-web.JPG

Goal 1. Neighborhoods Are Vibrant, Economically Sustainable Communities

Future Suggestions

- Neighborhood members count vacant lots, local businesses

- Define local business

- Future indicator – mixed use buildings

http://gothamgazette.com/graphics/lot.jpg

http://farm3.static.flickr.com/2009/1503176683_80a3ee6c2c.jpg

Goal 2. Every Neighborhood Is A Mixed-Income Neighborhood

Indicator 2.1 – One-Third Rental Housing is available

Indicator 2.2 – Permanently Affordable Housing Units

Indicator 2.3 – Economic Diversity

Indicator 2.4 – Housing is Accessible

Indicator 2.5 – Racial Composition mirrors   the City of Grand Rapids

Goal 2. Every Neighborhood Is A Mixed-Income Neighborhood

Future Suggestions

-Zero Step Program

-does not work as indicator measure

-Track racial and economic demographics in local elementary schools

Goal 3: A Full Range of Transportation Modes Exist

Indicator 3.1 – Public Transit is Accessible

Indicator 3.2 – Redevelopment is occurring around Transit Corridors

Indicator 3.3 – Every Street has a Complete sidewalk on both sides of the Street

Indicator 3.4 – Bike Lanes are Common

Indicator 3.5 – Residents have become less car dependent

Indicator 3.6 – Residents with Disabilities can easily access the entire neighborhood

Source: http://www.voga.org/Bike_Touring.jpg

Goal 3: A Full Range of Transportation Modes Exist

Future Suggestions:

- Change indicator: "Residents have become less car dependent"
  - Add different methodology
    - participation levels of public transit
    - frequency of public transit lines to neighborhoods
- Track emission standards and pollution levels
- Make "Resident with disabilities can easily access the entire neighborhood" a separate goal

Goal 4: Neighborhoods are Green and Environmentally Sustainable

Indicator 4.1 – Residents support Locally Grown Food

Indicator 4.2 – Green Space is Accessible

Indicator 4.3 – Street Canopy reduces Greenhouse Gases

Source:
http://greendevelopmentplaybook.net/database/images/display/sb4720d928d50d3.jpg

Goal 4: Neighborhoods are Green and Environmentally Sustainable

Future Suggestions:

- residents should survey
  - **farmer's markets**
  - know proximity to green space and parks
- **replace indicator "Street Canopy Reduces Greenhouse Gases"**
- track LEED-certified buildings
- measure energy consumption through kilowatt hours per capita

Goal 5. Empowerment, Human Connectedness, and Social Justice are Prominent Features in the Neighborhoods

- **Indicator 5.1 – Strong Citizen-based Organizations are active**

Source: http://www.nwlincs.org/oreven/TRK_group.jpg

Goal 5. Empowerment, Human Connectedness, and Social Justice are Prominent Features in the Neighborhoods

Future Suggestions

  -track voter participation

  -regularity of community
    newspapers

-high levels of book circulation at the local library

-empowerment survey

-look at Community Development Block Grant
    funding

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3.2 Redevelopment is occurring around Transit Corridors

Measure: Number of new/improved building units

Method: Count # building permits within ¼ mile of Transit Corridor

http://www.thinkfullcircle.com

Indicator Strengths:

- Data is regularly updated

- Transit Corridors are relevant in future

- Easy to track development

  - Development Center Activity & Performance

  - City of Grand Rapids website

3.4 Bike Lanes are common

Measure: Increasing number of streets with complete sidewalks on both sides of street

Method: Count number of streets with complete sidewalks

- Count total mileage of these streets

Indicator Strengths:

- Information easily available
- Updated regularly
- Data is easily understood
- Can be used for future comparisons

http://blog.mlive.com/grpress/2008/08/bike-ride-crop-300.jpg

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1.2 Quality Neighborhood Schools

Measure: Test scores are equal or surpass the state average

Method/Source: Michigan Educational Assessment Program scores online

Indicator Flaws:

- Education could be its own goal
- Hard to compare to state, easy to county
- Can be interpreted differently
- Standardized tests are criticized
- MEAP could change standards or testing process
- Need to be complemented with other measurements

http://info.detnews.com/

2.2 Permanently Affordable Housing Units

Measure: House Prices

Method used

- US Census
- Calculate
    - Median house price
    - Median household income
- Mortgage calculator

House Prices		
	Median	**Affordable**
Belknap	$ 54,999	$ 84,000
Eastown	$ 107,500	$ 131,500

Indicator Flaws:

- No housing is Permanent
- Interest rates change
- Mortgage terms vary
- Property taxes not included in payments
- Dependant on third party website

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Conclusions

- Actively work towards making neighborhoods sustainable

- Work with community leaders to identify the **neighborhood's unique conditions**

- Must develop comprehensive and concise goal titles

- Define specific objectives for each indicator

- The Maclaren analysis proved to be an efficient way of choosing proper indicators and should be used for possible future additions

- Help to attract talent, jobs, and investment in Kent County

Thank you!

- Thank you to all who helped with this project and thanks for your time!

- Questions?