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## An Introduction to the 2008 Neighborhood Indicators Pilot Project

### Mayor Dave Cieslewicz

When developing a new program or allocating funding, we can use data to guide our decisions and better target our limited resources. For the City of Madison, we have a lot of timely data but it's often available only at geographies much larger than the city or its neighborhoods. With the US Census, we have detailed data but it comes along once every ten years and is quickly out of date. What we want is something timely and at the right geography to let us know what Madison's neighborhoods are like and how they're doing.

**Indicators as a tool.** *The Neighborhood Indicators Pilot Project* is a demonstration of key characteristics and various indicators that relate to the quality of life of Madison at the neighborhood level. When brought to full scale, the *Neighborhood Indicators Project* will:

- Give us a better understanding of our neighborhoods;
- Help us tailor solutions to a neighborhood's particular needs or characteristics;
- Over time, help us see emerging trends; and
- Give us early warning signs of stress so that problems can be addressed quickly, effectively and less expensively.

Indicators are not a substitute for local knowledge or the personal experiences of residents, but they will provide us with a more comprehensive view of our neighborhoods. Indicators can help us identify distressed areas even if they are quietly suffering. They can provide us with a first-scan for deeper issues, show where to drill down for additional information and flag where to investigate causes. All of this information can become part of our considerations to increase or reallocate funding for programs or pursue new policies.

**Public input.** Our roster of indicators was developed with over a year of public input that started with the 2006 Neighborhood Conference. The pilot was also featured at the Mayor's Neighborhood Roundtable in 2007 and during sessions with the Northside Planning Council, East Isthmus Neighborhoods Planning Council and Neighborhood Resource Teams. Input from alders and department and division heads was gleaned during project overviews and progress reports. The pilot was presented to several of the Council's standing committees including Public Safety Review Board, Board of Education-Common Council Liaison Committee, Community Services Commission, and Community Development Block Grant Commission. The Madison Metropolitan School District offered guidance on which indicators it felt were most relevant and provided critical data for the pilot. During each of these sessions, suggestions and recommendations were recorded and considered by a work group of City managers and staff for inclusion.

The goal of the *Neighborhood Indicators Pilot Project* is to demonstrate the usefulness and look of a full-scale system. Feedback from users like you will help refine and improve the package for its full-scale citywide version and for years to come.

You can share your thoughts by clicking the "Leave Feedback" link above, by sending an email directly to [NHIfedback@cityofmadison.com](mailto:NHIfedback@cityofmadison.com), or by calling my office at 266-4611.

For the Madison Neighborhood Indicators Pilot Report [click here](#).

For the Madison Neighborhood Indicators Pilot Preliminary Evaluation [click here](#).

To view a snapshot of a neighborhood [click here](#).

To compare neighborhood indicators [click here](#).

To map a variable [click here](#).

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