

#18: ADDITIONAL METRICS including SOCIAL VITALITY

OPTIONAL METRIC FOR CATEGORY A & B & C CITIES

METRIC TOPICS

- 18.1 Social vulnerability (index number)
- 18.2 Livability (index number)
- 18.3 Civic participation/ civic capital (index number)

Other possible topics

- Educational attainment
- Arts & culture
- Community health
- Crime & safety
- Social & cultural diversity
- Equity

Depending on your city category, report city-defined data for the following number of metric topics:

Category A cities: 4 topics

Category B cities: 3 topics

Category C cities: 2 topics

METRIC DEFINITION

- **Social vulnerability/resilience** refers to a specific index measure that attempts to gauge the resilience of communities when confronted by external stresses on human health, stresses such as natural or human-caused disasters, or disease outbreaks. The index web site pulls 14 Census/other government data variables at the tract level in the areas of socioeconomic, household composition/disability, minority status/language, and housing/transportation. ([Metric 18.1](#))
- **Livability** refers to a specific Livability Index number from an AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) web site. 40 Census/other government data points are used from seven major livability categories: housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement, and opportunity. ([Metric 18.2](#))
- **Civic participation/ civic capital** attempts to gauge the number or percent of community members active, at some level or in some way, in community organizations and/or civic opportunities (like voting) that are open to all. Civic capital refers to the formal and informal relationships, networks and capacities that communities use to make decisions and solve problems. See more from the [National Civic League](#). ([Metric 18.3](#))
- **Educational attainment** is a term commonly used to refer to the highest degree of education an individual has completed. For a city, an aggregate measure for all school children or community members is used that is most relevant to particular issues or local concerns.
- **Arts & culture** measures can focus on the number of venues in a city, the access/utilization of the venues, the number of employees employed in the arts, or the economic impact of arts and culture businesses.
- **Community health** has many dimensions, and can be viewed as the extent to which physical and mental conditions do not impede community members from fulfilling their full potential as active participants in society.

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- **Crime & safety** cover a wide range of reported, measured and surveyed data about harm and threats to individuals and the perception of harm and threats.
- **Social & cultural diversity** covers a range of factors among a city's population including age, race, national origin, income, gender, and affectional preference.
- **Equity** is a broad topic, broadly defined as the fair distribution, among diverse populations, of resources/opportunities.

DATA SOURCES

- **Social Vulnerability Index:** <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html>
- **Livability Index:** <http://livabilityindex.aarp.org/>
- **Civic Index:** http://www.nationalcivicleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/CivicIndex_FINAL_compressed-1.pdf
- **Educational attainment:** school district records; Census data (American Community Survey, 5 year estimates, Table B15003)
- **Arts & culture:** city records of businesses and common knowledge of city staff; American Community Survey Census data; index numbers from specific organizations listed below.
- **Community health:** county health data; Census data
- **Crime & safety:** city police and transportation departments; county records; Census data; city surveys.
- **Social & cultural diversity & equity:** city data; Census data.

METRIC CALCULATION AND PUBLIC REPORTING

- **The Social vulnerability/resilience index** reports whether individuals in a specific zip code are most vulnerable (highest quartile), least vulnerable (lowest quartile), or in the two middle quartiles. For large cities individual zip code measures would have to be averaged.
- **The Livability Index** pulls 40 data points from Census data, ranks each as to whether your city's data falls in the top, bottom or middle third of data from all US communities, and then calculates **a number between 1 and 100**. Users can change the weighting of each of seven data categories based on your preferences and their relevance to your city, and then recalculate the Index number. Data points/index numbers for even the smallest of Minnesota cities include age diversity, income inequality, voting rate, obesity, drinking water quality, household transportation costs, proximity to libraries, housing cost burden.
- **Civic Index** is a self-assessment tool for measuring a community's civic capital which includes 32 questions to determine the Civic Capital Score. Depending on the size of your city, issues of concern, and availability of data, additional data points for reporting might be:
 - # of (crime watch) block clubs to total residential blocks in the city
 - % of eligible city residents who voted in the latest November election
 - # of civic groups (neighborhood associations; fraternal organizations such as the Lions; faith organizations; interest groups such as Friends of the Library; school organizations such as Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations; local chapters of organizations such as the Izaak Walton League of America).
- **Educational attainment** - data points various cities in Minnesota report, sometimes broken down by race and income, are:
 - % high school graduation rate
 - % city residents holding a high school diploma
 - % of 3rd graders reading proficiently

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- % residents with a college degree
- % residents 25-64 with an Associate's degree or higher
- % of residents 25-44 with a Bachelor's degree or higher
- **Arts & culture –**
 - # of arts, cultural and historical venues (including festivals)
 - # of art businesses
 - # employed in the "creative class" (using Census data and including various mixes of residents employed in management, business, science and arts occupational sectors).
- **Community health –** many data points may be available in an individual city and of interest for tracking; common single measures are:
 - % of community members at a healthy weight (often only county-wide data exists)
 - % pregnancies among girls aged 15-17
- **Crime & safety –** typically several measures are reported to cover criminal acts, such as assault, and accidental acts such as car crashes (accidents). Data points various cities in Minnesota report are:
 - Part I & II crime clearance rates
 - # of violent crimes per capita
 - average score (1-5 range) on city survey of perception of safety
 - transportation crashes/accidents (pedestrians, bicyclists, car occupants)
- **Equity** The [LEED for Cities Distributional Equity](#) credit includes these optional metrics:
 - Equitable per capita income
 - Equitable workforce mobility
 - Graduation rate equity
 - Equitable employment
 - Community facilities' access & proximity
- **Social & cultural diversity** measures of relevance to cities vary widely. For example, in some small western MN cities **gender diversity** is a crucial issue to the city's continued existence: more women are needed! Other cities may need to focus on measuring how **diverse city leadership** is in order that diverse people in the community – whatever that diversity is - feel represented. Or a city with low **income diversity** may want to track the positive growth of lower income (such as café workers) or higher income people (doctors). Here are possible measures:
 - A score from a city-defined index assessing the **diversity of appointments to city boards & commissions**
 - The Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index (<http://www.hrc.org/campaigns/municipal-equality-index>) evaluates how inclusive cities' laws, policies and services are of **lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people**. Currently only the 8 largest Minnesota cities have been scored (on a scale of 1-100) by the HRC but the scoring methodology is available for use by any city by looking at any city's score sheet.

METRIC RATIONALE

The GreenStep Cities program challenges cities to “achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals.” While the 29 GreenStep best practices are focused on environmental issues, with a strong economic thread, social issues are inherent in the striving for greater sustainability. Hence this one GreenStep metric focuses on social issues and community vitality, for which a number of metrics have been developed at <http://oregonexplorer.info/content/what-community-vitality>

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Each city should choose specific metrics to report, as options are many and the GreenStep program does not think any small set of metrics fit all cities. That said, metrics 18.1, 18.2, and 18.3 – complex index numbers for which data is easily available – are suggested as 3 metric elements many cities may choose to report under this Metric 18.

GreenStep Category C cities should report 2 metric elements, which could include - or not - metric elements 18.1, 18.2, and 18.3. Category B cities should report 3 metric elements, and A cities 4 elements.

STEP 5 METRIC TARGETS

While there is no shortage of public and private organizations urging communities to hit specific targets in these social areas, and while there are funding streams related to specific targets, each city is unique and can best set realistic targets that are finely tuned to the community's history, current capabilities, and aspirations.

As an example of one target, the MN Association of Development Organizations' goal is to increase the percentage of residents aged 25-44 with a bachelor's degree or higher to 39% by 2025.

At a state level, the MN Dashboard (https://public.tableau.com/views/Dashboard_ALL/MNDashboard?:showVizHome=no), prepared by the state agency MN Management and Budget, calculates -- and grades -- one number statewide, which cities may find of use for comparison purposes, for these indicators (data from 2019):

- % of 3rd graders proficient in reading: 57%
- % of students graduating from high school in 4 years: 83%
- % adults aged 25-44 with an educational certificate or higher: 60%
- % of Minnesota adults at a healthy weight: 34%
- # of violent crimes per 100,000 people: 242

NEED HELP? CONTACT

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