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Community Benchmarks: An Analysis of Performance Measurements in Urban Planning Management

Susan Joan Daluddung
Portland State University

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DISSERTATION APPROVAL

The abstract and dissertation of Susan Joan Daluddung for the Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Studies were presented December 3, 2004, and accepted by the dissertation committee and the doctoral program.

COMMITTEE APPROVALS:

[REDACTED]

James Strathman, Chair

[REDACTED]

Carl Abbott

[REDACTED]

Lois Ann Martin Bronfman

[REDACTED]

Charles Heying

Mark O. Hatfield

[REDACTED]

Thomas Harvey
Representative of the Office of Graduate Studies

[REDACTED]

DOCTORAL PROGRAM APPROVAL

Loren Lutzenhiser, Director
Urban Studies Ph.D. Program

ABSTRACT

An abstract of the dissertation of Susan Joan Daluddung for the Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Studies presented December 3, 2004.

Title: Community Benchmarks: An Analysis of Performance Measurements in Urban Planning Management

New public management practices in the U.S. call for governmental accountability, performance measures and benchmarks. Community benchmarks research provides a basis for current information and further research for planners and educators in the urban planning profession. A benchmark is simply a standard for performance or targeted level of service delivery aspired to by the city. Community benchmarks, as defined by the researcher, are tied to an adopted community plan. Community plans take many shapes including the General or Comprehensive Plan, the city's budget document, or a variety of strategic planning documents.

The intent of the study was to complete research and survey mid-size cities to determine common performance practices for urban planning. management. The sample population was 381 cities selected from the National League of Cities and a database was created. The intent was to create a composite of key quantitative variables strongly related to the benchmark cities program. Additional terminal research was conducted from 2000 to 2004 to supplement survey results. Case studies

of several select cities were conducted in order to determine the application of community benchmarks.

COMMUNITY BENCHMARKS:
AN ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS IN
URBAN PLANNING MANAGEMENT

by

SUSAN JOAN DALUDDUNG

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
URBAN STUDIES

Portland State University
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Dedication

To my Mom, Ethel Louise Breyfogle, who said two things,
“Finish what you start” then “spread your wings and fly!”

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- Carl Abbott, PhD Professor
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- Charles Heying, Associate Professor
- Senator Mark Hatfield, Distinguished Professor of Government
- Thomas Harvey, Associate Professor
- Dr. James Strathman, Director and Professor

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Glossary

Common definitions:

Benchmark - A targeted level of service – what the city is trying to achieve.

Benchmark targets – A point of reference or a standard against which measurements can be compared; sometimes a goal or a target.

Budget Document – The instrument used by the City Council to present a comprehensive financial program – includes detailed information on revenues and expenditures, and other data can include performance measures.

Community Benchmark – a measurement of progress towards performance objectives and outcomes stated in adopted community plans.

Comprehensive Plan – The general plan of a city, which lays out goals, policies, and objectives to guide the city’s growth and development; generally focuses on physical/spatial change in communities.

Development – A process of growth or change. Often used in the phrases “economic development,” connoting an expansion of economic opportunities and jobs, and “sustainable development,” referring to economic and social changes that promote human prosperity and quality of life without causing ecological or social damage. Sometimes confused with *Growth*.

Economy – Originally, the “*management of a household.*” Commonly today, the system of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services in the larger scale.

Growth – Increase or expansion, to mean an expansion in production, jobs, population, land area or revenue. Often confused with “development,” which does not necessarily include the idea of physical increase.

Indicators – A measurement that reflects the status of a system or service.

Inputs – The resources (money, staff, participants, facilities, equipment, etc.) dedicated to or consumed by a program. Inputs are what make the services happen.

Managing for Results – The creation and distribution of performance information through strategic planning and performance measurement routines.

Outcomes – Benefits for individuals, families, organizations, or communities that result partially (if not totally) from your program. Not what a program did, but the consequences of what a program did. The program’s impact on the public being served. Why a program exists.

Outputs – The products of a program’s services. Outputs indicate the volume of work the program’s services have completed or produced, measured in units of service.

Performance Measurement – The selection, definition and application of indicators of efficiency, quality and effectiveness.

Performance – Defined in increasingly narrow terms as measurable outputs and outcomes.

Performance Measures – Capture and maintain a system of measurable indicators of progress towards a goal.

Resources – A source of supply or support, available means. Money, employees, capital, volunteer and participant hours, equipment, etc. used to support the delivery of services, or dedicated to a program.

Reinventing Government Movements – Reforms generally cast in terms of new public management or reinventing government movements.

Results – A measure of progress made towards public sector goals – disagreements in terminology come when administrative activity is measured with output related vs. outcome related results.

Services – What a program does with its inputs to achieve its intended outcomes. The processes a program undertakes. Program services lead to outputs.

Strategic Plan – A plan implementing the objectives and short term goals of an organization or program.

Sustainability – “long-term health and vitality-cultural, economic, environmental and social” (Sustainable Seattle’s definition.)

Vision Document – A community’s image of a collective future; including physical, spatial, as well as recreational, cultural, ecological, and environmental features.

Preface

Measure to Perform

America has long been known as a melting pot of innovation, creativity and ideas. The thinkers of this country have been at the forefront of every possible profession, including professional city planning and management. America's cities began the search for a better means of productivity, efficiency and management at the turn of the twentieth Century. Those methods have been taken to another level of public involvement and government accountability as the Twenty-first Century gains momentum.

The search for better means of productively and the desire to more efficiently provide government services has transformed into a movement to perform. For those of us in the city planning and management, the opportunity to strive for greater excellence is served by searching for better practices. Better measures help us strive for better performance. This dissertation is my contribution along the path of performance and is especially for those who work at the grassroots city level.

Chapter One: Community Benchmarks in Context

Introduction

New public management practices in the U.S. call for governmental accountability, performance measures and benchmarks. Community benchmarks research provides a basis for current information and further research for planners and educators in the urban planning profession. A benchmark is simply a standard for performance or targeted level of service delivery aspired to by the city. Community benchmarks, as defined by the researcher, are tied to an adopted community plan. Community plans take many shapes including the General or Comprehensive Plan, the city's budget document, or a variety of strategic planning documents.

The 21st Century planning and community development departments are faced with enormous pressures managing changes to their service delivery, wading through massive information and technology innovations, and responding to demanding political forces. The purpose of this research is to study the extent to which community benchmarks have emerged in planning practice in mid-size United States cities. This dissertation reviews the influences that have led cities to use community benchmarks.

The following provides an overview of the research steps undertaken:

1. Major articles from academic and professional journals published in the past 35 years were reviewed and selected as topic-specific sources.

2. Materials were directly gathered from mid-size cities, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Center for Performance Measurement, and from larger size jurisdictions.
3. Books written about performance measures and benchmarking were collected and the literature was reviewed.
4. A survey instrument was created for mid-size cities, and a sample was systematically drawn from the database of the National League of Cities.
5. Completed surveys were coded, responses were analyzed, and conclusions were drawn.
6. Focused cases studies were conducted for a few selected cities, registered as both “yes” and “no” benchmarking cities.
7. Summarized the finding and conclusions were summarized and reported.

The analyses were conducted to understand the role and use of performance measures and benchmarks, and to determine the quantification of key variables.

The literature review is focused both on theory and practice of local governments’ benchmarks. The research examines commonly discussed trends, and historical political forces that contribute to the use of measuring performance and results in public planning and management.

Definition of Community Benchmark Research Objectives

Local governments in the United States have entered a new era of governmental accountability demanded by informed citizens seeking lower costs and greater results. The services of planning and community development departments, along with a host of other government services, have not escaped the constituents' demand for accountability.

This dissertation research analyses benchmarking activity trends at the mid-size city level in local government planning and community development departments in the year 2000. Planning/Community development departments are difficult city functions to precisely define. Cities combine services for planning in a variety of ways, including such activities as economic development, housing, development activities, engineering, and plan check for buildings. Planners and administrators in local government use benchmarks to demonstrate accountability and results to the public. This study reviewed the literature on benchmarking, developed and fielded a city survey on benchmarking practices, analyzed responses, estimated a model, conducted focused case studies of selected cities and drew conclusions related to community benchmarks.

For purposes of this dissertation, the term community benchmark was defined, and input was sought from a variety of planning departments. A benchmark is simply *a targeted level of service that is used as a comparative measure for performance*. Community benchmarks are developed when government engages the community in a plan, such as a comprehensive or strategic plan, and proceeds to monitor progress of

the plan. For purposes of this research, when the indicators used to measure progress are tied to the formal community plan, the term community benchmark applies. Therefore, a community benchmark ties the benchmark measurements to community goals, budgets, or strategic plan.

To be useful, a benchmark should be clear, results-oriented, and easy to measure. Joseph T. Kelley of the Government Finance Research Center made the following observations, “A good unit of service should be: results-oriented; simple, clear and understandable; amendable to accurate measurement; and acceptable to those who deliver the service” (Kelley, 1984: 21). To be effective, the benchmark should be acceptable to the service provider, as well as to the public.

Key research objectives for this research parallel the Syracuse University Government Performance Project (GPP). This research was conducted at the national level by the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University (<http://www.Maxwell.syr.edu/gpp/history.htm>). The Syracuse study documents the accountability trends at state, city, and county levels from 1999 - 2002. According to the Government Performance Project (GPP) study, “strategic planning, performance measurement, benchmarking, and performance-based budgeting are all in use in a growing number of places, though the way the terms are defined vary widely” (Governing, Feb. 99).

Managing for Results the Government Performance Project research objectives focus on strategic planning, performance measurement, and the implementation of

performance information. In order to evaluate government performance at national, state and large city levels, the research criteria were:

1. Government engages in results-oriented strategic planning.
2. Government develops indicators and evaluative data that can measure progress toward results and accomplishments.
3. Leaders and managers use results data for policymaking, management, and evaluation of progress.
4. Government clearly communicates the results of its activities to stakeholders (GPP, Syracuse University, 2000).

Because this researcher's scope is more narrowly defined, the concept of community benchmarks keys primarily into the second point, "indicators and evaluative data used to measure progress towards a goal or objective." (GPP, 1999) For purposes of this dissertation, the other key characteristics of "managing for results" are not key research objectives in establishing the evidence of community benchmarks in mid-size cities.

The purpose of community benchmark research was to determine if management responds to the public's demand for measures of performance and progress on planning activities and regulatory areas. Today's citizens expect results from local government in a variety of ways, such as, public-oriented services, clear, effective and efficient processing, sound fiscal management, and public involvement in setting planning goals for the community. Is accountability to the public an emerging priority for many planning and community developments departments in the

United States' mid-size cities? This researcher's objective at utilizing community benchmark findings was to examine evidence of the existence of community benchmarks.

This dissertation research documents the emergence of community benchmarks and measuring performance in mid-size cities. The literature review conducted as part of this research substantiates the use of benchmarks and performance measurement as a growing trend among cities. The literature review and research information provide a theoretical basis for the reasons governments are driven to use benchmarks. Most cities responding to the survey acknowledged the political forces driving cities to measure results. Characteristics of the city and community context also impact a city's choice to set up a system of community benchmarks. The researcher's objective was to determine which characteristics were useful as predictors of decisions to undertake benchmarking.

Accountability Trends in Planning Management

The survey undertaken for this dissertation substantiates the increasing use of performance measurement and benchmark indicators within planning and community development departments across the United States. There are a variety of reasons why benchmarks are utilized, but the most clearly is the elected officials' involvement. As cities grow in size and complexity, there is frequently a communication gap in establishing legitimacy of the elected officials and their staff with the constituency. The local government service provider uses community benchmarks to narrow the gap by clearly communicating progress in meeting public goals.

Often community benchmarks are utilized as part of a political platform, or can be a part of a City Council's policy agenda. Community benchmarks are also evolving in mid-size cities as methods for measuring program results and comparing performance across cities. Some communities issue report cards on progress, published in the local newspaper, compared with peer cities, and others report the various city comparisons in the budget document. In a review of the findings of the GPP, Don Moynihan comments, "These findings confirm the current popularity of results-based reform in government, despite the apparent failure of similar reforms in the past. Part of this popularity is derived from the theoretical advantages of MFR, especially improved decision-making."

Another potential benefit investigated by the GPP is the coordinating effect that MFR as an overarching management system has on other management systems. The GPP found that governments at all levels are devoting significant energy to creating and distributing performance information. Problems in the creation of these performance information systems are common, however. Frequently, governments engage in multiple types of planning that are not well coordinated. Translating high-level goals into quantitative measures also proves problematic. A broader challenge is ensuring that performance information, once created, is actually used in decision-making (Moynihan, 2000).

New local government performance standards contain elements to analyze the way resources are used and results are achieved in planning management. In order to perform on expectations of policy makers, stakeholders and citizens, city-planning

departments engage in results-oriented planning and develop benchmarks with indicators to measure success. “Benchmarking is a tool rather than a solution.” (Fitzenz, 1993) Planners face the challenge of translating broad city objectives into comprehensive plans, specific plans, strategic plan action elements, and individual budget department goals, and then measuring progress using productivity and performance measures in the budget documents. (Henton, Melville & Kimberly, 1997)

Competing goals in the political process prevent governments from acting purely like a business, yet many services are more client based and provide a business function; examples are, the development review process, housing programs and permit issuance. Planning and community development departments clearly reported that benchmarks of certain types of services are measured periodically, particularly those with a more business-like function. The movement to measure performance is based on objectives to reduce gaps between expectations and performance in the planning and political processes, increase connections with the cities’ constituency, and become more accountable to citizens by reporting results. Services for citizens that are more community based are measured on larger issues, such as long-range planning and economic development. Community benchmarks are often linked to an effort to increase communications with and responsiveness to citizens.

Local governments faced with limited budgets and increasing expectations are driven to change their practices in order to meet constituent demands. According to Jonathan Walters’ book Measuring Up: Governing’s Guide to Performance Measurement for Geniuses (and other Public Managers), “The fact is, such issues as

who had the most efficient social services system, the smartest kids, the best cops, the quickest snowplows, the cleanest drinking water or even the most reliable street lighting are of intense interest to citizens. And pretty soon, jurisdictions not producing performance data in such areas are going to be asked why they're not." There are a handful of real places that are making progress toward something like performance-based budgeting. But these places are mostly local governments (where connection between resources and results tend to be easier to make), and the implementation is far from comprehensive, at least at this point. (Walters, 1998, p. 39)

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board of the United States has had great influence in the development of performance measurement systems. Since the early 1990's, GASB has required results-oriented measurement to improve planning and budgeting processes.

"Use of performance data to increase the relevance and rationality of government planning and budgeting processes is a key objective of many governments who are attempting to develop integrated performance management systems. Many state and local governments have made significant progress in developing integrated systems. With the enactment of the Government Performance and Results Act by the Congress in 1993, establishing a clear systemic linkage between strategic and performance planning, performance measurement, and budgeting become a federal policy object. The use of performance data, particularly outcome information, to focus and enrich planning is reported to be beneficial in most cases at all levels of government and successes are reported in developing performance-based/results driven budgets. (1997, <http://www.rutgers.edu/Accounting/raw/gasb/scagov/summary.htm>)"

Many planning and community development departments receive federal monies, particularly those departments managing Housing and Community

Development block grant funds, and must apply GASB standards. As complexities and demands of city planning increase, planners must rise to a new level of performance management. The researcher's literature review of public management of local government practices in the late 1900's in the United States supports this perspective. This dissertation improved the understanding of community benchmarks in planning at the local government level. The area of research regarding practices for planning departments is not explored to a great extent in existing literature.

The research objectives of this study are to:

1. Define the term "community benchmarks"
2. Demonstrate how benchmarks are effectively utilized in planning at the local level
3. Summarize survey research data to further define benchmarking practices for planning.
4. Determine what characteristics of city context are statistically related to benchmark programs.
5. Illustrate focused case studies from the mid-size city survey and their techniques.

Evidence of Community Benchmarks in Planning

The government manager's authority on benchmarks, David Ammons, provides the most extensive resource for cities of the measurement of performance of municipal services, Municipal Benchmarks (1996 and 2001). Common performance measurements in planning and community development departments are processing

time frame for a zone change application, average turnaround time for review of development plans, review times for sign permit applications, prompt customer service for building plans and inspections, inspectors workload and inspector speed for building and enforcement. (Ammons, David N., 2001, p. 64-91)

According to Ammons, “Many work elements of community planning departments are non-routine in nature and ... therefore difficult to measure. Workload counts for one community – the number of inquiries received, the number of planning commission meetings, the number of zoning map updates, and so forth – are of little relevance as benchmarks for another community.” (Ammons, 2001, p. 65) Recent reports from the Government Performance Project at Syracuse University conducted over the past four years document adoption of benchmark methods at all levels of government. (Syracuse University Government Performance Project 1999 – 2002.) Academicians and public managers have written extensively in governmental trade journals on the topic of establishing accountability by using benchmarks and managing for results. The planning management profession has not received as much attention as basic police and fire services, which have had standards for apparatus, staffing levels, and response times for many decades. However, public administration measures are more commonly addressed, and some approaches can be transferred to planning management.

A leading local government journal, Governing Magazine has produced a number of articles on performance management and concludes, that “(t)he process of establishing long-term planning, and holding staffers accountable for real results, is far

more difficult than it often seems at first....” (Feb. 2000). How governments use benchmarks and performance measures and the evolution into practices of measuring outcomes and results is documented by Berman (1988), Watson (1992), Holzer (1995), Few (1997), and Government Performance Project (1999, 2000, 2001). David Ammons in 1996 and again in 2001 produced a “municipal benchmarks” primer for cities looking for practical applications and common measurement techniques. It is a comprehensive review of all municipal services, and as David Ammons stated in the 2001 edition, “City governments need performance benchmarks, if they are serious about the efficient delivery of quality services, and their citizens need municipal benchmarks, if they are not” (Ammons, 2001, p. vii).

According to Jonathan Walters’ work in the area of government performance measurement, there is evidence beyond the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 of government benchmarks in planning. He points to places like Portland, Oregon; Phoenix, Arizona; and Charlotte, North Carolina “as cities (that) continue to make progress in building a performance base under how they do business.” (Walters, 1998, p. 65) He reports on a treatise of lessons learned and developed by Dick Tracy, the Director of Audits for the City of Portland as a source, Development and Use of Outcome Information: Portland, Oregon. (Walters, p. 171) Walters summarizes pre-conditions that must exist for a “successful performance measurement effort ... a modicum of high-level support, the involvement of those who will be impacted (including implementers and customers); some decent lead time ... and above all, a

good idea of what your government wants performance measurement to help it accomplish” (Walters, 1998, p. 65)

Forces Driving Performance Measurement

The very nature of government often fails to create incentives for performance measurement. The motivation to move in the direction of accounting for performance has come more from external forces, generally politically influenced.

“In an era in which revenues are growing much slower than the demand for expenditures and programs governments are forced to make tough decisions about priorities. A greater consciousness of tax burdens and policy has resulted in a desire to not only prioritize services based on need and demand, but also to assure that the resources put into services are used to the best advantage. Citizens and voters demand greater accountability for the resources they commit to government. They insist on objective data to prove or disprove the worth of government programs. While disgruntled customers of government services may not be able to choose another provider, they can make changes in the leadership of their government organizations.” (December 1997, <http://www.aspanet.org/cap/perf.htm>)

Accountability is a major force behind the movement toward measuring performance. Elected officials can demonstrate accountability and measure results for the constituency.

Determining an appropriate system of measurements for community benchmarks in the field of urban planning is difficult because solutions must be localized and there’s little in the way of established national standards. In areas of financial management, human resources, fire and police services, and even libraries, standardized benchmarks are more readily available. (Ammons, 1996) Typical planning benchmarks have measured turnaround time; permit issuance, and development review. According to the most recent volume of Municipal Benchmarks,

the 2001 planning benchmarks for municipalities generally measure processing speed, workload counts and turnaround times rather than “(m)ore useful benchmarks as indicators that measure the quality of various planning actions.” (Ammons, 2001, pg. 65)

Planners have had little alternative but to look to past practice, budget mechanisms, or the methods of other cities for systematic measures. The measurement of permit processing and development review is a traditional planning service for which David Ammons has offered benchmarks with performance measurements as standards. Quality of service, quality of the built environment, and quality of life factors are infrequently measured. The challenge for planning and further research is to add more indicators that measure outcomes in the community and how planning’s progress impacts the quality of life.

Joseph Keeley conducted a series of reviews in his book, Costing Government Services: A Guide for Decision Making. The conclusion that “Benchmarking is a powerful tool for improving organizational performance, and like any other approach or methodology, its application needs to fit within and support the goals, objectives, vision, and strategic plan of the agency.” (p. 47, Keeley et al., 1996). He also states, “In general, it is desirable that a unit of service focus attention on outputs ... Government spends money to achieve goals, and a wise choice of units of service should always reflect the goals being pursued.” (Keeley, 1996, p. 29)

If city planners develop community benchmarks that are meaningful and effective for their work, and fit the context of their local area, a community benchmark

will likely be useful. By way of the comprehensive plan or general plan, a planning and community development department is frequently charged with achieving citywide goals aimed at achieving desired development patterns, quality land use, circulation elements, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic viability, as well as design standards and map designations. The challenge is defining indicators of progress towards these goals. There are simple methods of using indicators to measure outputs; i.e. the number of permits processed in a certain time frame, the length of time in a development review process, prompt service for walk-in customers (Ammons, 2001, pg. 77) but very few outcome indicators.

There are approaches in public administration to document the dollars expended in the budget or to capture some of the business functions of the planning and community development department (ICMA). Measurements to indicate progress on environmental design, livability of a community or its economic viability have few documented models to follow in practice. Therefore, the task of measuring progress to capture simple measures of efficiencies, outputs, and productivity standards for processing plan reviews is documented while examples of measuring livability, or the impact of land use decisions is less frequently discussed in the literature. In the case of political forces as drivers for measurement efforts, this may not be adequate.

As mentioned earlier, David Ammons offers no benchmarks or performance measures for determining progress in meeting community goals related to livability, economic viability, environmental sustainability, or other comprehensive planning goals. Ammons' standards for performance measurement for city planning focus on

development administration. Typical planning measurement targets “time frames for planning department review of zoning, planned unit development, and subdivision requests,” “delays and expenses to builders,” “rates of compliance for code inspection” and the “effectiveness of inspections” (Ammons, 1996, pp. 49-58, and p. 62). The benchmarks document speed and efficiency, but not the quality or the results of planning actions; however, Ammons more recent literature offers some key cities to look at for best practices, including Portland, Oregon; Raleigh, North Carolina; and Phoenix, Arizona. (Ammons, 2001, pg. 65) Additionally, he directs a more varied approach in “Odds and Ends in Development Administration: Selected Cities, which includes: responsiveness to planning inquiries, data collection and reporting, up-to-date information, up-to-date zoning map and comprehensive planning” pg. 89-91.

Little information exists with regard to standards to measure whether the city’s perceived quality of life has improved, or whether land use embedded in the comprehensive plan goals is being met. Accountability that links directly into the community goals is more effective. “Productivity measurements permit governments to identify problem areas and, as corrective actions are taken to detect the extent to which improvements have occurred.” (Hatry, 1978, p 28)

Measuring Accountability for Planners

Jonathan Walters’ Measuring Up provides a thoughtful, humorous guideline for the process of government performance measurement. “There are two very good reasons why governments get into performance measurement. First, to improve performance, second, to illustrate to citizens that government actually works for

them.” (Pg. 61) He goes on to define how to lay the groundwork with the staff, and stresses the importance of including the public, elected officials, and the “implementers”, or in this case, the planners. Citizens and planners are impacted, as well as administrators and elected officials by the performance effort.

Much like Jonathan Walters’ pre-condition for exclusivity, according to Kelley, et al, the most frequently ignored or overlooked rule is the acceptance by those who deliver the service. “It is absolutely essential that the people who actually deliver the service understand and agree on both its definition and its measurement.” (Kelley, pg. 21, 1984) It is this complex relationship between the planner, the public, and community goals that presents a unique challenge to develop meaningful planning benchmarks. Documentation of literature of public planning management shows progress occurring slowly, but consistently over the past twenty years. In summary, the problems documented by Patricia Keehley, Steve Medlin, and Sue MacBride are: (1) a lack of accuracy in measuring the data, (2) the inability to put the mechanisms in place to measure progress, (3) inappropriate indicators, (4) too many benchmark indicators, (5) unattainable or immeasurable goals, (6) the selected indicators did not accurately reflect the desired outcomes of the community, or (7) the jurisdiction had too little influence over the outcome to effectuate a change in the results. (Benchmarking for Best Practices in the Public Sector, 1996)

The dearth of standardized planning benchmarks has driven local governments to devise unique measuring and reporting techniques for the community they serve. Many cities use informal measures, or performance standards adopted within the

budget process. According to Robert Behn at Duke University's Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy "we must develop a process that not only permits public managers to produce better results but also provides accountability to a democratic electorate." Administrators and planners have ideas and, if given the latitude, can fix the problems. (Behn, 1999, p. 131-165)

As stated, there are few well-developed, national standards for planning departments to use for community benchmarks; however, local areas have widely different resources and skill levels. Community benchmark models measuring progress in implementing vision, community goals, and comprehensive plans are difficult to find. "Public sector benchmarking is a practice in its infancy, and cases have been scarce.... Benchmarking and the search for best practices is a powerful and promising new tool for public sector and public administrators." (Keeley et al. pg. 15, 1997)

Public managers can search the web and current literature. The International City/County Management Association has established technical assistance for public managers in municipalities, and encourages contacting local jurisdictions that are also involved in performance measurement for comparisons. As noted earlier, the Kennedy School of Government has research available including, Visions of Government in the 21st Century, (www.ksg.harvard.edu/visions). For additional resources, a list of sources is included in Jonathan Walters 1998 book Measuring Up. A comprehensive list of city documents on performance can be found in Ammons' Municipal Benchmarks.

Benchmarks and outcome indicators can help staff and officials develop a clear understanding of the City's priorities, goals, and progress. This is an approach adapted from business, and is value-driven rather than process driven. (Fritz-Enz, 1993, Jones, 1995, Keehley, Medlen, MacBride & Longmere, 1996, Ammons, 1996, Smith, 1997, Walters, 1992, 1998, Government Performance Project, 2000)

Cities can compare and learn from one another, and provide information to further research at local level, as well as at the nation's universities. (Ammons, 1996, Few 1997, Osborne & Plastrik, 1997, Holzer and Callahan, 1997, Hatry & Hendrias)

Citizens expect a businesslike approach to delivery of services, and critics scour local budgets for any sign of frivolous spending of tax dollars. According to the literature, benchmarks can help add value to staff work. (Kelley, 1984, Katz, 1992, Fitz-enz, 1993, Franklin, Aimee, et al. 1998, Walters, 1998)

The Maxwell School of Citizen and Public Affairs at Syracuse University has been rating the management performance of local and state governments in the United States for the past six years. (GPP, 1996-2002) In a 1999 report Governing Magazine claims "it's too soon to label the series of experiments in performance-based government an unqualified success (and, in fact, there have been dozens of false starts, misplaced expectations and outright failures.) It appears to be too soon to predict either success, or failure." In regards to the 1999 Government Performance project report, Governing Magazine reports "some world-weary government managers fear that the managing for results thrust is just another fad, destined to make a few consultants rich and then fade away." (Governing, Feb 1999) It may be too early to

determine whether benchmarking is indeed a fad, but the underlying forces are now endemic to local government service delivery in the 21st Century.

Chapter Two: Outside Forces on Local Government Lead to Performance

Monitoring

Theoretical Basis for Accountability Trends

Despite the lack of standardized models, there are several assumptions that can be made regarding why the trend towards government accountability and benchmarking have become prevalent in the United States in the 1990's and the early years of the 21st century. Many governmental changes were initiated to combat the effects of taxpayer revolts that occurred in the 1970's and 1980's. Public managers, in general, faced new sets of challenges by the 1990's. Specific conditions impacted local governments' budgeting that had a resultant impact on planning practices were: reduced budgets from the '70s and '80s levels caused services to be delivered more cost effectively within the constraints of limited resources; budget cutbacks, and tax limitations; the prevalence of information in society; and also, increased federal regulation regarding financial management. The following summary highlights some of the key factors leading to the trends. In the early 21st Century, cities are changing the way business is accomplished for a variety of reasons:

1. *Financial constraints of recent tax measures forcing greater efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability. Performance measurement is a first step towards quantifying government goals and local government is increasingly pressured to integrate the goals. (Perry, 1994, Osborne, 1997, Behn, 1999)*
2. *A major shift in city priorities emphasizes quality of life as the primary goal of local governments, recently replacing public safety as the number one goal.*

Planning departments often are the lead departments for establishing quality of life goals. (Ammons, 1996, Government Performance Project, Syracuse University, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000, City of Portland, Service Efforts: Accomplishments City Manager's Executive Report, Hatry, 1992, City of Phoenix 1996-1999)

3. *Citizens send feedback, demand greater accountability, and help cities select services and rate priorities. Information technology speeds up the process of communication. The public planner fields conflicting demands for results both from constituents, policymakers and political organizations. (Poister, 1988, Gabris, 1992, Walters, 1998, Ammons, 2000)*
4. *Movements towards privatization increased in the past twenty years. The citizen has options to exit government-provided services and move to private substitutes. Cities are looking for alternative sources of service delivery in order to increase efficiency. (Rubin, 1983, Public Productivity and Management Review Series, 1995, Stahl, 1998)*
5. *Government Office of Accounting demands outcome-based indicators of progress in order to procure and maintain federal grants. This particularly impacts planning for delivery of housing, CDBG programs & economic development initiatives. (Kelley, 1984, Halachmi & Holzer, 1995, Walters, 1998, GASB www.gasb.org)*
6. *Citizens look to the local government to solve their problems, and blame cities for a poor management of systems when there's no accountability. Planners*

have a responsibility to problem solve on issues of local importance. They are driven to solve problems even when the service is not the city's direct responsibility, local citizens demand and expect results. (Senje, 1990, Holzer, Callahan, 1998, Government Performance Project, 1998, 2000, Keehley, Medlen, MacBride & Longmere, 1996)

Chapter Two will examine further the relationship between these forces and community benchmarks

Financial Constraints and Rising Cost of Local Government Services

The provision of local government municipal services is impacted by pressure on local authorities to cut taxes, and to make significant expansions in services. In addition to loss of tax base and concomitant revenues, the rising costs of public services also contributed to residents exiting from public services to private providers and other substitutes. More than ever before, residents have the ability to abandon public services by withdrawing, substituting, and augmenting services. Some of these services include private security, garbage and solid waste services, private contractors for engineering, planning project, and building plan review, gated communities with private streets, contracted billing and financial services, etc. Altogether, the climate of competition has been created to cause cities to better manage their resources and deliver on citizens' expectations. The competition for planning and community development funds often is internal pressure created by demand for public safety services and other municipal priorities.

The rising costs of services coupled with phenomena of private business moving into governmental arenas has changed the municipal playing field and the delivery of service over the past thirty years. Since the 1970's the cost of local municipal services has escalated, and much research has documented the increased expenditures. Bradford, Malt and Oates documented the rise beginning in 1969 with an article in the National Tax Journal titled "The Rising Cost of Local Public Service: Some Evidence and Reflections." This National Tax Journal article sounded the alarm regarding the increase in local government spending, which was at that time well in excess of the overall increase in national income. The trend identified by these researchers was mirrored by tax revolts.

Bradford and Oates show that the rising cost of police and fire services have been a major source of the increase in expenditures for inputs in local government budgets. The rising unit costs were the major determinant of the rise in local public expenditures. Much of their research was focused on larger cities and was prefaced on the proposition that "to some observers, this rapid rise in local public expenditures, particularly in the large cities, is simply the results of inept and, in some cases, corrupt administration by local government." (Bradford, Malt & Oates, 1967 and 1969) In many cities, this ultimately led to revolt from government services and tax limitation measures.

The 1970's became a time of cutback management and government searching for ways out of the cost conundrum. Princeton University professors Bradford and Oates' research further investigated fiscal pressure put upon local governments during

the 1970's. Their efforts, were supplemented in the 1980's by the work of two professors at the University of Maryland, Schwab and Zampelli, who recognized "the demand approach fails to recognize that income and socio-economic characteristics may also affect the production of publicly provided goods." (1986)

New factors were entered into academic models such as, income and how it affected the production of publicly provided goods, as well as the demand. Bradford and Oates were joined in their research by Malt. The team was among the first to make the distinction between the direct output of government, such as numbers of police patrols, and the output that is relevant to residents, such as level of security. They were also the first to build an environmental factor into their models. (Bradford, Malt and Oates, 1967, 1969). Environmental factors began to take into account the characteristics of the community and the make up of the local residents. Researchers begin recognize the importance of citizen's perceptions.

Disillusionment and lack of confidence in government's ability to effectively provide services led to withdrawal of citizen support for cities' budgets and fiscal resources. Ultimately this drove efforts to reinvent government and to find better ways of performing on the tax dollar, and, therefore, to measure results of performance. The pattern of decreasing confidence in the ability of government to provide the services citizens valued led to the need for cities to prove their ability to perform, and to provide increasing numbers of performance measurements. The phenomenon of eroding confidence in governments' ability to efficiently and

effectively deliver the services immediately preceded the government finance and accounting performance trends.

The tax revolts of the 1970s and 1980s suggest an important link to the government accountability trends emerging in the 1990s and into the 2000s. It is plausible that the need to stem the loss of confidence, and support for government service led to the counter measures of providing accountability, such as benchmarks and to privatizing the services that were demanded. The survey is not intended to prove this theory, but to show this relationship's evolution in the practice of benchmarking. The statistical review queries cities regarding the impact of privatizing on planning.

The contextual basis for this study is that community benchmarks evolved from a variety of conditions facing local government in the later decades of the 20th century, particularly privatization of services. A review of the literature demonstrates a growing disillusionment with government services prior to the emergence of community benchmarks. Management and academic literature reveal patterns substantiating citizens' lack of trust in local government performance.

Citizen Perceptions and withdrawal of support at the ballot box

Cities provide accountability using a variety of methods including community benchmarks, aiming for an increase in confidence in government performance. Lack of trust, and confidence in municipal government ability to perform can cause citizens to exit to private service providers. The late '80s and the early 1990s saw a wave of privatization efforts. Privatization has come to symbolize a new way of looking at

society needs, and a rethinking of the role of government in fulfilling them. It means relying more on society's private institutions and less on government to satisfy the needs of the people. In 1992, Sherwood points out, "There can be little doubt that the current, heavily bureaucratic systems of government are working neither to serve the citizens of society nor to secure maximum returns in the huge resources provided for them." (Sherwood, 1992, p.1)

Residents abandoned municipal service not only by withdrawing and substituting, but also by causing government cutbacks or by changing land use decisions in city services at the ballot box. Fiscal impacts and the cost of service delivery directly impact citizens' priorities. Tax revolts, including the 25-year-old California Proposition 13 tax reforms, refusals to pass new tax base revenue streams, or voting "no" on a redevelopment area are all expressions of citizen values. In the book Paradise Lost Peter Schrag documents that California had problems with shady assessment practices with distrustful local assessors office eventually this led to the passage of Proposition 13 in a 1978 election. (Schrag, 1998) By voting "no" on a bond or revenue-related ballot measure a community makes a statement of value.

A negative vote generally means no additional government expenditures, translating to no added service, and eventually a decreased level of service. "Propositions 13 is widely viewed as the bellwether event in what became a widespread and enduring nationwide revolt against high taxes." "To understand why Proposition 13 passed and why it remains popular today, it is important to understand the problem that Proposition 13 was trying to address: a system of property

assessments and taxation that was arcane and unpredictable at its best and scandalously corrupt at its worst.” (Fulton 2003)

Sissela Bok's 1979 discussion of public trust and the general public's perception of government points out the impact of deception and misrepresentations. Actions taken in the name national security, public good or economic gain can be used to cloud a heavy-handed government approach. Furthermore, lofty goals do not evoke trust with the public. Misuse of power and decision-making can undermine confidence in government. Bok points out “confidence in public officials and in professionals has been seriously eroded.” Staffers are frequently driven to package city policy decisions and information to accomplish a better spin on errors, inadvertent fumbles, and results that didn't pan out exactly as planned. The definition of lies used by Bok in Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life is “an intentionally deceptive message in the form of a statement.” Bok documents the prevalence of such practices in government spin doctoring.

Bailey (1988) “Ethics and the Public Service” challenges governments to develop an ethical basis for public service. Bailey states that “Public officials need to establish and integrate ethical solutions to create a basis of trust with the constituents.” When government makes errors, has policy failures, or continues to make errors, suspicions emerge which undermine trust.” Bailey continues to emphasize the value of trust and the role of establishing trust in public management in the 1990's public policy researcher. “Trust is a fragile commodity—particularly in government.... Moreover the responsibility and discretion required to implement the new public-

management paradigm require some major increases in America's trust of their various governments." (Behn, 1999) To earn trust, the new public manager has become more like public entrepreneurs, which requires a certain level of accountability, not as essential in the early years of the 20th Century. Public administrators have, for at least a century, been responsible for process, but this new paradigm pushes public expectations to the next level with a responsibility for results, in order to reinforce the basis of trust.

As our society has modernized, the basic issues of trust have become even more problematic. The importance of trust is included in the very roots in modern public management theory. "(T)he emphasis in modern societies on consensus, the ideology of pragmatism, problem-solving, and technocratic expertise are all founded on an image of society based on interconnected networks of trust." (Seligman, 1997) Hardin presents a rationalized account of trust as a learned capacity that serves on the individual level to permit the extension of confidence on the general level towards the institutions of society. (Hardin, 1993).

Of course without trust and without constituents' confidence in the department's ability to provide service, today's managers cannot manage for results. Entrepreneurs in the public sector need savvy to solve problems and recognize obstacles to performance on community priorities. Community goals must be bolstered with financial resources to deliver services. A public entrepreneur is expected to use resources in new ways to maximize productivity and effectiveness. In order to create both confidence and trust, it's practical to exercise problem solving,

which reflects the values of the community, to structure measurements of progress with the citizens, to select indicators that evoke trust, and to issue community reports on the progress as it relates to goals and indicators.

According to practitioners of planning using benchmarks, accurate reporting of agreed upon measurements may elevate confidence in the departments' ability to deliver the services, and trust in the local government to provide services demanded by constituents. The ICMA Best Practices Symposium (International City Managers' Association) in Phoenix, Arizona, supported the managers' perspective. Several cities, including San Diego, California and Phoenix, Arizona, as well as Orange County, Florida, cited examples of building credibility and civic pride at all levels of the community. Orange County Chairman, Linda W. Chapin, stated the Orange County "citizens first" approaches customer service at the local government level as "creating partnerships with different groups and individuals in the community. ...creating a renewed sense of civic pride and personal responsibility at all levels in the community." (Pg. 14) (ICMA Best Practices Symposium, "Orange County, Florida) "The Quest for the Best" listed their attitude goals for customer service of public service.

Attitude Goals of Citizens First

- Engender Trust
- Encourage Responsibility
- Encourage Feeling of Empowerment
- Achieve feeling of Citizen Satisfaction

(ICMA, pg. 15)

Community Involvement and Public Participation

One of the goals of cities using community benchmarks is to elevate trust by increasing the level of accountability to citizens in the delivery of governmental services. In addition to meaningful, accurate information community involvement is an essential ingredient in establishing trust and for designing a model to measure results. An extensive study was conducted by Everett Carl Ladd, The Ladd Report on Civic America, (1999). In the discussion of the chapter on social confidence and trusts, Ladd states that: “

“By all the basic measures – group membership, voluntarism, and philanthropy – civic engagement is as strong today as in times past. Still, there may be underlying trends in citizens’ outlook that bode ill for the future. Robert Putnam has argued that Americans are now less trusting of their fellow citizens and the society that were their counterparts in the preceding “long civic generation.” He observed that “the proportion of Americans saying that most people can be trusted fell by more than a third between 1960, when 58 percent chose that alternative, and 1993, when only 37 percent did.” This matters because of the close link between trust and participation. Citing findings of the 1990-93 World Values Surveys, Putnam observed that “across the 35 countries [studied], social trust and civic engagement are strongly correlated; the greater the density of associational membership in a society, the more trusting its citizens.” He concluded, *“trust and engagement are two facets of the same underlying factor – social capital.”*

Documentation in the literature has found a positive relationship between community involvement, and responsiveness, customer satisfaction, efficiency and effectiveness. (Wilson, 1996) As citizens take part in government the theory is that these ingredients help establish the basis for trust, so essential to solving today’s challenge.

Measurements, which do not capture the essence of what the public holds as a goal, can leave dissatisfaction and build upon lack of trust. (Keeley, 1997) The selection of indicators and measurement tools is especially essential to establishing trust. Indicators can be misleading when looked at separately, or out of context. Deceptive use of planning data can work at cross-purposes with the community goals. For example “net job growth, which is a traditional indicator used by economic planners, measures only how many jobs have been created in a community. Two things the indicator fails to address are whether new jobs are providing living-wage incomes for the people living in the community, and who is filling these new jobs.” (Northwest Policy Center, 1996). Has the community been made better off by the addition of these jobs?

Reporting merely the number of jobs replaced is partial reporting of the data. Substitution of the number of jobs with out determining equivalent wage value “misleads” the public by withholding key information. In the case of cities with new jobs created at lower level wages, the number of jobs has increased; however, the quality of life for the residents may have decreased. In order to establish trust the measurement must be meaningful to the community, and be reported accurately and consistently. The value, in constant dollars, would more accurately reflect the economic activity, and be a more “truthful” measurement. In fact, reporting on whether local residents filled those new jobs would add another layer of credibility to the benchmark.

What this shows is that while establishing trust is a motivator at political levels, this frequently doesn't always satisfy the citizen. A summary in the Ladd report (p. 56) reflects upon this phenomena:

"Cyclical ebbs and flows in satisfaction with governmental performance don't tell us much about underlying public confidence or trust. "Trust: must be understood as involving something deeper than calls to public officials to "shape up and do better." Citizens are supposed to holler when things go wrong in the public sphere; and Americans have always had a healthy skepticism about politicians. In 1943, for example, in a poll done by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, about half of those surveyed agreed that "it is almost impossible for a man to say honest if he goes into politics." That's just about the same proportion that Opinion Dynamics found when they asked a similar question in 1997, in a Fox News survey."

This demonstrates the need to continue with management improvements and offering "systematic evidence in defense of worthwhile public operations that find themselves under attack; and *they can influence* the public's perception of its local government." (Ammons, ICMA Best Practices Symposium, 1998)

Private Substitutes for Public Services

The provision of local government municipal services was impacted by pressure on local authorities to cut taxes, and to make significant service improvements. In addition to loss of tax base and concomitant revenues for municipal service delivery, the rising costs of public services also contributed to residents exiting from public services to private providers and substitutes. More than ever before, residents have the ability to abandon public services.

As documented on the literature and research, the 1970's became a time of cutback management and looking for ways out of the cost conundrum. Princeton

University professors Bradford and Oates's research merited further investigation, and others dug into a review of fiscal pressure put upon local governments during the 1970's. Efforts, were supplemented in the 1980's by the work of two professors at the University of Maryland, Schwab and Zampelli, who recognized "the demand approach fails to recognize that income and socio-economic characteristics may also affect the production of publicly provided goods." (1986)

New factors were entered into academic models such as, income and how it affected the production of publicly provided goods, as well as the demand. Bradford and Oates were joined in their research by Malt and together were among the first to make the distinction between the direct output of government, such as numbers of police patrols, and the output that is relevant to residents, such as level of security. They were also the first to build an environmental factor into their models. (Bradford, Malt and Oates, 1967, 1969) The environmental factor began to take into account the characteristics of the community and the make up of the local residents. Researchers began to recognize the importance of citizen's perceptions.

Community and citizens characteristics of Malt, Oates, Schwab and Zampelli economic models make an interesting distinctions that citizen's perceptions of the quantity and quality of the public output rarely exists; yet it was a key factor in determining demand. Schwab and Zampelli recognized early on that we are always forced to rely on indirect evidence in looking at production functions measuring demand for local public services. (Schwab and Zampelli, 1986, 1987) Schwab and Zampelli undertook their own research studies exploring the effect of income and

socio-economic characteristics of the community and how they may also affect the production of publicly provided goods. They concluded those citizens' perceptions of the quantity and quality of life is important components in looking at the provision of public goods. Their results suggest that public expenditure models must include community characteristics both for production and cost functions. From that follows measures of quantity and quality of life become necessary in setting up a community benchmark program. Community characteristics are important in the development of the measurements.

The model proposed by Bradford, Malt and Oates distinguished between the direct "output" of public services, such as the number of police patrols, (which they call D for direct) and the output that is relevant to the household, personal security (which they call C). The level of C that is enjoyed on the household level is a function of the D-output and environmental factors (E). City government throughout the 20th Century focused on "D," the direct output. It's critical to define community goals and indicators of progress towards those goals using level "C" & "E" as indicators takes into account household tastes and environmental factors of the community. The value for "C" citizens is the amount of personal substitution for government services they are caused purchase beyond that which the government provides and the values of their community. The implications of the economic research are that determining appropriate levels for service delivery requires taking into account community make-up and values, and the ability of the consumer (citizen) to substitute and augment government services with private services. Has the citizen ample opportunity to use a

substitute for municipal services? This must be taken into consideration by the city in context with efficiency and the measurement of effective services, and with the decision to deliver that service in any circumstance.

In the 1970's economists were looking at the fundamental cause and effect of rising costs of government services; meanwhile, another economic researcher, Charles Clotfelter began looking at the practice of using non-governmental substitutes as alternatives to the public sector services. Clotfelter recognized that the public sector was just one of several choices residents have available to satisfy their individual demands for services. He pointed to increasing use of substitutes for public services used in the private sector to augment, or replace, public service, particularly in the area of police service. Using their research as basis, Clotfelter further refined the theories of Bradford, Malt and Oates. He extended the distinction between direct output of government, the attributes valued by the household, and their role in public service provision. (Clotfelter, 1992)

In a 1992 article, "Public Services, Private Substitutes, and the Demand for Protection Against Crime" Charles Clotfelter concluded that regarding crime protection, the costs of public input have increased relative to private, and it depends "on how substitutable the private protections are with public police. Price trends, such as these tend to result in the substitution of private for public inputs." The term "participation effect" was coined by Clotfelter to describe how the quality of the service received by the users is influenced by the composition of the group of fellow

users or participants. The characteristics and demands of the community, “E” factors, once again become a dominant theme in designing municipal models.

Clotfelter expanded on the theories of Albert Hirschmann ‘s book Exit, Voice and Loyalty, where Hirschmann elaborated some of the reasons for “exit” from public service to private substitutes. Clotfelter offered additional options for exiting government services that are available to citizens, such as moving to a new jurisdiction or city. The theory of the classic Tiebout model of “voting with your feet” can include moving to a different neighborhood within the same city. Clotfelter gave some examples of substitution, such as backyard swing sets substitute for parks, club memberships substitute for park services, private automobiles substitute for transit, and some examples of augmentation of city services like tennis racket clubs, smoke detectors, sprinklers, etc. Alternatives available to households increase over time, for example, private security forces, personal security systems, private parks, private streets, private schools, and gated communities. In the twenty years of research, Clotfelter increasingly documented the citizens’ options for substitution of government services in 1977, 1992, 1993, and 1997.

Practical Applications for Governmental Services

The theoretical framework of research has provided a rich basis and clear patterns for city practitioners looking for practical applications to meet these challenges. Academic research supplemented by the writings of practitioners and proponents of privatization began to evolve throughout the 1980’s and early 1990’s. Guidebooks and tutelage for public administrators were published on the topic of

managing the costs of government services. Costing Government: A Guide for Decision Making (Kelley, 1984) provides detailed examples of how to get more “bang for the buck” in government by performing cost analyses, bidding out work, and examining results. The difference between the early trends and current, emerging 21st Century practice is that results were defined primarily in terms of production, not outcome.

The Kelley guidebook contains methodologies for developing cost saving and cost-effective services are “if it is decided that the local government can most cost-effectively perform the service in-house, then it must be established that the service is actually meeting bid specification.A rigorous system of monitoring and assessing productivity must be established and conscientiously carried out.”(Kelley, 1984)

The basis of the Katz article “Privatizing Without Tears” (Governing, 1991) describes the pain performance measurement can cause cities and issues surrounding costing of government services. Katz points to activities of the Reason Foundation, a leading advocate of privatization, as they reported an increased interest in the 1990’s in privatization of governmental services. Reflected in the article are the reasons for the organization’s president’s quote, “you’re seeing privatization becoming a budget-saving tool that both Republicans and Democrats are turning to and interest is on the upswing for turning public services over to the private sector. It’s the anything government can do, business can do better theory.”(Katz, 1991). Government service deliveries had taken a beating in the 1980’s, and by the 1990’s theories of privatization were in full swing.

As a reaction to these trends, governmental managers began to look at more effective production techniques in the 1990's. In 1994, The City of Phoenix began a study of productivity in its police department, looking for avoidable costs as a way to reduce expenses. Phoenix analyzed its police "stand-by" program; i.e., officers who "stand by" in court waiting for an appearance, who are meanwhile losing field times for police protection. They were looking for a better way to manage the court system to reduce the amount of stand-by time to produce a cost saving. Other cities, facing increased costs and local constituent pressure, and began looking at alternatives themselves.

A further example is Indianapolis, highlighted in a 1994 article "Breaking the Civil Service Mold: The Case of Indianapolis"(Perry, 1994). For years Indianapolis was a textbook case of how not to run civil service. In 1994, the city decided to move to a business approach, using competitive bidding, revamping its human resources policies, and leaving behind old political systems. Recently, the City of Indianapolis' services were graded highly in the Government Performance project conducted in 2000. (Governing, 2000) The accounts in Government Performance Project are filled with successes and failures of benchmark performances and productivity adaptations by larger metropolitan areas in the United States (GPP, 2000 February issue of Governing). In some cases, cities have determined that when it comes to delivery of some types of services, private business could be a more efficient and effective provider of service. Types of services amenable to using private substitutes were crime prevention, security, inspections, garbage hauling, and solid waste.

Jerald Herting and Avery Guest produced an article in 1985 in the *Sociological Quarterly* “Components of Satisfaction With Local Areas in the Metropolis” on the economic models with some perception. According to the research the contemporary local area served was an important, but limited, function for metropolitan dwellers. General physical and social environment and specific characteristics of the city drove satisfaction with local areas. The study investigated citizens’ overall satisfaction with the communities in the Seattle, Washington area. To some extent, this conclusion overlaps with Guest’s “limited liability” perspective, in that governmental services are perceived as an important means of enhancing home value and the general quality of the urban environment.” (Herting and Guest, 1985)

Herting and Guest state “political economists have placed a great emphasis on the specific importance of municipal services and taxes to the development and maintenance of “good” communities.” Good communities are defined by perception of the degree of safety from criminal acts, the state of health of the members of the community depends on several environmental variables as well the quantity and scope of services.”(Bradford and Oates) Police and fire services particularly provided evidence to suggest that rising costs of inputs (expenditures) were required just to maintain the existing levels of service. This put extra pressure on other city services to perform and the fiscal pressure have continued into the 21st century. Services that receive the most pressure from cutback management are services considered “soft” like planning, social services, parks and recreation, and cultural arts. These services

are considered to be not as essential as police or fire or suffer because public safety services take up an increasing portion of the available budget each year.

To summarize the forces that faced bureaucrats during the final decades of the 20th century, Halachmi and Bouckaert provide a summary of status of local government in The Enduring Challenges in Public Management. In the 1990's, the areas of change most affecting government, were “ (1) budgetary squeeze, (2) deregulation, (3) marketization, (4) introduction of new technology, (5) managerial innovation, (6) creation of new mechanisms and criteria of evaluation, (7) decentralization, (8) deconcentration, (9) diffusion (10) jurisdiction, (11) institutional adjustment, and (12) privatization.”(Halachmi and Bouckaert, 1995). Beyond Halachmi and Bouckaert, the theory of this researcher focuses on the first and last “budgetary squeeze” and “privatization” as key components affecting community benchmark programs.

Researchers predicted that in order to meet public needs to expand quantity of services and to correspond to the demands of growing populations, improved services were instrumental. This meant additional expenditures over and above the current spending, cutback management in other services, better prioritization, and new ways of conducting the business of government. It means taking into account the relationship with the citizen, and demonstrating proof of results of local government service investments.

The theory is that the results of measurements systems will help governments' work to enhance the level of trust with their constituencies, and to deliver the package

of services desired by the public. (Berman, West, 1998) This dissertation studies how city-planning services are impacted and linked to the desired outcomes of the citizens and to performance measurement. By conducting performance measurements, public officials have the opportunity overhaul the process between collecting tax dollars and achieving some public goal. The question is to what extent is this occurring in American's mid-size cities planning departments, and what types of efforts are underway.

Chapter Three: Evolution of Municipal Government Measures/Benchmarks

City Government Trends and Practices

Over the past one hundred years in the United States, there has been a shift in performance and productivity methods used by city governments and bureaucrats. At the beginning of the 20th Century, movements were set into motion to clean up the corruption and scandal in local government. Ostensibly, reforming local government and reducing political patronism were the primary goals. By mid- century, cities moved away from reforming local government to establishing a more scientific, efficient approach. The scientific movement correspondingly evolved alongside the city management profession. In the 1970's and 1980's, cost cutting and cost containment, using cutback strategies and realignment of resources became common patterns in city management. As the 20th Century closed, a growing city management profession evolved utilizing performance indicators, as well as other methods of effectiveness and efficiency.

A synopsis of key traits and trends of the various productivity and performance reforms is summarized in the following discussion in a chart. Information was gleaned from a variety of sources including an article written by Gert Bouckaert, Public Productivity & Management Review (PPMR, 1990), and from the literature review of a variety of PPMR articles. Gert Bouckaert's article documents changes in local government practices over the past century, and reveals a pattern of growing complexity of expectations of city government services. As part of the dissertation

research, the following chart was created to distill the information into discernable patterns.

	1900-1940	1940-1970	1970-1980	1980-2000
DRIVING FORCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens/business-men • Began at the municipal level • Economy and efficiency • Need for reform for better government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technicians and expert administrators • Initiatives, imagination and energy • Productivity was implicit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayors, senators, governors and political managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiration of the private sector/citizen pressure • Continuation of technical approach • Budget cuts as correction to productivity • Productivity revitalized due to deficits/taxpayer pressure • Efficiency improvements /reduce total costs & raise service levels
TYPES OF MEASUREMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input • Output • Activities • Efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management by objective • Zero-base budgeting • Planning, programming budget system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals, targets and objective measures • Workload efficiency • Effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Measures • Cost-benefit/quantify "savings" • Workload measures • Output/per hour approaches
EVALUATION TECHNIQUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional • Technical aspects of the agency • Dichotomy of politics/policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politically aware & knowledgeable • Controlling expenses • Management improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity improvements • Tools, techniques • Increased worker participation • Technical approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public opinion surveys • Privatization alternatives • Productivity translated to \$'s of savings
GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption, scandals, urgency around budget reform • Political 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government by administrators • Social efficiency • Productivity = 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early in the decade, productivity increased • Late in the decade, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased competition & raising the "bar" on service level • Implementing

	neutrality	doing more with less	productivity declined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase value of government goods and services 	private sector techniques <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belt-tightening • Era of less government
APPROACH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific approach objective, but not clearly “value-free” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public administration • General management • Comprehensive productivity concept unused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public administration as profession • Political management emerged • Productivity improvement policy • More bang for the buck 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational focus to integrate productivity spirit • Government-wide productivity reviews • Cost-effectiveness

Table 1 - Historical Approach In Measuring Performance of City Government - 1900-2000

Government by the Efficient 1900-1940:

The solution was therefore a separation of politics and administration. (Goodnow, 1900) People involved in change as the 19th Century turned to the 20th were looking for better government, free from scandal and corruption.

1940-1970's Government by Administrators:

The main motive to “control expenses” explains why productivity, conceived of doing more with less, became and remained of interest to the political elite.” The International City Manager Association (ICMA) efforts began to look at productivity measures in 1938. However, as Bouckaert points out there was a shift from a scientific management approach to a general management approach. In this timeframe, the term “administrator” came into being, and it was assumed civil servants had a good grasp of goals and objectives. New tools were tried including PPBS, Management by Objective, and Zero-based budgeting. Comprehensive

productivity concepts were “largely unused until the 1970’s.” (Halachmi and Bouckaert, PPMR, 1990)

1970-80’s: Government by the Managers

By the 1970’s, the reality of limited resources became clear and the city government theme of getting “more bang for the buck” was prevalent. The political leaders; i.e. Governors, Senators, Mayors, etc., focused on controlling and reducing costs with little discussion whether the government was producing the desired results. The emphasis was on effectiveness; therefore, effectiveness and efficiency were now a matched set and the U.S. municipal government management had evolved to the point where both were of equal importance. The Journal of Public Productivity Review was founded in 1975, reflecting the interest of local administration and heightened the level of interest in learning the science of productivity, effectiveness and efficiency. As a scientific public management journal, its objectives were to provide a forum for academics and practitioners alike to share and critique ideas and research surrounding performance.

1980-90’s: Government by the Private Sector

The 1990’s have seen a movement, which continues to employ cost-effectiveness, performance measures, and emphasis on the outputs of an organization. However, increasingly during the decade, the focus had moved from the output to the outcome.

Deficits in government revenues and taxpayer pressure energized productivity movements. The 1980’s introduced the private sector as a viable competitor for the

delivery of municipal services. As in the beginning of the century, citizens and businessmen put pressure on government to reduce spending and services were privatized. In the local scene the use of performance measures & “workload” measures began. Government was limited in spending by ballot box initiatives and tax limitation measures.

“Contracting out and privatization in the public sector redefine the idea of division of labor and raise questions about what constitutes the real boundaries of an organization.” (Halachmi and Bouckaert, 1999, p. 5) Demands by clients and citizens for quality services resulted in pressure on cities to re-invent their processes and organization’s structure. Re-engineering trends were initiated, which took hold in the 1990’s. Halachmi and Bouckaert, who are teachers, editors and researchers in public management, have compiled extensive research on productivity trends for the Sage Publications Public Productivity and Management Review and the Jossey-Bass Public Administration Series. Many of the efforts initiated in the 1980’s resulted in the continuing re-invention theme in the 1990’s – the most notable were the Re-inventing Government authors, Osborne and Gaebler, who re-examine the “separation between politics and management – a re-emerging notion” from the early 1900’s. (Halachmi and Bouckaert, 1999, p. 14)

1990’s - 2003. Community Benchmarks as a Hallmark

Mandates at the federal level in the early 1990’s spelled out in requirements for cities. The 1993 Government Performance and Results Act created a change at the federal level “Once rule-bound federal agencies are now becoming ruler-bound...

("Extreme Measures," Govexec.com, Feb. 1999). Impacts on local government, as the performance and results act legitimized managing for results at the federal level, were felt. Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) began to overlay federal regulations to audits of local programs receiving federal funds.

The trend continued to employ cost-effectiveness, performance measures, and retained emphasis on the outputs of an organization. However, increasingly during the decade, the focus has moved from the output to the outcome of productivity measures. From 1999 to 2003, the Syracuse Government Performance Project (GPP), funded by the Pew Foundation confirms the trends towards managing for results and measuring outcomes through community benchmarks. The GPP sums up the majority of trends in the past century, "which, in the "old view" of management and performance, is equivalent to the "black box" of government. In this model, government resources and results are easy to identify, but not much is known about how they are attained." (Maxwell School of Government, 1999) (<http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/gpp/goats.htm>).

A special issue of Governing, the Magazine of States and Localities, published in February 2000, examined the results of assessing the benchmark and performance of America's largest cities. This research was noted earlier as a parallel study "Grading the States", which was published in Governing in February 1999. The efforts are part of the Government Performance Project (GPP) funded by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts. The cities were graded for financial management, human resources, information technology, capital management, and managing-for-results efforts. The 35 cities that participated and were delivered report cards are the "35 that

had the largest total revenues, according to the most recent comparable data available when work began.” (Governing, February 2000, p. 23) In a detailed report covering 70 pages, the Governing article examines the trends and practices of big cities. Some overall observations were made, which emerged from the process:

1. A major shift in priorities from crime as a concern to quality of life.
2. Citizens blame problems on local governments, even if the problems aren't the local responsibility.
3. Mayors have a tendency to launch reforms late in their tenure.
4. It takes a long time for cities to overcome mistakes made in the past.
5. Finally, it was startling how many managers were brutally frank about their city's problems. (Governing, February 2000, pp. 23-24)

On the perspective of contracting out for service, “(m)ost of them are increasing the budget that goes to contracts ...But the biggest weakness in contracting is also the biggest weakness we discovered in financial management overall: cost accounting. ...If a city is going to pay someone else to do the work – with the premise that it's going to save money – it needs to know how much the job is worth in the first place.” (Governing, p. 28)

Planning and Community Benchmarks

In the 21st Century, Federal GASB standards have impacted local governments. “Measurement-based best practices are becoming models for the entire public sector. Working from the premise that measurements of performance and of financial management are intertwined, the Government Accounting Standards Board

(GASB) has stated that the goal of service delivery would be well served if debates about service allocations and resource utilization were guided by objective criteria (Fountain, 1997). GASB made major progress towards the development and widespread use of objective measures in municipal budgets and fiscal reports. The impetus for efforts was a widespread concern that lack of such data undercuts the efforts of government to communicate information about its efficiency and effectiveness. Planning departments' programs that are affected by GASB include Community Development Block Grants and HOME Funds. Also, the managing for results movement impacts programs that utilize federal funds from the Economic Development Administration and Environmental Protection Agency.

The federal auditors, GASB, premised reform on the basis that financial reports of governmental entities did not go far enough to provide "complete information to management, elected officials and the public about the 'results of the operations' of the entity or its programs" (Fountain, 1992, p.1). The National Center for Public Productivity (1997) and other organizations are, in conjunction with the Sloan Foundation, now establishing pilot projects that provide a results-oriented, citizen-driven basis for performance improvement in the public sector." (Holzer & Callahan, Government at Work – Best Practices and Model Programs, 1998) For a complete overview of measuring local government performance, the GASB has published Service Efforts and Accomplishments Reporting: Its Time Has Come; an Overview.

There are a variety of reasons for the emerging performance measurement and benchmark practices of U.S. cities at all levels. Getting results in the community in areas that are important to citizens is a key goal area for some planning and development departments. The GPP results in 2000 emphasize the importance of quality of life for city management goals. The planner's role often is to relate what cities do about growth, sense of place, environment, quality of life, etc. to city planning and community plans, as well as to regulate. Benchmarks and performance measures that measure the impact of goals of planning are demonstrated at widely differing levels in America's cities. Some cities are beginning to explore measuring performance, while others are beginning to apply long-term goals to measurement models, while still others have been successfully practicing benchmarking for over a decade.

Established benchmarks and trends in managing for results is a growing practice in the United States governments at the federal, state, and local levels. The challenge for city planning is to select community benchmarks important to the citizens and relate them to planning services. Broad community goals, such as quality of life, environmental sustainability, and good design clearly have implications for the work of planning departments. The planning department is faced with the question "how do we measure whether the city has improved quality of life, stimulated the economy, promoted environmental sustainability, or advanced good design in their cities?"

Vision and Sustainability Goals and the Benchmarking Paradigm

Francesco Bandarin, director for world Heritage Centre, UNESCO, had recently written about the importance of sustainability goals for urban managers. “Conservation makes little sense if it is not done for the long term. The long term is a difficult dimension for urban managers, as it spans beyond political and financial time frameworks, and often beyond carriers and even our own lives. This is why the challenge of conservation has to rely on a consistent effort to educate all the partners involved—first and foremost, the population involved in the process.” (Bandarin, 2004) Sustainability goals are linked to conservation of every dimension of the urban fabric. Bandarin points out that the private sector must adjust its strategy and seek opportunities offered by the choice of a higher quality built environment. He further states that sustainability requires a well thought systems of goals, tools and practices, shared by all.

Outcomes give managers the ability to work with results orientation in the long-term, as opposed to input and outputs which operate closely with the annual budget process. When cities attempt to link their vision documents and sustainability goals to their measurement and performance systems, the attempt is made to move to a longer-term view. Factors the public value are linked to authenticity, pride of place and identity and they offer a different type of opportunity for measurement. In order to choose results that are meaningful and to develop benchmark standards towards the long-term goals, considerable involvement of the public is necessary.

The approach of some communities is to link progress to the comprehensive vision or general plans. A review of the types of goals utilized by mid-size cities in the last decade provides a sampling of approaches cities are currently using in United States. Broad community goals are often derived from goals set in the comprehensive plan, strategic plan, or budget document. There are a variety of different types of examples, but the list below was derived from the research for Community Benchmarks survey, 2000.

1. Scottsdale, Arizona – Scottsdale’s Shared Vision, 1992
<http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/generalplan/VisionValues.asp>
2. Springfield, Oregon – Strategic Plan, 1999
<http://www.ci.springfield.or.us/index.htm>
3. Tallahassee – Leon County, Florida – Evaluation & Appraisal Report, 2000
<http://talgov.com/citytlh/planning/pdf/earrpt.pdf>
4. Torrance, California – Mission Statement, 2000
<http://www.torrnet.com/city/citymis.htm>
5. Savannah, Georgia – Vision Statement & Mission Statement, 1999
<http://www.ci.savannah.ga.us/cityweb/webdatabase.nsf>
6. Olathe, Kansas – Comprehensive Brochure, 1997
http://www.olatheks.org/Planning_Development/Design_Guides/docs/2002_ComprehensivePlan.pdf
7. Ogden, Utah – Ogden City Vision, 1996
<http://www.ogdencity.com/index.cfm/council.vision>
8. Chattanooga, Tennessee – Vision Statement
<http://www.chattanooga.gov/neighserv/common%20visions.pdf>
9. Cedar Rapids, Iowa – Mission & Vision Statement
<http://www.cedar-rapids.org/overview/mission.asp>
10. Edina, Minnesota – Edina Comprehensive Plan

The cities contacted in the mid-size cities research provided copies of examples of their city's efforts linked a community vision to the community plan utilizing indicators or performance measures. The evidence of how the indicators were formally linked to the adopted visions and plans was weak at best. No direct tie was demonstrated by any of the cities contacted, a topic that could be identified for further research.

Performance and productivity measures that are useful must be developed for planning management, and are important factors for city officials to measure success. In order to assess what measures are up-to-date and potentially meaningful for today's planning and community development directors, a review of the historical revolution of performance/productivity/benchmark measures in the U.S. is necessary.

Measurements of effectiveness, including a recent compendium of methods and examples, Benchmarking for Best Practices in the Public Sector (Jossey – Bass Public Administration Series, 1996) lists dozens of resources and documents the emerging practices. The forward states, "The bottom line is that benchmarking works. This book shows you how to make it work for you in clear, simple terms, backed up by examples drawn from other organizations" (p. XIL)

In productivity and performance measurement certain trends have remained consistent. For example, holding local governments accountable for resource allocation, prudent spending, and ethical management are on the list of performance goals demanded by constituents. None of the measurements of cost-containment and

effectiveness have disappeared. What has happened is another layer of measurement has evolved.

In the 21st Century, trends have gone beyond measuring inputs and outputs, reporting on effectiveness and efficiency to measuring the results of city management actions. This creates the demand to come up with ways to measure outcomes that accurately reflect results, not only to show “proof” to citizens, but also to meet Federal-reporting requirements. Services provided by urban planners are funded through local government budget allocations; and often the budgeted programs require capacity to measure progress towards meeting expectations. Establishing benchmarks can be a method for planners to show where progress has been made or where a resource constraint prohibited meeting a community expectation. It can also show a shift in priorities within the political climate.

Traditionally, planners are the primary keepers of community goals, if nothing more than through design and administration of the Comprehensive Plan, keepers of neighborhood plans and protectors of the environment. Planning processes in most cities are not directly tied to citizen benchmarks, yet evidence shows emerging practices of local government will change that trend. Key elements crucial to measurement of results are: goals and outcomes must be established by the citizens to establish value to the community, strategies for implementing planning goals are woven into planning department program objectives, budget documents reflect these measures, and employee evaluations are tied to reaching the outcomes.

The community benchmark paradigm introduces a system of accountability using indicators, determined by the citizens, policy makers and budget preparers working together with planners. The key is to involve citizens in establishing the community outcome-based benchmark model, and to communicate the results with the citizens. Indicators for desired outcomes are tracked by including them within comprehensive plans, strategic plans, Vision documents, and goal statements. Essential to success are reliable indicators that can be measured by a set of standards established by the policy makers, and are achievable by planners.

Data collection and measurement towards performance goals is frequently captured in the budget process. Interesting to note, one of the first books on benchmarking in the business sector was written by Robert Camp (1989), a professional at Xerox, who had experience in the private sector. It is an evolving “science”, which has parallel applications in the business sector. According to Fitz-Enz (1993) and other authors, benchmarking is future-oriented, raises targets of excellence, and stimulates cities to match the best.

A City planning department must select specific planning services to measure success in providing valued services to the community. Although specific national standards in the way cities are measuring planning performance are inadequate, some benchmarking practices are available in leading cities, and can be adapted at the mid-size city level.

Communication and Constituency in Planning

Several cities in Oregon, and many around the nation, are engaged in developing active benchmarking programs, and are resources to the research in this dissertation. The survey questions for the mid-size cities were formulated subsequent to review of the practices of the aforementioned cities. Oregon Shines, the state's benchmarking program, began in the early 1990's and continues to be a model for other states. The City of Portland began using indicators around the same time and integrated the indicators into the state's efforts. The City of Albuquerque, New Mexico is attempting to build city programs around indicators. Albuquerque started with citizen-recommended goals, which were received by the city council and the mayor, who then refined and adopted them. Albuquerque formed the Indicator Progress Commission; a citizen group that developed desired community conditions to flesh out the goals. Phoenix has been a leader since the 1980's in the effort to provide better linkages to citizen and improved accountability. In each city studied for practices, it can be noted a key component to community benchmarks was citizen involvement.

Small cities in the United States efforts in the practice of community benchmarks also joined the effort. In Gresham, Oregon, the city's approach to developing indicators is similar to that of the State of Oregon. Gresham has a similar group of citizens, modeled after the Oregon Progress Board, called the Gresham Progress Board. It is chaired by the mayor and is charged with establishing a set of "community indicators as a way to monitor the state of the community and the impact

of city services.” Gresham also participates with the International City Managers’ Association’s comparative performance measure program, and prepares an organizational work plan after the budget is approved. Other cities in Oregon, Eugene, Springfield, Tigard, and Albany, use an outcome or results model approach to community benchmarks. Edina, Minnesota communicates their progress in About Town – the official magazine of the City of Edina.

Larger cities that have been documenting their strides in the community benchmark area include: Phoenix, Arizona; Bellevue, Washington; and San Diego, California. King County in Washington and Multnomah County in Oregon are examples of counties using indicators and managing for results. Even rural counties, like Gunnison County in Texas are on the road to establishing an indicators project. Gunnison County is rural, with an economy based on tourism, and hopes indicators will be helpful in expanding their economic and community development applications. The State of Oregon reports benchmark progress in an annual report to the Oregon Progress Board.

Cities researched and interviewed adopt benchmarking for their measurement approach to management. Benchmarking provides the cities more than a measured, evaluative analysis of the productivity of its departments; it also facilitates communication, progress, comparison and exploration.

- Communication of Goals

The community involvement begins by establishing a new General Plan, a vision plan, updated Comprehensive plan, and sets common goals. By

visualizing the attributes and shape of the future community, the citizens are able to communicate with city planners, city management and elected officials to establish desired outcomes.

- **Measurement of Progress**

Once the goals are set, and objectives established, benchmarks allow administrators to report on progress. This provides a message to the community regarding both positive and negative changes in the city. It is critical to measure the status of vital categories before, during and after the planning period. Citizens measure progress using common attributes, standards and expectations of performance and selected indicators. The mayor, council and city administrators report on the indicators periodically and track them over the long term.

- **Comparative Mechanisms**

The progressive aspect of utilizing comparison provides managers with community-based measures to evaluate movement towards goals. Managers have a mechanism to measure their performance against others. Additionally, management performance is generally reported in the city's budgeting process.

- **Exploratory Tool**

A city can always learn new applications for community planning from others, or can share successful planning and development strategies. Benchmarking utilizes the theory of best practices, which enables cities' strategies to be transferred from one jurisdiction to another. Using common approaches to

measuring outcomes offers further avenues to test other cities' approaches and to explore new solutions to urban problems and challenges. Best-in-class organizations can provide best practices that will help lead other organizations toward superior performance.

- Establishing Trust with the Citizens

Clearly established goals and measurements that have been agreed upon can provide the basis for collaborative problem solving and establish a basis for trust. Decisions, which involve a high degree of trust, can be tracked and reinforced with a good measurement system.

The goal in establishing a system of community benchmarks is to develop a clear evaluation of what would need to be done to improve that community's well being. Benchmarks measure whether the community's needs are being met within a grounded framework. The planning framework allows city planners to develop connections between indicators and the delivery of planning services.

Chapter Four: Community Benchmarks –Survey of Mid-Size Cities for Planning and Community Development Departments

Survey Sample:

Community Benchmarks is a research study conducted as a method to survey performance measurement and benchmarking practices in planning and community development departments in America's mid-size cities. Midsize cities are defined as those with a population between 50,000 and 175,000 population as of 2000, using members in the National League of Cities as the database. The survey questions investigate what, where, when and how city planning and community development departments collect data in the areas of performance measuring and benchmarking. In the summer of 2000, a randomly selected sample of cities from the membership of the National League was surveyed. In total, 385 surveys were mailed out, of which, 153 cities responded. This resulted in a response rate of forty percent.

The survey was conducted to determine whether mid-size cities are using a system of benchmarks or performance indicators, what kinds of measurements and what types of city planning and community development services are tracked for performance. The "yes" cities represent 58 percent of the population – with 89 of 153 cities stating they are practicing benchmarking through the use of one or more methods of measurement. Among the "yes" cities, performance indicators are clearly the dominant method. As shown in the literature review, performance measurement has been used historically longer than benchmarks or outcome methods. However, setting benchmark targets is a frequently used method.

The sample population, or the total number of cities surveyed, was 381 derived by selecting every 7th city from a geographical list by region. The sample size, derived from all respondents to the survey, was 153 cities, a 40% response rate from cities scattered throughout the United States. The survey was conducted between May and December 2000. In order to maximize the size of the sample, the timeframe extended over several months. The surveys were answered by planning directors, community development directors, planning and zoning administrators, and in a few cases, by an assistant in the City Manager's office. Many attempts were made in order to get the maximum sample size, as cities were contacted several times using a variety of methods. Considerable effort was directed at getting the highest level appointed official in the department to respond, which required a longer time frame to conduct the survey.

Section I: Benchmarking and Performance Measurement:

A copy of the survey is included in Appendix A. Section I identifies the types of performance indicators and benchmarks the practicing cities are using and for which services. The range of options included the following: tracking permit issuance, development review process, community participation, inspections, housing programs, tourism, long-range planning, community participation levels, economic development, building inspections, code enforcement, development engineering and plan check. An additional open-ended question probed further in order to ascertain whether other planning services tracking measurements were in place. A query was included to determine the priority services for tracking. The next question asks

whether any formal guiding plan, strategic plan, or budget document links the measurements to established city goals.

The next portion of the survey looks at the involvement of staff and officials in developing benchmark mechanisms. A question was included regarding the effect of elected officials' involvement in the process benchmarking. The next question probes the nature of the involvement of councilors and commissioners. The intent was to shed some light on how much of the benchmarking effort is driven by staff vs. elected/appointed officials. The expectation, as stated in earlier chapters, is that elected official involvement is a critical component of a city's benchmark program. Cities practicing benchmarking were asked if they budget for or merely absorb the costs in operational expenses of the department. The indication of an actual budget allocation could be interpreted as a demonstrated effort of the city's part to track and report on progress. The lack of budget could also mean that departments are expected to track results as a normal part of their operations.

Section II: Planning and Development Measurements:

Although all cities responded to Section II, this section was designed primarily for cities that have no formal, systematic mechanism of tracking benchmarks, or performance indicators. Cities were asked if they were involved in any form of gathering feedback from the community, or if they are involved in any sort of rating system. This is related to citizen rating and how the various departments determine citizen ratings. Most cities responded to the question of how their planning department or community development was viewed; however, not all reported on the

question of whether a “citizen rating” was reported directly to the department by the constituents. Departments were asked if they seek feedback and how they gathered the feedback. Cities were queried to find out if they use any kind of incentive for the employees. In general, this section was designed to discover whether cities use alternatives to benchmarking.

Section III: Communication & Feedback:

Questions in Section III are focused on the issues of privatization of services and questions whether city department managers’ perceived any pressure to substitute governmental planning services with private, competitive solutions. For purposes of interpretation of the survey results, privatization of governmental services is an informal indicator of whether there is a trend in their city towards abandoning city-planning services for private providers. The survey probed further to ascertain what services were affected by privatization.

A formal way of gathering feedback on satisfaction with services is a direct citizen input process. Cities were asked what they are doing to get input from citizens on meeting their planning goals, and providing planning services. The researcher included these questions to find out the kinds of methods cities are using to establish a basis of trust and communication with their citizens. The cities were asked what priority the departments and management give to communicating feedback data to its citizens. In addition, do cities communicate performance indicators and benchmarks to the citizens? The survey further asked what were the mechanisms or devices utilized for communicating with their citizens.

Section IV: City Characteristics:

This section involved determining the manager's tenure in the organization, number of staff members, population, type of organizational structure of the cities surveyed. These were considered to be informative of the ability to provide services with a more complete, comprehensive management focus, based on availability of staff and resources, experience of the director, and organizational structure of the city. The tenure of the director might also be an indicator of willingness to experiment with new practices relating to performance. Questions were also posed regarding the degree of involvement of the city's planning and/or zoning commission in the performance indicators. Departments' practices were queried to determine whether they considered their city's policies proactive or reactive, regulatory or collaborative. As mentioned earlier planning and community development vision statements that relate to city's benchmarks were collected.

The Sample and Survey Design

As stated, the survey sample was derived from the National League of Cities data in May 2000. Population was based the 1990 Census. The 2000 Census data was not yet available at that time. The mid size city sample was determined from a National League of Cities membership database of cities ranging in size from 50,000 population to 175,000 population. States involved in the survey are shown in Figure B. Not all states were represented by the sample; not all states have cities of that size that are members of the National League of Cities. States that were not represented in the survey were Wyoming, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Delaware, Mississippi,

Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. These states had no cities in the National League of Cities database.

The total sample size of cities was 385. There were 399 original labels from the National League of Cities, of which 14 were returned due to address failure, or incomplete information. Of the total 385 city surveys successfully mailed, 110 were returned via land mail. Subsequently, the follow-up to non-respondents included e-mail reminders to complete the survey. The survey was sent out once again by e-mail. This increased the response to 130. The next round of efforts to increase the size of the sample included follow-up phone calls as well as e-mail reminders. Respondents then returned their surveys via e-mail, fax, or land mail. This increased the return to 153.

According to the survey results, planning departments' practices in benchmarks/performance measures are emerging over time in mid-size cities. Of the cities surveyed, 58.17 percent use a system of benchmarks or performance indicators as methods for measuring results at the local planning department level. (Figure C)

Phone responses from non-respondents:

What is interesting about the research was not only what was revealed from those who responded to the survey, but also from those who chose not to respond to the survey. Cities that didn't complete the survey cited a variety of reasons; however, some did talk over the phone. Many of the cities did not want to respond because they did not have a system of performance measurement, did not want to think about it, did not understand it, or they were not prepared to think about it. Cities were encouraged

to send in their results even when they did not have a benchmark system. Some of the reasons for not responding to the survey reflect staff that has few resources or time to assess the performance of their organization:

- The boss lost the copy; please fax again
- They don't have anyone who thinks about how we are doing
- They don't have the staff
- They are too busy
- The employee that should be doing that no longer works here.
- They are starting a master plan now, but check back with them in a year.
- Don't have any benchmarks to report: They reported there's none established and they don't want to participate, because they have nothing to share.
- They were interested in the benchmark survey results but they didn't feel they knew enough about it to fill it out.
- The email survey got buried, you can send out another one but this one will likely get buried too!
- There was an earthquake and there is no time to respond to the survey.

The majority (58.2 %) of cities responding practice some form of community benchmarks or performance indicators; however, this data could be impacted by the phenomena that cities who understand or do practice were more willing to share their information. There may be some bias towards the "no's" not wanting to respond. Specifically, the effort to track performance has improved the perception of good community planning held by the cities' residents as reported by the cities. Cities that

responded to the research also confirm the fact that the practice of benchmarking is now a component of local government planning processes, for a wide variety of services. The detailed results graphs, and charts presented in Chapter 5 array the variety of the survey findings.

Several cities provided samples of their vision statements, and presented example of follow up work building upon a City vision, a comprehensive plan, or community progress report. Community benchmarks have moved beyond theory into practice in selected midsize and large cities. In the surveyed cities, the data demonstrates that benchmark practices have been adapted and grown steadily over the past twenty-five years. The fact that 58 percent of the mid-size cities surveyed are using a system of benchmarks or performance indicators shows that this system of accountability has been integrated into the practice of delivering planning services.

Chapter Five: Descriptive Data Derived from Survey Results: Community Benchmarks for Planning

Descriptive Statistics

The results are organized into two chapters. Chapter 5 contains descriptive statistics, and Chapter 6 subsequently describes the inferential analysis. The intent of Chapter 6 is to apply multiple linear regression, and probability models to determine if there's a systematic way of understanding, or predicting a benchmark city. All of these techniques are intended to provide a baseline body of information. Although the survey's intent is to discover the emerging practices of benchmarking, it is useful to observe the general characteristics of all cities that responded to the survey (153), and how they described themselves in the year 2000. Primarily, this information is located in Chapter 5. Additionally, survey respondents were told the information would be used to provide a baseline body of information concerning planning and development departments' practices in assessing the value of their services to the public.

Responses were collected from a fairly representative geographic distribution. The survey labels were randomly selected from every 7th city, so not all states were contacted. As noted earlier some states has few, or no cities, that were members of the League. The attached map, Figure A displays the percentage of cities that responded from throughout the United States. The "zero" stated are those where no cities were contacted, the polka dot states has cities that were contacted, but none responded.

Figure A - Number of Cities with Benchmarks/Performance Measures

Other general information was collected to get an idea of the types of departments and the conditions cities' staff work under in conducting their business. The case studies are reviewed in Chapter 7. The purpose of each case study was to conduct follow up questions, to determine whether the cities programs had changed, and to determine if there are any observable differences between the "Yes" and "No" cities. Again the survey research is intended to discover what characteristics contributed to "Yes" and "No" cities' make-up, or governmental business practices.

Of the cities that responded there was a strong tendency to community benchmarks in the western, and Midwestern states. Cities in the faster growing areas

of the west were the strongest. Other conclusions could be drawn regarding the “good government” political systems on the Midwest vs. the interest-based government of the Northeast. However, the researcher did not pursue that line of questions in the survey of cities. The first question to be addressed was “Are you already using a system of benchmarks or performance measures?” According to the survey results, planning departments’ practices in benchmarks/performance measures are emerging over the last 30 years in mid-size cities. Of the cities surveyed, 58.17 percent use a system of benchmarks or performance indicators as methods for measuring results at the local planning department level. (Figure B)

Figure B - Using Benchmarks or Performance Indicators

Looking back at the literature review, it can be noted that several definitions for benchmarks, performance indicators, and outcome indicators exist. Therefore, in order to provide a clear understanding of terminology the survey was conducted using these definitions:

Benchmark – a targeted level of service

Performance Measurement – involves the selection, definition and application of indicators of efficiency, quality and effectiveness

Outcome Indicators – measure the results or benefits of a program

Figure C - Mid-Size Cities Using a System of Benchmarks

Cities responded by selecting one or more of the methods they utilized in the area of performance measuring and benchmarking. Performance measures and benchmark targets were the leading methods, with 74% and 70% respectively. Outcome indicators were selected as a method by more than a majority of the "Yes" cities, with 55% of the cities. (Figure C) Outcomes indicators could be harder to define, and more difficult to collect. This corroborates the literature review findings, where outcomes are discussed increasingly in the 1990s, but had not been a typical

measurement technique in the 1970's or 1980's. Therefore use of outcome-based measurement is not as typical as benchmark, or performance measures.

What seems to be emerging overall is a growing use of benchmarks and performance measurements. As reported, some cities have been using a system of benchmarks for a very long time – 28 years – while others were just beginning in the year 2000. The average length of program “life” in the “yes” cities was nearly 8 years. This also fits logically with the literature review and the many city management trends of the early 1990s focused on reinventing government and increasing trends towards government accountability. By reviewing the histogram, it is evident that, the number of cities using benchmarks increased sharply during those years (See Figure D). The accountability in government trend and its impacts on services for planning is observed in the Figure C, and the responses to the survey questions regarding types of services measured.

Figure D - Cities Start-Up Year for Benchmark System Planning
Section I - Types of Service:

All “yes” cities were subsequently queried regarding the types of services that were tracked in the three different category types (benchmarks, performance indicators, and outcome indicators.) The types of city planning and community development services queried were as follows:

Client Based Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Permit Issuance/Plan Check ○ Development Review Process/Engineering ○ Code Enforcement ○ Inspections/Building Inspections ○ Housing Programs
Citizen-wide Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tourism ○ Long-Range Planning ○ Community Participation ○ Economic Development

Table 2 - Planning Services Measured

Services included those specifically customer driven, or client-based as well as the more global planning services delivered to all citizens. This represents a typical list of a variety of planning type services, and all services were tracked by some cities; however, patterns did occur which led to the more popularly measured, or common services.

The most common city planning and community development service tracked for performances are development review, permit issuance, plan check, inspections and code enforcement. In 54% of the “Yes” cities, departments track the development review process using performance measurements. The development review process leads as the number one type of planning service most frequently tracked both for performance measurements and benchmarks. This is logical in that the two types of performance measurements work together. Generally a department, or city will set targets for service using a benchmark, and then the department uses a measurement of performance to determine whether the target has been achieved. The second most performance-measured service in planning departments is permit issuance, with performance indicators being used by 44% of the “Yes” cities. Plan check is the third most frequently measured service, with building inspection following in 4th place. Code enforcement follows closely behind, in fifth place. This ranking is consistent using performance indicators and benchmarks for the Top 5 planning and community development services. Figure E shows the planning services in rank order.

Figure E - Top Five Commonly Measured Services for Benchmarks & Performance Indicators

A special note should be made for data assembly in the various service types; the fourth ranking service in planning and community developments is building inspections. The services list included both inspection and building inspection. These were redundant types of services, so “inspection” was retained, and the more specific category “ building inspections” was not included in the rankings.

Figure F - City Planning and Community Development Service Performance Measures

The data also shows the use of the outcome indicator is consistent for the Top 3 planning services in the same rank order; (1) development review; (2) permit issuance, and (3) plan check. However, what is interesting in the data ranking is that cities' utilization of *outcome indicators* varies from those of the performance indicators and benchmark targets, as the data goes beyond the Top 2 types of services. The 3rd, 4th, and 5th ranking services measured using outcome indicators are housing

programs, long range planning, and economic development, respectively, as shown in Figure E. Cities measure the results or benefits of a program a greater percentage of the time by tracking long-range impacts, or economic benefit to the community. City planning and community development departments are using outcome indicators by a higher percentage than performance indicators for other services also, for example community participation and tourism. (See Figure F) Obviously, not all departments provide all types of services, but it can be observed that certain types of programs use “outcomes” more frequently, as a basis for results.

Outcome based measurement is frequently used in the more long-range, community and program based services, delivered to all citizens. For example, services such as economic development, long range planning, housing programs, and community participation present different opportunities to demonstrate accountability through outcomes. Assessing systematically the progress of affordable housing, the state of the economy, or the level of community involvement requires involving external impressions, larger scale indicators, and comparison to industry standards. Often, these are more outcome oriented by design and necessity. Also housing programs are clearly tied to federal standards (GASB) and have new outcome based performance requirements.

Outcomes measure the impact on the community. The researcher believes that it is a very important finding that services measured for outcome are more citizen-based. It shows the growing importance of measuring the results of a city’s quality of life and sustainable community targets.

Figure G - Programs Linked to a Formal Plan in Rank Order

Vision or Strategic Plan

Cities were then asked whether their benchmark/performance program was linked to a formal plan. A majority of cities responded “Yes” to the question on use of benchmarks linking their benchmark/performance program to a formal plan. (Figure G) Cities often relate their results to one planning document. Clearly, the budget document is the most predominant method of linking program results to policy with 64% of cities. However, 45% of cities utilize the Comprehensive Plan for tracking progress. The strategic plan method is used by 34% of the cities. As discussed in the literature review, departments review their services using the management tools and methods available to them. These tools can include a variety of things, such as mission statements, strategic planning, benchmarking targets, work plan goals, professional standards and commonly used comparative performance measures. A

majority of cities surveyed use some mechanism to link the performance program to a formal plan.

Several cities reported methods, such as, comparison to a series of selected outcomes or comparison to a neighboring city's standards. Others noted that their comparators were not official, but pieces of a program were imbedded in economic development policy or the long range-planning document. Many cities had programs in progress that had been started at various times over the last decade (1990's). Others noted their benchmarks were not tied to a vision, or strategic planning document but were tied to "score card results and status reports." A few cities reported that outcome indicators were used in the budget development process, and that "budget requests must be justified in part on this basis."

Elected Official involvement

Cities with benchmarking processes were asked to name the ways their elected officials were involved in the work of the department's performance program. In benchmarking cities, 52% of the responders indicated elected official participation at the level of "policy development," and secondly, the elected officials were viewed as "advisory" by 28% of the respondents. Of the 89 cities that do benchmark, 25% stated their elected officials take a strong leadership role in the benchmark process. This leads to the conclusion that 75% of the elected bodies are not actively involved in the process of developing the benchmark program. In fact, 17% of the city departments reported that their elected officials had little involvement, or through the focus group process (Figure H).

Figure H - Elected Officials Involved in Benchmarking Policy

Very little acknowledgment of regional or state boards & commission involvement in established benchmark programs involving elected officials was noted. Only 2% of the cities were involved at a state or regional level with their benchmark programs. The literature shows there are only few states & regions with far reaching benchmark programs that could be adopted at the local level. This also contributes to the problem of lack of comparables, or standards at a higher governmental level to provide a benchmark target. The exceptions to this rule were the States of Florida and Oregon, who tied reportedly measurements to levels of service and growth management established by State goals. There may be other states with established benchmark programs, but no others were called out by the survey data.

What way were elected officials involved in the public process? The most commonly mentioned responses were as follows:

- Annual budget and budget allocations
- Advisory through the Vision
- Agreement to participate in certification programs
- By participating in HUD program process
- Strategic Planning

Very little clarification, collaboration or elaboration with elected officials was noted. However, the literature does point to the political nature of benchmarking programs. Instead, at the local level, the budget documents put forth the policy and political priorities of the City by prioritizing funding goals, and therefore the work of the city. Clearly, the annual budget and budget allocations are the preferred measurement tracking and reporting mechanisms because they are known to advance the community priorities of elected officials. The budget is the most accessible and familiar community document for the citizens.

Department Operations

It is remarkable that most cities do not provide additional resources for the activity and work products surrounding a benchmark program. The work is absorbed, which in effect results in a loss of time for the activities surrounding service delivery. In response to the question “Does your city budget for the benchmark process?” the majority (74%) responded “No,” with only 26% claiming they do have a budget for their benchmark program for staff, consultants or program management. Most cities absorb the cost within the operating budget; most work is undertaken at the division level and completed with the other work of the department.

Other ways benchmark information is used to assess program/project performance and the achievement of select targets is to provide financial incentives, such as the following: budget for staff resources, general fund, performance workload indicators (in the budget), capital improvements based on public facility level of service, and use of performance standard to gauge effectiveness of programs to determine need for continued or increased fund for program.

It seems rewards can be given to the departments for successfully meeting the management measures. Additional staff may be given to build on organizational strengths, or training may be offered to build on management strengths.

Critical to the implementation of the benchmark program is the acceptance by department personnel and management staff. The question posed to the cities “How does department personnel view your performance measurement or benchmarking program,

Figure I - Department Personnel View

Personnel generally accepted the program, although several reported “fears” of employees, and what the underlying reasons for the measurements truly were. Over 50% of the cities noted that they’ve received a good-to-excellent response from their employees. An additional 36% had a “fair” acceptance, with only a 12% in the low acceptance and 1% very resistant (See Figure I). It should be noted that literature about the resistance of staff to measurement programs was written in the early 90’s, which may have been before benchmarking and performance measurement became more of an accepted practice. It goes back to the idea of establishing a basis for trust.

Section II: Planning And Development Measurement

This section was responded to by all cities in the survey. Section 1 specifically delved into the processes or operations of benchmarking cities, whereas the following information came from the entire sample of departments. The data more generally show the activities, methods, and priorities of the mid-size planning and community development departments. The question was posed, “To what degree does your department or agency perform a benchmarking/performance measurements analysis to study the impact of planning projects?” The reason behind the question was that although a department may not have a formal plan, it might look at projects on an individual basis to see if the planning project met common objectives and intent of the community. 65% of the planning projects and their impacts were never or rarely benchmarked.

Figure J - Does your Department/Agency Perform Benchmarking/Performance Measurements on Planning Projects?

It was determined it is not standard practice for cities to go back and review projects after they have been completed to assess their impact, or even their acceptance, by the community. Figure J aggregates the “rarely,” “never,” “sometimes,” to mean it is not standard practice, and interpolates the “usually” and “always” to mean it is a standard practice. Measuring the impact of planning projects does not occur 86% of the time. Less than 15% look at the planning impacts of their projects. Development projects are generally a common “outcome” of planners’ work and their community’s acceptance of the city planning efforts would be a rich area to develop some standard practices for performance.

Figure K - To What Degree Does Your Department/Agency Perform Benchmarking/Performance Measurements on Planning Projects?

In contrast, the most current measurement standard for planning departments focus on timeframes and speed of processing proposed zone changes, variances, and development permits. The speed of responding to citizen requests is also a commonly noted performance measure, as well as a variety of others i.e., low-level permit applications, signs, initial environmental review studies, updating zoning maps after a zone change. (See Figure K) This type of performance measure standard generally does not get at quality, community buy in or citizen satisfaction. Planners rarely measure the impact of a planning project. Planners focused performance is on the client-based services. Few outcome oriented, or impact assessments are related to the citizens and how satisfied they are after the project is constructed. Impacts of a planning project, like many of the planning work elements are difficult to measure, and few “industry” standards are available.

The same case exists for the function of building permits, where the focus is on the client. Initial construction plan review and targeted completion timeframes for review of plans are the industry standard. In general, cities measure how efficient or effective staff is in producing the documents to get buildings built, not how well they're constructed, or if they meet the planning vision of the community. It may have been built well and quickly, but is it what the community wanted? The idea generally is to avoid time delays for builders, which can be costly, and to provide speedy, accurate service at the counter, with no emphasis on the results in the community. Is the built environment what the citizens wanted and how could managers report that information?

In most cities surveyed, the department reported that citizens generally rate their planning services as good or excellent. In many cases, however, this information was not supported by a formal rating system. 41% of the cities did receive ratings through customer feedback forms, but 42% do not gather information on the value of indicators (See Figure L). Their general ratings are tied to systematic client feedback mechanism in some cases, but rarely to citywide, citizen surveys.

Figure L - Citizens Rate Planning Services

Most of the Cities do not use pay-for-performance to reward successful benchmark efforts (See Figure M). Although productivity and management journals often laud the idea of pay-for-performance, it is not used in practice by 88% of the cities in the survey. The interesting fact is though 88% respond they do not; there are 12% of the cities that do use a pay-for-performance system connected with their measurements/performance system.

Figure M - Pay-for-Performance to Reward

Some cities are linking measurements with rewards, and rewarding performance by a variety of methods including: bonus payments; special bonus program with objectives set in the budget; incentive or merit pay; and gain sharing program.

One city's particularly insightful approach was captured in this response: "management-by-results performance review of employees. Pay raises based on how well an employee attains results." This is an excellent approach because it touches all employees, not only management.

Citizen Input

As seen below in Figure N there are a number of cities that are becoming more methodical about gathering citizen input data, using surveys and comment forms. The most popular methods are surveying citizens, web pages and customer comment forms. Web pages for planning and community development departments disseminate and gather information. To summarize the methods used to gather citizen feedback, it is important to include other methods, such as, the involvement of focus groups in nearly 10% of the cities, and in 3% of the cases an "interpretation of voting" is used to gather feedback on "how citizen's value the performance indicators." However, simply stated, as many cities do not gather information from their citizens as those that do gather. As noted in Figure N, 42% of the cities surveyed do not gather feedback on whether citizens value the city's performance program.

Figure N - Method to Gather Feedback on Citizens' Value of Indicators

Section III: Communication & Feedback

By further reviewing methods of feedback, a pattern of communication with citizens begins to emerge. This section uses more detailed information on communication and feedback to look at the operations and priorities of planning and community development departments for all cities surveyed. One of the theories developed in the literature review is that cities might possibly be driven to prove the value of their services because of the threat of privatization. Privatization is evident but of those cities that responded, 87% responded never or rarely, and 11% responded sometimes, and 2% responded usually or always (See Figure O). Although, privatization for planning services is not identified as a threat for planning services cities provided valuable information upon probing. The open-ended question which

followed,”(i)n many cities there are pressures to privatize public services. Can you give me an evidence of privatization?” revealed many instances.

Figure O - Planning Services Impacted by Privatization

In the planning service area there was a commonality of some basic services that are being contracted out by the departments, for example contracting for “plan check and inspection services.” Other planning related services noted by more than ten cities were as follows:

- hiring consultants for studies, including the Comprehensive Plan, area plans and market studies
- engineering services and map making
- contracting for planning to accommodate peak workload
- private plan check services
- ordinance amendments being codified under contract

In addition, there were services that are related to planning noted on a less frequent basis (by 1-3 cities,) such as:

- community participation
- economic development
- grant writing and housing
- project evaluation

In many of the cases, the departments reported that staff resources were being cut; therefore projects were given to consultants. It seems that cities didn't recognize this factor as privatization. The other driving force in privatization of planning services, as noted in the survey, was outsourcing to meet the fluctuating workload demands, and to conduct special projects.

Survey respondents reported privatization and outsourcing a variety of services in their cities, outside of the planning department functions as follows:

- Traditional public works services; i.e. fleet, mowing, janitorial service, and water services
- Waste management, such as; garbage collection and trash pick up; Solid waste pick up, general waste management services.
 - General waste management services
- Fire protection services
- Traffic radar, photo ticketing, and transit services
- Center for the Arts and other cultural services

Respondents have plenty of examples, but didn't seem to recognize the scope of privatization impact on their city services.

When departments were presented the question, "What are the methods of determining your department's success in meeting planning goals?" they were allowed to select more than one choice. Once again the strong city manager make-up of the surveyed cities was evident as the majority of cities (58%) use the city manager's review as their primary evaluation technique (See Figure P). Closely following (54%,) is the accomplishment of City Council goals. There's a presumed direct relationship between these two methods, as the City Manager's review and evaluation is generally tied to their success in City Council goal achievement.

Figure P - Methods of Determining Success

Another factor that influences success is clear input from the private sector, at a 47% response factor. This is not surprising as private sector approval closely ties to City Council priorities. The budget is generally directed by the City Manager and City Council priorities and reflects community goals. The importance of “budget parameters” is demonstrated by 46% of the cities that measure success by satisfactorily meeting budget parameters. To a lesser degree, “achievement of benchmark targets” is practiced in nearly 31% of the cities. Note, this question was posed to all cities, not exclusively to “Yes” cities so it represents a fairly high percent.

Less than a third of the cities used a “citizen approval rating,” or some other mechanism.

Figure Q - Priority Given to Communicating this Data to Citizens

More than half of the cities felt it was important to communicate this data to the citizens (See Figure Q). When it was further queried how they communicate, once again the budget document came out first. The rank order is listed below:

1. Budget document
2. Community newsletter
3. Internet services
4. Local newspaper
5. City Manager’s report
6. Special publication
7. Others – physical, economic and social improvements in the Community

Section IV - Characteristics For All Cities

Since the focus of the survey questions were aimed at planning and community development departments, questions were posed to determine the type of conditions under which the departments were operating. Most of the cities that responded described their cities' population as stable (28.8 percent) or increasing (64.6 percent), and relatively few had decreasing population (7.84 percent). The assumption here is that with population increase the demand for services was also increasing for most of the cities. Increasing demand can cause changes in the ways cities deliver services.

Figure R - Population Description

Correspondingly, planning budgets were described primarily as stable (55%) or increasing (40%). Only 5% described their budgets as decreasing. This appears a promising trend for the planning departments, as the service population (citizens) is increasing in number, it seems budgets are also increasing, or at least stable. Refer to Figure S. To perfectly correspond, 65% of the cities would experience increasing planning budget, in order to keep up with population and service demands. However, as the data shows, the departments aren't always given more resources when their city

increases in size. Work is absorbed, delayed, or in some cases, outsourced to private contractors.

Figure S - Budget Description

When asked, “What is the most appropriate description of your city?” the cities were almost evenly distributed in the various categories. They described themselves as freestanding cities (35%), while urban core cities made up 27% sample population, and suburban communities (37%) made up the balance. (See Figure T)

There is nothing particularly significant about this statistic, except to note that there was no predominant “type” of city that responded to the survey. Which leads to the conclusion that all types of cities participated in this survey, and there is no certain “type” of city interested in the topic of benchmarking.

Figure T - Type of City

When asked to classify the organizational structure of the cities, the majority of the responses described their operation as a strong city manager/administrator city. The city manager structure is more than twice as frequent (58%) as strong Mayor or strong City Council form of government. The City Manager's review and approval has already been noted as a strong factor in achieving success in the departments, and as key to those cities embarking on measurement programs, whether they considered themselves benchmarking, or not.

Not only is a strong city manager predominate (58%,) but also the city manager review and approval is the predominant method of measuring success in meeting planning goals, also 58%. (See Figure U.) The city manager is clearly a strong component of the management structure of planning in the majority of cities. When compared to the response rate regarding the degree of involvement of the city's planning and zoning commission in projects, the commission appears to have a

lesser degree of involvement. Because of the strong city manager organizational structure in the majority of cities, it can be assumed also the City Manager would be providing leadership and direction in the benchmark program.

Figure U - Organizational Structure

Next departments rated the degree of involvement of the city's planning and zoning commission in planning and development projects. Nearly 44 percent of the planning or zoning commissions were described as being "very involved" or "involved on a regular basis"; however, others limit their involvement to formal public hearings and planning commission meetings (34 percent). A small percentage, (13 percent) described their planning commission as "moderately involved" with project activities. In 9 percent of the cities, commissions are described as "only involved when concerns or issues arose. Figure V shows the various levels of involvement.

Figure V - Degree of Involvement

It is not expected the Planning Commission would, under their normal role be highly involved on a daily basis. The Planning Commission usually review cases on a project-by-project basis, and are not involved with department operations in a performance measure and benchmarking program. Generally the involvement would occur through a comprehensive, or general plan process where indicators are measuring progress on plan policies and programs.

An overwhelming majority of cities indicated that their departments' policies were not proactive, because the daily demands for services are so demanding that departments are primarily reactive. The lack of ability to be proactive in policy at the department level also limits city planning and development departments ability to put together new programs, including benchmarks and performance measures, citizen surveys and active citizen participation. Under the constrained conditions of increasing population, a budget that may or may not be increasing, and services that are performed by both staff and private contractors, it is challenging.

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which their departments' policies were proactive or reactive. A scale was given in order to pick a point along that scale. Far more city departments, 52%, described their departments policies in the "reactive" range of the scale. In fact, only 26% described their departments' policies in the proactive range. Generally, in surveys the midpoint is a "safe" place to land when asked to mark a scale, but in this case only 22% selected the middle range. (See Figure W.) Consistent with this response, processes were self-rated by the departments to be as more structured and less collaborative.

Figure W - To What Extent Are Departments' Policies Proactive or Reactive?

Less than a majority have vision statements for their planning and development departments; however, 44 percent do have a vision statement. A growing number of the departments are beginning to link their programs to a formal plan using performance measures and benchmarks. As noted previously, the most common method is to link the measurement of benchmarks programs' to the budget document

(37 percent). Of the 44% of governments who have a planning and development vision statement, some cities mailed in their vision or mission statements, other stated that their comprehensive plan served the purpose of a vision. As one respondent replied, “Sort of – the introduction to the comprehensive plan’s land use element address many comprehensive plan issues and the intent of the objectives and policies. More visionary statement has been adopted by local governments of many cities.”

Questions Unanswered By Research

Benchmark programs have been in place in a majority of the cities that responded to the survey with the average length reported at eight years. The shortest length of time was one year; however, a few cities report practicing a benchmark or performance indicator program for over a quarter of a century (28 years). When cities were graphically arrayed for their start-up year for benchmark system, an evolution of numbers of cities growing in practices measurement of services can be documented from the 1970’s to the year 2000. The 58% positive response rate provides strong support for the basis of this research, that in growing numbers cities are increasingly providing benchmarks and measurement for planning.

The literature shows that “policy implementers – managers who are on board for the long-term – are increasingly and professionally committed to productivity improvements.” (Halachmi, Bouckaert, 1995) The U. S. public managers and elected officials are at a point where benchmarks and performance measurement are commonly discussed and practiced. The survey research has confirmed the fact that benchmark practices continue to evolve in America’s city governments. Although this

dissertation cannot answer all the questions posed around the community benchmarks practices in planning departments, the survey establishes trends emerging at the local level of government. The practice of benchmarking measurement in many planning and community development departments in mid-sized cities is clearly demonstrated by the survey data and corresponding research.

Communities have demonstrated, through ballot measures and elected officials' platforms, that they desire value for the tax dollar collected. A question that cannot be answered by this research is whether community benchmarks truly affect the development of public policies. Is there any link between the gathering and reporting of data and the actions taken by elected officials? Do the citizens, in fact, think the benchmarks reflect their investment in tax dollars? Does benchmarking performance change the political process of decision-making and investment of resources? Does benchmarking help make government services better for the citizens? These questions are left for future study and evaluation.

Questions that are answered by this research are that benchmarking and performance indicators are utilized in a majority of the mid-size cities surveyed. Planning and community development departments primarily use performance indicators, with benchmark targets in a close second place. The survey shows that the budget is the primary method of tracking, however the comprehensive plan is also used as a measurement link to performance. The review and influence of the city manager is key to the performance program, and is important to the managing for results perspectives.

Planning departments are much more involved with performance measurement and tracking of client-based services than the more broad citizen based services. There is a growing trend, however, to measure outcomes, or results of the long-range, citizen-wide process such as comprehensive plan goals, tourism and economic development strategies, and citizen participation efforts. The future trends of designing and selecting outcome-based measures should be tied to community goals.

Chapter Six: Statistical Analysis

The objective of this chapter is to report the statistical analysis of the survey data of cities. The analysis was designed to help assess the effects of a variety of characteristics and activities that are inherent to benchmarking cities. The analysis represents an effort to help in understanding the distinguishing features of a benchmarking city.

Part 1: Preparation of Data

The sample is cross-sectional, therefore limiting the opportunities for dynamic analysis. The objective was to develop a model using the one-time responses to survey questions. Before developing the model, a number of preliminary steps were undertaken to prepare the survey data for analysis.

Coding of Variables

First, survey data was transferred into an SPSS database. Variables were coded as either numeric or string. For string variables, a coding system was established in order to transfer string variables into numeric form. Given that most of the survey questions were multiple-choice answers of A through D (or E), the letter answers were assigned a corresponding code value. In most cases, the answer “A” was given a value of “1”, letter “B” was given a value of “2”, etc.; however, there were a few questions in which this was not the case. A series of three questions towards the latter part of the survey required a graduated answer. As an example, one of the questions was as follows:

“On the line below, indicate the extent to which your Department’s policies are proactive or reactive.”

Very reactive -----Very proactive

In order to assign a numerical value to these questions, the answers were defined as quartiles. The line was physically divided into five parts, each of which was given a value of 1 to 5. The corresponding survey answers were assigned accordingly. This exercise was repeated for all questions in which this was an issue (e.g., regulatory vs. collaborative).

The survey also contained a section of questions in which a long list of potential answers was included. In this case, answers were separated into individual codes and assigned binomial values. For example, one question asked if the benchmarking procedures were linked to the one of the following: A vision statement, a budget, a strategic plan, or a comprehensive plan. In this case, the question was coded as four different variables: BPLinkVision, BPLinkBudget, BPLinkStrategic, and BPLinkComprehensive. If a city has benchmarking practices that were linked to both a budget and a comprehensive plan, for example, their coding would be as followed (zero=no, one=yes):

BPLinkVision 0

BPLinkBudget 1

BPLinkStrategic 0

BPLinkComprehensive 1

Because the coding symbolized a certain categorical answer, and not an actual data value, the coefficients had to be interpreted accordingly.

Missing Variable Allocation

After transfer of the survey responses to a statistical database, the dataset was cleaned for any missing variables. The regression models were estimated with parameters such that cases with missing variables were automatically excluded from the regressions.

Part 2: Inclusion of Specific Variables

The next necessary step was to develop a rationale for the inclusion or exclusion of the variables from the city survey. This analysis involved generating a large correlation matrix in order to gain a preliminary assessment of the relationships between variables. The dependent variable was defined as the survey question that asked whether the city used a system of benchmarks (regardless of what the benchmark was). This variable was coded as *sysbenchperin*.

Testing for Correlation

Correlations of variables were examined with respect to their relationship with the *sysbenchperin* variable. The research at this point was testing a whole group of attributes that are strongly correlated with cities that have a system of benchmarking in place. The idea was to look not only at the attributes of the benchmark program, but also the community context that might influence that benchmark program or, what are the characteristics of the different cities with planning departments engaged in benchmarking? Given the nature of the dataset, a Pearsons' correlation matrix was

estimated for the variables of interest. Given the size of the sample, correlations were examined at a 95 percent confidence interval, rather than 99 percent. At this point, the following variables showed correlations with *sysbenchperin*, with their associated Pearson's Coefficient:

Categories	Variables	Pearson's Coefficient
General Technique	Benchmark Targets	0.700
	Performance Indicator	0.739
	Outcome Indicator	0.582
Planning & Development Services	Code Enforcement	0.664
	Development Reviews	0.800
	Community Participation	0.487
	Inspection Services	0.608
	Housing programs	0.556
	Long Range Planning	0.547
	Building Inspections	0.626
	Development Engineering	0.419
	Plan Check	0.635
Benchmarks	Permits	0.470
	Development Reviews	0.496
	Community Participation	0.329
	Inspections	0.427
	Housing Programs	0.348
	Long Range Planning	0.357
	Community Participation Levels	0.310
	Economic Development	0.357
	Building Inspections	0.410
	Code Enforcement	0.401
	Plan Check	0.412
Performance Indicator	Permits	0.496
	Development Reviews	0.573
	Community Participation	0.300
	Inspections	0.445

	Housing Program	0.427
	Long Range Planning	0.570
	Community Participation Levels	0.258
	Economic Development	0.366
	Building Inspections	0.462
	Code Enforcement	0.436
	Development Engineering	0.300
	Plan Check	0.470
Outcome Indicator	Permits	0.393
	Development Reviews	0.410
	Community Participation	0.319
	Inspections	0.329
	Housing Program	0.375
	Long Range Planning	0.357
	Community Participation Levels	0.236
	Economic Development	0.300
	Building Inspections	0.319
	Code Enforcement	0.310
	Development Engineering	0.247
	Plan Check	0.329
Benchmark Linkage	Vision	0.246
	Strategic Plan	0.419
	Comprehensive Plan	0.505
	Budget	0.626
	Planning Document	0.436
City Officials Involvement	Focus Group	0.236
	Advisory Only	0.375
	Participatory in Policy	0.527
	Leadership Role	0.348
	Little Involvement	0.208
	Planning Commission Involvement	0.172
Money Budgeted for Benchmark	City Budget	0.320
Pay for Benchmark Performance	Yes	0.269

Rating of Services	Customer Feedback forms	0.188
	Planning Department Survey	0.198
	City-wide Survey	0.185
	Pay for Performance	0.269
Feedback Mechanism	Survey	0.207
	Do not Gather	-0.194
Performance Review	Achieved Benchmark Target	0.536
Communicating to Citizens	City Managers Report	0.192
	Budget Documents	0.240

Table 3 - Pearson's Correlation Matrix for Benchmarking Cities

The correlation coefficient matrix yielded a long list of potential variables. Not surprisingly, the correlation matrix yields results that mirror the summary statistics discussed in Chapter 5. Many of the variables closely correlated with the dependent variable (*sysbenchperinc*) were those that reflected the use of a specific type of benchmarking process. Naturally, cities that do use benchmarks to measure progress are also cities using the various benchmark measures and methods. What the data reveals is there are key variables that create composite for benchmark cities. (Table 3) Also, the correlations were strong with a pattern of particular services. In Chapter 5, the trends in typical services were highlighted. Therefore, before beginning any regression analysis, it was important to test for any interactions between variables that might eventually influence the regression results.

Correlation of Key Variables with “Yes” Benchmarking Cities	
Variable	Pearson’s Coefficient
Measures Development Review Process	.800
Uses Performance Indicators	.739
Uses Benchmark Targets	.700
Measures Code Enforcement	.664
Measures Plan Check	.635
Benchmark Program Linked to Budget Goals	.626
Measures Building Inspections	.626

Table 4 - Summary Pearson's Chart

Testing for Interaction

Given the close correspondence of many variables, an issue arose regarding the potential interaction between variables. In other words, the researcher needed to determine whether the variables would eventually be explanatory variables of characteristics of cities using a system of benchmark indicators, or whether these variables were simply a result of cities already having benchmarking practices in place.

The initial elimination of certain variables was largely based on the rationale behind the survey questions and answers themselves. All variables in which the answers involved specific characteristics of a benchmarking practice were eliminated. For example, questions regarding the type of benchmarking used (benchmarking targets, performance indicators, or outcome indicators) were removed as potential variables to test using regression analysis. Because the regression analysis was to be used to model the *probability* of a city adopting benchmarking given it’s policies and

characteristics, the inclusion of variables in which the city already uses a benchmarking system was clearly redundant.

As a second measure, running cross-tabulations had also tested the interaction of variables. The cross-tabulations served to address a number of objectives. For one, it enabled a more detailed analysis of the relationships between variables and their associations to the summary statistics discussed in Chapter 5. Moreover, it checked for missing variables through its case-processing summary, and through the count created in cross tabulations. Perhaps most importantly, it allowed the testing for interaction between specific variables. Special consideration was given to the chi-square test and corresponding coefficient. The following is an example of one cross-tabulation that was run:

This question “In what ways were your elected officials involved in your benchmarking process?” is cross tabbed with cities that marked “Yes: to using a system of performance indicators. The output first generates a simple matrix of total counts:

WeoInvFocus * PerIndicator

		PerIndicator		Total
		0	1	
WeoInvFocus	0	84	58	142
	1	3	8	11
Total		87	66	153

Table 5 - Crosstabs: Performance Indicator Cities Using Elected Official Focus Groups

In all cases, variables are coded as dummy variables. This means that all variables will have one of two codes: 1 if the answer is yes, and 0 if the answer is no. In this case, those cities that do use a system of performance indicators have a code of 1 for the variable perindicator, and 0 otherwise. Likewise, for those cities whose elected officials participation in the benchmarking process took the form of a focus group, their response is coded as 1, and 0 otherwise. In this case, there were a total of 153 cities surveyed with non-missing responses to both questions. 66 of the cities answered positively to having a system of performance indicators, while 87 did not. Likewise, 11 cities had elected officials that participated in the benchmarking process through focus groups, while 142 did not. Of those cities, 8 cities within the sample of 153 used a system of performance indicators *and* had elected officials participate through focus groups.

By browsing these matrices, one is able to get a general sense of the relationships that exists within the sample data, and where there are greater frequencies of correlated or parallel activity.

The second portion of output generated when running correlation matrices is as follows:

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.231(b)	1	.040		
Continuity Correction(a)	3.031	1	.082		
Likelihood Ratio	4.254	1	.039		
Fisher's Exact Test				.057	.041

Linear-by-Linear Association	4.203	1	.040		
N of Valid Cases	153				
a Computed only for a 2x2 table					
b 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.75.					

Symmetric Measures						
		Value	Asymp. Error(a)	Std.	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.166	.077		2.072	.040(c)
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.166	.077		2.072	.040(c)
N of Valid Cases		153				
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.						
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.						
c. Based on normal approximation.						

Table 6 - Chi Square Tests For Goodness Of Fit And Tests Of Independence

Pearson's chi-square is used to assess two types of comparison: tests of goodness of fit and tests of independence. A test of goodness of fit establishes whether or not an observed frequency distribution is different from a population (or parent) distribution. In statistics, a frequency distribution is a list of the values that a variable takes in a sample. It is usually a list, ordered by quantity, showing the number of times each value appears. This goodness of fit statistic will become important when regression analysis begins, particularly with respect to the maximum likelihood tests that will be explained further in this chapter.

A test of independence assesses whether paired observations on two variables are independent of each other. If the two are absolutely independent, there is clearly a correlation between the two variables.

The Pearson's chi-squared test can be interpreted through the Pearson's R. The Pearson coefficient is a statistic, which estimates the correlation of the two random variables. The coefficient ranges from -1 to 1. A value of 1 shows that a linear equation describes the relationship perfectly and positively, with all data points lying on the same line and with Y increasing with X. A score of -1 shows that all data points lie on a single line but that Y increases as X decreases. A value of 0 shows that a linear model is inappropriate – that there is no linear relationship between the variables.

In our example case, the Pearson's R is near zero, 0.166. This explains that there is a non-linear relationship between the use of performance indicators in a city and the involvement of elected officials in focus groups. What little relationship does exist is positive. While the initial count matrix gave an indication to this result, because there were so few cities that had a “yes” answer to both questions (you may remember that there were only eight cities of the sample of 153), the Pearson's tests helped quantify this finding with more statistical precision. While the results of the other tests were also considered, the Pearson's correlation test was the most important criteria in this exercise of determining correlations between given variables.

The results of the Pearson's correlations have been listed above. As one may see by the chart of significant correlations, the list of potential important relationships

between variables within the dataset remained very long. The next step in the modeling process, therefore, would be to attempt to find a way to identify a smaller, more relevant group of independent variables to include in the final modeling process. This process was done by running a series of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions. OLS models provided a process by which to test the significance of given variables, in order to establish a more refined list of variables to test in the final modeling process.

Ultimately, this final modeling process uses a Maximum Likelihood Probability method, either a logit or probit model. This was known because of two reasons: 1) the variables were coded binomially, and 2) Pearson's coefficients often displayed non-linear relationship between variables. However, running OLS models provided a fitting and efficient method in which to test of initial significance of independent variables.

Part 3: Modeling and Regression Analysis

Preliminary Linear Regression Analysis

Once the dataset had been cleaned and sorted, an initial set of linear regression models were estimated. The regressions were estimated using Ordinary Least Squares methods (OLS). Additionally, an ANOVA test was run. Three initial models were created, mostly to test the significance of variables within different equations. The objective of establishing the three initial regressions was to have a starting-off point in which to develop a more comprehensive final model. The results for the three models can be found in Appendix B.

Characteristics as predictors showed up in early data sets and also in Chapter 5. The characteristics were cities that had an involved and participatory set of elected officials, cities where the benchmark program was linked to a strategic plan, whether the City has a planning and development vision statement, or where cities have had city functions that have been impacted by privatization.

Specified Regressions Modeling

The preliminary linear regression modeling allowed a statistical context in which a more controlled analysis could take place. The modeling shed some light on the effect of specific variables and their place in the analysis. Accordingly, a more specific model was tested. This model was as follows:

The dependent variable remained *sysbenchperinc*. The potential explanatory variables were: the city communicates progress with citizens using the budget document, proactiveness of a city manager, level of regulatory practice of city department, length of manager's tenure, whether housing programs and city population was increasing, whether the city's public functions had been affected by privatization.

The result of the model can be found in Appendix C. As a reminder, the definition of these variables can be found in Appendix B.

The results show fairly robust model, with an adjusted r-square of 0.574. Moreover, the OLS had established a more refined list of independent variables that had significant coefficients. The researcher felt compelled to build a more complete model, yet needed to avoid the common pitfalls of data-mining. In other words, it was necessary to find logical explanations for the creation of a more complete model.

without reverting to a simple trial and error of variables. It was therefore moved to a different regression technique – a probit model – a probability method was employed.

Part 4: Results and Findings

Building a final model

Given that many of the independent variables were in binomial form, running an ordinary least squares regression was not necessarily the best methodology. Moreover, the interpretation of coefficients was such that the model was testing the *probability* of a city using a system of benchmark practices, versus not using benchmark practices. Therefore, even the dependent variable could be explained binomially.

For this reason, a Binary Response model was used as the final methodology for the modeling. A probit was decided on rather than logit mostly for the sake of ease of interpretation of coefficients. The most significant difference between a probit and a logit is that the former assumes randomly distributed error terms. Given the past tests done up to this point, the researcher felt confident that this was in fact the case, and therefore chose a binary probit model as the choice regression methodology.

The final list of independent variables to be tested was determined by the prior OLS modeling. The list was as follows:

Weoinvpa: Is involvement of elected officials participatory?

BPlinkstrategic: Is your benchmark program linked to a strategic plan?

Metdeterachieve: Achievement of benchmark targets is the method of determining department success.

Less5years: Has your manager been in his/her current position for less than 5 years?

Morethan12years: Has your manager been in his/her current position for more than 12 years?

Complandevision: Does you community have a planning and development vision statement?

Private: Are your planning services being impacted by privatization?

While some of the variables were coded binomially, others were not. This dual system of coding is generally acceptable, but in certain cases, the data may be difficult to interpret. Such a case was the variable regarding the city manager's tenure. The variable had been coded using four categories of tenure: Less than 5 years; 5-8 years; 9-12 years; and more than twelve years. After plotting a histogram of this variable against the dependent variable, it was clear that some relationship existed for the tail ends of the tenure, but not the middle years. Therefore, two dummy variables were created to represent a length of tenure of city manager less than 5 years and more than 12 years, to further explore the relationships of the data.

The Final Model Results

After running a probit model, the final model was as follows:

<u>Dependent Variable</u>	<u>Regression Coeff.</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>Coeff./S.E.</u>
BPLINKST (Budget is linked to Strategic Plan)	.18456	.09583	1.92588
WEOINVPA (Involvement of elected officials is participatory)	.12721	.09521	1.33610
METDET1 (Method of determination through achievement)	.16247	.08529	1.90493
DLESS5YR	-.06592	.09791	-.67327

(Director/Manager Tenure less than 5 years)			
DMORE12Y	-.07833	.10727	-.73018
(Director/Manager Tenure more than 12 years)			
PRIVATE	.05820	.11824	.49228
(Have city functions been affected by privatization?)			
COMPLAND	.05610	.08534	.65738
(Comprehensive Plan)			

Table 7 - Probit Model Results for Significant Variables

As with any binary logistic model, the interpretation of the model is built upon the probability of the base case. In this case, the base case is that a city does not use a benchmarking system. The coefficients, therefore, quantify the increased or decreased probability of a change to the base case. In other words, the model helps explain the change in the likelihood that a city implements a benchmarking system given the characteristics described by the dependent variables.

The author would also like to draw special attention to the question of the significance of the variables. As noted earlier in this chapter, the significance of the variables used was determined through the series of preliminary OLS regressions. The lists of dependent variables were thus chosen because of their significant coefficients within the OLS modeling.

In discussing the probit coefficient and linear probability, it is the “T” statistic that provides the critical value. The “T” distribution with a 153 (number) sample is 1.98 for the value with a coefficient/S.E. greater than 1.98 the significance is at the 95% or greater level. For a value with a coefficient/S.E. greater than 1.66 it is significant at the 90% or greater level. Anything below may have some bearing on probability but the significance is so low, it is ignored.

Findings and Interpretation

There were several important findings. The model predicts a higher likelihood of adopting benchmarking for cities that already have other systems of regulation and marking progress in place. For example, cities that already have a budget linked to a strategic plan in significant at the 90% level. However, there is no coefficient of significance we can use for predictability for the involvement of elected officials. It appears that there is some relationship, but not at a high enough confidence level. The methods of determination for Departments success through the use of benchmark targets were significant. In other words, cities that have already have some of the steps in place, in terms of measurement and efficient governance, have a much greater likelihood of supplementing these practices with benchmarking systems.

Moreover, the results with regard to tenure of manager would imply that these likelihoods increase when the director/manager is in the prime of his/her career. Yet the level of significance is not conclusive. A director/manager that is too new may not yet have the resources or leverage to establish a system of benchmarks. Conversely, a director/manager with a long tenure may have lost motivations or career incentives to undergo the benchmarking process. The effect of tenure is consistent with expectation, as well as the affects of privatization. The model did not produce a strong coefficient, but it was consistent.

In the same vein, the impact of privatization on city services has a positive impact on the probability of benchmark system implementation. Privatization may be a means to encourage efficiencies among city services, and may therefore lead to

greater accountability measures such as a system of benchmarking. Again the model does not bear significant results at the 90% confidence level.

Although there were not many cities (18) who said their planning services were impacted, the probability did increase in cities that were under this pressure.

We have learned from the data that the linkage to strategic planning is key. It is clear from the data that the long-term effects of building upon some set of measures increases the likelihood of a city practicing community benchmarks. The remaining variables are interesting, but not significant. Chapter 7 will look at some of the practices of the mid-size cities surveyed.

Chapter Seven: Methods to Manage and Measure Results

To this point, the research has established a growing use of benchmark in the practice of planning in mid-size cities. Despite the events of the national crisis on September 11, 2001 and the following economic and financial crises, performance benchmarking continues to evolve. During the time period between 2000 and 2004, additional momentum for accountability and transparency of government were evidenced. It is evidenced by numerous websites highlighting a variety of cities' initiatives, by the growing number of ICMA Center for Performance training events, and by the increased state level executive orders. In the twenty-first Century several states have embarked on new initiatives, including the California Office of the Governor, California Performance Review, Texas Performance Review, Minnesota Office of Strategic Planning and Results, Iowa Department of Management, Iowa Excellence, and State of Washington Executive Order on quality and performance for Service Delivery. The State of Oregon continues its efforts with the new executive Order for "Regulatory Streamlining," and Oregon Shines remains in place. Virginia's Results Program is housed within the department of planning and budget.

It was always the intent of the researcher to document the use of benchmarking, and also to provide community development departments an assortment of methods and resources to set up a results program. Included in this chapter are some examples of approaches from specific cities. Each city is in a different stage of progress in their process of establishing benchmark programs for planning. However, what makes each unique is there is no one right way of becoming

accountable. It is more important to match your city's program to meet the goals and expectations of the community. It is highly recommended to give it a try at the grass roots level for a meaningful community benchmarks model.

Local governments in the United States have access to a professional organization to guide them in this effort. City governments can enroll as a participating jurisdiction in the International City Manager's Association (ICMA) Center for Performance Measurement. The Center was created in 1994 and has 120 participating jurisdictions. Since 1994, the ICMA Center for Performance Measurement has grown in experience, added new services, and is a good source of training for cities. The Center's facilitate the analysis of cities, collects data, operates a web site and provides management practices to program participants. The Center for Performance Measurement has refocused its recent effort towards results oriented and outcome based measures.

Joining the organization may be beyond the budgetary reach of smaller and mid-size cities, so it is advisable for cities to do some of their own research. It is also recommended that original thinking, meaningful to the jurisdiction in which they are planning, is a very important step. Some examples of key websites that contain examples and such information are:

- http://www.fresno.gov/city_officials/mayor/CEAWebnoppendices.pdf

City of Fresno, CA

Mayor's Council of Economic Advisors, Meeting the Challenge, Task Force
Report on City Efficiencies and Revenues

- <http://www.cityoftacoma.org/52tedd/images/MeasurementReport-2003.pdf>
City of Tacoma, WA, Tacoma Economic Development Department,
Performance Measures Report
- <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/04-05/downloads/pb0405v1.pdf>
City of Austin, TX Performance Volume 1 -- General Fund
- http://www.ci.gresham.or.us/departments/ocm/Strategic_Plan/Gresham_Strategic_Plan_Final.pdf
City of Gresham, OR, City of Gresham, Strategic Plan

The survey data revealed that the overwhelming majority of cities do not have time and money to budget for the benchmark process. However, in the open-ended responses of the mid-size cities, some cities reportedly do have money available to supplement their normal activities with some performance-oriented efforts. The practices of city management are to use creative means to budget for the process. As documented in the Community Benchmarks Survey 2000/2001 cities reported that they have dollars budgeted and utilized in a variety of funds, such as:

1. Five-Year capital plan - responsive public services program
2. Staff positions allocated to the effort—also postage.
3. Dollars budgeted for Benchmarking in Administration's Budget
4. Biennial City Survey Fund
5. Performance budgeting, and achievement of selected targets result in financial incentives to the Department's program

Some cities reported that they did have strategic planning and budget allocations available for benchmarking. Other noted that their planning projects absorbed the cost of performance measurement and set the standards. In other cities, plans were identified, such as, the strategic plan, recreation plans, CDBG action plans, and the budget document, which contain standards for performance.

In 2004, a brief follow-up survey was conducted to assess city progress in measuring value of their services to the public, and to test their current status. Selected cities for follow-up case study are Boise, Idaho, Ventura, California, Eugene, Oregon, Tacoma, Washington, and Roanoke, Virginia.

The basis for the selection was to have a representative city from a “no” and a “yes” in 2000 and to determine if any change in status had occurred. The researcher was familiar with the selected cities by association.

City of Boise, Idaho

Requested Information	Boise, Idaho Information
Form of government	Strong Mayor form of Government
Benchmark program	Types of methods utilized: Benchmarks/Outcome Measures and Performance Measures Techniques for measuring progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Timeframes/Permits & Review b. Approval Rates – includes # of appeals c. Response time for inspections, complaints and completion d. Public Hearing Participation e. New locations of business Elected officials were participatory in policy development and took a strong leadership role.
Population	199,416 in 2003
Budget	Adopted budget 2004 - \$439,538,904 Adopted budget 2005 - \$443,152,660
Number of employees	Budget 2005 FTE - 1469
Number of community development/planning employees	Budget 2005 FTE - 94
Socioeconomic data including:	
Average household income	\$63,045
Five leading employers or industries	Micron Technology Hewlett Packard Albertson's Boise Regional Hospital Boise Cascade

Table 8 - Summary of Boise, Idaho

Originally reporting as a “Yes” city in the baseline benchmarking survey, Boise, Idaho continued to be a “yes” city in 2004. According to the Planning Director who completed the survey in 2001, Boise had 10 years of benchmarking and performance measuring experience. Their early experience was primarily through the budget process. The summary below list some key characteristics of Boise:

In Boise, benchmarks performance measures and outcomes all are used in the budget development process. Budget requests must be justified, in part, on this basis. In early 2004 the department division manager for economic development reported that the department usually analyzes the impact of planning projects for economic benefit to the City. A key feature of staff's annual compensation increase is based on merit, which is determined by annual evaluations. The department must satisfactorily meet the budget parameters, the City Council goal achievement schedule, and have a positive citizen approval rating in order to receive merit raises.

Customer feedback is gathered from the citizens and the city ranks as "important" the priority of communicating. The Disinvestment program is a key benchmark effort underway in the Community Development Department. The program provides indicators to the City Council about the relative health of neighborhoods, thus enabling them to prioritize planning and capital expenditures. The Disinvestments report provides the community with a view of problem areas, and allows the prioritization of community investments.

The City of Boise continues to grow in population and overall construction investments. There are two reasons given for this growth; 1) Net growth in immigration/birthrate, and 2) Boise has a relatively strong economy focused in construction, high tech industries, and natural resources industries. When asked whether the city is able to budget better by using a set of performance indicators or community benchmarks, the response was "It budgets better with community benchmarks." A slightly differing point of view regarding the benchmark program

was given in a phone interview with the Housing and Community Development Division Manager, Jan Blickenstaff, in October 2004—several month later.

The phone interview followed these questions:

1. Was there one person who championed benchmarking and continued on through the implementation? What happened when this person left the organization?

Because of the Strong Mayor form of government, the Mayor and the Budget Office have been the champions. The old Mayor recently resigned due to a minor scandal and all the top management team members have recently changed under the new administration.

However, the new Mayor is interested in a Strategic Budget—the key question the Mayor poses to Departments is “how do we pay for where we want to go? Accordingly to Mr. Blickenstaff, this change is extremely positive because it will take their performance measurement to the next level, beyond the 17 Points of Focus that Boise used in the past. Each year they were to have selected 3 points of the 17 to focus upon, but that got bogged down in the detail and wasn’t related to outcomes and results. Under the new Mayor those performance measures may change.

2. What did it really take to get the program implemented?

The State of Idaho began the 17 points of Focus in the mid-90s and was the impetus at the City to get more outcomes based. Jan Blickenstaff feels that the state vision was set too high and the expectations were not clear. Jan Blickenstaff came to the City from the State CDBG programs for rural development and was quite familiar

with the process. The problem the State ran into was that it was supposed to be qualitative and quantitative, but because no additional staff was added to the Comptroller's office, nothing very specific was ever achieved. The outcomes were too broad and general to be useful. In contrast, the City's program was almost entirely output-based measurement, and became a numbers counting game. The focus was primarily on growing the economy. To maintain it took strong Budget Office involvement and oversight.

3. Has the program evolved and resulted in strategic value?

Yes, it has evolved and the program will improve under the new administration. Currently the City is using output measures using percentages and ratios, which get at efficiency and effectiveness such as the following:

1. Transportation and airlines cost/passenger served
2. Repair and return of vehicles within a 2-day response time
3. Number of collections for in-flight persons
4. Number of units or loans provided for housing

As the new Director, Jan would like to improve these measures to create more outcome-based accountability. He will be tracking whether the number of complaints have gone down as a result of good service, or the number of satisfied customers growing. He would like to measure quantitatively the persons positively affected by his housing and community programs. He recently met with the Fair Housing Board to move his housing and community programs beyond counting the number of brochures mailed and into new types of outcome measures. He aims to achieve performance

measures, pushing for “better marketing and education for the citizens to get more people into housing.”

4. How much confidence do you have that the right things are being tracked?

The department has confidence that they are tracking the right things for the HUD HOME and CDBG programs because of the federal mandates. HUD demands reporting on the number of units assisted, etc and to make sure staff is collecting and reporting all the correct information. The problem is that currently this is not reported back to City Council in the budget process, and it does not always track the measures that are important to citizens.

5. What attention or value is given to the benchmark program by City Council?

The City Council and Mayor pay a lot of attention. Collectively they are trying to get much more out of the process. The City wants look at the legal framework of the city and review what it is organized to achieve, and then to do those services well. The City Council recently discussed this at a City Council meeting and wanted to move to outcomes with respect to police service, i.e. reduce the number of police incidents and to measure increase in satisfaction of the citizens affected by the crime.

In summary, Jan Blickenstaff states that outcomes are hard to document, but that he’s going to make the attempt. To quote: “I think that is what job satisfaction is all about, if you haven’t make a difference in someone’s life, then you’re just spinning your wheels.”

City of Ventura, CA

Requested Information	Ventura, CA. Information
Form of government	Council/manager
Benchmark program	2000 – No 2004-No
Population	105,145
Budget	Adopted budget 2005 - \$188,231,071
Number of employees	665 FTE
Number of community development/planning employees	34
Socioeconomic data including:	
Average household income	\$58,114 median
Five leading employers or industries	County of Ventura Ventura Unified School District Ventura County Healthcare Industry Ventura County Community College District Community Memorial Hospital

Table 9 - Summary of Ventura, California

The Ventura perspective is coming from the Community Development Department Director, Susan Daluddung, who is the researcher. I have collected some additional comments from our new City Manger who was brought on board recently to introduce new accountability into the city government process. Currently the council works from a two-year action plan, and from individual department work plans, Council referrals and policy considerations. In the past, work coming from the Council was not prioritized and reporting is something of a fire drill, which happens during the Budget and the Mayor's State of the City Address.

- 1. Was there one person who championed the benchmarking process and continued on through? If that person moves on will it have an affect on the measurement and performance?**

The City of Ventura has not had any set of consistent performance measures. Recently one city council member took the charge of championing it through the hiring of a new city manager, and the City Council placed performance measurement requirements in the new manager's contract. The City of Ventura plans to take a year to develop the program, and evolve towards outcomes. Currently a Pilot Program where staff is encouraged to develop their own set of measures will be put in the 2005 budget. The operating guidelines given by the City Manager were to "separate the important few from the trivial many" and "don't expect what you don't inspect." His approach has been to take a department approach to organizing the information into a baseline review. A peer review team was formed to help conduct the internal assessment and to provide an outside perspective on internal operations. Interaction with the peer review team member was also an opportunity to exchange information.

2. What will it take to really get the program implemented?

In the Community Development Department, all of the employees participated in a baseline operations review. The Department will be utilized the working benchmarking models from other mid-size cities who are successfully implementing programs. In 2000, the City of Ventura adopted a Vision, which sets the framework for the newly updated Comprehensive Plan. The department has integrated the Vision into a variety of the programs it administers already and tracks these on an annual basis, including the "livability index" for the Residential Growth Management Program (RGMP). In the newly initiated benchmark program, Community

Development will integrate community expectations, Council priorities, and the department's strategic plan with an expected set of results for the model.

3. Is the program being designed to evolve and result in strategic value to the City?

Yes, the City Council is in the process of discussing "what matters most?" based on their review of the Ventura Vision, their plans, and the recently completed operations review. This is being reviewed in the annual performance evaluation of the city manager. It will be utilized in the manager's evaluation of all of the department heads and the respective progress on accountability. For community development it will take some hard work to transfer output-based measures into outcome-based measures.

4. Have you tackled the question of whether the right things are being tracked?

Currently the some common measures being collected are:

- Revenue Collected (% increase)
- Planning cases successfully completed.
- Number of appeals following denial of a permit
- Businesses saved and jobs retained
- New housing and improved housing stock
- Additional hotel rooms and % of increase in tourism dollars

The City Council held a goal setting retreat in October 2004 calling for increased use of performance measures at the city. In response, the Community Development Department, under the direction of their Director, this researcher, came

up with a trial proposal. It is expected that these measure will be refined, added to, and included in the budget process for 2005.

5. What attention or value is given to the benchmark program by the City Council?

The City Manager's contract has performance measures in it, which includes the requirement to start a citywide program.

**Community Development Department
Performance Measures**

Administration:

Outcome:	Provide responsive service to citizens
Output:	Maintain high customer service satisfaction rate
Measure:	Establish customer survey form to determine customer satisfaction at the public counters

Long Range Planning:

Outcome:	Clear direction for implementation of Ventura Vision
Output:	Complete the update of the 1989 Comprehensive Plan
Measure:	Present updated Comprehensive Plan to City Council for approval by July 05

Urban Development:

Outcome:	Establish a streamlined entitlement process
Output:	Process development applications in a timely and efficient manner
Measure:	Average number of days for land use decision Percentage of zoning case appeals upheld by the City Council Entitlement of 250 new units of housing downtown by 12/05

Land Development Engineering:

Outcome:	Predictable, efficient engineering review
Output:	Timely plan check turnaround for all steps
Measure:	Establish tracking mechanism for turn around times for grading and improvement plans

Outcome: Provide responsive service to citizens
 Output: Deliver and ensure a timely response to citizen complaints associated with construction projects
 Measure: Maintain a 24 hour response time on all construction related complaints

Economic Development:

Outcome: A vital, prosperous and stable economy
 Output: Attract and retain investment that builds a vibrant economy
 Measure: Tax revenue increase
 # of new jobs created
 # of businesses attract and retain

Affordable Housing:

Outcome: Facilitate development of a variety of housing for all income levels
 Output: Achieve Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA)
 Measure: Achieve 60% results in each category by next cycle

CDBG/HOME:

Outcome: Enhanced neighborhood livability and a balanced mix of housing for all income levels
 Output: Coordinate, monitor and complete CDBG projects and activities
 Measure: Meet HUD annual spending requirements

Redevelopment Agency

Outcome: Strengthen Downtown through revitalization, public/private partnerships and infrastructure improvements
 Output: Redevelop key downtown properties and improve infrastructure
 Measure: Increased tax increment revenue
 Increased downtown business activity
 Creation of affordable housing units

City of Eugene, OR

Requested Information	Eugene, OR Information
Form of government	City Council/Manager
Benchmark program	Yes-2000 Yes- 2004
Population	143,910 in 2003
Budget	Total budget for FY05 \$435,716,220
Number of employees	1407
Number of community development/planning employees	105 in 2003
Socioeconomic data including:	
Average household income	\$35,850 year 2000
Five leading employers or industries	Peace Health Oregon University of Oregon U.S. Government Lane Community College Lane County

Table 10 - Summary of Eugene, Oregon

In an interview with the City Manager's Office of Eugene it was reported that Eugene continues to be a "yes"-benchmarking city, and that the program continues to evolve. Performance information is reported in the budget document and in stand-alone performance reports. In the year 2000, Eugene had just started their program. They began training and collecting benchmark information in the late 1990's. The interview was conducted in September 2004 with Terrie Monroe, Service Improvement Manager in the Mayor's Office.

1. Was there one person who championed benchmarking in the City and continued it through implementation? If that person moved on, did it have an effect?

The Mayor and City Manager's Office have long been the champions of performance measurement and began actively exploring managing for results in the late 1990's. Under the Mayor's direction the City joined the ICMA Center for

Performance Management and has received the Certificate of Distinction from the Center for the past two years. The budget remains the primary reporting tool, but change is underway. Eugene City Manager's goal is to have an approachable community focused performance document, in addition to the budget's performance measures.

The program is not dependent upon any one person. Various people have provided leadership, particularly in the Mayor's Office and the budget staff. There really has been no one lone champion, as it's a group effort. People have moved on, and the program continues to grow in sophistication as new knowledge enters the organization.

Profiles and strategic plans were undertaken for each service delivered. By joining the ICMA Center for Performance Management program, staff gained necessary tools and education to carry it through.

2. What did it really take to get the program implemented?

Although the culture of performance started long ago, the City of Eugene began its current program informally in the mid-90s with the use of service profiles. Over the first years many employees were afraid of the data, particularly comparative data. Once management used the information more for establishing best practices than to compare in a punitive manner the programs advanced. The staff fear was management making value judgments as to the quality of their work. Terrie Monroe felt, for that reason, it was not used as an effective evaluation tool, but more of a tool of communication.

3. Has the program evolved and resulted in strategic value?

Yes, the strategic plans are actively integrated into the functional areas of each department. According to the City Manager's Office staff it is a "great learning tool and a good communication device." The City does not report a direct result on accountability.

Because the information is primarily a tool of communication, both the public officials and the citizens use it broadly. Even when the message is a negative service indicator, it is communicated with elected officials. The ideal is to get better management tools or additional resources to turn the service problem into a positive result. According to Terrie Monroe, the program will continue to evolve because the Sloan Foundation, the National Foundation for Civic Organization, recently selected Eugene to trial the next level of reporting. From this effort will evolve a new set of service profiles and accomplishments.

4. How much confidence exists regarding whether the right things are being tracked?

The primary performance measures were originally reported through the budget. Statements of performance were asserted with no supporting data or information displayed in the charts. In the early years, the data was not accessible and was often drowned out in words. In the past the public was unable to relate the data points to the text, because they really were not connected. The data is now more straightforward and relates to information requested by the public officials. There are lots of graphics and pictures that directly tie into community goals. The community

goals are reflected into strategic plans. All of this added together gives the City of Eugene the confidence that they are reporting the right information.

5. What attention, or value, is given to the benchmark program by the City Council and Mayor's Office?

The Mayor doesn't use it that much. He sees the results with the rest of City Council as they are published. When he has an activity and needs a report, he will ask for the hard facts.

6. Did the state's program have any influence on the City's accountability efforts?

Oregon Shines had a tremendous impact, especially in the early years. The statewide process inspired people here at the city, most important our early city manager champion who was here in the mid 1990's. It helped to get us started, although there were no lasting requirements or state guidelines imposed.

In Eugene, it's the citizens who review and approve the performance measures through the budget committee. It's a very local process and has relevance to the public here, more than at the state level. In Eugene, citizen involvement is the highest priority. Even the Council members do not select the measures. Citizens use the strategic plan and profiles, and learn about city government.

The City Council uses the program to report out to the public and specifically requested a more approachable document because it is valuable to them. The Council requested the stand-alone performance report and city staff will produce completely

new service efforts and accomplishments report to satisfy this direction. The City does not tie their performance measures to merit increases in any way.

To summarize Terrie Monroe reports: “I want the public to be able to access the information in a way that is meaningful.”

City of Tacoma, WA

Requested Information	Tacoma, WA Information
Form of government	Strong Manager/City Council
Benchmark program	2000 – Yes 2004 - Yes
Population	196,300 (2003)
Budget	Total Budget (2002-2003)-\$ 2,052,357,955 Enterprise fund (Budget) - \$1,103,691,645 General Funds (Budget) - \$335,739,030
Number of employees	
Number of community development/planning employees	45 staff
Socioeconomic data including:	
Average household income	\$45,610
Five leading employers or industries	U.S. Army – Fort Lewis Local Public School District (K-12) U. S. Air Force (McChord AFB) State of Washington Multicare Health System

Table 11 - Summary of Tacoma, Washington

In 2000, Tacoma had seven years of experience with a benchmark performance indicator program for long-range planning. The City had just initiated a program of economic development measures. The City reported primarily using outcome indicators for the development review process, housing programs, tourism as well as long range planning and economic development.

The Tacoma Economic Development Department publishes a performance measures report to report on progress is available on their website. Outcome based measures tied to an adopted set of goals. The City Council adopted the plan, and staff set the measurements. Below is a sample of the information on their website.

Goal: Attract Investment that Builds a Vibrant Economy

Providing for new job creation (outcome)

80% of new jobs coming from existing businesses (outcome indicator)

Goal: Strengthen the Heart of the City

Provide an effective incentive for multi-family developers (outcome)

4 projects and 105 new units of housing (outcome indicator)

Goal: Establish Tacoma as a Destination City

Use Cultural institutions to help anchor downtown (outcome)

Number Of total attendance increase (outcome indicator)

Goal: Enhance Neighborhood Livability

Number of units assisted and city investment in housing projects

Dollars - city and private investment for home improvement and down payment assistance

In a phone interview with Michelle Regan, Administrative Services Manager, for the Tacoma Economic Development Department in October 2004, further insight into the program was provided. Tacoma was a “yes” City in the year 2000 and continues to be a “yes” City in 2004, and is currently preparing for the 2005 reports.

1. Was there one person who championed the benchmarking and continued it on through to implementation? If that person moved on, did it have an effect?

There was one clear champion in 1999, and that was the City Manager. He was later fired and is no longer at the City. However, he worked with several City Council members to get this program off the ground, and the momentum continues to exist. Both the City Council and the manager gave a good deal of support to the trenches to get the program started. It’s too early to say at this point how much will continue in 2005 because of looming budget cuts, and losses in revenue. In fact, our

Department was originated because of the Strategic Plan and Performance Measures Report. The Department was created in 1999 as a result of the four goals listed above, and was implemented in the year 2000. The Department Director left earlier this year for a job at the State of Washington, however; clearly she was the champion at the department level.

Budget cuts have driven the elimination and re-alignment of some positions. The economic development portion will be preserved, but potential cuts in culture and tourism are on the horizon. The Growth Management Division is comparable to the planning director and will remain mostly intact. The Statewide Washington Growth Management Act drives the continued need for planners. Also, there is a reporting mechanism attached to the planning goals at the state level.

2. What did it really take to get the program implemented?

Basically, it took the overall goals of City council to be established, and then the departments could connect their outcomes with the City's strategic plan. The Department Director and management staff sat down to figure out what was needed to help the City Council achieve its overall goal. There was a pretty high level of involvement at the City Manager's Office as well as Budget and Finance. Obviously from our department, everybody wants to know how private investment has been leveraged by public investment, and how many jobs have been added or retained.

3. Has the program evolved and resulted in strategic value?

Clearly, the strategic plan was the original driver of the program, and the department. The City Council current strategic plan is the:

1. Provide a safe, healthy, livable community (police, fire, housing programs and planning have most of these goals)
2. Balanced, vibrant economy (primarily economic development goals)
3. A results-oriented government (all departments)

To add a more detailed level to the Council's strategic plan, the Tacoma economic development department has created a business plan that looks at all the things we need to do on our level to get the job done. Most of it was created at the department level. We've got some pretty good thinkers and we knew the things we needed.

4. How much confidence exists regarding whether the right things are being tracked?

I would not say it has really good statistical or evaluation data. I think it serves three main purposes that all are pretty good. It is a good document internally to reflect and analyze our accomplishments. It is a great promotional tool to pull off the shelf whenever a report is needed, or the Director has to provide information at a meeting. Most of all I think it helps because it keeps us focused on our City Council goals. I am not sure what value it has to the community, because I don't think we test that.

5. What attention or value is given to the benchmark program by City Council? Does the Mayor's office use it for reporting?

The Council looks at it with their annual review of the goals, but beyond that we really don't know. We think it is important because their goals were done first. At that time the budget and finance directors were very involved in the process of

selecting, publishing, and involving staff. They wanted to make sure that we were able to collect the data to be able to report to Council and the Mayor.

6. Does the State program have any influence with regards to your City Program?

Yes, there is some effort towards standardizing the budget based on State goals to become more outcome based. It is not a state requirement but Tacoma has been moving forward on outcomes since 2000, and it is a good parallel to the State. Also, as mentioned earlier, with the State Growth Management Act there is a continued need for plan to do their annual comp Plan updates, the critical area ordinances, shoreline protection and other state mandated goals.

In conclusion, Michelle Regan gave her perspective of the benchmark program:

“ I happen to be the lead in our department. We’re proud of our record and we’ve been able to report consistently over the last four years. It’s a way for us to recap and highlight our best efforts to the City Council and the community.”

City of Roanoke, Virginia

Requested Information	Roanoke, Virginia Information
Form of government	Council/Manager
Benchmark program	2000-No 2004-No
Population	2003 Provisional Estimate 92,853
Budget	\$211,776,000
Number of employees	1818 FTE
Number of community development/planning employees	32
Socioeconomic data including:	
Average household income	\$29,283
Five leading employers or industries	Carilion Health System Roanoke County Public Schools Roanoke City Public Schools City of Roanoke Wachovia Banking

Table 12 - Summary of Roanoke, Virginia

When the City of Roanoke, Virginia first responded to the Community Benchmarks survey in early spring 2001 it was a “no” benchmarking city. The City Planning Director reported, “ Unfortunately, we do not currently use benchmarks or performance measures, except in our public safety areas. However, we are pursuing indicators and additional measures at the present time. Our Comprehensive Plan sets the framework for a future system that we can use to evaluate performance. In addition the City Manager is moving towards mandatory Strategic Business Plans.

At that time Fire/Emergency Services and Police service had benchmark program in place for five years. Fire and Police used national standards for their targets. No measures were in place in the planning department. Roanoke had privatized some of their public services including solid waste management, i.e. trash collection and recycling, and the engineering project; i.e. survey, facility design, and construction.

In October of 2004 a follow-up phone survey question was administered to Housing and Neighborhood Services Director, Mike Etienne to determine if Roanoke had instituted a program as of yet. Mike reported the Roanoke is still a “no” city but pieces of a program are beginning to bubble up. He said that the City needs help to get the program started and that the primary focus was in securing new jobs and growth.

1. Have you begun any type of reporting for accountability and measurement?

Yes, we do follow the State of Virginia use of performance measure for use of Enterprise Funds. We track the “increase in tax assessments” in the city because we give away incentive funds for economic development. Performance is not evaluated in a formal citywide process, but is handled department by department. In Housing and Neighborhood Services, the housing programs, because of HUD requirements, and the code violation are the number one areas tracked. In Planning and Building the measures focus on zoning appeals, percent of cases approved consistent with staff recommendations for Planning Commission. Also, they track the percent of cases recommended by Commission and approved by City Council. The building inspectors track the average number of site inspections completed per inspector per day.

2. What are some of the obstacles that lie in the way of the City establishing a benchmark program?

There’s no real champion at the City Council level. It starts with the City Manager, and she is behind it, but it is not the highest priority of the city council, or Mayor. The City’s top priority is more jobs and neighborhood improvement. The city

is starting to put together some measures regarding neighborhood improvement, but it may take awhile to figure it out in terms of quality and outcomes. Every year the Mayor does a State of the City Address and everyone goes like crazy to get the information, but no method exists to collect it methodically throughout the year. We need information systems so we can be better organized and able to review progress. If we did it doesn't have to be a fire drill every time.

3. How much attention does the Council give to performance measurement- any examples of how it may have influenced their behavior?

The City Council does not pay a great deal of attention, not formally anyway. At a City Council meeting recently, one Council member got mad and demanded a report on how the City was doing attracting jobs. He demanded that they give him a report on attracting jobs this quarter. Only if they ask, will we do all the work to create the report. The Budget Office did report to me that they do have standards for reporting that are captured in the budget report.

4. In your Department, do you expect to move Roanoke forward with performance measurement in the future?

I think so, but we're not a big city like Richmond and we lack resources. We do track the number of cases closed, and we track the decrease in our code violations. We track the decrease because we've invested a lot of time of education of the public including: knocking on doors and talking, passing out fliers regarding code violations, doing TV informational spots, etc. People have been taking care of violations themselves, which is an effective method. Our City Manager, Darlene sends letter

thanking the citizens for fixing a violation. Overall, our budget department has had performance measurement “on their plate” for a while now. In summary Mike Etienne reports: “You always hear the need for money, resources—it would be good to have funding for a consolidated set up for performance management and benchmarking. Grant programs would be very helpful.”

In a follow-up survey to probe the budget staff, the researcher talked with Roanoke’s budget division, R. B. Lawhorn, Budget Management Analyst. He says the city has tried since 2001 to do several departments per year, and his primary job was to work with Departments to begin looking at counting beyond widgets. The Budget office is working towards measures of customer service, quality; as well as cost. It is slowly evolving.

5. Did the State’s program have any influence on the cities?

R. B. Lawhorn responded to the question by saying that he was not aware of the State of Virginia having a great deal of influence. Roanoke has been working with a local college, Radford University in Radford, Virginia to develop some standardized measures. The goal of the university is to have some financial and non-financial examples posted on their web site. He thinks the state may have helped push this along by giving the university grants. The approach is to provide a resource for local government, as opposed to a central repository of measures mandated by the state.

In summary, Mr. Lawhorn said: “We’re slowly evolving but our goal is to have a Balanced Score Card, similar to Charlotte, North Carolina.”

Summary Section:

This analysis shows a variety of approaches. Cities and their application are a rich source of data modeling and provide a basis for comparison. As a practical guide, local government can learn a lot from each other's experiences and not have to reinvent the wheel in putting together a program that fits their community. There are common themes also reflected in current literature. The literature has provided several models that can be adapted to the local government. Jerry Harbour provides some examples of productivity approaches in concise yet detailed summary. In The Basis Of Performance Measurement, he provides brief examples of the types of performance measure available and show how they can be used. He summarized approach to creating a performance measurement system and advises the modeler to "piggyback on existing information collection and distribution systems to obtain performance-related information.... and to develop collection and distribution methods that assure timeliness and usability", (Harbour, p. 54). This reinforces the input from cities that were reviewed and their emphasis on information should add value to the process and be relevant to the users of the information. Harbour's point regarding a performance measurement hierarchy is relevant. As noted, "providing the right level of information to the right persons at the right time is critical for optimizing overall organizational performance." (Harbour, 1997.)

In a very detailed and extensive look at the techniques of benchmarking studies, Bjorn Anderesen and Per-Gaute Pettersen take another approach to benchmarking using comparison of performance, processes and strategic

benchmarking. Their book's title The Benchmarking Handbook: Step-by-step instructions is primarily for the private sector, however some of their principles were those reflected by the cities in the case studies. "It is very important to achieve a balance between the ambitions for a benchmarking project, the time set aside for it, and the resources one is willing to allocate. It is decisive for the results that the project participant fully understands the process that is being benchmarked....It is also important to include the people in the process in the team. Every member of the benchmarking team must be trained in benchmarking. Benchmarking is well-suited for creating enthusiasm." (Bjern and Pettersen, 1996, p. 130-131)

In a newly published document, Tools For Decision Making, David Ammons continues to provide a guide for analyzing performance relative to selected target, or to other cities. He provides instruction on calculating the costs for privatization decisions. Although not many of the cities interviewed felt the full threat of privatization of local government services, many services were being privatized. Several local governments noted in the literature included Phoenix, Indianapolis and Charlotte. Mr. Ammons has studied these cities and others and has come up with a methodology for calculating and identifying full costs. He discusses "go-away costs", because only that portion of full costs of an in-house program or service that will actually go away when the service is produced by an outside entity." Ammons, (2003). He advises cities to look at a full range of impacts including previously shared capital equipment, vacated space, whether any staff would indeed be reduced by the action of privatization. All in all a variety of approaches and resources are available for cities,

and little specialized knowledge are necessary at the outset, if thorough research and training is completed during the process.

Chapter Eight: Community Benchmarks Research Conclusions

Definition of Community Benchmarking Terms

This research has documented historically the contextual characteristics that are important to defining benchmarking cities. The descriptive statistics reveal relevant and interesting data regarding urban planning management. Current management trends regarding cities' approaches to accountability are established. Clear distinction and definitions for terminology used by managers are presented. The terminology of new urban managers can vary as this is not an exact science and ambiguity exists among the various practitioners. This research has attempted to clarify some of that ambiguity and provide definitions.

Community benchmarks are outcomes set by governments to measure whether the desired result has been achieved. The outcome is the long-term community goal expressed by the citizens, elected and appointed officials. The outcome is why a city wants to achieve a goal. In general, the outcomes are broad, principled and lofty goals not easily measured by a simple target. Benchmark targets are specifically established to measure whether the outcomes that are set up are achieved. If they are successfully related to a community, they are measured by the use of one or more targets.

On its own a target can have more than one aspect of measurement. Because a benchmark target is often complex, more than one indicator can be set up to measure progress. Outcome indicators can be measurements of progress or they can be actual outputs, such as completion of a comprehensive place update.

The outputs are the specified products that move a government towards the outcome, i.e. steps or objectives met along the way to the long-term outcome. The outputs are the WHAT it will take to achieve the outcome. Outputs are important because they define steps along the way to meeting a community benchmark, albeit they shouldn't be substituted for the outcome. If outputs are solely used, a community can lose sight of why the community wanted to achieve the goal. The inputs are the resources invested by the government to deliver on these outputs, and arrive at the final outcome. The inputs describe HOW and WHERE staff, City Council, and the community will get the work accomplished. The various measures along the way define their collective progress. All the terminology is on a continuum used to measure progress of a governmental decisions and investments of resources. Cities use one or more of these techniques, often interchangeably, without a great deal of consistency.

The expectation of this research was that the cities using these practices could be defined by key contextual variables. The variables designed in the survey construct were centered on management systems, operating policies and political frameworks that define a city planning operations.

Typology Of Benchmarking Cities: Summary

The contextual theory of benchmarking cities involves the following characteristics:

- a. Linkage between measurement systems and comprehensive or strategic plan
- b. Participatory elected officials to provide leadership in accountability

- c. Measurements and accountability are linked to private sector goals
- d. Cities with service functions affected by privatization
- e. Management is experienced in measuring performance
- f. Planning departments would be likely to have measurements for plan check, housing programs, inspections and the development review process.
- g. Indicators and measurements are tied to the budget process

The theory is that both procedurally and politically an awareness of systematically measuring performance exists and is embedded in the organization. The survey was set up to test this theory.

The researcher finds it difficult to document in a statistical model conclusive defining characteristics of mid-size benchmarking cities. However, significant information on the context of benchmarking cities was revealed. Data supports the increasing practice of accountability; the idea that cities have bought into benchmarks increasingly over the past 25 years is demonstrated. The data reinforces the notion of professionalism in city management as a key factor in city's decision to provide community benchmarks. Also the data strongly suggests that management and staff in benchmarking cities have internalized the notions of accountability.

Cities evidenced a growing phenomenon in the United States of understanding and integrating into daily vernacular the management tools of accountability. The work tasks and the practices of performance, best practices and benchmarking are familiar concepts to many city planners and are used with varying level of competence by city planning departments. The researcher has learned a good deal about these

practices from the department heads and managers who responded to the survey of mid-size cities, and the follow-up case studies. The conclusive statistical results are demonstrated below:

- Responses of the sample cities indicated that 58% of the cities surveyed were practicing benchmarks.
- The primary method of linking planning progress to a city document is the budget however; the second most popular method is the Comprehensive, or General Plan.
- Performance Indicators are primarily used to measure efficiency and effectiveness rather than outcome indicators and benchmark targets.
- A high degree of involvement of elected and appointed officials is critical to the existence of a benchmark program.
- Community benchmarks are more likely to occur in cities already practicing efficiency and performance measures.
- Cities with benchmark programs are likely to have a strong city manager form of government and the manager, or director, is generally experienced, and in the prime of their tenure.
- Outcome indicators are used for development review process, permit issuance, housing programs and services, long-range planning and economic development, which are more long-range planning goals.

As a result of the research, what do we know is statistically significant? The research shows there are some relationships between the dependent variable, a

benchmarking city, and the independent variables, the contextual characteristics developed in the theoretical basis. However, the data results are not clear enough to predict whether a city will be a community benchmark city. The probability model does show there is a strong likelihood that a city planning department that links their strategic planning documents to measures of accountability is likely to be benchmarking city.

Practical Applications

There is an association between the benchmarking cities using the private sector as a method of determining their planning department's success. A strong tie to the private sector expectation exists in benchmarking cities. Key variables correlate to the practice and methods embedded in city management i.e. linking their benchmarks to a strategic plan or practicing other levels of performance management in the past. The community's participation and point of view is strongly correlated, as well as the involvement and participation of elected officials.

Cities use the benchmarking tool not only as a management practice, but also as a way of determining how people feel about their government. Management can provide transparency, or appear to be transparent, to the constituents and to the elected officials. As long as the departments are not using measures that are too simplistic, or too superficial the elected officials can demonstrate progress using the information. Mayors integrate the information to direct key strategies and programs to the city's problem areas.

City managers address citywide corrective measures, guide departmental problem-solving objectives, and demonstrate to the citizens how the desired outcome has been met. Also, the city manager can increase the public's access to clear, measurable standards of performance, and progress towards meeting policy goals. Trends that are applicable to a business are not always applicable to city managers. Governments are not a business, but can operate similarly. Governments do not always have the luxury of not providing services that are not cost-effective or efficient. Benchmarks give organizations a new level of accountability to set clear service standards and measurable targets. Citizens' expectations of the government in meeting planning goals can be effectively linked to strategic planning documents.

Questions arise when looking at the data such as, "is the measurement truly tied to the community goal?" Or "does the community feel that the planning projects further the quality of life in the community?" Who champions this process and keeps it alive over the years, or do the efforts find a way to transform themselves into new management trends? To learn more about these conclusions, and to help fill in the gaps of understanding, focused case studies were conducted on a few selected cities. The case study interviews provided another perspective from city practitioners, management and city planners. There are a number of common challenges for city benchmark programs:

- a. The public must be able to access the data/information in a way that is meaningful
- b. Cities are advancing their techniques as they move along in the process

- c. Cities whose practices have been grounded in performance measure for several decades have moved up to the next level of reporting
- d. Cities have difficulty selecting and addressing the correct measures to demonstrate the outcome
- e. Data used is often not shown with the correct relationship to the desired result
- f. Strategic measurements is imperative, but can only be achieved after additional years of experience
- g. Many cities have not advanced to the higher level outcome measures
- h. City departments may use the language of benchmarking, but may not actually integrate actions or make decisions as a consequence of the data

Further research is necessary in order to reach definitive conclusions on how planning department staff is practicing innovative techniques that may not be captured by these methods of research. The continuing issue of whether departments collect and distribute performance results that is meaningful and well received by the public needs to be documented.

Additional issues of civic capacity and what citizens want for their community are not typically measured for results. Quality of life variables must be documented and put into a logical matrix with suggested outcome indicators and key measures to help the community focus. It is time for city staff and elected officials to get beyond the typical performance measures of the past, which document efficiency and effectiveness and move into the arena of results. Community benchmarks demonstrate

community-desired results, and can move Cities to a higher level along the continuum of governmental service delivery.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Survey of Cities

Community Benchmarks Survey of Cities for Planning Departments

The purpose of this survey is to provide a baseline body of information concerning planning and development departments' practices in assessing the value of their services to the public. The questions investigate what, when, where and how cities are currently practicing the area of performance measuring and benchmarking. Please note that you will be provided with a copy of the results via Internet if you complete this survey. We wish to thank you!

Use the following definitions in responding to this survey:

Definitions:

- *Benchmark – a targeted level of service*
- *Performance measurement – involves the selection, definition and application of indicators of efficiency, quality and effectiveness*
- *Outcome indicators -- measure the results or benefits of a program*

SECTION I: BENCHMARKING AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

1. Are you already using a system of benchmarks or performance indicators?

(Yes/No) If you answered “No” proceed directly to Section II

What kinds?	YES	NO
Benchmark targets		
Performance indicators		
Outcome indicators		

2. When did you begin your program? (*Length of program*)

3. What city planning and community development services are tracked for performance? *(Please check which technique is used for your various services.)*

Service	Benchmarks	Performance Indicators	Outcome Indicators
Permit Issuance			
Development Review Process			
Community Participation			
Inspections			
Housing Programs			
Tourism			
Long-Range Planning			
Community Participation Levels			
Economic Development			
Building Inspections			
Code Enforcement			
Development Engineering			
Plan Check			

4. Indicate below whether your benchmark/performance program is linked to a formal plan.

	Yes	No
Vision Plan		
Strategic Plan		
Comprehensive Plan		
Budget Goals		
Other (?)		

Is your benchmark program tied to a vision or strategic planning document?

(Yes/No)

If yes, are the benchmark/performance indicators reported? (Please check one)

☐ through the budget ☐ report card ☐ series of selected outcomes
☐ comparison to an organizational standard ☐ other (please specify) _____

5. In what ways were your elected officials involved in your benchmarking process? *(Circle as many as possible)*

*A. Focus group activity B. Advisory only C. Participatory in policy development
D. Strong leadership role E. Involved through a regional or state commission
F. Others as apply _____ G. Little involvement*

6. Does your city budget for the benchmark process? *(Yes/No)*

If Yes, how?

7. How do department personnel view your performance measurement or benchmarking program? *(Please check one)*

☐ Very resistant ☐ Low acceptance ☐ Fair acceptance ☐ Good acceptance
☐ Excellent acceptance

SECTION II: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MEASUREMENT

8. To what degree does your department or agency perform a benchmarking /performance measurement analysis to study the impact of planning projects?

(Circle the most accurate response)

Never Rarely Sometimes Usually Always

9. How do citizens generally rate your city planning services? *(Please circle one)*

Excellent Good Fair Poor No ratings

On what basis did you determine this rating? *(Please check appropriately)*

☐ *Customer feedback forms?*
☐ *Informal feedback?*
☐ *Planning department survey?*
☐ *Citywide survey?*
☐ *If survey, please send copy of the results*

10. Does your city use pay-for-performance to reward successful benchmark efforts? *(Yes/No) If yes, how:*

11. How do you gather feedback on whether citizens value the indicators?

(Please circle)

A. Customer feedback B. Survey of citizens C. Focus groups D. Web page
E. Interpretations of voting F. Service rating comment forms G. Do not gather information

SECTION III: COMMUNICATION & FEEDBACK

12. Are your planning services being impacted by privatization? (*Circle the most accurate response*)

Never Rarely Sometimes Usually Always

In many cities there are pressures to privatize public services. Can you give any evidence of privatization? (*Give example*)

13. What are the methods of determining your department's success in meeting planning goals? (*Circle the most accurate response(s)*)

- A. *Input from the private sector*
- B. *Achievement of benchmark targets (measured)*
- C. *Satisfactorily meeting city budget parameters*
- D. *City Manager review & approval*
- E. *City Council goal achievement*
- F. *Citizen approval rating*
- G. *Other* _____
- H. *Other* _____

14. What priority does your city give to communicating this data to citizens?

(*Please check one*)

___ *Very important* ___ *Important* ___ *Not important* ___ *Somewhat*

How? (*Check all that apply*)

___ *Internet services* ___ *Community newsletter* ___ *Local newspaper*
___ *Special publications* ___ *City Manager's Report* ___ *Budget document*
___ *Other* _____

SECTION IV: CITY CHARACTERISTICS

15. How long have you been the Planning Manager or Director? (Circle appropriate year category)

0-5 years 5-8 years 8-12 years 12 + years non-applicable

Please give your organizational title: _____

16. How many employees are in your planning or community development department? (Circle the most accurate response)

0 – 9 10-19 20-39 40-59 60+

17. Is your city's population increasing or decreasing? (Please circle one)

Increasing Decreasing Stable

What is the most appropriate description of your city? (Please circle one)

Urban core city 1st tier suburb 2nd or 3rd tier suburb Freestanding city

18. Is your planning department budget? (Please circle one)

Stable Increasing Decreasing

19. How would you classify the organizational structure of your city? (Please circle one)

Strong mayor Strong council Strong city manager/administrator

20. Please rate the degree of involvement of your city's planning or zoning commission in planning and development projects. (Please circle one response)

- 1. Very involved with projects and project status*
- 2. Involved on a regular basis regarding projects*
- 3. Moderately involved with project activities*
- 4. Only involved when concerns and issues arise*
- 5. Involvement is limited to public hearings and planning commission meetings*

21. On the line below, indicate the extent to which your department's policies are proactive or reactive.

I-----I

Reactive

Proactive

22. On the line below, indicate the extent to which your governmental processes tend to be structured.

I-----I

Regulatory

Collaborative

23. Does your community have a planning and development vision statement?

(Please circle one) *Yes* *No*

Would you be willing to send me a copy? (Yes/No) If so, please send to address listed on survey cover.

"Thank you for your time in completing this survey."

Statistical Appendix B: Variable definitions

DEFINITION OF VARIABLES

Variable	What kinds of benchmarks ?
SysBenchPerin	Are you using a system of benchmarks – yes or no
BenchTarget	Benchmark targets
PerIndicator	Performance indicators
OutIndicator	Outcome Indicators
LengthProgNum	Length of program in years
	What type of services ?
ServPermit	Permit Issuance
ServSevrevprocess	Development Review Process
ServCompar	Community Participation
ServInspections	Inspections
ServHouseprog	Housing Programs
ServTourism	Tourism
ServLongrangeplan	Long Range Planning
Servcomparlevel	Community Participation Level
ServEcondev	Economic Development
Servbldginsp	Building Inspections
Servcodeenforce	Code Enforcement
	Technique for Tracking Service
Bmpermit	Benchmark permits
Bmdevrevprocess	Benchmark Development and Review Process
Bmcompar	Benchmark Community Participation
Bminspections	Benchmark Inspections
BmHouseprog	Benchmark Housing Programs
BmTourism	Benchmark Tourism
Bmlongrangeplan	Benchmark Long-Range Planning
Bmcomparlevel	Benchmark Community Participation Levels
BmEcondev	Benchmark Economic Development
Bmbldginspe	Benchmark Building Inspections
Bmcodeenforce	Benchmark Code Enforcement
Bmdevengr	Benchmark Development Engineering
Bmplanchek	Benchmark Plan Check

Variables**Services Track for Performance Indicators**

Pipermit	Performance Indicator Permits
Pidevrevprocess	Performance Indicator Development Review
Picompdr	Performance Indicator Community Participation
Piinspections	Performance Indicator Inspections
PiHouseprog	Performance Indicator Housing Programs
PiTourism	Performance Indicator Tourism
Pilongrangeplan	Performance Indicator Long Range Planning
Picomparlevel	Performance Indicator Community Participation
PiEcondev	Performance Indicator Economic Development
Pibldginsp	Performance Indicator Building Inspections
Picodeenforce	Performance Indicator Code Enforcement
Pidevengr	Performance Indicator Development Engineering
Piplancheck	Performance Indicator Plan Check

Services Track for Outcome Indicators

Oipermit	Outcome Indicator Permits
Oidevrevprocess	Outcome Indicator Development Review Process
Oicompdr	Outcome Indicator Community Participation
Oiinspections	Outcome Indicator Inspections
OiHouseprog	Outcome Indicator Housing Programs
OiTourism	Outcome Indicator Tourism
Oilongrangeplan	Outcome Indicator Long Range Planning
Oicomparlevel	Outcome Indicator Community Participation Levels
OiEcondev	Outcome Indicator Economic Development
Oibldginsp	Outcome Indicator Building Inspections
Oicodeenforce	Outcome Indicator Code Enforcement
Oidevengr	Outcome Indicator Development Engineering
Oiplancheck	Outcome Indicator Plan Check

Benchmark Linked to Formal Plan

BPLinkVision	Benchmark Program Link to Vision
BPLinkStrategic	Benchmark Program Link to Strategic Plan
BPLinkComprehensive	Benchmark Program Link to Comprehensive Plan
BPLinkBudget	Benchmark Program Link to Budget Goals
Bencprogdok	Benchmark program linked to a planning document

Ways Elected Officials are Involved

WeoinvFocus	Elected Official Involvement focus group
Weinvadvisory	Elected Official Involvement advisory only
Weinvpartipatory	Elected Official Involvement Participation in Policy
Weinstronglead	Elected Official Involvement Strong Leadership
Weinvinvolved	Elected Official Involvement Regional or State
Weinvlittinvolve	Elected Official Involvement Little Involvement

Does City Budget for Benchmarking ?

Citybudbenc	Y/N
-------------	-----

How do you rate services?

Deteratcaustomer	Customer feedback forms
Derateinformal	Informal feedback
Deratecitywide	Citywide survey
Deratelfplanning	Planning survey

Does Cities Pay for Performance?

Payforperf	Y/N
------------	-----

How do you gather feedback from citizens?

Feedback Customer	Customer Feedback forms
Feedbacksurvey	Survey of citizens
Feedbackfocus	Focus Groups
Feedbackweb	Web Page
Feedbackinterpretations	Interpretations of voting
Feedbackservice	Service rating comment forms
Feedbackdonotgather	Do not gather information

Methods in Meeting Planning Goals

Metdeterinput	Input from private sector
Metdetersatisfactor	Satisfactorily meeting budget parameters
Metdeterachieve	Achievement of benchmark targets
MetdeterCitymgr	City manager review and approval
MetdeterCitycouncil	City Council goal achievement
Metdeterctzen	Citizen approval rating

How does city communicate data to citizens?

Howctydatacitizeninternet	Internet services
Howctydatacitizencomtr	Community newsletter
Howctydatacitizenlocnpaper	Local Newspaper
Howctydatacitizenspecial	Special Publications
Howctydatacitizencitymgr	City manager's report
Howctydatacitizenbudget	Budget document

Degree of Involvement of Planning Commission

Ratedegreeinvolvevery	Very involved
Ratedegreeinvolvevreg	Involved regularly
Ratedegreeinvolvemoder	Moderately involved
Ratedegreeinvolveonly	Only on issues/concerns
Ratedegreeinvolvelimited	Limited to public hearings/formal

Statistical Appendix C: Results of three preliminary OLS Models

First model:

Model Summary(b)					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.700(a)	.490	.473	.359	2.111
a Predictors: (Constant), Bmcomparlevel, howctydatactzenbudget, ServHouseprog, weoinvparticipatory, ServCompar					
b Dependent Variable: SysBenchPerIn					

ANOVA(b)						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.237	5	3.647	28.231	.000(a)
	Residual	18.992	147	.129		
	Total	37.229	152			
a Predictors: (Constant), Bmcomparlevel, howctydatactzenbudget, ServHouseprog, weoinvparticipatory, ServCompar						
b Dependent Variable: SysBenchPerIn						

Coefficients(a)						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.244	.048		5.114	.000
	howctydatactzenbudget	.112	.061	.113	1.855	.066
	weoinvparticipatory	.335	.071	.312	4.724	.000
	ServHouseprog	.360	.073	.334	4.946	.000
	ServCompar	.322	.092	.282	3.496	.001
	Bmcomparlevel	-.123	.118	-.080	-1.039	.301
a Dependent Variable: SysBenchPerIn						

Second model:

Model Summary(b)						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.741(a)	.549	.534		.338	2.131
a Predictors: (Constant), ServHouseprog, Complandevision, BPLinkStrategic, Metdeterachieve, weoinvparticipatory						
b Dependent Variable: SysBenchPerIn						

ANOVA(b)						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.451	5	4.090	35.836	.000(a)
	Residual	16.778	147	.114		
	Total	37.229	152			
a Predictors: (Constant), ServHouseprog, Complandevision, BPLinkStrategic, Metdeterachieve, weoinvparticipatory						
b Dependent Variable: SysBenchPerIn						

Coefficients(a)						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.221	.042		5.242	.000
	weoinvparticipatory	.254	.068	.237	3.718	.000
	BPLinkStrategic	.228	.074	.184	3.078	.002
	Metdeterachieve	.327	.066	.306	4.937	.000
	Complandevision	.102	.057	.103	1.800	.074
	ServHouseprog	.311	.068	.289	4.568	.000
a Dependent Variable: SysBenchPerIn						

Third model:

Model Summary(b)						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.741(a)	.549	.534		.338	2.131
a Predictors: (Constant), ServHouseprog, Complandevision, BPLinkStrategic, Metdeterachieve, weoinvparticipatory						
b Dependent Variable: SysBenchPerIn						

ANOVA(b)						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.451	5	4.090	35.836	.000(a)
	Residual	16.778	147	.114		
	Total	37.229	152			
a Predictors: (Constant), ServHouseprog, Complandevision, BPLinkStrategic, Metdeterachieve, weoinvparticipatory						
b Dependent Variable: SysBenchPerIn						

Coefficients(a)						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.221	.042		5.242	.000
	weoinvparticipatory	.254	.068	.237	3.718	.000
	BPLinkStrategic	.228	.074	.184	3.078	.002
	Metdeterachieve	.327	.066	.306	4.937	.000
	Complandevision	.102	.057	.103	1.800	.074
	ServHouseprog	.311	.068	.289	4.568	.000
a Dependent Variable: SysBenchPerIn						

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.758(a)	.574	.538	.336
a Predictors: (Constant), howctydatactzenbudget, VAR00006, VAR00002, VAR00001, ServHouseprog, VAR00005, VAR00003, BPLinkStrategic, Metdeterachieve, Complandevision, weoinvparticipatory, ServCompar				

ANOVA(b)						
Model		Sum Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.380	12	1.782	15.739	.000(a)
	Residual	15.848	140	.113		
	Total	37.229	152			
a Predictors: (Constant), howctydatactzenbudget, VAR00006, VAR00002, VAR00001, ServHouseprog, VAR00005, VAR00003, BPLinkStrategic, Metdeterachieve, Complandevision, weoinvparticipatory, ServCompar						
b Dependent Variable: SysBenchPerIn						

Coefficients(a)						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.131	.066		1.993	.048
	VAR00001	-.028	.083	-.021	-.343	.732
	VAR00002	.046	.059	.044	.782	.436
	VAR00003	.073	.084	.050	.870	.386
	VAR00005	-.038	.066	-.033	-.572	.568
	VAR00006	.102	.060	.095	1.690	.093
	ServHouseprog	.295	.072	.274	4.106	.000
	ServCompar	.123	.080	.108	1.545	.125
	weoinvparticipatory	.228	.073	.212	3.139	.002

	BPLinkStrategic	.160	.080	.129	1.985	.049
	Metdeterachieve	.285	.069	.266	4.115	.000
	Complandevision	.113	.063	.113	1.801	.074
	howctydatactzenbudget	.067	.058	.068	1.166	.245
a Dependent Variable: SysBenchPerIn						