

# SOCIAL INDICATORS FOR NEW YORK LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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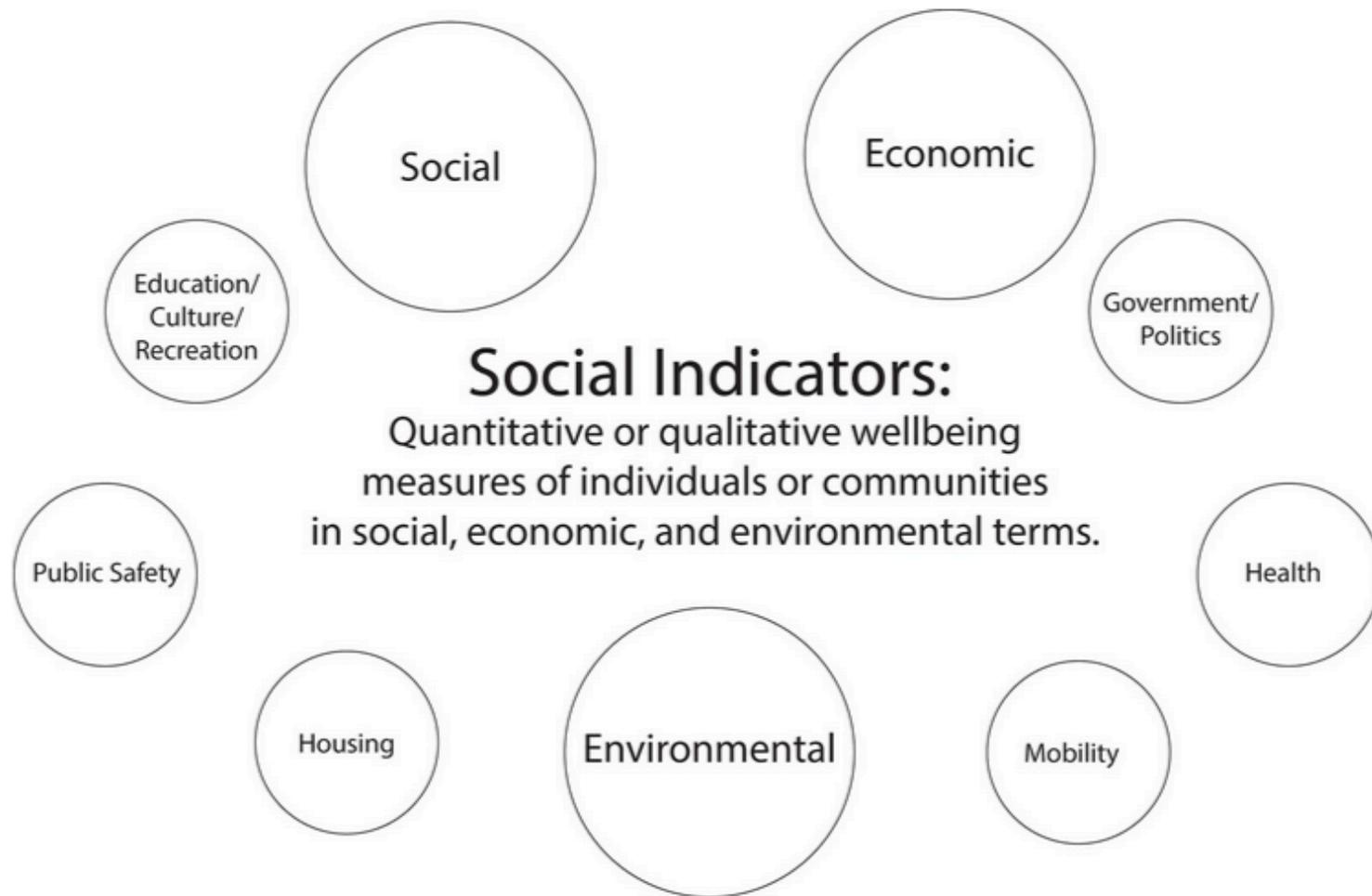
Visit [www.mildredwarner.org/restructuring/fiscal-stress](http://www.mildredwarner.org/restructuring/fiscal-stress) & [www.cardi.cornell.edu](http://www.cardi.cornell.edu) for more information.

# INTRODUCTION



- With fiscal stress, local governments must be careful that efforts to cut budgets to ensure fiscal solvency do not cause a decline in services
- Social indicators are tools to assess economic and social impacts of budget and service decisions
- Contents of this presentation:
  - history
  - cases
  - components
  - uses
  - limitations

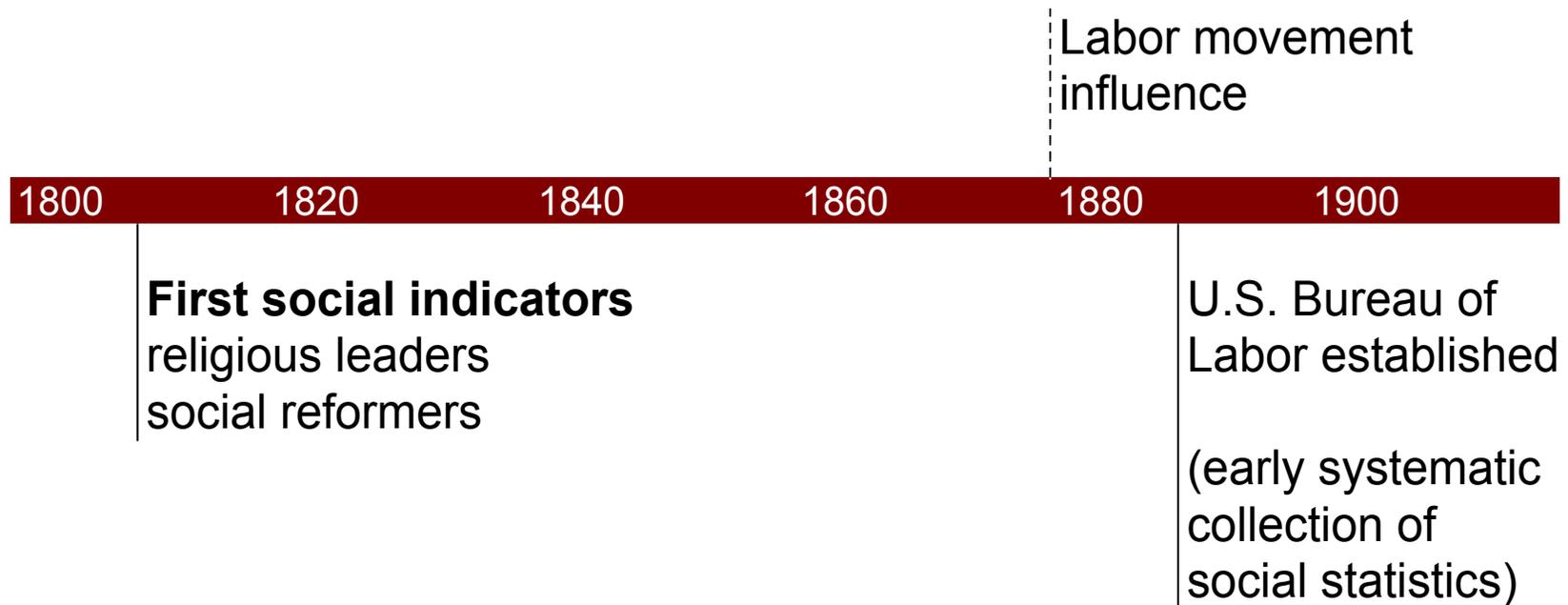
# WHAT ARE SOCIAL INDICATORS?



# BRIEF HISTORY OF SOCIAL INDICATORS



- Historical dichotomy between economic and social indicators
- Today, they are complements: social indicators help promote economic development



# BRIEF HISTORY (CONTINUED)



Hoover administration

Great Depression  
WWII

rapid social change  
LBJ administration

1920

1940

1960

1980

2000

2020

**National-level**  
social indicators

**economic**  
over social  
indicators

renewed interest

inductive  
vs.  
descriptive  
approaches

**sustainability & wellbeing**

**subjective**  
indicators

**Enrichment**  
and **expansion** of  
wellbeing and  
sustainability concepts

# KEY ELEMENTS IN CASE STUDIES

- **Triple Bottom Line:** social, economic, environmental factors that affect people's wellbeing
- Promote **citizen engagement, community planning, policymaking**
- Each community develops a framework that reflects its **unique needs and community aims**



# DESIGN PROCESS



1. Decide **what** to measure and **why**
2. Identify **sources of information**: administrative data or survey data
3. Draw up **possible indicators**
4. **Narrow** the list
5. Decide **how and when** to ask questions for a survey
6. **Pilot-test indicators** to ensure data is not too difficult to collect or disadvantageous for analysis
7. Ensure **findings** can be **correlated** with other sources of information
8. Make the most of the indicators for **social performance management**: **integrate** them into an ongoing assessment process

# DESIGN CRITERIA



1. **Valid** — well-grounded in data
2. **Appropriate** to priority issues
3. **Consistent** and **reliable**
4. **Cost-effective**
5. **Understandable** by a diverse audience
6. **Represents** many **aspects** of an issue
7. **Comparable** to other communities
8. **Attractive** to the media

# INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDY: AUSTRALIA



Community Indicators Queensland (CIQ)

Community Indicators Victoria (CIV)

# COMMUNITY INDICATORS VICTORIA (CIV)



<http://www.communityindicators.net.au>

- One of the **first community indicator projects** in Australia
- Includes **social, economic, environmental, democratic and cultural** wellbeing factors
- Ballarat City Council made budget and investment decisions in health using CIV



**Ballarat, Victoria, Australia**

Source: <http://www.travelvictoria.com.au/ballarath/photos/>

# COMMUNITY INDICATORS QUEENSLAND (CIQ)



<http://www.communityindicatorsqld.org.au>

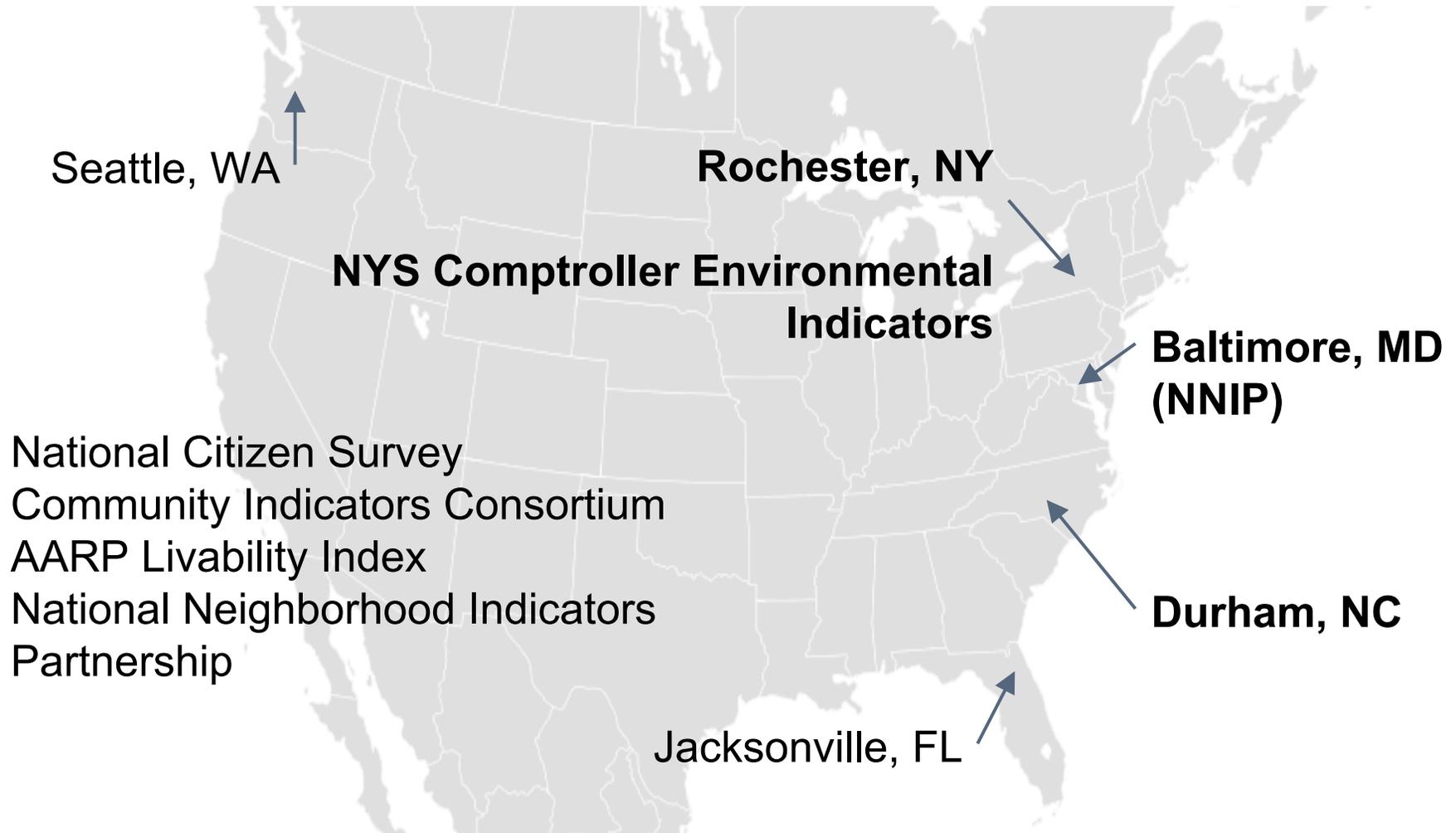
- Addresses **resilience domains** and **community wellbeing**
- Aims to identify a link between recovery efforts and available resources to help disadvantaged communities
- Currently being piloted in 3 communities
- Innovations from CIQ can be borrowed to promote community resilience in NY towns affected by disasters



**Southeast Queensland flood in January 2011**

Source: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au>

# DOMESTIC CASE STUDIES



*<http://bniajfi.org/>*

- BNIA is a partner of the National Neighborhood Indicators Project (NNIP)
- Identified a tipping point: found that neighborhoods with four percent or greater vacancy rates experienced population declines from 2000 to 2010
- City now has ten-year plan to demolish ~4,000 distressed structures and push for increased code enforcement and receivership efforts

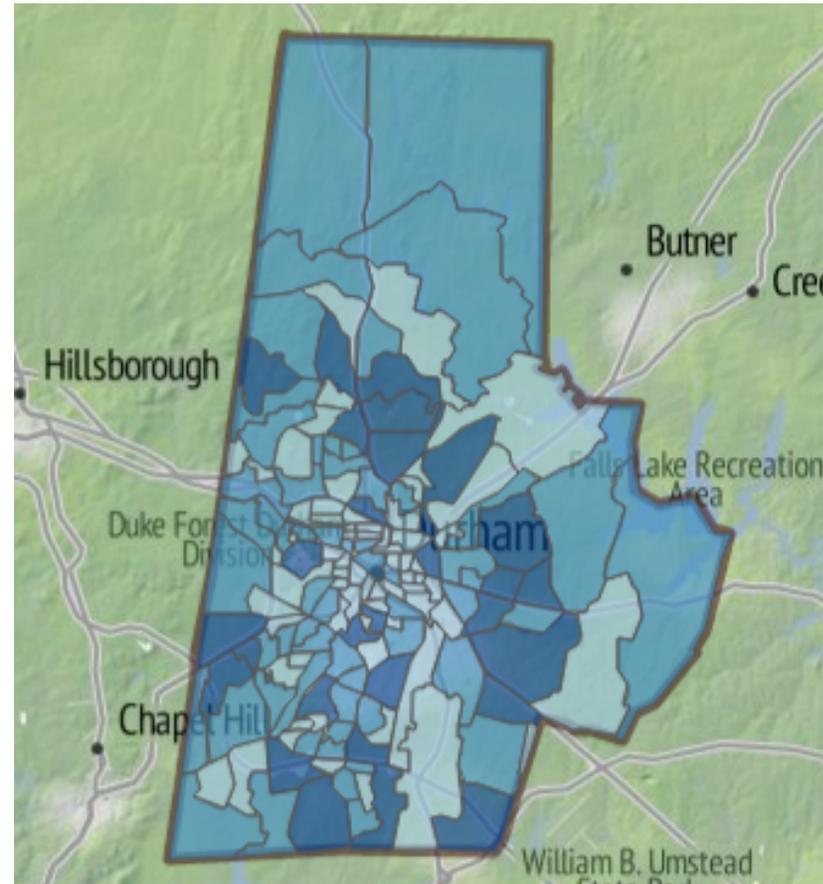


# DURHAM NEIGHBORHOOD COMPASS



<http://compass.durhamnc.gov/>

- Two block groups have high poverty and little investment
- 2014: launched public web GIS application
- Tracks quality of life and provision of services
- Both government and the public can use the data
- Won award: Technology Service Award



**The Web-GIS application**

Source: <http://compass.durhamnc.gov/>

# ACT ROCHESTER



*<http://www.actrochester.org/>*

- Focuses on the greater Rochester, NY, region
- Interactive and open source data website
- Indicators selected by a nonprofit research group in collaboration with citizen focus groups
- Recent report on **poverty**: Rochester has 3rd highest concentration of extremely poor neighborhoods among major US cities
- Highlighted policies to address problem: invest in the urban core and disperse the poor by expanding low-income housing in the suburbs



## NYS Comptroller Environmental Indicators

*<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/fiscalmonitoring/>*

- Indicators measured: demographics, property, fiscal data
- Scoring Mechanism
- Fiscal Stress Monitoring System

## National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP)

*<http://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/>*

- Shares administrative data
- Organizes indicators by domain: arts and culture, health, affordable housing, etc.
- Mission: democratize information

# CONCLUSION



- Social indicators are useful tools to:
  - Aid policy making
  - Identify community needs
  - Measure quality of life
- They can assess impacts of budget and service delivery decisions in New York
- Local governments, unions and citizen groups can partner to design a social indicator survey for local governments in New York

# FOR MORE INFORMATION...



see our full report at:

*[www.mildredwarner.org/restructuring/fiscal-stress](http://www.mildredwarner.org/restructuring/fiscal-stress)*

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- What are the most feasible methods for gathering survey indicators in NYS?
- What are the expected social impacts of the property tax cap? What indicators could measure these?
- Which NYS cities/communities have the best volunteer base to help with the creation and collection of indicators?
- Which NYS cities/communities are in most need of indicators?
- How can we get citizens involved in the design process to identify community needs?
- Which domains are priorities?