



Fact Sheet

Regional Indicators

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Definition: Regional indicators are a set of specific measurements which provide a picture of a place over time. They are a tool to measure what a region looks like and report on how things are changing. Indicators are used to measure trends in social, economic and environmental systems and help people see the bigger picture through a tapestry of small details. They offer a sense of direction for additional research, planning, advocacy, and perhaps, most important, action toward positive community changes as well as a means of assessing progress toward these desired changes.

Purpose: Regional indicators are intended to:

- Maintain and improve sustainable quality of life;
- Prioritize our regional challenges;
- Track trends;
- Influence allocation of resources;
- Stimulate factual discussions;
- Spur collaboration;
- Encourage a regional mindset;
- Trigger dialog and make decisions.

Process: Hundreds of indicators were reviewed; those that met established sustainability criteria were kept. They will now be monitored annually. **The Regional Indicators Initiative** has compiled benchmarking data comparing West Michigan to 26 other regions. A Process Guide, published in July 2008, to guide others in the process of creating their own indicators. This guide can be found on the WMSA website or by calling: 616.356.6060.

More information about Regional Indicators, including a report called **The West Michigan Vital Signs**, is available on the West Michigan Strategic Alliance website: www.wm-alliance.org.