A way to answer the questions about “How well are we doing?” Track performance indicators over time within the city and across cities that offer comparable services. Benchmarking involves performance measurement and is useful only if it informs performance management.

EXAMPLES OF FIRE PERFORMANCE MEASURES
- Percentage of fire code violations cleared within 90 days.
- Percentage of structure fires for which cause is determined.
- Response time, in seconds.
- Total fire department cost per call.
- Inspections completed per FTE.
- Fire inspections completed per 1,000 population.
- Total fire department cost per 1,000 population.

FIGURES
- STARTED IN 2002 BY MTAS AND CITY OFFICIALS
- INITIAL SERVICE AREAS: POLICE, FIRE, AND REFUSE; NOW ALSO EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS, HUMAN RESOURCES, FINANCE, DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING & ZONING/CODE ENFORCEMENT
- MODELED AFTER UNC'S PROJECT
- HOW DID PERFORMANCE CHANGE, IF AT ALL, FOR THE CITIES IN THE TMBP FROM 2002-2011? WHAT VARIATIONS IN PERFORMANCE WERE OBSERVED OVER TIME?
- FIRE BENCHMARKING MEASURES COLLECTED BY MTAS FOR 14 CITIES DURING 2002-2011.

REPORTED BENEFITS OF TMBP
- Inspection workload increased in the Gainer City due to changes made.
- TMBP data revealed a marked increase in structure fires in the three years after the Gainer City began using its battalions for routine inspections - while our two fire inspectors were performing all fire inspections.

“IT ONLY MAKES SENSE TO BENCHMARK IF YOU RECOGNIZE THAT YOU PROBABLY ARE NOT THE BEST IN EVERYTHING, PROBABLY NOT PERFECT IN EVERYTHING YOU DO”

“THE CITY WAS LOW ON THE NUMBER OF FIRE INSPECTIONS PERFORMED. AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER BENCHMARKING CITIES, WE LEARNED THAT OTHER DEPARTMENTS USED THEIR BATTALIONS FOR ROUTINE INSPECTIONS - WHILE OUR TWO FIRE INSPECTORS WERE PERFORMING ALL FIRE INSPECTIONS”

~Comments of City Manager.

RESEARCH DESIGN
- Performance classification scheme developed by Ammons and Roenigk (2009) adapted for the service performance measures included in the TMBP & applied to the 14 cities for fire service.
- The classification scheme has two dimensions: 1) horizontal axis - a city is above or below the mean rate of change in performance; 2) vertical axis - a city is above or below the group performance mean.

CLASSIFICATION OF CITIES
“Above” group rate of change (slope)

“Below” group rate of change (slope)

REPORTED BENEFITS OF TMBP
- Inspection workload increased.
- FTE/1,000 population decreased.
- Fire cost/departmen response decreased.
- Service efficiency increased.

A separate MTAS Fire Study concluded that the observed decrease in structure fires was due to increased inspections and fire prevention activity (West 2008).