



## 5. Vision for People

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### A. Overview

This chapter focuses on three fundamental elements that build a high quality of life for central Ohio residents—education, equity, and public services.

The chapter is organized into the following sections:

- Vision Statement
- Key Findings
- Strategies

### B. Vision Statement

Our vision for People is . . . *A diverse and civically engaged population that enjoys a healthy environment and has access to affordable housing, a range of employment choices, recreational and cultural amenities, spiritual institutions, and life-long learning opportunities. Residents of the region have accessibility to civic life and more housing choices near jobs.*

### C. Key Findings

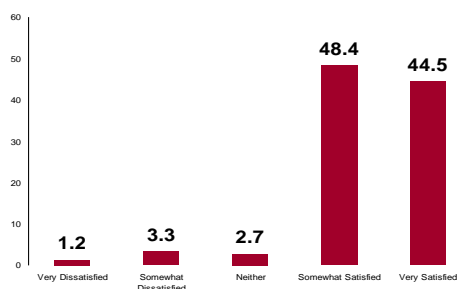
The central Ohio region has and will continue to grow at a strong rate that surpasses most regions in the State. Central Ohio also compares favorably to other regions in employment and income. In fact, the region has average household incomes second only to Cleveland as well as the lowest school poverty rate among six of Ohio's largest regions. Although poverty incidence is still relatively high, it has been declining over the past two decades. The region is also becoming increasingly diverse, although this is predominantly in the core county of the region.

The impacts and implications of population growth – both positive and negative – are varied. Growth has not been distributed equally throughout the region. In fact, as discussed in Place, much of the population growth is taking place in areas far from the established communities at the core of the region. This dynamic generates demand for infrastructure and services in areas not yet equipped to serve their burgeoning population; it also denies mature communities the resources necessary to maintain their services and infrastructure as government and private resources are directed to newer communities.

Listed below are key findings for population, education and workforce, employment and income, and diversity and social equity.

#### Population

- The central Ohio region has experienced marked population growth – outpacing other regions in the state – and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Between 1990 and 2005, the region's population grew by 18.5 percent exceeding that of the regions of Cincinnati (16%) and Cleveland (.25%). It is projected to grow by an additional 29 percent between 2005 and 2030 for a total population of 2,200,000.
- Franklin County remains the region's most populous county (1,068,978 in 2000), but its share of population growth has declined as more people settle in the surrounding counties.
- The growing population is settling rapidly in low density development at the edges of existing urbanized areas.
- Delaware County experienced the fastest rate of growth over the past two decades (64%) and will continue to grow faster than others making it the second most populous county in the region by 2030.
- Household creation has outpaced population growth due to lower average household sizes throughout the region. Fast population growth, declining household sizes, and generally larger lot sizes have led to lower population density in urbanized areas and greater land consumption on a per person basis.
- The region is attractive to mid-career workers and families. Over 50 percent of the population growth in the region between 1990 and 2000 was for those aged 40-54 years.



Ninety-three percent of surveyed central Ohioans are somewhat to very satisfied with the quality of life in central Ohio.

Source: Strategic Research Group

- The population growth that occurred between 1990 and 2000 in the 40-54 age demographic will become an even greater regional priority as that demographic ages. This aging demographic will require appropriate housing and transportation options in order to maintain a desirable standard of living.

### **Education and Workforce**

- School enrollment was up 20 percent between 1990 and 2000, a substantial increase particularly considering that the general population only grew by 15 percent.
- Growth in enrollment is not taking place equally around the region. Delaware County experienced a 65 percent increase in enrollment, Union experienced a 26 percent increase, and the remaining counties grew by 20 percent or less. The increasing school population places considerable pressure on local school districts and local governments that are experiencing many other effects of growth that require government resources to provide quality education.
- Approximately 65 percent of the region's elementary and high school students are educated in Franklin County. (Franklin County makes up 61 percent of the region's total population.)
- The region's population is relatively well educated in comparison to other regions with approximately 86 percent of the population over age 25 with high school diplomas and 30 percent with college degrees.
- The labor force is growing faster than population. Between 1990 and 2000, the labor force grew by 18 percent.

### **Employment and Income**

- The region experienced marked growth in employment. Between 1990 and 2000, the region added over 120,000 jobs, an increase of 18 percent.
- Growth in employment will continue. It is estimated the region will add 217,000 jobs between 2005 and 2030.
- Delaware County, which is experiencing the greatest change in population, will also experience the greatest gains in employment with a 60 percent increase in its number of jobs by 2030 to over 92,000.
- Many of the region's residents live and work in different counties. Union and Franklin counties are the only ones that have or will have more jobs than population for the foreseeable future.
- The concentration of jobs in the core county, Franklin County, is declining. Franklin will retain its standing as the county with the largest number of jobs and its share of jobs will continue to exceed its population, but its regional share of jobs will decrease from 77 to

72 percent between 2005 and 2030. Jobs are moving to outlying areas.

- Median income for all counties in the region exceeds state and national figures. The region’s median income (\$44,800 in 1999) and its increase between 1989 and 1999 of 13 percent are on par with peer regions.
- The region’s employment mix is changing. Between 1990 and 2000, construction, FIRE, public administration, and education, health and social services increased while agriculture and manufacturing decreased.
- In 2000, the counties’ unemployment rates were substantially lower than in 1980, but higher than in 1990. Unemployment in the region has historically been lower than the State.

### Diversity and Social Equity

- The region is becoming increasingly diverse. The share of the white population has been decreasing over the past few decades. By 2000, whites accounted for 81 percent of the region’s population and African Americans were up to 13 percent.
- Although the foreign born population only accounts for five percent of the total population, it is growing rapidly and faster than it is in other regions in the country.
- Minority populations are concentrated in the core county. Although diversity has increased within metropolitan regions, Ohio’s regions are experiencing increasing segregation by income and race.
- Poverty incidence is still relatively high (approximately 10 percent), but has been declining over the past two decades. In fact, the region has average household incomes second only to Cleveland as well as the lowest school poverty rate among six of Ohio’s largest regions.

Strategy: A plan of action to accomplish a specific goal or objective—a program, policy or project.

The People strategies are organized into the following themes:

- Education
- Equity
- Public Services

## D. Strategies

### Education

This section provides a number of strategies for addressing the educational needs of the region, with particular attention to funding and equity issues within public schools.

#### 1. Monitor state legislature on the issue of the judicial mandate for funding equity and adequacy for all school districts in the region.

In 1997 the Ohio Supreme Court mandated that the state must ensure equitable funding of public schools, to meet the needs of all students regardless of the wealth of their communities. MORPC and local communities should continue to monitor the state legislature with regard to reforming school funding in a manner that adheres to the mandate.

**2. Evaluate policies to address the increasing pressure new housing development places on the school system.**

New housing development is leading to rapidly increasing school-aged populations in many parts of central Ohio. Some schools face overcrowding, or must build new facilities to meet the needs of the growing student population. Local communities should evaluate the intersection between land use, growth patterns, and education policies to ensure that rapid development does not overburden the education system.

**3. Promote programs that increase educational excellence.**

Local communities should promote more programs that increase educational excellence in schools. Such programs may involve teacher trainings, partnerships with colleges, universities, and cultural institutions, and curricula designed to meet students with special needs.

**4. Evaluate inequity among schools and recommend methods to provide better balance of educational opportunities.**

Local communities should evaluate inequity among schools throughout the region, and examine ways to increasing funding resources for education, potentially through an education and awareness campaign that informs residents about how education dollars are utilized and the importance of investment in the public school system. Communities should also examine opportunities for resource sharing and/or redistributing funds among school districts in order to improve the quality of all schools and stabilize enrollment trends.

**5. Encourage programs to increase collaboration among all levels of schools, from elementary to college, and between schools and the community.**

Communities should support programs that increase interaction among students of all ages and community members, including tutoring, mentoring, sports, and after-school activities. Such interactions can help enhance educational opportunities and develop a stronger sense of community.

**6. Promote the importance of life-long quality educational opportunities at all levels, for all residents.**

Local communities should enhance the educational environment for residents of all ages, including young children and adults. Techniques to support the educational needs of all residents may range from encouraging pre-school enrollment, to facilitating adult education opportunities, to sponsoring public readings and lectures.

**Equity**

The strategies in this section focus on promoting greater social equity in the central Ohio region, with particular attention to housing affordability, employment opportunities, and community reinvestment.

**1. Promote adequate, affordable housing is spread equitably throughout the region.**

Local governments should work together to create a regional program of development incentives in order to encourage a balanced supply of housing of diverse prices in all communities. Techniques for encouraging more affordable housing include reducing red tape for affordable developments and allowing for more as-of-right housing options such as townhouses, condominiums, and accessory apartments. Fee waivers or tax incentives can also be pursued.

**2. Promote policies that support the sharing of resources and services among communities.**

Through cooperative planning in the provision of public services, local governments can identify strategies for sharing facilities and personnel in a manner that reduces costs for individual jurisdictions. For example, emergency services are often better handled through a regional agency or system, particularly in areas where population is dispersed or where local governments are fairly small. Local communities should support policies that encourage the sharing of resources in order to achieve more efficient public service delivery.

**3. Provide programs that increase employment opportunities on a regional basis.**

Several of the strategies discussed in Chapter 5 – Prosperity address the need for a regional approach to economic development and job creation. Local communities should ensure that job creation initiatives meet the needs of all residents, and encompass a range of industries, skill levels, and geographic locations.

**4. Create programs to stabilize older neighborhoods and housing stock in mature communities of the region.**

In order to stabilize and preserve the housing stock of mature neighborhoods, local communities should establish programs that provide financial incentives to homeowners who are interested in pursuing renovation or rehabilitation projects. Financial incentives may take the form of grants, low interest loans, or tax benefits. The local financial community should be tapped to take a leadership role in developing financing tools. Communities should also engage in public education programs that will inform residents about state and local funds that may be available to them.

**5. Create programs to ensure well-paying jobs are obtainable for people of all skill levels.**

A number of programs should be pursued to stabilize and enhance wages for all workers. The legal minimum wage can be increased. Training opportunities can help individuals obtain the skills they need to get higher paying jobs. Programs could also be initiated to provide transportation and child care services to help low-income workers stay on the job.

**Public Services**

The strategies in this section address regional needs related to public service delivery, community facilities planning, and social service provision.

**1. Assess needs for community facilities to service the growing regional population, including healthcare, libraries, recreation and education.**

In determining where to locate new facilities, communities should take into account population growth patterns, land use plans, demographic changes, and transportation and accessibility issues. By planning for facilities expansion from a regional perspective, communities can better meet the needs of a growing population and offer more efficient service delivery. This strategy is particularly appropriate for the retiree demographic that will require specialized housing, recreation, and social services.

**2. Create a model comprehensive plan program that includes identification of public safety equipment and facilities needs.**

The model comprehensive plan program discussed in Chapter 5 – Place/Tools should also account for the public safety needs of different types of communities. Depending on the size and resources of a given community, police, fire, and EMS services could be independently managed, or could be shared by surrounding jurisdictions.

**3. Create a program to facilitate the provision of greater sharing of regional services.**

There are many services that can be shared among communities, from fire and EMS to accounting. Numerous communities in the region are exploring if not already engaged service sharing. A program that facilitated greater sharing could be beneficial to individuals and local governments.

**4. Continue to advocate social service programs to residents of the region.**

Access to social service programs is essential for many residents throughout the central Ohio region. Local communities should continue to ensure that needy residents receive the programs that they need, including health care, day care, elder assistance, and special transportation needs, among others.