



## 6. Vision for Leadership

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### A. Overview

The key issue facing leadership in the central Ohio region is how to shape and address future growth in a voluntary, cooperative way. On the one hand the jurisdictional complexity of the region, the disparity of size among local governments, and the complexity of issues, such as environmental and transportation issues that go beyond the boundaries of any given entity, make that task daunting. On the other hand, the desire to share a vision for the future of the region, make better use of land resources, and promote a good quality of life for local residents makes voluntary cooperation among jurisdictions a necessity. This chapter specifies actions designed to bring together local jurisdictions in unprecedented ways.

The chapter is organized into the following sections:

- Vision Statement
- Key Findings
- Strategies

### B. Vision Statement

*Leadership and governance that is defined by shared understanding and aligned decision-making among all levels of government. Plans, policies and decisions related to growth, development and major infrastructure investments are made with a regional perspective, desire for improved*

*efficiency of service delivery, and sense of mutual responsibility for providing services and protecting environmental resources. Residents and stakeholders are involved and well informed about regional issues.*

### C. Key Findings

There are over 200 jurisdictions in the central Ohio region each with different land use planning tools at their disposal. A majority of the 200 local jurisdictions have a comprehensive plan with future land use strategies. Many have zoning, but a few townships in Licking, Pickaway, and Union Counties do not have zoning. Madison and Fairfield Counties have countywide land use plans that include many of the jurisdictions within these counties. The city of Columbus adopted the Columbus Comprehensive Plan in 1993, and the entire city is zoned.

There is no regional policy making entity.

### D. Strategies

#### Governance

The strategies in this section recommend ways to approach governance from a regional perspective. In many cases a regional or interjurisdictional body is ideal for efficiently addressing issues such as growth management, infrastructure, and public service provision.

#### 1. Explore new governance structures to address regional growth management, economic development, and transportation.

Around the country, a variety of governance structures are used to address planning needs at the regional level. Ohio law authorizes the creation of Regional Councils of Government (COGs) that can engage in cooperative regional planning efforts. COGs are fairly limited in scope, in that they have no powers of taxation and they lack the authority to implement programs or deliver services unless local government units designate that power. Local communities should determine whether a COG will meet the needs of the central Ohio region, and should explore alternative governance structures that may provide for more regional authority.

#### 2. Explore creation of a joint authority to provide public services more efficiently, as long it is in keeping with other plan strategies.

The COG or similar authority discussed above should be given authority to provide certain public services, where appropriate. Local governments will need to determine the best way to fund service delivery, perhaps through member fees or bonds. They must also authorize the COG or similar authority to deliver services.

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

The Leadership strategies are organized into the following themes:

- Governance
- Cooperation
- Outreach

**3. Evaluate consolidation of service opportunities.**

At the sub-regional scale, two or more jurisdictions may choose to consolidate public service delivery efforts through the use of JEDDs or CEDAs. For more information see Chapter 4 – Prosperity.

**4. Explore consolidation of government units to reduce duplication of providing government services.**

Consolidation of government units refers to the dissolution of two or more local governments, which are then replaced by a single new municipality. For some jurisdictions, this strategy may prove to be the best way to meet a variety of local needs.

**5. Establish a Regional Leadership Institute.**

As the challenges and opportunities of the central Ohio region become more complex, there is an increasing need to develop regional leaders. MORPC, working with regional partners such as the Franklin University Leadership Center, should initiate a leadership program designed to better prepare a diverse group of community, government, business and nonprofit leaders to work collaboratively in addressing regional issues. This program would bring local decision makers together to learn about the regional issues facing central Ohio, teach them the benefits of thinking regionally, and equip them to make the decisions to address regional issues.

**6. Create a best practice set of procedures to guide the formation and implementation of multi-jurisdictional agreements.**

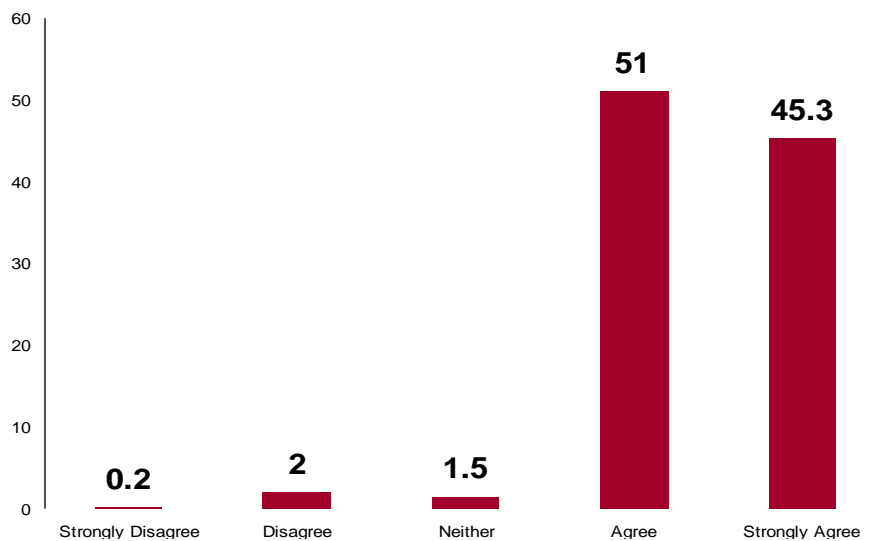
Research on multi-jurisdictional agreements in central Ohio and across the United States should be conducted to determine a best practice set for their creation and implementation. This material can then be used support the process of creating and implementing multi-jurisdictional agreements while avoiding unnecessary roadblocks and challenges.

**Cooperation**

This section looks at the importance of promoting cooperation among leadership in order to address regional needs.

**1. Build on and leverage existing efforts of multi-jurisdictional cooperation.**

Conduct and maintain an inventory of multi-jurisdictional planning efforts that have occurred in central Ohio. This inventory can provide guidance and examples of similar issues that other communities have previously addressed and enable more efficient networking between peer community staff.



Over 96 percent of surveyed central Ohioans agree or strongly agree that local governments should work together to better manage growth.

Source: Strategic Research Group

**2. Foster greater coordination for regional initiatives by creating improved methods for sharing information program.**

Local governments should foster coordination of regional initiatives by developing an information and education program that focuses on regional issues. A web-based program can offer a forum for public education and interjurisdictional information sharing. It can serve as a sounding board for citizens to share their opinions about a variety of planning issues, from specific development projects, to preferred neighborhood design criteria, to regional housing and economic trends. Maps, aerial photographs, charts, drawings, and other visual aids can be used to illustrate data and make it more accessible. Opportunities for public involvement can be made available through discussion threads, comment forms, and online postings to announce upcoming public meetings.

**3. Establish a Regional Development Sub-Committee.**

The MORPC board should sanction the creation of a chartered sub-Committee responsible for overseeing the ongoing implementation of *Regional Connections*. The sub-Committee will be made up of a regional representation of public, non-profit, and private sector members. The sub-Committee will have the responsibility to provide guidance, support, and advocacy to the *Regional Connections* implementation staff as well as providing non-binding recommendations to the MORPC board on relevant regional issues, initiatives, and policy decisions.

**4. Cooperate with the Regional Policy Roundtable.**

Recently MORPC has convened a Regional Policy Roundtable of representatives from the public, non-profit, and private sectors. This roundtable is responsible for developing and prioritizing policy initiatives to be advocated to the appropriate State and Federal legislative and administration representation. Recommendations of *Regional Connections*

should be part of the roundtables policy agenda and further developed and prioritized in order to further advance legislation needed for *Regional Connections* to be successful.

**5. Facilitate sub-regional working groups to address local issues.**

As needed, MORPC should work to facilitate conversations between communities that are jointly addressing regionally significant issues. As a neutral regional entity, MORPC can provide objectivity to help the local stakeholders reach a mutually beneficial consensus for the benefit of the entire region.

**6. Improve communication among jurisdictions.**

When municipalities share their experiences, they can avoid common pitfalls, anticipate opportunities, and capitalize on the expertise that exists throughout the region, not just within a single jurisdiction. The web-based program mentioned above can be used to share information among local government officials. Municipal employees, subcontractors, and affiliates can share success stories and offer ideas for overcoming local challenges. Another technique to improve communication and information sharing is the hosting of periodic roundtable discussions. Roundtables can be organized according to topic, creating forums to address regional infrastructure concerns, demographic changes, local government administration, intergovernmental collaboration, financing strategies, and public/private partnerships, among other issues. Elected and appointed officials, subject experts, and other key stakeholders should be invited to participate in these roundtables.

**7. Promote greater cooperation between local, county, regional and state jurisdictions.**

Greater cooperation among different levels of government is necessary to ensure consistent policies and to advance common goals and objectives. A regional governance structure (see strategy Governance-1) can serve as an important missing link in bringing together local and county governments and giving the region more bargaining power from a state-wide perspective. In addition, the communication and information-sharing strategies mentioned above can also facilitate cooperation among all levels of government.

**8. Consolidate some service delivery among jurisdictions... such as water, sewer, trash collections, police, fire, recreation, etc.**

Refer to strategies 2 and 3 in the Governance section (p. 6.2).

**9. Create an agreement to eliminate intra-regional economic development competition among communities in central Ohio.**

When communities in the central Ohio region compete against each other to attract economic development, the result is often substantial concessions to private businesses and developers. From a regional perspective, providing subsidies to businesses that have already decided to locate in an area is not necessary, and can even be destructive. Such competition is wasteful, as it means that communities frequently do not receive adequate compensation for the local costs and regional impacts incurred by new development. Local governments should seek to institute an agreement to eliminate intra-regional competition in central Ohio.

For example, MORPC should work to strengthen collaboration with the Mid-Ohio Development Exchange (MODE). This partnership has the potential to strengthen regional economic development and related public policy.

**10. Explore the creation of a seven-county regional tax base sharing agreement.**

In addition to the non-competition agreement discussed above, a regional tax base sharing agreement can serve as an important tool for eliminating fiscal inequities and reducing intra-jurisdictional competition. Tax base sharing can facilitate development that is in line with regional planning and land use goals, such as open space conservation and infill development. It can lead to a more equitable distribution of tax burdens and public services throughout the region. Local governments may need to work with the state to ensure that appropriate enabling legislation is in place.

**11. Acknowledge and reward individuals, organizations, and communities that demonstrate exemplary regional leadership.**

Local communities should organize an annual “State of the Vision” event that celebrates progress and recognizes exemplary regional leadership from government bodies, civic organizations, and the private sector.

**12. Adopt a regional compact that details the commitment to regional cooperation.**

Local governments should develop and adopt a compact that details their commitment to regional cooperation and outlines agreed-upon principles that will be followed during local and regional planning efforts.

**13. Create an implementation program for Regional Connections.**

An implementation program for Regional Connections should be thoroughly outlined, so that all governments, stakeholders, and residents have a clear understanding of how its objectives will be achieved. The implementation program may involve task forces, outreach and publicity initiatives, resource allocation, and ongoing monitoring of activities.

**Outreach**

The success of this vision will be dependent upon support from government officials, business and civic stakeholders, and the general public. The strategies below outline techniques for conducting outreach efforts to help generate support.

**1. Improve communication with citizens and other stakeholders on growth topics of regional significance.**

The residents in the region play an important role in ensuring the success of this vision. A public outreach and education program should be created to provide residents with ongoing opportunities to become familiar with the vision, help them understand their role in achieving the goals, and keep them informed as policies and projects of regional significance arise. Communication efforts may include the preparation of promotional brochures and information packets. The web-based program mentioned above should also be utilized.

**2. Create greater education efforts for development-related initiatives for local government officials.**

Regional Connections calls for some innovative development techniques. Local governments should organize educational programs and materials that provide built examples from other communities. Staff, planning commission members, and elected officials should conduct site visits to other communities to observe firsthand development projects that may serve as appropriate examples.

**3. Provide cooperative education opportunities for policy-makers to learn from similar experiences and situations of other jurisdictions.**

Educational opportunities should highlight model ordinances and development tools, and feature case study successes from within the central Ohio region, and well as from throughout the country.

**4. Advocate to State and Federal representatives and partner agencies.**

Working with MORPCs advocacy firm and the MORPC Regional Policy Roundtable, policy recommendations from *Regional Connections* should be brought to the regions State and Federal representatives to advance the regional agenda.

**5. Advocate to local governments.**

Work with local governments and organizations to help them understand the benefits that the recommendations of *Regional Connections* have for their communities as well as the tools that are available to them as a result of *Regional Connections*. This ongoing dialogue will also enable the local stakeholders to provide feedback on their changing needs so that MORPC can proactively respond and provide solutions.

**6. Conduct ongoing analysis of regional issues.**

With the guidance of the MORPC Board, Regional Development sub-Committee, and MORPC Regional Policy Roundtable, MORPC staff should conduct research and analysis of issues of regional importance. In doing so, MORPC can help shape public policy decisions at the Federal, State, and Local level for the overall benefit of the region.

**7. Provide un-biased guidance, support, resources and technical support to local governments to increase the chance of success.**

As needed and appropriate, MORPC should provide guidance, support, and targeted resources to increase the chance of success as local jurisdictions address regionally significant issues. Helping local staff implement the tools recommended by *Regional Connections* will provide the support needed to ensure that the potential impact of the tools is realized at all levels and parts of the region.