



7. Operational Plan

The next phase of *Regional Connections* is to see that the vision statements and strategies are implemented. This is, of course, a complex task. Issues are difficult to tackle and much time and effort are required to establish the climate for regional cooperation that is conducive to implementation.

Regional Connections offers a bold vision for the future of the central Ohio region. An equally bold and clear framework for implementation will be necessary to transform the visions and strategies outlined in the preceding chapters into reality.

This chapter has three sections:

- A. **Initiating Implementation:** This section offers eight specific **action steps that will facilitate the initiation of the implementation** of *Regional Connections*. The action steps are organized into two topics: 1) Leadership and Organization and 2) Communication and Outreach.
- B. **Priority Strategies:** In addition to the initiation actions, this chapter identifies **16 priority strategies** that should be the focus of implementation.
- C. **Summary of Strategies:** All of the Steering Committee's recommended strategies are summarized in the **Implementation Matrix**.

A. Initiating Implementation

The MORPC will take on the primary responsibility of coordinating implementation of *Regional Connections*. Just like the process to create the Regional Growth Strategy, successful implementation will require collaboration of diverse interests in the central Ohio region.

MORPC is the only voluntary association of governments in the seven county central Ohio region and can bring together diverse parties to address matters of mutual concern. Most importantly, the vision and recommendations of *Regional Connections* are integral to the mission of MORPC.

The following actions are recommended to focus on leadership and governance questions for the implementation of *Regional Connections*. To have an impact and sustain interest in the implementation of *Regional Connections*, these actions should be completed or initiated within a period of 180 days.

Leadership and Organization

Action 1: Establish an Implementation Committee

MORPC should convene an informal Implementation Committee that includes representatives of local governments, as well as private and civic sector leaders with a strong interest in regionalism. The purpose of the Implementation Committee is to explore the implementation options and make recommendations on the critical initiation actions.

Action 2: Consider Establishing a Chartered Sub-committee of MORPC

The Implementation Committee will consider establishing a chartered sub-committee of MORPC that would be representative of the seven county region, including public, private, non-profit, and education members. The role of the sub-committee will be to recommend policy and direction to MORPC and the region, as well advocate and educate the region on ‘Planning Regionally.’

Action 3: Use the *Regional Connections* Report as a Policy Guide

The *Regional Connections* report should be utilized as a policy guide by the MORPC board, sub-committees, and staff. Applicable MORPC strategic policy and work programs should be reflective of the recommendations of *Regional Connections*. However, *Regional Connections* is a recommending tool only; neither MORPC, nor its members, are bound to these recommendations.

Communications and Outreach

Concurrent with exploring the issues of how to best implement *Regional Connections*, the Implementation Committee should monitor the

implementation of actions specifically designed to *further the regional dialogues* started by the creation of a shared regional growth strategy.

Implementation of the vision will require a strong communications strategy – aimed both internally at local jurisdictions as well as externally.

Action 4: Develop an Internal and External Communications Strategy

In conjunction with the Implementation Committee, MORPC should develop an internal (aimed at local jurisdictions) and external (aimed at the regional community) communications strategy designed to increase awareness of the benefits of the growth strategy. A good communications strategy should also incorporate a “listening and learning” approach, offering forums for individuals and groups to share their own perspectives on the vision and discuss the progress of various strategies. By encouraging a rich dialogue surrounding the vision, implementation techniques can gradually be revised and refined to become more effective.

Action 5: Convene Working Sessions with Local Jurisdictions

MORPC should engage local jurisdictions in formal and informal cooperative planning and learning activities. Workshops and working sessions should be used to clarify the visions and strategies of *Regional Connections*, share information about available programs and funding sources, broker cooperative efforts among municipalities, and encourage the implementation of joint initiatives.

Action 6: Engage Non-governmental Partners

The Implementation Committee should identify and engage citizens, civic organizations, institutions, and businesses that can further the implementation of key strategies of the regional growth strategy. Workshops and working sessions similar to the one recommended for local jurisdictions should be conducted for private sector leaders focusing in particular on lending institutions, developers, and other businesses that directly help shape growth in the region.

Action 7: Educate the Region on the Benefits of Thinking and ‘Planning Regionally’

Consistent with Action 4 (Internal and External Communication Strategy), an effort needs to be made to educate regional interests about the benefits of cooperative, regional action. The content, including key messages, can establish some fundamental communication points that can be reinforced by specific educational efforts.

Action 8: Take an Active Role in Regional Conversations

During the initiation period, MORPC should continue to seek a “seat at the table” when regional issues are discussed. This can take place in many

forms, but will require diligence on the part of MORPC to seek these opportunities. It will also require discipline in prioritizing staff time participating in these conversations, but there is a role for MORPC and committee members.

B. Priority Strategies

As described in the Executive Summary, there are some strategies that have been indentified as priorities for implementing the Regional Growth Strategy. With nearly 100 recommended strategies—all important, all that could make a difference for the region—there needs to some focus on implementation activities. The sixteen priority strategies are listed below.

Place (Chapter 3)

- Tools, Strategy 1: Create a Model Comprehensive Plan Program for Central Ohio Communities.
- Tools, Strategy 2: Conduct Regional Cost of Development Analysis.
- Tools, Strategy 3: Create Fiscal Impact/Cost of Community Service Tool.
- Tools, Strategy 11: Update Land Use Model.
- Tools, Strategy 12: Continue to Update Regional DataPort.
- Tools, Strategy 13: Continue to refine Conceptual Development Framework/Matrix.

Leadership (Chapter 6)

- Governance, Strategy 5: Establish a Regional Leadership Institute.
- Governance, Strategy 6: Create a best practice set of procedures to guide the formation and implementation of multi-jurisdictional agreements.
- Cooperation, Strategy 1: Build on and leverage existing efforts of multi-jurisdictional cooperation.
- Cooperation, Strategy 3: Establish a Regional Development Sub-Committee.
- Cooperation, Strategy 4: Cooperate with the Regional Policy Roundtable.
- Cooperation, Strategy 5: Facilitate sub-regional working groups to address local issues.
- Outreach, Strategy 4: Advocate to State and Federal representatives and partner agencies.
- Outreach, Strategy 5: Advocate to local governments and quasi-governmental entities.
- Outreach, Strategy 6: Conduct ongoing analysis of regional issues.
- Outreach, Strategy 7: Provide un-biased guidance, support, resources and technical support to local governments to increase the chance of success.

C. Implementation Matrix

The following table summarizes the strategies that are incorporated into each element of the plan. The table provides a reference for each objective/strategy (by element), the parties responsible for implementation and the recommended timeframe as follows:

- Short Term – Implementation begins within one year after adoption (2008).
- Mid Term – Implementation begins one to two years after adoption (2009-2010).
- Long Term – Implementation begins three to eight years after adoption (2011-2015).

The **priority strategies are highlighted with bold type** in the matrix.

The abbreviations listed in the responsibility column of the implementation matrix are as follows:

- MORPC – Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
- AIA – American Institute of Architects
- ASLA – American Society of Landscape Architecture
- BIA – Building Industry Association
- CC – Chamber of Commerce
- CDC – Community Development Association
- COTA – Central Ohio Transit Association
- EPA – Environmental Protection Agency
- GP – Government Partners (County and Local Governments)
- LT – Land Trusts
- ST – State of Ohio

Please bear in mind that this list is not all-inclusive. All relevant non-profit, governmental, and private sector organizations in the region must be engaged in this process to maximize the opportunities for success. It is incumbent upon the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission as the main implementer to work with these stakeholders to ensure that there is active engagement in the process and in the region.

Table 7.1: Implementation Matrix [Note: Priority strategies are in bold type]

Place	Objective / Strategy	Time Frame	Responsibility
	Coordination		
1	Create a program to monitor the regional growth and development changes.	Short-term	MORPC
2	Encourage a regional perspective for local planning.	Short-term	GP, MORPC
3	Create an intergovernmental growth management agreement.	Mid-term	GP, MORPC
4	Encourage the evaluation of development impacts on public services and infrastructure.	Short-term	GP, MORPC
5	Promote the use of fiscal impact analysis of land use in comprehensive planning and development review, building an awareness of the true fiscal costs and benefits of development.	Short-term	MORPC
6	Promote energy efficient and environmentally-friendly neighborhood development.	Short-term	GP, MORPC
7	Create a program to support the coordination of transportation, utilities, and land use (at the scale of the region).	Mid-term	MORPC
8	Encourage development policies with greater consistency at county and local levels.	Short-term	GP, MORPC
	Tools		
1	Create a model comprehensive plan program for central Ohio communities.	Short-term	MORPC
2	Conduct a regional cost of development analysis	Short-term	MORPC
3	Create a fiscal impact/cost of community service tool	Short-term	MORPC
4	Create model tools and standards that promote traditional neighborhood development patterns.	Mid-term	MORPC
5	Create model regulations that include tools to connect and protect open spaces between newly developed areas.	Mid-term	GP, MORPC
6	Create model regulations that promote connectivity among land uses.	Mid-term	GP, MORPC
7	Encourage regulations that would allow a greater intensity and mix of uses in our town centers— retail, offices, residential and civic.	Short-term	GP
8	Encourage regulations that allow for areas of higher density development to support transit and other services to be provided more efficiently.	Short-term	GP, MORPC, COTA & other transit providers
9	Create incentives to direct development inwardly to strategic locations and encourage redevelopment.	Mid-term	GP
10	Create model parkland dedication rules.	Short-term	GP, MORPC
11	Update Land Use Model.	Ongoing	GP, MORPC
12	Continue to update regional DataPort.	Ongoing	GP, MORPC
13	Continue to refine Conceptual Development Framework/Matrix.	Ongoing	MORPC
	Appearance		
1	Create a model program to demonstrate the integration of a community's unique culture, history and physical character into the built environment.	Mid-term	GP, AIA, ASLA
2	Create a program to recognize communities with successful community design efforts.	Mid-term	GP, AIA, ASLA
3	Create model tools that enhance community appearance (zoning codes, design standards, affordability equations, administrative reviews, etc.)	Mid-term	GP
4	Promote pedestrian friendly street design and amenities.	Short-term	GP, MORPC
5	Promote the inclusion of small-scale shops in our neighborhoods.	Short-term	GP
6	Promote the inclusion of civic and community uses in our neighborhoods.	Short-term	GP
7	Promote the inclusion of housing with a mix of values in our neighborhoods.	Short-term	GP, BIA
8	Promote mixed use developments at appropriate scales in a range of community types—from small towns to suburbs and major urban areas.	Short-term	GP, BIA

Agriculture			
1	Establish a regional farmland preservation program, and raise awareness of the economic benefit of agriculture in central Ohio.	Long-term	GP, LT, ST, OSU Extension
2	Create model zoning codes that address protection of farmland and open space.	Long-term	GP
3	Promote existing tools, like land trusts, to preserve agricultural land and open space.	Short-term	GP, LT, ST, OSU Extension
4	Lobby the state legislature for new tools to protect farmland, like transfer of development rights.	Short-term	GP, APA
5	Develop funding sources to support farmland preservation efforts.	Short-term	LT, GP, ST
Natural Environment			
1	Create a regional natural resource protection master plan.	Mid-term	GP, LT, ST, Metro Parks, MORPC
2	Utilize model tools to protect natural resources (e.g. watershed, well head).	Short-term	GP, MORPC
3	Create a program to support green building.	Short-term	AIA, BIA, MORPC
4	Improve enforcement of current environmental regulations.	Mid-term	GP, EPA
5	Strengthen policies to improve and protect water quality, including key watersheds.	Mid-term	GP, ST, EPA, MORPC
6	Strengthen policies to improve and protect air quality.	Mid-term	MORPC, GP, ST
7	Create standards for provision of parks in new and existing neighborhoods.	Mid-term	GP, MORPC
Infrastructure			
1	Coordinate and plan major infrastructure improvements with regional growth and development objectives.	Long-term	MORPC
2	Create a regional transportation plan for all seven counties of central Ohio.	Long-term	MORPC, COTA, ST & other transit providers
3	Create protocols for providing regional infrastructure improvements concurrent with development.	Mid-term	MORPC, GP
4	Create policies that encourage the maintenance of existing infrastructure as a priority.	Mid-term	MORPC, GP
5	Encourage new development toward areas already served with infrastructure, capable of accommodating additional growth.	Mid-term	MORPC, GP
6	Pursue opportunities for increased mass transit and provide transit links throughout the seven county region.	Mid-term	GP, COTA & other transit providers
7	Create tools that assist communities in providing a range of travel choices (cars, transit, biking, walking, etc.) for residents, businesses and visitors.	Mid-term	GP, COTA & other transit providers
8	Create a regional utility plan to upgrade utilities based on growth and development objectives.	Mid-term	GP
9	Create programs to ensure affordable utility service for all citizens.	Mid-term	GP
10	Identify funding inequities and fiscal disparities among greenfield and mature communities	Short-term	GP

Prosperity	Objective / Strategy	Time Frame	Responsibility
Economy			
1	Support the implementation of a plan for coordinated, cooperative regional economic development in central Ohio.	Mid-term	MORPC, GP, CC, CDC, ST
2	Create and market a unified identity for the central Ohio region.	Mid-term	CC
3	Create mechanisms to share the costs and revenues of joint economic development, and use existing revenue sharing agreements, like CEDAs (Cooperative Economic Development Agreements).	Mid-term	MORPC, GP, ST

4	Support a plan to retain existing and attract new businesses that add to the social and physical fabric of the region.	Mid-term	GP, CC, ST
5	Support a cooperative incentive program to attract new businesses to central Ohio. Use available State dollars and other resources.	Mid-term	GP, CC, ST
6	Promote reinvestment in established and mature communities to stabilize or enhance them. Support retention and expansion of traditional amenities. Look to the State for reinvestment monies.	Mid-term	GP, CC, ST
7	Support plans to revitalize and improve the established urban, cultural and entertainment centers in each County.	Short-term	GP
8	Lobby the state legislature for additional resources to redevelop blighted, under utilized or polluted areas. Hold businesses more accountable for properties, and consider better uses of land.	Short-term	GP
9	Monitor cooperative economic development activity.	Short-term	MORPC
Jobs			
1	Strengthen efforts to create quality jobs.	Mid-term	GP, CC, ST
2	Monitor changes in the types and distribution of jobs throughout the region.	Short-term	GP, CC
3	Encourage the mix of uses that provide better jobs, housing proximity and economic balance (fiscal relationship to infrastructure).	Short-term	GP
4	Support programs that improve accessibility to employment opportunities and reduce transportation needs.	Mid-term	MORPC, GP, CC
5	Support incentives for jobs that retain and attract skilled employees.	Short-term	GP, CC

People	Objective / Strategy	Time Frame	Responsibility
Education			
1	Monitor state legislature on the issue of the judicial mandate for funding equity and adequacy for all school districts.	Short-term	Monitor
2	Evaluate policies to address the increasing pressure new housing development places on the school system.	Short-term	GP
3	Promote programs that increase educational excellence.	Short-term	GP
4	Evaluate inequity among schools and recommend methods to provide better balance of educational opportunities.	Mid-term	MORPC
5	Encourage programs to increase collaboration among all levels of schools, from elementary to college, and between schools and the community.	Short-term	GP
6	Promote the importance of life-long quality educational opportunities at all levels, for all residents.	Short-term	GP
Equity			
1	Promote adequate, affordable housing is spread equitably throughout the region.	Short-term	GP, MORPC
2	Promote policies that support the sharing of resources and services among communities.	Short-term	GP, MORPC
3	Provide programs that increase employment opportunities on a regional basis.	Mid-term	GP, CC, ST
4	Create programs to stabilize older neighborhoods and housing stock in mature communities of the region.	Mid-term	GP, MORPC
5	Create programs to ensure well-paying jobs are obtainable for people of all skill levels.	Mid-term	GP, CC, ST
Public Services			
1	Assess needs for community facilities to service the growing regional population, including healthcare, libraries, recreation and education.	Short-term	GP, MORPC
2	Create a model comprehensive plan program that includes identification of public safety equipment and facilities needs.	Mid-term	GP, MORPC
3	Create a program to facilitate the provision of greater sharing of regional services.	Mid-term	GP, MORPC
4	Continue to advocate social service programs to residents of the region.	Short-term	GP

Leadership	Objective / Strategy	Time Frame	Responsibility
	Governance		
1	Explore new governance structures to address regional growth management, economic development, and transportation and establish a regional planning group for the seven county area.	Long-term	MORPC, GP, ST
2	Explore the creation of a joint authority to provide public services more efficiently, as long it is in keeping with other plan strategies.	Long-term	MORPC, GP
3	Evaluate consolidation of service opportunities.	Mid-term	MORPC, GP
4	Explore consolidation of government units to reduce duplication of providing government services.	Mid-term	ST, GP, MORPC
5	Establish a Regional Leadership Institute.	Short-term	MORPC
6	Create a best practice set of procedures to guide the formation and implementation of multi-jurisdictional agreements.	Short-term	MORPC
	Cooperation		
1	Build on and leverage existing efforts of multi-jurisdictional cooperation.	Short-term	MORPC, GP
2	Foster greater coordination for regional initiatives by creating improved methods for sharing information.	Mid-term	MORPC, GP
3	Establish a Regional Development Sub-Committee.	Short-term	MORPC
4	Cooperate with the Regional Policy Roundtable.	Short-term	MORPC
5	Facilitate sub-regional working groups to address local issues.	Short-term	MORPC, GP
6	Improve communication among jurisdictions.	Short-term	GP, MORPC
7	Promote greater cooperation between local, county, regional and state jurisdictions.	Short-term	MORPC
8	Consolidate some service delivery among jurisdictions... such as water, sewer, trash collections, police, fire, recreation, etc.	Mid-term	GP
9	Create an agreement to eliminate intra-regional economic development competition among communities in central Ohio.	Long-term	GP, CC
10	Explore the creation of a seven-county regional tax base sharing agreement.	Mid-term	GP, ST
11	Acknowledge and reward individuals, organizations, and communities that demonstrate exemplary regional leadership.	Short-term	GP
12	Adopt a regional compact that details the commitment to regional cooperation.	Mid-term	GP
13	Create an implementation program for Regional Connections.	Short-term	MORPC
	Outreach		
1	Improve communication with citizens and other stakeholders on growth topics of regional significance.	Short-term	GP, MORPC, CC
2	Create greater education efforts for development-related initiatives for local government officials.	Short-term	GP
3	Provide cooperative education opportunities for policy-makers to learn from similar experiences and situations of other jurisdictions.	Short-term	GP, MORPC
4	Advocate to State and Federal representatives and partner agencies.	Ongoing	GP, MORPC
5	Advocate to local governments and quasi-governmental entities.	Ongoing	MORPC
6	Conduct ongoing analysis of regional issues.	Ongoing	MORPC
7	Provide un-biased guidance, support, resources and technical support to local governments to increase the chance of success.	Ongoing	MORPC