

County Workshops Report

REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

JANUARY 21, 2004 – FEBRUARY 12, 2004



PREPARED FOR
MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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Summary of County Workshops



The mission of the Regional Growth Strategy is to...*"Create a common understanding of the dramatic change anticipated for the central Ohio region over the next 20 to 30 years. With this understanding, define a preferred approach to growth and development for the seven county regional community."*

Overview

The central Ohio region has changed dramatically over the past decade, and rapid change is expected to continue. Approximately 573,000 new individuals are projected to settle in the seven county region by the year 2030. Such growth will create ongoing challenges such as traffic congestion, the loss of open space, service issues and higher taxes. The Regional Growth Strategy is a community process that involves citizens, businesses, organizations, and local government officials in a cooperative effort to plan for projected growth and development in central Ohio.

The area has a wide array of diverse entities, and coordination among these entities can be challenging. The Regional Growth Strategy is a process which initiates meaningful dialogue on growth and development in the region, an investigation into the powerful trends impacting the region and an effort to prepare useful information and tools for local communities. This is an inclusive process open to all residents and stakeholders offering an opportunity to chart a common, cooperative future for the central Ohio region.

One of the major components of this Regional Connection process was a series of county workshops. The purpose of this report is to summarize the results of the county workshops. The report is broken down into three sections. First is a review of the exit questionnaires completed by the participants at the meetings illustrating who has participated in the county workshops, followed by the results from the two activities conducted as part of the county workshops.

The purpose of the county workshops was to provide a forum to: discuss growth and development trends for the central Ohio region; understand local issues; gather ideas about the future; and encourage participation in future regional events. The general format for the workshops is outlined below.

1. What is the Regional Growth Strategy?
2. How is Our Regional Community Changing?
3. Small Group Activities.

Activity 1: Reactions to the trends.

Activity 2: What should we be doing?

The workshops were held between January 21 and February 12, 2004. One workshop was held in each of the seven participating counties, with two additional workshops held in Franklin County due to the large population base residing in the county. The times and locations of the workshops are outlined below:

- **Union County**
January 21, 2004; 7:00 – 9:00 pm - Union County Services Center
- **Madison County**
January 22, 2004; 5:00 – 7:00 pm - Tolles Technical Center
- **Pickaway County**
January 28, 2004; 7:00 – 9:00 pm - Circleville High School
- **Licking County**
January 29, 2004; 7:00 – 9:00 pm - Watkins High School
- **Fairfield County**
February 5, 2004; 6:30 – 8:30 pm - The Liberty Center
- **Franklin County**
January 30, 2004; 11:00 – 1:00 pm - Columbus Health Department
February 4, 2004; 6:30 – 8:30 pm - Chase Manhattan (Easton)
February 6, 2004; 9:00 – 11:00 am - St. John’s (Grove City)
- **Delaware County**
February 12, 2004; 7:00 – 9:00 pm - Delaware County Bank

Table 1 - Residence of Participants

County	Participants	Percent
Delaware	103	12.7
Fairfield	160	19.7
Franklin	150	18.4
Licking	142	17.4
Madison	80	9.8
Pickaway	94	11.5
Union	85	10.4
Total	814	100.0

More than 800 people participated in the county workshops. The large number of participants reflects a strong interest in regional growth issues by all counties. The numbers are especially impressive given inclement weather for several meetings. Table 1 shows the workshop participation by County.

A presentation was given to the participants at each county meeting outlining what the Regional Growth Strategy is, as well as discussion about the data and trends shaping the regional community. Individual and small group exercises were conducted to give participants an opportunity to react to data and trends that were reviewed in the presentation. The small groups

also discussed solutions for growth concerns on both a county and regional level.

Workshop Participants

There were over 800 participants at the nine county workshops. Of those, 590 completed exit questionnaires at the conclusion of each workshop. The exit questionnaires provided information regarding the length of time the participant has lived in the region, their work commute, and age.

- *How long have you lived in the region?:* Nearly half of the participants (44 percent) have lived in the region their entire life, 32 percent of the participants indicated that they had lived in the region for over 20 years, and 10 percent have lived in the region between 10-19 years. The participants who had lived in the region between 5-9 and 0-4 years were equal at 7 percent each.
- *What is your work commute?:* The majority of participants indicated that they work fairly close to home, with 51 percent reporting their commute to work is between 1-10 minutes, and 59 percent commute between 1-10 miles to work. There were also a significant number of participants who indicated their commute is longer than 30 minutes (23 percent). The length of drive to work over 30 miles was the least frequent at six percent.
- *What is your age?:* While the majority of participants were between 40 and 59 years old (62 percent), all age categories were represented, including three participants over 80 years old (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Age of Participants

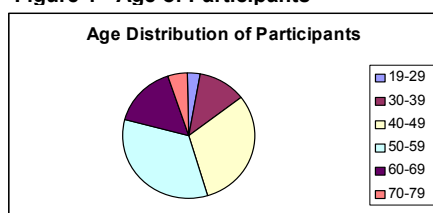


Table 2 - Question 1 Responses

County	Question 1	
	Your County	Region
Delaware	1.9	0.5
Fairfield	1.3	0.1
Franklin	0.7	0.0
Licking	1.5	0.7
Madison	2.8	0.3
Pickaway	0.3	-0.2
Union	2.4	2.2
Total	1.5	0.5

Table 3 - Question 2 Responses

County	Question 2	
	Your County	Region
Delaware	-1.9	-2.1
Fairfield	-1.4	-1.3
Franklin	-2.1	-1.9
Licking	-0.6	-1.3
Madison	0.5	-1.5
Pickaway	-1.6	-1.5
Union	0.4	-0.1
Total	-1.0	-1.4

A full description of participant information is given in Supporting Attachment A.

Activity 1: Data and Trends Reactions

Following the data and trends presentation, participants had the opportunity to react to the trends through discussion and the completion of a worksheet. The worksheet activity was created to initiate dialogue on the data and trends in central Ohio, and survey participants on their feelings about these trends.

The first question in this activity asked participants, *“In your opinion, over the last ten years do you think the quality of life has generally gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?”* The responses to this question were ranked on a scale from -5 significantly worse, to 5 significantly better. Participants were asked to answer this question in two parts; based on their county and the region. In general, the participants who responded to this question were neutral. Residents perceived their individual counties as getting slightly better (1.5), while in the region participants on average scored 0.5, slightly above a neutral score of 0 (Table 2).

Question two in activity one asked, *“Assuming that things continue pretty much as they are now, do you think we will have a better place to live*

in ten years, a worse place, or will it be about the same?” Again, participants were asked to answer this question in two parts; based on their county and the region. On this question, participants generally perceived the future as being a worse place to live if the present trends continue. Ranking was the same as Question 1. The results of this question are listed in Table 3.

The next question in activity one focused specifically on the trends outlined in the presentation. Question three states, *“Of all the data and trends discussed during the presentation, which two or three do you believe are the most encouraging and discouraging, and why?”* The results of these responses were categorized by the type of response. The most discouraging trends highlighted by the participants were traffic, loss of agricultural land and county growth. County growth was also an important encouraging trend for participants, as well as job growth and planning. The results of question three are shown in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4 - Most Encouraging Trends

Question 3		
Most Encouraging - Category	Number	Percent
Job Growth	323	44.6
County Growth	159	22.0
Planning	79	10.9
Miscellaneous	71	9.8
Land Consumption Trends	28	3.9
Tax Base	22	3.0
Traffic	17	2.3
Job Location	7	1.0
Pattern of Development	7	1.0
Education	5	0.7
Agricultural Land Preservation	4	0.6
Col.-Franklin County Growth	2	0.3
Total	724	100.0

Table 5 - Most Discouraging Trends

Question 3		
Most Discouraging - Category	Number	Percent
Traffic	217	24.1
Loss of Ag. Land	212	23.5
County Growth	140	15.5
Pattern of Development	84	9.3
Land Consumption Trends	67	7.4
Planning	43	4.8
Job Growth	42	4.7
Col.-Franklin County Growth	27	3.0
Miscellaneous	25	2.8
Education	22	2.4
Tax Base	14	1.6
Job Location	8	0.9
Total	901	100.0

Activity 2: Participant Worksheet

Activity two was conducted as a small group activity. Participants were arranged in groups and introduced to each other. This gave everyone a chance to become acquainted, and established the protocol for initially sharing responses to the worksheet questions. After introductions were completed, a visualization statement was read from the front of the room which asked the participants to think about the kind of future they want, dream of, and hope for, for their community. After listening to this statement, participants filled out a worksheet activity, and then were engaged in a group discussion. A series of questions were used to guide the groups' discussion. The first question posed, *"In light of existing conditions and trends, what needs to be done to ensure a prosperous future and high quality of life in our county?"* Participants responded to this question by highlighting responses pertaining to economic development, transportation, growth management, comprehensive planning, regulations and education as key issues that need to be addressed to create a prosperous future in their respective counties (Table 6).

"In light of existing conditions and trends, what needs to be done to ensure a prosperous future and high quality of life in our county?"

Table 6 - Activity 2 Question 1

Category	Number	Percent
Economic Development	411	13.1
Transportation	359	11.5
Growth Management	279	8.9
Comprehensive Planning	264	8.4
Regulations	246	7.9
Education	233	7.4
Land Use	208	6.6
Natural Environment	179	5.7
Intergovernmental Coop	174	5.6
Community Appearance	133	4.2
Agriculture	130	4.2
Community Service	118	3.8
Outreach	87	2.8
Social Equity	86	2.7
Governance	83	2.7
Utilities	78	2.5
Infrastructure (general)	42	1.3
Miscellaneous	22	0.7
Total	3,132	100.0

Following this question, participants were engaged in another question as part of activity two. Participants were asked, *"How is the future we desire for our county interconnected with growth and development in the central Ohio region?"* The participants responded to this question by mentioning the importance of growth management, intergovernmental

cooperation, economic development, and comprehensive planning as key issues in the future of central Ohio (Table 7).

“How is the future we desire for our county interconnected with growth and development in the central Ohio region?”

Table 7 - Activity 2 Question 2

Category	Number	Percent
Growth Management	191	24.2
Intergovernmental Cooperation	115	14.6
Economic Development	112	14.2
Comprehensive Planning	97	12.3
Transportation	83	10.5
Land Use	40	5.1
Regulations	30	3.8
Community Appearance	22	2.8
Miscellaneous	17	2.2
Community Service	17	2.2
Utilities	13	1.6
Natural Environment	10	1.3
Education	9	1.1
Agriculture	9	1.1
Columbus	7	0.9
Outreach	6	0.8
Social Equity	6	0.8
Governance	4	0.5
Total	788	100.0

The third and final question in activity two was created to gain insight in how to address the issues defined by the participants that are shaping the future of the region. This question asked, *“What needs to be done to address issues of regional impact (i.e. issues that affect numerous counties and communities) to ensure a prosperous future and high quality of life for central Ohio?”* The focus of the participant’s responses again turned to creating better intergovernmental cooperation and improving transportation, as well as better planning for the region, reviewing current development regulations and proposing new regulations to guide growth and development in the region (Table 8).

“What needs to be done to address issues of regional impact (i.e. issues that affect numerous counties and communities) to ensure a prosperous future and high quality of life for central Ohio?”

Table 8 - Activity 2 Question 3

Category	Number	Percent
Intergovernmental Coop.	327	21.0
Transportation	179	11.5
Comprehensive Planning	169	10.8
Regulations	161	10.3
Economic Development	130	8.3
Growth Management	101	6.5
Outreach	96	6.2
Governance	95	6.1
Natural Environment	72	4.6
Education	55	3.5
Community Service	43	2.8
Infrastructure (general)	35	2.2
Utilities	26	1.7
Community Appearance	22	1.4
Agriculture	20	1.3
Miscellaneous	20	1.3
Social Equity	8	0.5
Total	1,559	100.0

Supporting Attachments

A. Exit Questionnaire Summary

Total number of exit questionnaires surveyed – 595

A. How long have you lived in the region?

Lifelong – 260 participants, 44.1 percent
Over 20 years – 191 participants, 32.4 percent
10-19 – 58 participants, 9.8 percent
5-9 – 41 participants, 6.9 percent
0-4 – 40 participants, 6.8 percent

B. Where do you live by County?

Delaware – 95 participants, 16.2 percent
Fairfield – 87 participants, 14.9 percent
Franklin – 63 participants, 10.8 percent
Licking – 129 participants, 22.1 percent
Madison – 72 participants, 12.3 percent
Pickaway – 66 participants, 11.3 percent
Union – 73 participants, 12.5 percent

C. How long is your commute to work?

1-10 minutes – 270 participants, 51.2 percent
11-20 minutes – 60 participants, 11.4 percent
21-30 minutes – 76 participants, 14.4 percent
Over 30 minutes – 121 participants, 23.0 percent

D. How far do you drive to work?

1-10 miles – 315 participants, 58.7 percent
11-20 miles – 105 participants, 19.6 percent
21-30 miles – 85 participants, 15.8 percent
Over 30 miles – 32 participants, 6.0 percent

E. What is your age?

19-29 – 20 participants, 3.5 percent
30-39 – 70 participants, 12.4 percent
40-49 – 158 participants, 28.0 percent
50-59 – 194 participants, 34.3 percent
60-69 – 92 participants, 16.3 percent
70-79 – 28 participants, 5.0 percent
80 or older – 3 participants, 0.5 percent

Appendices

The attached appendices are the raw data collected at the county workshops. This data is presented in four sections:

“Of all the data and trends discussed during the presentation, which two or three do you believe are the most encouraging and discouraging, and why?”

- A.1 Most encouraging by County
- A.2 Most discouraging by County

“In light of existing conditions and trends, what needs to be done to ensure a prosperous future and high quality of life in our county?”

- B.1 Sorted by County
- B.2-B.19 Sorted by Category

“How is the future we desire for our county interconnected with growth and development in the central Ohio region?”

- C.1 Sorted by County
- C.2-C.19 Sorted by Category

“What needs to be done to address issues of regional impact to ensure a prosperous future and high quality of life for central Ohio?”

- D.1 Sorted by County
- D.2-D.18 Sorted by Category