

County Workshops Report

REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

OCTOBER 19, 2005 – NOVEMBER 16, 2005



PREPARED FOR
MID OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

PREPARED BY
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Summary of County Workshops

Overview

The central Ohio region continues to increase in population and development growth. Approximately 573,000 additional individuals are projected to move to the seven county region by the year 2030. This growth has broad implications for the quality of life of residents of the region. The Regional Connections process focuses on creating a better understanding and stronger cooperation on issues of growth and development for the central Ohio region.

In order to prepare and appropriately plan for the expected growth, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission conducted development work sessions in each of the seven counties of the region in October and November of 2005. The purpose of the meetings was to update county residents on the status of the Regional Connections process and gather their input through small group activities and E-Poll questionnaires.

The county work sessions were focused on gaining resident feedback on the Vision for Place and draft Conceptual Development Framework. During the work sessions, county residents were asked to participate and comment on the Vision for Place and how well it meets their own vision for their county as well as for the region as a whole. Additionally, residents gave feedback on how well the draft Conceptual Development Framework accounts for development constraints and how well it reflects the Vision for Place.



Regional Connections is the name of the process to create a Regional Growth Strategy and Conceptual Development Framework for central Ohio.

Meeting Structure

The county meetings were held between October 19 and November 16, 2005. More than 366 people participated in the county meeting sessions. Each of the county meetings included attendance from community leaders, active citizens, and other stakeholders reflecting a strong interest in the regional growth planning process by all of the counties. A presentation was given to the participants at each county meeting outlining the data and trends of the county and region as a whole, and explaining the history and future of the project. The presentation then shared the Vision for Place and draft of the Conceptual Development Framework. The times and locations of the county meeting sessions are outlined below:

- **Madison County**
October 19, 2005; 6:30 – 9:00pm - Tolles Technical Center
- **Fairfield County**
October 20, 2005; 6:30 – 9:00pm – Liberty Center
- **Union County**
October 24 2005; 6:30 – 9:00pm – Union County Services Center
- **Delaware County**
October 25, 2005; 6:30 – 9:00pm – Hayes Administration Building
- **Pickaway County**
October 26, 2005; 6:30 – 9:00pm – Circleville High School Cafeteria
- **Licking County**
October 27, 2005; 6:30 – 9:00pm – Cherry Valley Lodge
- **Franklin County**
November 15, 2005; 5:30 – 8:00pm – Historic Lincoln Theater
November 16, 2005; 9:30 – 12:00pm – Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

The general format for the county meeting is outlined below.

1. Regional Connections Update: Where are we in the process?
2. Trends: Growth and development in our region
3. Perspectives: What have you told us?
4. The preferred Future: Vision for Place & the Draft Conceptual Development Framework
5. Small Group Work
 - a. Vision for Place
 - b. Draft Conceptual Development Framework

E-Poll Data Collection

Meeting attendees participated in an electronic voting activity that instantly calculated and presented participant opinions. Two sets of questions were asked of the participants. The first E-Poll activity asked demographic questions and asked how involved attendees have been in the Regional Connections project in the past. Following the first E-Poll, the facilitator presented the Vision for Place and the working draft of the Conceptual Development Framework. The second E-Poll activity specifically asked for responses regarding the Vision for Place and Draft Conceptual Development Framework. Participants were asked to respond in reference to their county as well as the region as a whole.

Who Attended

An average of 59 percent of attendees to the county meetings were male. The majority of respondents were between the ages of 35 to 64 years of age. Residents ranged from newcomers to long-time residents. On average, nearly 50 percent of county respondents were residents of their county for 30 years or more. E-Poll results show a divergence among the residents as to how far they commute to their place of employment. For the most part, residents were either 5 miles or closer (10 minutes or less driving) to their jobs, or they were either 13 miles or more (12 minutes or more driving) away from their jobs. For a complete list of attendee information, see Appendices A and B.

Vision for Place

An activity to gain feedback on the Vision for Place was conducted at each county session. Participants were asked to offer reactions to the Vision for Place thinking about both their county and the region as a whole. Participants documented their individual reactions, and then engaged in group discussion about the Vision for Place. The Vision for Place is defined below.

The Vision for Place is...

- A physical environment that accommodates future growth and is distinguished by high quality neighborhoods and communities and careful stewardship of natural resources and agricultural land.
- Integrated-uses and more intensive utilization of land in neighborhoods and communities is evident throughout the region.
- Development occurs concurrent with the extension of appropriately sized utilities and roads and development policies are based on an understanding of the economic impacts to affected local governments.

"Well stated vision that needs backed up with strategies for achieving the vision. Strategies that can be translated into policies and guidelines to apply to development issues."

-Madison County Participant

- Places are connected by a range of transportation choices, including roads, public and private transit, and paths for walking and biking.

The E-Poll questions asked participants for their overall reaction to the direction of the Vision for Place. A limited number of respondents felt the Vision was either very timid or very bold, with most stating it was timid, just right or bold. When participants were then asked how strongly they supported the Vision for Place in central Ohio, an average of 74 percent either support or strongly support the Vision.

Draft Conceptual Development Framework

Using GIS, maps were created that illustrate development constraints, economic development patterns, and existing and proposed infrastructure investments. These maps were then used to generate a composite map of intended and encouraged growth.

E-Poll results show that an overwhelming majority from each county agrees that the CDF appropriately considers the environmental constraints of their county and of the region. However, the vast majority of respondents do not feel confident that policymakers throughout their community/county will seriously consider the ideas embodied in the CDF. An average of 67 percent of respondents support the draft CDF, with 61 percent agreeing that the CDF respects plans and infrastructure. Across the region, an average of 67 percent agree that the draft CDF embodies the Vision.