



Dear residents of the Central Ohio:

Our region—Central Ohio—is experiencing profound change. Over the next 30 years we can expect nearly 500,000 new residents in our seven county region of Franklin, Delaware, Licking, Fairfield, Pickaway, Madison and Union. This will raise the number of residents to over 2.2 million by 2030.

We are fortunate to live in region that continues to attract more and more people. This growth has helped fuel a strong local economy, providing important job opportunities for regional residents. While there are many positive impacts of growth, there is no denying that growth also has serious negative consequences. We are experiencing increasing traffic congestion, longer travel times, sprawling development patterns, and the loss of open space and any sense of uniqueness in the built environment. Virtually every community is having a difficult time paying for growth-related infrastructure and services. Similarly, school districts in the region have serious fiscal stress related to growth.

Individual communities can—and should—be proactive and develop plans and policies to anticipate growth and shape how they want to develop. But these individual plans have severe limitations to address those issues that transcend political boundaries—issues like traffic and watershed management. When considering what makes up our region—203 separate general purpose government units: seven counties, 21 cities, 59 villages and 116 townships—the challenge of cooperating at this scale and complexity is daunting. No regional policy-making body exists, so it is up to us to cooperate and create a more rational, cost-effective and equitable approach to addressing future growth. We must work together to ensure that we all remain strong and attractive.

In response to these challenges, our regional community, with the leadership of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), has worked diligently to prepare a shared growth strategy, *Regional Connections*. *Regional Connections* creates a vision of how the central Ohio region can grow, prosper, and enhance the quality of life of all residents in the next 25 years. The vision is drawn from the energy and ideas of over a thousand residents, governments, businesses, non-profits and others. Participants in *Regional Connections* share a collective desire to address future growth in more rational, cost-effective and equitable ways and to do so in a spirit of regional cooperation.

Ultimately, realizing this vision depends on the continued participation and support of citizens and stakeholders across central Ohio. We invite you to be engaged and involved with MORPC in the next steps of putting into action our collaborative strategies to create a vibrant future for central Ohio. We need each other.

Respectfully yours,

**Jack Lucks**  
*Regional Connections* Co-Chair  
Continental Communities

**Paula Brooks**  
*Regional Connections* Co-Chair  
Franklin County Commissioner