



# Stakeholder Workshop Report

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HOW DO WE GROW?  
REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

MARCH 31, 2004

**PREPARED FOR**  
MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

**PREPARED BY**  
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**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."*

## How Do We Grow?

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### **Overview**

On March 31, 2004, stakeholders from each of the seven central Ohio counties convened for a workshop to review draft visions, themes and strategies produced from the cumulative results of two prior regional workshops, nine county-level workshops, eight discussion groups, and four focus groups. The stakeholders also provided input on four draft future development scenarios. The workshop – How do we grow? – was designed to further shape an approach for growth and development in the region.

### **Workshop Participants**

There were over 170 participants at the workshop. Of those, over half (54 percent) live in Franklin County. Participants from Fairfield and Licking County each represented approximately 14 percent of the participants. Union, Pickaway, Delaware and Madison counties each represented under six percent of the participation. Table 1 illustrates participation by county. These numbers are somewhat representative of the regional population. Delaware County participation (by percentage) in this workshop fell substantially below the total population percentage, while Fairfield County was the opposite. Table 2 provides a comparison of participation by county to overall county population.

Table 1 - Participant Residence

County	Number	Percent
Delaware	7	4.1
Fairfield	25	14.7
Franklin	92	54.1
Licking	24	14.1
Madison	4	2.4
Pickaway	8	4.7
Union	10	5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: There were 176 participants registered for the event, six did not indicate a county or place of residence when signing in.

Table 2 - Population Comparison

County	Participants (%)	Total Pop. (%)
Delaware	4.1	7.0
Fairfield	14.7	7.7
Franklin	54.1	67.6
Licking	14.1	9.2
Madison	2.4	2.5
Pickaway	4.7	3.3
Union	5.9	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Future Scenarios

One of the major efforts of *Regional Connections* has been the creation of a land use computer model for the seven county area. Existing land use and plans for all communities are integrated in to the model.

The model was developed in part to illustrate different future scenarios. At the workshop on March 31, four potential scenarios were presented. This was the first attempt to use this planning tool. The scenarios shared at the workshop will be refined and integrated in to the final project report.

The scenarios depict a range of potential futures—from continuing the current growth trend, to an aggressive inward growth model. The input received throughout the *Regional Connections* process indicates a strong preference for using land much more efficiently than in the recent past, as indicated by the trends research.

The four scenarios and general descriptions are outlined below. Each scenario accommodates the anticipated population increase of 573,000 new people by 2030:

1. Continuing the Trend: Growth is characterized by a “business as usual” approach in which growth continues in a lower density, dispersed pattern with strong emphasis on roads as the major transportation investment (no transit service increase). Intensity of land use is based entirely on current plans of local communities.
2. Shifting Inward: Growth is characterized by some shifting inward, less low density residential development, and minor intensification and integration of land use. There is a strong emphasis on roads as the major transportation investment (no transit service increase).
3. Shifting Inward with Increased Transit: Growth is characterized by more inward growth than the previous scenario. Greater intensification and integration of land use is depicted based on major transit investments along the proposed North Corridor.
4. Aggressively Inward: Growth is characterized by significantly more inward and efficient growth. Much more intensification and integration of land uses is depicted, as well as major transit investments (COTA’s long-range plan, Vision 2020).

Table 3 - Future Scenarios

Initial Indicators	Trend (%)	Shifting (%)	Shifting+ (%)	Aggressive (%)
Land Consumption Change	102	93	80	59
New Housing in Greenfields	86	86	74	53
Housing Density Change	-29	-24	-20	-10
New Jobs in Greenfields	91	91	61	25
VMT Change	46	40	32	22

The depiction of these different futures is summarized in Table 3 based on a few initial indicators. These indicators communicate an order of magnitude difference among the scenarios. As stated previously, these

scenarios will be refined and used in preparing the final report for the project.

**Vision Statements**

Draft vision statements for place, prosperity, people and leadership were prepared based on input received from the county workshops and focus groups. The second exercise of the workshop asked participants to review four draft vision statements, one each for place, prosperity, people and leadership. Each participant was asked “How strongly do you agree with this statement?” Possible answer categories ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. There was significant agreement expressed for all four statements (see Table 4).

**Table 4 - Vision Statement Results (percentage)**

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Place (%)</b>	<b>Prosperity (%)</b>	<b>People (%)</b>	<b>Leadership (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	44	37	36	43
Agree	40	44	49	40
Somewhat Agree	14	18	14	12
Disagree	1	1	1	4
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0	1

The four draft statements and a summary of comments are outlined below (see Appendix A for all comments). Most participants “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the statements.

**Place**

The vision statement for Place is: *A physical environment that accommodates future growth efficiently and is distinguished by high quality neighborhoods and communities and careful stewardship of natural resources and agricultural land. Integrated-uses and more intensive utilization in neighborhoods and communities is evident throughout the region. Development occurs concurrent with the extension of utilities and roads and development policies are based on an understanding of the economic impacts to local governments. Places are connected by a range of transportation choices, including roads, transit and paths for walking and biking.*

A total of 84 percent of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Common themes from the comments received included:

- Remove the words “concurrent with”, and replace them with “following” or “after completion of”.
- Clarification on the words “careful stewardship” is needed (no alternative phrases were offered).
- The vision statement should place more emphasis on natural resources, recreation and prime agricultural protection.
- The last sentence in the statement needs to clarify transportation choices.

### Prosperity

The vision statement for Prosperity: *A diverse, healthy economy that provides well-paying job opportunities for residents and revenues to government to support the provision of quality community services and facilities. Approaches to economic development efforts strike a balance of regional and local needs. Economic development is defined by cooperation and the sharing of the benefits of joint efforts.*

Eighty-one percent of the participants agree or strongly agree with this statement. Common themes from the comments received for this statement include:

- Omit, or expand and clarify the last sentence. Comments included removing it (not clear and meaningless), replacing economic development with community development, adding recognition of the strategic role of the private sector as well, vague and difficult/cumbersome to read, not necessary.
- Identify or clarify “well-paying”. Comments included replace with “appropriate”, a relative term, seems out of place, assuming everyone has a well paying job.
- Include access to a better range of jobs and a broad range of employment opportunities.
- Striking a balance between regional and local is unclear.
- Statement should expand to include that economic expansion and prosperity needs to be supported by a strong transportation infrastructure.

### People

The vision statement for People: *A diverse and civically engaged population that has choices and access to housing, jobs and life-long learning opportunities.*

Eighty-five percent of the participants agree or strongly agree with this statement. Common themes from the comments received include:

- Strong sentiment that education needs to be more pronounced in the vision (add well educated after “diverse”, add or address public education, education, and “high quality” learning opportunities, life long learning does not address quality of education issues).
- In addition to education, quality of life issues need to be addressed better (access to health services, recreation, culture, open space).
- Promote human diversity in the region.
- Place an emphasis on the importance of affordable housing, not just housing.
- There is some confusion about what the term “choices” means.

### Leadership

The vision statement for Leadership: *A new paradigm for leadership and governance that is defined by shared understanding and cooperative decision-making. Plans, policies and decisions related to growth, development and major infrastructure investments are made with a regional*

*perspective and desire for improved efficiency of service delivery. Residents and stakeholders are involved and well-informed about regional issues.*

This vision statement pertains to governance and intergovernmental cooperation. Eighty-three percent of the participants agree or strongly agree with this statement. Common themes from the comments received include:

- Need to be careful as to not undermine the independence of local governments when creating regional cooperation, needs to say with a local and regional perspective (regional issues need to be done with consensus, local governments need to maintain control, “local decisions are guided by regional plans and policies”, “with a local and regional perspective”, emphasize local planning, area residents should make the decisions for their areas).
- Some contradiction in comments regarding representation and involvement. Some comments suggested a stronger emphasis on the importance of residents and stakeholders in regional leadership (bottom up approach). Other comments stated that not everyone should be included in a regional planning and decision making process (i.e. uninformed residents).
- Need for stronger leadership and involvement at the state level, legislative involvement.

#### **Overall Comments**

The final question in the vision statement section asked “Do you believe these four vision statements comprehensively address your aspirations for the future of central Ohio?” Eighty percent answered “yes”, 12 percent answered “no”, and eight percent wrote in somewhat or checked both yes and no. The eighty percent who indicated “yes” to this question is in line with those who agreed or strongly agreed to the four individual vision statements.

Many of the comments offered support of the draft statements. Other themes included:

- What about the development community and their roles?
- Seem to be missing a statement on public health.
- People seem to think education was not addressed enough, should it be its own category?
- There is still a strong sentiment to define and address environmental and agricultural preservation better.
- Strong sentiment to address employment opportunities and affordable housing
- More emphasis on the word “sustainable” both communities and region.

#### **Strategy Statements**

Draft strategies for each vision statement were presented for consideration by the workshop participants. Strategies are policies, projects or programs that will help achieve the vision. The strategies become the key recommendations for future work in this process. The mission statement of

the Regional Growth Strategy calls for “...shaping an approach for growth and development...”, which is the essence of the vision statements and strategies.

### **Group Analysis and Discussion**

Each table was randomly assigned two themes associated with separate vision statements. These themes contained a number of individual draft strategies. Under the vision category of “place” there are six themes and 50 strategies, and under the “prosperity” vision category are two themes and 16 strategies. The vision category of “people” contains three themes and 15 strategies, and the vision category “leadership” has three themes and 18 strategies.

In total, there are four vision categories, 14 themes, and 99 strategies. Appendix B provides a complete set of visions, themes and strategies that were presented and discussed at the workshop.

Themes were randomly assigned to each table; however, care was taken to balance the number of strategies so there was a relative balance of strategies for each table to review. As such, not every table reviewed every strategy. Each table was, however, given a complete listing of each strategy for reference. Ideas that were generated at the County workshops were distributed to each participant for reference relative to the strategies they were reviewing at their table.

Participants were asked to review each set of strategies for the first theme they were assigned to, and then make individual comments on a form provided. The table was then asked to openly discuss the strategy set and formulate a consensus, if possible, on whether the strategies are effective in helping to achieve the vision. At each table a participant volunteered as recorder. Recording for each table documented attitudes about how “effective”, “ineffective”, or “undecided” the participants felt about the strategies. If a consensus could not be reached, the recorder was instructed to note areas of disagreement. Comments were also recorded, as were the tables’ suggested additions, deletions and clarifications. After this process was completed for the first theme, strategies for a second theme were discussed and the recording process was repeated.

### **Effectiveness of Strategies**

A review of the scoring and comments for the strategy sets (themes) indicates three general areas of categorization:

A. Strategy sets that were reviewed and clearly thought to be “effective” by the participants with little or no suggested changes or clarifications.

Those strategy sets are

- Agriculture
- Coordination
- Economy
- Governance
- Jobs

B. Strategy sets that were reviewed and generally graded “effective”, but had significant comments, clarifications, or suggested changes. These strategy sets will require moderate alteration to be deemed “effective”.

Those strategy sets are:

- Appearance
- Cooperation
- Equity
- Infrastructure
- Natural Environment
- Outreach

C. Strategy sets that were reviewed and consistently graded “ineffective” or “undecided”. These strategy sets will require modification to be deemed “effective”. Those strategy sets are:

- Education
- Public Services
- Tools

See Appendix B2 for a complete list of the themes, ranking by table, and comment listings