

Frequently Asked Questions

April 2019

What is insight2050 Corridor Concepts?

Corridor Concepts starts where insight2050 left off. The consensus across Central Ohio is that focused, compact growth makes sense as we are preparing to become a region of 3 million people by 2050. Corridor Concepts explores how more walkable, compact neighborhoods and high-capacity transit along five representative routes can positively impact transportation, infrastructure, housing, and the environment (see figure 1). The study provides implementation recommendations for redevelopment along each corridor.

The effort was co-chaired by Columbus City Council President Shannon Hardin and ULI Columbus Chair Yaromir Steiner and led by MORPC, in partnership with the Columbus Partnership; the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA); Urban Land Institute (ULI Columbus); the Columbus Foundation; and the cities of Bexley, Columbus, Dublin, Grandview Heights with Clinton Township, Groveport, Reynoldsburg, Westerville, and Whitehall.

Who funded the study, and how was funded?

The project partners included COTA, MORPC, The Columbus Foundation, The Columbus Partnership, ULI Columbus, and the cities of: Bexley, Columbus, Dublin, Grandview Heights, Groveport, Reynoldsburg, Westerville, and Whitehall. The project partners collectively have contributed over \$700,000 to fund the study.

What is high-capacity transit?

High-capacity transit moves more people faster, in less physical space, attracts new development, and focuses growth. Examples may include bus rapid transit, light rail transit, streetcar service, commuter rail, or newly developed technologies. In order to make high-capacity transit effective, dedicated right-of-way is necessary. This study assumes dedicated right-of way along each corridor.

Which routes were studied?

The five routes studied are:

- E. Main Street: SR 256 to Downtown Columbus
- Northeast: Polaris Pkwy to Downtown Columbus
- Northwest: US 33 at Post Road /Frantz Road to Downtown Columbus
- Southeast: Rickenbacker Int'l Airport to Downtown Columbus
- W. Broad Street: Norton Road to Downtown Columbus

Why were these five corridors selected?

The routes were selected based on planning efforts conducted by MORPC, COTA, and the City of Columbus, which identified the routes as representing a high level of development opportunity with a need for infrastructure improvements, incentives, and/or other strategies in order to achieve compact development patterns.

The study is intended to be replicable so that it may be applied to other similar thoroughfares. Therefore, the corridors selected are most representative of three corridor types in the region:

- Build on Success and Relieve Congestion (Northeast, Northwest)
- Coordinate with Growth and Redevelopment Opportunities (W. Broad Street, E. Main Street)
- Make Better Connections (Southeast)

Thoroughfares currently supporting high levels of infill development were not selected for the study, as these corridors are already achieving compact development patterns.

Why do we need the insight2050 Corridor Concepts study?

The study was initiated in response to future growth projections that indicate Central Ohio is expected to grow to a region of 3 million people by the year 2050. Furthermore, lessons learned from insight2050 included that compact development patterns, characterized by infill and redevelopment, are more responsive to the changing demographics and increased market demand for smaller residences in walkable, mixed-use environments driven by the region's growth. Such development can help to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and decrease household costs – factors that contribute to the overall quality of life in Central Ohio.

The corridor study allows Central Ohio communities to understand what compact development and high-capacity transit might look like at the local level.

Who performed the analysis?

A team of consultants conducted the study under the direction of MORPC and the funding partners. Lead firm Calthorpe Analytics, based in Berkeley, CA, provides regional planning and analysis through proprietary tools like UrbanFootprint. The firm was joined by California-based Fehr & Peers, which specializes in transportation planning and modeling, and Strategic Economics, which performed local economic impact analyses. The Columbus-based firms of Engage Public Affairs and OHM coordinated communications and outreach efforts. The legal experts of Columbus-based IceMiller assisted with creating market-sensitive approaches to the implementation of study recommendations.

The funding partners supplied the data necessary to conduct the study. Stakeholder committees comprised of residents, businesses, developers, and local governments representing each corridor were tapped for their knowledge and input to guide recommendations.

Why is the growth in the study focused in Franklin County?

The routes were selected based on planning efforts conducted by MORPC, COTA, and the City of Columbus and were seen as representative of other corridors in the region. Most of the recent population growth has occurred within the boundaries of Franklin County, providing the county with additional pressure to think about redevelopment and mobility solutions. That said, these corridors are by no means the only corridors that could be redeveloped.

How does the population growth and this kind of development affect traffic congestion?

The corridor scenarios show that with the right mobility investment and land use allocations, traffic congestion can be kept at bay and other modes of transportation can make it more efficient to get around.

Why is the cost per acre of development so high?

The cost per acre in the focused corridor concept is higher than the cost per acre in the current trajectory because of the intense redevelopment needed to support more people, jobs, and transportation options. It is important to look at the upfront infrastructure costs as long-term investment rather than short-term expenses. Also, keep in mind that region-wide, infrastructure costs will be significantly reduced by focusing growth and redevelopment along corridors and actually save Central Ohio upwards to \$10 billion.

Furthermore, the revenue that can be generated per acre per year, once a corridor is built out, can be 3 to 5 times higher than its current value and can help pay back the upfront infrastructure investment.

What are the next steps?

Implementation is going to take jurisdictional collaboration and buy-in from the private sector. No single community can do this alone. The partners and communities throughout the region will continue the conversation through peer learning and putting in place low-cost, temporary changes to the built environment intended to improve local neighborhoods and city gathering places.

An example of these types of changes is the City of Columbus and COTA partnering for a series of Transit Innovation Tests. Starting this summer, COTA and the City will deploy temporary transit enhancements on high-use corridors and analyze the results. With these short-term projects, our community will be able to see how different transit improvements impact specific measures – like buses arriving on time, rider satisfaction, and traffic flow. As regional leaders get together to select one or several corridors for reinvestment, they should be intentional about:

- Ensuring a diverse housing stock, both in housing types and price points
- Determining land use and quality of place first, and then deciding on the mobility technology that best supports this environment
- Continuing the collaborative spirit in Central Ohio by coordinating zoning overlays and regulations
- Considering innovative funding models, including for transit

Will the partners provide technical assistance?

MORPC is currently designing a technical assistance program for its local governments to support their redevelopment and mobility projects. This program will roll out this summer.

In partnership with Columbus and others, MORPC will also lead a regional housing strategy that develops investment and policy recommendations for communities to support mixed income neighborhoods and regional growth. The study will likely be completed at the end of 2019.

I would like more information. Who may I contact?

More information is available online at getinsight2050.org or morpc.org. You may also contact Jennifer Noll at jnoll@morpc.org.

Figure 1. insight2050 Corridor Concepts Study Area

