

Regional Prosperity Initiative

Planning, Sharing, and Growing ... Together

WHAT IS RPI?

RPI is a collaborative regional planning and resource sharing initiative. The RPI focus area currently includes 16 counties in northeast Ohio.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF RPI?

The purpose of RPI is to establish conditions for cross-regional economic vitality, through coordinated regional planning and resource sharing, thus enabling local communities to help create a prosperous NEO.

WHAT IS THE RPI VISION?

RPI envisions three major accomplishments:

- Changes in statutory language to enhance economic development through a collaborative versus a competitive environment.
- Regional public and private sector leaders will share a 'win/win' commonality of purpose pursuing economic stability of all jurisdictions in the region.
- Smart growth steadily reduces disparities between growing and declining communities while mitigating sprawl.

RPI aspires to be known by public and private sector leaders throughout NEO as the stage setter for collaborative regional planning and resource sharing.

HOW WILL RPI DELIVER ON PURPOSE & ADVANCE VISION?

RPI's core strategy is encouraging, equipping and supporting communities to plan and share through:

- Legislative change
- Education
- Metrics

WHAT ARE RPI'S AREAS OF CONCENTRATION?

RPI has four key areas of concentration:

- Effective legislative change (including support of the "Ohio Constitution Modernization" initiative & the development of a NEO Regional Economic Development Alliance)
- Engagement in and support for a successful NEO Sustainable Communities Consortium
- Communication
- Funding



“Courage...is what it takes”

**By Hudson Mayor William A. Currin
Chairman, Northeast Ohio Mayors & City Managers Association**

The “Status Quo” is very compelling...but research and analysis shows that it doesn’t work. So one would wonder why it is so difficult to overcome status quo. After years and years of learning that the only constant in life is change, why is it so seemingly hard to change? I am sure it is due in large part to the power of the “Status Quo.” We must change the way NEO pursues economic development in order to take our rightful role in the global economic market place. That is where courage comes in to play...courage on the part of our elected officials to envision the future of Northeast Ohio and to set new or revise current policies for our various governmental agencies to work together for a stronger, more inclusive, more productive, and more vibrant Northeast Ohio economy.

In today’s world it is a fact that no individual Township, Village, or City can ever be relevant in the global economy...just regions are relevant. So on April 9th the attending advisors to the RERS Ad Hoc committee of the NEOM&CMA voted unanimously to advise the Mayors and City Managers of NEO to go to “Phase II” in order to overcome the hurdles to create a comprehensive, collaborative, sustainable, non-partisan regional economic development program for all of NEO. Just a few weeks later at a special meeting of the NEOM&CMA membership, the attending members voted overwhelmingly to do likewise...go full ahead into “Phase II.” The summary report, as well as the full report, is available for everyone’s perusal at www.revenuestudy.org .

What the Mayors, as well as the advisors, did was courageous in my opinion! I also think that is exactly what the citizens of NEO expect of their elected officials; the courage and the energy to stand up and change things when what we are doing is not working and/or can be enhanced. With the level of communications we have today we don't have the re-create the wheel to find a better way to do things. We can search the world for systems and approaches that others have incorporated, to stimulate smart economic development, thereby providing good job creation. While there are many, many factors that go into what makes the NEO region healthy, vibrant, and prospering for all, the Mayors and Managers of NEO have identified several factors that need to be changed. The two key elements are region wide land use and infrastructure planning coupled with an appropriate amount of new growth tax base sharing. Ahead of us is the difficult task of garnering the courage with relentless fortitude to pursue the solutions and the implementation of the new and/or revised policies that will create the changes we need on a region wide basis.

Along the way we must make sure that what we assume should happen may get in the way of our learning how much can happen, and that what can be done may far exceed our expectations. Let each and every one of us support the NEOM&CMA's effort to develop a comprehensive, collaborative, non-partisan and sustainable regional economic development program for all of Northeast Ohio. It is in our hands to assure the equality of the American Dream, especially for those at the economic margins of our society. Always keep in mind that ...

Northeast Ohio is The HEART of the Quality of Life Belt.

"Share the Vision. Become Part of the Solution."

To learn more about joining the Northeast Ohio Mayors & City Managers Association, or about its efforts throughout the region, please contact Mayor William A. Currin via e-mail at WACurrin@Hudson.OH.US or call him at 330-342-1795.



Northeast Ohio Regional Economic Development Alliance

The Northeast Ohio Regional Prosperity Initiative (NEO RPI) will develop and promote a Regional Economic Development Alliance agreement for application within Northeast Ohio. This proposed agreement will follow the parameters contained in the proposed enabling legislation to be enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio under the Ohio Revised Code sections 5755.01 to 5755.04.

The NEO RPI believes that an “opt-in” regional economic development alliance with some sort of a resource gain sharing program will enhance regional economic development through a collaborative rather than a competitive environment. This “win-win” environment will also foster regional cooperation in planning (e.g. transportation and infrastructure) and shared services programs within the region.

Additional benefits to the development of an “opt-in” regional economic development alliance, with a resource gain sharing program (optional), is that it will build trust among the many member communities, thereby fostering a movement toward more cooperation with shared services that strength our economic prosperity. The per capita cost of basic governmental services should therefore be reduced and regional redundancies reduced if not eliminated. At the same time the value of local governance will be protected and perpetuated. Local governance is the cornerstone of our democracy.

EQUIPMENT

Editorial

Regionalism
is a sensible
alternative to
raising local
taxes

POLICE

HEALTH CARE

Cleveland PD

8/24/14 ERM

Over the past four years, Ohio communities have seen their state-provided revenue decline by nearly \$900 million, much of that due to Gov. John Kasich's decisions to slash the state's local government fund and eliminate the estate tax.

Those funding reductions, along with a lengthy recession, have forced local communities to cut services and rethink the way they do things. Many have chosen to seek local tax increases to make up for lost revenue from the state, but not always with success.

In Brook Park, for example, voters this month turned back proposed income and property tax increases and now the future of the city's recreation center is in doubt.

When taxpayers demonstrate little appetite to pay more, and even when they don't, localities should start exploring alternatives such as consolidation or collaboration with greater intensity. And yet, so far, localities are reluctant to press ahead, according to a recent article by Northeast Ohio Media Group reporter Kaitlyn Ridel.

"When resources get tight, the first thought is shrinking the budget or making cuts, or we need to ask for a levy," Randy Cole, policy analyst for the state's Office of Budget and Management, told Ridel. "The third option is often harder and takes longer. The next round of efficiency and savings is working with each other." Cole recommends such actions as combining police and fire districts, pooling health care coverage and sharing equipment.

So far, Northeast Ohio has seen only limited cooperation, including the consolidation of some emergency dispatch services prompted by Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald. Much more needs to happen.

One good idea for making cooperation appealing comes courtesy of State Auditor Dave Yost, whose recently launched ShareOhio.gov asks, "Brother, can you spare a backhoe?"

The site allows municipalities to share equipment such as front-end loaders and street sweepers that might otherwise sit idle in a maintenance shed for much of the year.

More than 50 local governments — nearly half of them in Lake County, where the idea was first embraced — have registered with ShareOhio.gov, Yost said, but the program is still in its infancy.

Tight municipal budgets are here to stay, especially if Kasich wins another four years as governor, and localities must be more diligent and creative in finding ways to provide services.

Equipment sharing is great, said Brook Park Mayor Tom Coyne, but it doesn't go very far toward addressing serious budget shortfalls. In his neck of southwestern Cuyahoga County, where the Berea Municipal Court handles cases for Berea, Brook Park, Strongsville, Middleburg Heights, Olmsted Falls, Olmsted Township and the Cleveland Metroparks, Coyne thinks one building could house a court, jail, central booking and police and fire dispatch to accommodate all of the municipalities.

Coyne's idea makes sense, especially for a cash-strapped inner-ring suburb like his. But why would a wealthier suburb buy in? That's where Coyne believes the state should step in with a financial incentive.

Coyne estimates Brook Park could save \$500,000 a year through such consolidation.

But before the state can step in, if that's its inclination, local governments must demonstrate the will to reach above the low-hanging fruit and strive for real, substantial cooperation — and that includes creating police and fire districts that cut across municipal boundaries.

The time is now to put aside the parochial ways of old and embrace the bold new world of regionalism.

ILLUSTRATION BY TED CROW | THE PLAIN DEALER

Phillip Morris

Iron is out to prove Cuyahoga County publican is not an oxymoron. **E2**

Renée Loth

The Magna Carta, now 800 years old, is a small but mighty document open to interpretation. **E2**

Ted Diadiun

When Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein broke Watergate, the cynicism was unleashed. **E3**

Brent Larkin

Rob Portman's worries over the GOP party's presidential candidate need to be heeded. **E4**

Thomas Suddes

Thanks to Ed FitzGerald's mistakes, John Kasich liabilities will not be examined. **E4**

Albert L. Butler

Whiteness gives you "open carry," blackness gets you "open season." **E5**

Action now could alleviate future troubles

Report predicting a lack of regional resources down road prompts proposal of a new nonprofit group

By JAY MILLER
jmill@crain.com

Grace Gallucci hopes to build a public-private partnership that will toss around ideas for getting Northeast Ohio to 2040 in good economic shape.

Several business community leaders are intrigued by the idea and acknowledge the need to be involved in long-range regional planning, but they're reluctant to sign on to one more organization.

Gallucci, executive director of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, is about to begin drumming up support for a nonprofit meeting ground for public planners, public and nonprofit economic development professionals, political leaders and, especially, the business community. Her goal is to ensure that the region and its communities, decades down the road, aren't facing choices between cutbacks in basic services or steep tax increases to maintain roads, pick up the trash and police the neighborhoods.

It would work off the results of a federally funded, three-year planning program called NEOSCC, or the Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium. That group, guided by 33 public, philanthropic and educational organizations across 12 counties, produced a study earlier this year that forecast that the current pattern of development in Northeast Ohio will not generate sufficient new tax revenue to maintain existing services in nearly every corner of the region.



"I'm looking for people who have influence in their industry or have some civic influence."

— Grace Gallucci
executive director,
Northeast Ohio Areawide
Coordinating Agency

It was part of a federal program called the Sustainable Communities Initiative, which was created to help a select group of cities make smart economic investment choices. Northeast Ohio won a \$4.25 million grant, and a group of local philanthropies, led by the Fund for Our Economic Future, kicked in \$2.2 million.

"I'm going to be soliciting for 12 to 20 board members who have a vested interest in keeping the region viable and vibrant," Gallucci

said of the planned new organization. "I'm looking for people who have influence in their organizations or their industry or have some civic influence."

Bradley Whitehead, president of the Future Fund, believes the business community has a large stake in keeping the cost of government from rising through the roof, as suburbs consume more land and require more services without any growth in the number of taxpayers.

"The corporate community says they want lower taxes," he said. "But they (haven't gotten involved) in asking why taxes are so high."

Whitehead and others foresee the new group as a place to lobby government to be more efficient and collaborative.

The business community, though, barely dipped its toes into the work of NEOSCC.

That group's 228-page report, released in February, starts with the prognosis that the population of the 12-county region that stretches around Cuyahoga County from Lorain to Ashland and from Wayne to Mahoning, is likely to grow only modestly.

The NEOSCC report contends that without active planning and collaboration among communities and businesses the wealthiest county in the region would be worse off financially by 2040 than the weakest county today, if the region pays no greater attention to the way its land is developed or redeveloped.

Now, Gallucci is hoping to attract business members to her board

and, eventually, to make them dues paying members of the new organization which, for now, she's calling NEOSCC 2.0.

Wanted: More federal money

Joe Roman, president of the Greater Cleveland Partnership, one of several regional chambers of commerce in Northeast Ohio, would like to see a regional discussion about how to pay for maintaining the region's roads and sewers as well as for whatever new infrastructure might be needed. But he's not ready to buy into a new organization.

"I'd be very interested in hearing how (Gallucci) wants to move into Phase 2," he said. "And I would be happy to host her at a meeting of leaders of the Greater Akron Chamber, the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce" and other similar groups.

Pat Kelly, economic development director of FirstEnergy Corp., the largest regional power company, has been a participant in the NEOSCC process and supports the concept of a regional effort to tackle the issues NEOSCC has raised.

Since little population growth is forecast, FirstEnergy already has a network of power lines and substations that can serve the population of the region decades from now without the added cost of beefing up the grid in what are now rural areas.

But he, too, isn't ready for NEOSCC Phase 2.

"We want more federal funding rather than a new nonprofit," he said. "I was thinking of a collaboration between chambers of commerce."

New ways of thinking

Gallucci will talk with business leaders in the weeks ahead because she believes it's critical for the region to act now. And she agrees with Roman on the need to better plan for future infrastructure improvements.

She also is concerned about the impact of land use decisions on infrastructure costs. NEOSCC's analysis shows equal concern for the cost of stranding employable urban dwellers miles from potential jobs as it does for preserving the farmland of the rural areas.

Gallucci said, for example, that the NEOSCC report believes the region will need to find ways — perhaps by creating an integrated regional transit system that would replace today's fragmented system of individual county transit systems — to get car-less workers to jobs a county away.

At the same time, she said, Northeast Ohio needs to think hard about committing to build a new road for a plant on a former farm that puts jobs even farther from potential employees.

"We've got to make sure we can get employees to the places of employment and connect them in a way that isn't costing a gazillion dollars," she said. ■

**Center for Excellence
in Local Government**

— *CS* —

Regional Prosperity Initiative Meeting
Hudson Library & Historical Society
Flood Family Meeting Room
Thursday, June 12, 2014

**Center For Excellence in
Local Government (the Center)**

— *CS* —

CA Concept: Establish among the academy and local governments, a center for excellence that leads to improved government productivity across the region. The Center will assist in creating and implementing proven performance-based strategies at all levels of government. The Center will identify efficiencies, improve service, and increase transparency and accountability.

The Center

— *CS* —

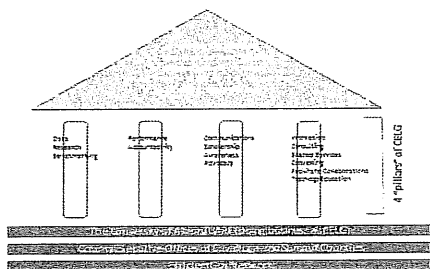
CA Initial geographic focus will be Northeast Ohio, with immediate emphasis on Cuyahoga and Summit Counties

CA The University of Akron (and its research foundation), the Offices of the County Executive in Cuyahoga County and Summit County, and the EfficientGov Network provide the underpinning for a novel enterprise for the region, and individually represent progressive and successful initiatives in efficiency and collaboration that can be leveraged for the proposed Center

EfficientGov Network

- Approx. 100 individual members; 16-county region
- Work in cost and competitiveness of local government services; focus on efficiency, value, cost effectiveness
- Primarily a vehicle for sharing information and infusing ideas on shared services and collaboration
- Recognition of benefits of shared services and collaboration and needs will increase
- Economic realities and sustainability of EGN
- Collaborating with a willing partner will allow EGN to build capacity, create sustainability, and increase its ability "move the needle" on government efficiency / collaboration measures

4 Major Areas of Responsibility



Center First-Year Activities

- Establish personnel
- Establish Center Advisory Board to determine mission, vision, goals, objectives, and budget
- Establish an Academic Advisory Board and designate faculty "fellows"
- Establish corps of students focused on related scholarship and support student internships and externships
- Obtain funding to expand Center capacity including fee for service programming
- Establish communications and marketing strategy
- Coordinate shared service initiatives including scenario planning and strategy development, training, education and conferences



Memorandum of Interest

WHEREAS, the Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) recognizes the importance and benefit of regional cooperation among Northeastern Ohio (NEO) municipalities in order to enhance the cost efficient operation of local governance and promote effective collaborative economic development; and,

WHEREAS, to help achieve economic prosperity throughout the region the RPI endeavors to establish conditions for regional economic vitality through coordinated/collaborative regional economic development planning and enhanced conditions for appropriate municipal shared services and resources; and,

WHEREAS, the RPI believes that an "opt-in" Regional Economic Development Alliance will accelerate economic development throughout NEO via a collaborative rather than a competitive environment; this "win-win" environment will also foster regional cooperation in planning and enhancing shared services programs within the NEO region.

NOW, THEREFORE, I desire to be recognized as a person of interest and an advocate and supporter of the Regional Prosperity Initiative's efforts to develop an "opt-in" *Regional Economic Development Alliance* for Northeast Ohio and encourage all parties/persons of interest to join me.

I have hereunto set my hand on this _____ day of _____, _____

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

_____(C,S,Z)

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____