

Northeast Ohio Application for Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant
August 23, 2010
Narrative Factors

The Northeast Ohio Consortium for a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (the “Application Consortium”) has convened for the purpose of preparing a sustainable development plan for the 12-county region, which is currently in the midst of a significant transition. Through the upcoming three-year planning process, the Application Consortium anticipates achieving the following tangible outcomes: concrete plans for truly regional issues; shared priorities to guide local action; formal shared strategies and processes to enhance local planning and a set of shared tools to support ongoing planning efforts. The Consortium is applying to HUD under Category 1 of the NOFA as the 12-county geography of Northeast Ohio has an estimated 2010 population of almost 4 million (3,829,813)ⁱ.

The Northeast Ohio Region is formed by the natural identity of the industrial Great Lakes, along Lake Erie. Its framework is seven revitalizing cities – Cleveland, Akron, Canton, Youngstown, Lorain, Ashtabula, Warren - known for innovation, persistence and a unique sense of place – set in three great river corridors, the Cuyahoga, Black-Rocky, and Mahoning. Within that framework are multiple smaller cities, villages, townships, agricultural land, and a river network that make up twelve counties – diverse, energetic, determined to transform manufacturing, health, community and environmental strengths into a strong, sustainable foundation for the future. We envision a “Green City on a Blue Lake”. The Application Consortium looks forward with energy and enthusiasm to participating in the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant opportunity.

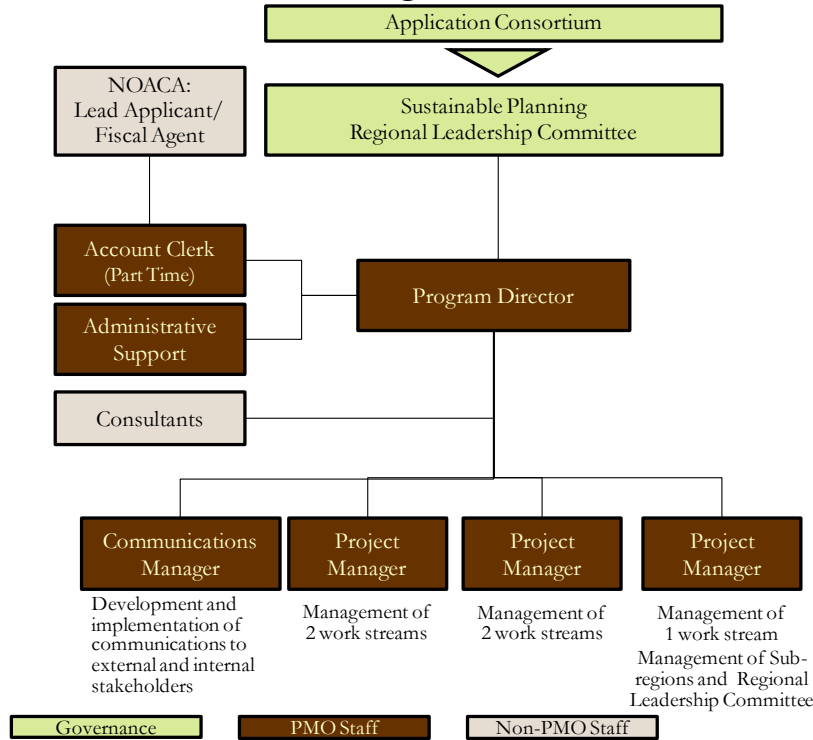
Factor 1 – Capacity of Applicant and Relevant Organizational Experience (10 points)

Over the last decade many factors have converged to make now the optimal time for the 12 counties, four MPOs and more than 480 governments in Northeast Ohioⁱⁱ to unite for the purpose of planning for sustainable development. It is over the last decade that we have come to accept the reality that our economy is truly regional – despite being spread across multiple major metropolitan areas including Cleveland, Akron, Youngstown and Lorain/Elyria. Acceptance, however, is only the first step in change. Thankfully, some of the more visionary and innovative regional stakeholders have launched regional initiatives in the last decade that have paved the way for our Application Consortium’s current efforts. Two of the more notable include the Fund For Our Economic Future and the Regional Prosperity Initiative.

The Fund provided the funding and support to enable the Application Consortium to convene and develop a proposal for the Sustainable Communities grant opportunity. Our Application Consortium is comprised of key regional players, and has created a preliminary memorandum of understanding (MOU) that includes the four Metropolitan Planning Organizations, six of the 12 counties, five of the largest cities, three metropolitan housing authorities, The Fund, RPI, and Cleveland State University. This is an unprecedented collaboration of stakeholders in Northeast Ohio, and while there is no single organization that is equipped to manage this effort we have devised a strategy for moving forward. The Application Consortium partners have agreed to establish a new, independent initiative with a formal, truly collaborative governance structure and a small but dedicated operating structure. The initiative will be governed by a board elected by the Application Consortium and the board will select and oversee the full time staff that comprises the Planning Management Office. The largest MPO, Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), will serve as the Lead Applicant and Fiscal Agent.

The organization chart for the Regional Plan project is illustrated in Figure 1, below. Project organization is also illustrated and related to other components of the project in Figure 5 (p. 23).

Figure 1



Leadership Responsibilities: The Application Consortium has exercised leadership in completing this application. All decisions have been made by consensus, with all 21 signatories to the Preliminary Memorandum of Understanding being a part of the Application Consortium. Once notice of approval has been received from HUD, the Application Consortium will work with HUD and the Lead Applicant to execute a formal Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) within 120 days of the formal grant award that will provide a decision-making structure with each MOU signatory having one vote. The Application Consortium will then elect appropriate officers and officially become the Leadership Committee. Leadership Committee members will serve one year terms. The Leadership Committee will immediately evaluate the need to expand membership to ensure appropriate representation for underrepresented and/or minority populations. The Leadership Committee will then incorporate itself as an Ohio corporation, apply for status as a 501c3, establish itself as the initial Board of Trustees, and advertise for the staff positions and consultants. The Leadership Committee will be responsible for prioritizing and decision-making throughout the period of the grant including: allocation of resources, hiring of staff and consultants, setting goals, and overseeing the planning progress.

Draft job descriptions for the key Planning Management Office staff are in the appendix of this application. Staff will be hired within 120 days of the formal grant award.

As Lead Applicant and Fiscal Agent, NOACA will be a party to the MOU, and will have authority to examine and audit all financial transactions. It will also be the primary point of contact for HUD for this grant.

Member Responsibilities: The 21-member Application Consortium signing the Preliminary MOU will serve as the members of the new entity. The Application Consortium members have longstanding histories of planning and implementation and depth of functional expertise. The capacity and experience of particular note within our large Application Consortium is with the City of Youngstown, The Fund For Our Economic Future, and The Regional Prosperity Initiative.

The City of Youngstown: Youngstown 2010 is an example of this partner's experience in thinking about sustainable development in our new economy. It began as a process to engage and educate the community about the importance of planning and the planning process, as well as create a vision and plan to help revitalize the city well into the future. The City of Youngstown and Youngstown State University coordinated this planning process with help from nearly 200 volunteers, neighborhood organizations and businesses. One part of Youngstown 2010 involves identifying and revitalizing neighborhoods that can be saved.

Fund for Our Economic Future (the Fund): The Fund is able to draw on the capacity and expertise of the over 100 philanthropic entities which make up the membership of the collaboration. The in last three years, the Fund has invested over \$1.8M for regional planning and government collaboration and \$400K in civic engagement initiatives. Prior to that, the Fund expended over \$3M for the Voices and Choices civic engagement program that led to the creation of the Advance northeast Ohio economic action plan that continues to guide regional economic development efforts.

Regional Prosperity Initiative: The Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) has extensive experience in furthering collaboration among local governments in our region. In 2006, The Northeast Ohio Mayors and City Managers Association commissioned the Regional Economic Review Study. Based on the results of this study in 2008, a 16-county advisory council approved the launch of The Regional Prosperity Initiative with the objective of providing the structure for region-wide land use planning and new growth tax base sharing in Northeast Ohio.

Leadership Committee / Non-Profit Corporation: As noted above, the Leadership Committee will be responsible for organizing the project, and will become the Board of Trustees for as new Ohio non-profit corporation that will create the Regional Plan. Members of the Application Consortium have deep and long-standing experience in creating, monitoring and managing non-profit corporations. Several of the members are themselves non-profit corporations, and understand the requirements of a well-run organization.

Planning Project Experience: Member organizations have significant experience in preparing and implementing regional housing, transportation and related infrastructure plans. Representative examples for key leadership organizations include:

NOACA (MPO): Examples of NOACA's work include transportation MIS and corridor studies, Transportation Links to Communities (TLC), neighborhood planning studies, and Job Access reverse Commute (JARC) studies

AMATS (MPO): As part of its planning efforts, AMATS prepares and maintains a long-range Regional Transportation Plan with a 20-year horizon. AMATS staff and Board are also involved in the major OhioRideShare program, and have initiated the Connecting Communities plan – integrating land use and transportation in the Akron region.

Cuyahoga County Government: The Cuyahoga County Regional Planning Commission initiated the Cuyahoga Valley Initiative in 2004, and has since actively pursued a series of studies and policies designed to renew the economy and create a sustainable urban ecology.

Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority: SMHA has prepared a series of strategic housing plans resulting in, among other outcomes, organization of Freed Housing, Inc. a non-profit housing development corporation.

City of Cleveland: The City's Department of Community Development has been a supporter of the Re-imaging Cleveland sustainability program since its inception, and has prepared many housing studies, including creation of a nationally-recognized citywide neighborhood typology.ⁱⁱⁱ

Resources: Member organizations have sufficient personnel and the experience and ability to procure qualified experts or professionals, including community outreach. The Northeast Ohio Planning effort will draw on the professional planning staffs of the participating MPOs, counties, cities, townships, and villages to execute the planning activities of each work stream. The Leadership Committee will also engage and oversee the work of contracted Consultants to augment the capacity and expertise of the participating communities. As an example, the Lead Applicant, NOACA has 45 full-time equivalent employees, including transportation planners, engineers, and environmental planners, as well as support staff in administration, word processing, computer support, accounting and graphic design.

Application Consortium members have already committed more than \$1.8M in in-kind resources to support the planning effort. These resources, combined with the \$5M requested in this application and approximately \$500K to be raised by philanthropy amounts to more than \$7.3M in resources available to support the planning effort. The Leadership Committee will oversee the management of all resources.

Factor 2 – Needs / Extent of the Problem (10 points)

A recent Brookings Institution report makes the following comment:

“Northeast Ohio is an economic region in transition that is prepared for significant economic growth and industrial transformation. Global competition and the rise of the knowledge economy have led to significant changes in what causes a place to prosper. Northeast Ohio’s legacy as a leader in the industrial economy endows it with many underlying assets on which to build in this new environment. The region – after a prolonged period of severe dislocation -- is demonstrating significant momentum and progress toward revitalizing its economy.”^{iv}

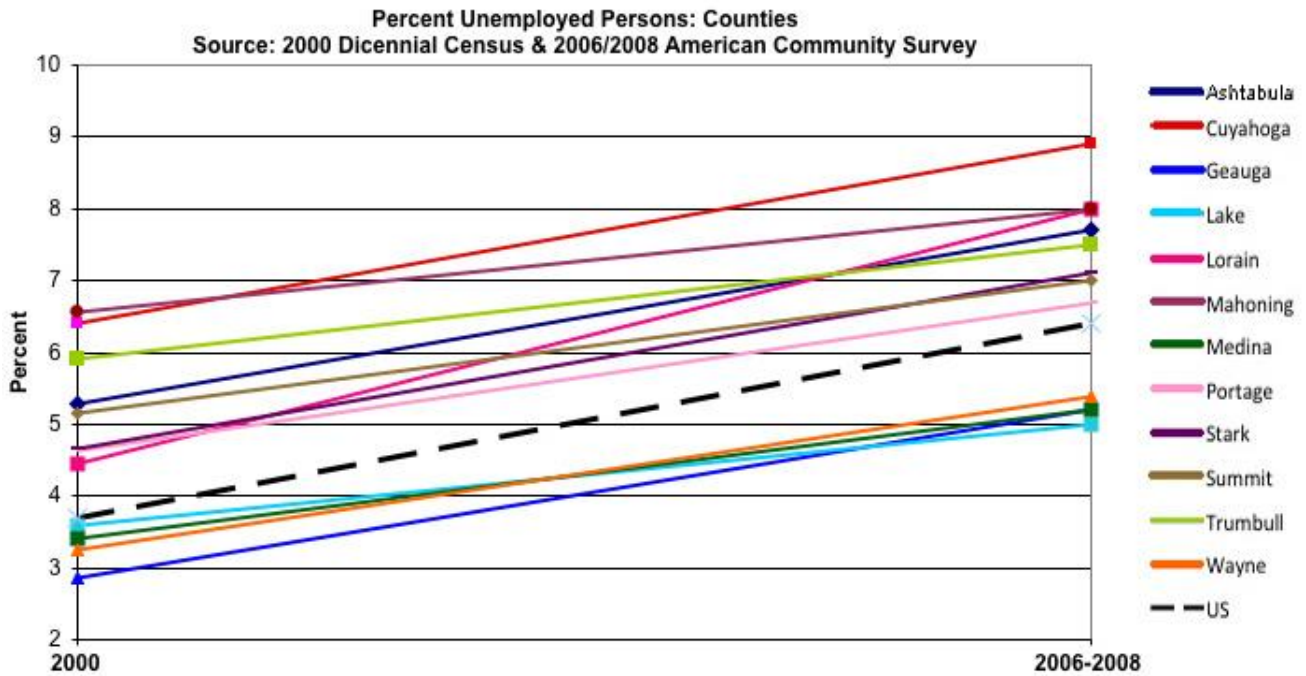
This revitalization is the result of a variety of converging factors, including a significant number of innovative organizations and initiatives. Some of these initiatives are regional in scale while others are focused on a smaller geography but incorporate multiple disciplines and perspectives to drive change and progress. Regardless of the geographic scope, these initiatives are of great value to both the future of the region and to our Regional Plan. We identify and outline a number of these “Exemplary Initiatives” in this application, and have created a catalog of 64 major sustainability initiatives and posted on our website^v. The catalog will continue to be updated during the planning process.

The Application Consortium defines Northeast Ohio’s eight major categories of need – and their respective reasons for hope – in the following way:

1. Northeast Ohio’s Economy Is In Significant Transition: Economic studies strongly indicate that the Northeast Ohio region is in transition away from its reliance on steel, traditional manufacturing, and the automobile industry^{vi}. The positive reality of the transition is that the economy is evolving to a more diversified base that includes advanced manufacturing, bioscience, polymers and advanced energy. Unfortunately, this transition rendered a double negative impact on unemployment: thousands of workers were displaced with the decline of the old economy and newer growth opportunities require a different skill base from Northeast Ohio’s currently under and unemployed populations.

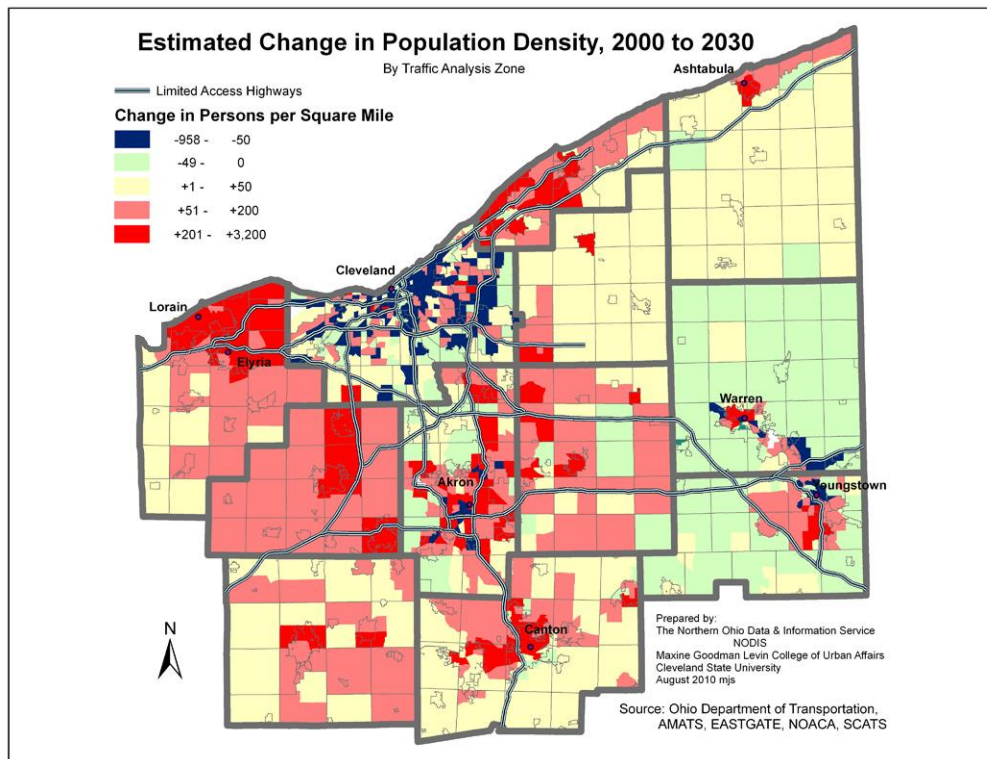
In 2000, unemployment in the region was 5.16% compared to 3.70% in the country. In 2008, both regional and national rates had deteriorated, with 7.50% unemployment in the region and 6.35% in the country.^{vii} Not surprisingly, unemployment rates within the region have deteriorated, but not identically. Figure 2 below illustrates the unemployment rates for the counties within the region in 2000 and 2006-2008. There are four counties that had unemployment rates that were better than the national average in 2000 and improved their advantage in 2006-2008. Meanwhile, there are eight counties that had unemployment rates that were worse than the national average in 2000 and in 2006-2008; however, the slopes of the curves indicate that some of these counties have had a more positive trajectory than the national average.

Figure 1



In addition to employment transitions, the region's economy is transitioning geographically. Regional population increased 2.5% between 1990 and 2000, urbanized land area increased by more than 10%, typifying the phenomenon of sprawl. Figure 3 illustrates this trend.

Figure 3



While the regional population has remained flat between 2000 and 2010, and while change in urbanized land data is not yet available for 2010, the development of additional formerly green areas for residential use typifies no-growth sprawl. The dominant reality of Northeast Ohio's older cities is that they are steadily losing both population and jobs. For example, Youngstown's population today is only 41 percent of what it was in 1950, while Cleveland's is 45 percent. The combination of under employed residents, declining populations and the ensuing excess of older commercial and residential structures has caused significant deterioration in all the core cities. Without targeted intervention this trend is likely to remain a reality for the foreseeable future.

While Figure 3 identifies a difficult reality for the communities within the dark blue areas, it also reveals that parts of the Northeast Ohio region are growing, fueled by certain expected economic trends and development choices. Given the geographic dispersion of both housing and jobs, Figure 3 is not encouraging news for the economic, social or environmental sustainability in the region. However, once these trends and choices are understood, it will be possible to influence them and to create policies that change the trends in Northeast Ohio to drive adoption of sustainable development practices.

Both of these data sets illustrate the need for a 12 county database, or what we refer to as an "integrated information system capacity." Figure 3 (Estimated Change in Population Density) took Cleveland State University the better part of three days to generate: some of the MPOs had this data, some did not, and the formats were not completely compatible. The unemployment data was not difficult to access, but raised questions (the changes in relative position of the 12 counties within the region) that point to the need for further analysis during the Assessment phase of the Regional Plan.

The Northeast Ohio economic transition creates significant opportunities to enable the transformation of existing industries to meet the needs of the contemporary economy, and to nurture and grow new enterprises that can draw on the skilled workforce, the relatively low cost of living, and the ready availability of commercial buildings and infrastructure.

A recent study ^{viii} by the Center for Economic Development at Cleveland State University (CSU) showed a significant rise in "high tech" industries and jobs in Northeast Ohio in 2008, but the level of this growth lags behind the rest of Ohio, the Midwest, and the country as a whole. "High tech" jobs such as medical instrumentation in Northeast Ohio represent 8.8% of total jobs in Northeast Ohio, compared to 9.8% in the United States. Of particular interest to our region is the finding that 75% of high tech jobs are in administrative and sales support, and other skilled but not advanced research professions. There is great hope for our region if the Regional Plan can align financing opportunities and workforce development for these organizations. Advanced research will be important, particularly in the medical sector, but Northeast Ohio does not need to attempt to become "the next Silicon Valley" to attain great success in building a new and powerful base of skilled jobs and organizations.

Exemplary Initiatives: There are a number of long-standing and increasingly successful regional efforts to reshape the regional industry clusters^{ix}. Some examples include BioEnterprise (bioscience venture capital), Energy Enterprise (advanced energy), FlexMatters (advanced polymer electronics) and NEOSA (software). In addition to the regional cluster efforts, several regional intermediaries that were sparked by the Advanced Northeast Ohio agenda provide key support, including the following: JumpStart (venture capital), Team NEO (business attraction) and Magnet (manufacturing transitions). Additional efforts to rebuild a new base for the Region's economy include Northeast Ohio research by the Brookings Institution, the Lake Erie wind turbine project, and the GreenCityBlueLake organization.

Another example of the transition taking place is the expansion of food production and agriculture. In 2008, sustainlane.com named Northeast Ohio's food system as the second most sustainable system in the country. This work is founded on the belief that all residents deserve access to fresh, healthy food regardless of income or zip code. The policies and projects are all about equity, and are truly regional, connecting urban and rural areas in innovative and important ways. Examples of specific action projects resulting from this sustainable foods network include:

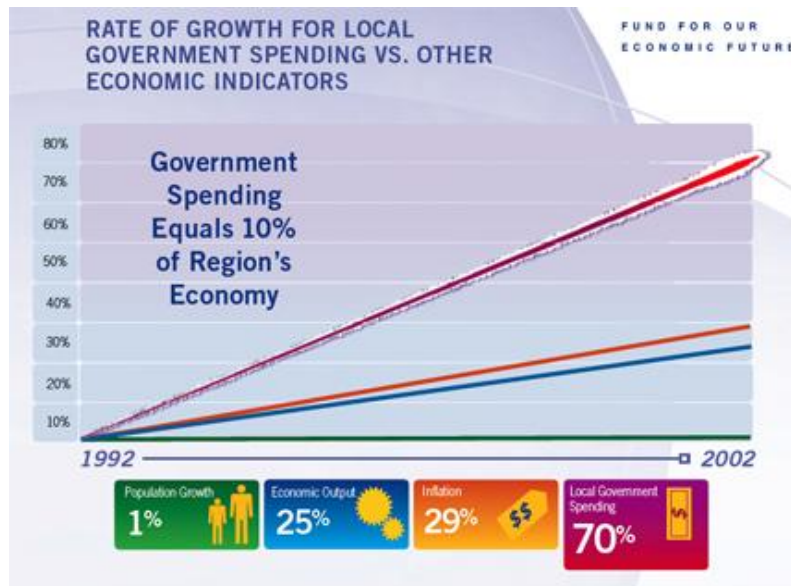
- The Cuyahoga County Ohio State University Extension office has created more than 220 community gardens across Cuyahoga County
- In 2008, the City of Cleveland with assistance from the Extension created the Gardening for Greenbacks program that provided economic development grants to market gardeners for the start up of their gardens
- The Ohio City Farm – After a year of planning, the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority has leased six acres adjacent to a public housing high rise to a local CDC – a group of Burmese immigrants are planting at this location, close to the historic West Side Market and the Great Lakes Brewing Company will plant a one-acre portion of the Farm to help supply their local needs.

2. Disparate, Fragmented and Inconsistent Policies & Investment Prevent Alignment: Northeast Ohio has over 480 significant units of government headed by elected officials, including cities, counties, townships, boards of education, and sewer districts.^x In addition, the Region has numerous public entities that shape policies and actions, including public housing authorities, MPOs, city and county planning bodies, and park districts and boards. The result is that policies typically consider only the needs of citizens in a specific jurisdiction, a wider range of costs and benefits are not considered, governmental services are sometimes inefficient, and opportunities for collaboration are missed. In many cases, data is not available that could help measure and guide more efficient and better actions.

For example, Northeast Ohio has been fortunate in attracting significant resources from the Federal government and the State of Ohio. It will be part of the Assess phase of our planning process to determine exact numbers, but as an example, for Fiscal Year 2005, the US Government spent \$78B^{xi} in Ohio and the State of Ohio itself spent \$44B.^{xii} It is difficult enough to determine total expenditures, and more so to compile and analyze an exact list of funded projects and their projected outcomes. The result is that aligning and leveraging investments to maximize the impact for the Northeast Ohio region is difficult.

Exemplary Initiatives: An example of the value of tracking and understanding government expenditures is presented in Figure 4, below, from a study by The Fund for Our Economic Future. Northeast Ohio government expenditures were tracked relative to population, economic output, and inflation. Government spending was seen to increase by 70% while population only increased by 1%. This is a powerful indication of an unsustainable trend that regional collaboration on decisions and services can change.^{xiii} As a result of this and other compelling facts, the Fund launched EfficientGovNow as a civic engagement effort to support government collaboration and alignment of investments. In the most recent round of civic evaluation of government collaboration opportunities, voters cast 17,400 votes. To qualify for funding each project has to involve at least two governmental partners and must produce a cost savings. The Fund has also supported the Regional Prosperity Initiative which is aimed at supporting greater government collaboration through regional revenue sharing and coordinated land use policies.

Figure 4



3. Low-Quality & Deteriorating Housing Plagues Existing Cities: The most significant housing issue for Northeast Ohio is not availability or affordability, but quality and the impact of a market excess of deteriorating housing. Most single family homes in Northeast Ohio are affordable to the majority of residents, largely because prices have been driven down by the excess supply created by the out-migration of population and jobs. The quality of much of the affordable housing is poor, however, with significant numbers of deteriorated vacant housing in all the core cities of Cleveland, Elyria, Lorain, Akron, Canton and Youngstown. This situation is exacerbated by the growing numbers of vacant properties, many of which are deteriorated beyond the point where rehabilitation is a viable option.

Northeast Ohio is a region of moderate housing costs. Figures for 2008 (the most recent available) show that the median monthly rental is \$675, compared to national estimates of \$824. The regional median income of \$45,515, compared to the national figure of \$52,029 shows that the region lags the national average. This combination of typical income levels with low housing cost indicates that housing affordability is not an issue. The fact of an overbuilt housing market in the Region is partly shown by the rate of increase in vacancy from 2000 to 2008: 66.1% for the Region compared to 37.5% nationally. One goal of the planning process supported by this grant is to improve the zoning and permitting processes to incorporate sustainability principles in residential development.

The Northeast Ohio Region is fortunate to have a significant number of non-profit affordable housing developers and “intermediaries” that provide assistance for these organizations. The Regional Plan will create a framework for expanding the assistance of these intermediaries throughout the region, leading to additional affordable housing sited according to sustainable land use guidance principles.

Exemplary Initiatives: The Cleveland-Cuyahoga Consortium for NSP2 was awarded a \$41 million Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 grant in 2009, one of the largest in the country, for redevelopment of vacant and foreclosed housing. The lead entity in the NSP2 Consortium is the Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation (the Cuyahoga County Land Bank), the result of a multi-year effort to pass Ohio enabling legislation which allows the use of delinquent taxes as a source of funding. The Land Bank has already been successful in acquiring properties for redevelopment in Cuyahoga County, and will be a model for replication in other counties in Northeast Ohio, providing a platform for coordinated Regional Plan implementation.

Neighborhood Progress, Inc. (NPI) is a non-profit supported by local and national foundations and by Federal and State funding. Since 1989, NPI has provided \$21.3 million in core operating funds and technical assistance to community development corporations that have resulted in focused neighborhood plans, 6,443 units of new and rehabilitated housing for a total investment of \$580 million, and 2.5 million square feet of new and renovated commercial space for a total investment of \$250 million.

4. Inequity in Community Assets Hinders Sustainability: The 12 county Northeast Ohio region is home to over four million residents, and has an economic output of about \$170 billion. If considered on a GNP basis, Northeast Ohio would be the 37th largest country in the world. Despite the scope of the regional economy, planning and strategic decision making is significantly “place based,” recognizing that every resident lives in a defined community, neighborhood, or rural township. This definition of “home” is critical to us all.

The data show a region-wide Black/White Dissimilarity Index of 73.5, well above the traditional index of 60 showing a high degree of segregation. While a national index is not available, metro areas ranked by the index are available.^{xiv} This data indicates that, for 318 metro areas, Cleveland-Lorain-Elyria is 9th with a 79.7 index, Youngstown is 21st, Akron 59th, and Canton 121st. The supported activities aim to change this situation and bring equity considerations explicitly into the planning process for the region. Rationalizing transit and housing patterns will bring more economic mobility due to increased access to employment opportunities. Ultimately, this can be expected to bring increased labor mobility and change in historically race-based patterns of housing.

Regarding poverty, 36% of regional elementary students were eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches in the 2006-2007 school year. This is somewhat higher than the statewide figure of 34%, although lower than the national figure of 41%. More striking, though, is the distribution of poverty within the region. In the most populous county in the region, Cuyahoga, 45% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, while neighboring Geauga County has a rate of only 11%. The process of aligning housing and transit decision-making with settlement patterns will help reduce these disparities by reducing barriers that restrict access to employment in impoverished communities.

Historic patterns of development have not led to an equal distribution of community amenities or access to jobs, education, neighborhood services, open space, transit, and municipal programs. This has resulted in disparities in health, income, food access, education, and employment options. Our Regional Planning effort will identify how to best deploy resources to address these historic inequities through targeted community development, use or reuse of existing infrastructure, and the restoration of natural systems throughout the region.

Despite the oversupply of housing noted above, the population of the region has increased modestly over the past decade. The amount of urbanized land has risen faster, however, resulting in a net gain of almost 90,000 acres between 1990 and 2000, a gain of over 10%. One of the goals of the Regional Plan process will be to meaningfully reduce the level of new urbanized land over the next 20 years.

Exemplary Initiatives: The Community Partnership for Arts & Culture (CPAC) was born from a regional, community-wide, strategic cultural planning process. Northeast Ohio’s Arts & Culture Plan^{xv}, released in May 2000, was the culmination of 9 major studies and 42 regional public forums during 30 months of quantitative and qualitative research. CPAC is currently working with CSU’s Levin College to undertake an economic cluster analysis of the music industry, important to NE Ohio as the home of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. CPAC is also taking action in working with the Cuyahoga County Land Bank to identify formerly foreclosed vacant houses that artists and musicians can purchase and renovate as their home and business location.

5. Existing Communities have Underutilized Assets: Northeast Ohio has the legacy of a significant and fairly well maintained infrastructure in roads, utility systems, transit systems, and the built environment. With the loss of economic base, jobs, and then families, much of this infrastructure is greatly underutilized. Utility companies talk of “stranded assets,” high capacity electric, gas and water infrastructure that only services a fraction of the previous residential and business demand. The region’s major cities all have an excess of housing and resulting deterioration. Transit systems have been developed to serve more riders than presently use them, and yet leave a legacy of capacity that may be re-utilized without the huge cost that new systems would require.

Having these resources in place represents an enormous cost savings compared with building similar facilities at today’s prices. For example, the Cleveland RTA system includes heavy rail and light rail systems built in the 1930s and 1950s, the envy of many American cities now developing such systems at great cost to themselves and to the Federal government.

A number of Northeast Ohio cities have approached the difficulty of being overbuilt from a “planned downsizing” policy perspective. Indeed, the City of Youngstown’s 2010 Plan is THE national model for a carefully planned approach to shrinkage and “triage” decisions for municipal investment. Such efforts are necessary in many cases, and the Regional Plan will include planning for “right-sizing,” “fix it first” and careful prioritization of investments.

It is clear, however, that the excess of infrastructure and housing can be a real asset to the region. There continues to be industrial and manufacturing growth in certain sectors. Some suburban communities are continuing to see new upscale housing being built, as natural assets and the region’s great park system draw successful residents outward. A great need exists for policy guidance in creating the new economic opportunities for the region, and in guiding new growth to take advantage of the existing infrastructure.

Exemplary Initiatives: Both Youngstown’s “Shrinking City” Initiative and Cleveland/Cuyahoga County efforts to “Re-imagine Cleveland” were raised up as nationally noteworthy local initiatives in the Auto Communities Summit in May 2010.^{xvi} The Summit was co-sponsored by the co-sponsored by the White House Council on Automotive Communities and Workers, the United States Department of Labor, and the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. The Youngstown 2010 Plan goes beyond “right sizing” and re-imagining,” which are constructive, asset-based efforts to envision a prosperous future building upon the past. The 2010 Plan proposes an alternate future and recommends that very difficult decisions be taken to achieve that future.

6. Transportation Alternatives Are Disconnected & Insufficient: The Northeast Ohio region has mature road, rail and airline service systems supported by significant past investment, and well connected with the rest of the United States and the world.

Transport modalities utilized in the region show considerable stability over time, with over 90% of trips being via automobile. Transit use shows slow decline from an already low base, while walking and bicycling make modest contributions. These trends may be attributable, at least in part, to the decline in centrally-located manufacturing facilities in favor of employment growth in areas not presently served by transit lines. The process envisioned in this grant will encourage employment growth where the people are, and transit growth that connects people to where the jobs are.

Despite the well developed public transit rail and bus infrastructure in Cleveland and existing bus systems elsewhere in the Region, total road mileage and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) are increasing.

For the period of 1990-2009, total road mileage increased by 29%, VMT increased by 24% and VMT per capita by 3.4%. The fact of the latter figure lagging the VMT indicates a positive movement in the data, and for the period of 2000-2009, VMT as a data point increased by 6% and VMT per capita by 3%.^{xvii} A key goal of the Regional Plan will be to meaningfully decrease VMT over a 20 year period.

Exemplary Initiative: OhioRideShare is a cooperative service offered by three of the four Northeast Ohio Region MPOs: AMATS, the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, and NOACA. OhioRideshare gives residents from 13 counties in Northeast Ohio the ability to identify potential carpool partners quickly and securely through the Internet. The program allows potential riders to easily pair with drivers across county and service area boundaries.

Northeast Ohio boasts two highly successful and sustainable Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) in the Cleveland suburbs of Shaker Heights and Lakewood. In Shaker Heights, the Van Swearingen brothers optioned 1,400 acres in 1909 to create the suburb, and by 1913 were building the Shaker Heights Rapid Transit to serve as a development catalyst. These plans were greatly successful, and Shaker Heights continues as a light-rail served suburb, with a population of 29,000 in 2000. The City of Lakewood was developed on the west side of Cleveland, beginning as a “streetcar suburb,” with a carefully laid out on a grid with commercial clusters every mile. Lakewood encouraged streetcar lines and grew rapidly, from over 15,000 in 1910 to 70,000 in 1930. While the streetcar lines were abandoned in the 1950s, Lakewood continues to be well served by buses with strong ridership. It is a successful city with a population of 56,600 in 2000, and has the highest population density in Ohio, approximating the density of Washington, DC.

7. Planning Is Based On Longstanding Political Boundaries : It has accurately been said that: “There are more local governments in Northeast Ohio than there are sovereign nations in the world.”^{xviii} Existing planning efforts have evolved from municipal and county boundaries, initially shaped by incorporation and modified by annexation. In Northeast Ohio, incorporation of the core cities and many towns occurred 60-150 years ago, with boundaries changed by constant annexation, and by incorporation of new suburbs. Many additional special-purpose governmental districts and service areas overlay municipal and county boundaries including school districts, housing authorities, sewer and water districts, library districts, and many others. Planning is typically done by each political subdivision, although there are examples of collaboration where natural or man-made systems cross boundaries.

Exemplary Initiatives: The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District operates three major wastewater treatment plants serving 59 suburban communities in Cuyahoga and Summit counties, as well as the City of Cleveland. The District has also engaged in planning regarding combined sewer system runoff problems, and in remediation of Lake Erie bacterial problems. The District is currently creating a storm water utility that will impose fees on local property owners, and this has not been without difficulty. Summit County officials have sued the District to halt fee imposition, with one argument being that fees from Summit County will benefit Cuyahoga County.

8. Natural Systems Have a Legacy of Degradation: A result of the region’s industrial past is the degradation and contamination of key natural features and systems, most notably Lake Erie, and the Cuyahoga River, infamous for the 1969 fire that is considered a landmark event in US environmental history. While numerous efforts are ongoing to rectify past practices and to prevent further degradation on natural systems, there remain significant areas of contamination in the form of slag heaps, contaminated water bodies, and brownfields. These areas are functionally excluded from being economically viable and, in many cases, former industrial lands are located in areas that are instrumental to fostering revitalization, such as adjacent to the waterfront (as is the case in both Youngstown and Akron).

Determining how to remediate these parcels either through conventional or bio-based processes, is critical to long-range viability of many local redevelopment plans. Moving beyond clean-up and remediation, the restoration of key environmental features and natural systems is critical to long-term economic vitality. Part of moving away from the land and resource-demanding industries of the past is to demonstrate that the region is able to both foster and attract new clean-tech industries and enterprises.

Increasingly, environmental factors play a critical role in corporate location decisions, making the clean environment-healthy economy equation an essential component of the Regional Plan. Examples of the success of linking environmental clean-up and restoration with economic repositioning are evident in cities such as Pittsburgh and Chattanooga, where sustainability have been driving factors in long-range growth plans. The Northeast Ohio process will draw from these past successful examples and apply them to the unique history and conditions of the region.

Despite the oversupply of housing noted above, the population of the region has remained essentially the same over the past decade.^{xix} As previously stated, the amount of urbanized land per person has risen 10%. The planning process will carefully analyze this trend, including looking at Regional outmigration/immigration and residential shifts within the Region, with a planning goal of reducing or reversing this figure. Many of the desired improvements in transportation and land use, as well as an increased emphasis on agriculture and rural communities is expected to have the effect of improving other measures of environmental air/water quality.

Exemplary Initiatives: The Lake Erie Allegheny Partnership for Biodiversity (LEAP) is a consortium of ~50 organizations that own and manage natural land in the Lake Erie-Allegheny plateau, encompassing all of northeast Ohio, plus parts of northwest New York and western Pennsylvania. Formed in 2004 and staffed by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the consortium is creating a biodiversity plan that identifies species and communities of value, and is using modeling to draw conclusions about likely locations worth preserving. The Partnership has also established a biodiversity fund, managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Fund (NFWF), to support planning and restoration efforts.

Factor 3 – Soundness of Approach

(1) General description of proposed Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.

(a) General contents of plan and (d) incorporation of HUD Livability Principles

The Application Consortium has developed a planning process that will result in an integrated, complex set of plans, priorities and policies. At a high level, the plan will include the following::

- An action plan for projects that are truly regional in nature
- Shared development priorities to guide local action, where appropriate
- Shared guidelines that may be adopted at the local level
- A formal network of the decision makers and basic stakeholders for each content area and geographic concern
- A set of tools including a regional integrated information system that builds the analytic and decision making capacity of the Region and frameworks to guide local action

Due to the comprehensive and integrated nature of the planning effort, the Application Consortium also defined some key content areas that will be incorporated into the overall planning effort. These key content areas are summarized below:

- Regional land use planning, policies and priorities, including water infrastructure and environmental planning and comprehensive climate change assessments

- Regional transportation planning, policies and priorities
- Regional housing planning, policies and priorities, including equity and affirmatively furthering fair housing (AFFH) recommendations
- Regional community planning, policies and priorities, including accommodation for differences in urban, suburban and rural needs
- Regional business growth planning, policies and priorities, including recommendations for economic clusters which will encourage overall Northeast Ohio growth and healthy living.

The Application Consortium has worked through a detailed set of priorities for approaching the six HUD livability principles through the Regional Plan, as well as adding the additional livability principle of “Preserve and Restore Natural Systems”. These seven principles will be used during the planning process to inform, be tested, and to drive that process. The Application Consortium’s priorities and related activities are summarized as follows, with additional detail in Part C of the Appendix:

<p style="text-align: center;">Enhance Economic Competitiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and leverage critical industry clusters • Support efforts to cultivate a 21st century workforce to lift up economically disadvantaged communities • Engage residents and businesses in planning that establishes Northeast Ohio as a place of choice to live and work • Coordinate land use planning to foster a sustainable tax base in all communities through ongoing collaboration and dialogue across political boundaries
<p style="text-align: center;">Coordinate Policies and Leverage Investment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a set of shared policies, priorities that incorporate a holistic, sustainable view of development alternatives to guide local action • Leverage existing planning expertise and institutionalize a network to facilitate ongoing collaboration and dialogue across functions and political boundaries • Establish a repository of state and federal investments in the region • Plan infrastructure growth and reinvestment to align with optimal population and economic patterns • Develop a planning protocol based on the EPA’s smart growth principles
<p style="text-align: center;">Promote Equitable, Affordable Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a “fix-it-first” housing strategy that minimizes blight and creates affordable alternatives for all income brackets • Provide mobility counseling for low-income residents to promote zip codes of opportunity • Implement strategies that facilitate aging in place for seniors • Affirmatively further fair housing (AFFH) initiatives and support the development of housing opportunities near jobs, especially for lower incomes • Support housing strategies that prioritize the proximity of mixed use development and multi-modal transportation centers • Create a comprehensive Housing Information System to increase the transparency of regional affordable housing and home maintenance alternatives
<p style="text-align: center;">Support Existing Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify all sources of investment in communities and increase alignment of housing, transportation, land use, infrastructure & environmental priorities and policies among agencies • Incorporate long-term analysis in all urban, suburban and rural planning that looks beyond trends and projections to better understand the true impact of decisions • Inventory assets of the built environment to develop a plan for restoration • Create incentives for “fix-it-first” strategies and development

<p style="text-align: center;">Value Communities and Neighborhoods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify, document and celebrate the distinctive assets and legacy of place for each community • Increase incentives for mixed use and higher-density development • Create criteria to evaluate the needs of existing neighborhoods and communities in the context of specific growth scenarios; implement strategies for “right-sizing” • Develop a region-wide toolbox to inform planning decisions and support the implementation of policies that can be leveraged locally, such as land banking
<p style="text-align: center;">Provide More Transportation Choices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematically link land use, housing and transportation policy and planning • Encourage transportation policy that drives clustered development • Create land use patterns that support the use of mass transit and non-motorized transportation to reduced VMT and greenhouse gases • Improve reach, accessibility and appeal of mass transit for all ages and incomes • Proactively link multimodal transportation for leisure, commuting and inter-regional travel • Minimize spatial mismatch of housing and jobs, especially for low-income and minority communities • Expand the “Ride Share” model to create a regional, multimodal online transportation portal
<p style="text-align: center;">Preserve and Restore Natural Systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish watershed-based planning processes • Incentivize innovative land use strategies for environmental protection and restoration that promote equitable, health-oriented economic development • Identify issues of environmental use, protection and restoration that will benefit from regional policy and guidelines

(b) How will this plan advance sustainable development in the region?

There is a clear understanding among the Application Consortium members that the time is exactly right for the preparation of an implement able regional sustainability plan. First, the more than 64 current Exemplary Initiatives that the RPSD application process has cataloged^{xx} provide a great leadership base and opportunity for the Regional Plan effort to build on. Second, the assessment and analysis that will be undertaken in Phase 1 of the plan process will provide new, valuable and clear information to the Leadership Committee and stakeholders, validating the Regional Plan process in their eyes. Finally, basing the Regional Plan firmly on a collaborative, holistic and iterative planning process will build-in the leaders and organizations that have already achieved some real success, and will expand that base to include new leaders.

(c) How will the Consortium use scenario planning to sharpen the regional visioning process?

The Application Consortium will use scenario planning extensively during the second phase of the Regional Plan development process. Data and preferences gathered during the Assessment phase of the Regional Plan process will be used to generate alternative scenarios for guided discussions with communities during the Visioning/Planning phase.

Application Consortium members have used scenario planning and visioning extensively and at a range of scales in the 2005-2006 “Voices and Choices” process. Voices and Choices was an extensive visioning process for Northeast Ohio, directed by the Fund for Our Economic Future and funded by 91 foundations and individuals throughout the region. Examples of the scale of this effort include 3,000 one-on-one citizen interviews, 1,650 citizens and leaders participating in a series of regional town meetings, and 13,500 citizens participating in discussions in homes, schools, business and community center discussions. Creating and discussing alternative scenarios for regional development was an extensive part of the process.

The Voices & Choices process set a firm scenario-based visioning process in place upon which the Regional Plan process will be constructed. Key organizations and leaders from the Voices and Choices process will be partners in the Regional Plan. The Fund for Our Economic Future, implementer of Voices & Choices, is a partner in this application, and its President, Brad Whitehead, is a member of the Regional Plan application steering committee. The George Gund Foundation, a key partner in Voices & Choices, is a partner in this application, and Gund Foundation Vice President Bob Jaquay was very active in Voices & Choices and is a member of the Regional Plan application steering committee. PSI and other civic engagement organizations will be part of the Regional Plan scenario-based visioning and planning process.

(e) How does the plan respond to needs from Factor 2?

The Factor 2 needs assessment detailed eight core needs that tie directly to the seven planning principles highlighted above. Needs one through six relate directly to corresponding priorities one through six. Needs seven and eight tie directly to priority number seven. The points below illustrate the direct connection between the planning priorities and the needs identified in Factor 2:

1. Need: Northeast Ohio's Economy Is In Significant Transition

Priority: Enhance Economic Competitiveness

The Regional Plan will address job creation as a spatial and equity concern through: (a) Visioning and planning for new growth in key industry clusters in Northeast Ohio; (b) Devising policies that support cultivation of a 21st century workforce to better align with growth clusters; (c) Crafting policies that foster redevelopment in existing cities and transform our communities to places of choice for businesses and individuals; and (d) Crafting policies that ensure sustainable development of Northeast Ohio's existing cities.

2. Need: Disparate, Fragmented and Inconsistent Policies & Investment Prevent Alignment

Priority: Coordinate Policies and Leverage Investment

The plan process will first address a determination of exactly what local, state and federal dollars are being spent, and where they are being spent. Major public project investments are not difficult to track, but a comprehensive inventory has never been compiled to provide a comprehensive picture. The RPSD Phase 1 process – to Assess – will establish shared knowledge of the amount and purpose of public spending. The first step to better decision making and spending is to know what is being spent, and on what projects. Once this pattern is clearly determined during the project's Assess phase, it will be possible to craft efficient actions and policies during the Vision/Plan phase process, and then to better Align future resource decisions to achieve sustainability.

3. Need: Low-Quality & Deteriorating Housing Plagues Existing Cities

Priority: Promote Equitable, Affordable Housing

Through establishing a regional approach to meeting housing needs, the resources and expertise of the affordable housing development community can be directed to those neighborhoods and properties that have the greatest potential to become stable and viable over the long term. The proposed Regional Plan will clarify the value of these existing assets and identify how they best can be used or, if needed, reused to create a more compact and resource-efficient form for the region's various urban areas.

4. Need: Inequity in Community Assets Hinders Sustainability

Priority: Support Existing Communities

The planning process will involve a range of local leadership in creating Regional Plans, and will ensure public decision making and meaningful resident participation. Key sub-regional and Regional Plans to be prepared to resolve this need will be transportation, land use, and economic development. Policies will be created to influence the alignment of infrastructure investment to ensure equitable land use planning, including equitable access to jobs and housing. Additional strategic steps can be taken to bolster the cultural and economic base of communities.

5. Need: Existing Communities have Underutilized Assets

Priority: Value Communities and Neighborhoods

The policy of guiding sustainable development toward existing communities will be emphasized in the framework of the requirements for specific economic clusters. Regional Plan sub-plans will assess existing community sites and political intention, and work to match these up with manufacturing and service industry growth requirements, all through the filter of sustainability. The process of aligning housing and transit decision-making with settlement patterns will help reduce disparities by reducing barriers to employment in impoverished communities.

6. Need: Transportation Alternatives Are Disconnected & Inefficient

Priority: Provide More Transportation Choices

The vision that will be established through the Regional Plan will clarify how local and regional land use and transportation investments can be most effectively linked in the future. Land use and development choices are not currently designed to take advantage of the current transit systems. The Regional Plan will address incentives for new development in sustainable locations served by transit, and designed to increase job growth and equitable land use distribution, and decrease in VMT and emissions

7. Need: Planning Is Based On Longstanding Political Boundaries

Priority: Preserve and Restore Natural Systems

The Regional Plan process will rely on and respect existing political boundaries, but will also inventory efforts that successfully cross boundaries – watersheds, utility systems, civic groups, etc. We will develop a planning tool or matrix that will inventory successful regional initiatives (we have already started that with our Catalog on the Internet), analyze why they are successful and identify what is needed to enhance their work or replicate them. The excellent regional parks system is a noteworthy exception that has successfully crossed political boundaries, and provides insights into how natural system planning and management can occur in the future. Recent experiences with watershed planning, around the regions six significant rivers, has also demonstrated the need for cross jurisdiction planning and the valuable, multi-benefit initiatives that can emerge when the planning process is structured and administered in a fair, transparent, and inclusive fashion.

8. Natural Systems Have a Legacy of Degradation

Priority: Preserve and Restore Natural Systems

The Regional Plan process incorporates an inventory and assessment of the most significant natural features and ecological functions of the region as part of the data collection process. This analysis will then be used to determine how clean-up and restoration efforts can be coordinated with plans for preserving, concentration, or constructing housing, establishing regional and sub-regional transportation routes, and remediating land either for community amenities such as riverfront access or for the development of facilities for new clean-tech enterprises.

(f) Describe the plan's ability to leverage critical regional economic assets to advance sustainability.

The Regional Plan strategy for regional economic development will rely on the major work done at CSU, particularly the economic cluster analysis approach of Ned Hill, Dean of the Levin College of Urban Affairs, and its Center for Economic Development. Among other vital research, the Center has determined that “high tech manufacturing” accounts for 33% of all “high tech” jobs, nationally. Northeast Ohio has both a rich history in manufacturing and a significant number of corporations that remain successful manufacturers. Relying on existing strengths, the Regional Plan will seek to guide these strengths toward sustainability through research and policy recommendations. Dean Hill and CSU have also published important articles on identification and analysis of “clusters” in the economy – similar industries that can rely on coordinated investment to build a “new industrial” base to create jobs

and a new sustainable economy. This will be accomplished by leveraging current strengths in medical services and research, and in the manufacturing sector. Northeast Ohio has the potential to lead the nation in this endeavor, driven by investment, the workforce, exports and the balance of trade, and the long-run value of the dollar.^{xxi}

(2) Process to Develop Regional Plan for Sustainable Development – (17 pts)

The Application Consortium has developed a phased process for developing the plan. The phases are detailed below.

Phase 0: Organize – Months 0-4 (4 months)

During the Organizational phase, all stakeholders and active participants will begin engagement. The groundwork during this phase is the critical foundation for the entire planning process, highlights include:

- 1) Application Consortium executes a formal MOU with HUD (finalized within 120 days of the grant award)
- 2) Application Consortium finalizes the Governance structure and endows the Sustainable Planning Regional Leadership Committee (“Leadership Committee”) with its power. The Leadership Committee is initially composed of all Consortium members who have signed the preliminary MOU.
- 3) The Leadership Committee incorporates itself as an Ohio non-profit corporation and applies for IRS 501C3 tax-exempt status. The Leadership Committee maintains its decision-making and policy role throughout this process, and becomes the Board of Trustees of the new entity.
- 4) Leadership Committee identifies and hires Planning Management Office (PMO) staff
- 5) Lead applicant establishes working relationship with HUD and Program Office staff
- 6) PMO staff updates the work plan with milestone dates and refines the budget
- 7) PMO staff works with the Leadership Committee to identify and assign specific Application Consortium members to support Work Streams with their in-kind time.
- 8) PMO staff works with Leadership Committee to identify and select consultants and partners to support effort. All consultants will be selected through a competitive RFP process.
- 9) “Work stream” committees are formed, oriented to the overall project plan and develop detailed project plans for functional objectives¹. The work streams will be:
 - a. Built Environment and Natural Systems Integration
 - b. Regional Mobility and Transit Options
 - c. Equitable Housing Access and Affordability
 - d. Community-Focused Economic Development
 - e. Place-Based Community Design
- 10) PMO staff updates the catalogue of existing initiatives in region (see <http://www.gcbl.org/planning/sustainable-communities-northeast-ohio/regional-initiatives> for preliminary catalog)
- 11) PMO staff develops public announcement and begins civic engagement

Phase 1: Assess – Months 3-12/ (10 months)

The Assessment phase establishes and validates the current context of the challenges and opportunities throughout the region and identifies best practices from within the region and nationally. The Planning Management office will work with the Work Stream committees and consultants to facilitate collaboration of participants from across the local, county, MPO, and state planning agencies and appropriate subject matter experts and research partners to undertake the following for each work stream:

- 1) Assess the existing relevant factors to validate current state
- 2) Define and quantify demographic and market trends

- 3) Evaluate existing public policy within and outside the region
- 4) Up to four sub-regions will be identified for the 12 county Northeast Ohio region based on items 1-3, above. The purpose of creation of the sub-regions will be to better enable participation by citizens and leaders in the visioning process, and to allow custom tailored implementation strategies to be designed.
- 5) Identify and evaluate best practices across the country
- 6) Synthesize findings to document formal assessment

Phase 2: Vision/Plan Months 13-24 (12 months)

Scenario Building evaluates the alternative realities based on several decision alternatives for each of the Work Streams. Scenarios will be based on desired sustainability goals defined by the Work Streams, and not just on existing growth patterns or data. A guideline for scenarios construction will be that “trend is not considered destiny.” Work Stream goals will be considered independently and in concert with each other.

- 1) The research partner(s) will be key at this stage to help develop scenarios for the four sub-regions and the Region itself to define an impact assessment across the three components of sustainability

Economic	Environmental	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal • Infrastructure Development and Management • Business Growth Patterns • Job Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air • Land • Water • Regional Ecosystems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility • Access • Health • Education

- 2) The Regional Plan process will engage stakeholders to inform and test the scenario assumptions in the four sub-regions and the Region itself.
 - a. Public Sector
 - b. Targeted Stakeholders
 - c. Targeted Civic Engagement
- 3) Work stream participants and consultants will develop specific plan recommendations based on the results of the impact assessment.
 - a. Plans will consist of recommended action elements for each work stream area and an implementation strategy
 - b. Separate plans will be created for each sub-region, and will then be woven together into a summary regional plan

Phase 3: Align Months 25-36/ (12 months)

The Alignment phase will be the final phase for the Regional Plan. This phase will be the most collaboratively intensive phase of the work plan. Stakeholder engagement will be at the forefront as much of the implementation will be at the local level. Key steps include:

- 1) Planning agencies and stakeholder groups from across the region will have been deeply involved in the Regional Plan process from the beginning, and will be engaged to ensure their communities are on board to establish:
 - a) Shared policies where a common governing authority can be identified
 - b) Regional guidelines where local governments will retain authority
 - c) Ongoing forums for continued feedback, dialogue, and collaboration
- 2) In the event that Regional Plan plans are not in alignment with local goals to the extent that they cannot be adopted, an iterative process will enable reconsideration of plan elements and action steps. Implementation of plan elements will also be considered in light of practical realities, with recommendations that call for one or more of the following strategies:

- a) Additional engagement with the implementers of the plan element
- b) Realizing that significant planning or political work needs to be accomplished prior to a successful implementation strategy and undertaking that work.
- c) Realizing that a successful implementation strategy is likely to require more time than the Regional Plan creation process allows, and placing the plan element on a temporary hold while additional visioning, alignment and planning takes place.

(a) How will the Consortium engage a broad cross section of local communities in the regional visioning process, including low income, minority, communities, allowing them to have an effective role on a sustained basis?

The Application Consortium has developed specific process guidelines^{xxii} for its approach to visioning and planning with all communities, with a specific emphasis on underrepresented and minority communities. The basic elements of this process are:

- Provide transportation to meeting locations, and include up-front in-person contacts.
- Identify and engage champions, and organizations, known and respected in underserved communities in Phase 0 Organizing.
- Involve respected representatives of underserved communities in all aspects of the planning process, including project planning, governance, and work streams, as well as the traditional public forums and work sessions.
- Build on the extensive visioning work done as part of the “Voices and Choices” program in 2008 as the “next step” of Northeast Ohio’s civic engagement.
- Focus on decisions that will impact a particular neighborhood or area, to gather input on broad initiatives, help participants understand the impact on their neighborhood or individual/group/family situation.
- Ensure that plans and scenarios are flexible enough to incorporate input and influence from those participating.

The Application Consortium has identified three stakeholder groups that must be involved in all phases of the Regional Plan process. These are: 1) Public sector/elected officials. These are the most important participants, as their support during the Align phase will be most critical. 2) Other stakeholders (business community, nonprofit thought partners); and 3) Civic engagement (underserved communities, young professionals, etc.) Community engagement will be one of the metrics the Regional Plan process continuously monitors, with corrective action to be taken if engagement is not satisfactory.

(b) Describe how the Consortium will assess existing conditions and projected trends in the region regarding transportation, water, other infrastructure investments, regional employment centers, and housing choices.

The first phase - Assess - of the Regional Plan process will include data collection and analysis. An RFQ process will be used to select the contract data and research partner for what the NOFA calls “household data.” The selected partner or partners will have extensive experience and resulting publications to its credit in this area. For “Parcel Data” (as defined in the NOFA - the more technical, systems-oriented data), the Consortium will rely on in-kind services from the four MPOs covering the Northeast Ohio region, as well as local county and city planning commissions.

(c) Describe the data the consortium will use in developing its regional vision, including role of data from Factor 2

Please see response to data at Factor 3: Governance & Management, section (d).

(d) Describe how the Consortium will formulate a strategy to address the barriers to sustainability identified as a result of the regional visioning process.

The Application Consortium will assure that the data collection and analysis and visioning processes will include a focus on barriers to sustainability, as the Voices and Choices process did in 2005-2006. Explicitly including barriers and challenges to sustainability will assure that these issues are dealt with during the third “alignment” phase of our process, rather than being suppressed and then surfacing later to lessen the chance for acceptance and influence for the Regional Plan.

(e) How will the consortium achieve regional consensus? Detail strategies, and (f) Describe how the consortium plans to implement the resulting regional vision.

The Application Consortium will consider acceptability and effectiveness as concurrent goals in the Regional Plan process. The “visioning with citizens” process will create a forum for discussion and filtering of initial data, priorities and research. The Consortium will also adopt a “sub-regional” process for discussion and achieving consensus, with each sub-region also discussing overall regional goals for the project. The process will depend on sufficient staff in the Planning Management Office to adequately staff regional and sub-regional meetings, and to provide excellent communication and feedback.

The Regional Plan by itself will not supersede any local authority on the issue of land use planning. However, basing the Regional Plan firmly on a collaborative visioning and local endorsement process will advance its acceptance throughout Northeast Ohio, and will encourage local jurisdictions to adopt its components. The emphases of the Regional Plan to create new, sustainable jobs from the Transitional Economy, and to reinvigorate the structure of our Natural Areas, should itself bring support. Both themes can be expected to have widespread support in Northeast Ohio, although of course that does not guarantee support for specific plans and policies.

The NOFA places significant emphasis on obtaining local government endorsement for the proposed plan, and asks for assurances that the Consortium can obtain participation and adoption of plan elements into local codes and plans. Northeast Ohio has direct and successful experience with such a process through the Ohio Balanced Growth Program’s watershed planning partnerships. There are significant lessons in these processes that account for their success that will be incorporated into the Regional Plan process. Local governments who participated in the watershed planning process are likely to understand the possibilities for involvement. The nine overall lessons^{xxiii} that will be incorporated into the Regional Plan process are:

- Participation by local government is required from before the project is started.
- There must be sufficient flexibility in the planning process to meet the needs of local jurisdictions.
- The visioning and planning process must include direct local participation by each jurisdiction.
- There will be a strong emphasis on open, transparent, straightforward communication from the beginning.
- Involvement and participation will be expected to support local goals.
- “Champions” will play a critical role in the endorsement process.
- The visioning, planning and endorsement process will be adapted as lessons are learned, and to meet specific local concerns.
- The endorsement process will be designed strategically.
- In selected areas, the possibility of funding for some of the member communities to update their comprehensive plans to incorporate plan policy will be examined.

(g) Describe how the consortium will establish and track metrics.

Please note the description in section d of Factor 3: Governance & Management.

(3) Governance and Management – (15 pts)

(a) Rationale for selection of partners

The initial partners in the Application Consortium are a result of the Regional Decade of thinking and acting in Northeast Ohio (see Factor 1 descriptions of organizations). The Fund for Our Economic Future, with support from the George Gund Foundation and others, convened a series of meetings including a range of public and private sector organizations including Northeast Ohio foundations, the four MPOs, the major cities and counties, public housing authorities, some mayors and other officials, and other public interest groups like the Regional Prosperity Initiative. This group identified additional parties who should join the table. The ultimate set of convening parties became the Application Consortium. Once the NOFA was issued in June, 2010, the Application Consortium focused on preparing for the submission, and making sure that partners would be prepared to make commitments and sign the needed Preliminary MOU.

(b) Role of each consortium member; and (c) Formal structure of consortium, including representation of diverse populations.

Application Consortium members signing the Preliminary MOU fall into five groups:

- MPOs. All four MPOs with jurisdiction in our 12 county geography are members of the Applicant Consortium: NOACA, represents 5 counties, will be the Lead Applicant and fiscal agent for the project, and will contribute professional planning staff to the work stream activities. AMATS represents Summit County and part of Wayne County, and will contribute professional planning staff to the work stream activities. Eastgate COG represents Mahoning, Trumbull, and Ashtabula Counties and will contribute professional planning staff to the work stream activities. SCATS represents Stark County and will contribute professional planning staff to the work stream activities and leadership to project guidance.
- Municipalities: The Cities of Akron, Canton, Cleveland, Warren and Youngstown represent their respective populations, and will contribute professional planning staff to the work stream activities and leadership to project guidance.
- Counties: Cuyahoga; Lorain, Mahoning; Summit; Stark; and Trumbull Counties represent their respective populations (which for 2010 are 77% of the 12 county Northeast Ohio geography^{xxiv}), and will contribute professional planning staff to the work stream activities and leadership to project guidance.
- Public Housing Authorities: the Akron MHA, Cuyahoga MHA, and Stark MHA are the PHAs for their respective counties, and will contribute professional planning and housing staff to the work stream activities and leadership to project guidance. The Public Housing Authorities also currently best embody minority and underrepresented populations in the region. Additional representative groups will be recruited as the project moves forward, particularly in the area of affirmatively furthering fair housing (AFFH).
- Other Organizations: The Fund for Our Economic Future is a collaborative effort of Northeast Ohio foundations and corporate supporters, will contribute professional staff to the work stream activities and leadership to project guidance, and has committed to raising \$500,000 for a grant to the project. The Cleveland State University Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs is a major university with planning and data expertise throughout Northeast Ohio, will contribute professional planning staff to the work stream activities and leadership to project guidance, and may be chosen by RFP process to be the RPSD data partner.

Collectively, these 21 entities make up the Application Consortium, and will be the initial voting members of the Sustainable Planning Regional Leadership Committee that will oversee the project. During the three month Phase 0 – Organize – additional groups will be asked to join the Leadership Committee to assure voting representation from rural communities, and from underserved and minority

populations. The Leadership Committee itself will become the Board of Trustees for the new non-profit corporation to manage the RPSD project.

(d) Describe the data management plan, including how information will be collected and shared amongst participating agencies to ensure that decisions are well-informed and communicated across jurisdictions.

The Application Consortium will rely on the analytical and research skills of the partner(s), which are expected to be chosen from among local universities submitting proposals in regard to an RFP during the Phase 0 – Organize- portion of the project. Data for this application was prepared by the NODIS (Northern Ohio Data and Information Service) of the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs of Cleveland State University, and CSU is likely to submit a proposal in response to an RFP. Case Western University and Youngstown State University, to name just two additional area universities with substantial and academically respected data analysis capacity, would be among those likely to submit responses to an RFP. The data partner will have the following responsibilities:

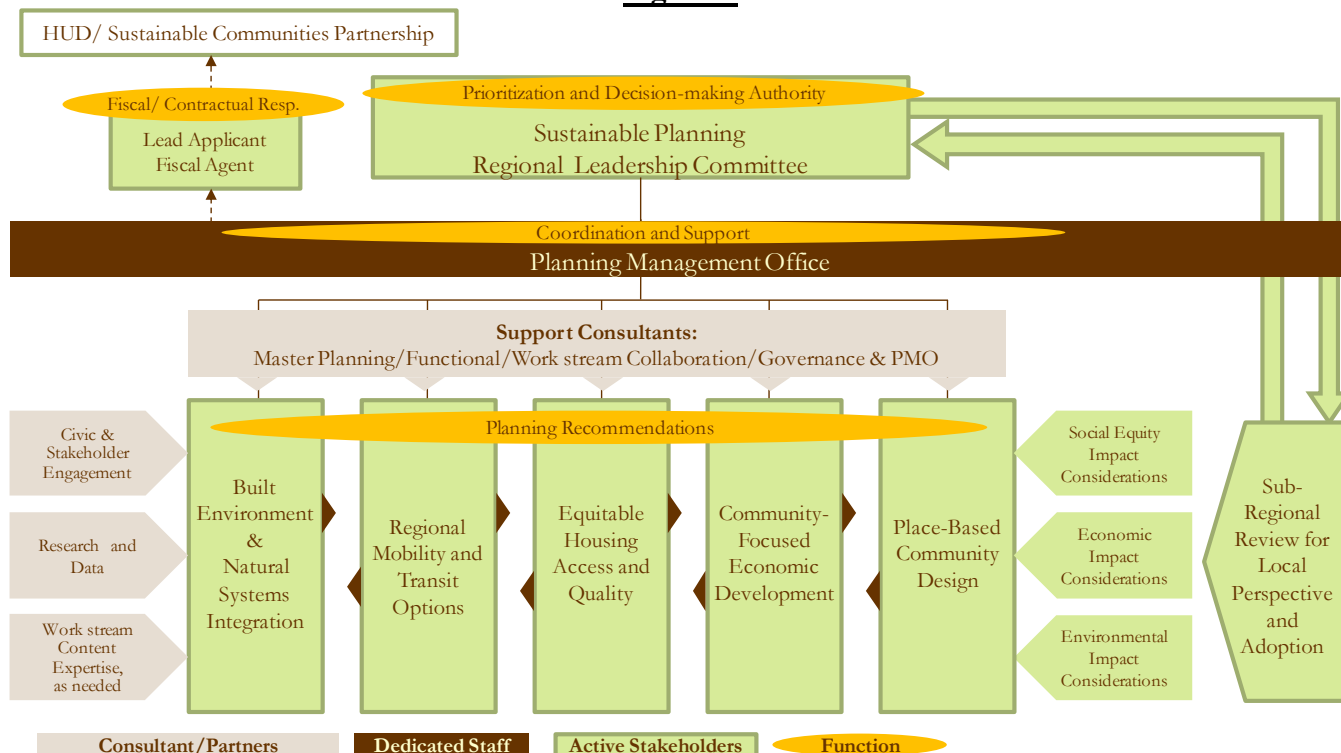
- To collect, analyze and clarify data already collected for Factor 2, for the projected population growth map (Figure 1). These data seem reliable, but the time frame for this application process did not allow a rigorous verification and analysis process.
- To collect new data as required by decisions during the Phase 1 – Assess – portion of the project.
- To provide ongoing data collection and analysis during the entire three-year process as required.
- To provide evaluation of progress toward milestones and indicators at six month intervals. This will include monitoring and reporting of key metrics such as disadvantaged and minority communities in the RPSD process.
- To design and implement the Northeast Ohio Integrated Information System – a source for regional decision makers in Northeast Ohio of key data for assessment and evaluation – not a large new database.
- As part of either item (v), to provide an expanded “Dashboard” (based on the current Fund for Our Economic Future Dashboardxxv) for quickly updated metrics on the Northeast Ohio economy and sustainability measures.
- To share and disseminate data and information among the Consortium and project partners.
- To generate academic peer-reviewed articles as appropriate for publication of key results of the Northeast Ohio RPSD project.

(e) Explain how you will ensure the implementation of the RPSD, including, if possible, the identification of future funding commitments.

The Consortium’s strategy for ensuring implementation and achieving consensus will be guided by the nine guidelines described above in section 3.a.2. f and g of this application. We believe that these strategies for engagement will lead to effective implementation of the Regional Plan.

As described above, this application is the culmination of a regional decade of planning and action projects in Northeast Ohio. Significant foundation and corporate funding has already been raised and expended for projects like Voices & Choices, EfficientGovNow and Advance Northeast Ohio, totaling over \$6.2M. With this regional history and background, the Application Consortium has great confidence that ongoing private funding can be raised if the Regional Plan is seen as being successful. Public funding is a more complicated issue, will depend on local and regional municipal budgets, but will also be dependent on a perception of success for the Regional Plan. When RPSD plans and policies are adopted across the Region, it is likely that public funding will also exist to continue the Regional Plan efforts beyond the projected three years.

Figure 5



Factor 4 - Leveraging Resources (5 points)

The Factor 4 Form illustrates that the Application Consortium has achieved a 47% in-kind and cash match of \$2,331,490 for the requested \$5M in federal funding. Specific commitments of in-kind resources come from the following source totals:

MPO budgets:	\$395,313
County Budgets:	\$311,228
City Budgets:	\$379,145
Public Housing Authority Budgets:	\$152,214
Civic Organizations	\$243,584
Fund for Our Economic Future (grant)	\$500,000
Fund for Our Economic Future (in-kind)	\$350,000
Total Cash and In-Kind Commitments:	\$2,331,490

Documentation for the match is included in the appendix. While significant portions of several sources, for example the MPO and Public Housing Authority in-kind contributions, will come from federal sources, the time constraints for preparation of this application did not allow time to document the federal totals.

Factor 5 – Achieving Results and Program Evaluation (20 points)

The Factor 5 Form attached as part of the appendix documents our proposed outcomes and measures of progress. Given the limitations of the form, we were not able to document all the applicable activities from our work streams, and therefore chose representative activities to enter into the form.

To summarize the Application Consortium’s expectations for meeting HUD’s mandatory outcomes:

(1) Creation of regional transportation, housing, water and air quality plans that are deeply aligned and tied to local comprehensive land use and capital investment plans.

Plans will be created as part of each work stream as indicated in the work plans. The Assess-Vision/Plan process we have outlined will assure an understanding of all local land use and capital investment plans. The most critical phase, however, is the third – Align – during which plans will be presented and discussed with localities in accord with the 9 step process documented in Factor 3(e) of this application. A mutual alignment process will take place: given the deep involvement of planning officials in the entire Regional Plan process, it is likely that the RPSD plans will be in alignment with their desires. In the event that this is not the case, plans will be reconsidered to determine if they need to be revised to align at the local level.

(2) Aligned federal planning and investment resources that mirror the local and regional strategies for achieving sustainable communities.

Our process calls for a complete inventory of federal planning and investment resources during the Phase 1 – Assess process. The initial step in alignment is clearly an understanding of what commitments have already been made and what the current local and regional strategies for sustainability are. The degree of alignment can then be determined, and this will greatly inform the next step: crafting appropriate scenarios to utilize in the Vision/Plan process to document appropriate outcomes, and then to interact with local and regional agencies to Align plans and strategies.

(3) Increased participation and decision-making in developing and implementing a long range vision for the region by populations traditionally marginalized in public planning processes.

Lessons learned during the Voices and Choices project have given Application Consortium members significant experience in reaching populations typically left out of regional planning processes. In addition, the guidelines and process we have specified in response to Factor 2 (a) (page XX) will assure that we are reaching these populations. As our data partner evaluates progress on the Regional Plan process, one of the metrics to be evaluated on a six month basis will be minority/underserved participation.

(4) Reduced social and economic disparities for the low-income, minority communities and other disadvantaged populations within the target region.

The Regional Plan's focus on job creation through investment in appropriate economic clusters is a first step toward decreasing economic disparities. Increased emphasis on locating affordable housing and new job opportunities in close proximity to one another is an additional significant step. Increasing opportunities in housing by eliminating barriers through the affirmatively furthering fair housing (AFFH) process will also be a powerful tool for reducing disparities.

(5) Decrease in per capita VMT and transportation-related emissions for the region.

Policy steps to be taken during the Regional Plan preparation include encouraging an increase in use of public transit and co-location of new job opportunities with clusters of housing. Other tools such as increased use and broadening of the OhioRideShare program will decrease VMT.

(6) Decrease in overall combined housing and transportation costs per household.

The aforementioned co-location emphasis of jobs and housing in land use decisions is a major step in decreasing H+T costs. Appropriate redevelopment of the excess housing stock in the core cities of the Northeast Ohio region will also accomplish this goal, particularly when this is combined with redevelopment of housing in proximity to the good public transit systems that exist in most of these cities.

(7) *Increase in the share of residential and commercial construction on underutilized infill development sites that encourage revitalization, while minimizing displacement in neighborhoods with significant disadvantaged populations.*

The Northeast Ohio Region has the good fortune of having an excellent new organization in place that can implement infill and rehabilitation that will accomplish this goal. The Cuyahoga County Land Bank has received national attention for its strategies and programs, and will be used as a model for the other counties in achieving revitalization and minimizing displacement.

(8) *Increased proportion of low and very low-income households within a 30-minute transit commute of major employment centers.*

this goal can be accomplished through the aligned and mutually reinforcing use of several plans and programs to be utilized in Northeast Ohio. Expansion of OhioRideShare will allow more transportation options to be available to low and very-low income individuals. In addition, increased redevelopment of affordable housing through the Land Bank model and through increased community development capacity building will allow more options for affordable housing.

ⁱ U.S. Census Bureau for 12 counties

ⁱⁱ per NOACA

ⁱⁱⁱ (http://cd.city.cleveland.oh.us/forms/Typology_3.0_Methodology.pdf)

^{iv} Northeast Ohio Regional Business Plan, Brookings Institution, Draft, 8/02/2010, p.1

^v <<http://www.gcbl.org/planning/sustainable-communities-northeast-ohio/regional-initiatives>>

^{vi} Reference needed

^{vii} American Community survey 2006-2008

^{viii} Reference needed

^{ix} See the work of Ned Hill at Cleveland State University on industry clusters.

^x Reference needed

^{xi} <http://www.taxfoundation.org/research>

^{xii} <http://www.usgovernmentspending.com>

^{xiii} Fund for Our Economic Future study.

^{xiv} <http://www.censusscope.org/us/rank_dissimilarity_white_black.html>

^{xv} www.cpacbiz.org/ftp_file/08-09/FullReport2.pdf

^{xvi} http://www.brookings.edu/events/2010/0518_auto_summit.aspx

^{xvii} All cited data from HUD Factor Form 2

^{xviii} Howard Maier, Executive Director, NOACA. As an example, there are 192 United Nations member states in 2010.

^{xix} All cited data from HUD Factor Form 2.

^{xx} <http://www.gcbl.org/planning/sustainable-communities-northeast-ohio/regional-initiatives>.

^{xxi} Citation of Ned Hill's "cluster" work

^{xxii} Derived from an unpublished paper prepared for the Consortium by Kirby Date, CSU, 8-18-10.

^{xxiii} Derived from an unpublished paper prepared for the Consortium by Kirby Date, CSU, 8-3-10.

^{xxiv} U.S. Census Bureau: Total 12 county population for 2010: 3,829,813 Total of six counties signing the Preliminary MOU: 2,950,179

^{xxv} <http://www.futurefundneo.org/Research>