

State of the County Report: Governance

COMMUNITY COMPASS REPORT NO. 16-8

Hamilton County, Ohio

Community
COMPASS



HAMILTON COUNTY
Regional
Planning
Commission

November 2004



The Planning Partnership is a collaborative initiative of the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission. The Partnership – open to all political jurisdictions in the County and to affiliate members in the public, private, and civic sectors – is an advisory board that works to harness the collective energy and vision of its members to effectively plan for the future of our County. Rather than engaging in the Planning Commission’s short-range functions such as zoning reviews, the Planning Partnership takes a long-range, comprehensive approach to planning, working to build a community that works for families, for businesses and for the region. The Partnership firmly believes that collaboration is the key to a positive, competitive, and successful future for Hamilton County.

Visit planningpartnership.org and communitycompass.org for more information.

Community COMPASS (Hamilton County’s Comprehensive Master Plan and Strategies) is a long-range plan that seeks to address mutual goals related to physical, economic, and social issues among the 49 communities within Hamilton County. Through a collective shared vision for the future based on the wishes and dreams of thousands of citizens, Hamilton County now has direction to chart its course into the 21st century.

In developing a broad vision with broad support, Community COMPASS will help ensure that trends are anticipated, challenges are addressed, priorities are focused, and our collective future is planned and achieved strategically over the next 20 to 30 years. Through an in-depth analysis of all aspects of the County, the multi-year process will result in a comprehensive plan.

The State of the County report series outlines conditions, findings, opportunities, and key measures related to improving and sustaining quality of life in twelve major systems in our community. The individual reports lay the groundwork for an overall State of the County analysis or report card, and provide support for refining action strategies.

Abstract

Title:

State of the County Report: Governance
Community COMPASS
Report No. 16-8

Subject:

Current conditions and findings related to governance in Hamilton County.

Date:

November 2004

Synopsis:

This report presents existing conditions and trends in Hamilton County related to governance. The report identifies six important findings as well as the importance of trends associated with each finding, and provides key indicators for measuring progress toward the Vision for Hamilton County’s Future.

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Context

COMMUNITY COMPASS COMPONENTS

- 1 **Vision**
(What do we want?)
- 2 **Initiatives**
(What strategies should we consider?)
- 3 **Indicators**
(What should we measure?)
- 4 **Trends**
(Where have we been?)
- 5 **Projections**
(Where are we headed?)
- 6 **Research**
(What's the story behind the trend?)
- 7 **Partners**
(Who can help?)
- 8 **Strategic Plans**
(What can we do that works?)
- 9 **Action Plans**
(How do we make it happen?)
- 10 **Performance Measures**
(Are actions making a difference?)

This Report

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- Civic Engagement and Social Capital
- Community Services
- Culture and Recreation
- Economy and Labor Market
- Education
- Environment
- Environmental and Social Justice
- Governance
- Health and Human Services
- Housing
- Land Use and Development Framework
- Mobility

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STATE OF THE COUNTY REPORT: GOVERNANCE

Executive Summary

FINDING 1

Ohio's "home rule" environment fosters a proliferation of special purpose governments to address cross-jurisdictional issues.

- Within Hamilton County, there are 49 separate general purpose governments. These include 21 cities, 16 villages, and 12 townships.
- In Ohio cross-jurisdictional collaboration is a voluntary activity; it is not required in most instances. However, in an environment where many neighboring jurisdictions serve a metropolitan population, issues requiring multi-jurisdictional collaboration are inevitable. Also, in many instances, a group of jurisdictions can accomplish a desirable objective that would be impossible for an individual jurisdiction - a situation where the sum can be more than its parts.
- State and local governments in Ohio have developed special districts and authorities to provide services to businesses and citizens that were not or could not be delivered by individual townships and municipalities. The services provided are varied in nature, but all are specific in their direction. School districts, sewer districts, and joint fire districts are examples of special purpose governments.
- Although, the establishment of consolidated regional government is generally unwelcome in home rule states such as Ohio, the need for regional governance for efficient delivery of many services (e.g., solid waste, sanitary sewerage, libraries, health, transit, etc) results in many layers of special purpose regional governments. In this environment of fragmented local and regional governments a unified vision and overarching, comprehensive plan has heightened importance in connecting and aligning decision-making by individual governments.

- Interacting with the general and special purpose government structure can be a confusing and frustrating experience for residents and businesses in Hamilton County. Few people understand the complexities of our local government, and the result can fuel negative perceptions regarding the efficiency and function of government. Through improved collaboration, communication, and careful planning, the layers of government in Hamilton County can be even more proactive and responsive to residents and businesses.

FINDING 2

The metro region's fragmented structure adds complexity to planning, policy formation, and regulation and implementation of plans.

- Hamilton County's 49 political jurisdictions are part of over 340 municipal, county, state and federal jurisdictions and districts in the Greater Cincinnati region. This fragmentation makes the Greater Cincinnati metro region one of the Country's most complex and difficult to manage metro regions.
- There are many benefits to the small scale of most Cincinnati metropolitan jurisdictions, which are reflected in a strong tradition of local government. Local governments are especially adept at reacting to and enforcing local safety and quality of life issues important to residents. Small governments also require the involvement of more citizens in civic activities, resulting in improved local accountability and civic mindedness.

- Many issues are left to jurisdictions that have impacts on neighboring communities or to the region that smaller governments cannot or will not address due to fiscal or political reasons. Often a local government's role as a part of the metro region is not considered in local decision-making. The problems of managing a region containing a large number of autonomous jurisdictions are compounded by distrust, adversarial relationships, and lack of regional accountability.
- There are many levels of approaches to dealing with regional issues in metropolitan areas. While Hamilton County local governments are engaged in some levels of regional governance, local governments are adamantly opposed to consolidation of government.
- In order for Hamilton County and the metropolitan area to compete successfully in the new global economy, its many jurisdictions and levels of government will have to find more effective ways to work together in attracting and retaining business and industry. More effective collaboration is also necessary to address Hamilton County's issues of population loss due to out-migration and the cost of increased social service needs.

FINDING 3

Hamilton County's local governments are increasingly facing fiscal and social stress.

- Many programs and services once administered and/or funded by the federal government have been given over to state and local governments. In this environment, it has been counties more than states or cities that have taken over responsibility for healthcare, aid to the poor, and criminal justice. As funding from higher levels of government for social services has decreased, local dollars are allocated. This is particularly true in the case of state and federally mandated programs that require counties to provide certain services.
- As the central county in the region, Hamilton County is home to many regional assets and regional problems. In its role as "anchor tenant," Hamilton County provides a place where many residents of surrounding counties come to work and recreate.
- As the regional development boundary has spread beyond Hamilton County's border (and taxing authority), citizens desiring a new home with modern amenities and "good" schools, are moving into neighboring counties. As this is an upper and upper-middle-income migration,

the result in Hamilton County is, through dilution, a higher percentage of residents who most often receive public services and a reduction in higher income (and taxpaying) households. In effect, Hamilton County is experiencing the same fiscal and social stresses that have impacted the City of Cincinnati and other major cities in the United States over the past 40 years.

- Recent research by the Metropolitan Area Research Corporation has found that "Just 6 percent of Cincinnati area residents live in affluent communities with plentiful tax bases and few social needs. Another 18 percent live in middle-class bedroom communities with above-average tax bases." The majority of people in the region live in communities facing fiscal or social stresses, classified as "at-risk developed" or "at-risk developing".

FINDING 4

The increasing authority and responsibility of local governments requires greater commitment to comprehensive planning to assure their fiscal and social health.

- Throughout the history of local government in Ohio and in other states, when municipalities and townships lack the legal authority to accomplish something, they work to change state or federal law. Over time local governments in Ohio have accumulated more authority and autonomy from the state.
- While the State of Ohio has granted more authority to municipalities and townships, it does not require local governments to plan for the future. Counties, townships, cities and villages are making decisions on a daily basis that shape the future development of their communities. However, many do not have a comprehensive long-range plan to provide a basis for short-range decisions, to accommodate future needs, and to provide for orderly long-range growth. This problem is compounded in areas like Hamilton County where many small jurisdictions exist in close proximity.
- In the absence of an over-arching comprehensive plan framework (such as Community COMPASS) local officials are not able to properly develop long range plans for their community in the context of the region. Without a long-range local comprehensive plan, local officials are not able to make informed short-range decisions in the best interest of their community and the County.

FINDING 5

Non-government organizational involvement in community planning and local public policy is increasing.

- A growing number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are involved in local, regional, and state issues and policymaking nationwide. NGO involvement in government initiatives reflects a nationwide move from top-down to bottom-up planning and a shift in NGO focus from specific issues to comprehensive strategic action.
- The availability of funding for local planning and public policy initiatives is a significant motivator and enabler for NGO based initiatives.
- Comprehensive planning usually results in directives requiring comprehensive action. Effective implementation requires the active involvement of citizens, private and civic organizations, and government. It is important that NGO initiatives are considered, and that NGOs are included as local governments work on cross-jurisdictional issues.

FINDING 6

Advisory government alliances are working to enhance cross-jurisdictional dialogue in Hamilton County.

- In Hamilton County and the Cincinnati metropolitan region, cross-jurisdictional dialogue among political leaders is enhanced and facilitated by advisory government alliances such as the First Suburbs Coalition, Hamilton County Caucus of OKI Representatives, Municipal League, Planning Partnership, Township Association and the Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI)..
- A need for sustained cross-jurisdictional collaboration above and beyond the role of special districts exists to ensure that local government decision-making is informed by a countywide, comprehensive plan, and that the County's governments can be properly represented at the regional, state, and federal levels.

STATE OF THE COUNTY REPORT:

Governance

THE VISION FOR HAMILTON COUNTY'S FUTURE:

Effective and efficient local government that acts proactively and cooperatively across political boundaries with elected, appointed, and community leaders responsive to and accessible by all citizens

INTRODUCTION

This report presents existing conditions and trends in Hamilton County related to Governance. The report identifies six important findings related to government proliferation and fragmentation, fiscal and social challenges, and collaboration, as well as the importance of trends associated with each finding, and provides key indicators for measuring progress toward the Vision for Hamilton County's Future.

From the local to the global scale, successful public administration today is characterized by more consolidation, less bureaucracy, and more business-like management of those basic facilities that contribute to the health and growth of the community. Government must become more efficient and more willing to cooperate than ever not just with other public agencies, but also with civic organizations and private entities. In many cases the energy to bring about more efficient government is to be found within the civic and private sectors, as much as among public officials and administrators.

In Hamilton County cooperation often takes place in the form of alliances created to solve problems, that affect the general public as they arise, to act preemptively to avoid future problems, or to move a jurisdiction in a particular direction. Many organizations like the Township Association, Municipal League, OKI, First Suburbs Consortium, and Planning Partnership work to enhance cross-jurisdictional dialog and encourage cooperation across political boundaries.

The Vision Statement for Governance, a component of *The Vision for Hamilton County's Future*, is based on recommendations from 12 Community Forums in the Fall of 2001 and the Countywide Town Meeting held January 12, 2002.

The Vision for Hamilton County's Future was reviewed and approved by:

- Community COMPASS Steering Team, July 30, 2002
 - Hamilton County Planning Partnership, Dec. 3, 2002
 - Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, Feb. 6, 2003
 - Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners, Nov. 26, 2003
-

FINDING 1

OHIO'S "HOME RULE" ENVIRONMENT FOSTERS A PROLIFERATION OF SPECIAL PURPOSE GOVERNMENTS TO ADDRESS CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL ISSUES.

In the State of Ohio there are three types of general-purpose local governments: municipalities, townships, and counties. These general purpose governments provide many services such as law enforcement, public works, adjudication, regulation, recording of documents, financial administration, and human services.¹

Within Hamilton County, there are 49 separate general purpose governments. These include 21 cities, 16

villages, and 12 townships, (Figure 1). Townships are unincorporated areas, meaning they have close ties to county government and limited powers under state law. Villages and cities are incorporated areas with municipal charters of governance authorized by state law. Municipalities – as villages and cities are often called – have greater taxing and legislative authority than townships. A primary distinction between a village and a city is population; a village

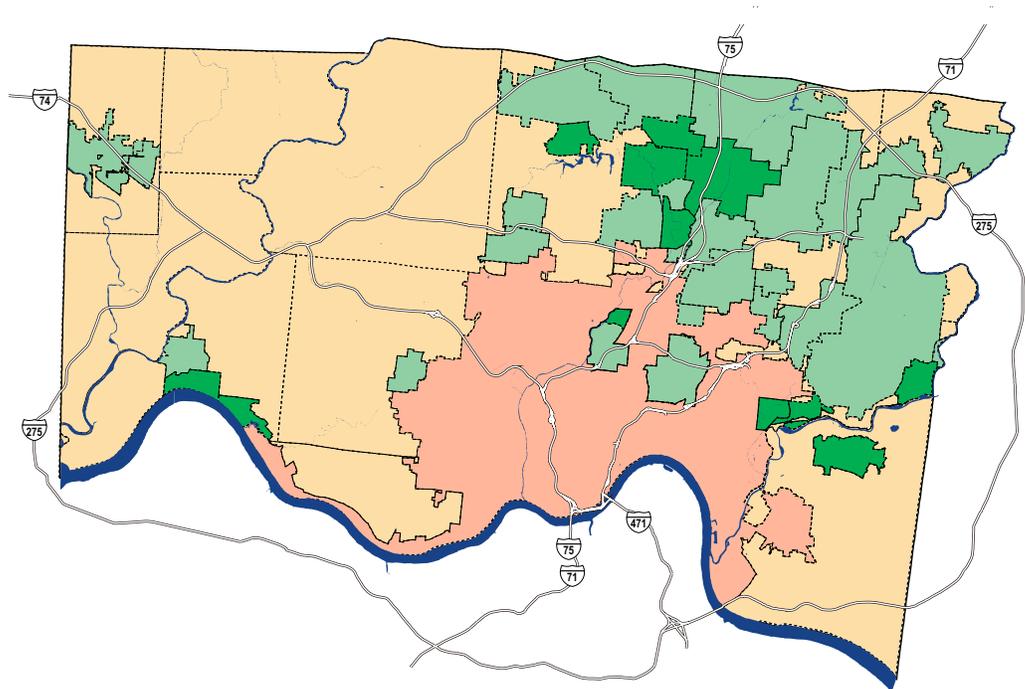
contains fewer than 5,000 people, while a city has at least 5,000 inhabitants.

“The Ohio constitution gives all municipalities home rule. This means that cities and villages may adopt laws for purposes of local self-government that are not specifically forbidden by or in conflict with general law. By way of contrast, counties and townships may perform only those functions that are specifically permitted by state law, unless they

Figure 1
**HAMILTON COUNTY'S
49 CITIES, VILLAGES,
AND TOWNSHIPS**

- Villages
- Cities
- Townships
- City of Cincinnati

Source: Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission



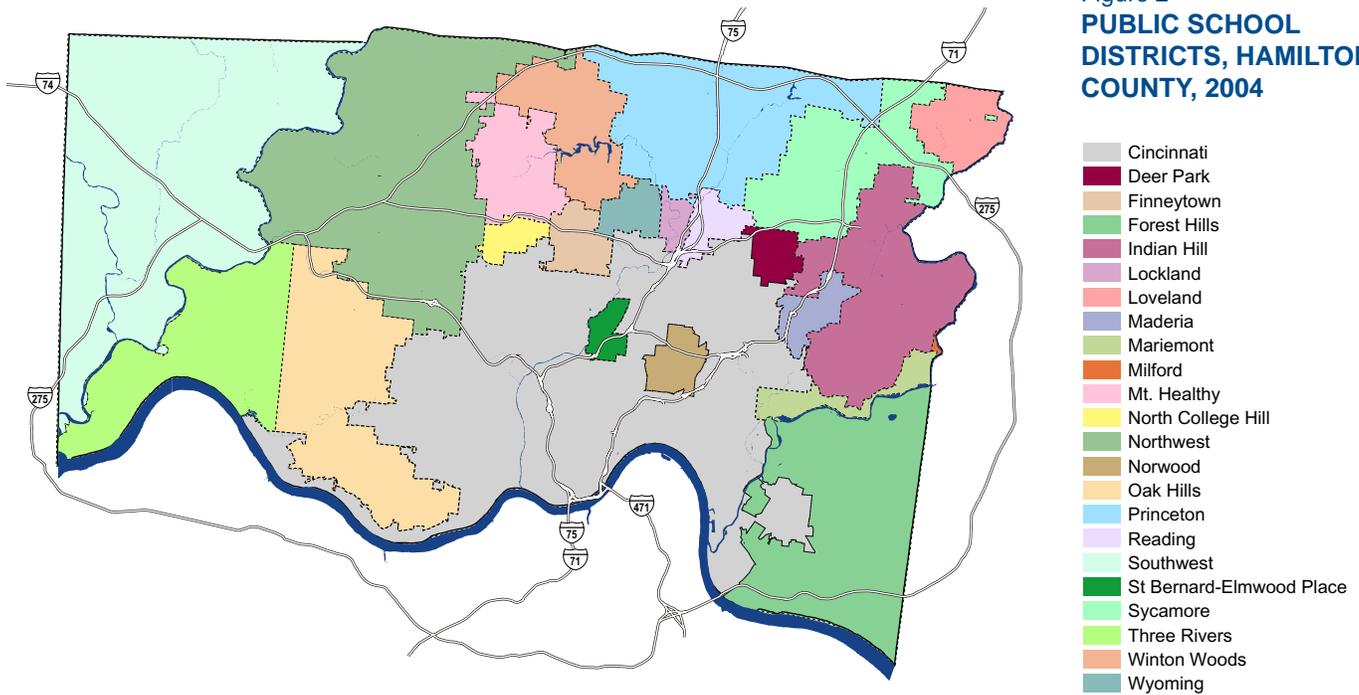
adopt, by vote of their citizens, an alternate or charter form of government.”²

In this context, Hamilton County and its 12 townships are administrative units of the state of Ohio. However, they are still independent governments with locally elected officials. To an even greater extent, the County’s municipalities act and govern independently of each other. Cross jurisdictional collaboration is a voluntary activity; it is not required in most instances. However, in an environment where many neighboring jurisdictions serve a metropolitan population, issues requiring multi-jurisdictional collaboration are inevitable. In many instances, a group

of jurisdictions can accomplish a desirable objective that would be impossible for an individual jurisdiction - a situation where the sum can be more than its parts.

State and local governments in Ohio have developed special districts and authorities to provide services to businesses and citizens that were not or could not be delivered by individual townships and municipalities. These districts and authorities are created through authority provided by Ohio statutes and are considered governments.³ The services provided are varied in nature, but all are specific in their direction. For example, soil and water conservation

issues exist independently of local government boundaries, and development decisions in one jurisdiction can have negative impacts on another. To ensure these issues are properly addressed, the State of Ohio created a Soil and Conservation District in each county. Each district is governed by a board of citizens elected at an annual meeting. “The board is responsible for conducting surveys, developing plans, implementing measures and establishing rules to achieve soil conservation.”⁴ Similarly, other districts exist to govern special multi-jurisdictional needs such as sanitary sewers and transportation infrastructure. In some ways the development of these



Source: Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission

organizations could be considered a form of legislated cross-jurisdictional collaboration.

Of the special districts, school districts are unique and are considered sepa-

rately because their leadership is directly elected and they have taxing authority. For these reasons, school districts have complete autonomy from the municipal and township governments they overlay.

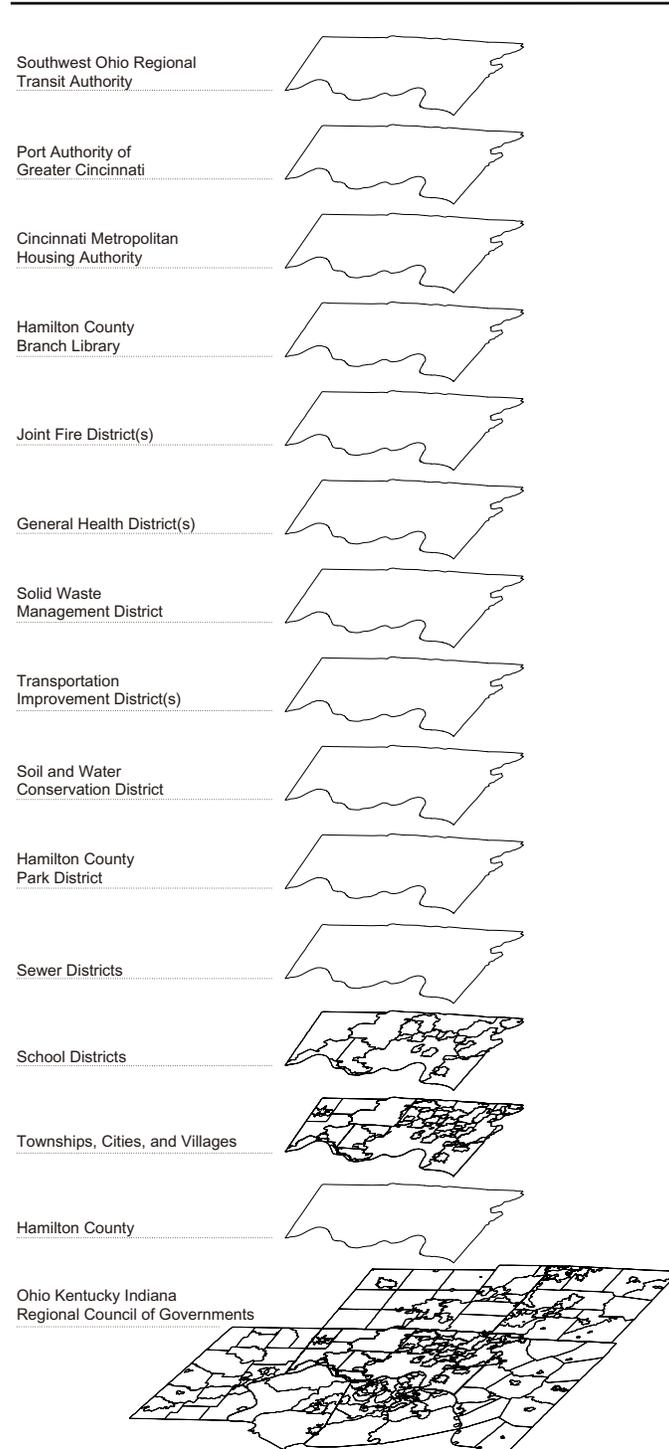
Twenty-three public school districts serve the educational needs of school-age children within Hamilton County. School boundaries within the County do not necessarily follow municipal and township jurisdiction lines, and many villages and cities in the County are served by more than one school district.

Hamilton County's local governments and school districts combine to offer residents and businesses a wide variety of options related to community size, level of elected representation, levels of service, taxation, school district size and quality, land use regulation, and community character.

Ohio's other special purpose districts are sometimes referred to as "shadow governments" because they are governed by a board that is appointed through a variety of processes stipulated in the organization's by-laws, state law, or county courts (judiciary). This degree of separation from direct elections is often held in check through funding mechanisms. Some organizations are funded directly by state, county, and/or local governments and can be controlled to a degree by elected official budgetary decision-making. Others are partially or wholly dependant on special tax levies that require voter approval for regular renewal and increases.

Figure 3
MULTI-TIERED
GOVERNMENT
STRUCTURE,
HAMILTON COUNTY,
2004

Source: Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission



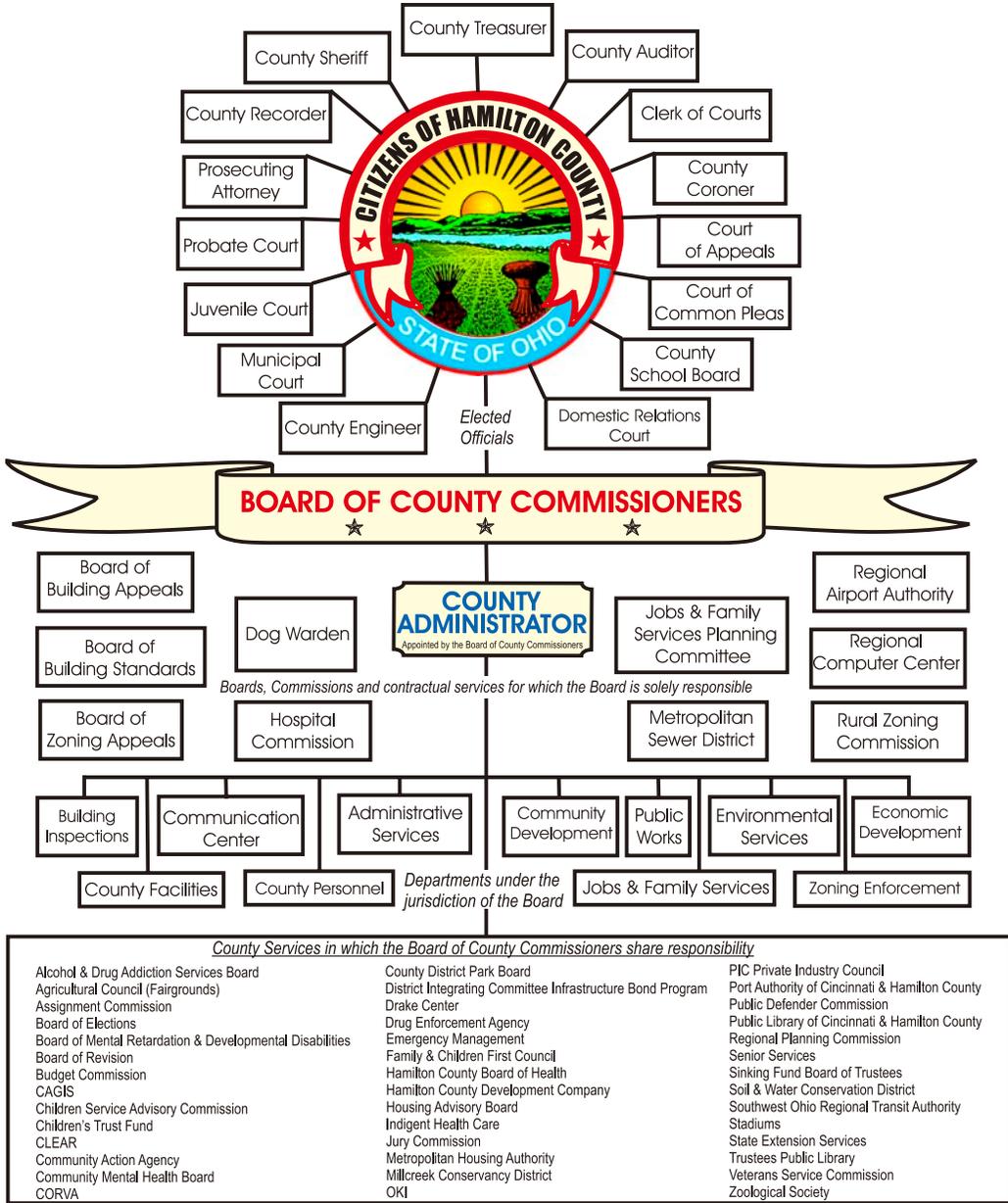
Statewide, the number of special districts has steadily increased from 140 in 1952 to 631 in 2002. Hamilton County, as the central urban county in the region, has 16 special districts while the neighboring Ohio counties have less: Butler (nine), Warren (six), and Clermont (five).⁵

Currently each district and authority operates independently from the other, communicating as needed in the execution of each organization's responsibilities. For example, in the case of a new development in Hamilton County's zoning or building inspection jurisdictions, plans are reviewed by county and township or municipal

staff as well as a variety of districts. The sewer district will review sanitary sewer plans, the soil and water conservation district will assess landslide potential, and the health district may be involved if a private sewage system is proposed or if there are concerns from past usage of the site. This is one of the many ways that Hamilton

Figure 4
**HAMILTON COUNTY
GOVERNMENT
ORGANIZATION CHART**

Source: Hamilton County Department of Administrative Services



County's general purpose and special purpose governments interact on a day to day basis.

However, as in the case of Hamilton County's general purpose local governments, each special district and authority (Figure 3) conducts its own long range goal setting and planning, often without coordination with other affected districts, governments, or authorities.

Figures 3 and 4 are graphical representations of local governance in Hamilton County. The common view of local government in the County usually includes the County, townships and municipalities. Occasionally school districts are identified as a part of the equation. A more accurate representation of local government, though, includes the many special purpose districts and regional authorities that overlay townships, municipalities, and each other. In addition to special districts, regional entities like the Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments provide services across Hamilton County's borders. In this context it is apparent that every Hamilton County citizen and business is served by a multiplicity of local governments.

Why is This Important?

Hamilton County communities have been involved in cross-jurisdictional collaboration in the form of special districts and authorities for many years. It could be said that this framework is the State of Ohio's and Hamilton County's answer to regional governance in metropolitan areas. Although, the establishment of, and even the discussion of, consolidated regional government is generally unwelcome in home rule states such as Ohio, the need for regional governance for efficient delivery of many services (e.g., solid waste, sanitary sewerage, libraries, health, transit, etc) results in many layers of regional government to support local home rule governments. In this environment of fragmented local and regional governments a unified vision and overarching, comprehensive plan has heightened importance in connecting and aligning decision-making by individual governments.

Assuring, or at least fostering, such coordination is one of the primary functions of a community's master plan or comprehensive plan. Hamilton County's last comprehensive plan was completed in 1964. Support for updating the comprehensive plan waned as components

were increasingly revised by independent authorities and districts. In the absence of a coordinated county wide plan, local general purpose and special purpose governments were left to plan in "silos", meaning they did not have the benefit of a countywide or regionwide plan framework. In a complex, multi-tiered government structure like Hamilton County, a current comprehensive plan and implementation commitments are essential for effective and efficient governance.

Interacting with the special purpose government structure (and general purpose governments) can be a confusing and frustrating experience for residents and businesses in Hamilton County. Few people understand the complexities of our local government, and the result can fuel negative perceptions regarding the efficiency and function of government. This is important when considering the attractiveness of Hamilton County to business. Through improved collaboration, communication, and careful planning, the layers of government in Hamilton County can be even more proactive and responsive to residents and businesses.⁶

FINDING 2

THE METRO REGION'S FRAGMENTED STRUCTURE ADDS COMPLEXITY TO PLANNING, POLICY FORMATION, AND REGULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANS.

Hamilton County's 49 political jurisdictions are part of over 340 municipal, county, state and federal jurisdictions and districts in the Greater Cincinnati region. This fragmentation "makes the Greater Cincinnati metro region one of the Country's most complex and difficult to manage metro regions."⁷

There are many benefits to the small scale of most Cincinnati metropolitan jurisdictions, which are reflected in a strong tradition of local government. Hamilton County residents value government close to the people and most local jurisdictions enjoy a resident to elected official ratio of less than 2000:1 - the lowest being the Village of North Bend at 86:1. In this type of environment citizens are more likely to feel engaged in local decision-making and that their efforts can make a difference.

Having small jurisdictions enables (and requires) a larger number of people to be civically engaged through service on municipal councils as well as boards and committees such as planning,

zoning, parks/recreation, historic preservation, and public safety. The cost of duplication of services by jurisdictions is offset to some degree by opportunities for civic involvement and citizen accountability. People are engaged as volunteers in the business of their local government and the social aspects of their communities on PTAs/PTOs, block watches, ad-hoc committees, etc.

There is an increase, however, in the number of people choosing to live in the unincorporated areas of the County where the resident to elected official ratio is much higher. In fact, the ratio of Colerain Township (20,000:1) is second only to the City of Cincinnati (33,000:1). This is due to the typically larger land areas of townships and fewer elected offices.

Local governments are especially adept at reacting to and enforcing local safety and quality of life issues important to residents. The scale of a majority of these jurisdictions enable, and sometimes compel, residents to be involved in their com-

munities if only for the reason that they are able to communicate directly with local elected officials with little effort.

At the same time many issues are left to jurisdictions that have impacts on neighboring communities or to the region that smaller governments cannot or will not address due to fiscal or political reasons. Often a local government's role as a part of the metro region is not considered in local decision-making. Some jurisdictions have adversarial relationships with neighboring communities based on "island" decision-making (where impacts across political boundary are not considered), political ideology, or competition for tax base. As stated in *Ohio Metropatterns*, "Ohio's state and local finance system is pitting local governments against one another in a competition for tax base."⁸ The problems of managing a region containing a large number of autonomous jurisdictions are compounded by distrust, adversarial relationships, and lack of regional accountability.

There are many levels of approaches to dealing with regional issues in metropolitan areas. Figure 5 lists 17 distinct approaches ranging from “Informal Cooperation” to a “Three-Tier Reform” style of consolidated government. Hamilton County local governments use several of these approaches in dealing with issues ranging from fire safety services (9. Local Special Districts), to solid waste (9. Local Special Districts), to regional transportation planning (5. Regional Councils / Councils of Governments).

As a part of the Hamilton County comprehensive plan visioning process

-
1. Informal Cooperation
 2. Inter-Local Service Contracts
 3. Joint Powers Agreements
 4. Extraterritorial Powers
 5. Regional Councils/Councils of Governments
 6. Federally Encouraged Single Purpose Regional Bodies
 7. State Planning and Development Districts
 8. Contracting (Private)
 9. Local Special Districts
 10. Transfer of Functions
 11. Annexation
 12. Regional Special Districts and Authorities
 13. Metro Multipurpose District
 14. Reformed Urban County
 15. One-Tier Consolidations
 16. Two-Tier Restructuring
 17. Three-Tier Reforms

elected officials from the County's jurisdictions were invited to participate in several round table discussions on building collaborative decision-making. The discussions focused on the following four distinct approaches (representative of the range listed in Figure 5):

- Work within the legitimate local authority of local jurisdictions
- Build strong regional governance (metropolitan government)
- Drive public policy through public involvement in governance
- Create voluntary strategic partnerships

Strong themes were apparent throughout the round table deliberations, including:

- Most elected officials have initiated and experienced the benefits of collaborative efforts within the County, including collaborations with Cincinnati; e.g., public safety, libraries, sewerage, tourism.
- Most elected officials are adamantly opposed to any form of collaboration that leads toward strong, top-down regional government structure that undermines the authority and responsibility of elected officials.

- Most elected officials fear that collaborative decision making is (or will lead to) regional government with an agenda set by narrow interests that favor countywide and Cincinnati needs without regard or respect for the needs or desires of local jurisdictions.
- Many elected officials have concerns about increased citizen participation, believing it may undermine the basic structure of representative democracy.
- Most elected officials are willing to collaborate on specific projects if the collaboration includes mutual goals, equitable representation, and respect and trust (especially between Cincinnati and suburbs and between county government and local government).

Why is This Important?

In the *Greater Cincinnati Metro Region Resourcebook*, Michael Gallis states that “the growth and development of the region suffer from a complex set of political relationships that often present a barrier to maximizing the future of the region. Political fragmentation is hindering the process of creating a regional vision and poses

Figure 5
REGIONAL APPROACHES TO SERVICE DELIVERY

Source: The Evolution of Regional Governance⁹

a serious competitive handicap for the region in economic development.”¹⁰ Gallis points to changes in the world economy following the fall of Communism that have resulted in a new global marketplace where metropolitan regions are “the new foundation units of the world economy and form the hubs of the global network.”¹¹ In order for Hamilton County and the metropolitan area to compete successfully in the new global economy, its many jurisdictions and levels of government will have to find more effective ways to work together in attracting and retaining business and industry.

Regional issues related to concentrated poverty and exurban growth exhibit negative trends (Finding 3) with regard to the future of the metro region. Many problems related to poverty that have historically been associated with and left to the central city are impacting more jurisdictions in the County. At the same time, the region is growing in developed land area more rapidly than population, resulting in a dispersed growth pattern that necessitates higher costs for new services and infrastructure and disinvestment in the County’s older communities. Management of such regional issues requires a regional approach.

Key Indicators:

- *Number and size (number of participating jurisdictions) of intergovernmental agreements.*

FINDING 3

HAMILTON COUNTY'S LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE INCREASINGLY FACING FISCAL AND SOCIAL STRESS.

The fiscal and social health of Hamilton County and its local governments is a function of regional development / settlement patterns, government structure and services, local tax capacity, and revenue received by higher levels of government.

First in the 1970s and again since the mid 1990s there has been a national trend toward devolution of government from the federal to the state and local level. In a movement referred to as New Federalism, many programs and services once administered and/or funded by the federal government have been given over to state and local governments. In this environment, it has been counties more than states or cities that have taken over responsibility for healthcare, aid to the poor, and criminal justice. “ ‘More and more,’ says John Saros, Director

of Children’s Services in Franklin County, Ohio, ‘we’re dealing with kids and families at the local level with less and less state assistance.’ The closing of residential state mental health centers has added to the local burden. At the same time, federal money that used to fund programs for unruly children and their families has dried up. ‘Those dollars have gone away,’ says Saros, ‘leaving us more and more reliant on property-tax dollars.’ ”¹²

The alternative to increasing local financial support for criminal, health, and social services is to discontinue or reduce the scope of programs and services. In this instance, non-profit and charitable organizations can play some role in offsetting the reduction in services, but many residents will simply not receive the support they need due to

relatively fewer dollars available from non-profits. As a comparison, in 2003 United Way of Greater Cincinnati, which serves the eight counties in Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky, provided funding to 160 agencies with a budget of 60 million dollars. The 2003 budget for Hamilton County Jobs and Family services, which administers federal, state and local programs including Welfare, Child Support and Children’s Services, was \$1.16 billion.

A number of services provided by counties in Ohio are legislatively mandated by higher levels of government, many of which are not adequately funded by the mandating government. In the instance of an un-funded or under-funded mandate, local tax revenues are allocated.

A review of Hamilton County’s two primary taxes - property tax and sales tax - shows that the County’s taxes are lower than most of Ohio’s five other urban counties (Figure 6). While Hamilton County has the highest gross countywide millage, it’s effective millage before the March 2004 elections

Figure 6
PROPERTY TAX (IN MILLS) IN OHIO'S URBAN COUNTY BUDGETS BEFORE AND AFTER 2004 PRIMARY ELECTION

County	Before March 2004		Change	After March 2004	
	Gross	Effective		Gross	Effective
Cuyahoga	18.00	14.62	0.00	18.00	14.62
Franklin	17.64	13.24	0.80	18.44	14.04
Hamilton	21.56	13.71	0.20	21.76	13.91
Lucas	18.30	14.06	0.00	18.30	14.06
Montgomery	18.24	15.13	0.00	18.24	15.13
Summit	13.07	10.39	0.00	13.07	10.39

Source: Hamilton County Department of Administrative Services.

was fourth among the six comparable counties. After the March 2004 election Hamilton County's estimated effective millage ranks fifth. Only Summit County (Akron) has a lower effective property tax rate. In a comparison of average 2003 property tax millage for all taxing districts, Hamilton County ranks fourth.¹³ (Figure 7)

Two of the six comparable urban counties have a sales tax rate lower than Hamilton County's rate of 7%; Franklin County (Columbus) and Summit County (Akron) sales tax rates are 6.75 percent (Figure 8) A comparison of Ohio's 88 counties reveals only eleven with sales tax rates lower than Hamilton County.¹⁴

A comparison of property taxes between Hamilton County and its neighboring Ohio counties is not as favorable. As shown in Figure 9, Butler is the only County in southwest Ohio with a lower sales tax rate (at 6.5 percent). However, all neighboring counties have lower property tax rates. This fact reflects Hamilton County's unique role in the region as the central urban county. Traditional development patterns in metropolitan areas are from a central hub, spreading outward. In this scenario, new and often more affluent residential development generally occurs at the outer fringe

of the urbanized area. As is the case with nearly all metro areas in the United States, a vast majority of the Cincinnati region's poor and low income residents live near the center of the urban area. Nationally this segment of the population requires a higher level of service delivery in the areas of social services and criminal justice.

In addition, urban core areas serve the region in a variety of other ways with high capacity transportation networks, regional arts and cultural institutions, and as regional economic engines. Residents of neighboring counties rely on Hamilton County's transportation network for access to work, shopping, recreation, and entertainment. The library system,

museums, zoo, and professional sports venues are assets enjoyed by the entire region. Many areas in neighboring counties are developing "bedroom communities" which have a dependant relationship with communities in Hamilton County - the regional job center.

County	Average Gross	Average Effective
Cuyahoga	107.83	63.14
Franklin	96.68	58.14
Hamilton	94.61	57.20
Lucas	95.18	54.11
Montgomery	87.75	59.98
Summit	83.22	51.68

County	Rate
Cuyahoga	8.00 %
Franklin	6.75 %
Hamilton	7.00 %
Lucas	7.25 %
Montgomery	7.50 %
Summit	6.75 %

Figure 7
AVERAGE COUNTY PROPERTY TAX (IN MILLS) FOR URBAN COUNTIES IN OHIO, 2004

Source: Hamilton County Department of Administrative Services.

Figure 8
COUNTY SALES TAX RATES FOR URBAN COUNTIES IN OHIO, 2004

Source: Hamilton County Department of Administrative Services.

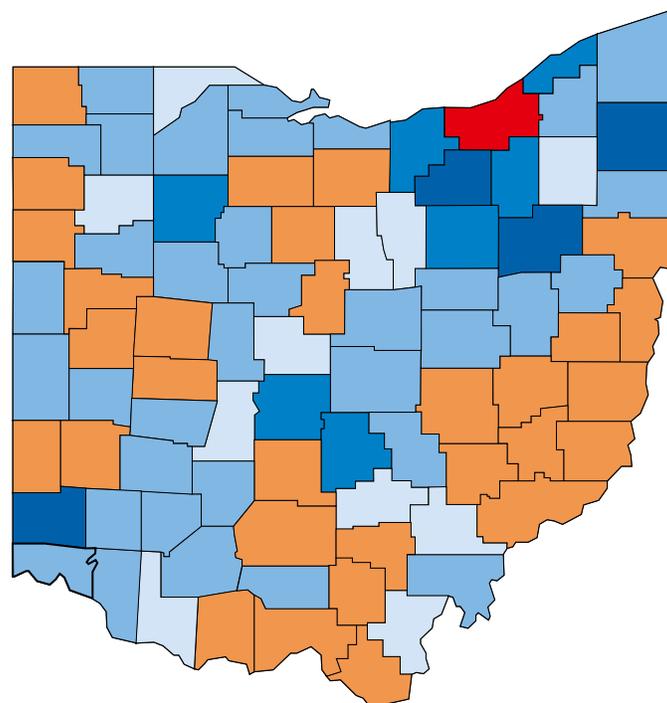


Figure 9
TOTAL STATE AND LOCAL SALES TAX RATES, BY OHIO COUNTY, 2004

- 8.00 %
- 7.50 %
- 7.25 %
- 7.00 %
- 6.75 %
- 6.5 %

Source: Ohio Department of Taxation.

Figure 10
COMMUNITY CLASSIFICATION

At-risk developed: These places are experiencing fast-growing poverty in their schools and their per household tax bases are relatively low — the lowest of any of their counterparts in other regions, in fact. In addition, they have nearly the same share of affordable housing units as the city of Cincinnati, 58 percent.

At-risk developing: These places also have a higher than-average supply of affordable housing units, as well as below-average household incomes and property tax bases. While the at-risk developed communities tend to be inner suburbs of Cincinnati or older outlying cities, the low-density communities are largely outlying townships and small towns.

Bedroom-developing suburbs: These low-density, middle-class communities are experiencing the most rapid growth of any of the communities. Their tax bases are above the regional average and growing more quickly than average. Nearly 90 percent of the households in the group are in unincorporated areas.

Affluent suburbs: Filled with comfortable, residential neighborhoods, these communities have the highest number of school-aged kids per household. With commercial-industrial tax bases over three times the regional average, they are also home to a disproportionate share of the region's jobs. Less than 20 percent of the housing units in these places are affordable to households making the region's average income

- At Risk, Developed (29)
- At Risk, Developing (66)
- Bedroom, Developing (38)
- Affluent (12)
- Central County (1)
- No Data (1)

Source: Ameregis Metropolitan Area Research Corporation, December 2002.

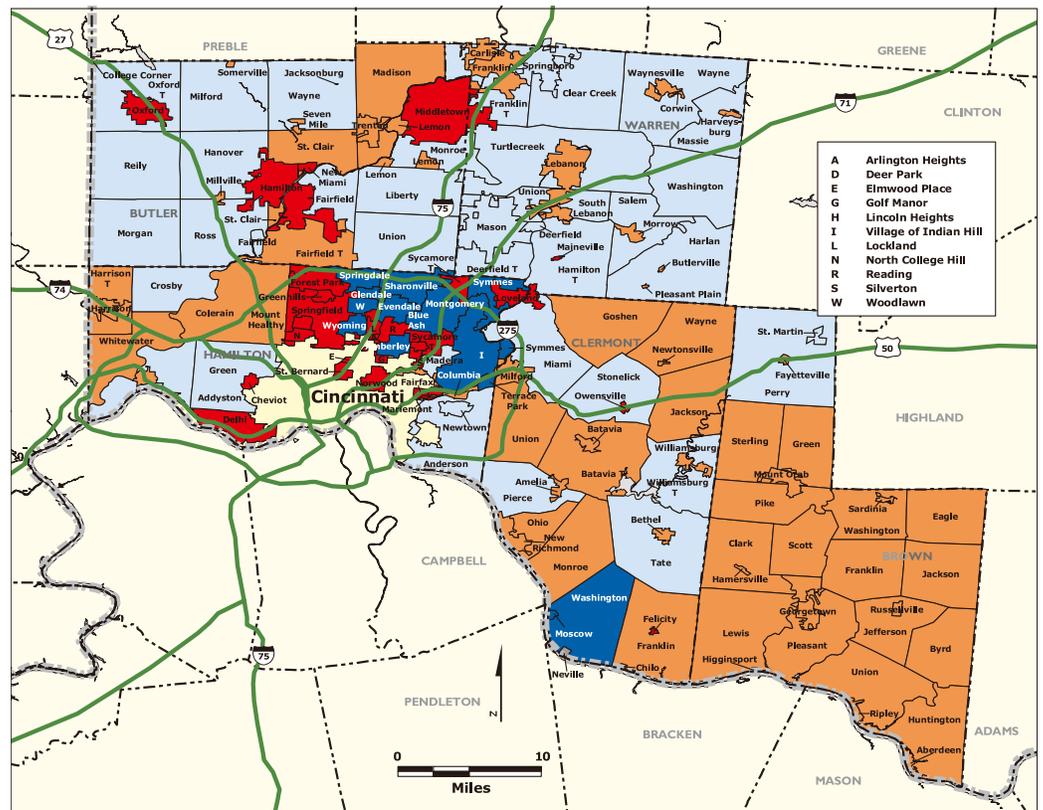
In this environment rational decision-making by individual citizens is not in Hamilton County's favor. As the development boundary has spread beyond Hamilton County's border, citizens desiring a new home with modern amenities and "good" schools, are moving into these lower tax areas. As this is an upper and upper-middle-income migration, the result in Hamilton County is, through dilution, leaving a higher percentage of residents who most often receive public services and a reduction in higher income (and taxpaying) households. In addition, there is evidence to suggest that Hamilton County's larger and more

sophisticated social service infrastructure retains and attracts citizens in need of these services. In effect, Hamilton County is experiencing the same fiscal and social stresses that have impacted the City of Cincinnati and other major cities in the United States over the past 40 years.

In *Ohio Metropatterns* the Metropolitan Area Research Corporation (MARC) conducted an analysis of demographic and fiscal trends in six of Ohio's metropolitan areas: Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown. In this study, local jurisdictions in each metro area were categorized into four groups based on total property

tax base per household, growth in residential-agricultural and commercial-industrial tax base per household, income per household, population growth, and population density. "These variables provide a snapshot of a community in two dimensions – its ability to raise revenues from its local tax base and the costs associated with its social and physical needs. Fiscal capabilities are measured by tax base and the change in tax base."¹⁵ Figure 10 provides a characterization of each category and a thematic map depicting the Cincinnati region.

MARC's research finds that, "Just 6 percent of Cincinnati area residents



live in affluent communities with plentiful tax bases and few social needs. Another 18 percent live in middle-class bedroom communities with above-average tax bases.” The majority of people in the region live in communities facing fiscal or social stresses, classified as “at-risk developed” or “at-risk developing”.¹⁶

Why is This Important?

As the central county in the region, Hamilton County is home to many regional assets and regional problems. In its role as “anchor tenant,” Hamilton County provides a place where many residents of surrounding counties come

to work and recreate. This, however, is a relatively new phenomenon. As residential development has exploded outside the borders of Hamilton County over the past two decades¹⁷, many higher income households have migrated beyond the confines of Hamilton County’s taxing authority (Figure 11). Residents of outlying counties enjoy the benefits of living in a metropolitan area (parks, zoo, library system, transportation infrastructure, etc.) while contributing little to the costs. In addition, costs related to poverty and social stress common to all metropolitan areas are left to the central county. In this context many, such

as Myron Orfield, have argued that the region has not only outgrown Hamilton County but the State’s century-old taxing structure as well.

Currently Hamilton County is offsetting the trend of out-migration to a degree by encouraging development in specified undeveloped areas of the County, primarily in the western townships (as designated in the Western Hamilton County Collaborative Plan), and redevelopment of under-developed, brownfield, or blighted areas. Other options include regressive tax agendas, metropolitan tax reform, state and local incentives encouraging redevelopment over greenfield

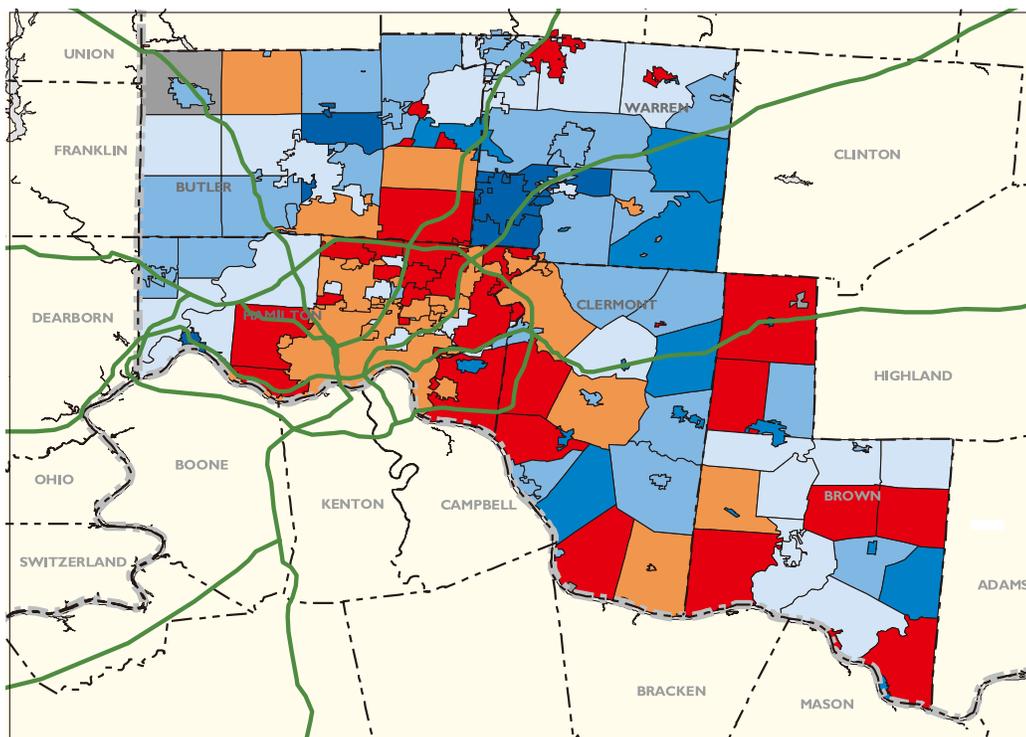


Figure 11
PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN PROPERTY TAX BASE PER HOUSEHOLD BY MUNICIPALITY AND TOWNSHIP, 1994-2000

Regional Value: 13.0%

Red	-52.6 to 5.8%	(30)
Orange	6.8 to 12.9%	(24)
Light Blue	13.0 to 20.7%	(27)
Medium Blue	22.8 to 34.8%	(37)
Dark Blue	36.6 to 48.6%	(16)
Very Dark Blue	56.1 to More	(8)
Grey	No Data	(7)

This map measures changes in residential-agricultural and commercial-industrial property tax bases only. Percentage change figures are inflation adjusted. Municipalities and Townships with “No Data” either did not have sufficient data or had less than 50 households in 1994 or 2000.

Sources: Ohio Department of Taxation, Ameregis Metropolitan Area Research Corporation.

development, and strategically timed expansion of transportation and public infrastructure into exurban greenfield areas.

While there has been a strong political movement favoring tax reduction, Hamilton County voters have continued to renew and increase property tax rates by approving a number of levies. It should be noted that this occurred in a time of tremendous increases in property valuations (residential property valuation increased 75.6 percent from 1992 to 2002¹⁸), which resulted in increases in the amount of tax paid by property owners. Metropolitan tax reform options might include tax base sharing, regional (four county) tax levies, or other changes to the tax system that would more equitably support the Cincinnati metro area's growing, multi-jurisdictional region; and better equip it to compete in the global economy. The timing of transportation and infrastructure expansion, along with incentives for redevelopment, can be used to curb urban disinvestment and ensure exurban development is not occurring at the expense of Hamilton County's existing communities.

Key Indicators:

- *Number of communities classified as "at risk" (Figure 10)*
- *Percent of regional population living in communities classified as "at risk" (76 percent in 2000)*

FINDING 4

THE INCREASING AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS REQUIRES GREATER COMMITMENT TO COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING TO ASSURE THEIR FISCAL AND SOCIAL HEALTH.

Throughout the history of local government in Ohio and in other states, when municipalities and townships lack the legal authority to accomplish something, they work to change state or federal law. Over time local governments have accumulated more authority and autonomy from the state.

In townships, the pursuit of additional authority is often due to the pressures of an expanding population and changing expectations with regard to government services. Township government in Ohio was originally intended to serve small populations. Indeed, in the case of municipalities state legislators felt that the village form of government, which is a more sophisticated and powerful government with greater elected representation, was only suitable for a population under 5,000. Today Hamilton County is home to the most populous townships in the State, with Colerain Township the largest at 60,000 persons. With growing populations of citizens desiring the amenities often associated with cities, townships

have had to lobby the State for additional authority to provide higher levels of service.

While the State of Ohio has granted more authority to municipalities and townships, it does not require local governments to plan for the future. Counties, townships, cities and villages are making decisions on a daily basis that shape the future development of their communities. However, many do not have a comprehensive long-range plan to provide a basis for short-range decisions, to accommodate future needs, and to provide for orderly long-range growth. This problem is compounded in areas like Hamilton County where many small jurisdictions exist in close proximity. Conversely, many states, including Kentucky, require local jurisdictions to prepare and regularly update (every five years) a comprehensive plan

including specific elements such as housing, community facilities, and transportation in order to administer zoning.

As of November 2004 nine of Hamilton County's 49 general purpose local governments had a current and adopted comprehensive plan. Thirteen others had adopted special plans for specific purposes like land use, sidewalks, recreation, or for a specific corridor or area. (Figure 12). These plans were developed in the absence of a county-wide or region wide plan framework. A plan framework provides a context for individual jurisdictions to plan in a way that meets the best interests of their community and the county or region.

Why is This Important?

With greater authority comes greater responsibility. The more local com-

Jurisdictions with:	Number	Percent
A current, adopted comprehensive plan	9	18%
Current plan elements or sub-area plans	13	27%
A comprehensive plan in process	2	4%
A current plan element or sub-area plan in process	1	2%
No current plan	24	49%
Total	49	100%

Figure 12
INVENTORY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANS, HAMILTON COUNTY, 2004

Source: Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, November 2004

munities are able to accomplish, and the greater their autonomy, the more important it is to conduct long range comprehensive planning to ensure future fiscal and social health. This is particularly important in metropolitan areas with many small jurisdictions. As stated by President John F. Kennedy in his 1961 message to Congress, “The city and its suburbs are interdependent parts of a single community bound together by the web of transportation and other public facilities and by common economic interests. Bold programs in individual jurisdictions are no longer enough. Increasingly, community development must be a cooperative venture toward the common goals of the metropolitan region as a whole.”¹⁹ In the absence of an over-arching comprehensive plan framework (such as Community COMPASS) local officials are not able to properly develop long range plans for their community in the context of the region. Without a long-range local comprehensive plan, local officials are not able to make informed short-range decisions in the best interest of their community.

Key Indicators:

- *Number of Hamilton County jurisdictions with current, adopted comprehensive plans (i.e., updated within the past five years; nine jurisdictions in November 2004)*

FINDING 5

NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY PLANNING AND LOCAL PUBLIC POLICY IS INCREASING.

A growing number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are involved in local, regional, and state issues and policymaking nationwide. While some of these organizations have a long history of broad involvement in local governance, others represent very focused issue areas.

One of the key aspects of many of these groups (especially those with a civic focus) is that they exist as volunteer “grassroots” organizations. Unlike the clear legislative authority of local governments, NGOs are supported by businesses and/or citizens engaged in public issues and policy. This is a phenomenon that has existed to some degree throughout our country’s history, and is clearly a force today in local governments across the nation. The involvement of these organizations in matters of government and public policy is part of a continuing national trend.

NGO involvement in government initiatives reflects a nationwide move from top-down to bottom-up planning. Historically, community planning was done by a small group

of experts and elected officials with little or no public involvement. While excellent plans can be developed in a top-down process, implementation often fails due to a lack of public support.

Today, most planning practitioners are mindful of the need for public involvement, and participation is solicited from as many stakeholders as possible. This change is an example of the move from government’s reliance on in-house technical expertise to its desire to partner in administrative processes. In addition, most federally funded planning initiatives (such as major transportation projects) require a significant degree of public participation, in particular with regard to potentially disenfranchised populations. While much has been done to include all stakeholders, some civic leaders identify a need for ongoing public involvement throughout the planning and implementation process.

A good example of an effective NGO in a comprehensive plan process is in Knoxville, Tennessee. In the mid 1990s a group of citizens organized to initi-

ate a large scale visioning and strategy development project. Today “*Nine Counties. One Vision.*” (NCOV) has succeeded in building consensus on a long range vision, developed strategies and is supporting hundreds of citizens and community leaders working in implementation teams. According to NCOV Executive Director Lynne Fugate, this initiative, while in cooperation with the many local governments in Knoxville was started and is sustained as a 100 percent citizen based NGO. Knoxville is not unique among metropolitan regions; there are a growing number of NGO initiatives like NCOV springing up nationwide.²⁰ The rise in NGO planning initiatives is apparent in Hamilton County with many major projects underway (Figure 13).

One reason for the rise in NGO initiatives is that citizens and NGOs are starting to see their communities and the region as a system, rather than just seeing specific issues or problems. A significant change has occurred in the manner in which United Way evaluates and funds

social services in Hamilton County and across the country. This change reflects a new perspective – focusing on whole communities as opposed to just providing a specific service, and in doing so addressing planning issues once left to political jurisdictions. According to

Terry Grundy, Director of Community Initiatives for the United Way and Community Chest of Greater Cincinnati, this change is mostly “driven by the fact that social investors and other civic sector groups are attempting to act in a more strategic and less reactive way. They’ve become aware that fulfilling their social missions requires this change and [they] see that strategic action has to be undergirded by good planning.”²¹

The availability of funding for local planning and public policy initiatives is a significant motivator and enabler for NGO based initiatives. The Greater Cincinnati Foundation has been a primary local source of funding for initiatives through its grant programs which include focus areas for community revitalization and regional cooperation. Other funding organizations include the Seanson Foundation, KnowledgeWorks Foundation, The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, Cinergy Foundation, and many private corporations.

Why is This Important?

Governmental decision-making in the United States is in large part reactionary to issues and problems. Many private and civic organizations realize this and take it

upon themselves to propose (or oppose) issues and policies in an effort to affect governmental decision-making in accordance with their goals and objectives.

Comprehensive planning efforts can be viewed in a similar light. Goals, objectives, and recommended actions are in essence an agenda for action and a guide for decision-making. Comprehensive planning, however, usually results in directives requiring comprehensive action. Effective implementation requires the active involvement of citizens, private and civic organizations, and government.

With the addition of non-government initiatives, work on regional issues requires even more collaboration. It is important that NGO initiatives are considered, and that NGOs are included as local governments work on cross-jurisdictional issues.

Key Indicators:

- *Number of local Non Government Organizations involved in planning efforts*
- *Civic sector expenditures on community planning initiatives*

-
- Catholic Social Action Commission / Ecology Project Team, Toward a Region in Balance
 - Citizens for Civic Renewal -- Metropatterns: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability in the Cincinnati Region (Orfield)
 - Regional Greenspace Initiative, Regional Greenspace Master Plan
 - Smart Growth Coalition, Planning together, Expanding Choices: A Guide to Smart Growth in the Tristate
 - Smart Growth Coalition, Community Imaging Forums
 - Sustainable Cincinnati: A Regional Indicators Project
 - Tri-State Futures Group, Community Colloquium Electronic Town Meet-ing
 - Tri-State Futures Group, Regional Cooperation Summit
 - UC Planning Studio/Citizens for Civic Renewal, Region in Crisis: Smart Growth Alternatives for Cincinnati
 - United Way Vision Councils (Vibrant Neighborhoods, Thriving Children, Self Sufficient Families, Healthy People)
 - United Way, Strategic Direction
 - Hamilton County Environmental Priorities Project, Task Force Initiatives
 - The Hillside Trust, A Hillside Protection Strategy for Greater Cincinnati

Figure 13
EXAMPLES OF RECENT LOCAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL PLANNING INITIATIVES

FINDING 6

ADVISORY GOVERNMENT ALLIANCES ARE WORKING TO ENHANCE CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL DIALOGUE IN HAMILTON COUNTY.

In the Cincinnati metropolitan region, cross-jurisdictional dialogue among political leaders is facilitated by the Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI). The purpose of OKI is to develop “collaborative strategies, plans, and programs which will improve the quality of life and the economic development potential of the Tri-State.”²² OKI’s membership is composed of over 100 members from public and civic groups from 198 jurisdictions. Together, these jurisdictions “work to solve interstate dilemmas, create far-reaching development plans, break through political bureaucracy, and provide services to the public and advocate for federal funding.”²³

OKI is a key agency in the receipt and allocation of federal transportation funds. However, the agency is also involved with issues of natural resource preservation, air quality, and region-wide land use planning.

Of OKI’s 102-member Board of Trustees, 32 members represent Hamilton County constituents. Various governments and organizations servicing

Hamilton County and other counties regularly approach OKI for funds to implement initiatives such as making road improvements, improving stream quality, and enhancing public transit services.

Some decisions by OKI and the State Legislature inadvertently adversely affect Hamilton County. The construction of new highways and interchanges in suburban counties, for example, can impact Hamilton County if it pulls businesses away. Such developments do contribute - in the short run - to social and economic gains in the suburbs. In the long run, however, such suburban growth hinders regional prosperity if it only moves people and jobs from older communities to new communities within the same metropolitan area.

Within Hamilton County, groups such as the Municipal League (whose members represent Hamilton County’s cities and villages) and the Township Association (whose members represent unincorporated areas) often bring issues to the table that benefit their respective areas.

Though it was created rather recently, the Planning Partnership has already proven to be an important forum for cross-jurisdictional dialogue, undertaking such initiatives as the Community Revitalization Initiative, Stormwater Management Education Program, Certified Planning Commissioners’ Education Program, Hamilton County Caucus of OKI Representatives, as well as a collective countywide vision and comprehensive plan known as Community COMPASS, the Comprehensive Master Plan and Strategies for Hamilton County. The group comprises representatives from townships and municipalities, affiliate members from various civic organizations, as well as private citizens.

The Planning Partnership’s mission is “to bring

- First Suburbs Consortium
- Hamilton County Caucus of OKI Representatives
- Local Government Managers Association
- Municipal League
- OKI
- Planning Partnership
- Township Association

Figure 14
EXAMPLES OF LOCAL ADVISORY GOVERNMENT ALLIANCES

together public, private, and civic sector organizations engaged in community planning in Hamilton County so that mutual goals related to physical, economic, and social issues can be planned for comprehensively and achieved collaboratively.” It carries out its planning initiatives “through non-binding advisory recommendations to the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission.”²⁴

The Hamilton County Caucus of OKI Representatives is a Planning Partnership committee comprised of Hamilton County’s OKI representatives (OKI Board of Trustees and the Intermodal Coordinating Committee) and representatives of Hamilton County political jurisdictions. The purpose of this new forum is to improve understanding of issues under consideration at OKI and their impacts on Hamilton County and its local jurisdictions. As a result, OKI representatives in Hamilton County have a more unified voice and more effective representation on regional policy and funding decisions affecting the County’s communities.

The Southwest Ohio First Suburbs Consortium is an association of government elected and appointed officials representing mature built-out communities in the Cincinnati-Dayton

Metropolitan Area. The mission of this Consortium is to initiate and promote public policies that maintain the vitality of first suburb communities.

Why is This Important?

One major problem with governing regional issues is that it often produces yet another governing structure. However, regional governance that tackles regional issues on an as-needed basis has been successful in the past, and has not necessarily had an over-arching government steering the process. This model of regional governance (with functional specialization through Special Purpose Districts) has evolved in Hamilton County and has proven to be successful in our home rule environment.

A need for sustained cross-jurisdictional collaboration above and beyond the role of special districts exists to ensure that local government decision-making is informed by a countywide, comprehensive plan, and that the County’s governments can be properly represented at the regional, state, and federal levels.

Acting individually, local governments have little influence at OKI or the statehouse; and often compete with neighboring jurisdictions who have

common interests. Together Hamilton County local governments have much bargaining power at the regional and state levels. To successfully influence decision-making at higher levels of government, agreement on and articulation of a countywide vision is imperative. With Community COMPASS, Hamilton County communities have articulated such a vision, and through the Planning Partnership this vision and future initiatives can be refined so that regional issues are addressed more efficiently and effectively.

Key Indicators:

- *Percent and number of jurisdictional and organization voting members that attend OKI Board of Trustees and Planning Partnership meetings*
- *Percent of Hamilton County residents represented by voting members of the Planning Partnership (80% in 2004)*

Appendix A

Endnotes

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 - Special Purpose District Autonomy Index — providing an index score based on how governing board is selected and how many government levels funding must go through to reach the district or agency.
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8. Luce, Thomas and Orfield, Myron. *Ohio Metropatterns: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability*. Ameregis Metropolitan Area Research Corporation. December 2002. p. 1.
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17. See Community COMPASS State of the County Report on Land Use and Development Framework
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23. Ibid.
24. Planning Partnership. 2004. Retrieved March 25, 2003. www.planningpartnership.org.

Appendix B

Community COMPASS Publications

The following Community COMPASS reports are components of Hamilton County's Comprehensive Master Plan and Strategies. The reports are available at the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission and can be downloaded at www.communitycompass.org.

1. Project Design -- Scope and Process (Oct. 2001)
2. The Community Values Survey (Jan. 2001)
3. Special Research Reports
 - 3-1. Inventory of Research (2002)
 - 3-2. Conflicting Views on Suburbanization (Sept. 1999)
 - 3-3. Spreading Out: The March to the Suburbs (Oct. 1999; revised 2003)
 - 3-4. Summary Report -- Spreading Out: The March to the Suburbs (Oct. 1999; revised 2003)
 - 3-5. The Use of Public Deliberation Techniques for Building Consensus on Community Plans: Hamilton County Perspectives on Governance (A Guide for Public Deliberation) (Dec. 2002)
 - 3-6. Hamilton County's Comparative and Competitive Advantages: Business and Industry Clusters (Oct. 2003)
 - 3-7. Census 2000 Community Profiles: Political Jurisdictions of Hamilton County
 - 3-8. Community Revitalization Initiative Strategic Plan (Aug. 2003)
4. The Report of the Community Forums -- Ideas, Treasures, and Challenges (Nov. 2001)
5. The Report of the Goal Writing Workshop (2001)
6. The Countywide Town Meeting Participant Guide (Jan. 2002)
7. Hamilton County Data Book (Feb. 2002)
8. A Vision for Hamilton County's Future -- The Report of the Countywide Town Meeting (Jan. 2002)
9. The CAT's Tale: The Report of the Community COMPASS Action Teams (June 2002)
10. Steering Team Recommendations on The Vision for Hamilton County's Future (Jan. 2002)
11. Planning Partnership Recommendations on The Vision for Hamilton County's Future (Jan. 2003)
12. The Vision for Hamilton County's Future (Brochure) (Feb. 2003)
13. Initiatives and Strategies
 - 13-1. Steering Team Recommendations on Community COMPASS Initiatives and Strategies (2002)
 - 13-2. Steering Team Prioritization of Initiatives -- Methodology and Recommendations (Aug. 2002)
 - 13-3. Planning Partnership Recommendations on Community COMPASS Initiatives and Strategies (revisions, findings and reservations) (Dec. 2002)
 - 13-4. Community COMPASS Initiatives and Strategies -- Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission Recommendations (Jul. 2003)
14. External Influences: The Impact of National Trends on Hamilton County's Future (Mar. 2003)
15. Population
 - 15-1 Summary Report (Nov. 2004)
 - 15-2 Atlas / comprehensive report (2005)
16. State of the County Reports (Key Findings, Issues, and Community Indicators) (Nov. 2004)
 - 16-1 Civic Engagement and Social Capital
 - 16-2 Community Services
 - 16-3 Culture and Recreation
 - 16-4 Economy and Labor Market
 - 16-5 Education
 - 16-6 Environment
 - 16-7 Environmental and Social Justice
 - 16-8 Governance
 - 16-9 Health and Human Services
 - 16-10 Housing
 - 16-11 Land Use and Development Framework
 - 16-12 Mobility
 - 16-13 Executive Summary
17. 2030 Plan and Implementation Framework (Nov. 2004)

**Hamilton County Regional
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www.communitycompass.org

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