



Agenda 360

A Regional Action Plan

Building Talent, Jobs and Economic Opportunity for All





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ON THE COVER: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE CAPTURE CINCINNATI ONLINE PHOTO CONTEST AND ENQUIRER MEDIA'S ARCHIVES. PHOTOGRAPHERS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: **MELISSA STULZ, KATHRYN COSSE, GARY LANDERS, MARK BYRON, JEFF SWINGER, KURT BACKSCHEIDER, JOSEPH FUQUA II AND CARA OWSLEY.**



DR. MYRTIS POWELL, KEVIN GHASSOMIAN AND ELLEN VAN DER HORST.

From the co-chairs

The community has spoken.

Over the last two years, a team of nearly 1,000 volunteers has worked to understand the strengths and challenges of Southwest Ohio.

The research has been exhaustive, the voices wide-ranging and resonant, the desire for change contagious.

And that work is just the beginning.

From it developed six priorities for action: creating a quality place to live; growing businesses; developing a qualified workforce; expanding our transportation options; being inclusive and welcoming; and encouraging our local governments to work together.

Now we must act. We must not let inertia keep us from competing with other metro areas for talented people, jobs and economic opportunity for all who call this region home.

We love this home. We have fierce civic pride, and we can, in detail and with vigor, describe why.

We aspire to be all that our proud history shows we can be.

But we also know we must not rest on that foundation of strength. We must continue to build on it, by acknowledging our challenges honestly and directly and finding solutions to our struggles. We must be focused on our future.

There is no better time for our community to be planning for its future. The dramatic turn in the nation's economy has created urgent calls for solutions. Metropolitan areas that have their priorities in line will be the ones to get state and federal money. They can then move forward with concrete plans that become models for other cities to emulate.

Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky can be a region that models success. And now we have a defined path for transforming it into a place that provides economic opportunity for all who call the region home. It's called Agenda 360.

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OVER-THE-RHINE LOOKING TOWARD MOUNT ADAMS. PHOTO BY MARK BYRON

What is Agenda 360?

You know this is a great place to live. That's why you're here.

Great neighborhoods, strong business community, stunning natural beauty, affordable housing and great quality of life.

You also know this place has its challenges. Slow job growth, weak public transportation, rising numbers of poor and uninsured, too many children who enter school unprepared to learn.

What can be done to create economic opportunity for everyone here? To build a talented workforce so that business owners can find the workers they need to grow; to educate workers so they can land the jobs of the future; to help us compete with other major metro areas in the country and around the globe; to improve our quality of life?

In the fall of 2006, about 50 local civic leaders made a trip to Boston to look at how they had improved on those issues in their region. What they found startling in Boston was that the people they talked to had the same basic list of priorities for the city. They were on the same page, so to speak.

That was not true in Southwest Ohio.

From the lessons of that trip was born the idea for the plan you hold in your hands, Agenda 360. It was launched in early 2007 with a group of leaders from more than 30 organizations—from labor unions to business groups, from social service agencies and their constituents, to lawyers, public officials and civic leaders.

What they began to create was a framework for tackling the tough issues facing the four counties of Southwest Ohio.

One great advantage for our region in building this framework was the existing United Way State of the Community Report. The report collects data on key

areas such as poverty levels, educational attainment and health status. It will help us track our successes.

Because of this important connection, Agenda 360 has been closely tied to the State of the Community Report from the beginning.

As the group started its work, it chose the name Agenda 360 very deliberately. The word "agenda" reflects the to-do list of important actions our region should take. The "360" describes the comprehensive nature of the plan. It addresses a wide range of social and economic issues. It also reflects the geographic coordination south into Northern Kentucky, west into Southeast Indiana and north to Dayton.

While the Agenda 360 plan was designed to look at the issues facing Southwest Ohio, it recognizes that the entire 15-county metropolitan area shares common traits and challenges. In fact, many of the projects described here reach into the broader area.

Agenda 360 has three overarching goals:

- To keep talented workers in the region and attract new ones.
- To grow new jobs and retain existing jobs.
- To provide economic opportunity—a chance for a good quality of life—for everyone who calls the region home.

HOW WE DID IT

The Agenda 360 organizers began with the framework of Northern Kentucky's Vision 2015 growth plan as a way to closely align the two plans once Agenda 360 was complete. From there, organizers reached out to engage a diverse range of people in Southwest Ohio.

Today, more than 7,000 people have contributed their voices to the planning process.



What is “our region?”

The U.S. Census Bureau defines the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky/Middletown metropolitan statistical area as a three-state, 15-county region. The Agenda 360 work focuses on the four counties of Southwest Ohio: Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren. But since its inception, Agenda 360 has been designed to unite with Vision 2015, the long-term plan of the three Northern Kentucky counties.

PAINTED LADIES OF COLUMBIA TUSCULUM NEIGHBORHOOD, PHOTO BY ROBIN ADAMS

What we found is that there is broad community support for the idea of transforming the region into a leading metropolitan area for talent, jobs and economic opportunity. In fact, 93 percent of respondents to the Agenda 360 Community Survey respondents strongly endorsed this “rallying cry.”

This endorsement was consistent across the region among all groups ... by age, race, ethnicity, gender, income and educational levels; among small, medium and large businesses; and in the nonprofit and government sectors.

The survey also showed that our values for how to make decisions are shared across the region. The single most important concern to our community—affirmed by 95 percent of those residents—is that we track progress and be accountable for the results.

In addition, 88 percent of respondents said they wanted us to choose a few key areas we agree will truly transform the region. Another 88 percent also said it was critical that we welcome participation by all, making sure those with different views and backgrounds are heard.

WHAT WE DID

What has resulted from this process is far from your typical regional vision plan. It's not encased in a plastic binder ready to sit on a shelf collecting dust. It contains no dense jargon aimed at outsmarting you.

Instead, there is plain language about you and the place you love, your home, and how it can be even better. It is designed to be do-able, definable and accountable.

The six imperatives identified for transforming our community are:

- **Quality Place:** We must create strong, attractive and functional places in which to live, work, journey and play.
- **Business Growth:** We must use our strengths as a region to retain, attract and create businesses and jobs.
- **Qualified Workforce:** We must provide our young people and our workers with the skills necessary to get good jobs now and in the future.
- **Transportation:** We must expand our options for moving people and freight across the region.
- **Inclusion:** We must work to create a welcoming community in which all people are embraced and their differences are the foundation for the community's successes.
- **Government collaboration:** We must help the region's many cities, counties and townships work together toward our common goals.

The Agenda 360 Rallying Cry

To transform the region, by the year 2020, into a leading metropolitan region for talent, jobs and economic opportunity for all who call our region home.

The following pages explain in greater detail what each imperative means, where we are now on the issue as a region, where we want to be by the year 2020, and what plans, programs and directions can be used to get us there.

Identifying those areas is a way for all of us to understand what our focus should be as we move forward.

We hope you will find the following information relevant and useful. But it's just a start. It gives us a direction, the “to-do” list. Now we need action. And we share responsibility for its success.

So stay informed. Stay connected through the Agenda 360 Web site (cincinnati360.com). Stay active by attending meetings to give your input on the plans and programs described here.

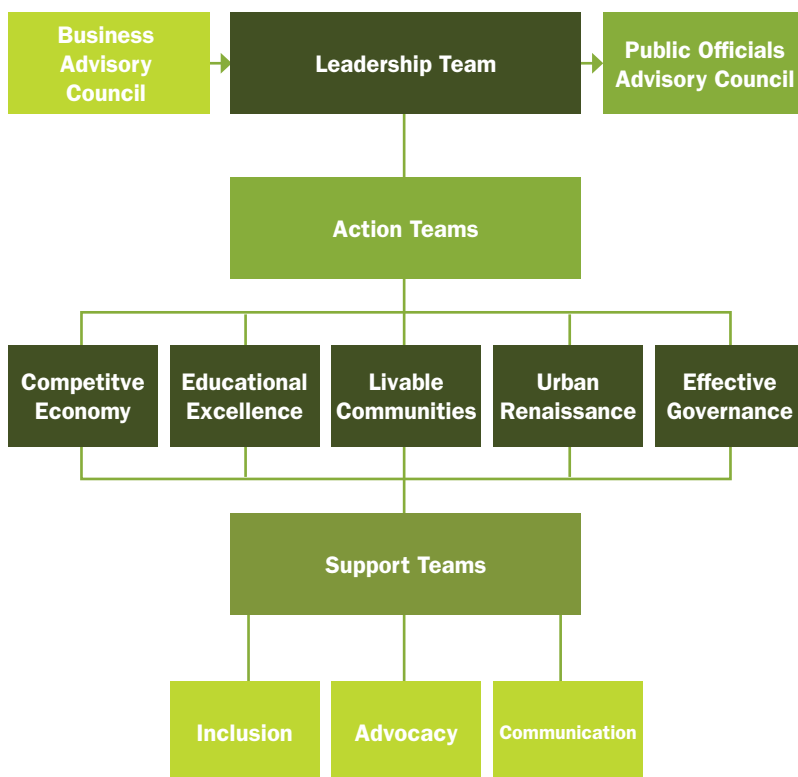
Most of all, stay engaged. Our region needs you.



A YOUNG PROFESSIONALS' AGENDA 360 MEETING.

The Agenda 360 Process

Agenda 360 Leadership Chart



Transforming the region is an ambitious goal that needs an ambitious effort behind it.

In order for all Southwest Ohio residents to feel a part of Agenda 360, the effort to create it needed to involve as many people as possible.

Organizers determined three ways to do this:

1. Volunteer leadership.

The process started with the University of Cincinnati examining past studies, plans and reports and extracting valuable recommendations and key themes. The idea was that we not reinvent the wheel but rather build on the strong foundations begun by others.

Then, five action teams and three support teams were created, each with 50 to 80 community volunteers. Their job was to dive deeply into five key issues: competitive economy, educational excellence, livable communities, urban renaissance and effective governance.

The teams worked to identify opportunities and unmet community needs in their focus areas as well as to understand the big picture.

2. Community dialogues.

In order to obtain a representative sample of the region's population, it was important to hold meetings across Southwest Ohio. Meetings were hosted in every corner of the four counties, from Oxford and Middletown to Lebanon and Eastgate, Norwood, Price Hill, Blue Ash and Forest Park, among many others.

The Agenda 360 team formed a partnership with Citizens for Civic Renewal, a local community action group started in 1996 to amplify the voice of the people on vital community issues.

With CCR's help, more than 1,500 people participated in the community dialogue meetings. At each of the 28 meetings, participants were given 10 "million-dollar" bills and asked to invest the money in the issues they thought were most important to the region's long-term economic health and quality of life. >>>

3. Community survey.

Finally, Agenda 360 organizers melded together the conclusions from the review of existing initiatives, the action teams and the community engagement groups.

The results were powerful. A clear group of common themes emerged across different groups of people in different parts of town with very different economic perspectives.

Organizers decided to test those themes with a community-wide survey that would help them verify the results.

Survey respondents were asked to rank the emerging ideas—from making all neighborhoods safe, proud and vibrant; to providing access to health care for all citizens; to growing high-impact industries and a strong economy with jobs and careers for all.

The themes were compiled into an online survey in which 4,500 people ultimately participated. Their rankings formed the basis for identifying the priorities and strategies explored in this report.

In the end, what resulted was a consensus for change, a road map for transforming the region. A unified, comprehensive agenda.

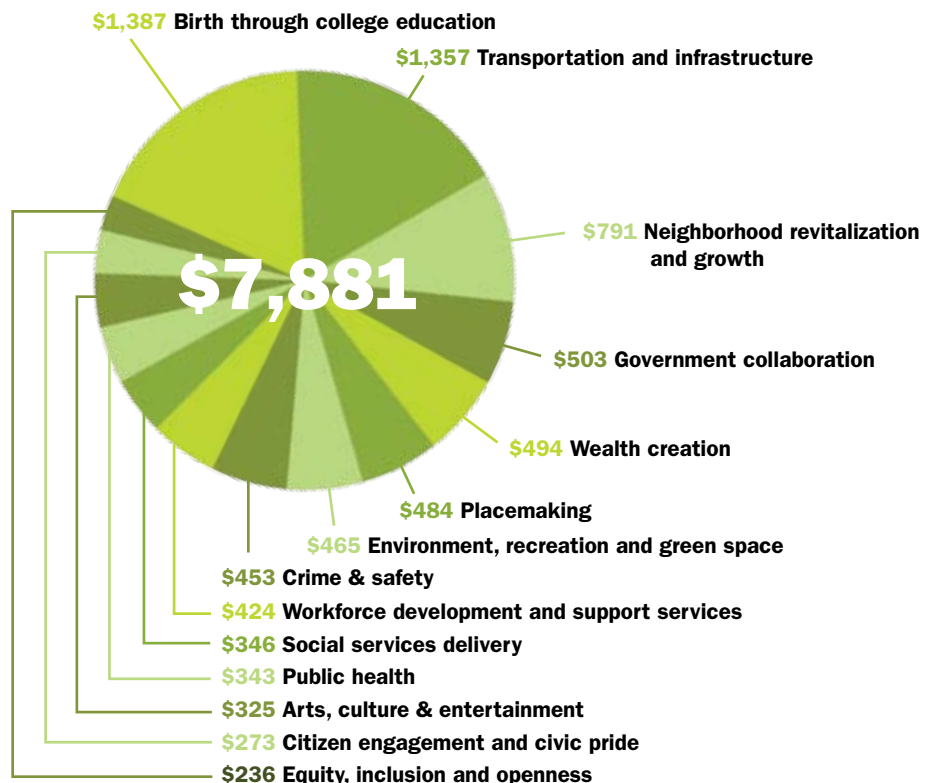


YOUNG PROFESSIONALS WITH THEIR COMMUNITY INVESTMENT MONEY.

Community priorities

In community engagement meetings throughout the four counties, participants got a chance to put their money where their mouths were by deciding how they would choose to invest \$10 million in the community. The chart demonstrates how participant spent on community needs (in millions):

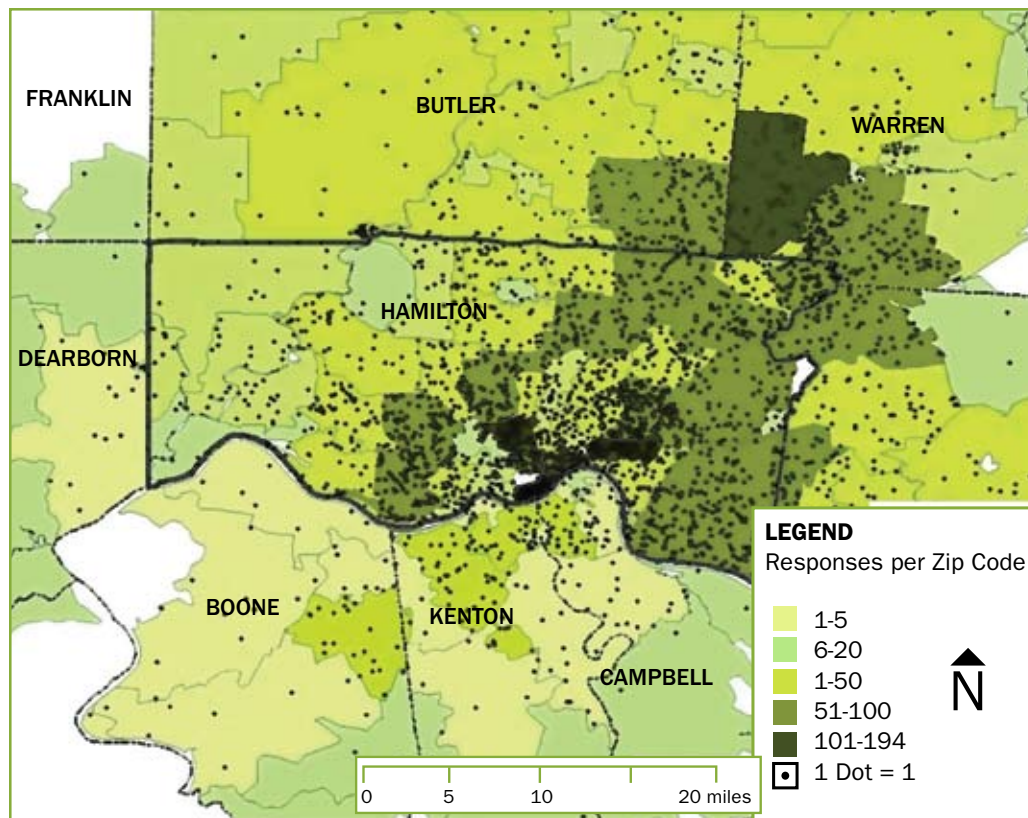
Achieving demographic representation was an important goal of the community engagement meetings, and the effort resulted in a tour of the region's rich diversity. Meetings were held with Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities, Hamilton County Health and Human Services executives, people of Appalachian origin, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce members, Jewish Federation board members, Service Workers International Union members and Urban League job training participants. More than 80 people who are homeless participated in a meeting at Christ Church Cathedral's 5000 club weekly dinner. Meetings were hosted with high school students, college students and young professionals.



Source: Citizens for Civic Renewal

Geographical participation

People from all over the region made their voices heard by completing the Agenda 360 Community Survey. This map shows what zip codes were represented by respondents.



Source: Jay Mittal, University of Cincinnati

The big lessons

The inclusive process of the Agenda 360 survey provided five insights that have guided the formation of the six priority areas.

- 1. People are ready for regional approaches that provide benefits to many, leveraging the efficiencies that can be gained through collective efforts. They expect our cities and governments to work together.**
- 2. We have come a long way with respect to diversity and inclusion. We see the power of having distinct voices at the table. Across groups, we seem to be more willing to stretch beyond natural boundaries and comfort zones to find solutions that have broad and measurable impact.**
- 3. Accountability is crucial. People are ready for change that is obvious, dramatic and sustainable. They will want to know that the connections drawn between the strategy and the rallying cry are real.**
- 4. The public sees the complexity of the 2020 vision and wants change that addresses multiple needs—economic development, regional transportation and training and education—that ultimately connect to job and career opportunities for all our residents, effective health care, and safe and thriving communities.**
- 5. There is broad consensus to embrace the rallying cry to transform our region. Our people want our region to be an economic hub for industry, jobs and economic opportunity.**

Source: Janet Metzelaar/Beyond Data

Cincinnati USA Transformation

Understanding the wheel

Agenda 360 has identified six areas essential for driving our success as a region over the next decade and beyond. Success is defined by how we make progress on the elements of our rallying cry: creating talent, jobs and economic opportunity for all who call this region home. Those elements, and the resulting civic pride they bring, are at the center of the Agenda 360 work.

In each of the priority areas, we have identified key strategies that help us move toward our goal. The diagram on the right depicts the priority areas as a wheel moving us forward. The strategies for each are listed within each spoke of the wheel. Within those strategies are initiatives—programs and projects that help us execute those strategies. They are listed within the sections of this book and on page 30. The initiatives were intended as a starting point.

The priorities and strategies serve another role as well: They are a framework with which to evaluate new programs and other future work. As circumstances change over the years, we can turn back to these priorities as a lens that helps us see the most important actions to take to accomplish our goals.

- **Expand shared service practices**
- **Increase regional leadership capacity**
- **Explore multi-jurisdictional revenue sharing**

For more information: www.cincinnati360.com





Quality Place

WHAT IT IS

The term “quality place” sounds rather academic, but it refers to the physical structures where we live, work, journey and play, and how they enhance our lives.

We know some places have more to offer than others. Why? They are attractive and convenient for buying goods and services, socializing and being entertained. They are safe and easy to get to. They offer a mixture of housing types as well as recreation, office, retail and service.

These things give them character, which makes being in and around them a unique experience.

WHY IT MATTERS

Quality places attract businesses and people. When our natural beauty, cultural institutions and our neighborhoods make us feel proud of where we live, we project a distinctive image of our region.

Quality places don't just happen. We create them.

That's why, while Cincinnati has so many attributes that give it a sense of quality place, we still need to be more intentional about how we build and preserve neighborhoods, public places, industrial areas and every corner of our physical environment.

WHERE WE ARE

The pillars of Roebling Bridge. The Art Deco architecture of Cincinnati Museum Center. Pyramid Hill Sculpture Park, Hueston Woods State Park, Little Miami River and its scenic bike trail, Loveland Castle, historic Lebanon, Kings Island.

Those are the kinds of special, familiar visual images that make Southwest Ohio feel like home, like it's a quality place.

Our vibrant, unique neighborhoods also are a tremendous benefit. Think how often people here list “strong neighborhoods” such as Northside and West Chester as something they love about their hometown.

We have a long and storied history of strong arts and cultural institutions. The Cincinnati Art Museum, the Cincinnati Zoo, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. We have some of the oldest organizations in the country, with some of the most generous patrons. We are one of the few cities in the U.S. that still boasts major arts groups ranging from visual arts to dance to music to theater.

Greening the region: Plant a tree

The Cincinnati Park Board's 2004-2024 Natural Resource Management Plan is an example of a plan that would help make Southwest Ohio a place where “greenspace and parklands touch the lives of all people.” Here are key goals of the plan:

- Plant 3,500 new street trees in 20 targeted neighborhoods.
- Replace within one year every tree that is removed.
- Plant 3,000 street trees in non-targeted neighborhoods.
- Raise at least \$25,000 a year through grants and fund-raising to implement planting.
- Plant 1,000 new park trees each year.

A MILFORD NEIGHBORHOOD.
PHOTO BY ERNEST COLEMAN



Finally, our environment is something to cherish and preserve.

Hills and rivers are among our greatest assets. Our natural beauty is among our greatest bragging rights.

WHERE WE'RE GOING

Here are four strategies defined by Agenda 360 for building on our existing quality place.

Expand place-based investment

If you've driven north on Interstate 75 past Middletown in the past year, you have seen a great example of what Agenda 360 identifies as expanding place-based investment.

Development along the interstate includes the sparkling new Atrium Medical Center. Right now it's the centerpiece of a plan the city of Middletown launched in 2005. The city wanted to make sure its East End was positioned to capture the growing demand for new commercial and office space as the population boomed in the corridor midway between Cincinnati and Dayton.

The city assembled a team to initiate development of the East End into a regional business and living center, providing an economically and environmentally sustainable balance of office, commercial, hospitality and residential development.

Middletown's plan is designed to make best use of the land by requiring high-quality, relatively high-density development. That approach will create and retain jobs and diversify the community's tax base as it develops over the next 25 years.

And that is what's meant by "place-based investment"—creating quality places of a certain size and scale in strategic locations.

The GO Cincinnati economic development strategy, for example, is looking to make best use of the great location and existing infrastructure in and around Queensgate, Bond Hill and Madisonville to create job centers and economic opportunity in those key sections of the city.

Also, in order to expand place-based investment, we need creative ways to finance projects so that developers don't have to bear the high costs of cleanup or redevelopment, which often keeps a project from being financially viable.

The Port of Greater Cincinnati Development Authority, which partners with communities and private developers to provide bond financing and brownfields redevelopment, is a good example of the

type of organization that helps reclaim land and put it to productive use.

Other great examples are the Cincinnati Center City Development Corp. and Uptown Consortium, public/private partnerships that use New Market Tax Credits and other incentives to spur development. Both organizations focus efforts on creating and revitalizing areas that, based on their locations, have great potential for large-scale development.

Empower neighborhood revitalization and growth

Nothing is more important than where we live—our neighborhoods.

If we can empower neighborhood revitalization and growth, we can create healthy communities out of neighborhoods that have experienced decades of disinvestment and decline.

Healthy neighborhoods are stable ones where clean and safe streets lead to the retention of businesses and families, and where home values remain strong.

The Agenda 360 Community Survey showed 94 percent of respondents ranked safe, proud and vibrant neighborhoods as a high-priority issue for our civic and political leaders to focus on.

Neighborhoods grow by attracting and retaining residents, promoting and growing commercial activity and fostering a sense of pride within the community.

Enhance and connect the region's arts and culture assets

The time is right to acknowledge our strong arts and cultural scene and use it as a selling point in attracting and retaining talented people to our region.

We know young professionals, for instance, value a rich arts and culture sector. And the Agenda 360 survey found that 71 percent of respondents believe it is crucial for us to create a network of arts and culture centers to inspire creativity.

To thrive as a region, we must preserve and strengthen the cultural institutions located in the heart of the region for the benefit of people who live there, for visitors who seek Southwest Ohio as an entertainment destination, and for businesses who seek cultural experiences as a coveted amenity to attract and retain employees. We must also build on our growing network of community-based arts centers and make it easy for people to access the arts. >>>

Smart Growth Principles

Based on the experience of communities around the nation that have used smart growth approaches to create and maintain great neighborhoods, the Smart Growth Network developed a set of ten basic principles:

- **Create Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices - Providing quality housing for people of all income levels is an integral component in any smart growth strategy.**
- **Create Walkable Neighborhoods - Walkable communities are desirable places to live, work, learn, worship and play, and therefore a key component of smart growth.**
- **Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration - Growth can create great places to live, work and play—if it responds to a community's own sense of how and where it wants to grow.**
- **Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place - Smart growth encourages communities to craft a vision and set standards for development and construction which respond to community values of architectural beauty and distinctiveness, as well as expanded choices in housing and transportation.**
- **Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective - For a community to be successful in implementing smart growth, it must be embraced by the private sector.**
- **Mix Land Uses - Smart growth supports the integration of mixed land uses into communities as a critical component of achieving better places to live.**
- **Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas - Open space preservation supports smart growth goals by bolstering local economies, preserving critical environmental areas, improving our communities quality of life, and guiding new growth into existing communities.**
- **Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices - Providing people with more choices in housing, shopping, communities, and transportation is a key aim of smart growth.**
- **Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities - Smart growth directs development towards existing communities already served by infrastructure, seeking to utilize the resources that existing neighborhoods offer, and conserve open space and irreplaceable natural resources on the urban fringe.**
- **Take Advantage of Compact Building Design - Smart growth provides a means for communities to incorporate more compact building design as an alternative to conventional, land consumptive development.**

Source: Smart Growth Online, a Service of the Smart Growth Network. Available at <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles/default.asp>



Price Hill Will

Kara Ray (left) started at Price Hill Will in September 2006 after a year in AmeriCorps. Her mission there: to help revitalize the neighborhood of Price Hill as a community organizer.

The group, which receives money from Place Matters, is a great example of empowering neighborhood revitalization and growth. It takes a comprehensive approach, not just by improving neighborhoods physically but by engaging their residents.

Ray helps find neighbors who want to get involved in making Price Hill a more livable community. She helps them break into action teams charged with things like safety and homeownership. And she supports them by writing grants to get money to pay for their ideas and by recruiting new volunteers.

PHOTO BY PHIL GROSHONG

Protect and improve the environment

Protecting and improving the environment encompasses everything from a straightforward effort to plant more trees to complex concepts such as guiding city planning and establishing zoning codes that support environmentally sound construction and operation of buildings.

While most communities are figuring out how they can be more “green,” our region has some compelling reasons to work to become a national leader in environmental sustainability. Basic needs such as air and water quality have a profound effect on public health, and the availability of green places for recreation are prime attractions to young people choosing a place to pursue their careers.

GETTING STARTED

Below are initiatives the Agenda 360 research has so far identified as good ways to make progress on the above strategies. They are just a start; new programs and initiatives will be found, created and evolve with the changing needs of our community.

Place Matters

Empowering neighborhood revitalization and growth starts with recognizing that the foundation of a neighborhood lies with its people. The Place Matters programs underway in Covington, Price Hill and Avondale mobilize community stakeholders to build capacity for reinvestment. The programs address social as well as financial needs by encouraging neighbors to get together to define challenges, leverage government and other development resources and achieve measurable outcomes.

This leads to the ability to attract investment dollars for physical improvements and eventually a more stable community that can offer jobs, higher home values and other improvements to families.

Smart Growth

Another way to improve place throughout our region is by using the ideas behind Smart Growth planning.

To understand Smart Growth, think of American neighborhoods pre-1950s—a mix of housing types and family incomes on the same block, sidewalks that took you to the town square, distinctive, attractive communities, different kinds of transportation options, and open spaces that took advantage of an area’s natural beauty.

Smart Growth suggests we borrow what worked in the past as we plan for the future. We should give strong consideration to mixed-use development, sidewalks, strategic green space and architectural beauty.

Arts & Culture Partnership

Created in 2008, the Arts & Culture Partnership’s mission is to preserve and strengthen the region’s cultural assets and to use the Fine Arts Fund and leading arts and cultural organizations to create a stronger, sustainable cultural life in Southwest Ohio. Specifically, the partnership is committed to:

- Growing the resources and influence of arts and culture
- Enhancing communications and collaboration within the arts and culture community and the community at large
- Promoting awareness and participation in arts and cultural groups among citizens and visitors
- Increasing the reach and impact of arts education.

Green initiatives

Agenda 360 proposes four ways to make our region among the greenest in the country, through green initiatives, green buildings, a green framework and green families.

First, we will develop an infrastructure and network to support green initiatives in the region. Second, through adoption of Smart Growth, LEED standards, and other means, we will reduce the negative impact of construction and operation of buildings. Third, we will increase the tree canopy across the region and connect it as an “emerald necklace” of recreational opportunity, and fourth, we will enlist local families to adopt green practices at home.

Business Growth

WHAT IT IS

We must use our strengths as a region to retain, attract and create businesses and jobs.

WHY IT MATTERS

A diverse, vibrant business community is the foundation for a healthy region. It creates jobs, which attract talented people, and brings economic opportunity to everyone who lives here.

Strong businesses also increase our tax base and contribute to our community through their products and services and their philanthropy, and in many other ways.

WHERE WE ARE

Southwest Ohio has a strong business community.

We reap the benefits of being a Top 10 market for Fortune 500 companies. Nine have established headquarters here. Those large companies nurture entrepreneurs, vendors and spin-off businesses.

The region is home to operations for more than 360 other Fortune 500 companies as well.

And it has an unusually high concentration of companies in key industries from aerospace to financial services and information technology.

The more than 300 colleges and universities located within 200 miles of Greater Cincinnati also contribute to the strong business community. Together they have nearly 1 million students and send more than 100,000 young professionals into the workforce each year.

However, one challenge is that despite the strong companies here, our job growth is not keeping pace with comparable cities, according to research from the Cincinnati USA Partnership Economic Advisory Committee. The Indianapolis region saw nearly 6 percent growth in employment from 2002-2006, for instance, and Columbus saw just over 5 percent growth, while the Cincinnati region barely passed 4 percent.

So we should not take for granted our strong business community. We cannot afford to be complacent in a global economy where metro areas are fighting to attract businesses.

WHERE WE'RE GOING

We must work harder to grow jobs. The best way to do that is to attract new headquarters and business operations, create new businesses and help existing businesses expand. And the best way to do that is to figure out what we're already doing well and to build on those successes.

Agenda 360 defined three strategies for creating a business-growth culture. >>>



PHOTO BY PHIL GROSHONG

Building a brand in consumer marketing

John Spencer, Kathy Selker and Rich Kiley were among hundreds of civic and business leaders who volunteered their time, expertise and contacts to think of new ways to best use our region's assets.

Spencer, Selker and Kiley, three leaders in the region's consumer marketing industry, looked at how to take advantage of being the headquarters of Procter & Gamble, Kroger and Macy's and the home of hundreds of creative services and consumer marketing companies that serve them.

Spencer is a co-founder of Planet Feedback, Selker is owner and president of Northlich advertising and PR agency, and Kiley is retired from P&G. As heavy-hitters in their industry, their engagement in Agenda 360 brought fresh ideas and depth of knowledge to the process of growing our national reputation in consumer marketing.



ThinkVine



Damon Ragusa (above) launched ThinkVine in 1999 as a marketing intelligence consulting firm.

But his dream was for it to evolve and grow into selling software products.

ThinkVine helps companies figure out how to best spend their advertising dollars online and offers products and services related to market research intelligence.

Ragusa, the CEO, says his goal is to grow revenue by up to \$10 million in the next few years, by shifting its emphasis from consulting to product development.

With a \$1 million venture capital investment last year primarily from local sources, Ragusa is now in a good position to do that.

ThinkVine received the money from CincyTech, a Southwest Ohio public-private group created to spur start-up business development in key cluster areas, as well as private venture capital firms Draper Triangle Ventures, Draper Portage and Fort Washington Investment Advisors.

As an information technology company, ThinkVine is a perfect example of an entrepreneurial venture being nurtured to become a larger business in an industry identified as a strength in our region.

Its story also is an example of how our region needs to nurture people with ideas and help them grow into businesses that not only provide a tax base, a source of jobs, and economic vitality, but also help people accomplish their dreams.

Leverage new and existing economic clusters

Economic clusters are areas of industry concentration or strength. All communities have such areas of strength. The very successful ones connect those strengths purposefully, so they can identify opportunities to grow, attract related businesses and develop new businesses.

Specifically, Agenda 360 proposes that we:

- **Connect related businesses with one another so they can look at ways to collaborate and grow their businesses.**
- **Engage the leaders in the cluster industries to help recruit companies to move here, whether they be competitors, vendors or suppliers.**
- **Look for opportunities to spin-off startup businesses from larger companies.**

Create a world-class health center

Every time you bring a health-care-related laboratory to a community, you bring 80 to 100 new jobs. And that's just a start. A strong health care system has a wide impact in almost every area of a community. It also builds a population of healthy, active citizens with a good quality of life.

The 31 hospitals and affiliated facilities in the Tristate contributed nearly \$14 billion to the region's economy in 2007. The numbers, calculated by the University of Cincinnati Economics Center for Education and Research, are an 85 percent increase over 2002 numbers.

These institutions employed 51,802 people as of June 2007 and, by driving employment in other industries, created a total job count of 127,229 here.

We want to make the health-care industry even more powerful by creating a nationally and globally recognized center for health care in our region. We can do this by building on the expertise at the University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in obesity and diabetes as well as the delivery of cancer prevention, research and treatment programs.

Protect air service

The Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG) has been a tremendous economic development engine for our region for more than two decades, with an annual economic impact estimated in 2005 at \$4.5 billion.

Companies such as Toyota North American Manufacturing, Fidelity, Ashland Inc. and more than 300 internationally based businesses attribute their locating here in part to the service provided through CVG. Those direct flights around the world are key for them in doing business.

As the airline industry has suffered in recent years—with the drop in air travel after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 as well as the unprecedented spike in fuel prices and overall industry consolidation—the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky airport has reduced service.

But CVG is still a world-class airport, with capacity to expand the number of airlines serving our region. Delta Air Lines, which runs one of its largest U.S. hubs out of Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky airport, provides 91 percent of the service at CVG.

We need to work diligently to preserve the existing direct domestic and international routes that are so important to businesses here—and to attracting new businesses in the future.

At the same time, airport leaders must work with business, civic and government leaders to pursue service from other airlines, which might be better able to meet the need for lower-fare business and leisure travel here.

GETTING STARTED

The following are initiatives Agenda 360 has identified as good ways to make progress on the above strategies for business growth. They are just a start; new programs and initiatives will be found, created and evolve with the changing needs of our community.

Consumer cluster

Our goal is to be recognized as one of the Top 5 consumer marketing regions in the world.

As the headquarters town of Procter & Gamble, Kroger, Macy's and a host of marketing, branding, design and advertising services companies, Cincinnati is already a consumer marketing hub.

The work of Agenda 360 suggests that we take our expertise and leverage it in a more cohesive way. This will help us continue to attract and create new businesses and talented workers in that area and build our international reputation as a leading region in consumer marketing.

Diabetes/obesity and cancer programs

The region can emerge as the national leader in the prevention and treatment of obesity and diabetes by leveraging regional scientific and clinical strengths to create a community-wide movement that makes its citizens healthier.

The University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center have a strong partnership already. They maintain approximately \$90 million in research funding in the areas of obesity and diabetes and offer extensive specialty clinical services in these areas, as well as patient education.

The region also can create a community-wide cancer initiative that positions it to obtain a National Cancer Institute Comprehensive Cancer Center designation, making us a destination for patients seeking state-of-the-art prevention, diagnosis and treatment programs.

The Cincinnati Cancer Consortium is emerging as the ideal entity to pursue NCI-designation and the related funding. This initiative draws additional federal dollars, grows clinical and research jobs in academia and industry, and increases relationships with key governmental agencies based here.



GE AVIATION'S ENGINE-TESTING FACILITY NEAR PEEBLES, OHIO.
PHOTO BY GARY LANDERS

Economic clusters

Eight cluster areas have been defined as strengths for our region.

ESTABLISHED INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

The existing strengths of Southwest Ohio have helped establish it as a good location for companies in these industries:

- **Aerospace:** The Cincinnati-Dayton corridor ranks in the top 15 areas nationally for the number of companies directly involved with aerospace products and parts manufacturing.
- **Automotive:** The Tri-State area accounts for more than 25 percent of the Tier 1 auto suppliers in the United States.
- **Chemistry & plastics:** The region is home to nearly 300 businesses involved in the manufacturing of basic and specialty chemicals, pharmaceuticals, soaps and cleaners, flavorings, printing inks, adhesives, paints and coatings and plastics and rubber products.
- **Financial services:** More than 5,300 businesses employing 62,000 area residents come from this important field.

EMERGING INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

The region also is poised to grow in these emerging industries:

- **Advanced energy:** The state of Ohio has made a strong commitment to the fast-growing alternative and renewable energy industry.
- **Consumer products & creative services:** Driving Southwest Ohio's strong consumer services industry and burgeoning creative services is a core of companies such as Procter & Gamble, Kroger and Macy's.
- **Information technology:** The region profits from a robust and diverse IT cluster that includes Fortune 1000 companies, a strong network of highly rated academic institutions, a number of global IT service providers, world-class infrastructure and passionate, engaged IT leadership.
- **Life sciences:** Southwest Ohio is home to a strong research university (UC), as well as more than 220 businesses involved in the research, testing and production of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and equipment as well as agricultural products.



Qualified Workforce

WHAT IT IS

Beginning in school, we must prepare our current and future workers with the skills necessary to find good jobs.

WHY IT MATTERS

Education is the key to providing economic opportunity for everyone who lives in our region. Far too many of our residents have insufficient skills and are unprepared to enter a career, advance and succeed in life.

We must prepare young people for the jobs of the future in Southwest Ohio as well as retrain workers in industries that are shrinking to take the jobs in industries that are growing.

Businesses move and grow where there are qualified, educated workers. We need to provide them with a strong workforce.

WHERE WE ARE

Our challenge begins at a child's birth and is most pressing in those early years.

In Cincinnati Public Schools, for example, 52 percent of children who enter kindergarten are already delayed developmentally. Research has shown that children who are behind when entering the K-12 system are less likely to succeed.

On the other end of the spectrum, many employers are unable to find the workers they need in order to take on new business and grow, even as unemployment in Southwest Ohio has been rising.

Total manufacturing jobs in Southwest Ohio are projected to decline by more than 5,600, to about 90,653, by 2014, according to the Ohio Skills Bank. Meanwhile, the Skills Bank projects nearly 40,000 new jobs will be created by that year in Southwest Ohio in a wide range of fields: health-care practitioners, food preparation, administrative support, sales, construction and mining, and computer/math-science work.

Compared to many regions, Southwest Ohio has a relatively well-educated population. The number of people in Southwest Ohio who have graduated from high school or college is about the same as that number nationally. About 29 percent of people over 25 have received a bachelor's degree nationally, equal to 29 percent in the Cincinnati metropolitan statistical area, according to the United Way State of the Community 2008 report.

Years of education is an important measure of a community's economic strength because it relates closely to income and job status and is a good measure of workforce quality.

But the State of the Community report also says there is a disparity here between the higher educational attainment in suburban communities and dropping levels in the urban core communities.

In the Agenda 360 survey, 84 percent of respondents said providing resources so our youth can attend college is a high priority for our region.



CINCINNATI CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL MEDICAL CENTER EMPLOYEES ATTEND AN INFORMATION SESSION ABOUT THE HEALTH CAREERS COLLABORATIVE, WHICH WOULD ALLOW THEM TO TRAIN FOR HIGHER-PAYING JOBS. PHOTO BY PHIL GROSHONG

WHERE WE'RE GOING

The work of Agenda 360 recognizes that we must bridge the gap between what our children are learning and what they need to succeed in the world. It is clear that success requires new levels of cooperation and collaboration between educators, parents and employers.

Here are three strategies defined by Agenda 360 for creating a qualified workforce.

Improve the system of urban education from birth to grade 16

The good news is that we have a head start on many metro areas. We already know we need a connected system of support that starts at birth and goes through a career. We know we need to create a system that teaches young people how to think critically.

We need to focus on certain priorities that will lead to better-prepared students and a more ready workforce. Those priorities include:

- Quality early-childhood education.
- Family engagement in learning.
- Teacher recruitment, development and retention.
- Career pathways and responsive post-secondary systems.

Increase college graduation

The United Way says putting higher education within reach of everyone in the region is critical to guaranteeing that we have a robust and competitive economy and can achieve the highest possible standard of living.

The people of Southwest Ohio seem well aware of this critical need. In the Agenda 360 survey, 89 percent of respondents said it was crucial that we support young people from pre-school through high school to prepare them for college and careers.

Align and expand workforce training and job placement efforts

Many groups in Southwest Ohio are conducting various types of job training and retraining. One of the needs identified by Agenda 360 is to bring together the many key stakeholders in workforce training to coordinate efforts.

We also must close the gap between the skills of workers in shrinking industries and the skills needed for thriving industries, help workers prepare for new career paths, and support legislative and policy initiatives that reduce barriers to employment and advancement of a career.

GETTING STARTED

Below are initiatives the Agenda 360 research has so far identified as good ways to make progress on the above strategies for preparing a strong workforce. They are just a start; new programs and initiatives will be found, created and evolve with the changing needs of our community.

Strive

The Strive education initiative is a unique partnership whose goal is to help each child in the urban core succeed from birth through higher education and move into a meaningful career.

The partnership includes educators, nonprofit and philanthropic groups, elected officials and local companies. Their underlying belief is that education must involve a child's whole life, that educators must be accountable and make decisions based on data, that education is a cradle-to-career effort, and that education should allow all children, regardless of circumstance, to find the support they need to achieve their dreams.

Success By 6®

The Success By 6 program began in Minneapolis in 1988 and has moved to 360 communities around the country as they began to see the importance of >>>



MARY WHITE
IS A PATIENT
ASSISTANT AT
CINCINNATI
CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL
MEDICAL
CENTER AND IS
PARTICIPATING
IN ITS JOB
RETRAINING
PROGRAM.
PHOTO BY AMIE
DWORECKI

Job Growth

THE TOP 10 FASTEST-GROWING JOBS IN SOUTHWEST OHIO

JOB INCREASE BY 2014	OCCUPATION
7,500	Health care practitioners, technical
7,048	Food preparation, serving
4,535	Office, administrative support
4,175	Health care support
2,977	Sales
2,889	Construction, mining
2,800	Business, financial operations
2,696	Education, training
2,606	Computer, math-science
2,394	Personal care, service

Source: Ohio Skills Bank/Economic Modeling Specialists Inc.

preparing children for kindergarten.

Success By 6 works for change across the educational system, including bringing together the community on the benefits of investing in early-learning experiences, increasing parenting skills and improving the home environment through home visits, increasing access to strong early childhood education and ensuring that all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

Success By 6 already is partnering in this region with the Strive education initiative, the Cincinnati, Covington and Newport public school districts, Vision 2015 in Northern Kentucky and the Middletown Area Success By 6.

Strive Promise/ Middletown Promise

In 2005, Kalamazoo Public Schools unveiled the Kalamazoo Promise, a scholarship for higher education offered to every Kalamazoo Public Schools graduate. Since then, the multimillion-dollar program has rallied the entire Kalamazoo community around the need for a better educational system, increased public school enrollment, and raised property values. Now it is being replicated in Southwest Ohio and elsewhere as a way to create a better-trained workforce.

In Greater Cincinnati, the scholarship program is being organized by the Strive education initiative. The goal of the scholarship program is to increase the number of students in the region graduating from college by reducing the cost. The Middletown Promise is created after the same model and hopes to improve the economic future of Middletown by creating more educated workers.

Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network

This new regional workforce development group aims to help employers meet their need for a skilled workforce while expanding job opportunities for low-skilled individuals.

The Workforce Network is a partnership between philanthropic organizations, local and state government agencies, employers, chambers of commerce, educational institutions, service providers and workforce investment boards in the region.

The goal by 2011 is to prepare at least 1,500 low-skilled adults for better jobs and long-term careers in priority industries and create a way to continue to improve and align the policies, strategies and resources of the Tristate region's workforce development system.



Regional rail transit: The Oasis line

The Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority and the OKI Regional Council of Governments support creation of rail passenger service between downtown Cincinnati and eastern Hamilton and western Clermont counties as a way to get people back and forth between those two areas.

The Eastern Corridor Oasis Rail Alignment would run along an existing SORTA right of way. An early estimate of the cost is \$410 million.

Clermont County leaders enthusiastically support the idea because it would spur growth in the western part of their county and connect their residents more easily with jobs in Hamilton County.

TRAFFIC HEADING NORTH ON INTERSTATE 71/75 IN NORTHERN KENTUCKY. PHOTO BY LEIGH TAYLOR

Transportation

WHAT IT IS

Transportation is the system that moves people and products around and through our region.

WHY IT MATTERS

Maintaining and expanding roads, supporting public transportation and moving freight efficiently are important for attracting and retaining businesses and for overall economic development as well as good quality of life.

WHERE WE ARE

Commute times in Southwest Ohio are relatively low—the U.S. Census Bureau ranks the Cincinnati metro area No. 46 among the 68 largest metro areas with an average of 21 minutes per commute.

But roadway congestion and maintenance remain a concern. After all, the region's roads carry the vast majority of people where they need to go.

The Census Bureau projects that population and job growth outside of Hamilton County will continue. That will strain existing roads and bridges in surrounding counties. Meanwhile, Hamilton County is expected to remain the leader in population and employment into the year 2030, which will bring its own demands on existing infrastructure.

Regarding public transportation, the Agenda 360 survey shows broad support for more transportation options. Ninety percent of respondents ranked as a high priority that we “provide choices in transportation that make it easy, convenient and economical to get where residents want to go.”

A bus full of people replaces about 44 automobiles, with one person in them, on the road. Yet right now the seven major public transit systems in Southwest Ohio, Southeast Indiana and Northern Kentucky face significant challenges in their goal to provide safe and efficient service, according to the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI).

Finally, freight capacity is a crucial issue in growing our economy.

We are located within a day's drive of nearly 70 percent of North America's manufacturing capacity, OKI says. Businesses locate where they have the most efficient way to get goods to markets. An efficient transportation system lets our region take advantage of our competitive location.

OKI's 2030 Regional Transportation Plan, which was updated in

2008, says during the past 10 years, there has been a 44 percent increase in truck traffic on Interstate 75 in Southwest Ohio, and this growth is expected to continue.

WHERE WE'RE GOING

A look at successful cities shows there is not one answer to the challenges of transportation. Instead, we need a comprehensive plan with a variety of options. It's time to look again at existing plans and consider what's appropriate as we move forward.

Transportation projects take local, state and federal money, and the costs only increase as time passes. They also take time to develop, win government approval and build. So the sooner we get started, the less they will cost.

Agenda 360 identified three primary strategies for meeting the region's transportation needs and helping us compete with other metro areas. >>>



The Cincinnati Streetcar Plan

The City of Cincinnati has proposed a streetcar system that would connect several neighborhoods to the Central Business District.

The system would include electric-rail vehicles on fixed rails installed in city streets.

The proposed route includes two phases.

Phase 1: Downtown Cincinnati to Uptown through Over-the-Rhine

Phase 2: An Uptown Loop extension around the University of Cincinnati

The estimated cost is \$185 million, for which funding is still being sought.

Cincinnati forecasts between 3,700 and 5,600 daily passengers for the Phase 1 route. Although that number is lower than such a cost might justify solely for the sake of transporting people, there are other benefits that need to be considered in the evaluation.

Streetcars are not just “people movers.” They are economic development tools. In Cincinnati, the proposed streetcar route would connect our two largest job centers as well as revitalization efforts in Over-the-Rhine with neighborhood revitalization projects in Uptown, supporting both areas by bringing people into them more easily.

The streetcar also is projected to spur new development, as it has in other cities. Businesses spring up along streetcar lines. Developers buy and renovate property along street car lines. Denser development results, bringing new vitality to a central business district. Streetcar tracks are a permanent investment, so businesses and developers feel safe counting on them to deliver people to their doors.

Finally, streetcars in other cities have shown to bring new people to an area. Streetcars attract people who don’t ride buses. They are popular with young professionals, who tend to live in and near urban areas.

Complete planning and funding for major road projects

The backbone of the region’s transportation system is the roadway network. Even buses and streetcars, which move more people more efficiently than automobiles, rely on efficient roads to do their jobs. Investing in roadways is necessary for strong regional transportation.

More than 9,000 miles of roadway run through OKI’s eight-county area. And they all need regular maintenance. Its plan gives priority to funding that preserves the system: \$6.3 billion of the \$9.7 billion in recommended projects through the year 2030 are allocated to roadway work.

But we also need to build new and bigger roads as population and commerce grow.

Create a regional transit strategy

It is urgent that we find ways to expand public transportation.

Reducing the number of cars on the road will help our air quality, our fuel costs and our road rage, not to mention our whole quality of life.

Our transportation policies have been shaped around the automobile, and most of us have come to travel almost entirely by car. But savvy metro areas are realizing the benefits to all their residents, from those living below poverty to talented young professionals, of investing in mass transportation, allowing people to live, work and play without reliance on an auto.

Public transportation helps reduce congestion on city streets and highways, which reduces the need for expanding those roads. It’s also good for air quality. And if residents don’t have to have a car to live here, it makes the region more affordable.

The OKI plan calls for “recommended improvements for expanded bus passenger service, preservation of right of way for transit facilities and future passenger rail transit,” which are intended to provide viable alternatives to automobile travel.

Expand multi-modal freight capacity

The region needs to ensure we provide a variety of viable ways for industries to move their goods: air, road, river, and rail. Otherwise they may move elsewhere.

OKI is laying the groundwork for fully including freight in the transportation planning, programming and project development process.

One method OKI has developed is to identify certain transportation projects as crucial to freight movement. Creating a new category of its Transportation Improvement Program project prioritization process will allow freight projects to be more accurately evaluated for funding.

OKI also established a Regional Freight Working Group in 2007. The group is made up of industry representatives and is developing public-private partnerships to improve goods movement, to facilitate the flow of freight and stimulate economic development.

Their work could become a national model for metro areas in addressing obstacles constraining the movement of goods and people. Their work also has helped give Agenda 360 a clear direction in defining the commercial transportation needs of our region.

GETTING STARTED

Below are initiatives the Agenda 360 research has so far identified as good ways to make progress on the above strategies. They are just a start; new programs and initiatives will be found, created and evolve with the changing needs of our community.

The Brent Spence Bridge

The Brent Spence Bridge is arguably the most important transportation link in our region. It’s also arguably the neediest. The bridge has been found to be functionally obsolete and unsafe. And yet, in carrying Interstates 71/75 across the Ohio River, it handled 155,000 vehicles a day in 2007. That’s estimated to rise to 200,000 within five years. Yet the 45-year-old bridge was



designed for 85,000 vehicles a day.

The bridge's overcapacity translates to traffic bottlenecks for commuters and long-distance travelers who use it to get through the region. The American Highway Users Alliance ranks it one of the 24 worst highway bottlenecks in the country.

The bridge must be replaced.

Because this bridge is a vital part of the federal interstate system and because it connects a wide swath of the United States, local leaders are working with our Congressional delegation to gain support from the federal government to underwrite most of the bridge replacement project.

The group, called Bridge Builders, includes the cities of Cincinnati and Covington, Hamilton County, the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and Northern Kentucky municipalities.

Regional bus service

In the fall of 2008, a strong step was taken toward creating a more regional public transit system when the city of Cincinnati and Hamilton County reorganized the board of the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA).

The reorganization means that Cincinnati City Council now appoints seven members of the SORTA board and Hamilton County appoints six, including three representing the interests of Butler, Warren and Clermont counties.

This is important because it gives the board a regional perspective and can help the Metro bus system better meet the transportation needs of residents in Butler, Clermont and Warren counties.

The longer-term vision—and the need—for our region is that someday SORTA will be a part of a larger public transportation system, whether it be bus routes coordinating with an urban Cincinnati streetcar or integrating with light-rail service for commuters and regional travelers.

The Charlotte Transit Model

As Southwest Ohio civic and business leaders set out to create a vision of what public transportation here could become, they turned to the system in Charlotte, North Carolina, as a model.

The Charlotte Area Transit System includes bus, streetcar and light-rail services.

The first light-rail line in south Charlotte opened in November 2007, covering almost 10 miles. Two more light-rail lines are in the works, one scheduled to open in 2012 and another in 2015.

The 10-mile Charlotte Streetcar connects the Center City with nearby neighborhoods and institutions. Charlotte plans to expand its streetcar service with a Center City Streetcar Line and, by 2029, a West Streetcar Line.

Did You Know? A plan for bike trails

What's not to like about bike trails? They are environmentally friendly, they make us healthy, and compared to fixing the Brent Spence Bridge, they are cheap.

When designed right, they can be used for commuting or for recreation. They enhance our recreational options and become a selling point for young people living here.

We like bikes.

But we don't use them enough. U.S. Census data from 2000 shows that bicycling and walking accounted for only 2.5 percent of work trips in our region.

The only way to increase this number is to make bike trails a key part of our transportation planning.

Southwest Ohio has a pretty good plan in the works. Bike trail connections have been made from Lebanon to the Little Miami Scenic Trail, and Dayton's Great Miami River Trail has been extended through Franklin. Free-standing sections of Five Mile Trail have been built that will eventually connect to the Regional Trail System. The Ohio River Trail eventually will connect downtown Cincinnati to Salem Road near Coney Island.





SPECTATORS AT THE MACY'S MUSIC FESTIVAL AT PAUL BROWN STADIUM
IN JULY 2008. PHOTO BY JOSEPH FUQUA II.

Inclusion

WHAT IT IS

We must create a welcoming community in which all people are embraced, they have an equal opportunity for success, and their differences are the foundation for the community's successes.

WHY IT MATTERS

Regions cannot be successful in attracting talent or new jobs if there are great disparities in tolerance and economic condition. Right now, Southwest Ohio has too big a gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'.

WHERE WE ARE

Today we are battling both the perception nationally that we are not open for business to all and the reality locally that many people feel discrimination due to their race, ethnic origin, income level, sexual orientation or gender.

Hispanics, African Americans, and gays report they don't always feel welcome here. We still have a racial divide. And people of color, persons with disabilities, and others have fewer opportunities for achieving economic independence here than in other cities.

The citizens of Southwest Ohio recognize that everyone needs to be at the table, contributing to decisions about our community and making their voices heard. In our Agenda 360 Community Survey, 76 percent of respondents said that ensuring our diverse residents actively participate in shaping our region was a high priority for our community.

The Agenda 360 process itself was an unprecedented effort in inclusion. People from across the region, from a wide variety of racial and ethnic groups and income levels, participated. From start to finish, inclusion was a priority for Agenda 360.

Progress is being made toward a more inclusive region. A recent report from BRIDGES For A Just Community found only 5 percent of its survey respondents ranked race relations a major challenge for our community, compared with 22 percent in 2003.

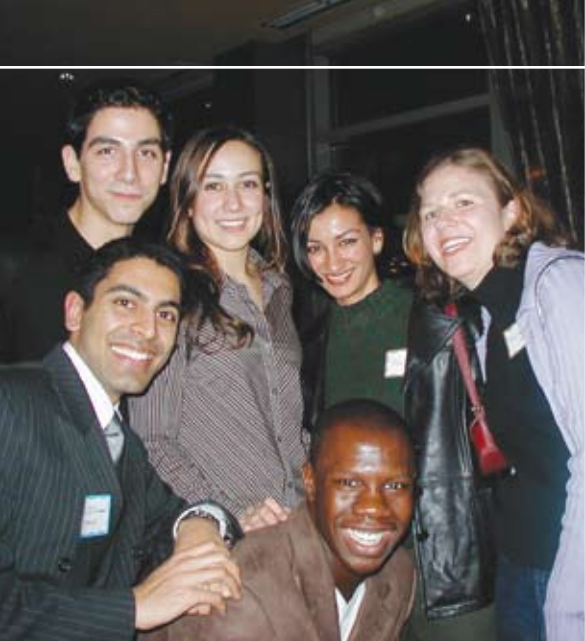
WHERE WE'RE GOING

Although we are making progress, much work remains to be done to create economic opportunity for everyone in Southwest Ohio.

Here are two strategies identified by Agenda 360 for building a more inclusive region.

Improving health care access and insurance coverage

You can't have a healthy region if you don't have healthy citizens. So we must provide the care that people need at a price they can afford.



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
(PARTICIPATING IN
HARNESSING YOUNG
PROFESSIONALS' ENERGY
OR HYPE) ARE ATTRACTED TO
REGIONS WHERE DIVERSITY
IS EMBRACED.

Access Health 100

Bill had a fever and was coughing so hard he could hardly speak when he showed up at the Emergency Department at Mercy Hospital Fairfield. He was diagnosed with pneumonia, for which he needed immediate medication and antibiotics.

Afterward, he met with a patient resource advocate in the ED, who was paid for with an Access Health 100 grant. He told her that although he was sick, if he didn't work, he didn't get paid. So he continued to work despite his respiratory distress. The Patient Resource Advocate set him up with an appointment at the Ernst J. Bever Community Health Center in Hamilton. Bill expressed concern about being able to pay for the office visit, and so the advocate set up an appointment two days later with the outreach nurse at Mercy Franciscan at St. Raphael, a social service agency on High Street.

Bill arrived at St. Raphael after his night shift. He was tired, still ill, and having an episode of uncontrollable coughing. The outreach nurse completed the process to qualify Bill for medical assistance through the Emergency Money



JUDITH WARREN, SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER FOR ACCESSHEALTH 100, HEALTH FOUNDATION OF GREATER CINCINNATI.

Fund. She also gave him a voucher to a nearby pharmacy, where he could pick up several expensive inhalers. In addition, the Fund covered the fee for his initial appointment in three days at the Health Center.

Bill called the outreach nurse the next day. He had taken a turn for the worse and thought he might have to return to the ED. The outreach nurse and patient resource advocate helped get him into the Health Center sooner, avoid an Emergency Department visit and receive additional treatment for his respiratory problems.

Affordability is crucial for us. The percentage of people without health insurance in the region increased notably between 2002 and 2005, according to the United Way State of the Community report released in December 2008.

Nearly 20 percent of the Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky metropolitan statistical area was uninsured in 2005, the latest data available, compared with 15.3 percent in 2002.

On a related note, United Way says the number of people who report that they do not have a regular health-care provider went from 13 percent in 2002 to 20 percent in 2005.

That means people are using hospital emergency rooms for their primary health care. This is expensive and does not help prevent health problems.

We must create programs that provide better health care coverage, and ways to pay for it, for those who need it most.

Advance a culture of inclusion

Inclusion is about race, gender, economic status and much more. It is difficult to engage those living below the poverty level on receiving job training and participating in community activities if they can't access avenues through which they can get support.

Inclusion also encompasses ethnicity. Our region has fewer ethnic groups represented than many strong metro areas. With an immigrant population that is nearly 10 percentage points lower than the national average (2.6 percent vs. 12 percent), it is difficult to achieve the kind of economic growth seen in metro areas with more >>>

Health: Percent Uninsured

	1999	2002	2005
United States		18.3	
Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN MSA	17.2	15.3	19.8

Source: United Way of Greater Cincinnati State of the Community 2008



MASON AND LIBERTY TOWNSHIP KIDS AT THE YOUNG CHEFS ACADEMY IN MASON. PHOTO BY MALINDA HARTONG



vibrant immigrant groups.

We must cultivate a culturally diverse population and a community that provides openness and economic opportunity for all so that we create a healthy, respectful community—a place we all want to live.

GETTING STARTED

The following are initiatives the Agenda 360 research has so far identified as good ways to make progress on the above strategies for being a more inclusive society. They are just a start; new programs and initiatives will be found, created and evolve with the changing needs of our community.

Access Health 100

Access Health 100 was developed by the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati in response to the need for more medical and dental providers who devote all or a sufficient portion of their resources to serving the uninsured.

The program's goal is 100 percent access to primary care for all.

To accomplish that ambitious goal, the Health Foundation has gathered a diverse group of stakeholders who will provide leadership in the development of an integrated delivery system

capable of closing the health care access and service gaps. This will also create stability for the safety-net providers.

CincyCare

CincyCare will provide primary care, prescription drug benefits and care coordination for 2,000 workers in Cincinnati who are not eligible for health care. The program will be free for participating employers and only cost a \$10 co-payment for doctor visits to those enrolled.

A two-year pilot program for CincyCare is scheduled to launch in early 2009 paid for with a Community Development Block Grant, which will cover defined medical benefits that focus on primary and preventive care. Additional funds are coming from the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati. The program is a creative approach to helping provide quality health care to those in need.

A Commitment to Inclusion

The Greater Cincinnati Commitment Alliance, a consortium of 20 organizations committed to the inclusion of persons of all human differences, is seeking citizen signatures for the "Greater Cincinnati Commitment."

Launched by Cincinnati and BRIDGES for a Just Community, the short-term goal is to obtain 25,000 signatures from people of all ages and walks of life who will pledge to work on behalf of an inclusive, equitable and just community for all who work, play and reside in our region.



Government Collaboration

WHAT IT IS

At the root of everything we do to move the region forward economically—grow businesses, create a quality place to live, prepare workers for the future, improve public transportation—is the need for the region’s many cities, counties and townships to work together.

WHY IT MATTERS

Getting beyond our basic understanding of the importance of collaboration, there are two key reasons why it is critical for our public officials to join forces:

- By speaking in a unified voice, we are more likely to be heard in Columbus, in Washington, D.C., and around the world. Also, as a region that can articulate its strengths, we can market our assets more effectively around the world.
- Government expenses are skyrocketing even as property tax and sales tax revenues decline. In order to continue to provide high-quality services to their citizens, local governments must find ways to save money by sharing resources and reducing costs.

WHERE WE ARE

Southwest Ohio has the distinction of being a patchwork of 130 political jurisdictions: four counties with 80 cities and villages and 50 townships, plus scores of school districts, fire districts and other public service providers. >>>



HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION PRESIDENT DAVID PEPPER, ROBERT JOHNSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE CENTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND CINCINNATI CITY COUNCIL MEMBER CHRIS BORTZ. PHOTO BY PHIL GROSHONG

These many entities make for unique communities with strong identities. But they can be a hurdle when it comes to working together.

They create overlapping services difficult communication and self-interested behavior.

If local governments aren't connected by a broader regional plan, we end up forfeiting the benefits of our collective strength.

The nonprofit public-policy group The Brookings Institution says in today's world, there is not one big economy at work but a network of local and metro economies that relate to each other, to the nation and to the world in new and sophisticated ways. Metro areas are the new economic engine of the U.S. This is especially true in Ohio, where 81 percent of the population lives in metropolitan areas.

The Brookings findings may sound academic, but in fact the concept is quite relevant to all of us. It drives how we make decisions as a community and how we make progress on best using our government groups to attract talent and create jobs and economic opportunity for all who call the region home.

WHERE WE'RE GOING

In order to overcome the artificial boundaries of many jurisdictions, we must realize that we are all tied to a core city that is the economic driver for our region. Even though we might live in Blue Ash or Middletown, we are linked not just by our infrastructure but by our interests.

We need to agree on the direction to go, the actions to take and the vision for the future of the region. Then we need to put aside parochial interests in order to get there.

What does "working together" mean? Here are three strategies identified by Agenda 360 for helping local jurisdictions to collaborate.

Expand shared services practices

We must find ways to expand on existing programs that allow governments to save money and create ways to be more efficient.

The state of Ohio is even providing incentives for communities that collaborate. The Ohio Economic Development Promise includes a new Local Government Services and Regional Collaboration Grant Program. In the first round in fall 2008, 15 communities received \$1 million.

The City of Cincinnati received \$63,350 to study ways to share operation and maintenance of heavy vehicle equipment among jurisdictions in Hamilton County. Hamilton County received \$59,725 to study creating uniform building, property maintenance, zoning and fire codes.

Increase regional leadership capacity

We have strong elected officials here who care greatly about their communities. They understand the challenges their communities are facing. Now we need to create in them a greater understanding of the region's challenges. We also need to build relationships so that when elected officials call on each other for help, they share a spirit of openness and teamwork.

Exploring multi-jurisdictional revenue sharing

Too often today one local jurisdiction convinces a company to move there from another local jurisdiction—a zero-sum game for the region.

If jurisdictions shared the tax revenue when they landed a new business, they would be more motivated to work together to recruit companies from *outside* the region.

This idea may be a long way off, but it would be a way to raise the economic level of the whole region.

GETTING STARTED

The following are initiatives the Agenda 360 research has so far identified as good ways to make progress on the above strategies for government collaboration. They are just a start; new programs and initiatives will be found, created and evolve with the changing needs of our community.

Government Cooperation and Efficiency Project

The Government Cooperation and Efficiency Project was launched in 2007 in Hamilton County to help local communities control their costs to taxpayers for things such as purchasing road salt, office supplies and fuel, maintaining fire hydrants and striping road pavement.

A total of 20 cities, villages and townships documented service-delivery savings of \$1.5 million in the first year.

Leadership 360

Agenda 360 is putting forward a plan for a program that would help increase local leadership's understanding of the critical issues facing our region. The program is called Leadership 360, and it would be run by the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber and the University of Cincinnati.

The program is envisioned as an annual leadership opportunity for elected and appointed officials in the Tri-State to develop and strengthen personal relationships while giving them in-depth exposure to our regional plan and priorities.

The program could actually turn the region's many jurisdictions into a strength by creating a national model for collaboration.

Business Outreach Protocol

The Business Outreach Protocol would call on leaders of local communities to create a sort of courtesy pact.

The approach, which is modeled after a Montgomery County, Ohio, program, would require local governments to agree not to poach each other's companies with aggressive recruiting and to give each other notice when they are in discussions with a business in one area about moving or expanding into their area.

So if, for instance, a company in Butler County needs to grow and is talking to a Hamilton County community about moving some of its workers there, the Hamilton County community will give a courtesy call about it to Butler County.

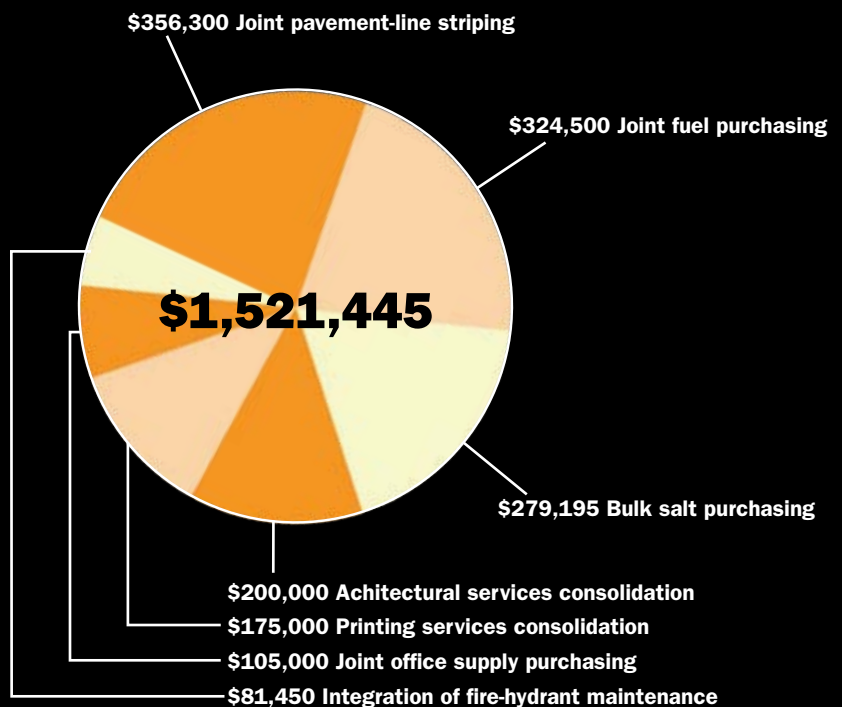
The Protocol would be a tool for the Cincinnati USA Partnership, which works to recruit and retain businesses across the 15-county region. The partnership is already a model for collaboration because nearly 200 companies and public economic development agencies invest to support its mission of promoting the region as a whole to businesses around the world.



CINCINNATI CITY HALL. PHOTO BY GARY LANDERS

How sharing means savings

The savings from the first year of the Government Cooperation and Efficiency Project (2007) were estimated at \$1.5 million. Twenty local jurisdictions shared costs and services in a range of technical areas.





Expanding the circle

THE EIFFEL TOWER
AT KINGS ISLAND
IN MASON. PHOTO
PROVIDED.

Although Agenda 360 was designed to focus on the four counties of Southwest Ohio, its scope is by nature much broader—reaching across the river into Kentucky and Indiana as well as north into Dayton.

As we move forward, it is crucial that Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky be aligned. Business, community and government leaders must work in one direction that recognizes their common ground and their common goals.

The complementary nature of Agenda 360 and Vision 2015 provides the framework for making this happen.

Our region has crucial ties to the north as well. Population has exploded along the Interstate 75 corridor in the last decade. From 2002-2007, Butler County saw a 28 percent increase in its population and Warren County saw 17 percent growth. And businesses are following the people. The U.S. Census Bureau projects the 15-county Cincinnati/Middletown/Northern Kentucky metropolitan statistical area will merge with the Dayton MSA by 2013.

From this growth comes opportunity. The Cincinnati-Dayton region has the potential to be a nationwide leader in commercializing technology, due in large part to the state of Ohio's Third Frontier Program.

The work of Agenda 360 suggests that Cincinnati and Dayton create an "innovation hub" centered in Warren and Butler counties. Such a hub would accelerate the collaboration between Cincinnati and Dayton and foster technology-led economic development by attracting and retaining investment, entrepreneurs and innovative companies. That's how you grow jobs.

Ultimately, these partnerships, whether between Northern Kentucky and Southwest Ohio or between Cincinnati and Dayton, are the underpinning of transforming the entire region. As the public-policy group Brookings Institution says, we are not one big economy at work but a network of local and metro economies. Therefore, working together is essential.

Working together is at the heart of Agenda 360's work.

What's next

To paraphrase Winston Churchill, this report is not the beginning of the end but the end of the beginning.

In other words, the real work is just beginning.

Agenda 360 is intended to be a living, breathing document, a plan that in essence is never complete. It will grow and change organically with the circumstances of our region. The goal is that it guide us past the next decade.

To that end, the effort needs a steward, a group responsible for shepherding its promise to transform our region. And so an Office of Agenda 360, supported by a diverse group of volunteer leaders, will live within the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber with the following commitment to the residents of Southwest Ohio.

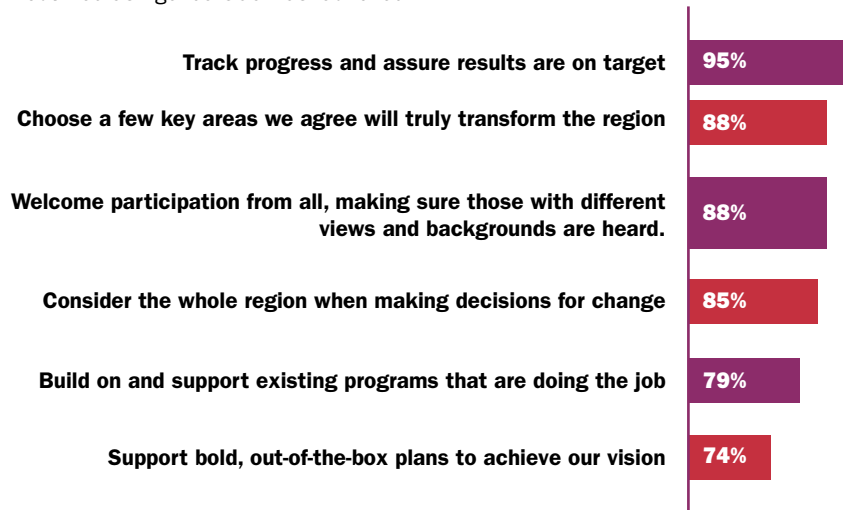
- **Tracking and reporting** progress on the Agenda 360 goals. This includes maintaining the cincinnati360.com Web site, producing an annual report and creating comparisons of our progress to benchmark cities.
- **Engaging and connecting** all the project partners who are listed on page 30 and working to achieve the project outcomes.
- **Engaging and informing** the community.
- **Developing** a "master narrative." We will work together to show our civic pride and collective will by weaving the unique threads of our many communities into a shared story of prosperity for the region.

The mission of Agenda 360 is to build talent, jobs and economic opportunity for all who call our region home. All of us share interest in and responsibility for its success.

Let's seize this moment and make it happen.

Here's what the community said

Survey respondents ranked the importance of the six guiding principles that were outlined as Agenda 360 was launched.



*Percentages represent the number of respondents who ranked an item "extremely important," seven and above on a 10-point scale.

Source: Janet Metzelaar/Beyond Data/Agenda 360 Survey

Measuring Success

At the heart of Agenda 360 is the rallying cry of increasing talent, jobs and economic opportunity for all who call the region home by 2020.

Here is how you can measure our success by that year:

Talent

Success is: 150,000 additional 20-34 year-olds in the region's workforce.

This would increase by 50 percent the number of workers in that age range in the region today.

Economists believe this group represents entrepreneurial aspirations, vigor and creativity, essential for growth.

Jobs

Success is: 200,000 net new jobs in the region.

This is an aggressive goal but essential for progress. It represents a more than 50 percent increase in the historical job growth rate in the region.

Economic opportunity

Success is: Economic self-sufficiency for all.

Agenda 360 will adopt the United Way goal of income at a minimum 250 percent above the federal poverty level for all households in our region.

My Cincinnati

We hope this report has inspired you to ask what you can do for your region. Here's one way: My Cincinnati.

My Cincinnati is a way for you to share your civic pride. It's a Web site that lets you share what you love about your hometown: your favorite neighborhood restaurant, the place your family spends a rainy Sunday afternoon, the quaint corner store, the best ride at Coney Island, the prettiest trail at Cincinnati Nature Center.

The idea is to engage Greater Cincinnati residents as ambassadors for our region and help us create and celebrate a new Cincinnati story.

Watch the Agenda 360 Web site, www.cincinnati360.com, for developments.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL E. KEATING



THE DANIEL LIBESKIND EXHIBIT AT THE
CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SCOTT BESELER**
PROVIDED BY **SOAPBOX MEDIA**

Agenda 360 Project Information

Agenda 360 is all about action. If you would like to get involved in the work, here is information on projects in the six priority areas.

Quality Place

PLACE MATTERS

Place Matters is a pilot underway in Price Hill, Avondale and Covington. The project involves residents, employers, service providers, investors, institutions and businesses working to achieve breakthrough change in declining urban neighborhoods.

United Way of Greater Cincinnati

www.xavier.edu/communitybuilding/placematters
513.745.3329

SMART GROWTH TOOLKIT

Agenda 360 recommends Smart Growth principles to guide land use decisions throughout the region. A Smart Growth toolkit is being developed that each city, village, township and county can endorse.

www.cincinnati360.com

ARTS & CULTURE PARTNERSHIP OF THE FINE ARTS FUND

Our region has a treasured heritage of arts and culture. The Arts & Culture Partnership will support and encourage arts and cultural experiences for the diverse residents and visitors of our region – building bridges, access and appreciation across the region.

Arts & Culture Partnership of the Fine Arts Fund
www.fineartsfund.org

GREEN INITIATIVES

Agenda 360 proposes strategies to make our region among the “greenest” in the country through a four-pronged approach to environmental challenges—Green Initiatives, Green Buildings, Green Framework, and Green Families. Goals range from the simple—plant more trees—to the complex—improve air quality.

University of Cincinnati
www.cincinnati360.com

Business Growth

CONSUMER CLUSTER

This initiative will ensure our region profits from robust marketing and research agencies; strong academic programs in communications and design; and the professional marketing organizations and leaders located here.

Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber
www.cincinnatiachamber.com

WORLD CLASS DIABETES AND OBESITY HEALTH CENTER

The goal of this project is to create the leading program for diabetes and obesity treatment and prevention in the nation.

University of Cincinnati
www.health.uc.edu

NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE DESIGNATION

This project’s goal is to achieve NCI designation as a comprehensive cancer center, which will increase funding for research and comprehensive care programs.

University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati Cancer Consortium

Qualified Workforce

STRIVE

Strive is a best-in-class model that aligns all the partners who play a role in ensuring that our region’s children are developmentally on target from cradle to career and to understand and fill the gaps in the development process.

Strive

www.strivetogether.org

SUCCESS BY 6®

Success By 6® engages local partners to ensure that our region’s children from birth to age five are successfully prepared for kindergarten.

United Way of Greater Cincinnati
www.sb6uwgc.org

STRIVE AND MIDDLETOWN PROMISE

This promise is a college scholarship program for every CPS or MPS graduate. The promise will motivate kids and parents to demand quality learning from themselves and their schools. It will also retain and attract families and businesses to the region.

Cincinnati: Strive

Middletown: Middletown Promise

Cincinnati: www.strivetogether.org
513- 929-1350

PARENTS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The PLI trains parents to develop and implement school projects that improve student reading and math skills. The institute also helps build relationships between parents and school personnel.

Parents for Public Schools of Greater Cincinnati (PPSGC)

www.ppsgc.org
513-751-5437

GREATER CINCINNATI WORKFORCE NETWORK

The network helps employers meet workforce needs while expanding job opportunities for low-skill individuals. This partnership of workforce development organizations will close skills gaps in three priority industries and advance services and policies that reduce barriers to employment and advancement for disadvantaged workers.

The Greater Cincinnati Foundation
www.cincinnatiworkforce.org
513.241-2880

Transportation

OKI REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments is made up of local governments, business organizations and community groups. Its 2030 Regional Transportation Plan was updated in 2008 and sets the region’s strategies, plans and programs to improve economic development potential for transportation.

OKI Regional Council of Governments
www.oki.org
513-621-6300

Inclusion

ACCESS HEALTH 100 AND CINCYCARE

Access Health 100 and CincyCare work to increase the number of children and adults who have a regular source of medical and dental care, reduce the number of uninsured and increase appropriate use of primary care resources.

The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati

www.healthfoundation.org

FOSTERING INCLUSION

The Greater Cincinnati Commitment is the first step in a multi-faceted approach to making our region more welcoming to a diverse population and more reflective of the changing demographics of our country. Led by Cincinnati and supported by BRIDGES for a Just Community, the commitment allows individuals and organizations to disavow prejudice and discrimination and speak out against discriminatory practices and behaviors in our community.

BRIDGES for a Just Community

www.cincinnatiassoc.org/pages/GCC.html

Government Collaboration

GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION AND EFFICIENCY PROJECT

GCEP improves service delivery and minimize costs through inter-jurisdictional cooperation in Hamilton County. This voluntary effort should be expanded geographically.

Center for Local Government
www.c4lg.org, **513-741-7999**

LEADERSHIP 360

Leadership 360 is modeled after the highly successful Leadership Cincinnati program. It will provide opportunities for officials to strengthen relationships and collaborate to solve regional problems.

Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber
www.cincinnatiachamber.com

BUSINESS OUTREACH PROTOCOL (BOP)

Southwest Ohio loses when jurisdictions compete with each other for businesses. The BOP sets guidelines for economic development departments to ensure that each jurisdiction has an opportunity to retain its businesses prior to an inter-regional move.

Cincinnati USA Regional Partnership
www.cincinnati360.com

Other

MY CINCINNATI

My Cincinnati is a Web-based program that encourages people to share their civic pride with user-generated content on the Web. Community arts centers throughout the region will be equipped to help residents generate videos and other media.

www.cincinnati360.com

TRANSFORMATIONAL DIALOGUES

Agenda 360 will continue to engage the region in an ongoing series of dialogues to move the agenda forward. Transformational dialogues will encourage new ideas and practices to make Cincinnati USA a national leader in education, government collaboration, inclusion and other areas.

www.cincinnati360.com



THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI POWER PLANT.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SCOTT BESELER**
PROVIDED BY **SOAPBOX MEDIA**

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PHOTO BY
MALINDA HARTONG



PHOTO BY
GARY LANDERS



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What you've told us in the Agenda 360 surveys:

"Cincinnati

is a city with a lot of untapped potential. It is full of beautiful spaces and creative and powerful minds, but there needs to be a place where this all meets up."

"Historically, Cincinnati has been slow to respond to a changing social and political environment. This kind of a visioning project is necessary to allow the region to properly prepare itself for the future."

"Cincinnati is obviously the hub, but it can't be the entire focus. We need to interconnect all the suburban areas around Cincinnati and downtown. The suburbs have to care about the city, but the city has to care about the suburbs. Government leaders need to set the example for cooperation."

"We need a public transportation system that links outlying areas, not just to and from downtown. Instead of adding car lanes to highways, add rail lanes. But don't lump rail with Metro improvements, do it in steps."

"I live in Clermont County, and my hope is that Cincinnati becomes a leading cultural creative metro area with citizens who appreciate and support education, history, the arts, and their neighbors. The economic development can happen, but if it's not a great place to live, people will still go elsewhere."

"Please don't spend 20 years discussing how to do it! Let's get started with baby steps as soon as possible and keep everyone involved in the bigger vision."

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Humana

