

HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO

# State of the County Report

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## *Executive Summary*

Community  
COMPASS



HAMILTON COUNTY  
Regional  
Planning  
Commission

November 2004



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

Visit [planningpartnership.org](http://planningpartnership.org) and [communitycompass.org](http://communitycompass.org) for more information.

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

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

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

## Abstract

### Title:

State of the County Report:  
Executive Summary  
Community COMPASS  
Report No. 16-13

### Subject:

Executive Summary for the 12  
State of the County Reports.

### Date:

November 2004

### Synopsis:

This report presents a summary of findings for each of the 12 State of the County Reports along with an overview of findings related to Hamilton County’s population.

### Source of Copies:

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## Context

### COMMUNITY COMPASS COMPONENTS

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

This Report

### STATE OF THE COUNTY REPORTS

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

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STATE OF THE COUNTY REPORT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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STATE OF THE COUNTY REPORT

# Executive Summary

## INTRODUCTION

Community COMPASS (Hamilton County’s Comprehensive Master Plan and Strategies) seeks to address goals related to physical, economic, and social issues among the 49 communities within Hamilton County. As a basis for understanding the multitude of issues and systems within the County, a series of 12 *State of the County Reports* have been prepared. These reports provide a sound basis for citizens, agencies, and a multitude of stakeholders to understand the complexities of each system and apply the findings to implementation plans for Community COMPASS.

- 16-1 Civic Engagement and Social Capital
- 16-2 Community Services
- 16-3 Culture and Recreation
- 16-4 Economy and Labor Market
- 16-5 Education
- 16-6 Environment
- 16-7 Environmental and Social Justice
- 16-8 Governance
- 16-9 Health and Human Services
- 16-10 Housing
- 16-11 Land Use and Development Framework
- 16-12 Mobility

This Executive Summary provides a synopsis of conditions, findings, opportunities, and key measures related to improving and sustaining quality of life as contained in the 12 *State of the County Reports*. The comprehensive research in each of 12 community systems has been guided by the 12 elements of “*The Vision for Hamilton County’s Future*” – identified by citizens in 2002 and approved by both the Regional Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners in 2003. The *State of the County Reports* form the baseline and foundation for development of measurable action plans to achieve Hamilton County’s vision. Key indicators given for each of the Report findings can be instrumental for determining the County’s quality of life and sustainability, as well as providing benchmarks for future performance evaluation.

To provide a context for studying and assessing Hamilton County’s conditions and trends, a summary of the Population Report provides an overview of changing demographics that impact each of the 12 systems. Future projections of growth through 2030 have been calculated to provide direction for planning for schools, housing, transportation, community services, and other countywide systems

The reports are available at [www.communitycompass.org](http://www.communitycompass.org) or directly from the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission.

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## HAMILTON COUNTY

# Population

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY COMPASS REPORT NO. 15-1

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This report presents existing conditions and trends related to Hamilton County's changing demographics including age-sex structure, race, ethnicity, migration, and other socio-economic characteristics. The report identifies six important findings as well as the importance of trends associated with each finding, and provides key indicators or measures that help us understand the constantly changing characteristics of our population.

The demographic structure of the population plays a crucial role in determining the future of cities, counties, regions, states, and nations. The number, age and gender of residents, along with their skills, abilities and culture are essential in determining the prosperity or decline of places. Over the last half century, a national trend has been central city (and more recently central county) residents and jobs moving outwards to the suburbs and exurbs in metropolitan regions. Cincinnati and Hamilton County have experienced this outward movement of population.

The City of Cincinnati steadily gained population through the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, reaching its height of 503,998 persons in the 1950 U.S. Census. The City then saw population loss of three-tenths of one percent in the 1960 U.S. Census, a prelude to suburbanization. Population loss has been significant since then with an average of nine percent per decade. In the 2000 U.S. Census, Cincinnati's population was 331,285.

Hamilton County's population growth since 1900, when the City of Cincinnati contained 80 percent of the County's

409,479 people, has been mainly outside of Cincinnati. The County's highest population was recorded in the 1970 U.S. Census with nearly one million residents. Since then, the County has lost population at an average rate of three percent per decade. In 2000, Hamilton County's population fell to 845,303. If the City of Cincinnati's population is removed from Hamilton County's numbers, the remainder of the County experienced a population growth of 2.5 percent (12,343 persons) between 1990 and 2000.

While the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County are experiencing a loss of population, the CMSA over the last three decades has seen a 19 percent increase in population. Much of the region's growth has been through movement of Cincinnati and Hamilton County residents into neighboring counties.

Although Hamilton County has been losing population since 1970, housing demand and jobs have been increasing. Following a national trend, more households are being formed due to declines in average household size and more single-person households. This leads to higher demand for housing units without necessarily an increase in population.

Hamilton County and particularly the City of Cincinnati are important employment centers as large numbers of people commute into them each day for jobs. The daytime populations for each are greater than the resident populations. Based on U.S. Census data, daytime population in Hamilton County is 1,054,765 and in Cincinnati is 420,467.

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**FINDING 1****Like many other metropolitan areas, the Cincinnati metropolitan region is experiencing population growth in the region as a whole, but losing population in the central county.**

- The Cincinnati metropolitan region is experiencing population growth in the region as a whole, but losing population in the central county (Hamilton County). Central counties of many metropolitan regions in the Midwest like St. Louis, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh have also observed population losses, while a few others such as Indianapolis, Columbus, and Louisville have gained population from 1990 to 2000.

**FINDING 2****Hamilton County's population losses are attributable to a decline in the total number of births and to high out-migration coupled with lower in-migration.**

- Although Hamilton County is experiencing a decline in birth rates and has higher death rates in older age groups (cohorts), out-migration of residents is the key factor in population loss. The major destination counties for people relocating in the region from Hamilton County are Butler, Clermont, and Warren Counties in Ohio. In 1970, Hamilton County had 56 percent of the total CMSA population, which decreased to 43 percent in 2000.

**FINDING 3****Hamilton County including the Cincinnati metropolitan region is not a population magnet.**

- The Cincinnati region does not attract a large number of persons from other states or countries like in Atlanta, Dallas, or Las Vegas, nor large numbers of inter-regional migrants as in Boston, Chicago, Columbus, New York, or Washington DC. Hamilton County's share of total in-migrants in the CMSA decreased from 29 percent in 1995 to 25 percent in 2002, while the share in suburban counties (Butler, Clermont, and Warren) has increased from 41 percent to 44 percent. Hamilton County remains the single largest destination for in-migrants into the region. However, its share is decreasing as more immigrants are opting for suburban counties.

**FINDING 4****Hamilton County's population is getting older.**

- Hamilton County's population is aging in place and getting older. Since 1980, the proportion of Hamilton County's population aged 60 years and over was around 17 percent. With the aging of the Baby Boom generation, the proportion of senior citizens will increase by more than 20 percent by 2020, requiring more social services and facilities for the elderly population.

**FINDING 5****Hamilton County's population is becoming more racially diverse.**

- As the proportion of Blacks, Latinos, and Asians has increased, White population has decreased. However, geographically Hamilton County remains a racially segregated county - communities where different races have equal presence are rare. A significant disparity in income and educational attainment exists between Black, White, and Hispanic. Median income in 2000 of Black households at \$25,074 per annum was about half of the median income of White households, and two-thirds of the median income of Hispanic households.

**FINDING 6****A reversal of Hamilton County's population decline is expected after 2014.**

- Population projections by the Ohio Department of Development and Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission have traditionally used the cohort component method, which shows a continuing loss in population up to 2030. Based on past trends of declining populations this method is not capable of forecasting any future population increase. However, a state of the art economic forecasting model known as Regional Economic Model Inc., or REMI, shows an increase in Hamilton County's population following 2014. According to REMI, the County's 2030 anticipated population of 862,531 will exceed the 2000 population by 17,288 persons. Strategic actions are still obviously needed to mitigate Hamilton County's continuing population loss over the next ten years. At the same time, however, we should also plan for growth in the second half of the next decade.

# Civic Engagement and Social Capital

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY COMPASS REPORT NO. 16-1

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This report describes the current state of civic engagement and social capital within Hamilton County as compared with general trends across the nation and explains some of the conditions necessary for growth in social capital.

Although the terms “civic engagement” and “social capital” are often used interchangeably, they maintain unique definitions. *Civic engagement* refers to a person’s involvement in his or her own community. It encompasses many different types of civic involvement, such as voting, community building, and volunteering.

*Social capital* is broadly defined as a network of social ties or associations an individual acquires, and the level of trustworthiness and reciprocity that exists across those connections. In this sense, civic engagement is just one type of activity that helps build social capital. For example, the act of voting reinforces the tie between the individual and the association of government.

Much progress has been accomplished, in examining the conditions necessary for social capital growth or decline. Social capital is built by “bonding” or “bridging.” Bonding describes the degree of interactions a member has with other members of his or her group. Bridging deals with a group’s interactions with other groups (or individual group members “building bridges” with members of other groups). The greater the degree of bonding within groups, the greater the sense of an individual’s and a group’s self-

worth and purpose. The greater the degree of bridging, the greater the ability of individuals and groups to diffuse and acquire new information. It follows that increasing either or both of these facets increases social capital in turn.

Civic engagement shares a positive relationship with social capital: an increase in one corresponds with an increase in the other. This is because civic engagement (in the form of voting, “get-out-the-vote” drives, public protest, and the like) helps foster human interaction, thereby building social capital. Alongside civic engagement, work in philanthropic, religious, public advocacy, and professional groups also provides people the opportunity to create social ties and enhance social networks that already exist.

So then, the multi-dimensional character of social capital allows persons or groups to increase it using a variety of avenues. Neighborhood groups, professional organizations, political parties, and even governments can (and often do) create an infrastructure to facilitate acts of bonding and bridging. For example, in formulating Community COMPASS, the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission solicited opinions from persons and groups from a variety of backgrounds. Through this process, participants pledged to work with each other to achieve goals articulated by the plan. Initiatives such as these allow a variety of stakeholders to play a role in fostering social capital growth by pursuing new and fruitful ventures with those with similar agendas or goals.

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FINDING 1

## Hamilton County's population largely mirrors national trends in civic engagement and social capital.

- Civic engagement (involvement in the community) and social capital (connections with people) are important components that facilitate bonding and a sense of belonging in a community.
- One of the most common ways for Americans to participate civically is through voting. Hamilton County residents have voted at a rate higher than the national average.
- The eight-county Cincinnati region ranked in about the middle of levels of civic engagement and social capital in a 2000 national survey study of 40 geographic areas in the U.S. When evaluated further from the perspectives of urban vs. rural, gender, race, age, education, and income, social capital varies quite distinctly.

FINDING 2

## National and local societal changes are negatively affecting levels of social capital and civic engagement.

- Many people of middle and high incomes have been leaving the central city for the suburbs in search of homeownership, better schools, bigger lawns, more space, etc. As families spend more of their leisure time on passive activities such as television, video games, and surfing the Internet, less time is available for neighborhood and community interaction.
- Social isolation impacts a community's mental and physical health, often resulting in depression and anxiety and even addiction and hypertension in extreme situations.
- Women have historically been civically engaged because of time spent in the home. Our 21<sup>st</sup> century economy has seen vast numbers of women in the workforce as new educational and professional opportunities have developed. The downside is decreased time for civic engagement.
- Crime is seen as a symptom of social and economic isolation. As social capital declines, there is often an increase in violent crime.

FINDING 3

## Local institutions are employing a host of methods to strengthen social capital.

- Local governments in Hamilton County are using a variety of outreach methods such as newsletters, televised meetings, etc. to inform residents about decision-making and events.
- Some private and public school districts now require community service work as a prerequisite for high school graduation.
- As more civic engagement activities occur – from voting to volunteering to running for office – they strengthen democracy by giving a sense of empowerment to citizens.

# Community Services

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY COMPASS REPORT NO. 16-2

This report presents existing conditions and trends in Hamilton County related to sanitary sewer and water service, storm water management, solid waste, recycling, public safety, homeland security, and communications. The report identifies seven important findings as well as the importance of trends associated with each finding, and provides key indicators for measuring progress toward the Vision for Hamilton County's Future.

As communities grow outwards, new residents require the extension of services for public health, safety, and welfare. Other than zoning and other land development regulations, the decisions a community makes on where to build public sewer and water lines has a significant impact on where new development will take place and how that community will grow. These decisions are far-reaching as other community services are affected by utility expansion. With outward growth, police and fire departments will experience a greater number of calls over a wider area for service and will adjust their operations accordingly. School districts must accommodate an increase in students. Hospitals and

health care providers will adjust to the needs of a changing population. Traffic generated from new development will impact the area's roads. All of these events to accommodate outward growth leave the older city and "first suburb" areas with fewer residents and less tax base to accommodate increasing cost of community services.

Ideally, community facilities planning would operate hand-in-hand with regional comprehensive land use planning. However, this kind of coordination has not been the tradition in Hamilton County, the OKI region, or the State of Ohio (which does not have legislation requiring comprehensive planning), nor indeed much of the nation throughout the last century of urban growth and expansion. With the completion of the new comprehensive plan - Community COMPASS - Hamilton County has identified initiatives to work towards closer coordination of comprehensive planning and infrastructure planning. Providing excellent community services will play an important role in retaining and attracting people and development in Hamilton County.

## FINDING 1

### **Demand driven utility expansion policies tend to override community goals.**

- Although total population is decreasing, and surrounding counties continue to become more fashionable places to live and work, development activity continues in Hamilton County.
- In an area that has not been developed, the location of a sewer trunk line is an excellent predictor of where the growth will occur.
- In low-density developments, sewer lines are not cost-effective. Likewise, if a new development is located in a remote part of the County or in an area with rugged terrain, providing public utilities may be unfeasible.
- On-site sewage disposal systems generally are not an ideal situation for new development, and can lead to public health and environmental problems.

- Sewer and water service extensions in Hamilton County appear to be primarily driven by demand for new development. Having a demand-driven utility expansion policy can lead to problems in prioritizing where funding and efforts for service expansion will do the most public good, and often prevents progress in achieving adopted community goals.

## FINDING 2

### **The number of failures of on-site sewage treatment systems is increasing for mechanical systems and decreasing for non-mechanical systems.**

- Approximately 19,000 housing units in Hamilton County have on-site private septic (non-mechanical) or aeration (mechanical) wastewater treatment systems.

- The Hamilton County Board of Health must approve all on-site wastewater treatment systems before they can operate. Beginning in 1996, the Board of Health began regular inspections of existing systems to ensure they are functioning properly.
- Approximately ten percent of the County's on-site wastewater treatment systems completely fail every year. Furthermore, the Hamilton County General Health District estimates that as many as 50 percent of septic and aeration systems are not functioning properly.
- Due to the number of on-site sewage systems that fail each year, there is a strong incentive to extend sewer lines throughout much of the County. MSD's *QUEST Plan* identifies opportunities along with limitations for sewer line extensions.

#### FINDING 3

### **Pollution from storm water runoff and sanitary sewer problems is being addressed through government mandates as well as legal settlements.**

- Storm water runoff and sewer overflows into rivers, streams, and buildings are longstanding problems in Hamilton County. Hundreds of overflows and discharges each year cause enormous damage to our environment and property, to say nothing of the public health hazards.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency created the NPDES Phase II Permit Program (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) requiring urban counties to adopt programs to improve storm water quality. Accordingly, the Hamilton County Storm Water District (HCSWD) was formed in 2003 with 45 of the County's 49 communities joining together to work on a watershed basis.
- HCSWD has a five year program for phasing in storm water measures. It is important to note that HCSWD will issue guidance ordinances and procedures manuals for member communities, but regulations for storm water will remain under local control.
- Storm water management in Hamilton County needs to advance from an engineering problem to a multi-jurisdiction planning initiative with long-range perspectives and solutions. The measures taken by HCSWD over the next years are a first step in working together to address watershed issues.
- The Hamilton County Planning Partnership has a role to play in storm water management as well. Independently

of the NPDES II program, the Partnership developed an educational storm water management workshop for planning commissions of member jurisdictions. Several communities have participated in the workshop and some have subsequently revised their storm drainage requirements.

#### FINDING 4

### **Hamilton County's solid waste recycling now exceeds the amount of waste deposited in the area's sanitary landfills.**

- Recycling is an increasingly important part of solid waste management in Hamilton County. As more materials are recycled, less solid waste is being sent to the Rumpke Sanitary Landfill.
- Hamilton County generates an average of 2.5 million tons of waste annually, 1.2 million of which is deposited in the Rumpke Landfill, and the remainder is recycled. Between 1992 and 2002, the total amount of material collected for recycling in Hamilton County increased over 500 percent, from about 227,000 tons in 1992 to approximately 1.4 million tons in 2002.
- According to the Solid Waste District, Rumpke Sanitary Landfill provides a low-cost solid waste disposal option not only to Hamilton County but the entire metropolitan region. How long this landfill remains in operation has implications for every household and business in Hamilton County. Recycling has a direct effect on the lifespan of the landfill. The more waste diverted from the landfill for recycling, the longer it can remain in operation.
- Beyond the benefits to the environment and landfill operations, recycling activity brings benefits to the State economy. The State of Ohio had approximately \$22.5 billion in sales of recycled materials in 2002.

#### FINDING 5

### **Once in decline, crime rates for the Cincinnati metropolitan region are increasing, although overall crime levels are lower than most other Midwestern metropolitan areas.**

- An important aspect of an area's quality of life is related to the safety of its citizens. Many factors impact the level of crime, some being employment rates, education levels, and stable family environments.
- Crime rates began dropping in the City of Cincinnati during the 1990s. However, those rates began rising with the 2000 recession.

- During the 1990s, overall crime rates declined in the Cincinnati metropolitan region and have stabilized over the past two years around 4,500 incidents per 100,000 residents. Reductions in both property crime rates and violent crime rates in the City of Cincinnati drove this trend.
- When compared with the Cleveland, Columbus, Indianapolis, Louisville, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis metropolitan regions, violent crime in the Cincinnati region is among the lowest.

#### FINDING 6

### Homeland security planning is an important new concern in Hamilton County.

- In order to create a plan for security preparedness, the Hamilton County Homeland Security Commission was formed in March 2003. Commission members come from the private and public sector and include elected officials, department heads, utility managers, public safety administrators, and business leaders.
- Top capital improvement projects are a regional emergency operations center and a consolidated facility for the Cincinnati Board of Health and the County General Health District to store materials and conduct operations. Equipment recommendations center around providing first response personnel with hazardous materials equipment.
- Recommendations for short-term projects include general improvement of first response operations, extra protective measures against possible threats to different facilities and locations in Hamilton County, and equipment purchases.
- In 2004, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security awarded Cincinnati and Hamilton County \$12.7 million in federal funds through the Urban Area Security Initiative grant program. Ohio received \$68.2 million from the Counterterrorism Grant program to distribute statewide. While these are generous allotments to our community, they fall short of the estimated \$135 million estimated funds needed to carry out all the recommendations in the *Hamilton County Homeland Security Commission Report*.

#### FINDING 7

### Technological advances in communications will bring economic, education, and social changes over the next years.

- With its Third Frontier Project, launched in 2002, the State of Ohio has made technology-based economic growth a top priority. This project matches \$1.6 billion in State investment with an additional \$4.5 billion in federal and private funding to create a \$6 billion ten-year initiative.
- Hamilton County seems to be doing quite well with high-tech jobs. That sector increased dramatically from 28,679 jobs in 1987 to 48,545 jobs in 2001.
- The Cincinnati region has benefited from \$27.4 million in awards from the Third Frontier in 2003. The largest one, \$25.2 million, was presented to a team led by Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center to establish the Center for Computational Medicine to benefit children with cancer and other diseases.
- Always at issue with internet connectivity are data transfer speed and the ability to communicate from any geographic location. Three emerging options are likely to address these communication obstacles in Hamilton County: wireless broadband networking, voice over internet protocol service, and broadband over power lines.

# Culture and Recreation

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY COMPASS REPORT NO. 16-3

Many cities across the country have looked to their arts and cultural community to play an important role in the revitalization and redevelopment of their central city areas. Some cities, such as Pittsburgh and Tucson, have successfully established specific arts/culture districts in their downtowns. With initial public investments, which then leverage private investments, these districts can reap increased audiences and venues for the arts, increased sales tax revenues, and renovations in existing businesses.

The Cincinnati metropolitan region has a wealth of more than 350 professional cultural organizations and art agencies. Many of these arts, culture, and entertainment venues are located in the City of Cincinnati – most in or in close proximity to downtown. In recent years a great deal of capital has been invested in new structures including two new stadiums, the Aronoff Center for the Arts, the Lois & Richard Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art (CAC), and now, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

This report reviews how elected officials, business leaders, and arts advocates have come to realize that these “home grown” arts venues create an impressive economic impact for the whole metropolitan region. The report also shows how recent major investments in the arts and entertainment are stimulating urban revitalization for downtown Cincinnati. It further describes the steps taken to build on this revitalization process with the development of *The Central City Plan* and the creation of the Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC) to implement this plan.

Finally, the report presents how recreational opportunities and facilities are increasing for all age groups throughout the County. These opportunities and facilities include new parks, new comprehensive fitness and health facilities, outdoor competitive fitness events, and new park infrastructure, such as skate parks. Long range planning is also in the works for developing bike/hike paths along riverways.

## FINDING 1

### Arts, culture, and entertainment are a prime economic generator for the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

- Regional cultural planning and economic analysis have led to greater understanding of arts, culture, and entertainment as prime economic generators.
- New life abounds for area museums with renovations, new buildings and taxpayer support. Annual festivals continue to flourish, creating significant economic impacts.
- Public art projects such as the Big Pig Gig, Flower Power, and Bats Incredible have generated economic benefits while providing an appreciation of the arts for all downtown residents and visitors.
- The Hamilton County Public Library celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2003 and is recognized as one of the best library systems nationally.

## FINDING 2

### Arts, culture, and entertainment are stimulating urban revitalization for the central city area of Cincinnati that benefits the whole region.

- It is anticipated that arts, culture, and entertainment, while focused in downtown Cincinnati, will benefit the region as the central core becomes a highly desirable destination and place to live.
- Since the mid 1990s, numerous capital investment projects for arts, culture, and entertainment venues have developed or are underway, (including the Reds and Bengals stadiums, the Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Arts, and the Convention Center expansion). This "Renaissance on the River" will include \$2.9 billion in investments and is projected to generate \$5.4 billion in overall economic impact along with 60,000 jobs over a ten year period.

- 
- The City of Cincinnati has implemented needed changes to leverage these major investments with the following:
    - Creation of a One-Stop Development Center to expedite the development process.
    - Creation of the Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC).
    - Development of the Center City Plan, with emphasis on revitalization of Fountain Square, Over-the-Rhine, and the development of The Banks.

#### FINDING 3

### **Recreational opportunities and facilities are on the rise for all age groups in Hamilton County.**

- The Hamilton County park system evolved from a parks, parkways, and boulevards plan contained in the *Initial Report of the Regional Planning Commission* in 1931. Today, the Park District has 19 parks comprising 15,441 acres.
- The City of Cincinnati was recently recognized as one of only four city park systems nationally judged to be "excellent" by The Trust for Public Land.
- In May 2003, the 22 acre Theodore M. Berry International Friendship Park opened on the riverfront with sculptures, international gardens, walking paths, and a hike/bike path. The latter is a piece in the planned 150 mile trail stretching from Madison, Indiana to Maysville, Kentucky.
- Extreme sports have also arrived with the Mobile Skate Park Series at Sawyer Point and the opening of new skate parks in the City of Wyoming and Anderson Township.
- New indoor private recreation facilities for soccer, basketball and volleyball are opening.

# Economy and Labor Market

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY COMPASS REPORT NO. 16-4

## PART I: ECONOMY

The economy of Hamilton County is a mighty engine of growth, and is by far the major source of vitality for the entire regional economy. It is also a “diversified” economy (meaning that it has a representative mix of businesses and industries) and this helps the region to avoid the worst effects of business down-turns as well as avoiding over-dependency on one industry or another.

But diversification also means that the regional economy will likely go into recession whenever the national economy goes into recession, and is unlikely to recover fully until the national economy improves. This is what has happened to the Hamilton County economy over the past two years.

Because of the likelihood of recessions, places like Hamilton County need to cultivate and grow their own “special advantages,” as well as maintain a significant range of economic activities. In order to develop the right strategies for keeping the economic engine humming along, it is important to understand the composition of the economy and how it works.

Increasingly local and regional economies such as those of Hamilton County and the Cincinnati metropolitan region are influenced and constrained by a much larger network: that of the global economy.

Despite recent shocks to the global network (and especially the global finance system) caused by events such as 9-11, wars, and the outbreak of virulent diseases such as SARS, it seems unlikely that the process of globalization will significantly slow in the long term. Regions such as ours, like many others, need strategies to maintain and expand competitive advantage in the global economy.

## PART II: LABOR MARKET

The concept of a labor market includes a geographic aspect - it is an area within which people find jobs and travel to work. In the United States, the definition of Metropolitan Statistical Regions like the Cincinnati CMSA is partly based upon the size and intensity of commuting patterns between places in the area. This defines the “labor market area.”

Secondly, the labor market also includes a jobs or employment aspect. Business and industry firms are the “buyers” in the labor market. They need to purchase the time and effort of employees to help them make their product, sell it, and run their businesses. Obviously, the presence of a sufficient number of well-educated and/or sufficiently skilled workers is an essential factor for businesses or industries in making a decision to open a business and to start or maintain an industry in the region.

The residents of a region form the third (and perhaps most important) part of the labor market. They are the “sellers” in the labor market. Within the labor force there are those who have already made a successful sale to an employer (they are employed) and those who wish to sell their labor and are looking for a job (these are the unemployed). Very often, the most successful sellers are those who have been willing to become and remain knowledgeable about the market for their services along with updating or improving their skills to meet changes in the marketplace.

The challenge over the next decades will be to grow and maintain jobs and business and industry establishments in the central county. This challenge can only be met by increasing the size, skills and qualifications of the labor force, as well as developing policies and plans to attract and retain business and industries.

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## ECONOMY

### FINDING 1

#### **Increasing globalization affects local and regional economies.**

- Economic globalization is increasing pressure on Hamilton County and the Cincinnati metropolitan region to be competitive.
- In the Cincinnati region, competition from Japan and (especially) Korea has affected the region's prominent machine tool industry.
- Many metropolitan regions are taking initiatives to identify business and industry clusters that exist in their region, to identify and capitalize upon their local strengths and specialties, to target industries they want to attract or grow, and to be more competitive in the national and global markets.
- The implication is that regions can encourage the kinds of industry mix, jobs and specializations they think will bring the best economic impacts.

### FINDING 2

#### **The County economy has been growing - even as population is declining.**

- Contrary to popular assumptions, Hamilton County's population losses are not associated with job losses. From 1987 to 2000, the county economy added 82,905 jobs in the private sector - 25,426 of them just in 1999 and 2000.
- The current recession has affected the economy. From March 2000 to March 2001 the total number of payroll jobs in Hamilton County decreased from 556,563 to 543,407 - a loss of 13,156 jobs.
- Sales tax receipts appear to be more dependent upon the number of jobs in the county rather than the number of people.
- Residents leaving Hamilton County to work in other places cost local municipalities in earnings tax dollars. In 1990, about 11 percent of Hamilton County residents worked outside the county, rising to almost 16 percent in 2000.
- The number of businesses and industries in the county increased overall from 23,695 in 1987 to 24,703 in 2001. The high point during this period came in 1995, when 25,577 firms were operating in the county.

- Hamilton County has had an average of about 2,250 business starts and 1,945 business deaths each year since 1987. Business starts are considered an indicator of vitality in an economy.
- All size-classes of business and industry establishments added workers from 1987 to 2000, with the exception of the smallest - those employing 1-4 persons. These industries usually form the bulk of economic activity in a region.

### FINDING 3

#### **The composition of the County economy has changed: more jobs are now supplied by service sectors than by the manufacturing sector.**

- Services jobs now dominate the county economy (34 percent), while manufacturing supplies about 14 percent of all employment. However, manufacturing brings in more income than services.
- Service jobs related to information; arts, entertainment and recreation; and professional, scientific and technical services pay more than the county average. All other service jobs such as retail, health care and administration pay less.

### FINDING 4

#### **Total payroll income of Hamilton County workers has increased overall, but at a slower pace than the us as a whole.**

- Total payroll of Hamilton County workers grew at an annualized rate of 1.6 percent from 1987-2001. This is just under half the rate of the total US (3.7 percent).

### FINDING 5

#### **Hamilton County's share of employment, business, and industries is decreasing as adjacent counties continue to develop at the region's northern and southern boundaries.**

- From 1987 to 2001, Hamilton County's share of the region's business and industry establishments dropped from 60 percent to 53 percent, due principally to growth in Warren, Clermont and Boone Counties.
- Hamilton County's share of all employment in the region declined from 68 percent to 57 percent with Clermont, Warren, Kenton and Boone Counties making the biggest gains over the period.

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- The County's share has decreased due to development in the other counties of the metropolitan region. If Hamilton County starts to develop a net loss of business and industries, following the population to the suburban counties, this will have strong negative impacts on fiscal and economic viability.

## LABOR MARKET

### FINDING 1

#### **Job growth in Hamilton County outstrips the size of the resident labor force.**

- The total number of jobs available in Hamilton County in recent years has far outstripped the resident civilian labor force. This means there is an inadequate number of qualified workers within Hamilton County to fill available jobs.
- Only Hamilton and Boone Counties have more jobs than labor force. In the remaining 11 counties, the labor force is larger than the number of available jobs. These workers fill the gaps in Boone and Hamilton County's labor forces.
- Because of high demand for labor, the average unemployment rate in Hamilton County has been low (less than 5 percent with only four exceptions) for the last 15 years. This indicates a tight labor market.
- Because of demographic changes, and out-migration, the tight labor market situation is likely to get worse over time unless steps are taken to retain and attract qualified workers into the region.

### FINDING 2

#### **Hamilton County and the Cincinnati region have a shortfall of workers in the "entrepreneurial" age groups.**

- The metropolitan region's population is increasing, only slowly, at a rate of 0.9 percent per annum from 1990 to 2000. Hamilton County's population is decreasing.
- The region-wide decrease in the 22-34 age groups - the entrepreneurial workforce - of almost 44,000 over just 10 years directly affects the labor force and economy by depriving the region of newer, cutting-edge training and knowledge, as well as decreasing economic support for the dependent population.
- The decrease is due partly to out-migration, but also to the fact that many fewer people were born in this generation ("Baby Bust"). The small generational size is a *national* phenomenon, so the Cincinnati region will have to compete even harder to attract this age group.

### FINDING 3

#### **Educational achievement has increased, but will need to be boosted in order for Hamilton County and the region to compete with other, more attractive metropolitan areas.**

- The level of educational attainment of Hamilton County residents has increased steadily over the last twenty years, although the number graduating with only a high school certificate is not dropping.
- Neither the county nor the region are keeping up with "peer" counties and regions, or with metropolitan areas that are top-ranked in college graduate or post-graduate education levels of the resident population.
- Two recent studies show that Hamilton County and the Cincinnati metropolitan region suffer from job/skill mismatches between what workers can offer and qualifications needed by employers.
- The implication is that not only does the size of the labor force need to be expanded, but education and training need to be more precisely aligned with future demand in particular sectors of the economy.

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# HAMILTON COUNTY Education

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY COMPASS REPORT NO. 16-5

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

While technically there are 23 school districts in Hamilton County, Milford has only six residents and no schools in Hamilton County, so will not be further discussed in this report. During the 2002-2003 school year, over \$1 billion was spent collectively among Hamilton County's 22 public school districts educating approximately 110,000 students in 205 different schools. About 6,500 of these students (over 80 percent of seniors) graduated from high school at the end of the school year ready to begin higher education, enter the workforce, or pursue other activities.

The education system in Hamilton County has effects far beyond those 110,000 students and their families. The economic competitiveness of our County and our region depends on how well our schools work. The success of these students in higher education or their chosen careers after high school depends on how well our schools work. The ability to strengthen civic engagement and understanding between people of different races and backgrounds in

our communities depends on how well our schools work. Building our quality of life to reverse population loss in our communities depends on how well our schools work. Whether or not Hamilton County and the Cincinnati region will continue to prosper with a vibrant economy and future-oriented leadership depends on how well our schools work. In short, everybody who lives, visits, or does business in Hamilton County has a stake in how well our schools work.

As a whole, Hamilton County's public school districts provide good opportunities for students to receive an education and prepare for college or careers. By many measures, Hamilton County schools operate on par with school districts in Ohio's other large urban counties. Significant challenges emerging from countywide population loss, socioeconomic and demographic changes, mandates from state and federal government, and the need for schools to increasingly become an active partner in community-building need to be successfully overcome in order for our schools to continue to prosper. Policymakers and education professionals have to deal with a complex mixture of race, socio-economics, academic performance, and community development trends when trying to design a school district and curriculum that can provide an education to all students.

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## FINDING 1

### **Outmigration and resulting declines in school enrollment, community investment, and property values are causing many Hamilton County school districts to plan for higher tax levies or reductions in staff and programs.**

- The system of funding local school districts is a complex equation of municipal and township taxes, property and income taxes levied directly by school districts, funds distributed from the State education budget, and federal funding. Because of changed development patterns and population loss across Hamilton County, many school

districts in older communities are faced with an unstable tax base from which to draw revenue.

- Continuing population loss and socio-economic separation have serious implications for Hamilton County's public school districts. Many districts lost students between 1998 and 2003, in some cases up to 30 percent of their total student body. Only nine out of the twenty-two districts gained students.
- The ability of schools to raise money from property tax levies depends on the district's tax base and willingness of the community to approve additional taxes. Some school levies are issued for special projects like new buildings or additional services for students. Most levies are used for basic operation costs to run a district.

- Failed local school levies combined with an \$82.7 million cut in 2003 from the State education budget have left many Hamilton County school districts scrambling for funds.

#### FINDING 2

### **Our region's lower income and minority populations are increasingly concentrated in Hamilton County school districts with low overall student academic achievement.**

- One-quarter of all students in Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) attend all Black schools. Two-thirds of the schools in Cincinnati are either 90 percent Black or 90 percent White. Black students made up 23 percent of the CPS student body in the 1950s when *Brown v. Board of Education* was ruled on. In the 2002-2003 school year, Black students accounted for 70 percent of the 37,700 students in CPS.
- As more affluent communities and school districts draw middle-class families from urban districts, they leave lower-income, higher-need populations behind. Similar to how minority populations are concentrated in CPS and several other districts, lower income households are also confined to many of these same districts.
- According to data from the Ohio Department of Education, the odds are against a Hamilton County student attending a highly-ranked public school district if they are from a lower income household, if they are Black, and especially if they are both.

#### FINDING 3

### **Charter schools provide greater education choice for children in low income families, but have not yet lived up to their promise of providing a better education.**

- School voucher programs such as the ones attempted in Cleveland and promoted in the federal No Child Left Behind Act are an alternative to give children a chance to go to a school with higher overall academic achievement. However, such approaches leave the underlying problems of concentrated poverty behind, along with struggling schools and students who do not or cannot take advantage of transfer options.
- Operating semi-independently of local school corporations, charter schools have the opportunity and flexibility to try new administrative and teaching techniques that may not be possible in a traditional public school.

- Ohio is not the first state to adopt charter school legislation, but it is one of the leading states in number of schools currently operating. Charter school growth in Ohio occurred rapidly after enabling legislation passed in 1997. Today there are 15 charter schools serving approximately 5,000 students in Hamilton County.
- According to charter school supporters, local tax revenue is not used to fund charter school operations. However, public money is used to fund charter schools out of the State's education budget - money that goes to charter schools would otherwise be distributed to traditional public school districts. Furthermore, according to CPS local tax money approved by voters for use in public schools is being diverted to support charter schools. CPS forecasts that payments from the district to local charter schools will reach \$26.8 million in the 2004-2005 school year.
- Many charter schools in Cincinnati simply have not performed any better academically than Cincinnati Public Schools. In other words, up to \$23 million dollars of local school funding is being spent on charter schools with no appreciable gains in student performance, when compared to similar public schools.

#### FINDING 4

### **The physical and social integration of schools into neighborhoods is now recognized as a core component of community building and neighborhood revitalization.**

- Across the country, communities are facing an unexpected adversary in battles against sprawl and community deterioration - their own public school districts. Older school buildings that provide a cornerstone to neighborhood activities and civic engagement are regularly abandoned and demolished in favor of new buildings on suburban-style campuses.
- Many school boards do not see older buildings as assets to be preserved, but as obsolete building stock to be replaced. Recommended land areas for new school sites range from 10 acres for an elementary school up to 30 acres for a new high school.
- Cincinnati Public Schools is leveraging the potential for schools to help revitalize neighborhoods through two current programs. The Facilities Master Plan is a comprehensive effort to upgrade the districts schools. After inventorying each building and site, the district decided on a \$985 million

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construction program. In May, 2003 district voters approved a 4.6 mill levy to partially fund construction.

**FINDING 5**

**Local school district performance and State funding for education constrain Hamilton County's competitiveness and potential for success in the knowledge based economy.**

- Today in Ohio and the U. S., high-tech, skilled manufacturing, and the service sectors are where job growth is occurring. Collectively termed the "knowledge economy," workers in these jobs need a higher education - a bachelors degree at a minimum - in order to succeed.
- Higher education is more important than ever before for individual carer success and continued economic development. It is also more expensive and receives less state funding than ever before.
- In 1979, 17.7 percent of the State's budget went to higher education, compared to only 12.8 percent in 2002. During times of low funding amounts from the state, tuition increases have made up the difference at colleges and universities across the State. In 2003, student tuition and fees made up the largest portion of the University of Cincinnati's general operating budget for the first time in the school's history.
- Tuition increases in Ohio have made it much more difficult for most students and families to afford a college education. Financial aid has not kept pace with higher education budget cuts and resultant tuition increases, so students and families at all income levels are borrowing more than ever before to pay for higher education. Upon graduating, these students face sometimes staggering amounts of debt that will take years to pay off.

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# HAMILTON COUNTY Environment

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY COMPASS REPORT NO. 16-6

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This report presents existing conditions and trends in Hamilton County related to air, land, and water resources. The report identifies seven important findings as well as the importance of trends associated with each finding. Following each finding, key indicators are provided for measuring progress toward preservation, restoration, and management of our natural resources and achievement of the Vision for Hamilton County's Future. Two separate Community COMPASS State of the County Reports address environmental issues of environmental justice and public infrastructure services such as storm water management, solid waste management, water utilities, and sewerage treatment.

The natural environment has strongly influenced the development and urbanization of Hamilton County throughout its history. Forested hillsides, rivers and streams, floodplains, and open plains provide for the County's environmental diversity and continue to be vital components in the social and economic development of the region today. Preservation, conservation, and restoration of natural areas, along with sustainable development, encourage residents and businesses to stay and for others to invest in Hamilton County's future. An attractive, green, connected, safe, and clean environment is an essential element for healthy communities in Hamilton County.

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## FINDING 1

### Numerous environmental groups are working in Hamilton County.

- During the past few decades, the quality of life in Hamilton County has improved dramatically because of the combined efforts of a diverse array of organizations active in environmental issue – from citizens, civic, business, educational, environmental, and political leaders to local, state, and federal agencies. Coordination and partnership among the numerous environmental groups provides great opportunity for achieving the County's goals. Additionally, these collaborations can help to enhance environment education and awareness while providing a more coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive conservation effort for Hamilton County, and the Tri-State region.

## FINDING 2

### Efforts are being made to increase protection and connectivity of open space and environmentally critical and sensitive areas for ecosystem integrity.

- In Hamilton County, hillside slopes greater than 20 percent accounts for 23 percent of the land area; high landslide potential accounts for 17 percent of the land area; floodplains account for 10 percent of the land area; aquifers account for 24 percent of the land area; and wetlands account for 2 percent

of the land area (these environmentally sensitive areas are not mutually exclusive and share some degree of overlap).

- Open space includes both natural and maintained areas of land that are either publicly or privately owned. Natural areas include preserves, wooded land, riparian corridors, and undeveloped land. Maintained areas include neighborhood and metropolitan parks, playgrounds, golf courses, and cemeteries. Environmentally sensitive areas in Hamilton County include hillsides with low and high landslide potential, floodplains, wetlands, aquifers, conservancy districts, and natural preserves.
- Planned green or open space, much like our planned transportation system, involves creating a “green infrastructure” that provides a connected, integrated network of sustainable green or open spaces to maintain natural processes. In the Tri-State region, connectivity occurs along wooded hillsides and ridges, waterways and river riparian corridors. Green infrastructure planning can achieve multiple compatible objectives such as promoting naturally functioning ecosystems, floodwater management, wildlife habitat protection and creation, and the preservation of open space.

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**FINDING 3****Residential construction on steep slopes is increasing.**

- In Hamilton County, almost 23 percent of the land is classified as steeply sloped at over 20 percent grade. About 17% of hillsides are classified as moderately high to very high potential landslide susceptibility due to the underlying Kope bedrock formation, soil type (Eden), and slope.
- From 1970 to 1979, 6.0 percent of residential buildings were constructed on parcels with steep slopes. That number rose to 8.9 percent for the years 1980 to 1989, and to 10.9 percent for the years 1990 to 1999. Development on unstable hillsides often leaves exposed soils susceptible to excessive erosion, resulting in increased sedimentation and nutrient delivery to our creeks, streams, and rivers. The economic cost, in terms of personal and public property damage, is also a concern.

**FINDING 4****Ground level ozone and fine particulate matter remain a challenge for ambient air quality.**

- Ground-level ozone levels and particulate matter will continue to be serious air quality issues. Under a more stringent eight-hour ozone standard enacted in April 2004, United States EPA classified the Cincinnati area as being in “moderate nonattainment.” In addition, stricter standards on particulates will be enforced beginning December 2004. HCDOES reports that the Cincinnati area will be in “moderate nonattainment,” for particulate matter 2.5 microns as well.

**FINDING 5****Hamilton county continues to rank high for toxic air releases.**

- Each year millions of pounds of toxic chemicals are released to the air, water, and land from human-made sources. Ohio is ranked as 1<sup>st</sup> in the nation for the number of reporting facilities and for toxic air releases. Hamilton County has a rank of 7<sup>th</sup> in the State for the total releases and transfers in 2002.
- TRI data provides opportunities for evaluation of existing local environmental programs, identification of problem sites and regulatory priorities, and tracks progress regarding pollution control and waste reduction programs.

**FINDING 6****Flooding and non-point source water pollution are emerging as important environmental challenges.**

- Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency identifies flooding as the number one natural hazard for this area, both in terms of frequency of occurrence and in property losses. Non-flood zone flooding is becoming a serious problem in the County due to current development trends.
- Non-point source pollution is the leading source of water quality impacts to rivers and streams in our urban county. Urban pollution sources include chemical and sediment runoff, from agricultural and residential lands, storm water runoff and combined sewer overflows (CSOs). Further, today’s causes of water pollution and environmental degradation result from the cumulative result of everyday individual behaviors and choices — small amounts of household and automotive chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides, pet wastes, and other pollutants.

**FINDING 7****Brownfields redevelopment is recognized as environmentally, economically, and socially important.**

- The majority of brownfields are in urban cores where unemployment and low-income and minority populations are high. USEPA reported, “undeveloped brownfields plague the low-income, ethnic minority, and disadvantaged communities in the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.”
- Major initiatives by USEPA and the Clean Ohio Fund focus on brownfield redevelopment and sustainable developments that will not create more Brownfields.
- In 2002, three of Hamilton County’s four applicants were awarded grant money totaling \$3,797,825 from the Clean Ohio Fund. In 2003, two of Hamilton County’s three applicants were awarded \$6 million dollar from the Clean Ohio Fund.

# Environmental and Social Justice

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY COMPASS REPORT NO. 16-7

This report presents existing conditions and trends in Hamilton County related to contemporary local and national research on discrimination, and relays how local social and environmental justice initiatives are attempting to combat these discriminatory practices.

Both social and environmental justice are related insofar as both require fair and equal treatment of all human beings. They are different, however, in that social justice focuses its attention on ensuring equity and fairness in the social world, while environmental justice is concerned with ensuring these things in the natural world.

Most would agree that justice implies “fairness”. It also implies *contract*: people have to agree to a set of rules upon which to judge the behavior of themselves and others – that is, to determine what is “fair”. Therefore, justice implies the existence of rules that are codified in written form (the U.S. Constitution, for example), or orally (for example, through a “gentlemen’s agreement”).

Calls for social justice have long existed and are inevitable as long as people live in groups. Recent calls for social justice have come from minority groups that may not necessarily have fewer numbers than the dominant population, but may have less power or influence in society. Many church groups undertake social justice initiatives by working to combat poverty or by fostering dignity to the powerless and disenfranchised. Government agencies enforce such initiatives through affirmative action programs and by prohibiting discrimination against citizens based on specific traits.

The growing calls for environmental justice rely on the 1964 Civil Rights Act as a way to determine fairness. Federal agencies must also abide by Executive Order 12898 — a directive issued in 1994 by President Clinton.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines

environmental justice as fair treatment and “meaningful involvement” of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Currently, environmental justice is considered by many to be a model or a lens through which one can examine developmental programs and policies.

However, both social and environmental justice are concerned with the fair distribution of infrastructure and with how equitably the repercussions of that infrastructure are dispersed. Environmental justice has as a specific aim that no group should bear a disproportionate share of negative environmental repercussions from governmental or commercial operations or from any governmental program and policies.

The EPA’s call for “*meaningful involvement* of all people” includes the affected community’s participation in the decision-making process, due consideration to concerns of every participant, communities influencing the decision, and EPA facilitating participation of those communities. Though they usually focus on a particular subset of population, almost all social and environmental justice movements are concerned with achieving what is believed to be *the common good* — an achievement that should not come at the expense of another group of people.

Calls for environmental or social justice imply that a person or a group of people witnesses a disparity or even discrimination in the society. While all discrimination implies the existence of a disparity, not all disparities are the result of discrimination. In the sense of environmental and social justice, discrimination is a *conscious* act of treating a person differently than one would treat another, given similar circumstances. However, discrimination can result from long-standing or traditional practices done subconsciously or unconsciously by people in power who don’t question their actions.

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**FINDING 1****Locally unwanted land uses are often located in areas that impact some populations disproportionately.**

- In the past various studies by the U.S. General Accounting Office, the United Church of Christ, and individual researchers have established a disproportionate concentration of “locally unwanted land uses” (or “LULUs”) in communities where Blacks are predominant. Studies published by the EPA often found racial and class disparities in the amounts of exposures humans receive to pollutants.
- Hamilton County shares parallels with other jurisdictions in the United States in that there is some spatial correlation between industries releasing toxic materials and the percentage of an area’s population that lives below the poverty line. In Hamilton County, Toxic Releasing Industries (TRIs) are concentrated in the Mill Creek Valley, which historically developed as an industrial corridor with many working family homes constructed nearby to provide access for workers to jobs. After construction of Interstate-75, further industries were attracted to the corridor, and the area became a less desirable place for residences. However, compared to locations of TRI in minority and poorer neighborhoods, Hamilton County has jurisdictions with TRI locations, which are predominantly White and well-to-do neighborhoods. Two areas within the City of Cincinnati, Lower Price Hill with industrial emissions and Winton Hills with a landfill, are perceived as cases for environmental inequities. Various interest groups and coalitions have launched initiatives or surveyed health of the community residents to uncover impacts of the pollutants. However, if existence of a LULU predates concentration of minorities and poor in an area then it is difficult to determine environmental injustice. According to researchers, LULUs such as chemical industries or toxic emitting facilities tend to attract other LULU in the area with a notion that existence of one more facility would not make much of a difference. According to others, there are cases where industries have located considering the situation that minority or poor may not have political clout to counter the decision.

**FINDING 2****Advocacy for social and environmental justice is growing stronger in Hamilton County but disparities still exist.**

- Historically, real and perceived disparities existed in many forms such as race-restricted housing covenants, red-lining, hate crimes, and under-representation of minorities in private corporations and on decision-making bodies. While there has been some progress, some of these disparities still exist.
- The Cincinnati region hosts different types of social and environmental interest groups addressing issues of disparities and inequities. Local governments have launched initiatives on community development and police and minority interrelationships. To name a few, Community Action Now (CAN) launched by the City of Cincinnati is combating social disparities for Blacks and includes community oriented policing. OKI has a newly formed environmental justice advisory committee to address issues of environmental justice in transportation planning.
- There are community groups attempting to repeal Article XII of Cincinnati City’s Charter, which sanctions discrimination based on sexual orientation, was recently repealed by the voters. Public interest groups have formed to address issues of public transportation. Church groups such as the AMOS Project and Christ Church Cathedral are working on different types of race interrelationship and community development initiatives. Recently, Cincinnati Association launched the Greater Cincinnati Commitment campaign. The opening of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati will contribute to the region’s ongoing social justice dialogue. Neighborhood groups have formed advocating for social and environmental justice issues in local areas. Despite efforts by different groups, a recent study analyzing four decades of socio-economic status (SES) finds that racial isolation increased in the lowest of the four social areas. The socioeconomic integration also did not improve much as most of the poor families remain concentrated in the core area of the metropolitan region.

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# HAMILTON COUNTY Governance

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY COMPASS REPORT NO. 16-8

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

From the local to the global scale, successful public administration today is characterized by more consolidation, less bureaucracy, and more business-like management of those basic facilities that contribute to the health and growth of the community. Government must become more efficient and more willing to cooperate than ever not just with other

public agencies, but also with civic organizations and private entities. In many cases the energy to bring about more efficient government is to be found within the civic and private sectors, as much as among public officials and administrators.

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

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## FINDING 1

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

- Within Hamilton County, there are 49 separate general purpose governments. These include 21 cities, 16 villages, and 12 townships.
- In Ohio cross-jurisdictional collaboration is a voluntary activity; it is not required in most instances. However, in an environment where many neighboring jurisdictions serve a metropolitan population, issues requiring multi-jurisdictional collaboration are inevitable. Also, in many instances, a group of jurisdictions can accomplish a desirable objective that would be impossible for an individual jurisdiction - a situation where the sum can be more than its parts.
- State and local governments in Ohio have developed special districts and authorities to provide services to businesses and citizens that were not or could not be delivered by individual townships and municipalities. The services provided are varied in nature, but all are specific in their direction. School districts, sewer districts, and joint fire districts are examples of special purpose governments.

- Although, the establishment of consolidated regional government is generally unwelcome in home rule states such as Ohio, the need for regional governance for efficient delivery of many services (e.g., solid waste, sanitary sewerage, libraries, health, transit, etc) results in many layers of special purpose regional governments. In this environment of fragmented local and regional governments a unified vision and overarching, comprehensive plan has heightened importance in connecting and aligning decision-making by individual governments.
- Interacting with the general and special purpose government structure can be a confusing and frustrating experience for residents and businesses in Hamilton County. Few people understand the complexities of our local government, and the result can fuel negative perceptions regarding the efficiency and function of government. Through improved collaboration, communication, and careful planning, the layers of government in Hamilton County can be even more proactive and responsive to residents and businesses.

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**FINDING 2****The metro region's fragmented structure adds complexity to planning, policy formation, and regulation and implementation of plans.**

- Hamilton County's 49 political jurisdictions are part of over 340 municipal, county, state and federal jurisdictions and districts in the Greater Cincinnati region. This fragmentation makes the Greater Cincinnati metro region one of the Country's most complex and difficult to manage metro regions.
- There are many benefits to the small scale of most Cincinnati metropolitan jurisdictions, which are reflected in a strong tradition of local government. Local governments are especially adept at reacting to and enforcing local safety and quality of life issues important to residents. Small governments also require the involvement of more citizens in civic activities, resulting in improved local accountability and civic mindedness.
- Many issues are left to jurisdictions that have impacts on neighboring communities or to the region that smaller governments cannot or will not address due to fiscal or political reasons. Often a local government's role as a part of the metro region is not considered in local decision-making. The problems of managing a region containing a large number of autonomous jurisdictions are compounded by distrust, adversarial relationships, and lack of regional accountability.
- There are many levels of approaches to dealing with regional issues in metropolitan areas. While Hamilton County local governments are engaged in some levels of regional governance, local governments are adamantly opposed to consolidation of government.
- In order for Hamilton County and the metropolitan area to compete successfully in the new global economy, its many jurisdictions and levels of government will have to find more effective ways to work together in attracting and retaining business and industry. More effective collaboration is also necessary to address Hamilton County's issues of population loss due to out-migration and the cost of increased social service needs.

**FINDING 3****Hamilton County's local governments are increasingly facing fiscal and social stress.**

- Many programs and services once administered and/or funded by the federal government have been given over to state and local governments. In this environment, it has been counties more than states or cities that have taken over responsibility for healthcare, aid to the poor, and criminal justice. As funding from higher levels of government for social services has decreased, local dollars are allocated. This is particularly true in the case of state and federally mandated programs that require counties to provide certain services.
- As the central county in the region, Hamilton County is home to many regional assets and regional problems. In its role as "anchor tenant," Hamilton County provides a place where many residents of surrounding counties come to work and recreate.
- As the regional development boundary has spread beyond Hamilton County's border (and taxing authority), citizens desiring a new home with modern amenities and "good" schools, are moving into neighboring counties. As this is an upper and upper-middle-income migration, the result in Hamilton County is, through dilution, a higher percentage of residents who most often receive public services and a reduction in higher income (and taxpaying) households. In effect, Hamilton County is experiencing the same fiscal and social stresses that have impacted the City of Cincinnati and other major cities in the United States over the past 40 years.
- Recent research by the Metropolitan Area Research Corporation has found that "Just 6 percent of Cincinnati area residents live in affluent communities with plentiful tax bases and few social needs. Another 18 percent live in middle-class bedroom communities with above-average tax bases." The majority of people in the region live in communities facing fiscal or social stresses, classified as "at-risk developed" or "at-risk developing".

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**FINDING 4****The increasing authority and responsibility of local governments requires greater commitment to comprehensive planning to assure their fiscal and social health.**

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

**FINDING 5****Non-government organizational involvement in community planning and local public policy is increasing.**

- A growing number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are involved in local, regional, and state issues and policymaking nationwide. NGO involvement in government initiatives reflects a nationwide move from top-down to bottom-up planning and a shift in NGO focus from specific issues to comprehensive strategic action.
- The availability of funding for local planning and public policy initiatives is a significant motivator and enabler for NGO based initiatives.

- Comprehensive planning usually results in directives requiring comprehensive action. Effective implementation requires the active involvement of citizens, private and civic organizations, and government. It is important that NGO initiatives are considered, and that NGOs are included as local governments work on cross-jurisdictional issues.

**FINDING 6****Advisory government alliances are working to enhance cross-jurisdictional dialogue in Hamilton County.**

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

# Health and Human Services

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY COMPASS REPORT NO. 16-9

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

## PART I: HEALTH

The quality of health of Hamilton County residents can be gauged by the effectiveness of the health care provider system and the general level of health of the overall population. The health care provider system has recently experienced major trends including consolidation of hospital facilities (resulting in the closing of two hospitals: Jewish and Bethesda Oak), the expansion of older facilities, and the development of new facilities in suburban areas. Another substantial trend has been the evolution of the metropolitan region as a nationally recognized medical research center specializing in genome research and biotechnology undertaken by the UC Medical Center and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.

After 9-11, public health agencies expanded their role to include preparedness for bioterrorism and emerging diseases primarily by running coordinated mock emergency events in collaboration with fire departments and hospitals. Public health agencies have recently offered health promotion programs such as walking programs and resistance training for seniors in order to curtail falls, and auto safety classes for teen drivers. Finally, both nationally and locally, health indicator projects have been developed to measure and track the overall health of populations and to improve public policy programming.

## PART II: HUMAN SERVICES

Human services has actually come to mean the social services provided for those citizens categorized as in poverty. Social services provided by the Hamilton County Department of Jobs and Family Services include; food stamps, child protection, child care for welfare recipients and cash assistance. Welfare reform has truly been revolutionary, changing the federal welfare entitlement into a program of public assistance that is temporary and requires recipients to work.

The human services community has recently been utilizing a more integrated, comprehensive approach to planning and providing services. Instead of just addressing individual needs, this approach broadens the perspective to consider individuals within the context of their families and communities. Thus, programming is designed not just for the individual needs, but also includes programs for community organizing and neighborhood revitalization.

The perpetual underclass is in part a consequence of a half-century of "white flight" to the suburbs, with the result that minorities are segregated in poorer areas in the inner city and some "inner-ring suburbs". More recently, jobs have also migrated to the suburbs and now minorities have to deal with the "spatial mismatch" problem where there is inadequate or no public transportation access to those suburban jobs.

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## HEALTH

### FINDING 1

#### **Hamilton County is growing as a nationally recognized medical research center.**

- Total research funding for the UC Medical Center in 2003 was \$240.6 million, an increase of 28 percent from the previous year.
- UC Medical Center and Children's Hospital Medical Center initiated a joint project in 2003 called the Center for Computational Medicine, with a \$25.2 million grant from Ohio's Third Frontier Project. The UC Genome Research Institute, another Third Frontier Project, was dedicated in October 2003, and is expected to attract \$130 million in National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants by 2004 and \$500 million by 2009.
- In 2002, Children's Hospital Medical Center received a total of \$73 million in grants/contracts, with \$57 million coming from the NIH. With the completion of its research tower that will house the Center for Computational Research, Children's will be the nation's largest pediatric research center.

### FINDING 2

#### **Hamilton County health care providers have consolidated to reduce costs and expanded facilities in suburban areas to remain competitive.**

- Starting in the 1990s, area hospital groups were forced to close hospitals and consolidate with others.
- The transition to managed care health insurance resulted in reduced revenues to hospitals.
- All three hospital groups experienced major operating losses in the late 1990s to 2001. By 2002, the hospital groups' financial status had improved. However, they still have concerns about their long-term financial viability and are now devoting major resources to needed infrastructure and technology improvements.
- The hospital groups also made a strategic move to expand their presence in the suburban areas of the County, with expansion of existing facilities and development of new facilities.

### FINDING 3:

#### **A shortage of health care workers in Hamilton County hospitals threatens the quality of care and safety of patients.**

- A recent, crucial trend in Hamilton County, reflecting a similar national trend, is a shortage of hospital nurses and physicians in some specialties.
- The *Hospital Data & Trends Study* (August 2003) found that in the Cincinnati metropolitan region there were fewer physicians, both in general and in some specialties, and fewer nurses than in comparable nearby metro areas.
- The recent increase in emergency room diversions is indicative of the worker shortage and the reduced capacity of hospitals.

### FINDING 4

#### **Hamilton County's uninsured population continues to be exposed to health and financial risk, while their care puts additional financial stress on health care providers.**

- In 2004, the estimated national figure for uninsured persons is 45 million (15.6 percent). In Hamilton County, the estimate is 76,000 uninsured person (9.1 percent). In 2002, uncompensated care given at area hospitals reached \$100 million.
- Hamilton County and the City of Cincinnati have long helped in the provision of health care for citizens who could not afford it: the County with the hospital levy and the City with funding for community health clinics and social service agencies.

### FINDING 5

#### **Public health agencies have expanded their role to include preparedness for bioterrorism, disease threats, and implementation of injury prevention/health promotion programs.**

- Since 9-11 and the bio-terrorism-related anthrax events that same year, preparedness has become a major focus of state and local public health agencies. Overall, the states have received a total of \$2.6 billion in 2002 and 2003 from federal grants for this purpose.

- The Hamilton County General Health District is initiating programs designed to help strengthen seniors in order to lessen falls and moderate the onset of cardiovascular disease.
- Health promotion programs are teaching about healthier and safer lifestyles to all age groups.
- A national trend to link public health and land use planning/community design is also occurring in Hamilton County.

#### FINDING 6

### Community health indicators and related strategic goals, both nationally and locally, are improving public policy and reducing unhealthful behavior.

- Healthy People is a program of the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It presents a set of disease prevention and health promotion objectives for the nation for the first decade of the new millennium.
- At the local level, *Indicators of Healthy Communities of Greater Cincinnati 2003* includes 46 health indicators organized under nine primary areas: 1) demographic overview of greater Cincinnati; 2) environmental factors influencing health; 3) maternal, child and infant health; 4) health behaviors; 5) behavioral and mental health; 6) infectious diseases; 7) health services utilization; 8) mortality; and 9) injury deaths.

## Human Services

#### FINDING 1

### Welfare Reform is moving many at-risk families from dependence to self-support.

- Welfare reform, also known as the national “Welfare-to-Work” program, has successfully moved many welfare recipients into the workplace. The national welfare caseload declined from 5 million families in 1994 to 2.2 million in 2000.
- The welfare caseload for cash assistance in Hamilton County was 17,863 in 1996 but dropped to 8,000 in 2002 - a 45 percent reduction.

- In Hamilton County some welfare candidates are “diverted,” and instead referred to Accountability & Credibility Together (ACT). ACT offers educational programs including budgeting classes, general educational development (GED), computer learning center, career preparedness, job search assistance, and job retention services.
- ACT has been successful in helping 98.2 percent of their clients who got off welfare, from 1998 through 2000, stay off (as of 2001).

#### FINDING 2

### The human services community in Hamilton County is taking a more integrated, comprehensive approach for planning and providing human services.

- Instead of concentrating on the needs of individuals, social service providers, the public sector, non-profit funders, and local citizens are now recognizing the importance of considering individuals within the context of their families, neighborhoods, and communities.
- This integrative framework is used by the United Way of Greater Cincinnati with their present program emphasis areas which include the more traditional *Helping Children Thrive, Keeping People Healthy, and Maximizing People's Self-Sufficiency*, along with the new *Building Vibrant Neighborhoods & Communities*.
- Community Investment Partners (CIP) is a five-year (1999-2004) grantmaking initiative that targeted economic, physical, and social issues collaboratively with key partners in specific, declining city neighborhoods. Its successor, Alliance for Building Communities (ABC), will invest in Community Development Corporations (CDCs) involved in comprehensive revitalization efforts in inner city and first suburb neighborhoods.
- Cincinnati Public Schools is taking a comprehensive, integrative approach in planning for the renovation or rebuilding of their schools. To plan for each school (or Community Learning Center), a civic engagement process is implemented that includes local residents/parents and other concerned partners, as well as social service agencies and businesses in the neighborhood. This process develops a shared vision for the desired continuous learning activities of each local school/community learning center. Some examples could include wellness programs with clinics operating at schools or innovative after-school activities with an on-site YMCA.

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# HAMILTON COUNTY Housing

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY COMPASS REPORT 16-10

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This report presents existing conditions and trends in Hamilton County related to how changes in the demographic, economic, and political aspects of Hamilton County impact the character of housing and the health of neighborhoods. Moreover, it examines the County's trends in the demand and supply for market-rate, subsidized, and affordable housing as well as the impact of such trends on people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, different incomes, and different household configurations. The report identifies seven important findings as well as the importance of trends associated with each finding, and provides key indicators for measuring progress toward the *Vision for Hamilton County's Future*.

Like all other markets, the American housing market is affected by a number of variables. As it is necessary for most people to borrow substantial amounts of money to purchase housing, interest rates play an important role in how much housing is built and bought. Demographic variables such

as household size and type, as well as age of householders give clues as to how much, and what kind of housing will be occupied. Government policies at the national, state, and local levels go a long way in determining location and density of housing.

This report's emphasis on demographic and political dimensions of housing will not preclude discussion of economic factors. Indeed, there is a fundamental and interdependent relationship among demographics, politics, and the economy. Changes in any of these phenomena will usually bring about changes in the other two. Economic variables such as interest rates, a buyer's credit availability, disposable income, and consumer confidence generally affect the housing market in the short term. On the other hand, long-term performance of the housing market (which this report will consider) require an examination of demographic factors, for it is the character of the population that will determine housing demand.

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## FINDING 1

### **Levels of housing demand are increasingly determined by quality of life indicators rather than by demographic indicators.**

- The development of housing on the urban fringes has expanded the number of location choices for many in the Cincinnati metropolitan region. As a consequence, potential home buyers rely more heavily on quality of life variables such as schools to choose a home. In areas where the quality of public schools is perceived as high and crime rates are low, housing tends to be larger in size and tends to appreciate in value at a higher rate.
- The housing market is changing as households in Hamilton County are becoming more diverse. One-person households and those with two or more unrelated persons are growing while traditional married couple family households are decreasing.

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## FINDING 2

### **Because of a lack of an overarching plan, local governments have not effectively managed the supply and location of housing.**

- With no mandate from the State of Ohio for comprehensive planning, coordinating growth and revitalization within Hamilton County and among adjacent counties is a challenge.
- With a myriad of zoning laws, agency development plans, and aversions to subsidized housing, there is a lack of comprehensive planning across agencies and the 49 jurisdictions in Hamilton County which leads to development not planned from the larger perspective.

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**FINDING 3****Federal and local authorities are working to de-concentrate the location of public and subsidized housing.**

- Public and subsidized housing exists for people who do not make enough money to compete in the housing market. Those numbers are increasing locally, as witnessed by the closing of waiting lists for Section 8 programs.
- HOPE VI and a refocused Section 8 are respectively working to de-concentrate poverty by creating housing that attracts households with an array of incomes and placing more subsidized housing in suburban areas.

**FINDING 4****Hamilton County is experiencing high demand for - but low supply of - housing for persons with very low incomes.**

- Hamilton County has both a surplus and a shortage of housing: there has been a rise in the number of vacancies in the County, but growing numbers of people cannot afford to purchase or rent such housing or are not attracted to available low-cost aging units.
- Facing decreasing numbers of single-room occupancy units, and generally priced out of the housing market, increasing numbers of low-income householders are turning to public housing, Section 8 programs, or the streets.

**FINDING 5****Potential homebuyers with moderate incomes are finding affordable, market-rate homes primarily in the City of Cincinnati and its "first suburbs."**

- Nearly 84 percent of homes sold in the area were affordable to persons earning median incomes. Greater Cincinnati was also the third "most affordable" large metropolitan area in the country behind Indianapolis and Kansas City. Persons with moderate incomes (80 percent of median) may be able to buy housing in the City of Cincinnati or the "first suburbs," but it will continue to be difficult for them to buy into the latest-developing suburb where services such as police protection, schools, and roads are viewed as better.
- While Cincinnati rates well nationally in home affordability, homeowners with low incomes (80 percent of median) can afford, at best, a house worth \$80,000. These houses can usually be found in Cincinnati and "first suburbs." If businesses continue to locate in newer suburbs, low-income homeowners may be impacted to an even greater extent by the spatial mismatch problem.

**FINDING 6****Though it is decreasing, racial and economic segregation create impediments to fair and affordable housing in Hamilton County.**

- While racial covenants are a thing of the past and the Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing, Hamilton County is still a racially segregated county. Racial segregation is highly correlated with economic segregation, and as such, fair housing may be accomplished by the de-concentration of subsidized housing. However impediments to such housing still exist, including "NIMBYism" and predatory lending.

# Land Use and Development Framework

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY COMPASS REPORT NO. 16-11

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This report examines land use and growth issues in Hamilton County and studies various factors causing growth and development patterns in the region. It identifies five important findings related to growth and land development at the regional, county, and local levels. It studies impacts of these trends on the economy, housing, transportation, utilities, environment, and fiscal resources, and identifies indicators for measuring the trends.

In the past two centuries of urbanization in America, it is the last few decades that have brought dramatic changes to metropolitan development patterns: movement of people and goods, technology, and especially the emerging new centers of population and employment at the edges of metropolitan regions. These new centers have different development patterns than the metropolitan core and are increasingly becoming centers for activity, entrepreneurship, and urban-like living. Hamilton County as part of the metropolitan core still retains its place as the major center for businesses, culture, and recreation for about two million people residing in the region. However, the new growth patterns are affecting Hamilton County in many ways including its demography, economy, and land resources.

Compared to the metropolitan development patterns of early years, when land developed in cities primarily to accommodate immigrating rural population, land now is developed in rural areas as well as cities to accommodate migration and spreading out of the existing population. Many metropolitan regions are experiencing a substantial increase in developed land even though the residing populations are either decreasing, remaining stagnant, or increasing at a slower rate. Usually, the growth taking place in a region, which encompasses population as well as economic growth, has driven land development and distribution of land uses. Compared to other natural

resources, land is a finite resource and its distribution for different uses affects almost every aspect of urban living including community services, economy, housing, mobility, environment, and human health. The land use distribution determines in many ways transportation efficiency, energy usage, environmental pollution, changes in ecology, and even the urban micro climate in a region.

The growth in the Cincinnati metropolitan region, especially the adjacent Ohio counties, has been a result of land speculation, consumer preferences, economic forces, and limited direction on the part of governmental jurisdictions. The resultant development patterns have been spread-out, low and medium density residential developments interspersed with large commercial and industrial uses. A new “smart growth” strategy has been discovered as a solution to development patterns occurring due to such widespread growth. As an overarching concept of development, “smart growth” includes integrating environment and ecology into land use planning, promoting redevelopment as well as new developments, and encouraging planned growth. These strategies call for preparation and implementation of comprehensive plans.

Most communities use the legislative power of zoning, with regulations attached to each zone, to identify preferred locations for land uses, activity, character of development, density, setback, etc. Most states require the zoning map and regulations to be based on a comprehensive plan that considers the interrelationships of community services, housing, etc. In Ohio, however, the Ohio Revised Code does not mandate comprehensive planning and in fact sees zoning itself as constituting “the plan”. This laissez-faire approach at the state level does not ensure sound comprehensive planning in the growth of communities.

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FINDING 1

**Residential, commercial, and industrial developments are spreading outward into adjacent suburban counties drawing growth and investments from Hamilton County.**

- Although Hamilton County remains the largest center for businesses, industries, and housing in the Cincinnati metropolitan region, the County continues to lose population and businesses to suburban counties. In the past decade, the County's share of businesses and industries to total businesses and industries in the region decreased from 60 percent to 53 percent, and its share of housing units in the region decreased from 50 percent to 46 percent. Recently, Hamilton County experienced some redevelopments at higher densities and programs for reinvestments, such as the Home Improvement Program (HIP).

FINDING 2

**Land consumption per person within Hamilton County is increasing as housing buyers choose low-density new developments over compact older communities.**

- This growth pattern results in loss of population in older communities and the core area and increase of new low density developments at the periphery and beyond. Regardless of decreases in the population, housing units, households, and developed lands in Hamilton County have continued to increase. Studies on costs of development patterns have found that low-density developments are costlier for the provision of infrastructure and services. As the population in the County decreases, the cost per capita for maintenance and expansion of infrastructure increases.

FINDING 3

**Growth centers and interstates are shaping commercial and industrial development patterns in Hamilton County and the Cincinnati metropolitan region.**

- Although Hamilton County remains the major employment center in the region, other centers of growth have emerged outside the County. These are full-fledged urban communities providing urban services, housing, and jobs at one location. The metropolitan development pattern of the past, with only one dominant center at the urban core, is changing to a *polycentric* pattern with many dominant centers. Some examples of emerging growth centers in the region include

Union Centre Boulevard area, Tri-County area, Eastgate area, and the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport area. This has affected commuting patterns for work in the region as commuting from other counties into Hamilton County decreased, whereas commuting from suburbs to suburbs has increased.

FINDING 4

**As growth moves outward, fiscal capacity of older communities in Hamilton County is impacted.**

- The current patterns of outward growth, disinvestment in older communities, and competition for tax dollars provide economic challenges for many Hamilton County communities. In the absence of any tax-sharing program or incentives for redevelopment and infill development, older communities are often fiscally constrained or do not generate necessary revenues to cover the cost of community services. Hamilton County hosts a number of such older, built out communities, often termed as "first suburbs." Past studies have emphasized that "first suburbs" are in a policy blind spot wherein adequate policies and programs at the federal and state level are often not available for them. Regardless of socio-economic challenges and fiscal problems, "first suburbs" usually have positive qualities such as town centers, a grid street system, sidewalks, human scale built form, social networks, architectural heritage, and sense of place.

FINDING 5

**Although total developed land in Hamilton County almost doubled since 1960, industrial areas have remained almost the same, and forests, cropland, and pastures continue to decrease.**

- A study by the Ohio State University, using satellite imagery, classified man-made and natural features into developed land, forests, croplands, and pastures. The study, comparing changes from 1982 to 1997, showed an increase in urban land and decrease in the forests, croplands, and pastures for Hamilton County. Distribution of developed land in the County shows 41 percent residential, 16 percent public services, 4 percent commercial, and 5 percent industrial, which use is characteristic of large urban areas, according to research on urban land uses.

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# HAMILTON COUNTY

# Mobility

## A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY COMPASS REPORT NO. 16-12

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

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

Transportation and mobility issues are both local and regional in scope. They affect not only traffic levels and patterns, but population growth, the character of nearby land uses, and economic development.

This report considers how both transportation facilities like roads and public transit, and the level of people's mobility impact the region. The report focuses on levels of passenger and freight congestion, and examines how increasing traffic may affect our region's physical and socioeconomic environments. It also evaluates the links between the design of transportation infrastructure and housing developments in suburban counties, and their larger effects on the region.

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### FINDING 1

## **Congestion is growing as automobile dependency increases and more single occupancy vehicles crowd Hamilton County's streets and highways than ever before.**

- Hamilton County commuters driving alone to work increased from 68.3 percent to 78.9 percent between 1980 and 2000. At the same time, usage of other modes of travel such as walking, bicycling, carpool, and public transit-decreased.
- Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled (DVMT) in the Cincinnati metropolitan region has been increasing steadily over the past 20 years, from 19,640,000 in 1982 to 33,000,000 in 2000. In 1982, the Cincinnati Metropolitan Region averaged 2.9 hours per day of congestion conditions, which increased to a span of 7.2 hours per day in 2000.
- It is projected that the annual cost of congestion to Cincinnati metropolitan region's drivers more than doubled in five years, increasing from \$250 million in 1995 to \$505 million in 2000.

- Nationally, the Cincinnati Metropolitan Region ranks 24<sup>th</sup> out of the 75 urban areas studied by the Texas Transportation Institute in terms of overall traffic congestion. Amongst the peer metropolitan areas of Indianapolis, Louisville, St. Louis, Columbus, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh; Cincinnati has the highest freeway DVMT (daily vehicle miles traveled) per lane mile; and Indianapolis and Cincinnati have the worst congestion conditions, as shown by the Roadway Congestion Index.

### FINDING 2

## **Hamilton County continues to be impacted by road projects occurring outside the County.**

- The congestion of new interchanges, roads, along with widening of highways in nearby counties is spurring outward growth for new residential, commercial, and industrial developments.
- In OKI's 2030 highway transportation plan, 23.63 miles of interstate highway widening projects are planned in the Cincinnati metropolitan region at a total estimated cost of \$404 million, excluding the costs for planned replacement of the Brent Spence Bridge.
- As highways expand, DVMT and congestion decrease in the short run, but finally increase as more and more commuters use the road increasing the annual congestion cost.

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- The total annual congestion cost, which includes loss of work hours and fuel, has been increasing continuously in the Cincinnati metropolitan region. In the year 2000, annual congestion cost was \$505 million, and excess fuel consumed was 44 million gallons.

#### FINDING 3

### **Completion of "major investment" or corridor studies in various areas of the region may bring about changes in the road and transit networks.**

- Major Investment Studies (MIS) to evaluate alternatives to meet future transportation capacity have been done or initiated for most of the County's major thoroughfares.
- In 1998, the *I-71 Corridor Transportation Study* examined the transportation needs of the highway from the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport to southern Warren County, proposing a light rail on the corridor. A ballot initiative to provide partial funding for the I-71 light rail was defeated by county voters in 2001.
- MIS studies underway are the North South Initiative on I-75 and the *Eastern Corridor Project* in Hamilton and Clermont Counties.
- A *Western Corridor Study* is proposed for the western part of Hamilton County, focusing on I-74.

#### FINDING 4

### **Current design standards and patterns of development focus on the automobile, limiting the transportation options of Hamilton County residents.**

- Suburban style subdivisions with multiple cul-de-sacs and few collector streets make the automobile a necessity for almost all trips.
- Limited transportation options and increased automobile dependency result in more congestion and higher household expenditures on transportation.

#### FINDING 5

### **Lack of adequate regional, multi-modal public transportation system increases dependency on automobiles and limits mobility of transit-dependent residents.**

- The current public transit system does not access all the employment, retail, and office centers in the Cincinnati Metropolitan Region, thereby contributing to "spatial mismatch," where low-income households in the inner city cannot access entry-level job openings in the suburbs.

- Metro ridership remained fairly stable changing from 28.3 rides per capita per year in 1990 to 28.9 rides per capita per year in 2001, despite a decrease in Hamilton County's population.

#### FINDING 6

### **As the local economy grows, Hamilton County is facing pressure to accommodate increasing freight traffic.**

- The Cincinnati Region's economy benefits from our increasing levels of freight movement. Warehousing shipments are focused by ODOT and the FHWA to increase at an average rate of 3.8 percent per year from 1998 to 2020.
- The Cincinnati Metropolitan Region, with its three interstate highways, is likely to gain jobs in the transportation sector due to increasing freight movement.

# Appendix A

## Community COMPASS Publications

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

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

**Hamilton County Regional  
Planning Commission**

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[www.communitycompass.org](http://www.communitycompass.org)

**Community  
COMPASS**



HAMILTON COUNTY  
Regional  
Planning  
Commission

**Planning  
Partnership**



HAMILTON COUNTY  
Regional  
Planning  
Commission