

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

THROUGH THE FIRST ROUND OF WORKSHOPS AND OVER THE COURSE THE LAST FEW MONTHS, WE HAVE RECEIVED NUMEROUS QUESTIONS ABOUT NEOSCC AND VIBRANT NEO. HERE IS A COLLECTION OF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- **WHAT IS LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN THIS PROCESS AND ITS OUTCOMES?**

Local government has been and will continue to be crucial to the development of VibrantNEO 2040 and to the implementation of its shared vision for the region. NEOSCC is working to develop tools that will allow local governments to take VibrantNEO 2040 and run with it. And, as NEOSCC's Goals and Outcomes state:

“Goal 3: Respect Choice

Preserving our quality of life, expanding choices for Northeast Ohio's citizens and respecting local government and individual property rights are essential principles for this process.”

- **WHO WILL HOLD THE POLITICIANS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THIS PLAN/VISION?**

Local governments participate in NEOSCC by choice. As with most policy decisions, it will be up to engaged and informed citizens to hold decision-makers accountable for their actions.

- **HOW DOES LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAVE TO CHANGE/PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROCESS AND ITS OUTCOMES?**

There is nothing about the VibrantNEO 2040 process that would force a local government to participate or change. Every local government, organization and individual participating in creating VibrantNEO 2040 is doing so by choice. While it's not a requirement, all we ask of local governments interested in participating is that they be willing to talk and to listen.

In summary, it will be up to local governments and their constituents to adopt and implement the recommendations of the Vibrant NEO 2040 Vision and Framework.

PARTICIPATION

- **HOW DO I BECOME A MORE ACTIVE PARTICIPANT?**

One major goal of VibrantNEO 2040 is to provide meaningful opportunities to learn, share, create and act... together. Here are five ways to get involved with VibrantNEO 2040:

1. **Play [ImagineMyNEO](#) today!** NEOSCC built an online tool called [ImagineMyNEO](#) that puts you in the role of Master Planner for Northeast Ohio's future. Through [ImagineMyNEO](#), you decide on your priorities for the future and choose how to spend resources and set policies to achieve them. Once you've set your priorities

and made your decisions, you submit your choices to NEOSCC to be a part of the data it's using develop its preferred scenario.

Once you've played [ImagineMyNEO](#), **tell your friends and ask them to play, too!**

2. **Attend our Round 2 Open Houses** that will be held across the region July 27 – August 7. Find out more and register to attend [here](#).
 3. **Follow the [VibrantNEO blog](#)** to find out what you can do today.
 4. **Share your story on [MyVibrantNEO](#)** and tell us why you think Northeast Ohio is a vibrant region. Post photos, upload descriptions of proven sustainability practices, submit tool kit ideas, ask about policies and solutions, generate ideas for the region's dashboard, and document local and regional assets. Help us build a "go-to" site in the region to find sustainable innovation and collaboration.
 5. **VOLUNTEER.** Some of the ways you can volunteer are: Hosting a guest speaker, volunteering for public engagement meetings in my community/county, and serving as a network leader to recruit small groups of meeting attendees. Sign up to volunteer [here](#).
- **ARE WE ABLE TO GET MORE PEOPLE WITH LOCAL EXPERTISE TO ATTEND?**

Yes. We are encouraging local experts to participate, but we also need your help to identify and invite them. VibrantNEO 2040 is an open process. We do our best to make sure residents know about our activities but it often takes a personal invitation to get people to participate. You should feel free to extend as many personal invitations to participate as you can.

- **WHAT LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS HAVE BEEN ENGAGED?**

NEOSCC has engaged stakeholders – local governments, organizations, companies, and individuals – all across the 12-county region. Thirty-three organizations from across the region are represented on NEOSCC's Board of Directors. More than 150 individuals and organizations participate on NEOSCC's Workstreams.

NEOSCC engaged with more than 500 regional leaders prior to the launch of its scenario planning process and has worked to involve the media in communicating all of its activities to the public. Over a three-day period (April 30 – May 2) nearly 600 individuals participated in our Business As Usual Workshops. NEOSCC sent individual invitations to the several thousand elected officials who represent Northeast Ohioans in state, county and municipal/village/township governments.

- **WHERE ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION AND HOW IS THAT COLLABORATION BEING FOSTERED/DEVELOPED?**

VibrantNEO 2040 itself is one big opportunity for collaboration – [the entire VibrantNEO 2040 project is one long collaborative effort](#).

Opportunities for personal collaboration can be found at our [workshops and open houses](#). You can learn about the collaborative process that we used at our first scenario planning workshops in April and May by visiting [here](#).

Opportunities for organizations and local governments to collaborate arise in any number of ways. [Organizations have chosen to host NEOSCC speakers](#) and involve NEOSCC in their activities. Leaders meet at NEOSCC/VibrantNEO activities, talk with their counterparts elsewhere in the region who are facing similar challenges, and begin to find ways to work together.

NEOSCC is [exploring how to develop additional opportunities](#) for local governments and organizations to collaborate by developing [information sources and tools](#) that they can use and identifying best practices and pilot projects that they may choose to pursue.

- **WHERE ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION? ARE THESE PARTNERSHIPS BEING LEVERAGED?**

The opportunities for cross-sector collaboration as a part of VibrantNEO 2040 are numerous and we have only begun to explore them. NEOSCC itself is a cross-sector collaboration, with governments, non-profits, businesses and community members participating in its efforts. Additional cross-sector collaborations are likely to be identified as part of NEOSCC's efforts to build its [best-practice examples and its pilot projects](#).

- **HOW CAN WE GET PEOPLE FROM PA INVOLVED?**

While differences in law and governance in Ohio and Pennsylvania may make certain types of collaboration challenging, we certainly are welcoming Pennsylvanians to engage in discussions about how our communities affect and can assist and learn from one another.

- **HOW WAS THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA DEFINED? WHY ARE ASHLAND AND RICHLAND COUNTIES NOT INVOLVED?**

The 12 counties were defined by the service areas of the four Metropolitan Planning Organizations and two Councils of Governments who came together to submit the original application.

We do encourage those in neighboring counties to participate in the Vibrant NEO process.

PROCESS

- **HOW DO THE VALUES OF NEO FIT INTO THIS PROCESS?**

Northeast Ohio's values are the basis and the core of VibrantNEO 2040. All of NEOSCC's public engagement efforts center on revealing and discussing what Northeast Ohioans value most about this region and how those values and assets can be pursued and protected.

ImagineMyNEO is NEOSCC's latest case in point – its sole purpose is to give Northeast Ohioans the opportunity to make their values explicit and choose those they believe should take priority.

- **HOW DOES REGIONAL PLANNING IMPACT PROPERTY OWNER'S RIGHTS?**

NEOSCC makes its view on property owner's rights explicit and clear as part of its list of Goals and Outcomes:

“Goal 3: Respect Choice

Preserving our quality of life, expanding choices for Northeast Ohio's citizens and respecting local government and individual property rights are essential principles for this process.”

- **ARE WE ABLE TO TALK ABOUT THE “HOW” IN THIS PLANNING PROCESS?**
- **HOW WILL THIS PLAN BE IMPLEMENTED – WILL THERE BE FOLLOW-UP AND ACTION?**

It's difficult to talk about implementation in terms of specific tasks until the VibrantNEO 2040 process is completed; it's difficult to say how you will take to get somewhere when you haven't made a final decision about where you are going.

But we can talk about “how” in terms of process. VibrantNEO 2040 itself is the first major step in that process. We are defining together where we think the region needs to go. Once VibrantNEO 2040 is complete, it will be presented to local governments and their constituents for review and consideration.

In addition to VibrantNEO 2040, NEOSCC will deliver the following products:

- **A Vibrant NEO Dashboard** that will be the quick reference guide for keeping the region moving in the right direction. The dashboard will include metrics for the highest impact issue areas, prioritized by the public and Consortium members, in land use, housing, health, transportation, economic development and environmental protection.
 - **A regional tool kit and a set of best practices** that will inform the local and regional actions essential to VibrantNEO 2040's implementation
 - **A set of recommended policy changes** that will have high impact on regional sustainability.
 - **A set of pilot projects that NEOSCC will launch** that provide innovative, real-world solutions, have the potential for long-term impact and will be replicable across the region.
- **HOW DO SOCIAL ISSUES (EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES, POVERTY,) FIT INTO THIS?**

Land-use planning and resource allocation affect social issues in ways that are deep and varied.

One example of this would be the issue of housing abandonment that was identified as part of the “Business as Usual” scenario. Trends indicate that more than 10% of Northeast Ohio’s housing stock is likely to be abandoned over the next 27 years – the equivalent of 18 house being abandoned in Northeast Ohio every day. This is likely to occur as population in the region moves away from our central cities and regroups in different municipalities. Some of the houses that will be abandoned will be demolished – at significant cost – while many will remain standing. Those that are left will damage the fabric of the neighborhoods that surround them. They will pose a safety hazard and will result in the permanent loss of residents and tax revenue for the cities where they are located, causing problems for their schools and more demand for city services.

More examples of how social concerns tie in with VibrantNEO 2040 can be found in [NEOSCC’s Conditions and Trends Platform](#).

- **HOW DOES THIS FIT WITH PROJECTS ALREADY OCCURRING LIKE CLEVELAND 2019 AND THE OBERLIN PROJECT?**

VibrantNEO 2040 and other projects like Cleveland 2019 and the Oberlin Project are perfectly compatible. NEOSCC has been working with Cleveland 2019 and the Oberlin Project since it launched and has been incorporating lessons from both projects into its efforts. In addition, VibrantNEO 2040 is being designed to be broad enough to allow for a wide variety of innovative local approaches to reaching its goals.

- **HOW WILL THIS PROJECT BE SUSTAINED ONCE NEOSCC GOES AWAY?**

Sustaining VibrantNEO 2040 beyond the organizational life of NEOSCC will be the responsibility of the NEOSCC Board and the Northeast Ohioans who support the continued effort for a more vibrant, resilient and sustainable region.

- **WHO HANDLES THE ADVERTISING FOR THIS INITIATIVE?**

NEOSCC and its consultants manage the advertising for this initiative.

COSTS

- **WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF THIS PLANNING PROCESS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS OUTCOMES?**

NEOSCC and Vibrant NEO 2040 are largely funded by a highly competitive, first-of-its kind, \$4.25 million federal grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as part of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities Initiative. The Sustainable Communities Initiative is an interagency collaboration among HUD, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The \$4.25 million funding NEOSCC is to create a long-term vision and framework for a region of more than 3.8 million people. This investment represents just over 4¢ per person for each of the 27 years VibrantNEO 2040 should help guide this region toward becoming more vibrant, resilient and sustainable.

As part of its scenario planning effort, NEOSCC and its consultants have developed cost projections for the costs of certain government activities like building additional roads and maintaining existing infrastructure. Developing details about the specific costs of implementation would be several steps down the road from where VibrantNEO 2040 is today. We first need to agree on a regional vision that describes where we want to go and then we need to develop specific mutually agreed upon strategies for achieving our vision, which would in turn drive development and determine its costs.

- **WHAT ARE THE FINANCING OPTIONS FOR THE OUTCOMES OF THIS PROCESS?**

As part of its scenario planning effort, NEOSCC and its consultants have developed cost projections for the costs of certain government activities like building additional roads and maintaining existing infrastructure. Developing options for financing projects, if and when such a need occurs, would be several steps down the road from where VibrantNEO 2040 is today. Before we can begin to develop details about financing, we first need to agree on a regional vision that defines where we want to go and then we need to develop specific mutually agreed upon strategies for achieving our vision that would in turn drive development decisions and financing needs.

FUTURE WORKSHOPS

- **IS IT POSSIBLE TO HAVE MORE WORKSHOP LOCATIONS?**

Yes. For its second round scenario planning [Open Houses](#), NEOSCC has expanded the number of locations and varied the times the Open Houses occur.

- **FOR FUTURE WORKSHOPS, WILL THERE BE OTHER WAYS TO RSVP INSTEAD OF JUST ONLINE?**

Yes. You can always call us at (330) 375-2949 or mail us at: **NEOSCC, CitiCenter Building, 8th Floor, 146 South High Street, Akron, Ohio 44308**

Or, you can just come to one of our [Open Houses](#). We promise we won't turn you away!