

Vibrant NEO 2040 – Vision Session Q&A Transcript
Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium

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Panel: Hunter Morrison, Executive Director NEOSCC (HM)
John Getchey, Executive Director, Eastgate Regional Council of Governments (JG)

H.M: I have been joined by John Getchey that many of you know he is the executive director of Eastgate. Eastgate is one of the founding partners of our consortium. As we go across the region we asked board members who are very familiar with the process, John along with the staff will be able to answer any questions you may have.

Question/Comment: I believe everyone here agree with the overall theme to have continued growth. That could solve a lot of issues and a lot of problems. How do we convenience others of your findings and what specific actions can we take? Along time ago they used to talk about state land use regulations. They don't talk about to that too much anymore. I know there are things such as financial incentives and regulation through legislation. What is next to advance the preferred vision?

H.M: Thank you as we try to do today is get into some of the recommendation, but that is a very broad overview of what we're going to be going forward with. The specific recommendations address the local community but, on a county or metropolitan level, or regional level. There would be more robust version then what you see this morning. Were all concerned certainly our board is concerned is this vision is achievable. What we're trying to do at this point is to see if this is the direction we want to go. If this is the direction we want to go, then we should. One of the main changes to this is the fiscal analysis which points to the consequences not changing and gives jurisdictions tools to look at different options or how to deal with their challenges.

J.G: Were working at the local level with our elected officials and boards. Again there is four MPOs that are involved with this study and all are working together. There is NEFCO who is also one of the five agencies involved with this study. I think working through those organizations getting the word out to our members. We been feeding information to our elected official that we answer to in the three county areas that we serve. We use our agency as tool gets a lot of that information out. Our agency focus on several different areas, we deal with transportation, environmental, economic development, and the state public work commission. All those programs have to be intertwined with what we get out this study, the tool kit, and policies and take that to our elected officials to help them get some of these things in place. We are always run into financial problems and political problems, but that's a good start on which way were going to go on this.

Question/Comment: Three points, first Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport shows on the map as an industrial site. It is a job producer, should be identified as industrial development site, it is an exception to the "don't build out in the country. We have a facility their and massive amount of green space, developing sites around their that can be producing high volume jobs, air cargo type material that would ship. Second we need some type of local generated funds to clean brownfields. We have had Clean Ohio, it has worked very effectively everywhere, it has applied here and work but we still have

brownfields all over the place. The programs out of Washington, DC is not conducive to it, we are on our own we are going to have to generate the funds locally to clean these brownfields. The neighborhoods around the brownfields aren't neighborhoods of choice because of the brownfields. We need jobs close to homes but if there is no one willing to put an industry because of the lawsuits they face because of the amount of condemned property. Also old neighborhoods need source of funds to restore and renovate places still feasible for use. Allot of this is demolition cases that function obsolete and don not have good value. But the ones that can be saved we need a source of funds for them. Right now these funds are not available and the we need to look at old standard such as Fannie May, Freddy Mack, FHA, HUD, they have eliminated rehabilitation funding for professional rehabbers to take properties bring them back up to code and make good affordable homes for people.

H.M: Good suggestion.

Question/Comment: Hello I am involved with Tourism on a local and state level. That's one potential for growth. Study shows that one dollar we spend on tourism generates fifth-teen dollars from visitors. The open space can be potential for parks which could be one of our major resources. Tourism can also give our rural areas more potential and more income for the cities. Again there is a lot of money coming into the state from tourism; it has a lot of potential to bring in even more money with our natural resource and historical properties we have. We can market these attractions out of the area and bring more money from out of the in to the region and state.

H.M: Thank you

J.G: One of the things we been discussing among ourselves and with the consortium is that as long as they obtain certain policies the programs like Clean Ohio will pay off and this one way of maintaining these programs and keeping these programs in the state view. There is not a lot of programs and instead of looking for new programs we need to keep some of the ones we have.

Question/Comment: I noticed a conflict between industrial growth along the river and preserving the river. So I think addressing land along the riverside maybe something to look instead of favoring both over one another. Possibly put some land on the side for recreational purposes and industrial areas.

H.M: I think that's true and one of the things we know. Today the river doesn't have those same demands that they had in the past and we have to opportunity to do well and do well. The two rivers in the area can coexist well.

Question/Comment: There are several things I would like to respond about this. The first is when presenting this information; you were presenting this information very rapidly. When you go into detail about building in the city it's kind of hard for us to decide if we like it or not. We don't know exactly what you mean, we don't know if you're talking about building a bunch of high-rises and put a bunch of people in those what are the situations. Where does investment come from? Is it private investment, government investment? When the government gets involved in things, there are usually more problems such as with the affordable care act. I don't understand because your addressing several different issues and planning have to pretty involving and I don't think you're getting a fair response from presentations like this. We got a serious job problem in this country. A lot of government jobs are decreasing, we don't have a lot of business and small business jobs and that's the effect of government policy.

J.G: For years we have been working on transportation, economic development, and environmental issues. We finally decide to coordinate with each other on some of these programs on the federal level sometimes you get programs that don't match up. But everyone is trying to do the same thing at the same time, so it was a good thing that we decided to coordinate all these efforts. There is a lot of things that we can come together and get funding to do some of these programs and the funding does come from the federal government. The processes to get funding for these programs are long and discourage a lot of people to participate. So it's good that were all trying to coordinate all these programs together into one plot, but those obstacles are still going to be out there. Once Senators take care some of these programs then we get moving more quickly.

H.M: I do acknowledge the fact that what we presented to you is very general. It is an abstraction of information that is down to the parcel level. What we're trying to do here is not supersede what local government is responsible for doing. The land use policies are set by local jurisdictions and they have the responsibility and right to zone them. What we're looking at is ways to provide information and guidance to those communities. This is a framework not a plan, how it gets implemented will be at various levels. Land use is a local government function and at times it's up to the county and county planning commissions. Water quality work is done by districts and sewer districts. Transportation planning is usually done by the Metropolitan Planning Organizations. All of those are working but it's a complex structure and coordination is a challenge. There needs to be a better job with our exist communities to coordinate, collaborate, and save money. The other thing were trying is to listen to folks across the region because really haven't done thins since the late 1960's early 1970's. This is a set of several discussions throughout the region. Welcome your comments on what missing. This is what we want and this is the way the region should go and possibly worked together across the lines that separate us.

Question/Comment: I want to thank you for taking the time to organize this. I know it's been very difficult to go around to different communities and present this. I want to agree with the gentleman that was discussing tourism. I do think we need to advertise in other states what we have to offer in Ohio. For instance, we need to have people to move back to our state. Our young people are graduating and leaving the state. We need to advertise we have a great cost of living here and we have stable weather here. These are important factors and we need to increase our job availability. We need to offer things that are important to get people to move back here.

H.M: Thank you we have had the opportunity to discuss with member of our board the assets we have. Question 7: I want to say that tourism is the 4th largest industry in Ohio and provide 434,000 jobs. Since clean air, water, and land are the priorities, will NEOSCC be addressing, exploring, and or education regional leaders and residents about the impact and risk about the hydraulic fracturing that is coming to our area.

H.M: We understand the controversial at hand and an emerging issues both economic and environmental challenge. We have identified what are assets are and across the region some people have stated that their first concern is clean land and water. The second concern we see is the growth of jobs and the access to jobs. What we see is a desire to have both across the region. We have taken several different points of views on this such as what is the economic potential and we looked at the water and air quality issues. People want to see clean air and water and see that as a value. How we translate that to elected official at a common share value. The pattern across the region has shifted with the language, you can't see or smell it, and it doesn't matter. What we tried to do is not to answer all

the questions at the local level by share values, goals, and directions and let figure out we can grow by networking and sharing.

Question/Comment: I would like to thank for addressing fracking. Economic liberty is essential to private property. What I have gathered so far from these meeting is that there are a lot of diversity challenges and we are spreading out, urban sprawl. But there is some concern about what is going to happen with the private property owners. In Bristol around Mosquito Lake in certain charts it looks pretty blank talking about open space. My buddy addressed you at the last meeting and showed concern about property rights. You reassured him that there would be no infringement among property owner. If there would be changes that they are going through, it would be voluntary and would be compensation for them to move to the city. Would private property owners be negotiated one on one at their individual discursion of their property or would it be a regional area, not 12 counties wide, but regional somewhere in Bristolville that composes 15 properties owners including my property, it is brought to a public vote in which the majority can out vote the minority and infringe upon their rights as property?

H.M: I think we said in the meeting is that private property if one of the fundamentals rights in the state of Ohio. It is also one of the fundamental principles in respect that we articulated very early on. I think the most important thing to take into consideration is perhaps the maps are a little misleading, what you see in green is not open space. It's what you see today, it rural agriculture town and townships that aren't experiencing any growth and doing just fine. We have a lot of agriculture land that has been sacrificed to suburban subdivisions. We map that, that is our concern and we think that if you look forward to 2040 being able to grow closer to home is an asset. We having been working with the farmland trust fund and find out their issues. How do we preserve our rural land? What we are hearing is support local agriculture. One of the things in Northeast Ohio is preserving our natural habitat or most sensitive land habits which are land trust. Land trust also respect private properties. This is nothing but a guide, some pointers for the 400 communities in the region.

Question/Comment: We need job-training facilities and job incubators located in urban neighborhoods near public housing. These things can help improve the quality of life.

H.M: That is a great suggestion and was also mention by Mayor Rush. Thanks again for everyone coming out.