Theorists all over the globe have written about the importance of young, creative talent in revitalizing cities and communities—but we don’t need to look in a book to realize that today’s youth are a vital element in shaping our tomorrow for the better. Our artists, students, professionals, and activists will be the drivers of much needed change and energy. The future leaders of our region deserve to inherit a community that represents their passions and priorities, and therefore deserve a place at the table as we formulate an idea of what these communities should look like.

Through our Vibrant Northeast Ohio initiative, we here at the Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium (NEOSCC) asked you young people to dig deep and let us know what you believe makes a vibrant community—and answer you did. Over 330 participants at five different venues pooled together to address three topics about their community:

- What is working well
- What existing programs or organizations can help turn our communities around
- How successes can be scaled and built upon

The quality and scope of responses we received was not only impressive, but incredibly inspiring. Participants at each location offered differing opinions on what makes for a vibrant region, but there were also striking similarities across the board. These are presented on the next page, followed by a summary of each event individually.

Our hope is that we will continue to receive valuable feedback from Northeast Ohio’s young leaders—to inform future action, as both an organization and a region. This is only the beginning. Each quarter will welcome another meeting in each of the five areas of Northeast Ohio. We hope that you will continue to attend and offer your voice, as well as get involved in other ways. By joining a subcommittee for your region, you can help shape both the region and future events. Also be sure to check out our Conditions and Trends Platform, which we’ll be sharing on June 26th. Information can be found at our website: www.neoscc.org.

Another set of meetings will take place throughout the region three months from now (see the next page for upcoming dates). We’ve made a commitment to give you a seat at the table. Help us make this region yours.
Combining all of the responses gathered from the five Vibrant events, the following are the responses that young professionals viewed as what is working and the key aspects that are turning communities around in Northeast Ohio, as well as potential actions we can take to leverage these successes in the region:

**WHAT’S WORKING**

- Colleges and Universities
- Community Gardens
- Public Art
- Theater
- Supporting Ethnic Diversity
- Metroparks System
- Promoting a Healthy and Active Lifestyle
- Transit Systems
- Sustainable Development
- Nonprofit Organizations
- City Parks
- Business Incubators

**WHAT’S TURNING**

- Entrepreneurship
- Fixing Infrastructure
- Creation of Independent Businesses
- Sustainability and Agriculture Development Projects
- Conferences and Programs to Facilitate Dialog
- Committing to a Community
- Corridor Development Projects
- Reusing Vacant Buildings
- City Community Movements
- Positive Attitude
- Attraction and Retention of Talent
- Communication and Collaboration

**WHAT WE CAN DO NEXT**

Young professionals focused on ten aspects- which can guide future steps to revitalization of the region:

1. Change the perception of our communities and our cities by educating people about issues
2. Embrace regionalism
3. Incorporate inclusivity of cultural diversity
4. Reverse the brain drain by giving incentives to the creative class and to other target populations
5. Create more space for urban agriculture and green area
6. Promote the benefits of public transportation options such as transit or biking
7. Combine efforts of economic development, philanthropy, and government
8. Encourage individuals to become more community-oriented via neighborhood block parties and festivals
9. Support programs to help mitigate drug use and crime in communities
10. Encourage a positive outlook on the community

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Akron July 17
- Youngstown July 24
- Lorain July 31
- Canton August 14
- Cleveland August 21

For more info visit neoscc.org

Facebook.com/VibrantNeo

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On April 17, 2012, The Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium (NEOSCC), in collaboration with The Civic Commons and R Strategy, launched a regional campaign in Akron. The NEOSCC Young Professional event, This is what VIBRANT looks like was a interactive mixer that brought together young leaders from across Greater Akron to discuss how we can make our region even more vibrant in the near future by highlighting local successes and building upon them. Over 50 young professionals and emerging leaders from across the Akron area gathered at Paolo’s Bar in the Canal Park neighborhood to discuss our three questions. What is working and what existing programs or organizations can turn the region around are combined in the word cloud below, and the list of actions proposed by young Akronites are listed.

1. Create more walkable spaces
2. Create more mixed-use spaces
3. Change the perception of the transit system
4. Connect the far-out parts with a train
5. Organizing neighborhood block parties
6. Promote community festivals
7. Utilize town-gown strategies
8. Integrate immigrant population
9. Have more local discussions

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT NEOSCC.ORG
FACEBOOK.COM/VIBRANTNEO
@VIBRANTNEO

NEXT EVENT AKRON JULY 17
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT NEOSCC.ORG
On April 24, 2012, Vibrancy became the topic of conversation in the Mahoning Valley as over 80 young professionals congregated at Overture at the DeYor Performing Arts Center to discuss the future of our region. Participants focused on revitalizing from the ground up by creating community within our neighborhoods to combat the ills of the region. The wordcloud below represents the combined responses to what is working in the region, and what is being done to turn the region and community around. A list of next steps proposed by the young professionals group is to its right.

1. More rehabilitation programs for addicts and criminals
2. Creating a dog run; dog-friendly parks
3. More landscaping downtown
4. More local writers discussing the history of Youngstown
5. Have more young elected officials
6. Urban Restoration
7. Support young entrepreneurs
8. Inspire
9. Educate and develop student entrepreneurs
10. Support local charities and philanthropies
11. Connect Local Businesses to Niche Market
12. Saving Students Money
13. Connecting and Networking with community
14. Creating Opportunities for Urban Agriculture
15. Create more affordable, livable locations within walking distance of downtown
On May 1, 2012, young professionals from across Lorain County gathered on Main Street in Downtown Amherst, at Cork’s Wine Bar and Bistro. The backdrop was a historic Main Street making a comeback. Once the center of commerce for the city, new stores are filling long-vacant storefronts. While small in number, the group was very engaged and provided not only concrete examples to answer questions but also offered words of encouragement for young professionals to take the reins and move our region forward. What is working and what existing programs or organizations can turn the region around are combined in the word cloud below, and the list of actions proposed by the young professionals are listed.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS
1. Promote the creative class
2. Incentivize entrepreneurial activity
3. Support business attraction
4. Engage economic development, philanthropy, and government
5. Reverse brain drain
6. Encourage historical Re-Invention for Manufacturing
7. Improve PR to include more positive than negative
8. Create more opportunities for youth
9. Improve public transportation
10. Build opportunities for more dialog and conversation
11. Share ideas and resources
12. Increase tourism and self-promotion

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PHOTOS | VIDEO
On May 9, 2012, Stark County participants offered a perspective that had not yet emerged in the previous three meetings. Attendees at the event at The Auricle focused not only on the local successes of Stark County, but also on successes all over the region. Specifically, they highlighted examples in Cuyahoga, Portage, and Summit counties. What is working and what existing programs or organizations can turn the region around are combined in the word cloud below, and the list of actions proposed by participants are listed.

**BUILDING ON SUCCESS**
1. Build awareness to get community involved
2. Encourage more community service
3. Support agriculture and small businesses
4. Revitalization of residential properties
5. Create good energy and positivity
6. One strong business plan
7. Bring leaders together at the table
8. Organize more community volunteers
9. Solve or mitigate major drug and crime problems
10. Work on better marketing and recruiting to hit target populations
11. Find a way to stop people from leaving the inner-cities
On May 16, 2012, over 120 young professionals assembled at Brother’s Lounge on the border of Cleveland and Lakewood to talk amongst each other and to write down their ideas about how to make the Greater Cleveland area vibrant. The mixer allowed for young professionals and members of the creative class, to discuss what they believed were the existing strengths and weaknesses in the Greater Cleveland community. The mixer also allowed young professionals to develop recommendations on how to best move the area forward through building on previous successes. What is working and what existing programs or organizations can turn the region around are combined in the word cloud below, and the list of actions proposed by young Clevelanders are listed.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS
1. Have the RTA run 24 hours
2. Become more civically engaged
3. Break down silos and embrace regionalism
4. Bringing more industries to NEO
5. Encourage more brownfield Development (Industrial)
6. Build Inclusivity and embrace cultural diversity
7. Enable a sense of community
8. Enable cross-pollination
9. Diversify the economy
10. Educate and inform people of benefits to themselves and society as a whole
11. Offer more education (in sustainability)
12. Encourage others to be positive ambassadors
13. Fix the educational system
14. Get everyone back to work and contributing
15. Get people to recycle
16. Give all people an opportunity to be successful regardless of race or economic circumstance
17. Integrate the social and economic with infrastructure
18. Integrate the East and West sides of town
19. Create more Lakefront Greenspace
20. Learn and adopt principles that work in places around the country and copy them
21. Create more Availability to Local Food
22. Create more programs to help get people off welfare
23. Enact more taxes
24. Promote active lifestyles
25. Improve transportation
26. Produce/distribute regional products in Cleveland
27. Rely more on Local food resources
28. Build more Safe Bike Lanes across NEO and bridges
29. Create more vocational work and training programs
30. Stop building and supporting landfills
31. Support entrepreneurial efforts instead of waiting for the next big company
32. Teach people about the economic long run outlook