

June 2002

the newsletter of



award-winning COMPASS!

from the NAICO (National Association of County Information Officers):

Excellent Recognition for the Community COMPASS website
Superior Recognition (the highest honor) for Community COMPASS in the area of media relations

from the NACO (National Association of Counties):

Achievement Award Winner (in recognition of an innovative program which contributes to and enhances community government in the United States) for the Community COMPASS Youth Forum, a one day forum held at Paul Brown Stadium in October 2001 to receive input from 160 students and 31 faculty members from 32 Hamilton County schools

Hamilton County Community COMPASS



commissioners solidly behind effort

On May 29, the Regional Planning Commission held a press conference to outline the work of the CATs. Representatives from WKRC, WLWT, WCPO, The Cincinnati Enquirer, The Community Press, Metro Networks, and WLW attended.

In their remarks at the press conference, Commissioners John Dowlin and Todd Portune commended COMPASS's collaborative, citizen-driven efforts. "We are doing some very good things here with Community COMPASS. I think we are getting people involved, and we're getting people to talk about issues, not about positions," Commissioner Dowlin said. Commissioner Portune said he was hopeful the participation of citizens would ensure that COMPASS is going to be a plan that has evolved from "from the ground up as opposed to the top down."

four CAT teams develop 144 strategies

On May 21, the COMPASS Action Teams (CATs) completed their tasks of drafting strategies for the county's growth and prosperity. Comprised of county residents from various backgrounds, the CATs identified benchmark indicators for each of COMPASS's 23 objectives. These indicators form the basis for quantifiable measurements that planners will use to gauge how the county is doing in terms of fulfilling each objective.

At the Planning Partnership and COMPASS Steering Team meeting, held on June 13, a leader of each CAT team summarized the strategies his or her group developed in the CAT meetings. Key points from the COMPASS Action Teams are highlighted on the following pages.



Regional Planning Commission Executive Director Ron Miller answers a question at the May 29th COMPASS press conference



Participants at the first meeting of the *Balancing Development and the Environment* COMPASS Action Team

CAT Team 1, *Assuring Economic Prosperity*, developed strategies that will establish a lively downtown that serves all the residents of the county, with mixed income housing to make downtown living a possibility for anyone. Ideas focused on enhancing arts and entertainment, redeveloping Vine Street, increasing the liveliness of Fountain Square, and carrying out “The Banks” project. More transportation choices and increased county-wide connectivity are also priorities. In terms of economic development, members of the CAT stressed the need for collaborative initiatives on the local, regional, and state levels. Local issues, such as revitalization, go hand-in-hand with a regional comprehensive economic development plan and an economic development consortium. Finally, this CAT stressed the importance of education, in terms of partnerships between universities, businesses, and the government, as well as its role in creating access points to the workforce and upward mobility within it. Members of this CAT pushed for promotion of vocational programs and advocated education for all. They envisioned an education system where students can move easily between institutions, levels, and types of education in order to develop growth of the workforce.

The second CAT team, titled *Building Collaborative Decision Making*, was unique in that it focused on developing a framework which would be used to implement strategies generated by the other CAT teams. One main focus of this group was to embrace all stakeholders and consider all parties while maintaining a pragmatic and functional process. All governments should have the opportunity to take part in any issues that interest them. Similarly, participation of all citizens should be invited, encouraged, supported, and incorporated and the tools enabling participation should be distributed through civic groups and the public sector. CAT members felt regional citizenship should be developed so residents work together in order to benefit communities as well as the entire county. Lastly, members of this CAT felt collaboration must occur between the public, private, and civic sectors, and identified the Planning Partnership as the vehicle for developing these links. They challenged the Planning Partnership to continue recruiting organizations from all sectors so goals may be accomplished.

Embracing Diversity and Equity, the third CAT team, focused on a variety of issues: encouraging and maintaining clean, safe, inclusive, accessible mixed-income communities that foster opportunities for social integration; providing high quality, equitable education and recreation for all; promoting diversity in public institutions such as law enforcement; and promoting local government responsibility for such regional issues as affordable housing, social services, and mobility. Health and housing were a priority of this group, as they developed strategies that would distribute services throughout the community in order to reduce physical barriers to access, while ensuring that everybody could receive preventative and restorative health services. Members of this CAT pushed for changes in education to make what we currently have more effective while adding to it as well. Implementation of strategies will promote partnerships between the private and public sectors in order to establish mentoring and internship programs and better funding for education. In order to enhance existing schools, more after-school programs should be created and the school day or year lengthened. CAT members desired programs to aid parents, as well as new cultural programs

to increase diversity and understanding. Strategies were also targeted at ensuring consistent enforcement policies and improved access for all citizens by enhancing the public transportation system.

CAT Team 4, *Balancing Development and the Environment*, was concerned with preserving greenspace and environmental features such as hillsides, aquifers, riparian corridors, rivers, and streams. Redevelopment of existing areas was favored over new development in vacant areas; this would also result in the build up of the urban core. They believed that citizen involvement in Community COMPASS and local land use plans, coupled with government regulations, could ensure success. In order to fiscally allow for redevelopment, CAT team members pushed for regional revenue sharing, expanded commercial reinvestment programs, preferential funding for communities with updated comprehensive plans, compact development and mixed-use zoning. Finally, this CAT team developed strategies that would use infrastructure and transportation as the means to control sprawl while improving county-wide accessibility. They placed great importance on coordination of land use, transportation, and infrastructure plans.

All four CATs were very efficient and successful, finally producing 144 strategies, as well as suggestions for implementation, potential partners, model programs, and possible roadblocks, among other considerations. Their great efforts have contributed inestimably to Community COMPASS and will help make it succeed!

summary of CAT participant evaluations

After finishing the CAT process, participants completed evaluations regarding the COMPASS Action Team meetings. Overall, comments were positive, and participants liked that they were part of a process that would move Hamilton County forward. They also enjoyed interacting with a diverse group of people and sharing ideas in an open format. Several participants said the grass-roots nature of the project appealed to them.

CAT members indicated they wished there was more time to work on developing strategies and less time spent wordsmithing. They would have liked more background information on some of the topics, and wish there had been even more diversity, both in terms of race and age as well as the jurisdictions from which citizens came.

In general, people seemed to enjoy the process and their comments will help to keep Community COMPASS as effective as possible. Thank you to all CAT participants!

help Hamilton County chart its course

If you would like further information on Community COMPASS please visit our website at www.communitycompass.org or call the COMPASS hotline at 513-946-4505. And please continue to give comments and suggestions and stay involved!



Rodney Brown, co-leader of CAT 3: *Embracing Diversity and Equity* speaks at the strategy workshop held before the fourth CAT meeting on May 21st

**Community
COMPASS**



HAMILTON COUNTY
Regional
Planning
Commission

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