





Flint Hills
Regional Growth Plan

Regional Coordination

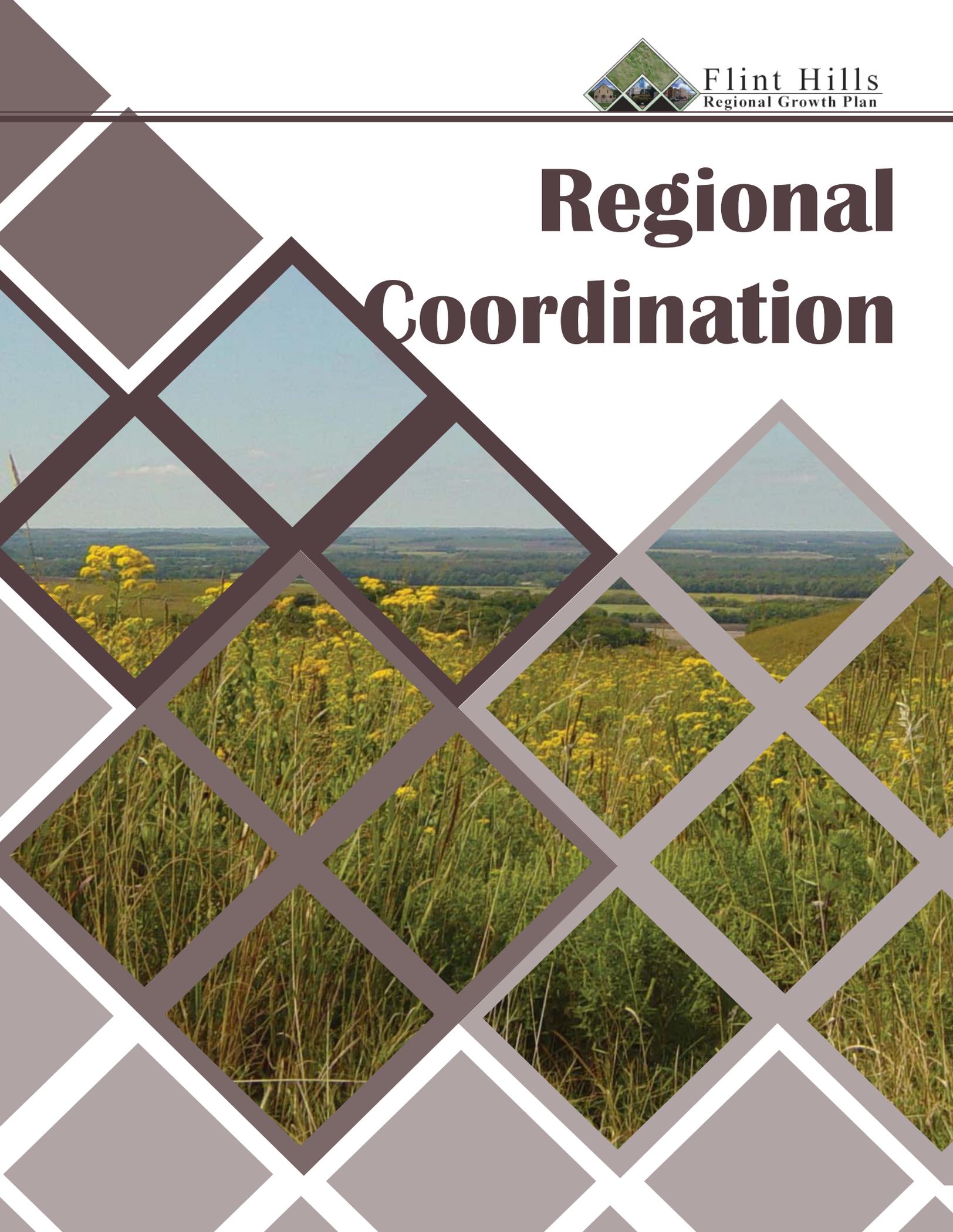




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REGIONAL COORDINATION

Section Summary

Regional coordination is the process of making and carrying out decisions at a level that transcends the traditional political boundaries of cities and counties. As communities become more mobile, economic capital becomes more fluid, and information becomes easier and cheaper to exchange, factors affecting economic vitality and livability depends less on individual jurisdictional boundaries and more on the image and quality of life within a region.

Existing Conditions

The Flint Hills region has increasingly sought more ways to attract economic growth and funding to its communities, sparking a renewed interest in collaborative efforts among cities, counties, employers, and service providers.

Regional collaboration is not new to the Flint Hills. Since the 1990s, Riley, Geary, and Pottawatomie Counties have participated in a Tri-County Congress that promotes leadership development and cooperation among government officials and staff. The Base Realignment and Closure process of 2004-05 has added further momentum to this emphasis on interjurisdictional problem-solving. The Flint Hills Regional Task Force served as the Steering Committee for a study of the region's growth funded by a U.S. Department of Labor National Emergency Grant, and acts as the Steering Committee for the current Flint Hills Regional Growth Plan (FHRGP).



Assessment/Gap Analysis

To explore the desirability of potential services and to assess the level of support for a regional entity, the planning team conducted an Expert Panel and Regional Luncheon and administered a survey to local elected officials, senior management, and school board officials in the seven county region. Feedback from the panel and luncheon identified the following potential functions of a regional entity in the Flint Hills:

- **The Citizen's Perspective** - The ability to offer high quality amenities within a region, thus strengthening the attractiveness of its individual communities to prospective residents.
- **Transportation** - Transportation analysis must consider regional context. Such collaboration allows individual communities to plan for cross-jurisdictional commutes, to prioritize among projects, and to implement larger system improvements from coordinated corridor management to a regional trail system. A consolidated voice can advocate more effectively for scarce transportation funding. While the Flint Hills has county-based demand-response transit

KEY DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THIS SECTION:

- Strategic Action Plan and Growth Impact Assessment for the Flint Hills Region, RKG Associates, October 2006
- Vision 20, Riley Geary and Pottawatomie Counties

available, additional multi-jurisdictional cooperation is essential for exploring regional transit options. With an estimated population of more than 50,000 residents, the Manhattan Urban Area must also form a Metropolitan Planning Organization to coordinate transportation planning decisions and allocate federal funds for projects.

- **Economic Development** - The ability to manage key economic resources, to continue diversifying the job base, and to deliver needed services efficiently are critical steps in sustaining the economic health of the entire region. The direct economic benefits of regional cooperation include:
 - The ability to save citizens money by planning and delivering certain services more efficiently i.e. managing water resources and solid waste disposal
 - The ability to do more with less by aggressively pursuing available state and federal funds
 - An enhanced ability to target key industries, thus creating more jobs and increasing private sector investment
- **Environment** - A regional outlook enables communities to create solutions and to develop a management framework that addresses the root causes of environmental impacts.
- **Eco-Tourism and Recreation** - A regional entity could elevate the visibility of the Flint Hills as a heritage and eco-tourism based destination and collaborate with existing Chambers of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureaus in jointly marketing such regional amenities.
- **Homeland Security and Disaster Relief** - Broader coordination enables local communities to pool resources and improve communications and logistics among the region's public safety staff, so they can function as a single response unit during a major crisis.
- **Data Coordination** - A regional entity can meet the immediate need for an authority to house and maintain the data that has been gathered for the FHRGP and other previous studies.
- **Technical Assistance** - Regional staff can function as on-loan professionals to the smaller local governments in the region, enhancing their capacity to address local issues. Regional staff can also assist local planning efforts by performing desired technical functions that communities may not have the resources or expertise to do by themselves. Examples may include code enforcement, transportation and land use modeling, and population forecasting.
- **Social Services** - A regional organization can help to coordinate efforts across jurisdictions and assist existing entities in pursuing additional federal, state and non-profit funds.
- **Military Relations** - A regional organization can serve as the central point of contact for facilitating relations among local governments and the military's community relations officers. A regional organization can help to collect information on and study the impacts of mission transformation, such as troop levels and civilian employment, deployments, and modifications in military training and other operations.
- **Education and Workforce** - A regional organization can directly support the efforts of community school districts by helping to assess the demographic impacts of troop realignments on local facilities and staff and by advocating for statewide policy changes that improve access to educational resources, such as more flexible teacher certification standards.
- **Housing** - A regional organization can assist in tracking the construction of new housing units, assess the demographic profile of incoming families to help ensure an appropriate mix of new housing types, and promote strategies to maintain housing affordability across communities.

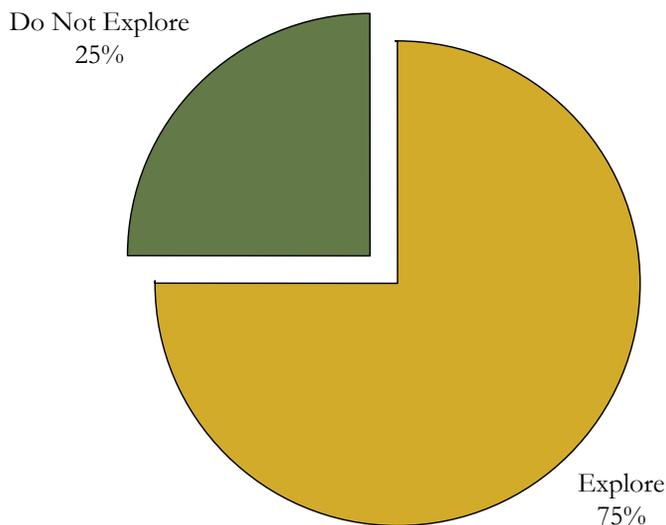
- **Rural Development** - Regional organizations are key players in advancing rural development through innovative and comprehensive strategic planning and alliances with private, public, and nonprofit entities.

Study findings highlight transportation, data centralization, planning technical assistance, and military community coordination as critical areas that require additional inter-jurisdictional coordination in the Flint Hills region.

Recommendations

Unique to this section, recommendations are not only based on guidance from the FHGP Planning Team and Committees, but also from our community’s leadership. In early September, the FHGP planning team distributed a survey gauging support for regional collaboration in the Flint Hills to elected officials and senior administrative staff of governments with populations around 1,000 and to school board members serving in the region . Based on the survey responses, most believe that the timing is appropriate to explore forming a regional entity.

Should We Explore a Regional Organization?



Regional Collaboration Survey, September 2007

The time may be now. Local governments could begin the work of establishing a regional organization. Key steps are outlined below.

Develop Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) To Agree To Work Together To Create A Regional Organization

This MOU should be a voluntary agreement to work together to create a regional organization that meets the needs of its member communities.

Define the Regional Organization

The next steps would involve defining the scope of services and gathering additional information on how best to form a regional organization. There is no “one size fits all” organizational structure, nor is there a prescribed mission statement. However, the organization should have a formal structure that includes representation from key participants in the MOU and encourages involvement from major regional stakeholders such as Fort Riley and Kansas State University.

As illustrated in the survey, this organization should focus on the communities highest ranked needs:

- Planning for quality growth
- Coordinating with the military (Fort Riley)
- Military impact planning
- Grant application assistance
- Providing regional growth forecasts

Pursue OEA Funding

Pursue available funding from the Office of Economic Adjustment to establish a regional entity. A request for funding requires:

- a clearly defined organizational mandate
- staff roles and responsibilities and governance structure

- proposed approach to long term funding and initial budget

Four potential initial areas of focus are described below.

1. Promote the sharing of information between communities and stakeholders related to post expansion impacts.

An ongoing informational exchange between the private and public sectors is vital for both parties. Establishing an organization that represents all local communities creates one point of contact for various federal entities (e.g., Congressional delegation, U.S. Army, U.S. Department of Transportation, Department of Commerce, etc.). In its Base Redevelopment and Realignment Manual (March 2006), the Department of Defense suggests this approach for communities affected by installation growth.

2. Provide leadership in obtaining Federal and State funds in order to address identified impacts.

Funds obtained would finance regional studies and evaluations of necessary infrastructure improvements, as well as identifying other areas of possible impacts. Local governments would jointly determine the allocation of the funds received based a coordinated ranking of priorities.

3. Work with local communities to maintain a leadership role in planning activities associated with the region's growth.

Population increases and greater economic diversity will require a concerted effort to prioritize those improvements necessary to support regional growth and secure grants and loans. Local communities will remain responsible for adopting and enacting all recommended actions, but the regional organization can give guidance on articulating a vision and on developing and evaluating feasible options and funding strategies.

4. Assist local communities with regionally oriented marketing efforts and materials.

Several successful organizations are actively marketing the cities and counties within the region, as well as producing marketing materials focused on specific cities or counties. To better manage future broad economic changes, the regional organization could spearhead marketing efforts on a more comprehensive basis. For example, demographic information about the projected growth of the region should be compiled to pursue regional retail and business opportunities. The regional entity could also work to advise existing local marketing organizations (e.g., Chambers of Commerce).

Implementation

The following are recommended implementation actions: each is broken out by timeframe, implementation partner, and funding sources. Additional information can be found in the Fiscal section of this report.

Flint Hills Regional Growth Plan
 Implementation Strategy Matrix (2007)
 General Regional Implementation Efforts

	Implementation Partners		Implementation Timing			Est. Public Cost	Funding Sources
	Public	Private and Not-For-Profit	Immediate 2007-2009	Mid-Range 2010-2012	Long-Range 2013-2020		
ISSUE:	Regional coordination will be further required as the cities and counties begin to “grow together”.						
GOAL:	Find common areas of need among communities and contribute mutually to save costs and increase efficiency.						
OBJECTIVE:	Identify and implement tools that could foster intraregional growth.						
Action 1:		RPE / CC	B	X		A - B	OEA / GR
Action 2:		RPE		X			
		RE - Realtors					

Implementation Table Key

Cost Key:

- (A) \$0-\$25,000
- (B) \$25,000-\$50,000
- (C) \$50,000-\$100,000
- (D) \$100,000-\$250,000
- (E) \$250,000-\$500,000
- (F) \$500,000-\$750,000
- (G) \$1 million +
- (--)- Unknown or no cost

IMPLEMENTATION CODES

PUBLIC SECTOR

- CC – City or County Council/Commission
- DOC- Department of Commerce
- KACCRRRA - Kansas Resource and Referral
- KDOT - Kansas Dept of Transportation
- KSU - Kansas State University
- LG - Local Governments
- LRRA - Local Resource & Referral Agency
- PC – Planning Commission/Department
- RPE - Regional Planning Entity
- FR - Fort Riley
- PH - Local Public Health Department
- PS - Public School System
- PP - Public Process
- WFC- Workforce Centers

PRIVATE SECTOR/NON-PROFIT

- B - Businesses
- C – Private consultants
- CoC – Chamber of Commerce
- CVB – Convention and Visitors Bureau
- D – Private Developer
- PO – Property Owner
- V – Volunteers
- DM – Downtown Merchants/Main Street
- CNGO - Conservation Group
- RE - Realtors
- SSP - Social Service Providers

FUNDING SOURCES

- GR - General Revenue
- SMRT - Kansas Smart Start Grants
- KS - State Revenue Source
- SID - Special Improvement Districts
- BID - Business Improvement Districts
- TID - Tax Increment Districts
- CDBG - Community Development Block Grants
- KDOT - Statewide Transportation Funds
- CFF - Community Facility Fee
- OEA - Office of Economic Adjustment
- CF - Conservation Funds



REGIONAL COORDINATION

A. Introduction and Methodology

Regional coordination is the process of making and carrying out decisions at a level that crosses the traditional political boundaries of cities and counties. Various social, economic, and environmental trends reinforce the value of coordinated, comprehensive decision-making:

- Regional residents increasingly travel across city and county boundaries every morning on the way to work
- Watersheds, which determine water quality and drainage patterns, conform to natural land forms rather than jurisdictional lines
- Highly visible and readily accessible regional shopping centers attract shoppers from multiple cities
- Fumes, gases, chemicals, and stormwater runoff that pollute the air and water disperse across communities
- Companies looking to locate in an area typically analyze the workforce capabilities and quality of life of the region

Across the country, as communities begin to understand and document these overlapping influences, they increasingly look toward new decision-making structures that better align with complex, broad, and inter-related regional issues.

To explore the desirability of potential services and to assess the level of support for a regional entity, the planning team conducted an Expert Panel and Regional Luncheon and administered a survey to local elected officials, senior management, and school board officials in the seven county region



B. Baseline Analysis and Background

As the Flint Hills grows in population and economic diversity, its communities have sought improved ways to attract private investment and funding, thus sparking an increased interest in cooperation among cities, counties, employers, and service providers.

Two major economic drivers of the region, Fort Riley and Kansas State University (K-State), significantly influence the dialogue about cross-jurisdictional cooperation. In the early 1990s, the planning document “Vision 20” recognized that major employers benefited the entire region and drew from a workforce living within the three-county area of Riley, Geary, and Pottawatomie Counties.

The “Vision 20” report recommended promoting additional regional collaboration among the three counties. After initial discussions, the three counties, the chambers of commerce of Junction City, Manhattan, and Wamego, and representatives from Fort Riley and K-State agreed to

study on an ad-hoc basis regional goals, aspirations and needs. A year later, participants identified general areas of concern that included water quality and sources, leadership, education, and transportation.

In 1992, the counties organized a Tri-County Congress focused on promoting leadership and collaboration among staff from the three counties and their municipalities. This congress evolved into a leadership summit, which has continued to meet on an annual or bi-annual basis since its inception. In 2004-05, the Base Realignment and Closure process further accelerated the momentum for regional cooperation.

In December of 2005, participants at the Tri-County Congress retreat articulated a commitment to regional approaches, identified priorities and strategies for implementation, and then defined a vision in which to pursue future collaboration efforts. Since then, interest has led to the establishment of the Flint Hills Regional Task Force, which has served as an advisory body in subsequent planning efforts.

In addition, several other regional organizations now exist to assist local communities in planning for military related impacts, including:

- Fort Riley Accommodation Task Force
- The Junction City/Geary County Military Affairs Council
- The Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce
- The Military Relations Committees
- Fort Riley Area Superintendents Coalition

While some regional entities have evolved recently to address the ongoing effects of post expansion, various providers in the Flint Hills region have delivered essential services across multiple jurisdictions for many years. Examples include:

- The North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging
- Pawnee Mental Health Services

- Riley County Aging Transportation Agency
- Flint Hills Job Corps Center
- Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board
- Junction City/Geary County Metropolitan Planning Commission
- Big Lakes Recycling

In October 2006, the U.S. Department of Labor National Emergency Grant funded study resulted in the Strategic Action Plan and Growth Impact Assessment for the Flint Hills Region, which analyzed military-related growth impacts on the primary (Geary, Riley, and Pottawatomie Counties) and secondary (Clay, Morris, Wabaunsee, Dickinson Counties) study areas. The plan strongly suggested that a regional organization could benefit the Flint Hills by serving as an information clearinghouse, seeking federal and state funding for planning initiatives, helping to coordinate land use and infrastructure policy, and spearheading joint marketing efforts.

As part of the FHRGP, the planning team reviewed case studies of various regional organizations, ranging in size, location, and function. On April 24-25 of 2007, participants attended a workshop and luncheon to discuss opportunities for regional cooperation. Cameron Moore, Executive Director of the National Association of Regional Councils gave an overview of the history of regional cooperation and emerging trends. Mr. Moore along with four expert panelists (Wendell Lawrence of the Lincoln Trail Area Development District; Alan Matheson of Envision Utah; Rob O'Conner, Military Impact Planner for Pike's Peak Area Council of Governments, and Jim Hicks of RKG Associates) then discussed the daily challenges of regional planning, highlighting these main themes:

- Any regional organization must be based on shared values
- Regional cooperation takes on many forms; one size does not fit all
- Regional organizations vary from single issue entities to multi-purpose, comprehensive organizations

C. Key Issues and Assumptions

C.1 Form and Financing of Regional Collaboration

To better understand how regional collaboration efforts are organized, funded, and coordinated, the planning team conducted an in-depth analysis of eight regional collaborative efforts (See Table C.1).

Generally, these regional efforts could not be neatly characterized by their form or funding source. Regional collaborative efforts took on a variety of structures, funded by a unique mix of federal, state, local, and private sources. Despite organizational variation, each of these entities is stable, broad-based, and adept at consensus building and creating partnerships.

Funding Sources

From the case study analysis, there are three main formalized regional organizational structures that have a guaranteed funding source from the federal government. These forms are: the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Rural Planning Organization (RPO), and the Economic Development District (EDD). In addition, multiple federal funding sources are not tied to these specific designations, such as grant money from the Office of Economic Development (OEA) and rural development grants offered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). State funding is also available for regional organizations and is usually offered as a matching grant to federal funds.

Of the organizations studied, The Lincoln Trail Area Development District, the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, the Mid-America Regional Council, and the Atlanta Regional Commission were organizations that incorporated as an MPO, RPO, and EDD and receive much of their federal funding through these designations. The Lawrence-Douglas County MPO receives all of its money through its MPO status.

Table C.1 – Summary of Regional Case Studies

Regional Council	Type	Services Performed						
		Transportation	Economic	Environment	Social Services	Military Rel.	Data/Technical	Rural Dev.
Lawrence-Douglas County MPO (Kansas)	MPO	X	-	-	-	-	X	-
Lincoln Trail Area Development District (Kentucky)	MPO, RPO, EDD	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
Pike's Peak Area Council of Governments (Colorado)	MPO, RPO, EDD	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mid-America Regional Council (Missouri)	MPO, RPO, EDD	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
Atlanta Regional Commission (Georgia)	MPO, RPO, EDD	X	X	X	X	-	X	-
Coalition for Utah's Future - sponsor of Envision Utah (Utah)	NPO	X	-	X	-	-	X	-
Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization (New York)	NPO	-	X	-	X	X	-	X
Fort Leonard Wood Regional Commerce and Growth Association	NPO	X	X	-	-	-	-	-

The Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization is not designated as an MPO, RPO, or an EDD, but the organization does receive a significant portion of its budget from federal sources (primarily through an OEA grant). Envision Utah is a highly successful regional organization that rarely receives money from federal or state sources but instead receives much of its funding through foundation grants, donations, sponsorships, and events, and local government support.

Table C.1 summarizes the regional planning agencies studied by type and services performed. A more detailed table and case study sheets on each of these regional organizations can be found in the appendix.

Forms of Regional Cooperation

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO)

MPOs are formed after the U.S. Bureau of Census designates areas as urbanized, usually following the decennial census. The City of Manhattan reached a population of 50,737 as per Census Bureau's July 2006 estimate. The federal government requires that any urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 must form an MPO to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects reflect a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive planning process. The government channels all transportation support through the MPO, which then allocates funds among its constituent governments. Having passed the 50,000 population threshold, the Manhattan Urban Area must take steps to form an MPO to conduct transportation planning and to receive federal funds for future projects.

Based on recent estimates by the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), over half of the 560 regional entities operating in the U.S. are MPOs. MPOs are the most common form of regional planning in the U.S., primarily because they are required by federal law. While an MPO is

federally mandated for cities with populations greater than 50,000 people, MPOs may function as more than single-purpose transportation entities. Numerous transportation planning groups fall under the umbrella of a larger and more comprehensive regional organization such as the Lincoln Trail Area Development District, the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, the Mid-America Regional Council, and the Atlanta Regional Commission.

Of the regional organizations studied, the Lawrence-Douglas County MPO is the only entity that functions purely in a transportation capacity. An MPO is an agency created by federal law to provide local input for urban transportation planning and to allocate federal transportation funds to cities with populations of greater than 50,000. Under federal law emanating from the 1973 Highway Act and the Urban Mass Transit Act, MPOs perform significant planning and programming of federally funded highways, multi-modal transportation, and transit projects. Through the Long Range Transportation Plan and its link to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), MPOs are responsible for approving significant expenditures of federal dollars, and as such, must develop an annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) outlining funding sources and expenditures. The 2007 UPWP for the Lawrence-Douglas County MPO totaled \$306,500 with 80% coming from state or federal funds.

Rural Planning Organizations (RPO)

RPOs are regional collaborations that primarily center on procuring federal transportation funding for rural areas. Unlike MPOs, RPOs are not federally mandated, and they are less common. In Kansas, the State Department of Transportation is the primary agency that conducts transportation planning for rural areas. In other states such as Iowa and North Carolina, RPOs perform this role. Usually RPOs are created on a voluntary basis and are eligible for Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants specifically marked for

rural areas. An RPO would also be eligible to receive grants specific to rural development such as those offered by the USDA. Establishing an RPO begins a formalized process that could facilitate the establishment of an MPO once a region qualifies for urban status.

Economic Development District (EDD)

The Economic Development District is a formal designation of a regional collaboration effort that deals primarily with economic development. This designation allows a regional organization to compete for money available from Economic Development Assistance through the Department of Commerce. According to Cameron Moore, Director of NARC, the federal government typically will grant \$50,000-\$60,000 to start an EDD. Along with providing startup loans to small business, the main requirement of an EDD is to develop a regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This CEDS strategy is a five-year plan requiring broad public input. The CEDS strategy identifies regional economic development priorities and is updated on a yearly basis. Once the CEDS strategy is in place, the Department of Commerce can fund up to \$2 million for projects specifically outlined in the CEDS strategy.

The South Central Kansas Economic Development District (SCKEDD), encompassing the 14 county area around the City of Wichita, is a great example of regional collaboration primarily focused on economic development. The mission statement of SCKEDD is “To provide professional leadership and technical assistance in finance packaging, advice and procedures to individuals, companies and government agencies for the purpose of stimulating the economy within our 14-county area.” As part of this mission statement, SCKEDD prepared a comprehensive economic development plan for the region that focused on two strategies for promoting the region’s economic growth, including diversifying the regional economy beyond aircraft manufacturing and building the region’s competitive advantages in the manufacturing clusters of aircraft and plastics.

Non Profit Regional Organizations

These organizations do not fall under a specific designation as listed above (RPOs, MPOs, and EDDs), but do receive numerous federal, state, and local grants along with funds from individual members, foundation or private grants, and endowments.

Organizations such as the Lincoln Trail Area Development District, the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, the Mid-America Regional Council, and the Atlanta Regional Commission are MPOs and EDDs, but they also function non-profit organizations that conduct environmental programs, provide aging services, gather demographic data, and offer technical assistance to member local governments. Additionally, the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments coordinates with five military installations and performs military impact planning.

Envision Utah is the product of a private/public partnership focused on quality growth in the Greater Wasatch area of Utah. The organization provides training, resources, and support for local governments as they pursue the region’s Quality Growth Strategy. Envision Utah receives 60% of its \$1,000,000 budget from private sources and the rest comes from compensation for services.

The Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization is a non-profit entity primarily devoted to maintaining open communication between the military and civilian communities. The organization also engages in housing studies and workforce development. State and federal grants cover approximately 75% of the agency’s \$1,300,000 annual budget.

The Fort Leonard Wood Regional Commerce and Growth Association (FLWRCGA) is an organization with a very specific focus and defined scope of work primarily focused on workforce and economic development. The FLWRCGA operates with an annual budget of \$35,000 that is funded solely from membership dues.

D. Needs Assessment

D.1 Potential Benefits of Regional Coordination for the Flint Hills Area

The Citizen's Perspective

When residents seek housing, employment or services, they seldom limit their possible choices to one particular jurisdiction. People move freely among jurisdictions to find affordable housing, good schools, convenient shopping and entertainment, outdoor recreation and job opportunities. The ability to offer high quality amenities within a region thus strengthens the attractiveness of its individual communities.

Transportation

As the region continues to grow, the influx of people and traffic will place more strain on existing roadways, thus demanding more efficient use of transportation resources. Transportation analysis must consider regional context. Such collaboration allows individual communities to plan for cross-jurisdictional commutes, to prioritize among projects, and to implement larger system improvements from coordinated corridor management to a regional trail system. A consolidated voice can advocate more effectively for scarce transportation funding. While the Flint Hills has county-based demand-response transit available, additional multi-jurisdictional cooperation is essential for exploring regional transit options to assist the growing number of households with limited vehicular access and citizens who desire transportation options.

Federal mandates also highlight the need for increased regional collaboration. Based upon the results of the 2006 Census population estimate, at least a portion of the region must form an MPO to conduct regional transportation planning and to qualify for federal transportation dollars.

Multi-jurisdictional cooperation, particularly in the form of an airport authority, could also support the expansion of services at the Manhattan Regional Airport. Some of the benefits of a regional airport are listed below:

- Air Transportation Benefits - Time Saved, Costs Avoided
- Stimulation of Business - Supplements Regional Business Activity
- Aeromedical Evacuation - Life-saving Activities especially in rural areas
- Pilot Training

In many cases, a regional airport is financially self-sustaining as revenues generated by airlines and other aviation users, concessionaires, and airport parking fund operating expenses.

Multi-jurisdictional cooperation among counties for financing airport improvements may help to leverage other funds specifically allocated for rural air services such as the Air Improvement Program (AIP) under the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and the Essential Air Service (EAS) program under the Department of Transportation.

Economic Development

The ability to manage key economic resources, to continue diversifying the job base, and to deliver needed services efficiently are critical steps in sustaining the economic health of the entire region. The direct economic benefits of regional cooperation include:

- The ability to save citizens money by planning and delivering certain services more efficiently i.e. managing water resources and solid waste disposal
- The ability to do more with less by more aggressively pursuing available state and federal funds
- An enhanced ability to target additional key industries, thus creating more jobs and increasing private sector investment

Fort Riley

Mission growth at Fort Riley presents a major opportunity for the Flint Hills area. With the return of the “Big Red One,” the post will receive over 9,000 troops and 2,000 civilian positions and generate an increased economic impact of approximately \$385 million.

According to the Strategic Action Plan and Growth Impact Assessment for the Flint Hills Region (SAP), the expansion at Fort Riley will yield an approximate net increase in the seven-county study area population of 26-32% by 2012.

This economic and residential growth will have a profound effect on the region, especially in the core planning areas of transportation, environment, housing, and land use. The SAP report strongly encourages that individual communities create an interim regional organization to assist in preparing for this impending growth.

Kansas State University (K-State)

With over 23,000 students and approximately 5,800 faculty and staff, the university is a major generator of economic activity, as well as a regional cultural and recreational resource. The university has numerous cultural facilities that draw tourists and visitors from around the state. As a member of the Big 12 conference, K-State’s sporting events are also widely attended by students, alumni, staff and community members.

Regional coordination is an effective means of sparking investment and job creation in the Flint Hills. Today’s knowledge-based businesses seek out a particular area depending on its workforce, transportation system, housing, and overall quality of life - elements common among the individual communities of a region. Pooled resources allow local governments to increase their visibility and compete successfully in the global marketplace. Cooperating local governments, for example, can compile data for prospective industries and engage in broader economic development strategies and marketing efforts that target key economic sectors, such as the emerging field of bioscience.

Geary, Riley, and Pottawatomie Counties are participating in a joint public-private economic development venture to explore the feasibility of a Flint Hills Horse Park & Events Center. The proposed 230-acre regional equine show and competition arena has the potential to draw national and international visitors and competitors and host major entertainment and recreational events. The feasibility study predicts a \$17 million annual economic impact to the Flint Hills region from the facility and the creation of over 250 jobs.

Environment

Regional collaboration is critical to implementing effective environmental management and protection efforts. Environmental issues do not neatly coincide with political boundaries but instead correspond to natural boundaries such as watersheds and ecological habitats. Air quality, water quality, grassland preservation, storm water runoff, invasive species, wildlife corridors, solid waste and hazardous-waste management can all have a profound effect on quality of life. A regional outlook enables communities to create solutions and develop a management framework that addresses the root causes of environmental impacts.

An excellent opportunity to collaborate on environmental issues is for the region’s communities to partner with Fort Riley in using the installation’s advanced solid waste disposal technologies to convert waste into energy and reduce impacts on landfills.

Eco-Tourism and Recreation

The tallgrass prairie landscape is a defining but increasingly threatened characteristic of the Flint Hills region. Preserving this cherished resource requires integrated, rather than piecemeal land use decisions. The Kansas Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, K-State, Fort Riley, individual landowners, and local governments have all collaborated in various projects to protect the Konza prairie and other

environmentally sensitive resources that anchor the unique identity of the region.

A regional entity could elevate the visibility of the Flint Hills as a heritage and eco-tourism based destination and collaborate with existing Chambers of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureaus in jointly marketing such regional amenities as:

- the Konza prairie ecosystem
- Milford and Tuttle Creek Lakes
- Regional rivers (Republican and Solomon Rivers)
- Regional trails
- the Oregon Trail and the Military Trail
- Fort Riley
- Council Grove and other historic downtowns

Homeland Security and Disaster Relief

The September 11th attacks and natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and the recent flooding throughout the great plains have heightened emphasis on regional planning for disaster preparedness and recovery.

Broader coordination enables local communities to pool resources and improve communications and logistics among the region's public safety staff, so they can function as a single response unit during a major crisis. The region can also jointly lobby for federal funds to support its Homeland Security efforts.

Data Coordination

Accurate data collected among multiple jurisdictions allows decision-makers to better understand regional issues and impacts. Housing markets, public safety issues, and social service needs follow trends that overlap jurisdictional boundaries, making them best monitored within a regional context. Similarly, the consistent use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to map issues across the region lets decision-makers identify the broad spatial

patterns associated with resource use, development and the environment. Additionally, a centralized clearinghouse of data on demographics, workforce skills, and development activity can support grant requests by area service providers, assist in recruiting new businesses, support regional modeling, and help to track housing inventory and market conditions. A regional entity can meet the immediate need for an authority to house and maintain the data that has been gathered for the FHRGP and other previous regional studies.

Technical Assistance

Regional staff can function as on-loan professionals to the smaller local governments in the region, enhancing their capacity to address local issues and performing desired technical functions that communities may not have the resources or expertise to do by themselves. For example, regional staff can conduct studies relating to growth and service delivery, develop model codes, identify best practices, produce maps, perform code enforcement, and conduct transportation and land use modeling and population forecasting.

Forecasting is a natural function of regional entities because it involves aggregating and analyzing disparate data sources and broad trends. Having accurate demographic data is essential because many federal programs distribute funds on the basis of population driven formulas. Furthermore, regional staff may be able to assist in securing in and acting as a conduit for grant monies to local governments.

Social Services

A regional organization can help to coordinate efforts across jurisdictions and assist existing entities in pursuing additional federal, state, and non-profit funds. A regional organization, for example, can function as a centralized clearinghouse of demographic statistics and other data required to support grant applications. Many social service providers already organize to deliver services on a regional basis, such as the

North-Central Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging and Pawnee Mental Health Services.

Social services stakeholders noted that some families “cycle” through the area in search of affordable housing, jobs, child care programs or health care. The transient nature of these households makes social and economic stressors such as poverty, lack of transportation, abuse, substance dependency, and isolation regional concerns. A regional entity can complement the efforts of existing social service entities by acting as a central source of information for people in need. It can also directly assist in coordinating other social service functions, including child care, after-school activities, housing for the homeless, workforce development, and violence and substance abuse prevention efforts.

Military Relations

A regional organization can serve as the central point of contact for facilitating relations among local governments and the military’s community relations officers. A regional organization can help to collect information on and study the impacts of mission transformation, such as troop levels and civilian employment, deployments, and modifications in military training and other operations.

At the same time, the regional organization can act as an advocate for the installation by promoting land use compatibility and seeking opportunities for more efficient joint service provision with surrounding communities.

Education and Workforce

A regional organization can directly support the efforts of community school districts by helping to assess the demographic impacts of troop realignments on local facilities and staff and by advocating for statewide policy changes that improve access to educational resources, such as interim teacher certification standards that may attract military spouses to vacant teaching positions.

At the post-secondary level, a regional entity can develop an educational and skills profile for the area workforce, highlight options for workers seeking additional training, and link interested employers with community college and college programs.

This ability to strengthen access to educational resources is critical in preparing local students for emerging job opportunities and in developing a quality workforce that supports advanced manufacturing and knowledge-based industries. A good example of a regional collaborative effort based in an institution of higher education is the Purdue Center for Regional Development. This center connects faculty, staff, and students in higher education with research and outreach in the broader regional community. The main goals of the center are to promote a voluntary approach; demonstrate the power of data, analysis, ideas and information; and foster dialogue that builds social capital and collaborative partnerships.

Fort Leonard Wood Region (FLWRCGA) is a great example of an organization that partners with academia and workforce and government entities to engage in strategies that range from promoting the development of local airports to recruiting primary job companies to the region. The organization includes 22 members, including seven government entities, three academic institutions, four non-governmental organizations, and eight corporate members in south-central Missouri.

Housing

Housing is one of the regional sectors most strongly affected by fluctuations in the military population. A regional organization can assist in tracking the construction of new residential units, assess the demographic profile of incoming families to help ensure an appropriate mix of new housing types and prices, and promote strategies to maintain housing affordability across communities.

Rural Development

A general unifying element of the Flint Hills region is its rural character typified by agriculture and a low-density widely dispersed population. A regional approach to economic and sustainable development is important in non-urbanized areas that typically have decentralized workforces and a high number of workers that commute to other regions. Regional organizations are key players in advancing rural development through innovative and comprehensive strategic planning and alliances with private, public, and nonprofit entities.



Figure 2 illustrates the array of possible services that a regional entity can deliver.

E. Key Findings

E.1 Level of Cooperation Should Reflect Interdependence

The initiative for any level of increased multi-jurisdictional cooperation must come from local government officials, as nearly all regional efforts in the US consist of local governments voluntarily coming together. Should local governments decide to go forward with creating a regional organization, it should be kept in mind that the structure and function of the organization can vary greatly.

The degree of regional coordination should correspond to the interdependence of the local communities, the complexity of the issues they must confront, and the rate of change over time. The communities of the Flint Hills already conduct collaboration on an ad hoc basis, as well as with standing committees and task forces. In evaluating the desire to pursue additional regional coordination, the local governments must carefully consider the challenges that they will face in the years ahead, including transportation, housing, land use, economic development, environmental impacts, homeland security, social services, and health care.

At a minimum, transportation, data centralization, planning technical assistance, and military community coordination are essential services that require increased inter-jurisdictional coordination in the Flint Hills region

E.2 Funding Availability

The Office of Economic Adjustment could allocate available funds to support the initial set-up of a Flint Hills regional organization as a subsequent funding activity to the current FHRGP. To compete for such funds, the participating

communities must produce a well defined organizational mandate, including staff roles and responsibilities and governance structure, and a proposed approach to long term funding. A proposed initial budget and staffing plan would be an essential part of these organizational requirements.

The Office of Economic Adjustment's Technical Review Committee would then evaluate the proposal and upon approval provide seed financing for the first one to two years of a new regional organization.

F. Recommendations

Unique to this section, recommendations are not only based on guidance from the FHGP Planning Team and Committees, but also from our community's leadership. In early September, the FHGP planning team distributed a survey gauging support for regional collaboration in the Flint Hills to elected officials and senior administrative staff of governments with populations around 1,000 and to school board members serving in the region. As of October 10, 2007, 63 surveys have been returned, yielding a response rate of about 26%.

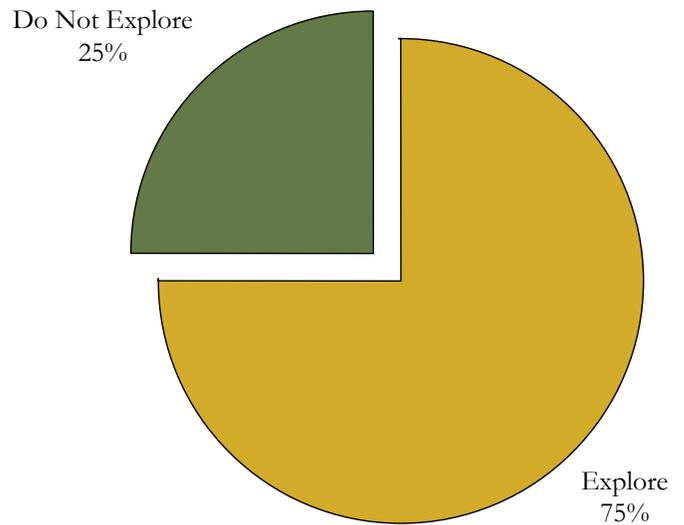
The planning team distributed 243 surveys to the following individuals:

- 119 School Board Members
- 113 Commissioners, Councilpersons, Mayors, and Mayors Pro-tem
- 12 City and County Managers, Deputy Managers and Administrators

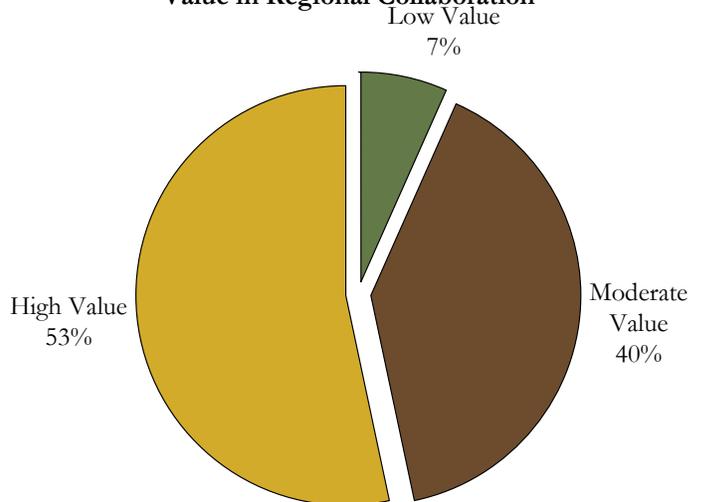
Based on the survey responses, most believe that the timing is appropriate to explore forming a regional entity. In addition, School Board members voted 14:4 in favor of exploring the formation of a regional organization, senior government staff voted 11:2 in favor, and elected government officials voted 17:8 in favor.

Of the respondents, 32 feel there is strong value in collaborating on a regional level, 24 feel there is moderate value in regional solutions, and 4 feels there is minimum or no value in regional collaboration.

Should We Explore a Regional Organization?



Value in Regional Collaboration



Regional Collaboration Survey, September 2007

The time may be now. Local governments could begin the work of establishing a regional organization. Key steps are outlined below.

Develop memorandum of Understanding (MOU) To Agree To Work Together To Create A Regional Organization.

This MOU should be a voluntary agreement among jurisdictions to work together in creating a regional

organization. The MOU would not be binding, nor would it commit a member to joining the organization.

Define the Regional Organization.

The next steps would involve defining the scope of services and gathering of additional information on how best to form a regional organization. The process of community outreach and the definition of critical services vs. long-term strategic services would be another component of this step. There is no “one size fits all” organizational structure, nor is there a prescribed mission statement. However, the organization should have a formal structure that includes representation from the key signatories of the MOU and allows other interested governmental and regional stakeholders such as Fort Riley and K-State to join.

Based on the survey, one of the most important functions that a regional organization could perform in the Flint Hills, the role of providing leadership to obtain Federal and State funds for addressing growth related impacts. The second highest ranked role is to promote the sharing of military expansion impacts information among communities and stakeholders. Overall, the highest ranked needs in the communities are:

- Planning for quality growth
- Coordinating with the military (Fort Riley)
- Military impact planning
- Grant application assistance
- Providing regional growth forecasts

Pursue OEA Funding.

Pursue available funding from the Office of Economic Adjustment to establish a regional entity. A request for funding requires:

- a clearly defined organizational mandate
- staff roles and responsibilities and governance structure
- proposed approach to long term funding and initial budget

Although the regional entity could ultimately address a comprehensive range of issues, dedicating full-time staff to focus on the organization’s core activities will support short to medium term implementation as the organization matures and builds support. Four potential initial areas of focus are described below.

1. Promote the sharing of information between communities and stakeholders related to post expansion impacts. An ongoing informational exchange between the private and public sectors is vital for both parties. Establishing an organization that represents all local communities creates one point of contact for various federal entities (e.g., Congressional delegation, U.S. Army, U.S. Department of Transportation, Department of Commerce, etc.). In its Base Redevelopment and Realignment Manual (March 2006), the Department of Defense suggests this approach for communities affected by installation growth.
2. Provide leadership in obtaining Federal and State funds in order to address identified impacts.

Funds obtained would finance regional studies and evaluations of necessary infrastructure improvements, as well as identifying other areas of possible impacts. Local governments would jointly determine the allocation of the funds received based a coordinated ranking of priorities.

3. Work with local communities to maintain a leadership role in planning activities associated with the region's growth.

Population increases and greater economic diversity will require a concerted effort to prioritize those improvements necessary to support regional growth and secure grants and loans. Local communities will remain responsible for adopting and enacting all recommended actions, but the regional organization can give guidance on articulating a vision and on developing and evaluating feasible options and funding strategies.

4. Assist local communities with regionally oriented marketing efforts and materials.

Several successful organizations are actively marketing the cities and counties within the region, as well as producing marketing materials focused on specific cities or counties. To better manage future broad economic changes, the regional organization could spearhead marketing efforts on a more comprehensive basis. For example, demographic information about the projected growth of the region should be compiled to pursue regional retail and business opportunities. The regional entity could also work to advise existing local marketing organizations (e.g., Chambers of Commerce).

G. Appendix

G.1 Summary of Regional Case Studies

Summary of Regional Case Studies Table

Organization	Size of Region	Population Served	Members	Age (years)
Lincoln Trail Area Development District	3,346 sq. mi.	252,423	35 (8 counties and 27 cities)	39
Coalition for Utah's Future - sponsor of Envision Utah	23,000 sq. mi.	1,700,000	Not a membership organization	10
Pike's Peak Area Council of Governments	4,918 sq. mi.	750,000	20 (3 counties, 12 municipalities and 5 military installations)	40
Lawrence-Douglas County MPO	474 sq. mi.	99,962		25
Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization	556 sq. mi.	169,871		
Mid-America Regional Council	3,800 sq. mi.	1,800,000	129 (9 counties in Kansas and Missouri, 120 municipalities)	35
Atlanta Regional Commission		3,925,400	10	60
Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization		254,000		

Summary of Regional Case Studies Table, con't.

Organization	# of Board Members	Budget					
		Private	Local	State	Federal	Other	Total
Lincoln Trail Area Development District	44	\$262,746	\$490,867	\$2,384,573	\$6,850,138	NA	\$9,978,324
Coalition for Utah's Future - sponsor of Envision Utah	47 on the Coalition for Utah's Future Board of Trustees; 55 on Envision Utah's Steering Committee	\$600,000	NA	No state or federal funding, although has received some federal grants in the past for specific projects and in-kind support from the state in the form of demographic analysis		\$400,000 for services	\$1,000,000
Pike's Peak Area Council of Governments	32 including alternates and non-voting members	NA	\$16,000	\$1,954,244		\$372,606 membership dues; \$344,147 special district revenues; \$1,250,273 pass-through revenues; \$28,193 miscellaneous	\$3,965,463
Lawrence-Douglas County MPO		NA	\$69,710	NA	\$278,840	\$89,750	\$438,300
Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization		NA	NA	NA	\$264,728	\$49,432 MTPO match; \$5,500 TMTA match; \$155,000 other	\$474,660
Mid-America Regional Council	32	\$68,000,000				\$9,100,000 for services	\$77,100,000
Atlanta Regional Commission							
Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization							

Summary of Regional Case Studies Table, con't.

Organization	Payroll	# of Employees	Services Performed
Lincoln Trail Area Development District	\$2,230,870	41 FTE, 3 PTE / Seasonal	Supports the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet in the statewide transportation planning process. Participates in a wide variety of programs and services aimed at enhancing the region's level of service for its communities. Provides assistance to the Kentucky Department of Local Government in the implementation of the Kentucky Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Provides Public Administration assistance in three concentrated areas: financial administration, personnel administration, and general administration. Land Use Planning; Water Management Planning; Project Financing, Grant/Loan Application and Administration Services; Preservation, Recreation, and Tourism Planning. Administers the Revolving Loan Fund program to promote private sector job creation and expansion in industrial, commercial, service and tourism ventures. Provides employment and training services to eligible employers, future employees and the underemployed. Provides homecare/aging services. GIS.
Coalition for Utah's Future - sponsor of Envision Utah	\$650,000	9	Provides training, resources, and support for local governments as they pursue the region's Quality Growth Strategy. Works with local governments to develop plans for specific areas and to convene community workshops. Researches and proposes new implementation tools with extensive community and local government input.
Pike's Peak Area Council of Governments	\$1,767,023	27	Programs include: Area Agency on Aging, Transportation Planning, Environmental Planning, Regional Economic Planning, Military Impact Planning, Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority. PPACG also serves as the designated repository for U.S. Census data; allocates transportation and aging services funds; provides technical assistance to member local governments; and evaluates the impact of laws and regulations on local governments.
Lawrence-Douglas County MPO	\$84,000	City of Lawrence staff performs all MPO activities.	Prepares a Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Plan, and the Unified Planning Work Program, as well as Access Management Studies, Traffic Impact Studies, Data Development, Intelligent Transportation Systems Architecture, and Public Transportation Coordination. A Technical Advisory Committee provides technical advice on transportation planning; Other committees include a Bicycle Advisory Committee, a Traffic Safety Commission, and a Public Transit Advisory Committee. A Citizens Advisory Committee is called into action whenever the Long Range Transportation Plan is under development.
Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization		City of Topeka staff performs all MPO activities.	Participates in the full range of required transportation studies, including the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Plan, and the Unified Planning Work Program. Other regional transportation planning activities undertaken by the MTPO include Public Involvement Planning, Corridor Studies, Regional ITS Architecture, and Transit Planning.
Mid-America Regional Council	\$6,600,000	150	Aging Services; Community Development; Public Safety and Emergency Services; Environmental Programs; Government Innovations Forum; Government Training Institute; Metropolitan Council on Early Learning; Research Services; Transportation Services
Atlanta Regional Commission			Transportation planning, land use planning, environmental planning, local government services, aging services, workforce development services, leadership development, and data compilation and demographic analysis.
Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization		1	The primary focus of FDRLO is on keeping lines of communication open between the military and civilian communities. The FDRLO also engages in housing studies and housing strategies in order to ensure an adequate supply of housing as Fort Drum expands. The Economic Development Task Force engages in workforce development, promoting contracting opportunities with the Army, and other business development and attraction initiatives.

Summary of Regional Case Studies Table, con't.

Organization	Public Outreach	Contact			Website
		Name	Phone	Email	
Lincoln Trail Area Development District	Markets aging services through a weekly column in print media and brochures at Senior Centers; advertises workforce programs through print and radio media; conducts public forums and meetings during their transportation planning process – both rural and urban (MPO); and as part of their focused effort dealing with growth at Fort Knox, they have used grant funds to retain the services of a private marketing firm to handle public information and outreach.	Wendell Lawrence	270-769-2393	wendell@ltadd.org	www.ltadd.org/
Coalition for Utah's Future - sponsor of Envision Utah	Publishes a newsletter. Conducts public workshops on behalf of local governments. Has presented to over 90 cities and towns in the 10 county Greater Wasatch Area.	Alan Matheson	801-303-1452	amatheson@envisionutah.org	www.envisionutah.org/
Pike's Peak Area Council of Governments	Coordinates five citizen and technical advisory committees: Area Agency on Aging, Community, Environment, Regional Economic Planning, Transportation.	Rob O'Connor	719-471-7080 ext 131	roconnor@ppacg.org	www.ppacg.org/cms/index.php
Lawrence-Douglas County MPO		Linda Finger	785-832-3150	lfinger@ci.lawrence.ks.us	www.lawrenceplanning.org
Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization	Public Hearings, Meetings and Workshops, Symposiums and Charettes, Public Advisory Groups, Technical Advisory Groups, Internet Web Page, Government Access Cable Television (Channel 4), News Media Contacts and Press Releases, Surveys	David F. Thurbon	785-368-3728	dthurbon@topeka.org	www.topeka.org/planning/index.shtml
Mid-America Regional Council	Maintains a website that provides educational information on topics such as carpooling, recycling, air and water quality, etc. The website includes a Public Input page that informs the public of opportunities to comment on various projects.	David Warm	816-474-4240	dwarm@marc.org	www.marc.org
Atlanta Regional Commission	Promotes Transportation Demand Management programs that encourage commuters to consider transportation alternatives	Charles "Chick" Krautler	404-463-3111		www.atlantaregional.com
Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization	Key activities include monthly newsletters, the FDRLO website, and the Drum Country website. The Drum Country website is a website specially designed for soldiers and families transferring to the Fort Drum area. It has answers and resources for addressing issues such as health care, education, day care, jobs, and housing in the area.	Carl A. McLaughlin	315-836-1531	info@fdrlo.org	www.fdrlo.org/