

# SUSTAINABLE CINCINNATI

Regional Indicators Measuring the Economic, Environmental, and Social Health of the Tri-state Metropolitan Area

2005





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## Message To The Community

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A sustainable community meets its present needs without sacrificing the ability of others, now and in the future, to meet their own needs. These needs include economic prosperity, quality of life, and healthy, functioning ecosystems. The foundation of sustainability is ensuring that economic prosperity, quality of life, and healthy ecosystems are enduring values for our region.

Sustainable Cincinnati was born of the belief that the 8-county, tri-state metropolitan region can become a sustainable community by paying attention to where we are now and holding one another accountable for our future. The Indicators Project is rooted in the concept of sustainable community – recognizing the interdependence of the environment, economic development, and social equity. We want to support a decision-making climate that invests in what is good for today without compromising the future for our children, a climate that benefits each person and the common good.

Our indicators project for the Cincinnati metropolitan region is not a new idea – hundreds of communities in the country are using this tool for civic improvement. Locally, the indicators project evolved from a handful of organizations convened by the League of Women Voters in 1999 to explore the idea, to a coalition of 59 organizations from across the tri-state region. This diverse coalition includes local governments, nonprofit organizations, universities, businesses, and faith-based groups. It includes organizations with economic development missions and social service missions; environmental advocacy groups and groups advocating for minorities and people with disabilities; government planning agencies and good-government citizen groups.

These diverse interests and personalities came together, listened to one another, debated, listened to national consultants, and over the course of two years decided on 14 key indicators for the region. The 2002 report presented those 14 indicators and a first-cut effort at determining what they say about the current state of our region. The 2005 report updates the data on the 14 sustainable indicators. We publish this report with several cautions:

- An indicator by definition is a piece of data that communicates the status of a complex system. We struggled mightily to choose the best sustainability indicators, and for those we settled on, data were not always available. Where data is incomplete, we labeled the indicator “Update Pending.”
- In as many cases as possible, we tried to collect five years of data or more for this first report. We plan to publish a report periodically to monitor trend-lines. In fact, the trend is often what is most important. Are we as a region moving in the direction we wish to move?
- There were a few areas that we knew were important and for which we struggled unsuccessfully to develop indicators. Suitable indicators for regional cooperation, availability of housing, and energy are not yet fully developed. The Steering Committee decided that the project needed to move forward with the 14 indicators with the idea that additional indicators may be developed for these areas in the future.

We publish the 2005 report with one request of community volunteers and leaders, elected officials, and citizens.

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Please use the data as a starting point for dialogue and action. Where the data paints a picture of health and achievement and vitality, let us celebrate together. Where they challenge us to more action and better solutions, let us redouble our efforts.

The members of Sustainable Cincinnati care passionately about this region. We want this report to lift up the concept of

sustainable community so that we can raise our aspirations. We want every decision to recognize the interdependence of economic vitality, environmental quality, and social equity. We want every decision to reflect a concern for all of our brothers and sisters and for our children in generations to come.

## **Sustainable Cincinnati Leadership Group (2004)**

Jeff Aluotto  
*Solid Waste management District*

Liz Blume  
*Xavier University Community Building  
Institute*

Paul Braasch  
*Clermont County Office of  
Environmental Quality*

Elizabeth Brown  
*Housing Opportunities Made Equal*

Isabelle Healy  
*Working Together*

Janet Keller  
*Ohio Kentucky Indiana  
Regional Council of Governments*

Jenny Laster  
*Grassroots Leadership Academy*

Allison Leavitt  
*Environmental Planning &  
Landscape Architecture*

Bill Miller  
*Ohio Kentucky Indiana  
Regional Council of Governments*

Ron Miller  
*Hamilton County  
Regional Planning Commission*

Chris Moran  
*League of Women Voters*

Julie Olberding  
*Citizens for Civic Renewal*

Jim Prues  
*Panoptic Media*

Nancy Strassel  
*Greater Cincinnati Health Council*

Harry Stone  
*Battelle Memorial Institute*

Linda Young  
*Welcome House*

Beth Zahneis  
*White, Getgey & Meyer, Co.*

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## Members of the Original Sustainable Cincinnati Coalition

Archdiocese of Cincinnati	Keep Cincinnati Beautiful
Audubon Society	Leadership Cincinnati Alumni Association
Bike/PAC	League of Women Voters of Cincinnati
Charter Committee	of Clermont County of Hamilton/Fairfield
Cincinnati Business Committee	Media Bridges Cincinnati
Cincinnati Earth Institute	Metropolitan Growth Alliance
Cincinnati Nature Center	Miami University Center for Sustainable Systems Studies
Cincinnati Preservation Association	Miami Valley Resource Conservation & Development
Cincinnati Union Bethel	Mill Creek Restoration Project
Cinergy	Neighborhood Development Corporation Association
Citizens for Civic Renewal	North Avondale Neighborhood Association
City of Aurora	North Fairmount Community Center
City of Erlanger	Northern Kentucky University - Environmental Resources Management Center
Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati	OKI Regional Council of Governments
College of Mount St. Joseph	Panoptic Media
Community Building Institute	Regional Greenspace Initiative
Concerned Citizens of Western Hamilton County	Smart Growth Coalition
Environmental Technology Commercialization	The Amos Project
Forward Quest (Northern Kentucky)	The Cincinnati Association
Genomatrix, Ltd.	The Grassroots Leadership Academy
Grailville	The Ohio State University Extension, Hamilton County
Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce	Tri-State Environmental Resource Center
Greater Cincinnati Convention & Visitors Bureau	United Way & Community Chest
Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission / Planning Partnership	University of Cincinnati, Institute for Community Partnerships
Hamilton County Board of MR/DD	Urban League of Greater Cincinnati
Hamilton County Environmental Action Commission	Warren County Regional Planning Commission
Housing Opportunities Made Equal	YMCA of Greater Cincinnati
IMAGO, Inc.	
Inclusion Network	
Invest in Neighborhoods	
Izaak Walton League of America	

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## History of the Project

### 1999

The League of Women Voters invited other organizations to join in exploratory discussions of the need for indicators to guide our community in achieving sustainable development. This group met monthly, looked at what other communities were doing, and developed a plan for a regional indicators project.

### 2000

Public forum held to introduce the Sustainable Cincinnati project and further understanding of the concept of sustainable communities. National consultant, Maureen Hart, spoke.

First meeting of organizations that signed the Sustainable Cincinnati coalition agreement. The Steering Committee included one representative of each organization. The Steering Committee continued to recruit additional members, organized an executive committee, and elected officers.

### 2001

Indicator development workshop facilitated by Maureen Hart. Funding received from three local foundations makes it possible to bring in a consultant and hire part time staff.

Representatives to the Steering Committee held outreach meetings with their organization members and Boards of Directors. Public meetings held throughout the 8-county region

Issue-specific indicator development work sessions are held every 2-weeks on Friday afternoons. Steering Committee members and issue experts participate.

### 2002

Workshop held to select final indicators, facilitated by Maureen Hart.

The Sustainable Cincinnati Steering Committee approved the 14 indicators.

Data collected for the first indicator report. Arrangements made for an organization to take responsibility for issuing the annual indicator update reports.

### 2003

Report is issued. Steering Committee appoints an Advisory Committee to work with the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission on annual updates and dissolves.

### 2004

Data collected for second indicators report.

### 2005

Second Report issued.

# 1

## Entrepreneurial spirit as measured by new business starts

An entrepreneurial spirit is considered essential for wealth creation and the long-term health of the economy. Although it is understood that many new businesses fail in the first few years, the number of failures or the net number of businesses were seen as less important measures. The key indicator is whether there is a steady stream of new ideas and new enterprises, some of which will be successful.

*“The Cincinnati USA Partnership, the regional economic development initiative supported by the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, is committed to developing this region’s entrepreneurial environment. From focused business attraction and retention programs in high-wage, high-skill industry clusters, to initiatives supporting the growth of technology-related companies (through CincyTechUSA) and minority-owned companies (through the Minority Business Accelerator), the Partnership is working each day to grow the regional economy.”*

Nicholas J. Vehr, Vice President, Economic Development, Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce

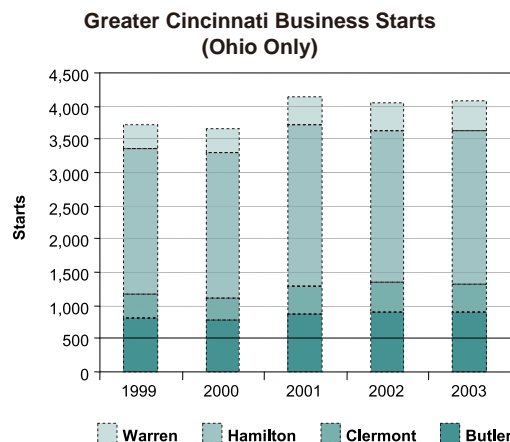
In the face of declining manufacturing jobs, growth of new businesses, particularly technology-based businesses, is of increasing importance to Greater Cincinnati. Greater Cincinnati business starts (in Ohio Counties) have risen slightly over the past five years, although starts have remained stagnant over the past three years. Hamilton County business starts per 1000 active businesses (start rate) is 118.7, slightly below the overall Ohio average of 120.6 and substantially below Franklin County (Columbus) at 166.0. The start rates in Clermont (162.2), Warren (159.3) and Butler (154.9) counties likewise trail Franklin County and are calculated from a much smaller business base. While data are lacking, it is reasonable to assume that new business start rates in Kenton, Campbell and Boone are probably comparable to Clermont, Butler and Warren. Without having the Kentucky and Indiana data, we cannot conclude that business starts for the entire greater Cincinnati region are stagnant or growing slowly.

Business starts depend on adequate seed and early stage risk capital, venture capital, professional advice,

innovation, buildings, communications and transportation infrastructure, and an educated and skilled workforce. Greater Cincinnati has much of the infrastructure in place, including affordable facilities, business incubators, and professional advice. Academic institutions are increasing efforts of potential value to new business starts. University-based biomedical research is growing in the Cincinnati region. Ohio’s Third Frontier investment in the Genome Research Institute and Children’s Hospital Center for Computational Medicine provide important examples of economic development efforts that may lead to the development of technologies of potential importance to regional entrepreneurship. Both at the high school and two-year college level, initiatives are underway to meet technology-based workforce needs.

Cincinnati was previously noted to be “underventured” for supporting leading edge entrepreneurship. Efforts are underway to fill this gap. Growing Cincinnati-based venture capital firms now manage \$1 to \$1.5 billion in capital.

Cincinnati’s recent successes in increasing the amount of VC funds under local management are supplemented by a variety of regional activities that support increases in business starts, yet the desired outcome of substantially-increased business starts is not yet observed. This may be due to reasonable time lags or entrepreneurship gaps may exist.



Business Start Data Source: [Ohio County Indicators](#), Ohio Department of Development, Office of Strategic Research, August 2004. (Comparable data was not identified for Indiana and Kentucky.)

## Percent of workforce between 20 and 35 years of age

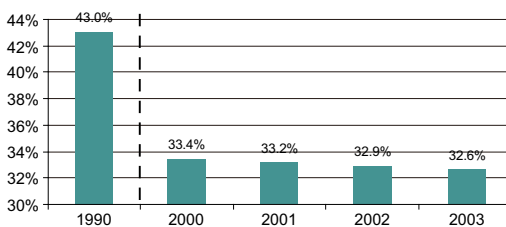
# 2

As the Cincinnati Region grew at a rate of 0.6% per year, the total potential workforce declined from 1980 through 2003. The young adult portion of the potential workforce fell even faster. Between 1980 and 2000 the composition of young adults, age 20-35, declined in the region by 9.4%. However, this decline was not spread evenly over the 20 year period. There was a marginal increase in the proportion of young adult population from 1980 to 1990 but a sharp decrease followed, by more than 10%, in 2000. However, this was largely consistent with the national trend which also shows an aging population and a declining population in the 20-35 age category, mainly due to the aging baby boomers. From 2000 onwards, change in proportion of the young workforce in the Cincinnati region has been marginal, though still on the decline.

The Region must reverse the trend of losing the younger workforce to assure that our workforce and economy is competitive with other regions. The high-tech businesses that the Cincinnati region wants to attract and grow rely heavily on young professionals. These professionals are free to choose locations that appeal to their lifestyles. Expanding urban housing choices, continuing to revitalize upscale entertainment districts, and supporting high-tech ventures that provide opportunities for young professionals within the urban core remain key initiatives for the region. Simultaneously Cincinnati must address the causes of undertones about Cincinnati that negatively affect perceptions in the population of young people.

This indicator measures our ability to attract new technology workers and keep our own children in the region when they graduate. Our ability to attract young people to the region is highly influenced by cultural and quality of life issues. Economic development professionals consider the ability to attract a qualified workforce essential to keeping the region competitive. As our population ages, young workers are essential not only to meeting the needs of employers but to providing support for older and younger people who are dependent on their wages and other support. This indicator is a measure of what might be called the “vitality” of a community.

Cincinnati Region Population Age 20-35 as Percent of Population Age 18-65



*“Retaining and attracting ‘intellectual capital’ from a talented young professional workforce is critical to our economic vitality and growth; and continues to be one of the major priorities of companies in the Cincinnati region.”*

Sherry Kelley Marshall, Executive Dean, Workforce Development Center, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College.

Source: U.S. Census

\*Richard Florida, *Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, 2002

# 3

Students adequately prepared by their education are expected to have earnings growth reflecting accelerated value to employers.

*“I am deeply concerned about the extent to which high school seniors, even those who have taken the pre-college curriculum, must be remediated in some form. It’s time for a new partnership between the area’s colleges and universities and the K-12 systems in order to better prepare students for postsecondary success. NKU, UC, and Xavier are exploring collaborative efforts to address this challenge.”*

James Votruba  
President, Northern Kentucky University

## Cumulative percent of students who finish high school and are “work ready” or prepared for higher education

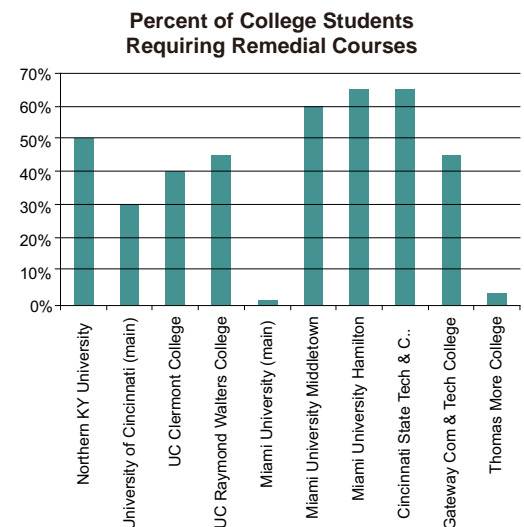
Both Money and Places Rated Almanac identify education among the top factors for best places to live. Why? The average educational level is a good indicator of average earnings potential and of regional attractiveness for new businesses. In the new economy, businesses need knowledge workers. In turn, knowledge workers make and spend more money than non-knowledge workers, further stimulating regional economic development. Further, companies and individuals prefer to locate in areas that provide high-quality education.

Data over the past five years is not available that directly addresses the “work ready” portion of this indicator. However, AngelouEconomics used a composite score of SAT/ACT, graduation rates, dropout rates and student/teacher ratios as a benchmark of educational performance in “tech metros.” The highest score was achieved by Boston (99.8). The Cincinnati Standard Metropolitan Area scored 77.8, lowest of any tech metro except Colorado Springs. These data suggest that our students are not “work ready” for the high technology jobs desired in the region.

The Ohio Board of Regents (2002)<sup>1</sup> found that 38% of Ohio high school graduates required remedial/developmental coursework upon entering college. The Kentucky Post recently (November 22, 2004) reported that many students require remedial courses when entering higher education. The percentage of students requiring remedial courses, reported in this news article, is shown in the graph below for various academic institutions in Greater Cincinnati.

It should be noted in the graph that the University of Cincinnati and Miami University data are disaggregated by campus or program whereas Northern Kentucky University data is inclusive of its historic community college and four year university roles.

These data, while not showing trends, suggest that students leaving high school are not adequately prepared for either the high tech workforce or for college-level studies.



<sup>1</sup> Ohio Board of Regents. 2002 Making the Transition from High School to College in Ohio 2002. <http://www.regents.state.oh.us/perfrpt/w00wHSindex.htm>

## The percent of the eligible workforce earning enough to be self-sufficient

# 4

Attracting new businesses with wages enabling self-sufficiency reduces societal costs while increasing a sense of personal value.

The self-sufficiency standard was created by Wider Opportunities for Women. The federal poverty measure has been found to be inefficient in illustrating the real economic conditions of many families. The federal poverty measure is based on a single measure – the cost of food – and was created in the 1960’s when the standard household was a two-parent family with a stay-at-home wife. Today, a household with one parent or two working parents has new expenses including transportation, taxes and child care. In addition, the federal poverty measure does not adjust for regional and local variations in costs. The self-sufficiency standard includes the cost of housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, taxes, earned income tax credit, child care tax credit, child tax credit, and some miscellaneous items such as clothing, diapers and telephone services.

The self-sufficiency standard has been developed for 34 states including Indiana and Kentucky, but not Ohio. Annual self-sufficiency wage standards for the communities in our region are listed in

the tables below. It is suggested that the Standard be used in relative terms or “wage adequacy” (percent of the standard earned by a household) rather than an exact dollar figure.

As reported in the last publication of this report, the 2000 Census shows that in the Cincinnati metropolitan area:

- 27.2% of the households reported incomes from all sources of less than \$25,000.
- The median earnings for a full-time, year-round worker were \$40,553 for a male and \$28,485 for a female.
- 3% of the labor force is unemployed.

Sustainable Cincinnati recommends that the appropriate organizations within the region and state work together to complete a self-sufficiency standard for Ohio. In addition, to complete the measure for the Sustainable Cincinnati indicator, it will be necessary to evaluate the self-sufficiency annual wage in terms of the current census data for the region on population and income.

The 2001 Self-Sufficiency Standard for Northern Kentucky and Indiana – Annual Wage<sup>1,2</sup>

Community	Adult	Adult + infant	Adult + preschooler	Adult + infant preschooler	Adult + preschooler teenager	2 Adults + infant preschooler	2 Adults + preschooler schoolage	2 Adults + schoolage
<b>Boone County</b> (excluding Florence)	\$15,003	\$27,278	\$25,591	\$33,852	\$25,412	\$40,378	\$37,665	\$36,236
<b>Florence</b>	\$15,793	\$28,604	\$27,010	\$34,913	\$26,578	\$41,439	\$38,726	\$37,296
<b>Campbell County</b> (excluding Newport, Bellevue, & Fort Thomas)	\$15,003	\$27,278	\$25,591	\$33,852	\$25,412	\$40,378	\$37,665	\$36,236
<b>Newport, Bellevue &amp; Fort Thomas</b>	\$15,793	\$25,835	\$24,101	\$32,773	\$24,149	\$39,300	\$36,587	\$35,157
<b>Kenton County</b>	\$15,003	\$27,278	\$25,591	\$33,852	\$25,412	\$40,378	\$37,665	\$36,236
<b>Dearborn County</b>	\$15,295	\$26,985	\$24,851	\$33,782	\$22,832	\$43,255	\$39,852	\$36,642

<sup>1</sup> Data from *The Self-Sufficiency Standard of Kentucky: Real Budgets, Real Families*, November 2001

<sup>2</sup> Data from *The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Indiana, 2002*, December 2002

\*Richard Florida, *Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, 2002

Sources: U.S. Census. Website sponsored by Wider Opportunities for Women: [www.sixstrategies.org](http://www.sixstrategies.org). The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Indiana, December 2002, by Diana Pearce, Ph.D. with Jennifer Brooks prepared for Wider Opportunities for Women and the Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless Issues. The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Kentucky: *Real Budgets, Real Families*, by Diana Pearce, Ph.D. with Jennifer Brooks, Wider Opportunities for Women, and the Kentucky Youth Advocates. November 2001.

# 5

## Percent of land in the region devoted to people habitat, car habitat, wildlife habitat, and agriculture

This indicator measures the balance of land uses. While no ideal balance was identified, it is important to monitor trends. Land is a finite resource; increased use for one purpose means a reduction for other uses. Car habitat includes roads and parking lots. It gets at flooding and water quality problems caused by impervious surfaces; loss of greenspace; air quality problems created by auto emissions; increased commuter times that impact on civic and family life.

### Update Pending

The total area of land in the region is approximately 2,600 square miles. That total area serves as the domain for a variety of uses – people habitat, car habitat, wildlife habitat and agriculture.

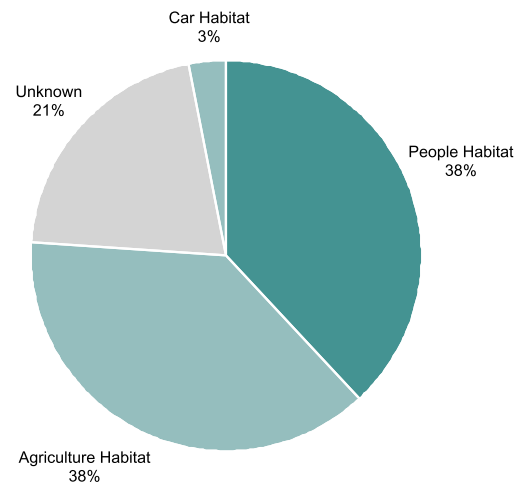
In the year 2000, 38 percent of the land in the region was devoted to people habitat. This number includes land dedicated to residential uses, commercial and industrial uses, institutional uses and park land. Agricultural habitat also accounts for 38 percent of the land area in the region.

Agricultural habitat includes land that is used almost exclusively for active cultivation of crops, orchards, feedlots, stables, livestock, pasturage, and other related agricultural uses, as well as farmsteads, outbuildings, and small tracts of woodland and grassland within the agricultural area.

Car habitat, which in this case consists strictly of roads and streets in the region’s transportation system, accounts for only 3 percent of the total land area in the region (car habitat is calculated using the total lane miles in the current road network in the region and assuming an average road network width). This calculation does not include parking lots.

While a portion of the remaining 21 percent (or approximately 350,000 acres) of the land in the region is likely devoted to wildlife habitat, the exact number is not known since such data is not currently being tracked. It is known, however, that some of that acreage is vacant, undeveloped, and or flood prone land.

Percent of Land Dedicated to People, Agriculture, and Car Habitat



Source: Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments, March 21, 2003

## Pounds of waste per capita sent to landfills or other disposal

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For each person in the region, approximately 1.3 tons of residential, commercial and industrial solid waste is disposed of in landfills each year. This figure is down from 1.88 tons in 2000. This includes public and private landfills whether they are located within or outside the region.

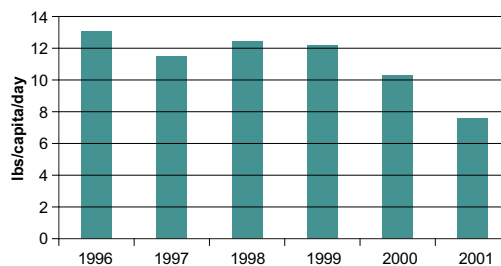
These data do not include construction and demolition debris (C&DD). As adopted, this indicator was defined to include C&DD. However, this waste is not typically weighed before disposal so accurate figures are not readily available. C&DD, however, further adds to our landfills.

As indicated by the graphic, there has been a downward trend in the total waste landfilled per capita. This downward trend, however, is primarily due to the recycling of ash from coal-fired electrical power generation in the tri-state region. The ash is landfilled in privately owned and operated, or captive, waste facilities, not in municipal solid waste landfills. Eliminating these wastes from consideration reveals a stagnant to slightly increasing trend for waste going to municipal solid waste landfills.

Recycling and waste reduction are becoming increasingly important as strategies to reduce our reliance on landfill disposal. There are several key areas of focus that could increase recycling:

1. incentives to encourage increased recycling by residents, commercial entities and industry;
2. manufacturers designing their products for recyclability; and
3. economic development efforts which seek to establish new, local manufacturing outlets for materials which are currently not being recycled.

Landfill Disposal of Waste Generated in Cincinnati Region



This indicator includes residential, commercial and industrial solid waste, plus construction and demolition debris. Illustrated data, however, only includes residential, commercial and industrial solid waste. Total waste landfilled could be reduced either by producing less waste or by recycling efforts.

*“The amount of waste disposed in landfills is a valuable indicator for several reasons. It helps us judge how much or how little progress we are making toward maximizing the use of our natural and manmade resources. To a large degree, landfill disposal is a referendum on how far we have to go to improve the efficiency of our society”*

Jeff Aluotto, Director  
Hamilton County Solid Waste District

Sources: NKSWMMA 2000 Annual Report Synopsis, Northern Kentucky Solid Waste Management Area; NKSWMMA 1999 Annual Report Synopsis, Northern Kentucky Solid Waste Management Area; NKSWMMA 1998 Annual Report Synopsis, Northern Kentucky Solid Waste Management Area; 2000 Indiana Solid Waste Facility Report, Indiana Department of Environmental Management; Ohio Facility Data Reports (2000), Ohio EPA; and *Reduction, Recycling, and Disposal in Ohio (1990-1999 Data)*: - DRAFT, Ohio EPA.

This chart was developed from data provided or published by the respective solid waste districts, “County Population Estimates for July 1, 1999 and Population Change for July 1, 1998 to July 1, 1999” from the Population Estimates Program, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233, and the 2000 Census from the U.S. Bureau of Census. Warren County population figures from Department of Development; Warren County Landfill tonnage from Warren County (Data Starts).

Improving Cincinnati's air quality may reduce illness while increasing the attractiveness for businesses and people.

## The number of days that air quality is unhealthy based on national standards

Cincinnati was ranked 11th in the nation for unhealthy smog days in 2003 among large metropolitan areas. By way of comparison, Columbus and Cleveland were tied for 25th in the nation, each with seven smog days.

In 1990, the Clean Air Act Amendments regulated six major pollutants: sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, lead, carbon monoxide, particulate matter and ozone. The Greater Cincinnati region (specifically, Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren Counties in Southwest Ohio, and Boone, Campbell and Kenton Counties in Northern Kentucky) meets the national air quality standards for all of the six pollutants, except for ozone.

The Air Quality Index was established by the USEPA in 1999 to inform the public about current air quality conditions and its health effects. Ozone is the principle cause of unhealthy air quality in Greater Cincinnati. A variety of other adverse health effects are associated with ozone pollution. Importantly, ozone is documented to trigger asthma attacks. Recent studies indicate that it may also increase the risk of children developing asthma.

In addition to health effects, regional air pollution is reported to adversely impact corporate decisions to locate into the region. Thus, poor air quality may have broad impacts on the region's medical costs, job creation and retention, and tax revenues to fund public services.

Ozone formation occurs through the "cooking" of volatile organic compounds, (such as those from oil-based paints and gasoline) and nitrogen dioxide (from exhaust from burning fossil fuels like gasoline) by sunlight. On hot, sunny, still days, conditions are right for ozone to be produced and to build up to unhealthy levels. On such days smog alerts are communicated.

**Greater Cincinnati Annual Days of Unhealthy\* Air Quality**

Year	Days of Unhealthy Air
2000	12
2002	33
2001	14

\*"Unhealthy" for sensitive groups or worse including 8-hour ozone standard

The Regional Ozone Coalition is a voluntary association of local governments, organizations and businesses committed to reducing smog in the Greater Cincinnati region by encouraging voluntary efforts to reduce ozone when smog alerts occur. Businesses and individuals are contacted with an alert so that trips, filling gas tanks, mowing the grass, and other activities can be voluntarily postponed. A variety of other activities are undertaken by the Coalition to help reduce unhealthy levels of ozone. These efforts have likely reduced the number of days of unhealthy air quality.

Source: Hamilton County Air Quality Management Division, <http://www.hcdoes.org/airquality/pdf/Smog/2001SmogStats.pdf>, <http://www.hcdoes.org/airquality/AQimages/021hrexceed.pdf>, and <http://www.hcdoes.org/airquality/pdf/Smog/8hourexceedences.pdf>

## Percent of stream miles meeting state water quality standards

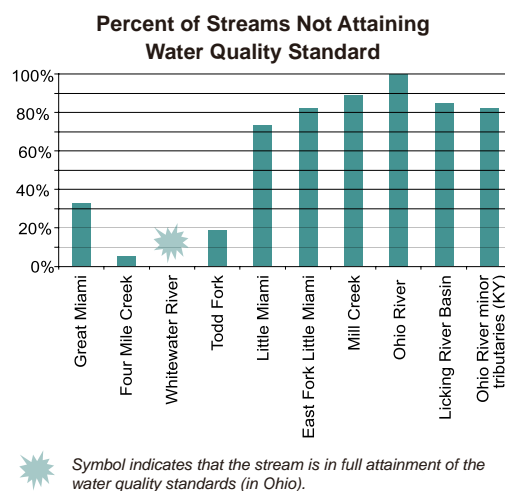
8

Our region's abundant fresh waters provide drinking water, food, recreation, and benefits essential to the functioning of terrestrial ecosystems.

High quality streams and rivers provide beauty that encourages people to live nearby and adds to the pleasure of those who visit the region. The standards for river and stream quality vary significantly between the states. Ohio's more stringent standards are numeric biocriteria for fish and macroinvertebrates (small aquatic animals that are large enough to see and have no backbones). Including this in the assessment of State of Ohio Waters greatly increases the number of stream miles determined to be impaired. In general, however, the water should: support natural fish communities; provide for the public water supply; be healthy for contact recreation; and allow for fish consumption. High quality streams provide valuable services. Such streams increase property values and support the tax base. Clean streams lead to fishing, canoeing, swimming and other forms of recreation that generate businesses and jobs in support of those activities. Naturally-functioning streams often moderate flooding, reducing the associated costs in lives, property, and costs to "fix" the problem. Clean rivers lower the cost of drinking water treatment.

In the Cincinnati Region, about 59% of the assessed stream miles of the Ohio River and its Ohio and Kentucky tributaries fall short of State and Federal water quality standards. In addition, some streams and river segments in Dearborn County, Indiana, (Whitaker Creek, Tanners Creek, Great Miami River and Whitewater River) also fail to meet water quality standards. All of the Ohio River in our region (Mehldahl Dam [mile 436.2] to the pool upstream of the Markland Dam [mile 531.5]) fails to meet the State and Federal water quality standards because excessive levels of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) and mercury trigger fish consumption advisories.

What are the causes of water quality problems? What's being done? Pollutants, changes in the water flow characteristics, water use, and habitat in and near the stream all impact water quality. Historically, industrial discharges combined with sewer overflows and malfunctioning septic tanks were a major source of pollution. Industry and wastewater treatment plants have made tremendous investments to substantially reduce pollutants going into the streams. Regulatory agencies continue to ensure adequate reductions from these point sources (end-of-pipe sources). Other sources of pollutants are harder to identify. Stormwater runoff from roads and lawns carry pesticides, fertilizers, oil and other pollutants. Siltation from erosion of agricultural fields and construction sites can cover the rocks and pebbles that are home to insect larvae and other invertebrate "fish food." Addressing this problem, the voluntary use of conservation tillage farming has reduced the runoff of soil, fertilizers and pesticides into the streams while saving the farmer both time and money. In Ohio, conservation tillage is used on about 56% of the cropland.



Sources: 2002 Kentucky Report to Congress on Water Quality; 2004 Kentucky Report to Congress; Biennial Assessment of Ohio River Water Quality Conditions (ORSANCO 2002); Ohio 2004 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report

Pollution and stormwater runoff into streams can increase flooding; create health risks from fishing, boating and swimming; lower property values; and increase the cost of providing drinking water.

Other causes include physical modifications to the stream and surrounding land. Stream habitat modifications through straightening, dredging, and reinforcing banks with concrete destroys conditions necessary for high quality fish communities to survive. In urban areas, the high levels of “waterproof” (or impervious) surfaces – roads, roofs, and parking lots – prevent rain from penetrating into the soil where it moves slowly to streams. Rain runoff flows rapidly to the stream resulting in very “flashy” streams where flooding is more likely. Flashy streams also allow sand and pebbles to scour the stream bottom, making life difficult or impossible for organisms that may be critical to water quality.

Finally, the removal of the natural vegetation along the stream can reduce stream quality. Natural areas adjacent to streams are called riparian zones. The riparian zone often plays an important role in removal of pollutants from stormwater runoff. The plants also slow stormwater flow to the stream, reducing flashiness and the flooding and destruction of the biota that can result.

Increasingly, voluntary efforts are being made to restore and protect the natural areas along streams. Watershed groups are restoring riparian zones and wetlands. Landowners are protecting riparian zones, in some cases using conservation easements to provide permanent protection while lowering their property taxes.

Governments are also stepping up. Political jurisdictions across the region are in comprehensive land use planning discussions, coordinated by the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI), to develop strategic approaches for managing impervious surfaces and protecting natural areas. Such approaches may improve quality of life, increase property values, and reduce costs to taxes and expenses resulting from flooding, water treatment, and other by-

products of damage to our streams and rivers. OKI’s water quality management staff collaborates with several watershed groups on a variety of watershed issues.

For more information on watersheds, check these resources:

- Mill Creek Restoration Project:  
<http://www.millcreekrestoration.org>
- OKI Regional Council of Governments, land use planning:  
<http://www.oki.org/landuse>
- Licking River Watershed Watch:  
<http://basins.org/lickingriver>
- Little Miami Inc.:  
<http://www.littlemiami.com>
- Friends of the Great Miami:  
<http://www.fogm.org>

## Healthy people index

### ADULT HEALTH

How healthy is the Tristate community? Every three years the Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati produces *Indicators of Healthy Communities for Greater Cincinnati*, a compilation of more than 40 health indicators that capture multiple and diverse aspects of health and wellness. The report covers 14 Tristate counties. A previous report was issued in 2000 and a similar but less comprehensive report in 1997. The report compares Tristate numbers to national and state averages and provides a snapshot of how the community's health and well-being are changing over time. The Health Improvement Collaborative, in cooperation with the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, also conducts a Community Health Status Survey on a regular basis to better understand current health behaviors and concerns and to identify improvement opportunities. The last survey (in 2002) covers a 22-county region.

Following are the measures from these sources that best match the Healthy People Index defined by the Sustainable Cincinnati project.

#### Overweight and obesity:

Almost 61% of adults in the Greater Cincinnati area (22 county average) are overweight (mildly to very severely obese) and 22% are considered to be obese (moderately to very severely obese) as determined by Body Mass Index measurements. Overweight and obese people are at a higher risk for many health problems such as high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. In addition, nearly 58% of area adults (22 county average) report they engage in physical activity at least three times per week,

whereas 37% do so less than three times per week and 5% are unable to exercise.

#### Suicide rate:

Annual average age-adjusted suicide rates per 100,000 persons vary within the Tristate. Over 14 area counties, the annual average age-adjusted rate for 1994-1998 ranges from 8.0 to 16.8 per 100,000 population. None of these 14 counties meets the Healthy People 2010 goal to reduce the suicide rate to 5.0 per 100,000.

#### Infant mortality rate:

While averages vary by county, the regional infant mortality rate for 14 counties in the Tristate is approximately 7 or 8 deaths for every 1,000 live births. The current regional rate is slightly lower than the 8 or 9 deaths for every 1,000 live births reported in 2000. The area rate is similar to the U.S. average but is much greater than other industrialized nations and is higher than the Healthy People 2010 goal of 4.5 deaths per 1,000 live births. It is believed that many infant deaths are preventable. In Greater Cincinnati, the infant mortality rate for African Americans is twice that of Greater Cincinnati whites, and addressing this

	2000	2002
Percent of Adults Who Are Overweight or Obese	56%	61%
Average Annual Age-Adjusted Suicide Rate per 100,000 Population	7.6 - 19.2* *1992-1996 Average, Range for 14 Counties	8.0 - 16.8* *1994-1998 Average, Range for 14 Counties
Average Annual Infant Mortality Rate (All Races) per 1,000 Live Births	4.4 - 10.4* *1992-1996 Average, Range for 14 Counties	4.3-10.2* *1997-2000 Average, Range for 14 Counties
Percent Who Are Current Tobacco Users	35%	32%
Percent Currently Uninsured	7.9%	9.6%
Percent Satisfied with Availability of Care (Very or fairly well satisfied)	82.6%	83.4%

The old adage, "if you have your health, you have everything" holds for regions as well.

Important factors impacting our region's health include being overweight, above average percentage of adults who smoke, and children experiencing lead poisoning from environmental sources.

factor is an important step in improving these rates.

**Adults who smoke:**

According to averages of the 1999 and 2002 Greater Cincinnati Health Status Surveys combined, 33.3% of those living in the 14-county area currently smoke. While almost 1 in 4 adults in the U.S. smokes, this average is almost 50 percent higher than the national average. Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease and death in the United States.

**Percent uninsured:**

Health insurance coverage is an important determinant of access to health care. An average 9.6% of area adults reported being without health insurance at the time of the 2002 Health Status Survey compared to 7.9% in 1999, but the increase is not statistically significant. The percent of uninsured varies by poverty status, with approximately 23% of persons below 100% of the federal poverty level currently uninsured as compared to 6% of those with incomes above poverty level.

**Health service availability (percent satisfied):**

83% of area adults report being fairly well or very satisfied with the availability of health care services. Lower levels of satisfaction appear to be most strongly associated with males, large household size and lack of health care coverage at some time in the past year.

**CHILDREN'S HEALTH**

**Asthma:**

Asthma is a leading cause of emergency room visits and of missed school days. Growing concern exists among health professionals about increasing numbers of children with asthma. The data below represents the latest available statistics from the Child Policy Research Center.

**Percent of Children with Doctor-Diagnosed Asthma in 2000**

Hamilton, Butler, Warren, Clermont	12%
Kenton, Boone, Cambell	13%
6 Indiana Counties including Dearborn	16%

Source: Child Policy Research Center of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center

**Childhood lead poisoning:**

Lead poisoning is Ohio's largest preventable environmental health threat to children. Blood lead levels as low as 10ug/dl area, which do not cause distinctive symptoms, are associated with decreased intelligence and impaired neurobehavioral development as well as decreased stature and growth.

	Hamilton County		City of Cincinnati	
	2003	2002	2003	2002
<b>Total of Children Screened for Lead Poisoning (0-72 months)</b>	9,416	8,089	8,890	7,673
<b>Number of Children Screened who Exhibited Elevated Blood Levels (above 10 ug/dL*)</b>	383	410	351	383
<b>Percentage of Children Screened who Exhibited Elevated Blood Levels</b>	4%	5%	4%	5%

\*ug/dl is a measurement tool; micrograms per deciliter of blood  
Source: Ohio Dept. of Health

Sources: *Indicators of Healthy Communities Greater Cincinnati, 2000 and 2003*, The Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati Community Health Status Surveys, 1999 and 2002, a collaborative effort of the Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati and the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati (funded by the Health Foundation). Please go to [www.the-collaborative.org](http://www.the-collaborative.org) to access these sources in their entirety.

## Sense of community measured by the social capital index

10

Civic engagement or involvement in the community develops ties and builds social capital. Social capital refers to the network of ties and the level of trustworthiness and reciprocity that come from them. The ties and connections give us a sense of community. Strong community ties and levels of social capital enable problem solving and development of a common vision.

The “Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey”, which includes information on Cincinnati, was released in 2001. In the comparison of 35 metropolitan regions, Cincinnati rates as average. The Cincinnati area is slightly higher than other areas in some measures, such as associational involvement and volunteering, while we are slightly below other metropolitan areas in political involvement.

The Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati conducted a detailed analysis of the local 2001 survey data to highlight differences in social capital according to age, gender, and race, place of residence (city/suburbs), education, and income. These differences will be useful in focusing efforts to raise the sense of community in the region.

There are no plans at this time to repeat the survey or parts of it.

Voting is a common means of civic engagement and ties the registered voter to government. Reported voter turnout rates are calculated based on the number of registered voters. Elections in even numbered years for president, federal and state level representatives have higher voter participation. Local officials elected in odd numbered years make decisions that directly affect the everyday level of people in the community. Also,

discussions and decisions of local elected officials impact this area’s Sustainable Indicators.

Levels of social capital interrelate with other Sustainable Indicators. Declining social capital correlates with levels of violent crime. Crime is both a symptom and a consequence of lower levels of ties in the community. Where there is racial and income segregation, bonding with other individuals and groups is difficult, leaving a weakened sense of community.

The following rates do not take into consideration the number of people who are eligible to vote, but have not registered.

Percent of Registered Voters Who Cast Ballots

County	2003	2004
Boone	33.9	69.3
Campbell	37	70
Kenton	35	67
Clermont	30	71.4
Hamilton	34.6	75.5
Warren	30	76.3
Butler	32	71
Dearborn	8	58

The Cincinnati region is one of several metropolitan areas involved in the Social Capital Benchmark Survey. The Greater Cincinnati Foundation sponsored the survey locally. The survey measures various aspects of civic ties and community connections, including social trust, political participation, civic leadership and associational involvement, giving and volunteering, faith-based engagement, and informal social ties. This indicator will also report the percent of eligible voters that actually vote.

Sources: Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, 2000 (national trends). *Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey*, www.cfsv.org (comparison among metropolitan areas). “*Social Capital in Greater Cincinnati*”, Institute for Policy Research (comparison among different groups in the Cincinnati area). Voter statistics from Secretaries of State websites. *State of the County Report: Civic Engagement and Social Capital*. Hamilton County Planning Commission COMPASS. November 2004

# 11

Citizens will not stay in a community if they do not feel safe. Although violent crime rates have been going down nationally and the Cincinnati region is better than other urban areas, safety is such an essential need of the community, it needs to be watched and measured. Crime rates affect, and are affected by, economic and social issues. Although crime rates are generally reported by jurisdiction, it was felt important that attention be focused on a regional measure. Violent crime affects more than the people who live and work in certain high-crime neighborhoods. It has a negative impact on the entire region.

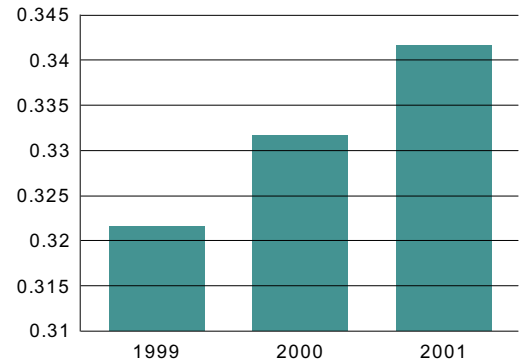
## Violent Crime Rate in the Region

*Update Pending*

The FBI maintains crime statistics based on reports by local jurisdictions. The following information is for the metropolitan region with the exception of Kenton County and parts of Campbell County, which did not report statistics to the FBI in 1999 and 2000.

Year	Total Violent Crimes	Total Reporting Population	Violent Crimes per 100,000 people
1999	4846	1,496,622	323.8
2000	5218	1,561,558	334.2
2001	5561	1,651,069	336.8

**Violent Crime Rate**  
(Number of violent crimes as a percent of population)

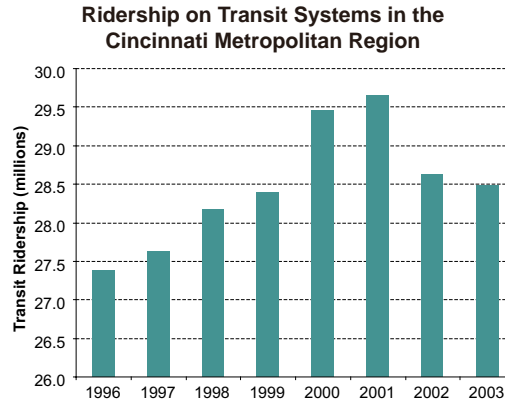


## Number of People Using Public Transportation

# 12

The automobile is the predominant mode of transportation in the region. Increasing highway congestion and improvements in the comfort and convenience of bus transit contributed to growth in the use of public transportation through 2001. A reduction in funding for public transportation has resulted in fewer riders in recent years.

The chart shows a 7.7% increase in the use of public transportation in the metropolitan area between 1996 and 2001. The large (4%) decrease in 2002 is largely attributable to the loss of transit service in Butler County.



This indicator is affected both by the existence (or lack) of public transit systems and by how accessible the existing systems are to the population. The use of public transportation reduces air pollution from automobiles, reduces energy consumption, and reduces the need for more and larger highways. Public transportation is also important in connecting potential employees to jobs and housing throughout the region.

# 13

This information would be obtained through opinion surveys. Public interactions would include interactions with the police, with shop clerks, on buses, etc. African Americans make up 12% of the region and have historically been treated as an underclass by the white majority. Perceptions of fair treatment are a good indicator that we are healing the racial divisions. At the same time, it is important that diversity in all aspects is respected.

## Percent of population that feels treated with fairness and respect in public interactions, reported by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability status.

### *Update Pending*

Surveys have not been done to measure this exact indicator. The fact it was selected by a broad coalition as a key measurement of long-term sustainability for the region will hopefully spur the needed research. Related information on perceptions of fairness and respect by race is available.

An August 2001 Cincinnati Enquirer poll of racial attitudes in the region indicates “that suburban blacks share beliefs and values that more closely mirror those of suburban whites... (and) share some beliefs and values that more closely mirror those of city blacks. Blacks and whites agree on some points and disagree - sometimes sharply on many more”.

### Percent who have interacted with police and felt treated fairly and with respect

Suburban blacks	73%
Suburban whites	93%
Blacks in Cincinnati	31%

### Those who are employed outside the home, responded to the statement: “My employer treats people of all races with respect and fairness.”

Agree	Whites		Blacks	
	City	Suburban	City	Suburban
Strongly	79%	81%	47%	51%
Somewhat	15%	14%	28%	36%

## Racial and income segregation in the region measured by the index of dissimilarity

14

Regions containing high levels of income or racial segregation show correlations with racial tension and economic risk arising from siphoning off of the tax base. Where poverty levels are disproportionately high, a cycle of poverty and economic decline can result. The unemployed workforce tends to lack the education and skills to attract businesses into the area. Crime rates tend to rise, further discouraging business location and encouraging the out migration of businesses and wealth. As jobs move further from the impoverished area, jobs for the poor are increasingly difficult to find.

The dissimilarity index measures the percentage of a group's population that would have to change residence for each neighborhood to have the same percentage of that group as the metropolitan area overall. Complete integration would have a score of zero.

In 1990, the Cincinnati metropolitan area was ranked the 18th most racially segregated urban area in the United States based on the dissimilarity index; by 2000 the metropolitan area had risen to the rank of eighth most racially segregated. Since 1980, segregation in the Cincinnati metropolitan area decreased by 5.3%. The slightly decreasing trend in racial segregation over the past 20 years reflects decreased segregation in the communities surrounding Cincinnati.

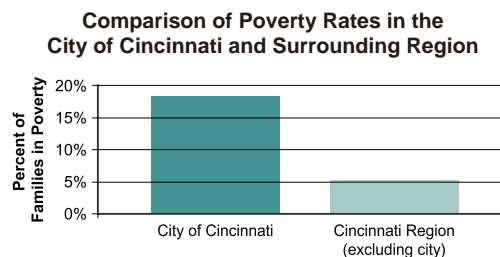
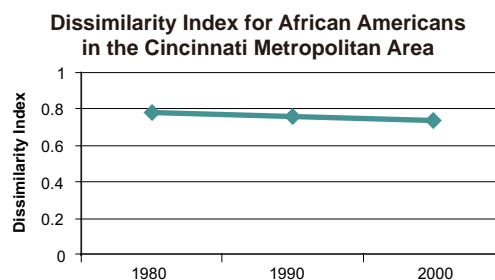
The City of Cincinnati, with a dissimilarity index of 0.77 when compared to the surrounding region, is a pocket of poverty. About 18% of the families in the City of Cincinnati are living in poverty (U.S. Census, 2003 American Community Survey).

Sustaining our region's quality of life is most likely if the disproportionate poverty and racial segregation in our urban heart is relieved. Fundamentally, poverty reduces access of the poor to markets. The poor are less able to obtain credit, obtain higher education, secure jobs, or start businesses. The resulting individual economic difficulties translate into challenges for the local and regional economy.

Breaking the racial segregation and the cycle of poverty is a complex and difficult challenge for the region. Affordable housing must be available throughout the region. Broadly-available transportation options are important to provide those in poverty with access to jobs. Adequate education must be ensured to prepare children raised in poverty to become contributing workers. Access to jobs can be enhanced by encouraging the retention and attraction of businesses into poorer areas, for example through redevelopment.

Indicators of disproportionate poverty identify areas at risk for economic decline and rising crime. Indicators of racial segregation may indicate risk of social stratification and racial disharmony.

Breaking racial segregation and cycles of poverty require effective access of every citizen to education, jobs, housing, transportation, credit and markets.



Sources:  
Census, "Racial and Ethnic Residential Segregation in the United States: 1980-2000" (Report No. CENSR-3).  
Data Set: P114. POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY SEX BY AGE, 2003 American Community Survey Summary Tables

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## Conclusion

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In the early years of this decade, the members of the Sustainable Cincinnati Coalition and hundreds of people in the community invested many hours in developing and reaching consensus on the 14 indicators included in this Report. During the past two years the Sustainable Cincinnati Coalition has invested numerous additional hours to update the data.

The Sustainable Cincinnati Coalition faces significant challenges. Albert Einstein said, “Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted.” We are finding that true for our indicators. We know that water quality is important. Yet the cost of monitoring the quality of streams and rivers is so high that it is not done on an annual basis. Therefore, it is difficult to know from year to year how our water quality is doing. Similarly, the perception of being treated fairly and with respect can be volatile, changing rapidly with changing circumstances. Yet we know that it is important to feel fairness and respect. The Sustainable Cincinnati Coalition continues to wrestle with the challenge of finding high quality data to address indicators for things that our community has said “count” for our sustainable quality of life.

Since the publication of the 2002 Sustainable Cincinnati Indicators Report, many organizations and individuals have continued or initiated efforts to improve the trends in the indicators. Some of these efforts were noted in this Report – such as the Cincinnati USA Partnership efforts in economic development, the collaboration among NKU, UC and Xavier to better prepare students for success in college, and the efforts of the OKI Regional Council of Governments to encourage comprehensive land use planning. One of the most exciting recent collaborations has been led by the United Way of Greater Cincinnati that produced the State of the Community Report. The United Way analysis included many of the consensus Sustainable Cincinnati Indicators. We believe that the United Way will galvanize support and commitment around improvement of these indicators.

Many more efforts are underway by individuals, organizations and collaborations. The Sustainable Cincinnati Coalition invites your organization to let us know of your efforts that are improving our Sustainability Indicators. We also welcome additional organizations to join the Sustainable Cincinnati Coalition by returning a signed copy of the Commitment Agreement (on the following page) to:

Sustainable Cincinnati Coalition  
c/o Battelle Memorial Institute  
10300 Alliance Rd., Suite 155  
Cincinnati, OH 45242

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# Appendix

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## COMMITMENT AGREEMENT

- Whereas:** We desire a vibrant and healthy present and future for the Greater Cincinnati Region, and
- Whereas:** The economy, environment, and social health of the community are interdependent components of the Region's status, and
- Whereas:** We wish to join in actions that will lead to sustainable improvements in all sectors of the Region, and
- Whereas:** Citizens and civic leaders are guided in their actions by measurements that indicate the condition of the economy, environment, and social health of their communities, and
- Whereas:** Other communities have found that a coordinated effort to measure these "Indicators" has led to desired improvements, and
- Whereas:** Sustainable Cincinnati: *A Regional Indicators Project*, a coalition of a wide range of organizations in the region and whose purpose was to promote improvement in the community, developed 14 Sustainable Indicators for the Region, and
- Whereas:** It is important that those who will use the indicators, those who will be responsible for maintaining them, and those who will urge attention to them be part of the coalition that supports the measurement and monitoring of the 14 Sustainability Indicators,

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** that the signatories commit to support the measurement of the 14 Regional Indicators to bring about improvements in the economic, environmental, and social health of the metropolitan Cincinnati region and commit to the following goals:

- Enable decision makers and the public to identify key problem areas based on the 14 Sustainability Indicators, to focus community response, and to test decisions within the region based on sustainability criteria;
- Provide a means to measure and monitor the 14 Sustainability Indicators of community health and promote community awareness;
- Integrate the 14 Sustainability Indicators into planning and decision-making processes within your own organization;
- Establish collaborations that will strengthen the efforts and capacities of groups and organizations to address issues of environmental, economic, and social health of the community.

**The signatories to this document agree to:**

- 1. Seek a more sustainable future for the region;**
- 2. Help to inform members and the public about measurements of the Sustainable Indicators;**
- 3. Have their own organization's name appear on the name of the list of Sustainable Cincinnati Supporters.**

This agreement shall take effect immediately. Signing this agreement does not commit your organization to financial support of the Project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized signatory(ies) for Organization

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Organization

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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For information on Sustainable Cincinnati contact:  
Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission  
138 East Court Street, Room 807  
Cincinnati, OH 45202  
(513) 946-4500  
[www.sustainablecincinnati.org](http://www.sustainablecincinnati.org)