

6.0 Resiliency

Resiliency planning is fundamental to ensuring the region is prepared for extreme events, whether natural or man-made. Adapting current economic, community, and transportation planning methods to incorporate resiliency is a priority goal of OMEGA. We will work with members and partner agencies to ensure development and completion of projects that are resilient and/or sustainable.

Changes in climate and extreme weather events strain the region's infrastructure. With challenging topography throughout much of the region, extreme weather events affect this area differently than many other parts of the state. Landslides, flash flooding, and road washouts are hazards to transportation infrastructure, as well as to the business community and residents.

6.1 Extreme Weather Events / Climate Change

The transportation system throughout the region is essential to the economic prosperity and quality of life of communities. To fill this critical role, infrastructure must be secure and resilient to a myriad of hazards. Resilience is the ability to anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to changing conditions and withstand, mitigate, respond to, and recover rapidly from disruptions. The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, enacted in December 2015, requires planning agencies to take resiliency into consideration during transportation planning processes.

The impacts of a changing climate and extreme weather events are one of the hazards that threaten our nation's transportation systems. Flooding and severe storm events endanger the long-term investments that federal, state, and local governments have made in transportation infrastructure. Changes in climate have intensified the magnitude, duration, and frequency of these events for many regions in the United States, a trend that is projected to continue. As a result, transportation planning agencies, including RTPOs, are assessing ways to protect, preserve, and improve their assets in the face of increasing climate change and extreme weather events.

To prepare the region, the OMEGA RTPO, in conjunction with our planning partners must conduct assessments to understand the vulnerability of regional transportation systems to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather. The transportation planning process provides a key opportunity for transportation agencies and local partners to proactively identify projects and strategies to address the vulnerabilities identified and to promote resilience at the systems level, thereby meeting the FAST Act resiliency requirements. These planning efforts support OMEGA's objective to have communities consider implementation of policies or plans that incorporate all users of the transportation network, such as Complete Streets. Planning for and implementing mitigation activities support OMEGA's objective to decrease the number of major roadways at risk of flooding.

6.2 Mines

Threats to the transportation system are not all above ground. A danger lurks below ground in many areas, due to the history of mineral mining throughout the region. Mine subsidence threatens many areas throughout the OMEGA region, owing to the history of predominantly coal mining in the area. There is a history of mines impacting the region's transportation network, and many more areas impact the ability of local leaders to attract businesses and other development:

- I-70 collapsed near Old Washington in March 1995
- ODOT grouted a section of I-70 just east of Zanesville in 2014-2015
- East Canton bypass of US 30 is projected to require over \$30 million in mine remediation.
- D.O. Hall Business Park and Guernsey Power Station both required mine remediation for large-scale developments to be completed

Mine remediation activities support OMEGA's objective to decrease the number of major roadways at risk of slipping. They also support increased safety measures in the region and create more attractive sites to business investors and developers. Without shovel-ready sites, the surplus of abandoned mine land in the region stifles economic development when potential businesses do not have access to dig-ready sites. When millions of dollars are required to grout and fill underground mine sites, many businesses are not able to or interested in investments that substantial. In order to be a marketable region, mine-remediated sites with access to public utilities are key.

6.3 Economic Resilience

Regional economic success is closely associated to the region's ability to prevent or mitigate, to withstand, and to recover from significant disturbances to its economy. Such major economic disruptions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Downturns or other significant impacts to the economy that affects demand for locally produced goods and consumer spending
- Downturns in the petrochemical or other industries that make up a valuable piece of the region's economic activity
- Other external shocks such as a natural or man-made disaster, public health crises, exit of a major employer, or impacts of climate change

As outlined by the EDA, integrating resilience into the CEDS and other planning efforts should be undertaken as part of a two-pronged approach:

1. Planning for and implementing resilience through specific goals or actions to bolster the long-term economic durability of the region (steady state), and
2. Establishing information networks among the various stakeholders in the region to encourage active and regular communications between the public, private, education, and non-profit sectors to collaborate on existing and potential future challenges (responsive).

Steady State Approach

Steady state approaches to economic resilience focus on the long-term planning efforts designed to avoid or mitigate major disruptions to the economy. These approaches may include aligning regional plans with other planning efforts, such as hazard mitigation plans. Other efforts may include

assisting communities to develop and implement safe development practices in business districts, industrial parks, and surrounding communities by locating structures outside of floodplains, preserving lands that act as natural buffers from storms, and protecting existing developments from the impacts of extreme weather.

Additionally, efforts to grow and diversify the region's economic and employment base will help ensure timely recovery to both economic and natural disasters. Potential strategies to achieve this are outlined below:

- Enhance infrastructure to support economic growth
- Facilitate the development of quality housing to support economic development
- Provide small businesses with accessible financing to support entrepreneurship
- Capitalize on existing recreational resources through tourism sector development and promotion
- Encourage the relationship between educational resources/institutions and local businesses' workforce needs
- Support the update of county hazard mitigation and disaster recovery plans
- Support expansion of industries less vulnerable to disaster

Responsive Approach

Responsive approaches to economic resiliency focus on short or intermediate planning efforts designed to initiate recovery from a major disruption. Examples of these efforts may include:

- Establishing a process for regular communication, monitoring, and updating of business community needs and issues (which can then be used after an incident).
- Establishing/using a capability to rapidly contact key local, regional, state, and federal officials to communicate business sector needs and coordinate impact assessment efforts; and
- Establishing/using coordination mechanisms and plans for short, intermediate, and long-term recovery needs (which may include pursuing emergency funding, when available).

To assist in preparing for these disruptions, OMEGA assists communities and businesses in the region with planning and access to resources such as our Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program or Regional 166 Loan program for private, for-profit businesses) and federal and state grant programs for communities and non-profits. OMEGA provides communities with assistance in applying for funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), the Community Development Block Grant Economic Development and other programs, the Governor's Office of Appalachia (GOA), and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) area development and POWER programs. The Brownfield Remediation and Assessment grant programs through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is another way that OMEGA assists communities within the region in redeveloping and returning previously contaminated sites and buildings to productive use. The Rural Industrial Park Loan program under the Ohio Developmental Services Agency is another program that OMEGA assists with that provides funding for industrial park development. With the addition of the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Pilot Program, OMEGA can also help communities apply for funding to remediate abandoned mine lands and restoring land to productive use and improve safety which will economically benefit the area. These programs support OMEGA's objective to increase business diversification.

OMEGA is also involved in several partnerships including:

- **JobsOHIO:** A private, non-profit corporation created in 2011 to lead Ohio's job creation efforts with a singular focus on attracting and retaining jobs, with an emphasis on strategic industry sectors in areas of statewide and regional strength.
- **OhioSoutheast (OhioSE)** Formerly known as the Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth (APEG) and **TeamNEO**;, OhioSE and TeamNEO are regional partners of JobsOhio that serve the counties in the OMEGA region.
- **Appalachian Growth Capital (AGC):** A Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that partners with local and regional banks as well as secondary lenders to support businesses in the region.
- **Small Business Association (SBA):** A U.S. government agency that provides support to entrepreneurs and small businesses by connecting them with lenders and funding as well as assisting them in planning, starting, and growing their small businesses.
- **Eastern Ohio Development Alliance (EODA):** A 16-county regional planning organization serving a population of approximately 805,000 residents and focused on economic development planning and marketing the region.
- **Ohio Economic Development Association (OEDA):** Created in 2005 by merging the efforts of the Ohio Development Association and the Ohio Economic Development Council, OEDA represents more than 300 economic development professionals in Ohio. OEDA advocates on behalf of its members on economic development issues important to growing Ohio's economy; it is a non-partisan organization that provides professional development training and activities.
- **Development Districts of Appalachia Association (DDAA):** Promotes Appalachia Ohio and 13 other states under the jurisdiction of the Appalachian Regional Council (ARC).
- **National Association of Development Organizations (NADO):** Provides advocacy, education, research and training for the nation's regional development organizations.
- **Ohio Rural Communities Assistance Program (Ohio RCAP):** A part of a national network of regional non-profit organizations that provide technical assistance to help resolve water and wastewater issues.
- **Ohio Conference of Community Development Inc. (OCCD):** A statewide association of community and economic development professionals dedicated to helping develop, implement and improve federal, state and local programs for community development.
- **Appalachian Ohio Geospatial Data Partnership (AOGDP):** An organization that adopts and promotes geospatial data standards in Ohio's Appalachian region.