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Gradual Growth in Regional Collaboration in Cuyahoga County, Ohio

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Focus on Facts

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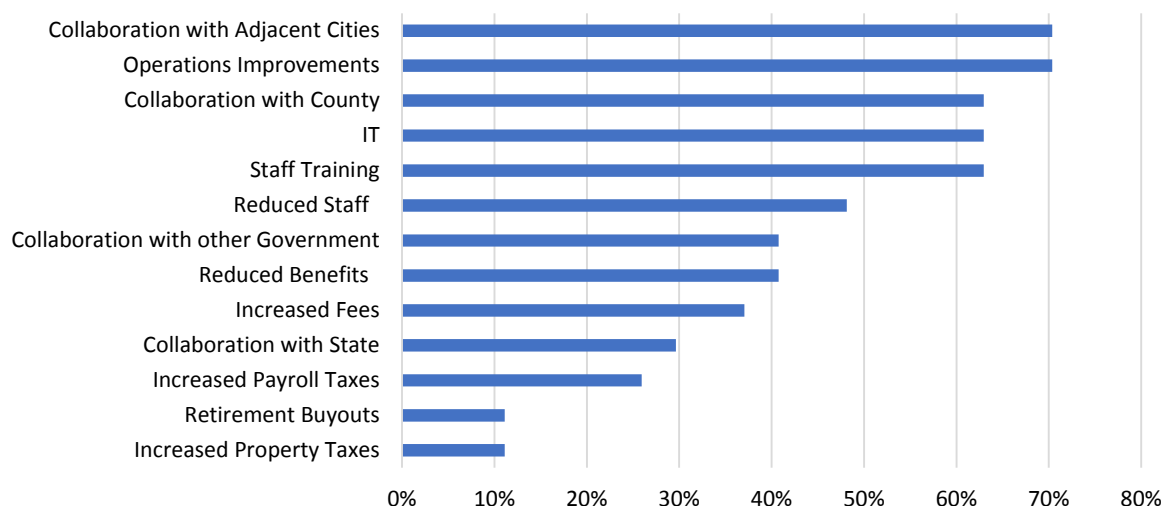
Gradual Growth in Regional Collaboration in Cuyahoga County, Ohio

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- For many, regionalism is the answer to managing city challenges brought about by metropolitan sprawl. Yet regionalism is defined in many ways. Proponents tend to recommend regional tax sharing and/or increased coordination and sharing of services.
- For the most part, such efforts have not progressed very far in Northeast Ohio. But the context for local autonomy has changed. Jurisdictions that were fiscally sound now find they are not immune from fiscal constraints.
- The first Levin Regional Cooperation Survey,¹ conducted in late 2018, examines regional collaboration efforts in city management and operations among the 57 municipalities in Cuyahoga County, Ohio.
- Figure 1 shows that among 31 responding Cuyahoga municipalities, 70% provide local services by collaborating with adjacent cities and 63% collaborate with County government.

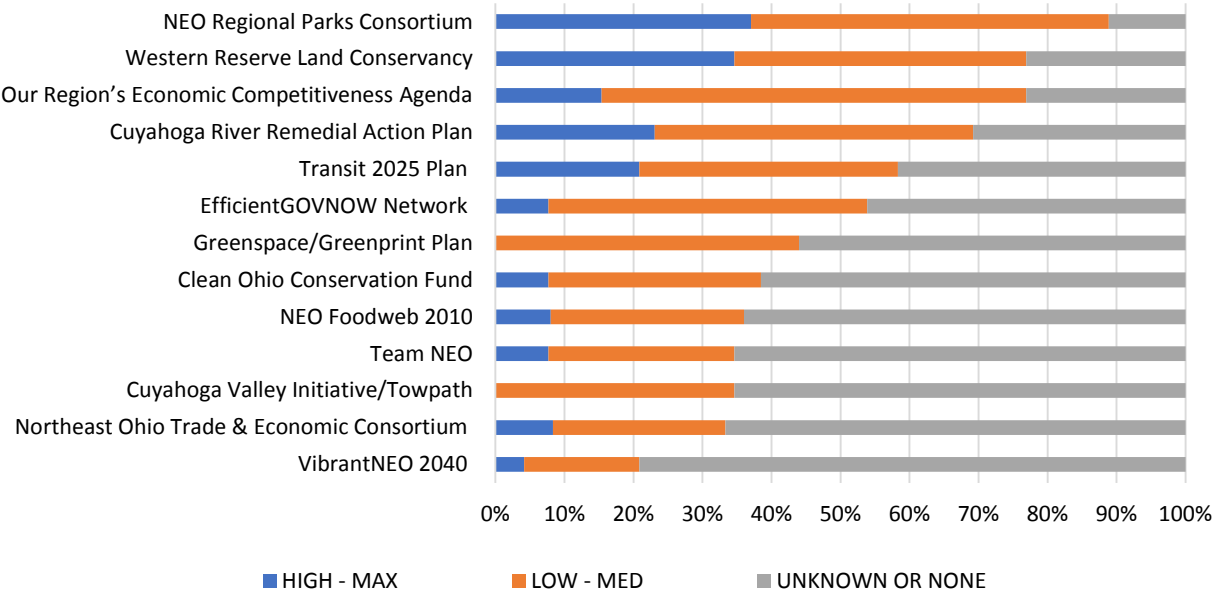
Figure 1: Mechanisms to Address Fiscal Challenges



¹ Anglin, Roland V. and Rene Kizys, "Levin Regional Cooperation Survey." October 2019. Full report can be found at https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/urban_facpub/1625/

- Respondents reported an average of 4 collaborative agreements for providing specific local services. The most common include: *Dispatch* (23 respondents); *Police* (16); *Fire* (15); *Water and/or Sewer* (14); *Emergency Medical Services* (11); and *Senior Services* (10).
- Frequently cited barriers to collaboration include “*strong attachment to local jurisdictional control*” and “*resistance from local stakeholders.*” These barriers seem easier to overcome when collaborating with adjacent partners and/or County government. But they may inhibit broader regional initiatives (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Municipal Participation in Regional Initiatives



- In regard to the overall perceived value of regional initiatives, 54% of respondents “*somewhat agree*” and 11% “*strongly agree*” that their involvement with a regional initiative “*changed the way we make decisions in my community.*” But the perception of value varies by specific initiative. For example, only 11% “*somewhat agree*” and none “*strongly agree*” that Vibrant NEO 2040 changed local decision making.
- In summary, the first Levin Regional Cooperation Survey indicates that many municipalities in Cuyahoga County are providing specific services through custom-designed collaborative agreements with their neighbors and with County government. But engagement in broader regional initiatives is less common. Faced with the proud traditions of home rule and local control, regional initiatives need clear plans that outline cost savings and community benefits.