

All of the regional city transformational processes began with either one or a small group of committed and visionary leaders who are vested in the community. They recognized a community need or challenge that, without being addressed through a collective and tactical strategy, would significantly impede the long-term economic and social health of the community while limiting new market opportunities.

Each transformation strategy was built upon and leveraged the unique assets, resources, and market drivers at play in each regional city. The first step in the development of that strategy is to holistically identify assets including talent-base, infrastructure, business climate, quality of place amenities and more. While the definition of these assets is unique to each regional city, their use as the foundation for a plan was demonstrated in all of the regional cities profiled.

It is important that the vision, challenges and assets are codified – becoming part of a formal action agenda. This process and the agenda itself must be more than just a list of objectives with timelines and resources required. Depending on the challenge(s) and vision for transformation, this process should encourage critical thought to how existing assets will be leveraged for change, projects will align with the goals and identity for the region and how to ensure projects are executed over time.

The plan to address the challenges and seize the opportunities should be catalytic and realistic. It should be an active document that encourages collaboration among key stakeholders, supports a singular regional message and allows for ongoing dialogue as the region evolves. The plan should be shared publicly to allow for broader awareness and leveraging of other actions underway in the region.



possible actions (not limited to)

- Articulate the urgent or growing need for transformation in the community along a path:
  - ➔ Improve conditions – a sense that the region can do better and grow jobs and population
  - ➔ Respond to issues – decreases in employment base, risks over industry decline, quality of place barriers that limit a community's attractiveness
- Empower a convener and civic intermediary to begin the process of planning to achieve the vision.
- Secure a consultant that can assist the civic intermediary in advancing the process
- Broadly define the challenges and the identify the opportunities of the region
- Identify, encourage and convene key leader(s) to engage
- Ensure diversity of stakeholder-base and how each can engage in the plan development process (Page 29 of "Benchmarking US Cities" report)

possible actions (not limited to)

- Define the region (map) that you are profiling
  - ➔ Utilize commuting patterns and retail flows/ leakage information
- Execute a process that allows stakeholders to define what sets your community apart and what can be improved
- Identify and assess your region's core assets for attracting investment and talent
  - ➔ Use a broad definition of assets to include: talent, cost of living, natural assets, proximity to other regional drivers and more
- Conduct an industry assessment that identifies the sectors where your community has strength
  - ➔ Utilize a data driven process to get beyond common perceptions
  - ➔ Utilize market projection data to identify industry trends and opportunities that will impact regional industry
- Create awareness in the community of global trends that may affect the region and determine how its assets and challenges can align to take advantage of future trends
- Define a vision for the future of your region based on the analysis and unique strengths and opportunities available for your future

possible actions (not limited to)

- Brainstorm, then prioritize projects and programs to achieve the region's goals and desired identity
- Balance short-term and long-term actions to create a steady pipeline of success
- Identify the people and civic intermediaries responsible for the execution of the projects and plans
  - ➔ Define their specific roles
  - ➔ Source funding for projects
- Focus on opportunities and barriers related to a region's infrastructure including but limited to:
  - ➔ Transportation: roads, air, mass transit, logistics
  - ➔ Education: K-12, higher education, life long learning
  - ➔ Real Estate: housing for key constituencies (senior/student/young professional)
- Analyze programs that exist to support economic and community development priorities
- Identify issues that are restricting the community's livability or quality of place around the following topics:
  - Recreational resources
  - Cultural amenities
  - Health related factors – air and water quality
  - Housing Quality-Availability
  - Mixed-use options (entertainment)
  - Abandoned Buildings

possible actions (not limited to)

- Develop the capacity of a civic leadership intermediary that can support follow through on the actions and priorities
  - ➔ Create a fundraising strategy to financially grow capacity to support execution of the actions
- Launch, execute and complete the projects in the plan
- Develop performance scorecard that includes metrics unique to each individual project or program (return on investment) while also demonstrating, through measurement, broader economic, social and community-based impact
- Develop a process for ongoing review of actions and for allowing for modification and additions of needed actions (optional)
  - ➔ Failures must be an opportunity to learn rather than pull back
- Engage the public stakeholder base through public relations and marketing of the plan region-wide
- Ensure transparency and inclusiveness in the planning and evaluation process
- Recognize and applaud success; include the contributions of diverse stakeholders