



Mid-Ohio Regional  
Planning Commission

# REGIONAL ENERGY ACTION PLAN FOR THE COLUMBUS REGION

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**JULY 10, 2014**

In partnership with:



## OVERVIEW

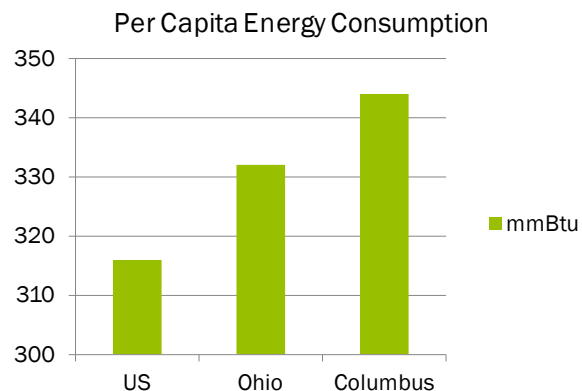
Energy is at the top of the agenda for many in Central Ohio. The changes in federal and state policies, rising energy demand and price, and shifts in the traditional mix of energy supplies are having the greatest impact at the regional level.

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) worked in partnership with the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) to release the first-of-its-kind Regional Energy Action Plan. It provides an assessment of the economic, social, and policy realities related to the development and use of energy throughout the 12-county Central Ohio region and identifies recommendations that may lead to a more prosperous regional economy and enriched environment.

## IMPORTANCE OF SMART ENERGY USE AND PRODUCTION

The Plan identifies energy as key to the economic growth and success of Central Ohio, which is the country's second-fastest growing, large metropolitan area in the US.

- Central Ohioans have a higher per capita use than the rest of Ohio and United States by 3 percent and 8 percent, respectively.
- The region is served by an aging transmission and distribution system that is wasting an estimated 86 percent of total energy generated – translated locally to cost Central Ohioans \$1-2 billion each year.
- To date, more than 200 projects are generating clean, renewable energy through solar, waste-to-energy and biomass resources.
- Energy efficiency is the lowest cost energy supply alternative and is a great value – every \$1 invested brings at least \$2 in economic benefits.



Central Ohio will be better served as community and business leaders continue to understand the critical link between a more productive region and the efficient use of energy in our investments in infrastructure, training, technology, and the built environment. Energy planning focused on diversifying the energy generation portfolio and curtailing consumption is a smart business strategy for our continued competitive advantage and growth in Central Ohio.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Create and implement a new economic development-focused regional energy planning initiative**

- Establish a shared vision for the regional energy economy
- Focus on emerging sectors: energy storage, data warehousing, building efficiency, and agriculture
- Utilize federal, state and local resources

### **Engage the region's network in a major new job development effort**

- Align workforce training programs with emerging regional energy jobs – shale gas, energy efficiency & energy storage

### **Start a new regional energy assurance effort**

- Integrate energy resilience in regional planning efforts
- Assess weaknesses in infrastructure, and in economic & social structures
- Implement distributed generation and energy efficiency for critical loads

### **Embrace the region's access to, and distribution of, shale gas and prepare for challenges**

- Leverage shale gas as a transitional energy source
- Mitigate adverse environmental & social impacts
- Explore partnerships with regional groups

### **Build strong transportation-focused industry collaborations focusing on warehouse and logistics support**

- Leverage centralized location for nearby energy development
- Focus on fuel efficiency and alternative fuel generation

### **Embrace the economics of green**

- Capitalize on assets in transportation, banking, insurance and regulation
- Use energy as a business development tool
- Adopt innovative financing models
- Utilize MORPC as framework for regional collaboration

### Availability of regional energy data – establishment of a data consortium and immersion in big data

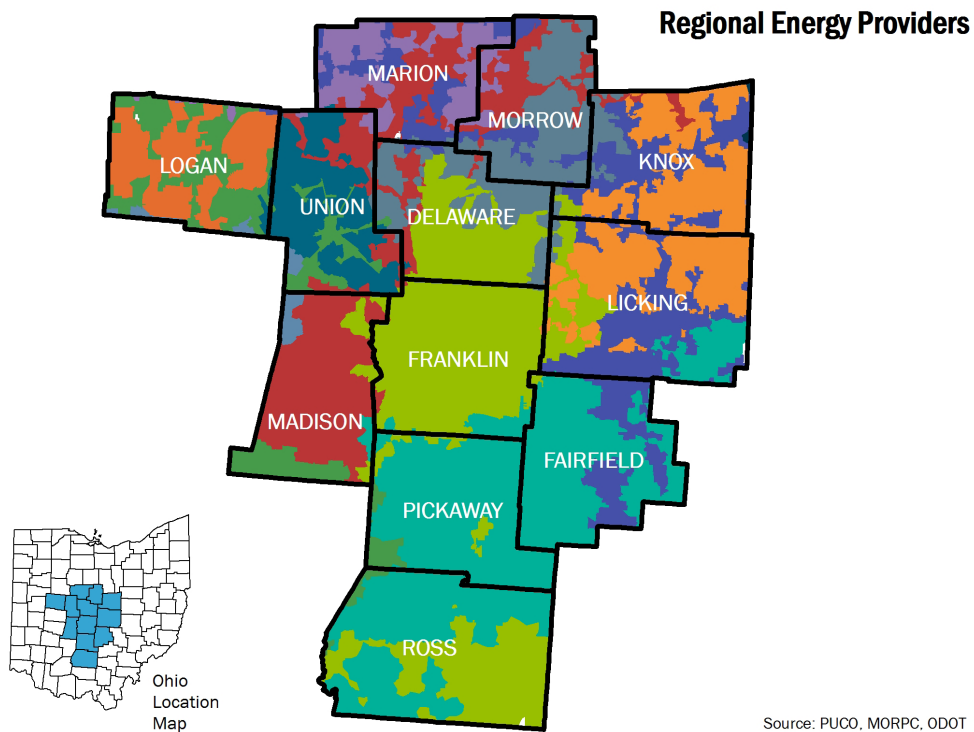
- Create a data consortium around regional planning
- Promote energy benchmarking programs to demonstrate cost savings

### Proactively advance and insert regional policy priorities at the state and federal level

- Sustain certainty in energy marketplace
- Support policies for a diversified, balanced energy portfolio
- Increase access for underserved sectors in energy programs
- Anticipate impacts of US EPA carbon rules

## REGIONAL ENERGY ACTION PLAN MAP

MORPC also created an interactive, online tool to visualize the geographic representation of energy data to aid energy providers, planners and residents. Below is an example of a map created to depict more than a dozen energy providers in the 12-county region in Central Ohio.



[www.morpc.org/energyplan](http://www.morpc.org/energyplan)