



**Contact:**      **Bernice Cage**  
Tel.: 614-233-4157  
Cell Phone: 614-626-1117  
Email: bcage@morpc.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **MORPC Extends Balanced Growth Planning to Four More Central Ohio Watersheds**

**(Columbus-June 25, 2010)** The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission will begin the Balanced Growth Planning Process for four central Ohio watersheds. Introductory meetings have been scheduled for the Big Darby Watershed, the Big Walnut Watershed, the Upper Scioto Watershed and the Walnut Creek Watershed. This process will bring together communities in the watershed to plan for land uses that protect areas requiring conservation while encouraging development that will accommodate future growth. This process will establish a regional forum for discussion regarding the built and natural environments.

“The Balanced Growth Planning Process was successfully piloted in four northern Ohio watersheds. The development of a Balanced Growth Plan is already under way for the Olentangy River Watershed. Twenty-seven communities and over thirty stakeholders in the Olentangy Watershed have agreed to work together to build a better region by developing a Balanced Growth Plan,” states Joe Kitchen, MORPC Associate Planner.

The Balanced Growth Planning Process is voluntary, locally-driven, and incentive-based. Participation does not require a fee or any other financial commitment. The resulting Balanced Growth Plan will not create any additional regulations for local governments, but may include recommendations.

Each community’s governing body will decide how to implement the final plan. If the final Balanced Growth Plan receives state endorsement, there will be incentives from state agencies to assist with implementation.

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*Working to Build a Better Region*

**111 Liberty Street, Suite 100**  
**Columbus, Ohio 43215-5222**  
**Phone (614) 228-2663 Fax (614) 621-2401**  
**www.morpc.org**

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For more information, please contact Erin Grushon, Associate Planner, [egrushon@morpc.org](mailto:egrushon@morpc.org), 614-233-4155 or Joe Kitchen, Associate Planner, [jkitchen@morpc.org](mailto:jkitchen@morpc.org), 614-233-4124.

Designated as central Ohio's metropolitan planning agency, MORPC is a voluntary association of 47 local governments. The Center for Energy & Environment at MORPC serves as a community resource in the region by offering a variety of services including: daily air quality forecasts, trail coordination, educational presentations, watershed planning, home weatherization, government carbon footprint analysis and more.