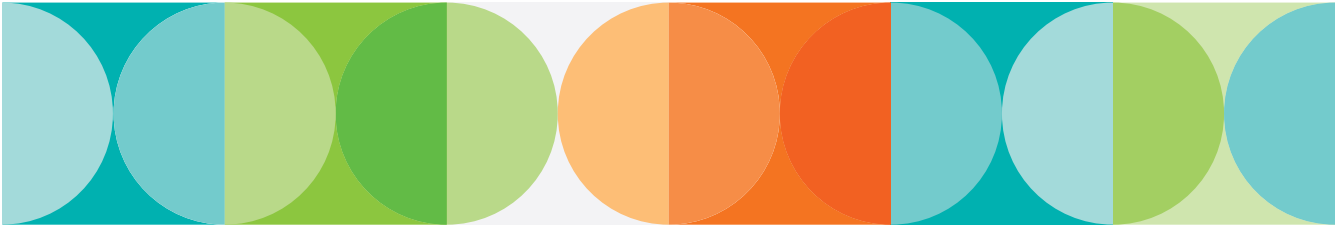


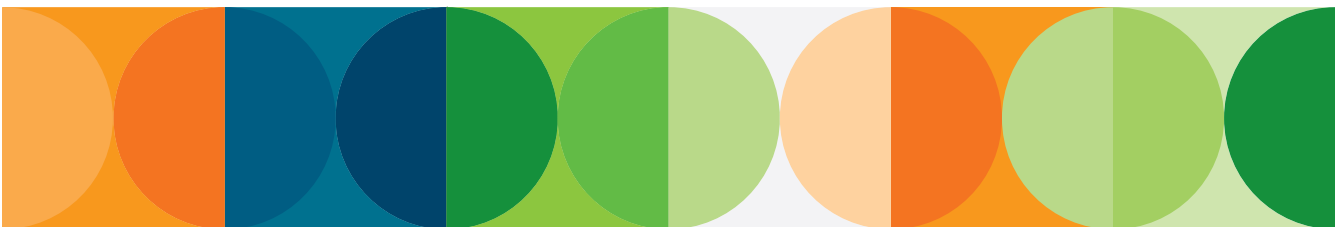
# GROWTH.



# DEVELOPMENT.



# OPPORTUNITY.



## 2018 STATE OF THE REGION

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Richard L. "Ike" Stage  
 Grove City Mayor

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# GROWTH. DEVELOPMENT. OPPORTUNITY.

Whether it is the next five minutes, years or decades to come, it is natural to find ourselves imagining what the future might bring. Although we are unable to see ahead, we can decide what we want for ourselves, our families and our communities, and then take steps toward realizing that vision.

This is what planning is all about.

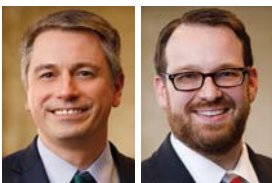
At the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), planning for a better future with our region's communities is what we do. We work with business leaders, government officials, higher education institutions, non-profits and residents to envision a shared future and help bring it to fruition through transformative programs and initiatives. Much of this planning centers on getting prepared for growth and ensuring it improves our environment, economy and quality of life.

Those of us who live and work here – experiencing a region with increasing opportunities and enjoying many local amenities – are not surprised that it continues to grow. But this growth challenges communities to make decisions about how they should develop, as well as what solutions and opportunities will be available for businesses and residents in the years to come.

As a smart, sustainable and more populated region, we will have many decisions to consider. MORPC will continue to bring together its more than 60 local government and regional organization members to confront these challenges and to lead a path toward the future.

We extend our thanks to all the Central Ohio residents who make this a vibrant region, and we look forward to taking on the future with you.

Kind Regards,



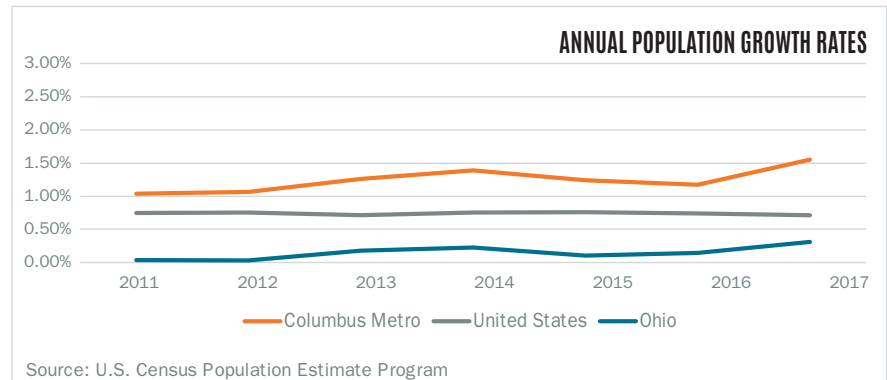
**William Murdock**  
Executive Director,  
MORPC

**Rory McGuiness**  
City of Columbus  
MORPC Board Chair

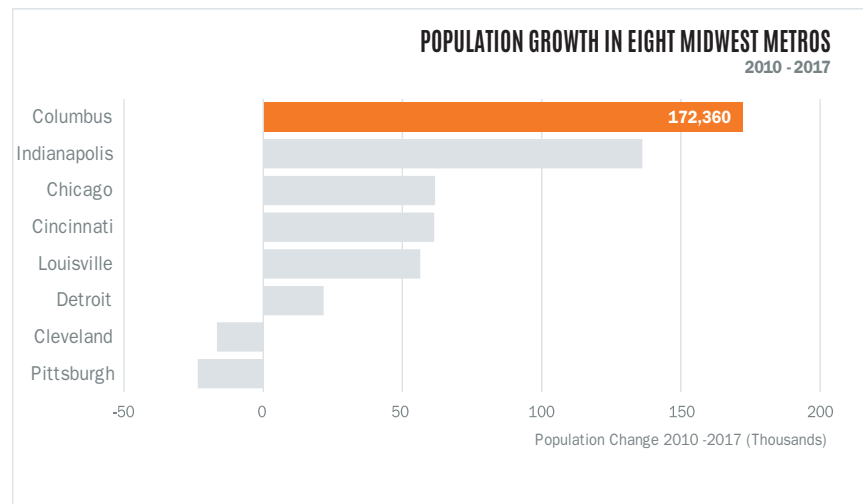
## GROWTH REMAINS STRONG IN CENTRAL OHIO

Central Ohio continues to grow. This growth remains strong relative to the state and the nation.

From the 2010 Census to the middle of 2017, the Columbus Metro has experienced an average annual growth rate around 1.2 percent. This rate has held steadily above the national average (around 0.74 percent) and significantly higher than the average for the State of Ohio — 0.15 percent.



When compared to seven other metros in the Midwest, the Columbus Metro has seen the largest growth from 2010 to 2017, with an estimated gain of 172,360 residents. Indianapolis is second, in terms of overall growth, with its estimated increase of 136,144. Other growing Midwestern metros each added fewer than half the residents than the Columbus area during the same period, and two — Cleveland and Pittsburgh — lost population since 2010.

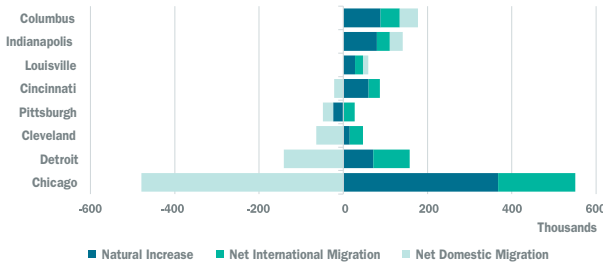


When growth is separated by type (natural increase, international migration and domestic migration) only three of the Midwest metros experienced net gains in all three categories. Columbus, Indianapolis and Louisville look fairly similar in terms of share of population growth by type — all three metros had close to a 50-50 split of growth from natural increase and net migration.

**CONTINUED**



### TYPE OF GROWTH IN 8 MIDWESTERN METROS 2010-2017



Source: U.S. Census Population Estimate Program, Components of Population Change

### GROWTH REMAINS STRONG IN CENTRAL OHIO

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Central Ohio growth is strong relative to the state, other Midwest metros and the country as a whole. If the recent increases in Central Ohio population continue, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) projects that the region is on track to add between 500,000 and a million new people from 2010 to 2050. Growth is not a new phenomenon in Central Ohio. The region has seen consistent population growth over the recorded decades. According to Census counts in 1970 and 2010, the region gained nearly 750,000 new residents during that period.

“By the numbers, the current trends look much like the growth of the past. However, macro-level factors such as generational shifts, changing migration patterns and technological innovations paired with intentional decisions about development policies, transportation investments and housing preferences are leading to shifts in where and how growth occurs in the region,” said Aaron Schill, MORPC Director of Regional Data & Mapping. “There is a great opportunity to learn from past development patterns and plan for the social, environmental and economic needs of the region’s future.”

Since 2010, suburban communities within Franklin County and quickly growing adjacent counties, have continued adding residents at the fastest rates in the region. Overall, however, the largest concentration of this decade’s growth is happening within the Columbus city limits.

High growth rates are observed in places like New Albany, which added an estimated 3,000 residents at a rate of 4.2 percent annually, and Hilliard, which gained around 8,600 residents at a 3.4 percent annual rate. These and other suburban cities are matched in pace by several burgeoning townships. At a 4.8 percent rate, Jerome Township in Union County has added nearly 2,000 new residents. In Delaware County, nearly half of all new residents live in the unincorporated townships.

So far this decade, the distribution of growth in Central Ohio has shifted dramatically. From 2000 to 2010, the metro added around 230,000 new people, with about 33 percent of that growth within the City of Columbus and 11 percent in the rest of Franklin County. Since 2010, however, MORPC estimates suggest that around 55 percent of the region’s growth has occurred within the City of Columbus alone, and 21 percent has occurred in the remainder of Franklin County.

The emerging dynamic in the pattern of growth in Central Ohio so far this decade is also felt in the outer counties in the region. Three of the 15 counties in the Columbus Metro went from decades of steady growth (around one percent on average) to growth rates less than 0.1 percent so far this decade.

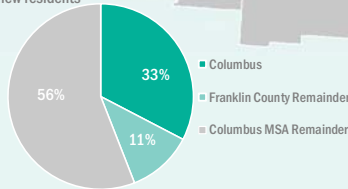
This remarkable shift in how we are growing this decade means some communities are planning for a boom in residents, while others are preparing for a decline.

“Growth patterns will continue to shift and change over time, but what remains consistent is that the Columbus Metro will continue to grow over the coming decades,” Schill said.

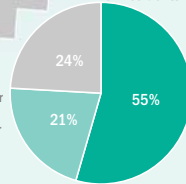
With that knowledge comes a need to plan for growth – and the diverse challenges and opportunities it presents – in a strategic and collaborative way. MORPC and its partners are working to do that.

So far this decade, the distribution of growth in Central Ohio has shifted dramatically.

**2000 - 2010**  
231,503  
new residents



**2010 - 2018**  
172,191  
new residents



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# SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS STRENGTHEN THE REGION

**A**s Central Ohio continues to grow, residents, developers and businesses are placing a strong emphasis on the importance of environmentally and economically sustainable practices.

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) has worked over many years to collaborate with local communities and regional organizations on sustainability initiatives that will contribute to the region's growth and vitality. It does so through programming in the areas of air quality, water resources, energy conservation, efficient land use, neighborhood revitalization and active transportation.



Most recently, MORPC began its sustainable2050 program, which supports member communities across the 15-county region in their sustainability efforts by providing direct technical assistance, collaboration and recognition. MORPC is working closely with these communities to benchmark their sustainability efforts and track their progress in achieving sustainability goals and objectives.

"We're gaining a better understanding of how all these communities' sustainability efforts are making a collective impact on the quality of life in Central Ohio," said Kerstin Carr, MORPC Director of Planning & Environment. "We are thrilled to already see more than 30 communities signed on since its launch last fall."

The actions being taken closely align with the goals outlined in MORPC's Regional Sustainability Agenda, including: reducing per capita energy consumption; protecting natural resources; attracting and retaining economic opportunity; creating sustainable neighborhoods; and increasing regional collaboration. By working toward these goals, the region is not only helping to maintain a high quality of life, but also contributing to the health of its residents.

MORPC's air quality program is a good example of a sustainability program helping to improve health – striving to make Central Ohio's air safer to breathe by reducing air pollution.

For many years, MORPC has issued daily air quality forecasts for ozone and particle pollution. It notifies the public through Air Quality Alerts when pollution levels become unhealthy for sensitive groups

of people, including those with sensitive breathing issues or respiratory disease. Residents can sign up to receive Air Quality Alerts at [morpc.org/airquality](http://morpc.org/airquality).

One father, whose son was born prematurely with cloudy lungs, recently told MORPC that he had never cared more about air quality than when his son began to breathe independently. The family now regularly checks the air quality, concerned about how the child's breathing will respond to it.

Communities and residents have a number of ways to improve the quality of our air. By removing barriers to electric vehicle infrastructure and alternative fuels, which produce fewer pollutants, MORPC assists Central Ohio communities in preparing for a future beyond the internal combustion engine. Meanwhile residents can take advantage of alternative transportation options such as carpooling or vanpooling, taking transit, walking and biking to improve air quality.

The region's multi-use trail system – with better connections than ever before – has certainly contributed to the ability of people to take advantage of active, healthier methods of travel.



Central Ohio Greenways, or COG, is a trail network of national significance spanning over 220 miles, connecting Central Ohio to other parts of the state and country. These trails are traveled more than 11 million miles annually, providing economic, quality of life and health benefits to the community. Efforts are currently underway to increase the number of people using the regional trail system through trail network expansions, increased programming, improved branding and marketing and new partnerships. More information is available at [centralohiogreenways.com](http://centralohiogreenways.com).

The region's growth over the next few decades is bringing an increased demand for more walkable neighborhoods and transportation options. Sustainability efforts taking place in the region are a critical element for providing a high quality of life to a diverse population.



**Cornell R. Robertson**  
Franklin County Engineer




Cornell has served as the Franklin County Engineer since June 2017. He began his career at the engineer's office in 1992 and has held positions in construction, design, and overall engineering management.

Mr. Robertson received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from The Ohio State University and is a registered Professional Engineer and Professional Surveyor in Ohio.

Paid for by the Committee: Cornell R. Robertson for County Engineer, William Curlis, Treasurer





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"The future doesn't belong to the light-hearted. It belongs to the brave."

- Ronald Reagan

Thank you, MORPC, for your vision and guidance.

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Union County - Marysville Economic Development Partnership  
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[www.33smartcorridor.com](http://www.33smartcorridor.com)

# MORE PEOPLE, NEW TECHNOLOGIES REQUIRE THOUGHTFUL PLANNING

Central Ohio's population is not only growing, but also changing. Increasingly, older adults with evolving mobility needs, and young professionals with new mobility preferences are calling this region home, along with a strong base of young families seeking a wider variety of transportation options. That makes this the time to plan and think innovatively for needed transportation and infrastructure improvements.

Connecting our growth to new transportation options and emerging technologies is key to the region's success, contributing to a higher quality of life for everyone – whether enjoying retirement, raising a family or starting a career.

We know how important a transportation system that adapts to growth is to the well-being of those who live in the region. It helps us to avoid crumbling infrastructure, traffic congestion and limited options for safely getting around without a car. Providing people access to jobs helps to increase economic opportunity. Residents can also maintain their health because they have access to healthcare professionals.

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and Central Ohio communities have been actively preparing to accommodate the region's growth and plan for the infrastructure it needs. Continuing to build upon previous planning, new initiatives are underway to get ahead of the ever-changing face of Central Ohio's growth.

MORPC and Columbus 2020 launched the Competitive Advantage Projects initiative to advance strategic infrastructure investments across the Columbus Region. The goal of the initiative is to prioritize important infrastructure projects – transportation, water and sewer, energy, telecommunications and smart technology – and to work toward making the projects a reality by tracking funding opportunities and sharing these priorities with legislators at the federal and state levels.

Meanwhile MORPC's Smart Region Task Force, launched this year, brings together local government officials and other innovative thought leaders from around the region to discuss the potential benefits and unintended consequences of smart infrastructure, data and technology.

The idea for a task force was formed as more smart mobility efforts unfolded and it became clear that technological advancements will dramatically disrupt the status quo of current planning and funding efforts for local governments. The task force will help prepare for the future – not as individual communities, but as a group of communities that thrives together as one Central Ohio region.



“Dublin and other communities need to be equipped with the resources, knowledge, and skills to take advantage of Smart City concepts as we plan for and invest in these technologies,” said Dublin City Manager Dana McDaniel, who is leading the Smart Region Task Force. “The task force is a great way to get everyone on the same page and ensure that no community in Central Ohio is left behind.”

MORPC also is prepping for growth through its 2020-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Columbus urbanized area, MORPC conducts a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process.

That planning process, in part, results in a Metropolitan Transportation Plan for a planning area that includes: Delaware and Franklin counties; Bloom and Violet townships in Fairfield County; New Albany, Pataskala and Etna Township in Licking County; and Jerome Township in Union County.

The growth in Central Ohio has only increased the excitement around this MTP. That is why MORPC's new MTP is looking beyond the required 20 years – all the way to 2050. The plan will take a long-range look at transportation needs, identify strategies and projects, and align them with sustainability and other regional goals. By developing the plan, the greater Columbus region is able to utilize federal transportation funding to improve, maintain and operate highways, public transit, bikeways and sidewalks – all of which reduce road congestion, improve air quality and add to our quality of life.

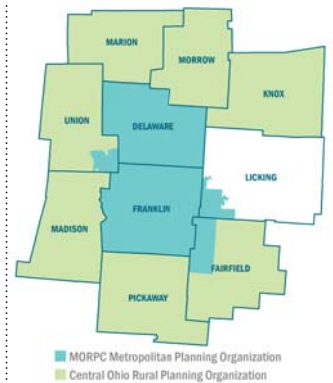
“In a region growing as fast as Central Ohio, preparing a transportation system to accommodate thousands of additional

travelers in the upcoming decades is vital,” said Thea Walsh, MORPC Director of Transportation Systems & Funding. “The MTP takes a comprehensive look at our transportation system and provides the basis for how transportation funding will be spent to maintain what we have and make needed improvements.”

The MTP will be completed in the spring of 2020. Throughout the development process, there will be plenty of opportunity for the public to review and comment on aspects of the plan, as well as to offer project suggestions. Regular updates can be found at [morpc.org/mtp](http://morpc.org/mtp).

The projects in the MTP are implemented through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Although projects must be included in the MTP to be eligible to receive federal funding, the TIP identifies the projects, along with specific funding sources, to be implemented by local agencies and the state over the next four years. Through the TIP, residents and communities can see what transportation projects in their area – such as road widenings, trails and transit – will be built to accommodate a growing population and offer residents choices in how to travel. MORPC updates the TIP for the MPO planning area every two years, and it serves to advance the transportation system and progress toward the performance targets established in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

A portion of the funding specified in the TIP is allocated at MORPC's discretion, following an application and selection process. MORPC works closely with local communities to prioritize how to use these funds in order to meet their needs, as well as those of the entire region. At this time, communities are preparing to apply for future funding this spring.



But MORPC's transportation work extends beyond the metropolitan planning organization area into the rural parts of Central Ohio. Because of its experience in transportation planning, MORPC has been partnering with ODOT and officials in Fairfield, Knox, Madison, Marion, Morrow, Pickaway and Union counties to provide transportation planning products and services through the Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization (CORPO). The primary goal of CORPO is to develop a regional, long-range transportation plan that reflects the transportation needs of these seven counties.

Much like the rest of the region, these counties have the goal of a transportation system that is connected, safe, well maintained, accessible to all users, environmentally sustainable and supportive of economic vitality.

Through all of these planning efforts, Central Ohio communities will be in a better position to meet the needs of their residents for years to come – offering them choice, safety and convenience as they go about their daily activities.





A rendering shows what the possibility of Midwest Connect hyperloop infrastructure might look like in Columbus. This is one of many initiatives taking place at MORPC to modernize the region.

## DEVELOPING INTO A MODERN, ATTRACTIVE REGION

With Central Ohio's bright future, there are many decisions to make regarding how to develop as a region. Diverse housing options, sustainable practices and policies, quality educational offerings, available work force and talent, arts and culture, and efficient transportation are just some of the factors that make a particular location attractive to residents and businesses.

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is continually looking forward and working with local communities to identify demographic and lifestyle changes, and how best to adapt to them in terms of development patterns, services and infrastructure. Over the next 30+ years, our communities could look dramatically different from how they looked in the past, as market preferences shift toward neighborhoods that are more compact and connected.

MORPC has long touted its insight2050 initiative, a collaborative effort to help communities better plan for growth by providing guidance, planning resources and community engagement tools to evaluate local development opportunities and make informed decisions.

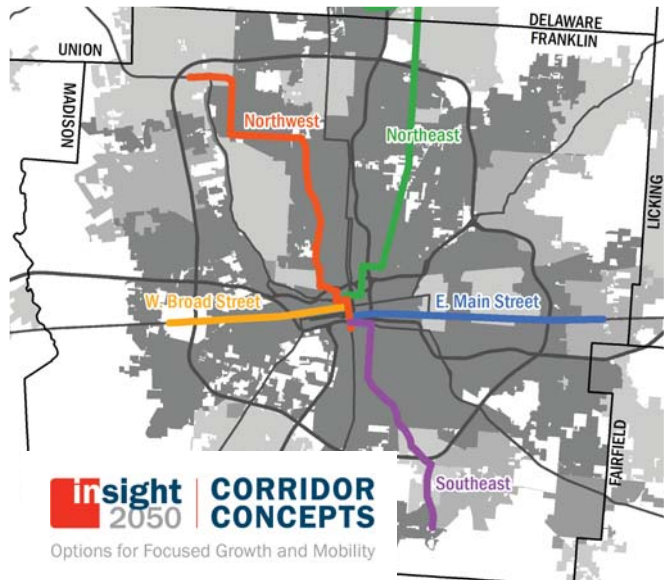
MORPC and its partners are now embarking on a new initiative under the umbrella of insight2050 called the insight2050 Corridor Concepts study. By looking closely at five major thoroughfares in Central Ohio, we can gain a deeper understanding of how communities are impacted by various development patterns and how it relates to transit options. The corridors include:

- East Main Street: SR 256 to Downtown Columbus
- Northeast: Polaris Pkwy to Downtown Columbus
- Northwest: US 33 at Post Road / Frantz Road to Downtown Columbus
- Southeast: Rickenbacker Int'l Airport to Downtown Columbus
- West Broad Street: Norton Road to Downtown Columbus

These five corridors could benefit from improved infrastructure and offer great opportunity for economic development and new housing choices. Insight2050 Corridor Concepts will determine what that development can look like at its best and make specific recommendations for how to implement it. Many of these strategies will be able to be applied to other corridors throughout the region and serve as tools and resources to all Central Ohio communities.

In addition to the insight2050 Corridor Concepts study, MORPC recently announced its Rapid Speed Transportation Initiative to further explore the feasibility and environmental components of hyperloop and passenger rail along the Chicago-Columbus-Pittsburgh corridor. This corridor creates a unique opportunity to connect major regions for improved freight and passenger transportation, as no direct highway or passenger rail connections currently exist between the regions.

MORPC's Midwest Connect Hyperloop proposal was named one of ten winners in the Hyperloop One Global Challenge in September 2017. This challenge attracted



hyperloop corridor proposals from 2,600 registrants in more than 100 countries across the globe. MORPC and its partners now have the opportunity to work with Virgin Hyperloop One to study the feasibility of bringing hyperloop technology to Central Ohio and the Midwest.

Creating more options for rapid speed transportation – by both traditional rail and hyperloop – would not only enhance passenger and freight transportation in the Midwest, but also drive economic growth, generate opportunities for development and create radically new opportunities for people and businesses in the Midwest megaregion. As such, MORPC has experienced great support for these projects from local governments, state departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, and individuals and corporations.

The proposed hyperloop and passenger rail connections will provide quick access to global businesses, international flights, and more specialized services supported in the largest of markets. As our population grows, the technology disruption could reach beyond transportation services to transform how business is conducted, how goods are shipped, and where people choose to live and work. The corridor's education, healthcare, labor and housing markets may become vast and unified through the introduction of hyperloop technology and passenger rail.

Through MORPC's continual efforts to strengthen Central Ohio and form connections to the global marketplace, local officials will have more of the information they need to develop the region in a thoughtful way.



MORPC helps its members remove the barriers to electric vehicle infrastructure and alternative fuels. Pictured are a variety of electric vehicles.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO MORPC ON ANOTHER GREAT STATE OF THE REGION!

When we recycle right, we help to reduce pollution, support jobs and the economy, and make a difference in our communities.



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# ENERGY FACTORS INTO REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Energy planning has become a major focus for local communities as they search for ways to best serve their residents and businesses. By understanding how energy flows from its source to where we live and work, how we use it and what this process does to our environment, we can begin to develop ways to increase the beneficial effects it has on our economy and quality of life.

Energy carries profound economic and environmental implications at the local, regional, state, national, and even global levels. For this reason, delving into our energy sources, uses, and losses becomes essential.

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's (MORPC's) Local Government Energy Partnership serves as the nexus among local communities, the utilities serving these areas, and the residents and businesses in Central Ohio. Utilizing a data-driven approach, MORPC provides the information, planning and technical assistance necessary to assist communities in meeting their energy needs.

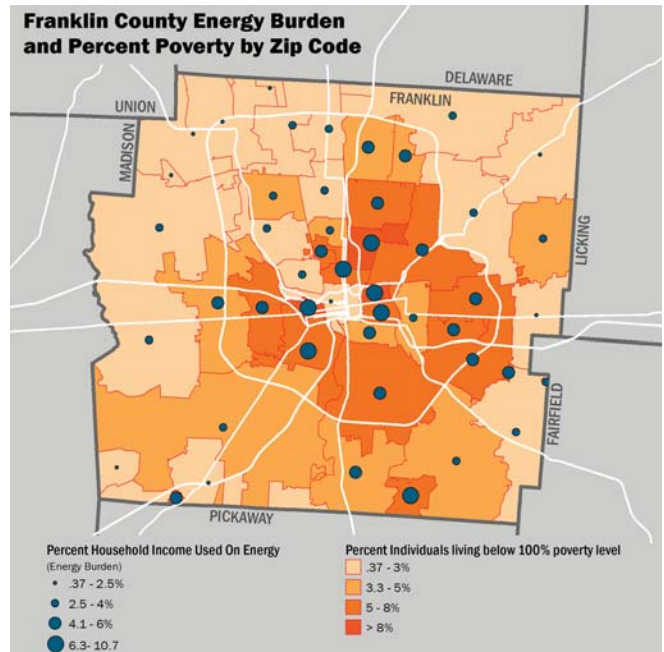
The first phase of this program offers energy benchmarking services for MORPC-member governments. Utilizing a tool developed by JadeTrack, local governments can establish the energy baseline for their buildings, track energy usage and trends over time and identify opportunities for improvements that can save taxpayer dollars.

Baselines like these were recently taken into account as MORPC finished work on its Franklin County Energy Study. This study provides an assessment of energy use and production across key sectors of the economy, including how much and how intensively energy is produced, imported, consumed and lost annually by Franklin County.

The study results will be released soon, but the analysis includes recommendations that will help guide future regional energy policies and strategies, set actionable energy goals, and benchmark progress toward those established goals and strategies. Some of these recommendations are to increase energy efficiency, to lessen driving alone in a vehicle, to increase the use of electric vehicles and to increase the local generation of renewable energy.

Being good stewards of the environment and using our dollars in a way that is most beneficial certainly comes into play as decisions are made at both the local level and by businesses and developers.

As the region strives to meet its current challenges and transform them into future opportunities, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of how we produce our energy, the way it is utilized, and the impact it is having on the quality of life in our communities.



This map highlights locations in which individuals use a higher proportion of their household income for energy.



# MORPC RESIDENTIAL SERVICES PROVIDING MORE OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) has a long history of working with local residents and businesses to not only provide access to safe and energy-efficient homes, but to help save on costs. These weatherization and home repair services are available to income-eligible Franklin County residents at no cost, providing a ladder of opportunity for those who might otherwise be unable to make such upgrades.

Residents in five communities within Franklin County spend an average of 6 to 10 percent of their household income on heating and powering their homes, which is higher than the typical 3.5 percent spent. In a community where residents spend more than 10 percent of their income on energy, they are at an extreme disadvantage to be able to afford other essentials.

During the past 30 years, MORPC has serviced more than 19,000 income-eligible Franklin County households through its programs. Residents experience reductions in utility bills and are safer and more comfortable in their homes. For example, the average natural gas savings is 28 percent.

Shelly Murphy, a resident of Groveport, took advantage of MORPC's home weatherization service after a car accident and other life circumstances unfolded. She said she is grateful for the program and wants other local residents to take advantage of it.

"This service literally saved my life," Murphy said. "Until MORPC performed its inspections, I had no idea that my house wasn't safe. Now I'm warmer in the winter, cooler in the summer, and – most importantly – safer from any hazards."

MORPC's experienced energy efficiency professionals perform energy inspections and safety checks of homes throughout the year. They start by thoroughly evaluating and identifying potential energy improvements, as well as related health and safety hazards. The inspection may result in a tune-up or replacement of the furnace or water heater, installation of attic or sidewall insulation, or replacement of refrigerators, freezers and light bulbs with more efficient models.

Murphy often talks about the work MORPC performed to friends and neighbors. Her home was even featured at MORPC's 2016 Home Weatherization Showcase, which highlights the value of these important services to community leaders, program funders and the public.

"MORPC is proud of the important work it does each and every day to provide a leg up to families throughout Franklin County," said Christina O'Keefe, MORPC Director of Energy & Air Quality. "Shelly's home is a wonderful example of the lives touched by these residential energy programs to protect their health, safety and comfort throughout the year."

The programs are provided at no cost to income-eligible clients thanks to funding from Columbia Gas of Ohio's WarmChoice program, Ohio Development Services Agency's Home Weatherization Assistance Program and Electric Partnership Program, and AEP Ohio's Community Assistance Program.

Those seeking more information on MORPC's home repair or home energy efficiency programs can visit [morpc.org](http://morpc.org) or call 614.621.1171.



The process of insulating a home is demonstrated at MORPC's annual Home Weatherization Showcase.



This aerial photo shows the beauty of Scioto Greenways, a project executed by the Columbus Downtown Development Corporation (CDDC).

## SCIOTO GREENWAYS: A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

Rarely do you get a chance to completely change the way people view our city. But the Scioto Greenways project did just that.

Think back to what the Scioto River used to be: an overly-wide sedimentation pond that was an underutilized area of our city. Instead of an active river, we had a mud flat. Instead of people strolling along the banks, we had barriers preventing access.

But that's all changed! Now, the Downtown Columbus Riverfront is the signature image for our community and a gleaming example of what public-private partnerships can accomplish.

The concept for the Scioto Greenways came from the community as part of the 2010 Downtown Strategic Plan, but the Columbus Downtown Development Corporation (CDDC) was tasked with executing the project and securing \$36 million in funding from public and private partners.

Working against an aggressive 24-month schedule, the Scioto Greenways made its debut in November 2015 and has succeeded in the most important way; our community has embraced it. Runners, walkers and cyclists can be seen using it daily, and it hosts over 1.5 million people annually.

Scioto Greenways consisted of three primary components:

- 1) **Removal of the low-head Main Street Dam**
- 2) **Restoration of the Scioto River to its natural width**
- 3) **Creation of 33 acres of new greenspace complete with 1.5 miles of multi-use pathways, 800 trees and more than 75,000 plants.**

"This transformation has catalyzed \$400 million in private investment, but that's just the beginning," said CDDC President/CEO Guy Worley. "Now, the Scioto Peninsula is poised to become Downtown's next great neighborhood, with hundreds of millions in additional investment.

With the leadership of visionary partners like MORPC, the Greenways has fortified downtown as an economic engine, anchoring the region.

This spring, get out and experience the Downtown Riverfront for yourself!

**COLUMBUS DOWNTOWN  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
& CAPITOL SOUTH**

# MOBILITY OPTIONS PROVIDE CENTRAL OHIOANS MORE OPPORTUNITY

A successful economy requires the ability to move goods in an efficient and timely manner, but the same is true for moving people. Now more than ever, there is a high demand for a variety of transportation options to get people where they need to be – whether for work or for play.

Car ownership costs Central Ohio households an estimated \$10,700 per year. Although many people still travel to work in single-occupant vehicles, a growing number are rethinking how they get around the region – opting instead for more cost-effective, active, and sustainable modes of transportation.



Gohio Commute, a program of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), provides commuters and companies with resources to help explore multimodal commuting options. Features of the platform include public or private ride-matching, emergency ride home service, and incentive campaigns that encourage sustainable commuting. The goal is not only to get people to work, but to help companies attract and retain their employees. For this reason, MORPC offers complimentary consultations to help employers customize a commuter benefits package for their employees.

Featured services of Gohio Commute include:

- Vanpooling. A Gohio Commute vanpool is a group of commuters who go to work

together on a regular basis in a commuter van. Riders share an affordable monthly fee that covers use of a van, insurance, maintenance, roadside assistance and prepaid fuel. Both electric and gasoline vanpools are available. Participants meet at a designated location and share driving responsibilities.

- Carpooling. Commuters can save money and build meaningful relationships through the Gohio Commute carpool-matching feature designed to link quality commuters through a patented algorithm within the platform. Work sites may create a carpooling sub-network for private workplace ridesharing.

- Emergency Ride Home (ERH). Carpooling, vanpooling, transit, biking and walking are economical and sustainable ways to commute to work. But what happens if someone has an emergency, becomes ill or has unexpected overtime? That is when they can benefit from ERH. In case of the unexpected, the person can avoid being stranded by taking a taxi home at no cost. Those interested need to apply for the program, which can be used up to four times per year.

Taking advantage of transit options such as the Central Ohio Transit Agency (COTA) and Delaware Area Transit Agency (DATA) are equally viable options. Like vanpools and carpools, these riders can make the most use of their time by catching up on emails or reading the news on their route.

A first-of-its-kind program to free up downtown parking will be starting June 1 for eligible downtown workers. They will be able to access an unlimited bus pass thanks to the partnership of MORPC, COTA, the Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District (SID) and downtown property owners.

Many people walk or bike to their bus stops. Active transportation options provide a healthy alternative to driving. They are also environmentally friendly, considering driving is a major source of air pollution.

Residents are asking for greater connectivity for bicycling and walking. In fact, Central Ohio residents already travel millions of miles on trails annually for recreation, fitness and health, commuting and other purposes.

Central Ohio Greenways (COG) is an extensive series of trails that wind through picnic areas, boating and fishing facilities, and family-friendly parks. The trails create a unique experience by joining diverse neighborhoods and attractions of neighborhoods and business districts to the natural wonders of our rivers. MORPC's diverse COG Board is actively working with its regional partners on further increasing the trail system and providing more connectivity among the trails.

Some of the rivers that feature our regional trails are also part of the Central Ohio Blueways, a water trail network with marked routes on navigable waterways for recreational use. MORPC has worked closely with local communities and partners on establishing these water trails and will soon be launching the Blueways interactive web map of safe and legal access points for paddling along the region's rivers and streams.

When providing mobility options, it is critical that they work for people who need it most. With that in mind, it is important to make transportation available to those with disabilities, older adults and people with low incomes. The coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan for Franklin

and Delaware counties was recently completed by MORPC.

The plan helps to identify community resources for transportation and mobility, understand the gaps and unmet needs of those resources, and determine the approach to address those deficiencies.

MORPC and its transportation partners continue to work hard to provide all residents with a choice in how they travel, while at the same time encouraging them to try new, sustainable modes through efforts such as the Central Ohio Commuter Challenge.

The Commuter Challenge is a competition in which individuals can win prizes by replacing trips on which they normally drive alone with alternative, more sustainable modes of transportation. Eligible commute modes include ridesharing (both carpool and vanpool), transit, biking (including CoGo bikeshare), walking or car2go. When participants log their eligible trips online, they become eligible to win daily lottery prizes awarded to individuals and teams throughout the challenge.

Be sure to watch for more information about the Central Ohio Commuter Challenge. It will take place during the months of July and October.

Transportation options and activities provide choice and opportunity for residents and businesses. An increase in the number of people participating in these activities is an indicator of what we already know about Central Ohio; it is a strong region affording its residents an enhanced quality of life.



Vanpooling to and from work through MORPC's Gohio Commute program is a great, sustainable transportation option.



Riding a bike and taking transit are easy options for residents to travel around the region.





Community leaders gather for the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's annual State of the Region luncheon.

# ANNUAL STATE OF THE REGION EVENT BRINGS TOGETHER CENTRAL OHIO LEADERS

Central Ohio's top political, business and civic leaders gathered at the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's (MORPC's) 2018 State of the Region luncheon to plan for the future and highlight community accomplishments.

More than 800 people attended the event on April 19 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center, where MORPC highlighted the theme of "Growth. Development. Opportunity".

Keynote speaker Jennifer Keesmaat brought her passion for creating places where people flourish as she spoke to those attending.



**Keesmaat**

Named one of the "most powerful people in Canada" by Maclean's, and one of the "most influential" by Toronto Life, Keesmaat spent five years as Toronto's chief city planner, where she was celebrated for her innovative and collaborative approach to city building. Now a Distinguished Visitor in Residence at the University of Toronto, Keesmaat shares her vision for cities of the future, and her belief in inspired leadership.

Over the past 15 years, Keesmaat has worked in municipalities across Canada on urban design guidelines, official plan reviews, culture strategies and university campus master plans. Her planning practice has been characterized by an

emphasis on collaborations across sectors, and broad engagement with municipal staff, councils, developers, business leaders and residents associations.

The event also provided MORPC with the opportunity to present its annual awards to those who have made significant contributions to the region.

- The Regional Leadership Award, which honors extraordinary efforts to ensure the future viability of the region's communities, was presented to W. Curtis Stitt.

Stitt worked at the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) for 18 years, including the past five as president/CEO, where he oversaw the transformation of public transit in the region. Some of his accomplishments include: leading COTA's partnerships with New Albany, Groveport and Obetz in the Rickenbacker area to create new transportation service to jobs; reinstating downtown circulator service and the airport shuttle; and leading the comprehensive redesign of the entire bus network, which has laid the foundation for the future of public transit. Stitt recently became the executive director of the Ohio Public Transit Association.

- The William H. Anderson Excellence in Public Service Award recognizes a MORPC board member who exemplifies outstanding leadership. This year's award was presented to Franklin County Development Director James R. Schimmer.

Schimmer has served on numerous MORPC committees, including his current service as chair of the Sustainability Advisory Committee. Thanks in great part to Schimmer's leadership, this committee secured commitments from 31 communities to actions and processes that led to sustainable communities via the sustainable2050 initiative. Schimmer also has been active in other regional efforts, including the Mid-Ohio Development Exchange, the Franklin County Retail Summit and ED411.

- The William C. Habig Collaborative Achievements Award honors individuals or organizations that have achieved an effective effort or innovative collaborative project in Central Ohio. This year's award was presented to the Delaware Community Center YMCA and Ohio Army National Guard Training Center.

A unique partnership was formed among the City of Delaware, the Ohio Army National Guard, the YMCA of Central Ohio and a local citizens group that offered the most cost-effective way to build a state-of-the-art community recreation center facility at a reduced cost and connect it to the National Guard's new training center. The Delaware Community Center YMCA opened in 2011, and the Ohio Army National Guard Training center opened in 2013. The center boasts 12,400 members, and more than 2,000 users of all ages pass through its doors weekly. The center's opening paved the way for the YMCA and the City of Delaware to enter into a first-of-its-kind agreement, in which the YMCA now operates all of the city's recreation programming.



## Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission MEMBERS

### CITIES

- Bexley
- Canal Winchester
- Columbus
- Delaware
- Dublin
- Gahanna
- Grandview Heights
- Grove City
- Groveport
- Hilliard
- Marysville
- New Albany
- Pataskala
- Pickerington
- Powell
- Reynoldsburg
- Upper Arlington
- Westerville
- Whitehall
- Worthington

### VILLAGES

- Ashville
- Galena
- Johnstown
- Lithopolis
- Lockbourne
- Marble Cliff
- Minerva Park
- Obetz
- Plain City
- Riverlea
- Shawnee Hills
- Somerset
- Sunbury
- Urbancrest

### TOWNSHIPS

- Blendon
- Bloom
- Clinton
- Etna
- Franklin
- Granville
- Jerome
- Liberty
- Madison
- Mifflin
- Perry
- Plain
- Prairie
- Violet

### COUNTIES

- Delaware
- Franklin
- Perry
- Ross
- Union

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

- Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks
- Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority
- Columbus Metropolitan Library
- Educational Service Center of Central Ohio
- Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District
- Licking County Soil and Water Conservation District
- META Solutions
- Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio



MAYBE IT'S NOT THE  
**LUCK**  
OF THE IRISH. MAYBE IT'S ALL  
REALLY WELL PLANNED.



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