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2020 SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABILITY

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A *shared* VISION, A SINGLE *purpose*

We are sharing ideas, generating conversations and collaborating in ways that move us all forward. The 2020 MORPC Summit on Sustainability brings us together to set the path for future growth in Central Ohio. A shared vision for tomorrow.

COTA

Check out: linkuscolumbus.com and morpc.org/event/summit-on-sustainability for more information on how we're ensuring the future of mobility, together.

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ONLINE DASHBOARD HIGHLIGHTS THE REGION'S PROGRESS ON SUSTAINABILITY

Central Ohio can now take advantage of an interactive, online dashboard that provides complete, accurate, and up-to-date information on the region's sustainability accomplishments.

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and The Ohio State University Center for Urban and Regional Analysis (CURA) worked in partnership – under the guidance of a working group – to create the new Regional Sustainability Dashboard.

As Central Ohio's regional council for nearly 75 members comprised of counties, cities, villages, townships, and regional organizations, MORPC brings communities of all sizes and interests together to collaborate on best practices in sustainability and plan for the future of the growing 15-county region.

To further guide that work, the region's Regional Sustainability Agenda sets in motion MORPC's sustainability-focused programming and committees and provides the framework for communities and regional partners to work toward common goals. Communities work toward those goals through actions that enable them to be recognized for their efforts with the Sustainable2050 program.

The Regional Sustainability Dashboard serves as the official status report for Central Ohio's progress. It was created out of the need for greater access to data and information in order to shed light on the impacts of collective sustainability efforts across the region.

"CURA is the hub for data-driven urban science at The Ohio State University. We partner with community stakeholders to support progress on the challenges and opportunities facing cities in Ohio, and beyond," said Dr. Harvey Miller, CURA Director. "With this project, our community is taking a big step towards building the data resources needed to improve understanding of the paths to sustainability in Central Ohio."

The dashboard is useful for community advocates, sustainability professionals, elected officials, tech enthusiasts, and local residents. Those who prefer the 10,000-foot view will find an introduction to the dashboard on the landing page, background on the Regional Sustainability Agenda, and

progress at a glance to find out whether or not the region is trending in a positive direction on any given objective.

The dashboard helps measure actions that have contributed toward five broad goals, or categories:

■ **Energy Consumption** – How Central Ohio can conserve energy by reducing our energy use, take advantage of renewables, and use alternative transportation modes.

■ **Natural Resources** – How Central Ohio can protect our environment, air quality, and water.

■ **Economic Opportunity** – How Central Ohio businesses can take advantage of sustainable practices to be more competitive.

■ **Sustainable Neighborhoods** – How Central Ohio can put in place infrastructure and services that improve the quality of life for residents and make their everyday lives healthier and safer.

■ **Collaboration** – How Central Ohio can build more partnerships, educate people on sustainable practices, and be more committed to its future.

"The dashboard is a significant resource for understanding the progress we are making as a region and where we can improve in our sustainability efforts," MORPC Sustainability Officer Brandi Whetstone said. "This tool will empower our local governments, the media, and community members to explore sustainability, and drive changes that improve the lives of our residents and the environment."

As an example, the region is increasing its number of renewable energy facilities, indicated by a thumbs-up icon. Current data demonstrate that the region has exceeded its target, with solar representing the majority of the renewable energy facilities.

MORPC's energy planning program plays a critical role in supporting regional members and stakeholders in their clean energy initiatives, most recently with the creation of the Central Ohio Solar Toolkit for Local Governments. Local governments are gravitating toward more solar projects.

The Regional Sustainability Dashboard can be accessed at rsd.morpc.org. The dashboard represents the region's progress on sustainability goals and objectives with the most up-to-date information and data available.

THE DASHBOARD IS USEFUL FOR COMMUNITY ADVOCATES, SUSTAINABILITY PROFESSIONALS, ELECTED OFFICIALS, TECH ENTHUSIASTS, AND LOCAL RESIDENTS.

For those who want to dig in deeper, the dashboard provides interactive visualizations representing metrics and targets, and a map to display county-level data, where available. For those with specific interests, users can customize their view and share information with others via email or social media.

"You don't have to be tech-savvy to use the dashboard, because a tutorial is available to help you walk through all of the different features," Whetstone said.

The Regional Sustainability Dashboard can be accessed at rsd.morpc.org. It will be regularly updated as more data and information on the region's progress becomes available.

HOUSING NEEDS ADDRESSED THROUGH RECENTLY UNVEILED STRATEGY

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Franklin County, City of Columbus and additional regional partners recently released the results of the Regional Housing Strategy for Central Ohio – a strategy developed over the course of a year to leverage housing as a platform for equitable growth and recovery.

Based on the most recent data from MORPC, Central Ohio continues to grow with the 15-county region on track to reach 3 million residents and 1.2 million households by 2050.

"It's important to understand how our region's population is growing and changing so we can prepare local communities, partners and businesses," MORPC Executive Director William Murdock said. "We also provide them with the tools and foresight to adjust to growth through initiatives like the Regional Housing Strategy. This growth only increases the urgency to plan for and invest in more housing and transportation options."

After seeing historic growth and demographic changes – mixed with a highly competitive real estate market and persistent socioeconomic disparities – the housing strategy was created to address the increasing number of Central Ohio residents struggling to find and afford housing in neighborhoods of their choice.

The research uncovered five core regional housing issues that guide the Regional Housing Strategy:

- **Increased competition for homes**
- **Barriers limiting access to homes**
- **Limited supply of homes priced for low-income households**
- **Demand for more homes that serve a wider range of ages, abilities, and household sizes**
- **Housing instability among Central Ohioans**

The strategy culminates in an agile "implementer's toolkit" of actions designed to flex as the region grows and changes – with a number of potential actions the region could take today using the public and private resources currently available – in addition to building on partnerships and creative financing solutions that may make new innovations possible. The toolkit is available online and can be filtered by community and each of the 100+ action items.

Other deliverables include a housing investment allocation portfolio; non-financial/regulatory strategies; and a template for Local Housing Action Agendas – a coordinated effort between MORPC and its membership to fully leverage the potential actions. All of these are available in an online resource hub and dashboard, and will soon include metrics to track the region's progress at www.morpc.org/rhs.

One action from which residents can already benefit is MORPC's income-based weatherization services that provide the ability for families to save over $400 annually with measures such as proper insulation, repaired or replaced furnaces, hot water tank replacement and weather stripping. The services also provide homes with health and safety measures – and overall increased comfort in their weatherized homes.

When families do not have the financial ability or stability to pay for weatherization on their homes, it can begin a downward spiral that leads to housing instability. Keeping existing, affordable housing units in use stabilizes low-income and at-risk families in safe and decent housing, all while maintaining reasonable housing expenses.

■ **Residents can apply for MORPC's home weatherization services at morpc.org or by calling 614.621.1171.**

REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY PRIORITIES

ADOPT A "GREEN TAPE" DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS
By making the process more efficient, developers are able to build their projects in a more cost-effective way, providing more opportunity for low- to moderate-income homes in residential areas.

MORE TENANT-BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE
As seen recently, the number of households at risk of eviction continues to go up as a result of COVID-19, disproportionately impacting neighborhoods of color.

ENACT SOURCE OF INCOME PROTECTION LAWS
This is something local governments can take on today and make a big difference in removing barriers to accessing housing.

CREATE A STATE HOUSING TAX CREDIT
More development gap financing is needed. A statewide housing tax credit can help to fill that gap.

PILOT DEVELOPMENT OF DIVERSE, LOWER-COST HOUSING PRODUCTS
The idea behind this is to foster innovative design and construction as a way of increasing the number of homes that can serve a wider range of ages, abilities and households.

WHEN FAMILIES DO NOT HAVE THE FINANCIAL ABILITY OR STABILITY TO PAY FOR WEATHERIZATION ON THEIR HOMES, IT CAN BEGIN A DOWNWARD SPIRAL THAT LEADS TO HOUSING INSTABILITY.

The Regional Housing Strategy built upon the work of the Affordable Housing Alliance, Franklin County's poverty and economic development work, the Building Industry Association of Central Ohio Housing Need Assessment and the City of Columbus's 2018 Incentives Study.

Regional stakeholders representing local governments, financial institutions, real estate, for-profit and non-profit residential developers, service providers and community leaders were involved in developing investment and policy recommendations that will serve as a guide for planning for the region's future housing market.

This is the first time Central Ohio is addressing housing on a regional scale, and it is the first of its kind strategy in the country.

CENTRAL OHIO, ATLANTA LEADERS COME TOGETHER FOR ANNUAL SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABILITY

Central Ohio community leaders gathered virtually this week to explore environmental ideas and solutions at the 2020 version of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's (MORPC's) annual conference – the Summit on Sustainability.

With an online format used because of COVID-19 health concerns, MORPC partnered with its peer organization, the Atlanta Regional Commission, to deliver a summit that included a wider array of content and speakers.

Hundreds of people attended the Oct. 15-16 event, which highlighted the theme of "Resilient. Adaptable. Bold." and focused on putting sustainable solutions into action in people's everyday lives.

The summit allowed for a closer look at best practices across both the Central Ohio and the Atlanta regions – bringing in top-notch speakers to share stories and ideas related to sustainability and allowing those in each region to learn from one another. Topics related to everything from air and water quality to energy, mobility, development, and the current political environment were featured in the two-day event.

Katharine Hayhoe served as one of the event's highlighted speakers. Hayhoe, an atmospheric scientist and endowed professor of public policy and law at Texas Tech University, gave an inspiring talk about what climate change means for people and the places where we live.

The event also provided MORPC with the opportunity to present its annual Regional Sustainability Awards to those who have made significant contributions to Central Ohio.

■ **The Leadership in Sustainability Award** honors a person exemplifying outstanding leadership and innovation in seeking comprehensive sustainability solutions to address key challenges facing the region. This award was presented to Gilbert Michaud, a faculty member at Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs.

Michaud's work on clean energy, sustainability, and economic development projects has enabled him to provide important guidance on the best path forward for solar, wind, electric vehicle, and other forms of advanced energy deployment. His energy transition and clean/advanced energy deployment research has been invaluable for nonprofits, the economic development community, electric utilities, local and state governments, and the broader citizenry.

■ **The Leadership in Mobility Award** recognizes an individual who demonstrates outstanding work toward creating a world-class multi-modal transportation system for Central Ohio. This award was presented to Ted Beidler, chief mobility engineer at the Franklin County Engineer's Office.

As the past chair of the Trail Development Working Group of Central Ohio Greenways, Beidler helped advance the Regional Trail Vision Plan and ensure support of this multi-jurisdictional planning effort. He also was instrumental in developing guidelines for trail design and construction based on local and national best practices.

■ **The Collaborative Achievement in Sustainability Award** recognizes a group of entities or individuals who have shown effectiveness in producing environmental accomplishments through a collaborative effort. This award was presented to the Regional Sustainability Dashboard team.

The Regional Sustainability Dashboard project began in the spring of 2019 so that Central Ohio could better track its progress on sustainability efforts in an easier, interactive way. The design of the online dashboard was created by the Center for Urban and Regional Analysis at The Ohio State University under the direction of the Sustainability Dashboard Working Group and MORPC.

For more information about the event and to see its full agenda, visit www.morpc.org/summit.

RESILIENT. ADAPTABLE. BOLD.
2020 SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABILITY

Dr. Katharine Hayhoe

sustainable 2050

SUSTAINABLE2050 COMMUNITIES

Sustainable2050 is a program that supports Central Ohio communities' sustainability efforts by tracking their progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the Regional Sustainability Agenda. Communities are designated to a tier status – with platinum being the highest – based on how many activities they complete. All efforts make a collective impact on the quality of life in Central Ohio.

Bexley
Blendon Township
Central Ohio Transit Authority
Clinton Township
Columbus
Columbus Metropolitan Library
Delaware
Dublin
Franklin County Commissioners
Franklin County Engineer's Office
Franklin Soil

& Water Conservation District
Gahanna
Grandview Heights
Genoa Township
Grove City
Hilliard
Lockbourne
Marysville
Metro Parks
Mifflin Township
MORPC
New Albany
Pataskala
Powell
Prairie Township

Reynoldsburg
Somerset
SWACO
Upper Arlington
Violet Township
Washington Township
Westerville
Whitehall
Worthington

PLATINUM MEMBER | GOLD MEMBER | SILVER MEMBER | SUSTAINABLE2050 MEMBER