

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

Remote Meeting

Sustainability Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes

February 17, 2021, 2:30 pm

Members Present

Leo Almeida, The Nature Conservancy
Kate Bartter, OSU Sustainability Institute
Andy Biesterveld, COTA
Bryn Bird, Granville Township
Sophia Fifner, City of Columbus
Vice-Chair Mayor Ben Kessler, City of Bexley
Justin Milam, City of Upper Arlington
Megan O'Callaghan, City of Dublin
Kyle O'Keefe, SWACO
Letty Schamp, City of Hilliard
Chair Jim Schimmer, Franklin County
Economic Development & Planning

Commissioner Christiane Schmenk, Union
County
Alana Shockey, City of Columbus
Megha Sinha, NBBJ
Dan Sowry, Ohio EPA
Matt Stephens-Rich, The Electrification
Coalition
Carolyn Thurman, City of Westerville
Eric Walli, Honda North America, Inc.
Mayor Christie Ward, Village of Lockbourne

MORPC Staff Present

Kerstin Carr
Jon-Paul d'Aversa
Joe Garrity

Ted Geer
Lynn Kaufman
William Murdock

Jennifer Noll
Stephen Patchan
Edwina Teye

Melinda Vonstein
Brandi Whetstone
Brooke White

Called to Order at 2:33 pm.

Welcome and Introductions – *Jim Schimmer, Chair*

Chair Schimmer recognized Mayor Kessler as the new Vice-Chair, and eight new Members: Leo Almeida, The Nature Conservancy, Bryn Bird, Granville Township, Sophia Fifner, City of Columbus, Commissioner Christiane Schmenk, Union County, Megha Sinha, NBBJ, Matt Stephens-Rich, the Electrification Coalition, Carolyn Thurman, City of Westerville, and Mayor Christie Ward, Village of Lockbourne.

Executive Director William Murdock welcomed the new Members, and provided brief remarks to the Committee. Click [here](#) to see the presentation.

Policy Update – *Joe Garrity, MORPC*

Click [here](#) to see the presentation.

2020 Year in Review and 2021 Initiatives – *Kerstin Carr and Brandi Whetstone, MORPC*

2021 initiatives include keeping focus on equity and lifting up those who have been traditionally underserved, and prioritizing projects, programs, and initiatives that help create inclusive policies and build trust in all communities.

Regional Sustainability Dashboard

The Dashboard is the tool used to track progress for the Regional Sustainability Agenda. It was developed in 2020 by collaboration between MORPC staff and OSA CURA staff. The Dashboard can be seen at rsd.morpc.org.

Regional Sustainability Agenda

Goal 1 – Energy Consumption

2020

- Via the Local Government Energy Partnership, MORPC staff held ongoing Energy Academy sessions, continued work on the MORPC benchmarking program, and developed the Solar Toolkit to assist local governments with developing onsite resources.

2021

- 2021 projects will include hosting Solar Week (which was the first week of February), pursuing SolSmart Silver Designation, the Clean Energy Acceleration Program, and the development of a Regional Energy Strategy.
- MORPC hosted Solar Week during the first week of February. Solar Week was designed to foster member capacity to address the growing interest in utility-scale solar developments in their communities. Each session was attended by 80 to 100 local government officials and regional stakeholders.

Goal 2 – Natural Resources

Air Quality Programs

2020

- Marketing and Communications – we had strong campaign showing the link between COVID-19 and air pollution exposure.
- Air quality monitoring convened a sub-committee of stakeholders from across the region to explore using the inexpensive new air quality monitoring equipment. Partnering with Franklin County Public Health; pursuing a partnership with the Thriving Earth Exchange

2021

- The 2020 Air Quality Report was released recently, showing the impact of the pandemic shutdown.
- Staff is working toward implementation of the new air quality monitoring plan

Water Quality Programs

2020

- The Sustaining Scioto Board was initiated with funding from City of Columbus, City of Marysville, and DelCo Water. The Board has not yet met in person, yet is still moving forward with their work.
- Members have completed a Scope of Work for the Comprehensive water quality monitoring plan
- The Board's Agricultural & Rural Communities Outreach Working Team has convened and met several times. The goal is to advance MORPC's work through strategic partnerships and engagement with rural and agricultural stakeholders.
- Water Quality Management Plans – plans for the seven-county region were completed in 2020.

2021

- The Board plans to host a Forum on Precipitation Impacts and Water Infrastructure Planning Tools
- The Communications Working Team will kick off their work later in 2021

- Complete Water Quality Management Plans Morrow, Logan, and Champaign Counties. MORPC has received funding from the Ohio EPA to begin work on Morrow, Logan, and Champaign. This will require extensive research and stakeholder engagement.

Waste Reduction

2020

- By receiving a SWACO grant, Sustainable2050 members Dublin, Westerville, Upper Arlington, and Hilliard were able to kick off composting projects

2021

- More materials are being accepted by Central Ohio's recycling program
- SWACO is exploring an industrial hub/business park near Franklin County Sanitary Landfill for
- recycling and composting infrastructure expansion needs for the increasing regional diversion.

Goal 3 – Economic Opportunity

The number of Greenspot Businesses continues to increase.

Goal 4 – Sustainable Neighborhoods

Positive trends are the adoption of the Complete Streets Policies and Greenways trails

Safety

2020

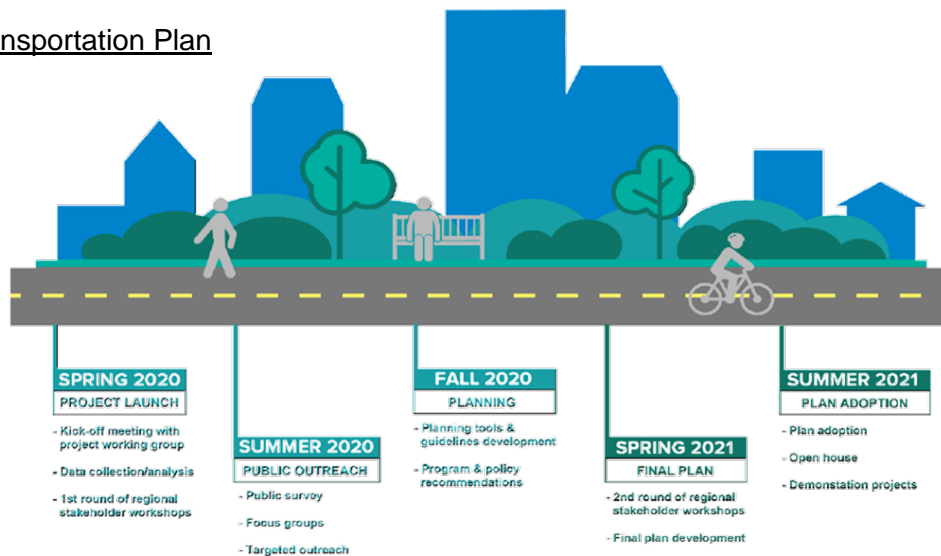
- Coordination on Vision Zero
- City of Columbus has adopted the Vision Zero framework, which aims to eliminate all roadway related deaths and severe injuries while at the same time promoting safe, healthy, and equitable mobility. MORPC has been very supportive of their efforts.

2021

- Safety plan implementation
- New crash data will be available soon to keep members up to date.

Active Transportation Plan

Timeline



There will be an Active Transportation Plan Stakeholder Meeting on April 13. Staff hopes to have the plan adopted in Summer 2021.

Complete Streets

MORPC Staff is working to update the Complete Streets Policy, which is tied to the Attributable Funds Program.

Central Ohio Greenways

2020

- Regional Trail Vision Prioritization was completed to identify within the 500 miles of proposed trails in the region which segments could impact our region most dramatically. This effort was funded and supported by the Franklin County engineer's office and by the City of Columbus.

2021

- To help communicate the importance of building the regional trail vision, MORPC is conducting an Impact of Trails Study to evaluate the Equity and economy of building these trails and to show with data how public Health and the environment can be enhanced.

Summit on Sustainability

The Summit is MORPC's signature environmental conference, bringing together hundreds of community leaders to explore and share sustainable ideas and solutions. The 2020 Summit was the first ever virtual Summit, and was enjoyed by over 500 attendees. The 2021 Summit will be held in October.

Regional Sustainability Agenda Update –

Brandi Whetstone & Justin Milam, RSA Subcommittee Chair

2020 – 2021 Progress

- Vision and principles
- Sustainable2050 member survey and interviews
- Workshop focused on equity considerations
- Propose and vet goals, objectives, strategies

2021 Work Remaining:

- Regional stakeholder survey and informational presentations
- Metric and data source identification / to coordinate with the sustainability dashboard.
- SAC review and adoption (April) & Commission adoption (May/June)



Current Status

Goal 1 Improve air quality through emission reductions that protect public health and the environment.

- Reduce vehicle miles traveled
- Increase alt. fuel vehicles/infrastructure
- Reduce energy consumption
- Increase renewable energy
- Reduce GHG emissions

Goal 2 Protect & preserve natural resources to support healthy & resilient communities and ecosystems.

- Reduce waste
- Improve water quality
- Reduce water consumption
- Increase protection of natural areas/ecosystem services
- Increase protection of prime farmland

Goal 3 Create sustainable and equitable communities to improve quality of life for all residents.

- Improve safety/mobility options
- Reduce air pollution disparities
- Increase greenspace and trail access
- Increase housing choices
- Reduce energy burden
- Reduce environmental hazards

Goal 4 Promote a robust, inclusive, and sustainable economy through regional collaboration.

- Increase sustainable business practices
- Increase sustainable procurement
- Increase sustainable econ. dev. practices

Working Group Updates

Sustaining Scioto Board

The Board met in December and reviewed achievements in 2020, including creating a scope of work for creating a comprehensive monitoring program for the Upper Scioto and establishing the Agricultural and Rural Communities Outreach Team. The Board will meet again in February to discuss a National Science Foundation application and to hear a presentation about best practices for water utilities addressing climate change.

Agricultural & Rural Communities Outreach Team

The Team met in January, and will meet again in March 18, continuing to develop a strategy focused on developing questions and outlining a key stakeholder list to. This will help shape the Team's work on creating partnerships and engagement activities.

Energy & Air Quality Working Group

The Working Group met in January to hear a presentation from Sarah Conley-Ballew, Rural Action Sustainable Energy Solutions on Clean Energy for All -Equity & Access in Appalachian Ohio. Cynthia Maves, Lordstown Motors Corporation will speak at the Working Group's March 23 meeting.

Diversity and Environmental Justice Subcommittee

The Subcommittee is currently seeking new members prior to developing a workplan for 2021. SAC Members were asked to forward candidates to Brooke White.

Solar Subcommittee

MORPC's SolSmart designation application is nearing completion and will be submitted at the end of February 2021.

Air Quality Network Sensor Monitoring Subcommittee

The Subcommittee continues to work with Ohio EPA to collocate low-cost PurpleAir monitors

Central Ohio Greenways Board

Member Schamp directed the Committee's attention to the report in the meeting packet, and reminded Members that COG's goal is to build more trails in the region and to get more people out on the trails for both recreation and transportation.

Sustainable2050

The Sustainable2050 Q1 meeting is scheduled for March 19 with a focus on energy and renewables. Attendees can anticipate a robust discussion on the future of the energy sector. Due to COVID-19, the tier status designation process slowed in 2020. Staff will revisit the tier status designation in 2021.

New Business/Updates

MORPC and the Bexley Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee are co-hosting a Resident Sustainability Committee virtual forum on February 25. The Forum will bring together representatives from local sustainability groups that work in concert with local government members to support environmental initiatives.

Adjourned at 4:06 pm.