



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

RURAL SERVICE STRATEGY 2020





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MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Areas of focus:

Transportation
Infrastructure & Development
Planning & Sustainability
Data & Mapping
Residential Services
Government Affairs
Communications & Engagement

morpc.org

WHO WE ARE

ABOUT MORPC

MORPC is Central Ohio's regional council for over 70 members comprised of counties, cities, villages, townships, and regional organizations. We take pride in bringing communities of all sizes and interests together to collaborate on best practices and plan for the future of our growing region. We do this through a variety of programs, services and projects and initiatives – all with the goal of improving the lives of our residents and making Central Ohio stand out on the world stage. MORPC has grown with Central Ohio to serve rural, suburban and urban area offering transformative projects, services, and initiatives along the way.

CASE FOR RURAL STRATEGY

As a result of the significant growth in rural communities MORPC has established a rural services plan to address the unique needs of these members.

Central Ohio's rural areas are diverse and beautiful. The topography ranges include flat plains, rolling hills of Appalachia, the Scioto Water Shed, the highest point in Ohio, and a number of recreational lakes. A greater concentration of land outside the urbanized area is devoted to agriculture use. Water, sewer, and utility distribution systems vary greatly from municipal systems. The rocky terrain and low population density present benefits and challenges particularly with emerging communication technologies and infrastructure.

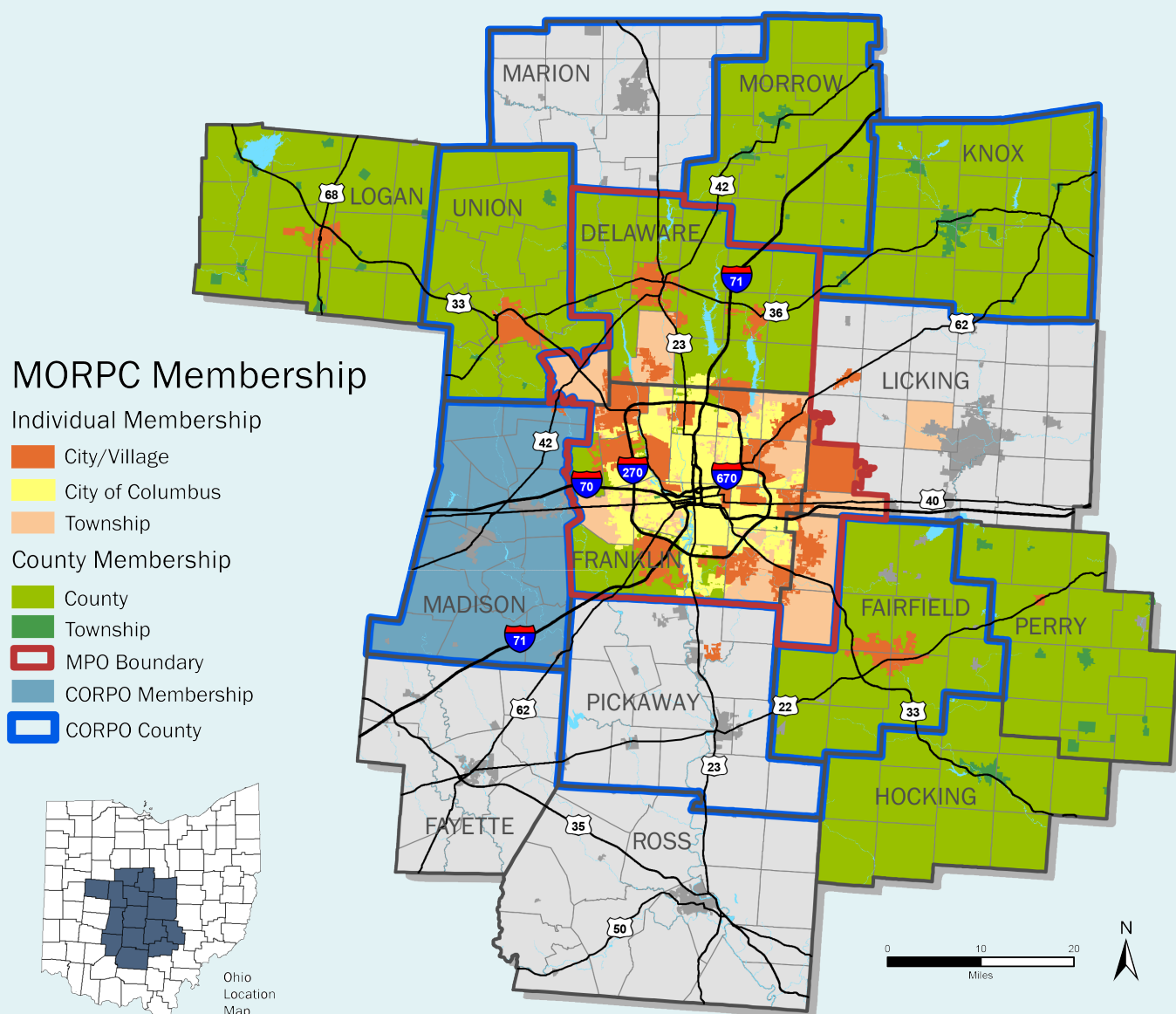
Central Ohio's rural areas share in many of the interests of their suburban and urban counterparts, but often with fewer financial and human capital resources. They also face their own unique circumstances. Many communities may not be able to support professional planning staff and/or complete preliminary work to qualify for grant applications. Additionally, their staff may not be able to attend meetings and forums held in downtown Columbus, so alternative communications methods must be used.

MORPC can serve rural communities by encouraging collaborative planning efforts to help develop an inclusive, local strategy-building processes to build on community strengths and address challenges. By bringing subject matter experts into discussions and forums, MORPC provides valuable information and resources for rural communities to make informative decisions.

Central Ohio has the added benefit of a strong economy and a growing population. Population projections show we will be a region of three million people by 2050. A growing number of commuters travel from the surrounding counties into Franklin County for work, with more than 10 percent of Franklin County jobs filled by rural residents. Although commuting patterns demonstrate the broader region is coming closer together than ever, there is a desire among our rural areas, villages, and cities, to be able to nourish sustainable hometowns where local residents can lead quality lives and prosper.



CENTRAL OHIO REGION



VALUE

“With limited staff and resources, it is very challenging to be as engaged in all the emerging information. The MORPC Team keeps me posted on resources and practices that benefit my community.”

-Tom Johnson, Mayor Somerset

OPPORTUNITIES

Although it varies significantly through Central Ohio, some segments of the rural areas are not seeing the same levels of prosperity as others. Many are experiencing higher concentrations of poverty and significant income disparities, high levels of opioid abuse, have a lower ratio of access to social services, and higher transportation costs due to greater travel distances and limited transportation options. Some communities have suffered population losses and are seeking to reverse these trends. Others would like to provide more housing options for residents, but are not able to attract new development. With the greater distances comes higher costs to expand broadband coverage and private sector vendors are being selective on where to place connections. Many homes still lack adequate access. Protecting water quality and food production are ongoing issues as the severity of storms has increased. Extreme rainfall and an extended rainy seasons have resulted in more flooding and a loss of agricultural production.

MORPC successfully convenes stakeholders to address a vast array of community development issues. This includes garnering sponsors to support comprehensive studies and analyses of current conditions, as well as securing specific recommendations to address the challenges. MORPC encourages collaboration among private and public entities to come together to address regional issues and leverage assets. MORPC employs talented professionals with expertise in transportation systems, infrastructure, planning, sustainability, data management, energy, air quality, water resources, land use, legislative advocacy, and community building. The MORPC team is connected to a wide range of professional affiliations such as the National Association of Regional Councils, the Urban Land Institute, the Ohio Association of Regional Councils, American Planning Association, Rails to Trails and the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals and more.

RURAL POVERTY & WELL-BEING

by Tracey Farrigan, *USDA, Economic Research Service, March 2019*

Communities adjacent to the urban core are experiencing increasing pressure to permit development and address transit issues. While non-adjacent communities are experiencing a greater loss of critical workforce-age population as residents either leave or commute to the urban core. This depletes the community's ability to attract needed amenities, additional private investment, expand local employment, and sustain property values. Without a source of tax revenue to support the local government, elected officials are forced to operate lean governments with limited ability to modernize and improve services for their residents.



RURAL SERVICE GOALS

MORPC recognizes the diversity and range of assets and attractions within Central Ohio. Each community deserves a unique approach to address long term community planning to achieve economic diversification and sustainability. In some instances, collaborative partnerships across multiple governments can leverage assets. Other critical factors include the engagement of local leaders and public input.

Fostering creative approaches to develop sustainable communities can be particularly helpful, which is why MORPC embraces engaging our local, state and federal economic development partners as well as the private sector, and educational institutions.

THE 5 GOALS FOR THE MORPC TEAM RURAL SERVICES PROGRAM:



**PROVIDE RESOURCES & BENEFITS
TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE
COMMUNITY & TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING**



**ACCENTUATE THE UNIQUE RURAL
COMMUNITY ASSETS**



**CONNECT TO EXPERTISE &
NEW SOLUTIONS**



STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC VITALITY



**IMPLEMENT PRACTICES THAT ARE
TRANSPARENT AND INCLUSIVE
PROCESSES**

GOAL 1

PROVIDE RESOURCES AND BENEFITS TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING



ACTION STEPS:

- Coordinate rural transportation planning for RTPPO members.
- Invite all member communities to be part of appropriate work groups and share progress.
- Provide member county commissioners with an update on MORPC's work in the county. Address questions and seek feedback.
- Invite all MORPC members to Regional Collaboration meetings (minimally once a year) and hold these in the quadrants to make them convenient for rural members to attend.
- Coordinate a local government summer internship program for advanced college students to assist with projects and gain valuable career building skills while providing additional capacity for the member government.
- Provide population projections for all members.
- Provide Gohio services and support to advance additional mobility options.

GOAL 2

ACCENTUATE THE UNIQUE RURAL COMMUNITY ASSETS



ACTION STEPS:

- Showcase best practices at forums and communications.
- Share opportunities to augment the local community's opportunity to promote and/or enhance key assets.
- Seek opportunities to collaborate and leverage existing resources with public and private partners.
- Support water resources planning efforts with our partners.

GOAL 3

CONNECT TO EXPERTISE & NEW SOLUTIONS



ACTION STEPS:

- Promote inclusive public engagement and transparent processes.
- Invite other stakeholders with economic development roles to participate in planning activities.
- Reduce fees and offer scholarships when possible to permit more rural attendees participation.
- Provide a grant finder service and help members utilize this tool.
- Provide an annual forum to review available resources.
- Provide a membership in Council of Development Finance Agency (CDFA) to gain access to public financial expertise.
- Meet with each member annually to discuss specific challenges and follow-up on items discussed.
- Promote partnerships with area colleges and universities.

GOAL 4

STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC VITALITY



ACTION STEPS:

- Foster opportunities to connect local government leaders to current discussions on community sustainability and invite members to participate in sustainable2050.
- Host periodic rural region workshops to discuss planning strategies and emerging methods.
- Feature best practices modeled in the insight2050 that can be replicated in rural areas through accessible case studies, website tools and through offering an academy that teaches concentrated sessions on specific planning strategies.
- Provide critical information in a usable format for smaller governments to utilize.
- Coordinate a Competitive Advantage Projects list of top needs for each county to advocate and garner support from legislators and stakeholders.
- Provide programs that advance model approaches.
- Provide legislative advocacy services to support MORPC's Public Policy Agenda.

GOAL 5

IMPLEMENT PRACTICES THAT ARE TRANSPARENT AND INCLUSIVE



ACTION STEPS:

- Provide an annual Social Media Best Practices for Local Governments forum to encourage all members to utilize new communication tools to connect to constituents.
- Share information on new developments in community planning from MORPC team member involvement with key organizations such as the National Association of Regional Councils, the Ohio Association of Regional Councils, Urban Land Institute, American Planning Association, and the Center for Urban and Regional Analysis.
- Use available social media modes to communicate information.
- Provide access to forums via webinar and other means to minimize travel time.
- Share the executive director's post commission email summarizing commission activities and actionable items with key member staff and elected officials.
- Invite other appropriate regional planning commissions to participate in the rural forum meetings that involve their territories.



DELAWARE
COUNTY Ohio



LOGAN COUNTY
Ohio



BENEFITS

MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION BENEFITS: COMMISSION NON-MPO

REPRESENTATION

- Commission meeting
- Annual membership visit from MORPC team
- Legislative advocacy — 2 year agenda formation
- Opportunity to serve on working groups



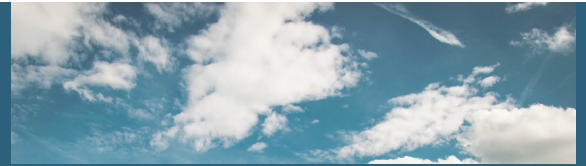
MOBILITY

- Gohio Commute
- Bike count equipment (borrow)
- Central Ohio Commuter Challenge
- Travel forecasting (contract only)



ENERGY & AIR QUALITY

- Energy Benchmarking and education
- Air Quality Monitoring and education



EVENTS & FORUMS

- Discounted registration on forums and events
- Annual State of the Region
- Annual Summit on Sustainability
- American Pedestrian & Bicycle Association webinars
- Rural planning meetings
- Regional Collaboration meetings



RESOURCES

- Grantfinder Membership
- Council of Development Finance Agency membership
- Human Resource Salary & Benefits Annual Survey data
- Competitive Advantage Program participation
- Mid-Ohio Finance Administrators group
- Monthly legislative updates
- 8 hours of technical assistance in data and mapping
- Insight2050 resources
- Local Government Summer Internship Program
- Local Government and Energy Partnership
- Return on investment provided yearly
- Maps, population estimates & more
- Multiple partnerships with colleges and universities



COMMUNICATIONS

The MORPC Communications & Engagement department oversees a variety of areas including:

Communications

Events & Workshops

Membership

Public Involvement & Engagement

Diversity & Inclusion

Summer Internship program

Marketing

Media Relations

Using a variety of traditional and digital media strategies, the C&E department disseminates information about news, events, news updates to members throughout the region. The Membership Services Officer coordinates members relations activities, oversees member benefits, innovative forums and specific member matters.

MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION BENEFITS 2019: COMMISSION NON-MPO



TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Print media: Media interviews and notices about public meetings in news publications

Broadcast media interviews: Radio and television



DIGITAL MEDIA

E-source: Monthly electronic newsletter

Getinsight2050.org: Monthly electronic update

Email correspondence: Executive Director sends a recap of commission meetings

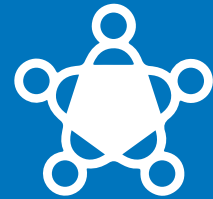
Podcast: MORPC partners with Columbus Underground to share progress on initiatives throughout the region

Social Media

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- YouTube
- LinkedIn

Website: morpc.org

- Commission meetings
- News & Events
- Media
- Tools & Resources



MEETINGS & EVENTS

Regional Collaborations: One per Central Ohio quadrant

Commission Meetings: 10 meetings per year

Rural Forums

Member visits

Grants & Funding Forum

Social Media Forum

MORPC signature events:

- State of the Region
- Summit on Sustainability

Columbus Metropolitan Club: Held by topic

2020 CALENDAR

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

JANUARY

NO COMMISSION MEETING

- 9 Preparing for 5G: The next generation of mobile networks
- 28 Regional Collaboration NW

FEBRUARY

- 5 Pace Program
- 13 Commission 1:30-3:00 p.m.

MARCH

- March 2-6: Incubator Showcase
- 12 Commission 1:30-3:00 p.m.
- Insight2050 Academy TBA

APRIL

- 9 Commission 1:30-3:00 p.m.
- 30 State of the Region
 - 10 a.m. Networking
 - 11:30 a.m. Luncheon

MAY

- 11 Summer Intern Program
- 14 Commission 1:30-3:30 p.m.
- 19 Regional Collaboration NE

JUNE

- 9 Grant Forum Invitational
- 11 Commission 1:30-3:00 p.m.
- 17 Rural One Forum

JULY

NO COMMISSION MEETING

- 22 Rural Two Forum
- 29 Social Media Best Practices

AUGUST

- 11 Rural Three Forum
- 12 Intern Celebration
- 13 Commission 1:30-3:00 p.m.
- MORPC night at the Clippers TBA

SEPTEMBER

- 10 Commission 1:30-3:00 p.m.
- 22 Regional Collaboration SW

OCTOBER

- 8 Commission 1:30-3:00 p.m.
- Summit on Sustainability TBA

NOVEMBER

- 12 Commission 1:30-3:00 p.m.

DECEMBER

- 1 Regional Collaboration SE
- 10 Commission 1:30-3:00 p.m.

**Schedule subjective to change. Check website for updates: morpc.org or call 614.233.4135*



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