



# 2018–2050 POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTIONS

## MORPC'S APPROACH

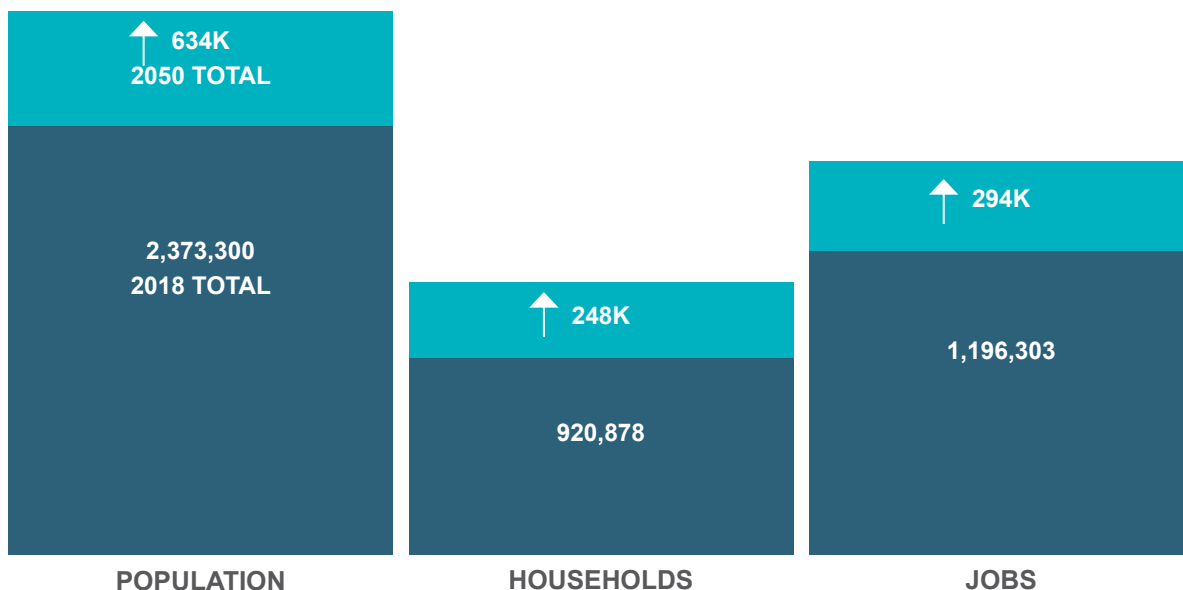
The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is Central Ohio's regional council for more than 70 members comprised of cities, villages, townships, counties, and regional organizations. We take pride in bringing communities of all sizes and interests together to collaborate on best practices and plan for the future of our growing region, while reaffirming our commitment to address inequalities and barriers to eliminate systemic racism. We accomplish this through a variety of programs, services, projects, and initiatives—all with the goal of improving the lives of everyone throughout the Central Ohio region.

Elemental to that role, MORPC is committed to engaging in ongoing, objective evaluation of regional trends and changes at the state, national, and even global scale that impact our region's growth. The methods selected for this work are based in research and subjected to rigorous testing and ongoing evaluation.

MORPC invests in this population work, in part, to support our core regional planning efforts. For instance, every four years, MORPC develops forecasts of how future housing and employment will be distributed throughout counties in Central Ohio to inform future transportation system needs. In addition to serving MORPC's own planning work, MORPC population data brings communities and partner organizations together around a shared, data-driven picture of growth.

MORPC's data work is guided by the concept that long-term population growth generally follows a predictable pattern that is best informed by historical trends, while also taking into account short-term fluctuations that are highly unpredictable but likely to occur at certain points throughout the projection period. This approach provides steady guidance on the region's growth trajectory to inform long-range planning and infrastructure investments, while also helping us contextualize and respond to unpredictable changes that can either slow or accelerate growth in the region for a shorter period of time. We believe that keeping an eye out for the trends that could otherwise catch us off guard provides local leaders with the necessary foresight and capacity to turn any anticipated threats into opportunities.

## 2018–2050 PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH: 15-COUNTY REGION



## 2018–2050 POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTIONS:

- Our model projects that the 15-county Central Ohio area could become a region of 3 million residents by 2050, compared to 2.2 million residents in 2010. This translates to nearly 1.2 million households and 1.5 million jobs in 2050.
- Our model accounts for both long-term stable trends over time (such as declining birth rates), as well as cyclical but irregular short-term changes in growth (such as changing immigration policies or a pandemic).
- While we will continue to see periods of faster and slower growth, our model predicts overall continued strong growth in the region. In fact, Central Ohio will continue to make up an increasingly large share of both the state's and the nation's populations.
- We expect Central Ohio will continue to grow based on the strength of the region's economic development partnerships and innovative corporate culture, our relatively affordable housing and ease of commute, our thriving downtown, and our strong suburban communities.
- Natural increase (births minus deaths) has been steadily declining, so our growth is increasingly reliant on attracting people to Central Ohio.
  - The 2010s were the first-ever decade when as much growth came from migration as from births.
  - In the 2010s, half of our migration was from residents moving here from overseas. New Americans in Central Ohio are an integral part of the region's economy.
  - Based on 2018 estimates, New Americans in the Columbus Metro:
    - are younger—nearly half of New American residents are between the ages of 25 to 44, compared with around a quarter of U.S. born residents;
    - have larger families—the average household size of New American residents is 3.07, compared with 2.51 for U.S. born households;
    - have higher participation in the labor force (72% labor force participation, compared with 66% among U.S. born residents), especially in the high-demand manufacturing, transportation and warehousing industries.
  - Of domestic migration, 80% come from other parts of Ohio—which means the health of our growth is directly tied to healthy growth in the rest of the state.
- Our recent and projected growth trends point to the need for changes to traditional development patterns, as emphasized by insight2050.
  - There is a trend toward urban revitalization in Central Ohio. In the 2010s, 70% of the region's population growth was in Franklin County (compared with 42% in the 2000s).
  - In addition to the strong growth of younger residents from migration into the region, 20% of growth is expected to come from baby boomers aging into older adulthood.
  - The overlapping preferences for development style and unit types among these groups are reflected in the rising demand for multifamily development. From 2010 to 2019, 58% of all new units built were multifamily, compared with 42% single family.
- To keep up with projected growth, the region is expected to need nearly 270,000 additional housing units by 2050; when accounting for growth and other market factors, the BIA estimates a need for 14,000 new homes per year over the next 10 years.
  - We have been underbuilding housing units for the past 10 years. Following the Great Recession, this was absorbed with surplus supply, but that is not sustainable—the region needs to produce more units at a wider range of price points to keep up with demand going forward.
  - Based on forecasted population growth and household size, the region is expected to “need” 11,000 more housing units every year for the next 10 years just to keep pace with the number of new households from our anticipated growth. However, this is a 10-year average; in actuality, the cyclical nature of growth means that some slower growth years may require significantly fewer new housing units than the average and accelerated growth years may require significantly more.
  - That said, this number is not intended to be a recommendation of how much housing to build. There are many nuanced market factors, like a healthy vacancy rate to allow for choice in the market and the degree to which current and new product aligns with demand, which MORPC's population forecasts are not intended to predict. For these insights, MORPC draws on the expertise of key industry partners such as the Building Industry Association (BIA) and the Columbus Board of Realtors to fully understand the Region's housing needs.