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## Central Ohio Greenways Clarity Report for Readiness & Feasibility Project Introduction & Recommendations Summary May 21, 2019

The Central Ohio Greenways (COG) Board serves as a formal committee of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's (MORPC) Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC). Board members represent the public, private, and non-profit sectors. The COG Board's focus is to expand the trail system, increase trail accessibility, improve branding and marketing, and establish new public, private, and non-profit partnerships.

The COG Board's vision is a world-class network of trails easily accessible to every Central Ohioan, and its mission is to increase greenway trail mileage and use of trails for recreation and transportation needs.

With Central Ohio being on track to become a region of up to 3 million people by 2050, we must prepare for an increased demand for walkable neighborhoods and more transportation options. Trails are a critical element of a diverse transportation system. COG's nationally recognized annual trail usage count system has revealed a consistent increase in trail miles traveled from 2014 to 2018, demonstrating the significance trails play in the quality of life of our growing region.

In 2018, the COG Board developed a regional trail vision through extensive community collaboration. This regional trail vision identifies a community supported desire to add approximately 500 new trail miles to the existing trail network of over 230 trail miles. New miles will extend existing trails, fill gaps in trail corridors, connect neighborhoods to job centers, and create a truly interconnected network useful for both transportation and recreation.

It is estimated that a mile of trail cost at least \$500,000, which means the community needs to secure \$250 million to fully build out the vision. To set the stage for implementing the trail vision at an accelerated pace, with support from the Columbus Foundation, the COG Board hired Mollard Consulting in late 2018 to assess the perception of trails in Central Ohio and possible funding models. The consultants interviewed more than 30 regional leaders and potential donors and surveyed nearly 1,000 residents and trail advocates. The results of the study affirmed that the perception and interest in trails is extremely high among community leaders and residents alike. The philanthropic community believed strongly in the COG mission and indicated that private donations could be leveraged to supplement large public investments in the trail network.

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To responsibly prepare for future large investments in trails, the study results recommend additional planning work focused in four areas:

- Trail Prioritization:  
Over the next year, MORPC and the COG Board will be working with local communities to prioritize the 500 miles of proposed trails based on criteria tied to economic development, the environment, social equity, and health.
- Brand / Purpose / Identify  
The COG Board is seeking funding to complete an *Impact of Trails Study* that will identify credible data linking the benefits of trails to economic development, the environment, social equity, and health. This data will be used to re-tool its branding and identify, if deemed necessary, and to develop a case for support for public and private funding opportunities.
- Partnerships  
The COG Board will continue to connect with the community and regional leaders to identify how COG and its mission can help advance the mission of other important existing Central Ohio initiatives.
- Business Model  
Implementing a large cross-jurisdictional trail plan requires a carefully planned business model that can support public and private fundraising. MORPC and its partners are looking at various models from around the county with a goal of identifying the strategy best suited for Central Ohio.

The guidance provided by Mollard Consulting within the “Clarity Report for Readiness & Feasibility” has provided insightful recommendations for setting the stage for a major trail implementation project. The Central Ohio Greenway Board and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission would like to thank **The Columbus Foundation, Mollard Consulting**, and all the participants of the study for supporting the trail expansion effort in Central Ohio.

mollard  
consulting  
a nonprofit partner



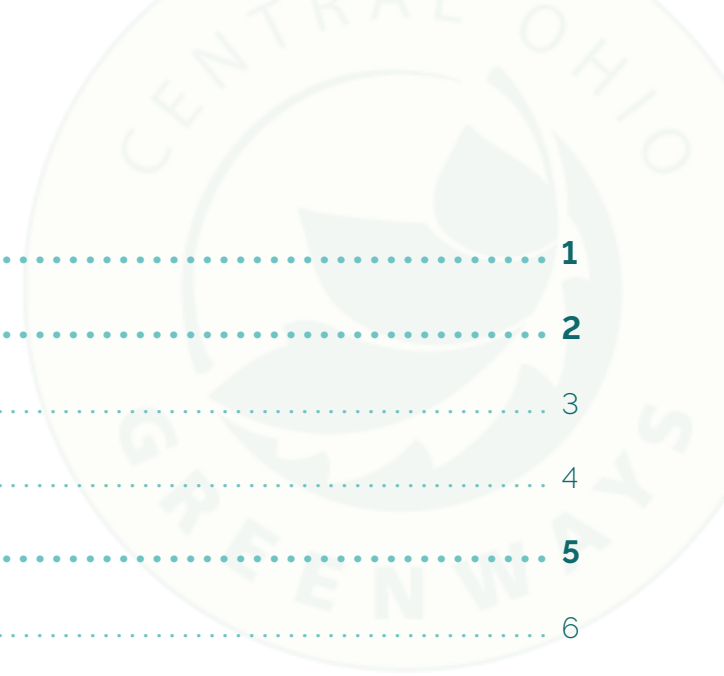
# CLARITY REPORT

FOR READINESS  
AND FEASIBILITY

MARCH 2019

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# INTRODUCTION

*“Right now, in America, in Ohio, in Columbus, there is this timing around the intersection of wellness, of health, of conservation, and of the environment. There is so much positive energy around it all. There is a critical moment where people get it.”*

*“What happens before capital fundraising starts is the most important part of the work. Questioning, measuring, qualifying, verifying, listening to hard answers to hard questions, and weighing judgements expressed by potential key volunteer leaders and potential key contributors are all parts of strategic market testing.” — HANK ROSSO, AUTHOR*

This report reflects Mollard Consulting's understanding of the Central Ohio Greenways (COG) committee's internal capacity, readiness to succeed, and overall feasibility to achieve philanthropic goals. You have taken the important first step with the commissioning of this work. We questioned, we measured, we qualified, and we verified. We gained clarity on readiness and feasibility. Now it is time to pause, hear the answers to the questions, and weigh the findings.

An indicator of how well an organization is perceived is evident by the level and types of responses from interviews and surveys. The stakeholders and leaders we spoke with

asked thoughtful, diligent questions. The overwhelming theme was that stakeholders appreciate the trails and believe in providing connectivity across Central Ohio. We, too, believe in this vision and would be honored to continue to further the expansion and impact of trails in the region.

*“What we see is, people want trails ... we're seeing public will for these types of investments. And, it's bipartisan will — it's not connected to the ways that we are divided as a country. In some ways, it feels like a safe investment, whether it's a philanthropic partner, a business partner, or a levy campaign. I think there's general agreement that it's something that's valuable in a community.”*

Our recommendations consider the clarity still needed in regards to which entity will oversee the expansion project and questions about trail prioritization and operations.

Based on our findings, we recommend that significant public funding be secured in advance of a private fundraising campaign. We believe that Central Ohio Greenways will be able to raise 10-20% of the total goal with private funding. Building the groundwork for the organization is critical, and overall, we recommend significant planning prior to fundraising.

Unattributed quotes in italics are from interviews or surveys. They are not attributed as we promised anonymity. See Appendix A for a list of participants.

A scenic landscape featuring a winding asphalt path that curves through a grassy area. To the right of the path, a rustic wooden fence runs parallel to it. The background is filled with lush green trees, some of which show signs of autumn with yellow and orange leaves. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural. The text "LEVEL SET" is overlaid in the center of the image in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

**LEVEL SET**

# SWOT ANALYSIS

## INTERNAL

### STRENGTHS

- Vision of a fully connected region.
- Engaged and passionate COG committee.
- COG strategic plan, planning documents, and research.
- COG fund at The Columbus Foundation.
- MORPC and MORPC CEO are highly respected.
- Each community within Central Ohio is represented on the MORPC governing board.
- Expertise of MORPC staff.
- Broad reach and impact of MORPC.
- MORPC's financial stability.
- Number of trails already developed and used.

### WEAKNESSES

- \$250M+ campaign cost.
- Minimal COG staff.
- Unclear business model to support fundraising.
- Confusing "committee of a committee" structure.
- Lack of fundraising infrastructure/process.
- No donor database and no development team.
- Mission/vision/values statements to be affirmed or revised.
- Case for support not yet clear.
- COG brand awareness.
- COG trail signage/wayfinding.
- Gaps in trail connectivity.

## EXTERNAL


### OPPORTUNITIES

- Stable and growing Columbus economy.
- Population growth of city and metro area.
- Strong network of trail advocates.
- Increased publicity/awareness of Columbus as a top place to visit, live, work, and/or invest.
- Demand for a connected trail system.
- Potential for collaboration with corporations and communities.
- Potential for collaboration with Metro Parks, Rails-to-Trails, etc. in various areas of the project.
- Levy and bond passage rates at local levels.
- Increased awareness of the environment, environmental impacts, and healthy lifestyles.
- Recent national research<sup>1</sup> relating health benefits to nature.
- Pelotonia and increased cycling.
- SMART Columbus investments and attention.

### THREATS

- Corporate donor fatigue.
- Other nonprofit capital campaigns.
- Potential market correction and/or economic downturn.
- Construction and material cost increases.
- Election cycles and changes in administration.
- Community understanding of tax/levy/bond funded initiatives.
- Multi-jurisdiction ownership/management/maintenance of trail system.
- Land acquisition challenges.
- Competing community priorities.
- Perception often a "nice to have" amenity rather than "need to have" necessity.
- Diversity and scope of multi-county Central Ohio region. Trail accessibility of underserved communities.
- Weather/climate impact on trail use.
- Midwestern attachment to cars for transportation.





# RESEARCH FINDINGS

# INTERNAL READINESS

## AWARENESS

In fundraising, there seems to be an age-old awareness debate: How valuable is awareness of the organization in order to raise funds?

There were multiple levels of awareness to assess through the following entities:

1. Central Ohio trail systems.
2. Central Ohio Greenways.
3. Central Ohio Greenways committee.

For the Central Ohio Greenways committee, it comes as little surprise that awareness as a committee, and an oversight entity, is low. Less than half of all survey respondents were aware of COG as a committee, and most interviewees were not aware of COG.

As one might expect, Central Ohio trail systems had the highest levels of awareness, followed by Central Ohio Greenways, and lastly the Central Ohio Greenways committee. Of the survey respondents who self-identified as “trail users,”

- 97% were familiar or somewhat familiar with the Central Ohio trail system;
- 85% were aware of Central Ohio Greenways as a trail system;
- 70% said they had no connection to COG as a committee; and
- 56% were aware of the COG committee.

Our awareness research brought forth two critical questions:

1. What is the community awareness of the trail system vs. the committee?
2. What is the importance of organizational awareness for fundraising purposes?

The MORPC board, although largely aware the COG committee exists, was unfamiliar with the organization's leadership and infrastructure. Half of the board members don't consider themselves connected to the COG committee at all.

## INTERNAL READINESS CONTINUED

It's apparent that many trail users are connected to the trail experience and the trails in close proximity to their home/work, but are not necessarily connected to the trail name or the entity that supports them. This finding would translate to targeting "cause supporters" — those who are giving to the cause of using/expanding trails, not giving to the organization behind the work. For instance, some identify as a donor to cancer causes rather than a donor to The James Cancer Hospital or to Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

*"I don't think anyone is aware of COG as COG. They are aware of the trails. I think it's confusing and there are trails all over in Dublin and none of them are in the COG network. People don't differentiate between bike path next to the road and a greenway system."*

*"I suspect very few people actually give much thought to the 'behind the scenes' functions of COG. However, if we want to build support — political, funding through public or private means — there probably needs to be better awareness."*

*"The name COG could use some focus-grouping."*

*"Unless you are an avid biker or outdoor enthusiast, you are not having COG top of mind."*

*"I didn't know that it was called Central Ohio Greenways."*

**Stakeholders were asked, "How important is community awareness of the COG committee in order to oversee the trail expansion project, and its fundraising?"** Over 80% of survey respondents said awareness of the COG committee, or the overseeing entity, is important/very important.

Several trail users suggested that awareness of the trail project should be a priority over familiarity of the organization; however, the general consensus of donors and trail users is that a higher level of awareness of the committee to oversee the expansion project is very important.

*"There needs to be a trust in the entity overseeing the work; that trust and brand reputation needs to be there."*

*"As a donor I would like to see that my resources are with an entity that I'm familiar with and I think most donors would feel that way."*

*"My first reaction is if people are giving money, then they want to have confidence in the organization overseeing that money — who is asking, who is reporting out, and all of that. I'm not sure whether it matters though, unless you are giving [that organization] money; otherwise, it's just an asset that people recognize and appreciate."*

## INTERNAL READINESS CONTINUED

*"In order to get someone excited to donate, it has to go to someone they know and trust. If it is going to be COG, then an effort has to be made to educate the community on who they are."*

*"It's the entity that's asking, too. MORPC has no track record of asking for private sector dollars that I'm aware of ... as opposed to the zoo, with decades of experience and a broad net of donors."*

*"On the private side, we'll want to have the option to give to a 501c3 where the private sector is robustly represented. The viewpoints are different when public, private, education, and nonprofit sectors are at the table. If it's just government folks, then it's not the right view to make it successful."*

## PERCEPTIONS

*"They [Central Ohio Greenways] are critical. I've been here four years and am blown away by the improvements made. Their work hits so many buckets and there are very few other things that cross over these different areas."*

Despite a low awareness of the COG committee, **perceptions of greenways and trails are high.**

- 90% of survey respondents ranked personal perception of the trails as positive/very positive.
- 64% felt the broader community's perception of the trails was positive/very positive.

*"My impression of the community's experience with trails and greenways is super positive. I've never heard anything negative — I continually hear people talking about trail extensions and renovations and a buzz of constant efforts to expand and improve. I've never heard anything but momentum about adding more and better amenities."*

*"99 of 100 times they are favorable opinions. My email is flooded with positive [communications] ... this is a well-appreciated and well-received amenity."*

*"I was talking to someone in Mansfield and he and his wife come to Columbus to ride on the trail system. It's a destination trail system, and that's quite pleasing to me."*

## INTERNAL READINESS CONTINUED

*"I'm a meditator. I do walking meditations and I love being in nature. I know every portion of that trail."*

*"Yes, I think the community has a positive perception of the trails and perceives them as valuable."*

*"It's almost like painting a picture of the future of Central Ohio and the region really succinctly."*

*"Oh God yes. This is what people want, absolutely ... walking, biking ... it's completely an appropriate use of public money."*

It is clear that stakeholders see the positive impact a trail expansion project could have on Central Ohio.

*"I think it's great. I think it continues to tell the story of what a great place Columbus is, and it probably provides connectivity for people who have the time and interest to make that part of their lives."*

*"It's a really worthy effort that will completely transform the region. I understand there is effort in that."*

*"It's a talent strategy. A way to brand your community."*

*"Like a good transportation system, having integrated, well-kept modern greenways will be a differentiator for any market. As our area is attractive for younger professionals, it would be a deal-breaker to not have it."*

*"The New York Times list named Columbus as the 'American City of the Future.' We're not going to be the 'American City of the Future' if we're not doing what you are talking about here."*

*"I was watching House Hunters and they were in Columbus ... the couple was moving here for a job and said, 'Columbus has a lot more trails than I would have expected. It's really nice.' ... good positioning for our city."*

*"What people want in the community of the future — live, work, and play are all connected."*

*"Think about landlocked Columbus. Promoting something like this enhances the overall appeal of the city."*

## INTERNAL READINESS CONTINUED

*“Public art should be part of this ... through neighborhoods and in the countryside. It would be a landmark to go out and see it.”*

However, while the positive impact is acknowledged, perceptions of the campaign itself vary. **It is widely believed that these initiatives are, or should be, publicly funded.**

*“My perception is government. My perception is that tax dollars are funding this work. So, from a funder perspective, I don't have a good sense for the need for [private] resources.”*

*“An everyday person will think, ‘Aren't my tax dollars paying for this?’”*

*“The average user is going to wonder, ‘Why are my tax dollars being spent on this too?’ — so the question is how do we influence the skeptical tax payer?”*

*“Our experience is that people assume bikeways are handled by the city and the metro parks — they think it's all one big organization that's government-run.”*

*“Sometimes there's conversation around where the responsibility lies in funding some of these things and it certainly seems like that will be a big hurdle for this campaign. The perception is that transportation and those types of things are more of a government responsibility than a private one.”*

*“Why do we expect the philanthropic community to fill in the gaps that historically the public sector has been able to do?”*

Stakeholders recognize the value of trail expansion, indicating there is an established value proposition for this project. Of survey respondents, 90% said the value of trails in the community is high/very high. Other campaigns spend significant time communicating value — COG's is clear.

*“The value proposition is very strong because while many cities are investing in trails, having a region-wide vision and plan for ensuring connectivity is key.”*

*“This project [and its value] makes sense. A robust trail network is key to our thriving economy as it creates a place where employers want to be located and where people want to live.”*

## INTERNAL READINESS CONTINUED

The deeper questions become:

- Will COG's value proposition translate into fundraising or is it perceived as a value delivered by the government via taxes?
- Do trail users connect the trails they use to the Central Ohio Greenways trail system? Or are they happily using the trails with little regard for the name of the system? Does this disconnect impact fundraising?
- How does the value of these efforts stack up against the other competing public and philanthropic initiatives and organizations?

*"There is a passionate group and donor community that would support something like this, but I compare this to CelebrateOne [infant mortality], opioids, and community public health issues, and my bias is in that space."*

*"Foundations aren't increasing dollars, but cutting back if anything, so given the competing priorities around jobs, access, equality, childcare, etc., I think this is a tough environment."*

*"This is great, but does that mean we are not funding homeless shelters? What do we stop doing to add money to the pot for this?"*

*"In the context of all the other priorities that the city has right now, I'm excited about it, and I see its part in our large growth strategy, but I'm not excited to make a decision right now."*

Connecting the project to the health of the community was shared numerous times. Recent national research<sup>2</sup> demonstrates the health benefits of time spent in nature. By spending just 20 minutes in a park, it is enough to improve well-being, even if you don't exercise while you're there.

*"Healthy living is a lifestyle. A coalition could work [as champions]. Find traditional corporations interested in healthy lifestyles for their employees."*

*"In my mind, it fits better into community-based, healthy lifestyles, and there might be some economic value to it as well."*

*"Look at Des Moines' trail system. They have a three-county health and wellness initiative and they use a Gallup poll to help measure outcomes ... exercise and public assets like trails are captured in Gallup health index."*

*"Tie it back to health. With the new 2018 studies that say one-third of Americans are obese and one-half are overweight — tie it to health."*

*"If people can feel an attachment to how it's going to make them live healthier and longer lives, that's what's important. It will hit a nerve with people, and maybe there's a way to tie to the hospital systems for support."*

## INTERNAL READINESS CONTINUED

*"I think a strong case can be made to those who have control over health dollars — hospitals, insurance agencies, Ohio Department of Health — that this is an investment in the health of the community."*

### INTERNAL INFRASTRUCTURE

*"COG is primarily made up of volunteers. We will not build and maintain a world-class network of trails unless there are people in place whose primary job is to focus on the trails. In most organizations, a board provides general leadership and sets policy and the staff implements. It seems that COG's organizational structure is out of whack proportionately based on the COG goals."*

There are several operational and infrastructure questions that arose in our findings. Specifically, **"the who"** behind this project is widely unknown. When asked, nearly 60% of survey respondents that are aware of COG were unsure if COG has the right leadership in place to launch the expansion project. The lack of certainty appears to relate to the need for increasing human resources. The MORPC board itself, arguably closest to the committee and organization, was also largely unsure if the right leadership is in place and if there are internal infrastructure needs to be addressed. Over 50% of board members said they were unsure to both questions.

*"Brad, who before the board, was probably the champion of the system as a system, as opposed to a bunch of disparate trails."*

*"I think it's feasible with the right leadership, which they don't have today."*

Several questions around "the who" arose through our research.

- What entity will lead this project?
  - COG, MORPC, Metro Parks, or other established groups?
- Specifically, what staffing structure will support this effort due to COG's limited staffing?
- What kind of human resources capacity is needed?
- Who outside of MORPC and COG will champion this work?
- What external groups or organizations might be interested in partnering in this work?
- How can board and leadership composition be built to support this work?

## INTERNAL READINESS CONTINUED

What entity will lead this project?

*"My sense is the Scioto Mile and big philanthropic efforts are not [done by] 'startup nonprofits.' They [COG] need to take a role of assisting, not leading, unless someone comes in with a significant amount of horse power. MORPC is seen as so governmental that you need a standalone ... it gets diluted."*

*"MORPC is more of the household name, but where is the track record [with private fundraising]?"*

*"Being a committee of another subset doesn't work. This needs to have a funding source, to be empowered and have a serious director for it to be successful. Without a champion it won't go anywhere — there has to be a leader which includes the overseeing entity."*

*"MORPC's role is important. At times I wonder about the ability to execute the plans as it's largely a public sector body and a largely public sector-led planning process. So, whether it's trails or anything else, you need to think through the private sector involvement and integration into the project."*

Who can champion, internally and externally?

*"People don't give money to things, they give money to people."*

*"They need a strong leader who can develop the strategy. And that leader has to be empowered. The organization needs a leader and to be a 501c3 with a select board that's carefully constructed, and they have to be charged with getting something done. No one is going to knock on the door and have someone say, 'Here's \$20 million.' No one is going to do that for a loose organization that's a committee of MORPC."*

*"If XX said to me, 'We're going to be able to turn around some chronic health issues by making sure that every member of our community has access to our greenway system,' that would motivate me. And, 'They will be able to access this system as a transportation system to get to jobs anywhere in our community,' that would motivate me. Someone who has a history and reputation of being for the historically marginalized people in our community, that person delivering the message would motivate me."*

*"It would be nice if they have a celebrity chair of the campaign, not necessarily someone from Central Ohio. Like a Lance Armstrong, but not him, something along those lines would be interesting."*

## INTERNAL READINESS CONTINUED

*“Often times an effort needs a face of that effort. A leader that is associated with this with a little bit of ‘star power,’ if you will. Thinking through who a single champion could be, or multiple champions, is important.”*

*“None of this happens without a champion ... without a champion it won't go anywhere.”*

*“Healthcare systems have new leaders, who might be atypical on community initiatives like this.”*

*“Hospitals may have funds with ACA responsibility to communities tied to federal dollars. OhioHealth is in all the counties.”*

*“To me, it sounds like we've already said the champion is MORPC. If you're talking about an individual to lead a campaign, I don't know the answer to that.”*

How can you develop the board?

*“The committee needs more than two members from nonprofit local allied groups.”*

*“[Public and private sectors] both need a seat at the table.”*

*“There are no big hitters on the corporate side of the board ... there are a lot of parks and recreation and people in that sphere that have important points of view. But they need more firepower at whatever point is appropriate for credibility and the ability to go and advocate [for private funding].”*

*“COG and MORPC are incredibly white boards and organizations, and there is a lot that gets missed because we don't know what we don't know.”*

In terms of partnerships, several people mentioned the potential interest of large corporate entities, such as JPMorgan Chase with a vast commuting workforce in a highly congested area. CoverMyMeds was mentioned as a company that selected their most recent building location due to the closeness of trail access, and Rogue Fitness was mentioned because *“they chose to purchase a polluted site in a depressed neighborhood where a corporate giant had abandoned it 40 years ago, cleaned it up and invested in it, with a trail through that area.”*

## INTERNAL READINESS CONTINUED

Additionally, these names were cited in the interviews as potential partners and/or funders for the project:

- AEP
- BrewDog
- Charlie Ruma
- Clean Ohio Fund
- Columbus 2020
- Columbus Partnership
- COTA
- CoverMyMeds
- Dantavius Gerald
- Dawn Tyler Lee
- Franklin Park Conservatory
- Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure
- Honda
- Huntington
- JPMorgan Chase
- L Brands
- Loann Crane
- Matt Scantland and Pete Scantland
- Metro Parks
- Mount Carmel
- Nationwide Children's Hospital
- NiSource
- Ohio Bicycle Federation
- OhioHealth
- OSU Fisher College of Business Real Estate Advisory Board
- Pelotonia
- Rails-to-Trails
- Rev1 Ventures
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Rogue Fitness
- Scotts Miracle-Gro
- SMART Columbus
- The Columbus Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Thomas J. Evans Foundation
- Urban Land Institute (ULI)
- Wallace Fund
- Wexner Medical Center

## INTERNAL READINESS CONTINUED

"The who" behind this campaign is just one element of the uncertainty in the infrastructure of this project. Both public and private funding would require thoughtfully implemented processes and procedures.

- Neither COG nor MORPC have engaged in private fundraising.
- Public grants/funds for trail development do not typically pass through MORPC.

*"100% of MORPC revenue is earned income — government grants, earned interests, etc. — a budget for zero philanthropic dollars."*

*"[They need] the human resources for the donor prospecting, some kind of major gift and campaign knowledge, and technology, database resources, hardware, and software to manage a [fundraising] campaign."*

A project such as this would be a game-changer for the trail system and a massive culture change for MORPC — one that cannot be understated.

Ultimately, the question that must be answered before moving forward is, **does MORPC and COG leadership have the appetite and funding for such a massive change in their business model?**

# EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY

## STICKER SHOCK

It was difficult to find an interviewee that wasn't shocked by the project goal of \$250 million with \$125 million in private funding. Some appreciated an aspirational goal, and a few stakeholders thought it was possible.

*"It's extremely ambitious, which I love. You don't make change without being a bit audacious in your proposal."*

*"I'll preface by saying I think anything's possible. It seems attainable given how this community operates, but it doesn't mean it's easy."*

*"My experience in philanthropy is that anything is possible and it's amazing what people will support and what money can be available. But what isn't clear to me is who is the group [supporting this effort] and where do you develop 'the list.'"*

*"If I think about the goal over a decade or 10–15 years, it sounds aggressive, but doable. The shorter time frame doesn't sound as attainable."*

*"It's a big number for sure, but if a strong enough case is built around this, I think it's doable."*

However, the vast majority had difficulty seeing the private funding goals as realistic, especially in light of other competing community priorities.

*"I just don't see it, and I love the trail system."*

*"In lieu of other pressing problems that we have, if we made that kind of investment NOT in other critically important things in the region, that would be hard for me."*

*"If you have \$250 million in a community, is this where you would put it?"*

*"It's a staggering number ... that sounds like a Herculean task."*

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY CONTINUED

*"Only a couple of people in our city that can give a \$25 million gift away."*

*"Those are just big numbers man!"*

*"Getting a high seven figure gift would be really difficult. Multiple million-dollar gifts don't seem credible to me."*

*"Consider that Pelotonia is a movement and they've raised \$120 million in ten years. Think of that. It's major corporate underwriting, the likes of Les and Steve, Ohio State, and 8,000 riders."*

*"I don't see it in the community; I just don't see the muscle to do this."*

*"When this community decides to do something, we get it done ... Columbus 2020, Pelotonia, SMART Columbus, and Save the Crew, but how you will elicit that kind of engagement and drive for this initiative? It's going to be hard."*

Survey respondents, who were mostly trail users, and the MORPC board were less shocked by the philanthropic goal. Slightly over half of both groups said they felt the goal was attainable, but several noted their unfamiliarity with fundraising and their inability to assess feasibility. Despite survey respondents' feelings that the goal may be attainable, none of them stated that they would be able to significantly contribute to the project. The MORPC board showed slightly more ability to contribute with gifts of \$1,000–5,000, one at under \$10,000, and a member stating that Franklin County could give "\$5 million over 10 years."

Interview responses, while more challenging to quantify, indicated less comfort in meeting the philanthropic goals. Approximately less than 20% said the philanthropic goal of \$125 million was attainable. Both survey respondents and interviewees felt the availability of lead gifts was even less attainable. Only 29% of survey respondents felt a \$25 million gift would be available and half of interviewees felt the lead gift was not likely.

Most donors — even those who believe the goals are attainable — have several critical questions before they feel comfortable assessing the feasibility of a project this size. One question is, how much has, or will, public agencies invest first?

For instance, interviewees who believe a \$125 million goal is attainable were much more cautious when asked if a \$25 million lead gift was possible.

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY CONTINUED

*“Yes, the philanthropic community, once they choose an initiative, is very generous. \$250 million is reasonable given the volume proposed. That many gifts over \$250,000, yes, but a lead gift of \$25 million, no.”*

*“\$250 million is a big number for sure but I think it's doable. This one [lead gift] could be a tough nut to crack.”*

**The overwhelming sentiment is public dollars first, private dollars second.**

### PUBLIC FIRST

It became apparent that a project of this nature and magnitude would **need to secure public funding before launching private fundraising.**

Despite some concern from the MORPC board and others regarding the public being stretched thin, donors want to understand the public leadership stance on trails and what public funds will be invested first. Public funding is a highly effective tool in leveraging private support. SMART Columbus fundraising was a tremendous example of the private sector stepping up to match, and in the end more than match, the federal grant.

*“Looking at private funding first is backwards. My initial question was, ‘Is there some kind of private match required?’ because otherwise you need to show what the public piece is first.”*

*“It deters private dollars when they're thinking the public should be, or is already, more involved. You need to remind donors how many public dollars there are ... the sustainability over time comes from the public.”*

*“I feel it should be 80% public sector-funded. I think the [public vs. private] percentage is off ... I keep going back to being curious about what the public sector capacity is to do this ... tap into levies and bonds.”*

*“80% public sector [funding] is what we would push to do to in order engage [the private] community.”*

*“Are public sector folks pushing themselves on the financial mechanisms to get this done?”*

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY CONTINUED

While we tested 40–60% public funding with survey respondents and interviewees, we now understand that is a low percentage. According to COG leadership, trail development projects typically bring in 75–80% in public funding. If this percent of public funding could translate to the trail expansion project, then that would make a significant impact on private fundraising success. In addition to identifying federal and grant dollars, trail expansion levies in all 11 counties should be considered. The recent Metro Park levy passed at 67%, indicating there is a public appetite for this type of project.

*“I’ve always thought public investment [for this project] is over 50%, when to date 75% of trails have been publicly funded.”*

*“We just had a levy for Metro Parks, and we did public surveys, and trails are always at the top or near the top. We asked for more money [via the levy] and 67% said yes — two of three people said yes and part of that levy promise was building 50 more miles of trails.”*

Levies were frequently suggested as a first step to securing necessary upfront public funding.

*“If you were to take a multi-county levy with Metro Parks, would it be approved? Are [the public sector folks] focused on taking the initiatives to the voters?”*

One interviewee specifically asked for benchmarking against Metro Parks, the Columbus Zoo, and the Columbus Metropolitan Library as a comparison to the proposed COG expansion project. These largely publicly funded organizations have the infrastructure for raising private funds, including friends' groups or foundations. While levies are a significant portion of their budgets, levies are not the only public funds that support them.

- **Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks** — \$28.8 million budget  
93% public funding, 30% levy-funded, less than 1% philanthropy
- **Columbus Metropolitan Library** — \$83.6 million budget  
88% public funding, 57% levy-funded, 12% philanthropy
- **Columbus Zoo and Aquarium** — \$78.9 million budget  
24% public funding, 24% levy-funded, 12% philanthropy

*Outside of this report, we will provide an excel spreadsheet outlining our research on local levies for these agencies.*

## BIG PICTURE VS. SMALL PROJECTS

It is important to elevate the vision of this project, but not the price. This project has a powerful element of connectedness, which resonates with stakeholders. Messaging and momentum will include the big picture; however, for fundraising purposes, most stakeholders felt the project must be broken down into smaller components/campaigns. The exception would be if 80% to 90% or more in public funding was secured first. Public commitment at that level would be a catalyst for the private sector to respond and close the gap to achieve the overall goal.

*“Don’t be distracted by the magnitude of the vision. Be proud of the vision, but not distracted by it. If you try to build that whole big thing you’ll die. Take a plan and take it block by block. Each deal is separate.”*

*“Professionally, I would start to break it into pieces and never go out with a hard ask of \$125 million [in private funds]. I would say piece A is \$X and that’s a more digestible bite.”*

*“They will appreciate the broad vision, but you better have a ‘phase one’ that they will understand.”*

*“Raise money and start designing actual construction documents on the first 25 miles. The most important thing is to give confidence to the people that this piece is part of the global objective.”*

Our interviews and surveys confirmed that interest lies in initiatives where donors can have an impact and where the initiatives can impact them. Less than 14% of those surveyed felt the focus should be on the broader regional expansion over smaller projects. The benefits of smaller campaigns seem well understood to interviewees and survey respondents alike.

- Smaller trail section projects can rally local community support.
- Completion of smaller sections can create momentum for the next section(s).
- Prior to launch, thoughtful and strategic prioritization of trail sections is critical.

*“Fundraising is like politics. It’s all local. It’s all enlightened self-interest.”*

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY CONTINUED

*"You win these things with a bunch of little victories. I would put it out and say this is our dream and it's hard to say the overall cost, but we have this really great first phase and explain that."*

*"Break it down into smaller projects and find friends groups for each project. That will give it legs that bring it to fruition."*

*"Much more successful in fundraising when close to home, place-minded."*

*"The library experienced this with 10 different buildings and they were having a lot of that same thought [and question] — having a bigger campaign while still thinking about each individual branch and the community around that branch. I think it's a combination."*

*"This strikes me as more individual [campaigns] and will be driven by a person's desire to invest in their own neighborhoods."*

*"Most people have a real attachment to their community, and they would prefer to see their funds designated."*

Either way, the project will require thoughtful **prioritization of trail development**. A users' personal connection to trails impacts their perspective on how the trails should be prioritized.

*"I think people want to see fast progress, so in my opinion starting at a point where you can see results will be more impactful."*

*"Prioritize the trails that check the most of those [philanthropic interests presented in the interview] first — access and bridging inequality, etc., then hit those first."*

*"My initial thought would be that it should be based on some type of assessment where the biggest gaps exist, for instance in Columbus proper, links to the bigger trail network and how are we going to help make those connections."*

*"Some trails will be easier to get people excited about than others. So maybe not all trails are created equal. Completing the gaps are super important, the tiny missing gaps in the system."*

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY CONTINUED

*"It's easy; look at where potential partners and funders are and go there first — to me it's the rivers, focus on the rivers (Olentangy and Scioto) — you'll still get little pieces of trail ... and all kinds of partners by the rivers."*

*"Look at utilization and true connections — if there is an obvious one that would connect to a big place, or would already be high traffic, or would take them off of main roads."*

*"I think I would like to see underserved areas targeted first, they tend to be areas where there is high obesity and not a lot of green space and then it goes back to the quality of life piece."*

*"The hard thing is getting people to remain patient, so show big, visible victories that affect a lot of people."*

*"If there was a series of nodes all along these trails in the 11 counties, where the COTA bus has pick-up locations for rides that are either free or subsidized, and it can take you to one of the nodes, that would be really cool."*

The survey responses indicated the following in terms of trail prioritization. **A ranking of "one" represented the highest priority and a ranking of "ten" represented the lowest.** An average of all the rankings, shown after each description listed below, represents the collective priority.

- 1. Gaps in the existing network (2.54)**
- 2. "Easy" victories and/or least expensive trail segments first (4.62)**
- 3. Underserved communities (4.74)**
4. Proximity to schools, businesses, and/or cultural amenities (4.85)
5. Dense communities that would serve a lot of people (5.25)
6. Proximity to parks (5.90)
7. Segments providing connections to statewide trail networks (5.99)
8. Donor and partner supported trails first (6.02)
9. Proximity to transit stops (7.16)
10. Rural areas that provide a scenic trail experience (7.80)

The MORPC board agreed that filling gaps in the existing network is the top priority. Their second and third priorities were proximity to schools, businesses and/or cultural amenities, and developing donor and partner supported trails. This was a divergency from survey responses that prioritized donor and partner supported trails at 8/10.

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY CONTINUED

Overall, survey respondents and interviewees emphasized the importance of completing existing gaps in combination with focusing on "easy" victories that make a notable impact.

The first step in trail prioritization will be determining what land is readily available for development, likely followed by achievable, visible victories. The remaining prioritization will also be contingent upon the alignment between specific trail projects and the mission and vision of the organization.

*"Prioritization will depend on if you're having to acquire land right away that is currently being used for something else. Property owners would be more of a challenge."*

*"Another thing we'll think about as this matures is land use and land acquisition. We want public sector dollars to take care of that [first]."*

*"Land acquisitions can be very complicated. It takes a long time."*

## BELIEVER BASE

The value of the trail system is understood, and a strong believer base currently exists. The unique aspect of trail initiatives is that believers, and potential donors, are found in all pockets of the community. We spoke to suspecting and unsuspecting trail advocates alike. We were pleasantly surprised with how many C-suite executives talked passionately about their use of, and belief in, the trails.

*"There are a lot of people who use the trails. If you could even tap into all of those people and for every mile they ride, they'll commit a dollar and have friends match, then this campaign could have more of a momentum about it. A momentum that may not be as easy to build in other organizations."*

*"I'm a big believer of greenways and I've chaired a greenways committee in [another city]. I have a passion for it, and a belief that cities and communities that put a premium on green space become places where more people want to live. I'm proud that Columbus and Ohio have made a significant commitment."*

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY CONTINUED

*“Everyone uses them [trails, greenways, and parks]. If someone did a survey, [they’d see that] people use them. It’s worth more than playing fields, playgrounds, or anything. Everyone uses them.”*

*“This project is what the current and next generation of talent are looking for. They don’t just want a fancy car or a cool apartment. They want to know that they are connected to nature.”*

*“On the trails, you see everyone from running teams, cyclists training for Pelotonia, casual cyclists, and elderly people on cruising bikes. One of the biggest benefits of all is that it attracts all demographics.”*

*“No matter who you are or where you’re from in Central Ohio, you can identify with this and see where you fit in. That intentionality of being truly inclusive, everybody can understand, and if everybody can understand, somebody is going to want to fund it.”*

*“I don’t think there is an emotional connection to MORPC, so they’re really going to have to figure out their messaging on how this is going to create that equity and benefit the community and all citizens of Columbus.”*

Developing and identifying a strong believer base is the first step to effective fundraising campaigns. Unfortunately, while we found that many believed in the value of a trail system, they didn’t necessarily show interest in significant contributions. At the end of the day, trails are seen as a tax-funded asset.

*“Is this personal to me? Yes. Would I get out my personal checkbook? Maybe.”*

## MESSAGING MATTERS

Messaging to your established believer base will be critical. Messaging will include educating — especially stakeholders — by explaining the project and the plans succinctly.

*“People want to be connected to things that will make them feel better. While trails are great, we need to market it to people as what it can do for them personally to make their life better.”*

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY CONTINUED

*"If a plan doesn't make sense and is too complicated, or if it's serving only certain segments, then it can alienate groups quickly."*

*"You've got to tell the story and tell it well. The people you need have the attention span of a gnat. I wouldn't worry about the specifics (restoration of waterways, etc.)."*

*"Everyone will see it their own way ... but they will only like the project if it can be explained succinctly."*

*"When it's clear what they are trying to market, it will be easy. It's still just lines on a map which people don't get as excited about. It makes more sense when they understand they can go from park A to park B and what a completed trail would mean for them."*

*"Trail systems are fine, but we want more than fine. What I like about Greenways' plan is that it's a more forward thing."*

Specific philanthropic initiatives spoke to various stakeholders and they articulated the importance of messaging impact.

*"The beauty of this project is that it is the intersection of all of those [philanthropic interests] and I don't think it's traditionally framed that way. It's typically framed as trails themselves and not access, transportation, etc. which would be much more appealing."*

*"**Economic development**, if it's couched in that way, then it's not just a quality of life effort but it's something that can actually drive a little more into where [and how] people live."*

*"The **connection** piece is probably more important to the current cyclist."*

*"There is so much focus on opportunity **neighborhoods** because of the mayor, so riding on those coattails could help jump on the excitement for supporting the trails."*

*"I think the whole concept of a **healthy Columbus** — not only healthy people, but also the health of the downtown, suburbs, and the connectivity of all that."*

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY CONTINUED

*“Economic prosperity — tie this to quality of life that impacts the economic impact.”*

*“I understand **mobility** as a contextual term now, as opposed to just public transit.”*

Some stakeholders were skeptical about the ability of the trail expansion project to directly connect to some philanthropic interest categories.

*“How does this close opportunity gaps? I think it’s a stretch. [Build] a sidewalk to a bus stop or to an employer. Assuming sidewalks exist, then they aren’t going to use a trail as they [underserved populations] have other priorities or concerns.”*

*“Social inequalities? I love the concept, but that’s a hard sell.”*

*“Quality of life, that’s very relative depending upon the community and the individual.”*

*“I really struggle with how trails will address social inequalities. Aren’t we assuming a lot to say that a trail in Linden will help someone get a job? What evidence do we have that this will work?”*

*“Compare/contrast to Metro Parks; they are a better investment.”*

Interviewees ranked the following philanthropic interests on a scale from 1–10 **with “ten” representing the highest value to them**. The averages shown after each description listed below represent the collective interest for each category.

- 1. Addressing social inequalities and closing the opportunity gaps (7.5)**
- 2. Enhancing the quality of life in Central Ohio (7.5)**
- 3. Economic development (7.2)**
4. Recreation, health, and wellness efforts (6.6)
5. Transportation (6.5)
6. Nature, greenways, and environmental causes (5.8)
7. Central Ohio Greenways committee’s future fundraising efforts (4.8)

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY CONTINUED

Although addressing social inequalities resonated with interviewees, many of them did not feel a trail expansion project would meet those needs. Interviewees were connected to ideas of quality of life, closing opportunity gaps, and economic development. They were less interested in transportation, greenways, and environmental causes.

*“Connectivity of assets with trails makes a lot of sense but roads still do matter in Central Ohio.”*

*“I think that of all the social causes that exist and all the problems that we are trying to solve, this is not one that comes to top of mind as a social need.”*

*“This is a hugely expensive, incredibly integrated network ... if we could look at that with everything else that’s happening in the Columbus region. Imagine if we thought about that in a connected lens with mobility for populations in urban and non-connected communities.”*

Survey respondents had some alignment with the interviewees, but also many distinct differences. Both parties ranked “enhancing the quality of life in Central Ohio” as one of their highest interests — the highest ranking among survey respondents and tied for the highest among interviewees.

Listed below are the philanthropic interest rankings for survey respondents on a scale from 1–10 **with “ten” representing the highest value to them**. The averages shown after each description listed below represent the collective interest for each category.

- 1. Enhancing the quality of life in Central Ohio (8.6)**
- 2. Trails (8.5)**
- 3. Health and wellness efforts (8.2)**
4. Nature and environmental causes (8.2)
5. Transportation (7.7)
6. Recreation efforts (7.6)
7. Addressing social inequalities and closing the opportunity gaps (7.6)
8. Enhancing economic development opportunity in Central Ohio (7.5)
9. Central Ohio Greenways committee's future fundraising efforts (6.7)

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY CONTINUED

Quality of life can be perceived differently by individuals and groups. It is important to consider the perspective of the interviewees versus survey respondents. The survey respondents represented trail users who are more connected to nature and trails. Interviewees consisted of stakeholders and donors who want to see more impact on the economy and Central Ohio communities.

Central Ohio Greenways future fundraising efforts ranked the lowest with both groups likely due to outstanding questions about the project. This finding reinforces that work is still needed to effectively message the project.

*"You would have had a tougher time, even 10 years ago. I think the time is so ripe and I think people will understand the importance of these efforts."*

*"As density and congestion increase, I think transportation biking is going to become more attractive, and COG has an opportunity to be part of that solution."*

### CAPTURING THE QUESTIONS

Significant planning must occur before the project can begin. The first step to developing strategy is to capture the questions surrounding the project. Our qualitative research allows for the opportunity to gather stakeholder questions in order to understand the clarity they are seeking.

Questions from stakeholders and potential donors need to be addressed prior to the project launch. Sophisticated donors expect sophisticated answers.

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY CONTINUED

Questions for this project include:

- What entity will be making the ask for funding?
- Who will manage this work?
- How much public funding can be obtained?
- What land is available for development? Will it be purchased or seized through eminent domain?
- How much land is in the right of way?
- How will trail development/smaller projects be prioritized?
- How will trails be utilized for job access?
- Do we have a racial and economic breakdown of trail users?
- How is connectivity defined?
- How will the new trails be maintained?
- Does it include waterways?
- Does a city with lots of greenways perform better economically?
- What's the plan to expand to the other counties?
- How do greenways add to the well-being of a community? How do they make us feel different?
- Who owns the trails?
- What's the return on investment?

More specific stakeholder questions included:

*“Do they have a plan? Is it just dotted lines on a big map? Is it a schematic design or are there real construction documents?”*

*“How do the expansion pieces work with ownership [of the newly developed trails]?”*

*“When I took this position [working with trails] I completely underestimated the cost of trails including the maintenance of them. [How, and who, will maintain?]”*

*“What is it going to cost the environment? Are you destroying nature to put a path through so people can put a bike on it?”*

*“Are there issues with eminent domain and working with property owners, etc.? In some cases, the Ohio Farm Bureau has opposed it as it butts up against farm land, state, and county farm bureaus. Who owns the land? That matters to us.”*

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY CONTINUED

*“What’s the return on investment? This isn’t a Columbus thing, it’s regional, so if you put money in, where does it get spent? In which community does it get spent?”*

*“Are they using any alternative materials? Like, ‘We’re going to build 500 miles of trails but 100 miles are going to be eco-friendly, in partnership with company X.’”*

*“I think it’s a waste of capital dollars if you don’t have an operations plan. I do know that when people experience a poorly maintained section of trail, they don’t come back. That’s not a community asset.”*

Once the questions have been captured, incorporating these unknowns into your strategy will be critical. Stakeholders had insightful perspectives on what strategies, and keys to success, should be considered.

*“I saw the plan, looks great. But where’s the strategy? Until you have a strategy you won’t get anyone.”*

*“They have got to be smart about the next moves, otherwise it won’t make it and there have been many initiatives like that. The community embraces tremendous change, so they are in the right city and with the right strategy and right messaging they will succeed beyond what they anticipate, as [Columbus] did with the Scioto Mile. This city has the aptitude and appetite to achieve amazing things.”*

*“They are not at the end. They are barely at the end of the beginning.”*

*“Except for the Olentangy Trail, most other corridors are addressed piecemeal and not looked at as a whole.”*

*“It would be nice if they incorporated a strategy that addressed the special needs community.”*

*“Plans won’t make any difference — to celebrate a plan is useless. The only thing that will make an impact is when you build it. A plan isn’t the answer, a strategy is what they need. Plans are tactical — how you do things. Implementing a plan is a strategic decision, or series of decisions ... until you have a strategy you won’t get anyone [to invest].”*

*“You have to have a pretty solid project plan in terms of cost mapped out, numbers on what it connects to, numbers from other cities who have done something similar. It comes down to research and actual costs.”*

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY CONTINUED

*"I think you have to build a 'burning platform' and/or position a campaign for addressing a 'burning platform.' I actually think that's out there."*

*"Somehow build this into bigger projects, projects that are statewide/nationwide, and your chances of success are greater."*

Ultimately, strategy will stem from the overseeing organization getting clear on the mission, vision, and values. Once they understand project goals and objectives, decision making, trail prioritization, and strategy will become clear.

*"Understanding who they are as a nonprofit and **their mission and vision** in order to determine needs [and next steps] must be first. What's their top driving objective?"*

Categories where some stakeholders had specific concerns were those surrounding technology, safety, and access/signage. These donors, like all donors, will want their specific concerns addressed before considering a gift.

*"It's one thing to have trails, it's another thing to have people use them. Are we going to have different stations on the trails? I think technology is going to play a big role — is there a way to incorporate technology, trails, and well-being?"*

*"What about the safety of trails? Inequality is one of the big problems. How are we getting people in certain communities out to exercise when it's not safe?"*

*"Sustainability is a big question. If ever out on trails, you can see different levels of maintenance that exists and some become unsafe or unusable, and that defeats the whole purpose."*

*"Debris is a real [safety] challenge."*

*"From a social equity perspective, you have certain adaptive equipment for people who don't have use of their lower extremities ... but trails restrict any kind of e-bikes. I've heard complaints about the trails not necessarily being ADA. They are accessible but not to people in the forms in which they need to take advantage of them."*

*"In my experience, wayfinding is not good and people tend to get lost. I'm a regular user and I still get lost."*

*"Kokosing Gap Trail has restrooms. If we think of this as transportation, highways have rest stops. What types of amenities will be on these new trail miles?"*

*"More smart city, maybe it's got some sort of integration of technology into the trails, to track your location."*



# **ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

# INTERNAL READINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

## AFFIRM CURRENT MISSION AND VISION

**CURRENT MISSION:** To increase greenway trail mileages and use of trails for recreational and transportation needs.

**CURRENT VISION:** A world-class network of trails easily accessible to every central Ohioan.

**After the mission and vision are affirmed,** we propose that COG consider the following internal readiness steps listed in priority order:

1. Analyze and understand the possibility of a business model change.
2. Prioritize trail development. \*
3. Clearly define partnerships. \*
4. Establish clear and distinct brand. \*

\*Align with the existing five-year strategic plan (2016–2020).

# INTERNAL READINESS RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

## PHASE 1: ANALYZE AND UNDERSTAND THE POSSIBILITY OF A BUSINESS MODEL CHANGE

*"The bike and running paths didn't come to the top of my mind in terms of what MORPC was working on. Normally, when you hear about MORPC, you think of other things."*

*"I've met William a bunch of times and I think he's a great leader, but this is also not a trivial thing."*

*"I think William is deeply respected in the community; his leadership is visible and vibrant, and people appreciate who he is and what he brings to the table ... The last time I saw MORPC do any campaign like this ... it fell apart and there were a lot of pretty frustrated people who put a lot of money into it."*

We recommend gaining clarity surrounding the business model first. We heard critical questions during the interviews and the surveys asking about "the who" behind this project. Building operations and infrastructure should be given the time and due diligence it requires. In our experience, having the infrastructure is essential to support a multi-million-dollar expansion project.

Our recommendation is to create a new business unit within MORPC for COG. This would be a clear distinction and would include:

- Staffing model that includes fundraising, marketing, and administration.
- COG governing board with legal authority.
- Separate budget.
- Resources to raise public and private funding.

If the decision is made that the business model will not change, and the COG committee will remain as it is today, we recommend:

- Additional FTE staffing for COG.
- MORPC continue endorsing trail planning, prioritization, and development with a new plan for public funds but not take on private fundraising at this time.

# INTERNAL READINESS RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

## PHASE 2: PRIORITIZE TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

*"You don't need \$250 million because nothing is ready ... don't worry about years, put timeline together, 20 years is nothing."*

*"It's three phases from my perspective. Phase 1 is that greenways/bikeways trails were not in the vernacular of every day conversations. They were considered luxury and only done if dedicated funding was secured. Metro Parks did it, and places like Dublin ... Phase 2 is when a community thinks it's normal, even if they can't tax it, they plan for it ... like they did in Union County. The third phase is looking at it through the lens of equity. Are we missing East/West connections that adversely impact neighborhoods and cut people off? That's my lens."*

*"I think one of the clearest examples of that [economic and health impacts] is when you measured Alum Creek Trail. Alum Creek was nothing compared to the Olentangy Trail, until the three bridges went in to connect. I predicted that within three years it would rival the Olentangy Trail ... and I see the activity ... people out, all times of year, all demographics."*

*"Of the 500 miles to build, maybe do 50-mile increments over 10 years."*

Once the business model is decided upon, we believe — as do the stakeholders interviewed and surveyed — that prioritizing trail development is critical to the success of the expansion project. We understand that 500 miles of trails can be overwhelming to evaluate; however, when you pair MORPC and COG's planning expertise with a needs assessment, the answers will become clearer.

# INTERNAL READINESS RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

We recommend basing your needs assessment for each trail section on five crucial factors:

1. Does the trail section align with the mission, vision, and values (MVV) set forth by the governing entity?
2. How does the land impact the trail section? Is it already acquired, or easily acquired?
3. What does the trail section profile look like? Is it in a visible area with easy access? Does it connect highly utilized trails? Is it accessible to neighborhoods? How does this impact equity?
4. Are dollars available from federal, state, county, city, or other public sources?
5. Are private dollars available? Does the trail impact corporations and their workforces; individuals and their leisure activities?

Consider using an RFP process with all the local communities that would be impacted by this expansion project and ask for their insight into these questions of land, visibility, funding, and access. MORPC would then have community-generated data upon which to make these decisions.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

	Align MVV	Land	Utilization/Visibility/Profile	Public Funding Support	Private Funding Support
TRAIL SECTION 1					
TRAIL SECTION 2					

# INTERNAL READINESS RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

## PHASE 3: CLEARLY DEFINE PARTNERSHIPS

*“The thing that makes it a system is frankly just the will to say that it is that, and the power of persuasion to influence those jurisdictions to create some sort of uniformity in it.”*

*“Can we find private sector leaders who want to champion and lead it? Does it align with their brand?”*

*“The resources are there. Government will have to make choices about priorities ... doable, but if they only view this as an add-on without choosing priorities the elected officials need to be re-elected with, it will tend to look like ‘I’m not raising taxes for this unless it demonstrates benefits.’”*

Partnerships for the expansion project will be two-fold: public and private. The first step is securing key influential public partners that align with this work. For example, other trail projects in Indiana had partnerships with the Department of Transportation, Department of Natural Resources, and Office of Tourism.

A public collaboration of this nature will be critical to gain credibility and leverage additional funding. Asking local elected officials and regional stakeholders to serve as ambassadors for the expansion project would be a great start, as their collective voices representing the region would be strong. COG could then enter into a formal collaboration with related partners, such as the hospitals and health systems or COTA and SMART Columbus, to bring a public-private leadership consortium together.

Making decisions on partners is highly strategic because those agreements offer external validation and expertise. For instance, there is a youth-services nonprofit agency that formalized agreements with all the children's hospitals in the state of Ohio. That was a significant decision because it added credibility to the nonprofit, built confidence of donors, provided specific knowledge needed on how to best serve the kids in their care, and offered assurance to the parents.

# INTERNAL READINESS RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

## PHASE 4: ESTABLISH CLEAR AND DISTINCT BRAND

*"Focus on recreation, tourism, and health."*

*"I think most people will not know what MORPC is. I think marketing for MORPC is integral for their success — people need to know what they stand for. People will support it if it hits a nerve. I like the concept of COG and that needs to be promoted ... the role of MORPC."*

*"Marketing around it and all along the way. Maintenance has to be a part of this, I assume that's why cities are involved. Would hope that there is a plan to engage the cities to support the trails that go through their areas."*

Once decisions are made around the entity overseeing the expansion project and messaging clarity, you can begin the branding process. Our findings show that trail users are connected to the cause of trails, not the entity behind the efforts.

Part of building a brand will be identifying community advocates and visible champions that align with the expansion project. Champions can take two forms: public and private. A well-respected public champion such as the mayor will help build the profile of the organization, project, and ultimately the brand. On the other hand, a visible, high-profile community advocate can strengthen the brand and assist in raising private funds.

It will be helpful for COG to determine what brand means to the organization because while name and logo are certainly an aspect, brand is much more. The following are definitions from leading authorities to spur the conversation about COG's brand.

- The American Marketing Association defines a brand as, "A name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers. The legal term for brand is trademark. A brand may identify one item, a family of items, or all items of that seller. If used for the firm as a whole, the preferred term is trade name."
- Author Seth Godin shares, "A brand is the set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer's decision to choose one product or service over another. If the consumer (whether it's a business, a buyer, a voter or a donor) doesn't pay a premium, make a selection or spread the word, then no brand value exists for that consumer."
- Author David Ogilvy says a brand is, "The intangible sum of a product's attributes: its name, packaging, and price, its history, its reputation, and the way it's advertised."

# EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

## REEVALUATE FUNDRAISING GOALS

Based upon our findings, the fundraising goals need to be reevaluated. The vast majority of private funders are not ready for an ask because they do not have a funding relationship with MORPC and, while valuable, they see trails as a publicly funded initiative.

Once public funding is secured and articulated to stakeholders, we believe COG will be in a position to determine private funding goals. We feel strongly that the expansion project could secure private funds if priorities — both trails and access — are identified.

*Please see Appendix E for gift charts based on a \$125 million, \$50 million, and \$25 million goal in private fundraising.*

# EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

## ASSESS COST AND FUNDING

Getting clear on the amount of public dollars available for each prioritized trail section before asking for private dollars will be key.

- Where is the gap in public funding?
- How can private funders fill that gap?

### 1. Solidify actual costs of prioritized trail sections.

- a. What is the total actual cost for each trail section?
  - i. Who will fund surveying, engineering, and/or construction planning?
  - ii. What will land acquisition cost?
  - iii. Will an MOU need to be entered into with an operating partner for continued maintenance?
  - iv. What are the real estate, legal, and other professional fees?

### 2. Evaluate the availability of public funding dollars.

- a. What has been earmarked/approved already for the trail sections and how does that align with MORPC and/or COG's master plans? How are you fulfilling those promises before seeking new money?
- b. How can the needs assessment be used to quantify need and value? See page 37.

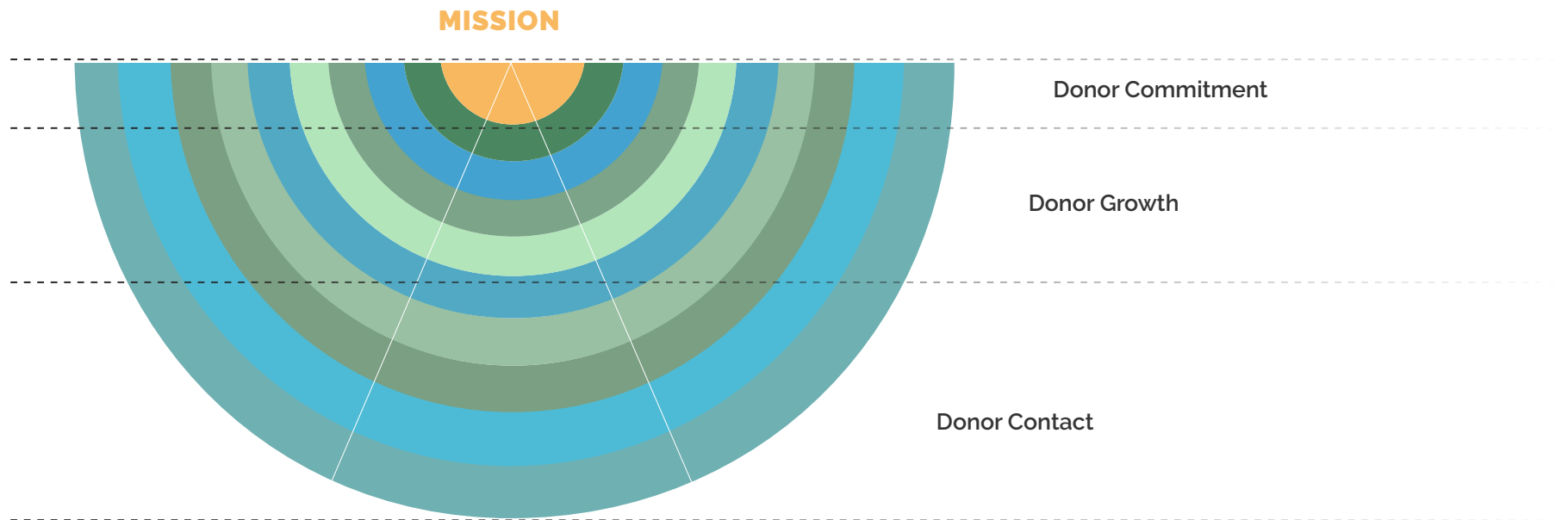
### 3. Evaluate the gap in public funding to inform private funding goals.

- a. How can public dollars be used to create momentum behind smaller expansion projects to leverage private funding?
  - i. Corporate partners could potentially underwrite an entire trail section to support their workforce.
  - ii. Traditional individual fundraising could potentially rally an entire community to fund a trail section.
- b. Can a consortium of mayors, commissioners, or other elected officials partner with CEOs to promote this campaign?
- c. Could an RFP process be distributed to communities impacted by the expansion project?

# EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

## IDENTIFY YOUR BELIEVERS

The Pyramid of Giving illustrates segmented philanthropic audiences. Those closest to the mission (the bullseye) are the most likely to give and make larger, multi-year gifts.



The pyramid illustrates relationship building over time. Donors may begin as single users (**donor contact**), with initial interest and support, but then further develop their relationship to the organization and connection to the mission (**donor growth**). When that happens, donors make more consistent annual gifts and larger programmatic or campaign gifts (**donor commitment**).

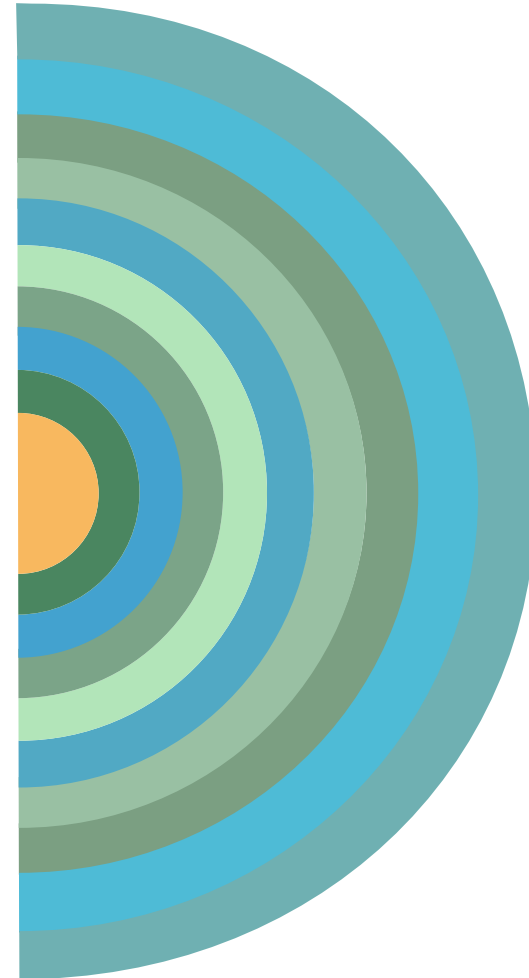
# EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

## PHILANTHROPIC AUDIENCES

- Level 1:** COG board and staff
- Level 2:** MORPC board and staff
- Level 3:** Friends of trails, trail advocates, forum members
- Level 4:** Super users of trails
- Level 5:** Leisure users of trails
- Level 6:** Community members who reside in areas with vibrant trails
- Level 7:** Companies located on or near trails
- Level 8:** Environmentalists, naturalists, gardeners
- Level 9:** Athletes, exercise enthusiasts

MISSION

- LEVEL 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.



When thinking about audiences of believers, it is important to understand what their values are. When your message makes the connection between your mission and their beliefs, then philanthropy is a natural outcome.

# EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

## UNDERSTAND AND BUILD DONOR PIPELINE

Use the Pyramid of Giving to begin to understand those who are closest to the mission and who can be identified as potential donors for early conversations and asks.

Who are your champions in the public sector? What communities are spending money on trails?

Once the philanthropic audiences are agreed upon, putting names to those categories is the next step in cultivating relationships with potential donors and partners. Since neither COG nor MORPC have experience in building a donor base, we offer the following donor types to assist with segmentation.

### DONOR TYPES

**Pride in Place** — donors who give because of the place they grew up, have established their business in a specific community, and/or have geographic proximity to an underserved area or an institution with which the stakeholder is affiliated.

- For COG it could be:
  - A corporation's workforce that has access to trails.
  - An individual donor's community that benefits from access to trails.

**Impact Donors** — donors who give to proven, highly-effective programs and services with evidence-based practices, organizations that measure and analyze outcomes, and leaders who make data-driven decisions and who disseminate their learnings to advance practice and the field.

- For COG it could be:
  - Donors who want evidence that health outcomes will be achieved with the expansion project.

**Cause Supporters** — donors who give to a specific issue because of a personal connection based on life experiences, alignment with their values, or other belief systems.

- For COG it could be:
  - Trail advocates who value their access to, and use of, the trail system.

# EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

**Civic Believers** — donors who invest in organizations and projects because of a prominent position held, a belief in the city leadership, and desire to advance the growth and potential of the community and its residents.

- For COG it could be:
  - Elected officials who believe this campaign is a priority.
  - Downtown corporations who see this as an economic benefit to the region.

**Who Matters** — donors who give because someone close to them or of influence asked, a gift given in honor or in memory of someone, or the donor is celebrating a milestone or accomplishment.

- For COG it could be:
  - Campaign chair(s) personally asking.
  - Elected officials advocating for funding.

**Legacy Givers** — multi-generational philanthropic families, companies, and foundations who give because of their high net worth (the 1%); their history of giving (that's just what we do); and values (responsibility to pay it forward).

- For COG it could be:
  - Potential campaign chair or lead gift.

**Event Goers** — gifts based on an event ticket, table purchase, or an auction or raffle bidder.

- For COG it could:
  - Alignment with community-based events on or near the trail system.

# EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

## CASE FOR SUPPORT

*"I'm trying to think about social benefit, more than just economic benefit, the true enabler of how this helps. Not just recreation, not just for fun, not just for lifestyle. Will this provide the connectivity for someone who lives in Franklinton to get a job downtown instead of walking down Broad Street at night?"*

Our internal readiness recommendations are the priorities to accomplish before engaging the donor community in a large ask; however, the work that can occur to prepare for external asks is to create a case for support based on strategic decisions.

With MORPC currently acting as an umbrella to the COG committee, utilize the value of the commission's reputation to position the trail expansion project into priority, smaller, and achievable campaigns. In doing so, private funders can easily understand their value in the larger project.

With the potential momentum of public funding, how will private donors help close the gap in funding to create 500 new miles of connected trails throughout Central Ohio?

- Create a compelling case for support that showcases the impact on people and neighborhoods.
- Ensure the case for support outlines and defines prioritized trail sections and the public dollars that have been invested.
- Build a communications strategy for internal and external audiences.
  - Ensure it is clear that this is a private fundraising initiative.
  - Leverage the reputation of MORPC as an endorser of funding.
  - Leverage the momentum behind Columbus as a SMART city.
- Potential donors want to understand:
  - Need.
  - Funding mix and financials.
  - Project leadership.
  - Other donors/who else is supporting the project.
  - Value of private fundraising.

## EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

While it is too early to write a formal case for support for the expansion project, given the level of questions yet to be answered, we offer the following as preliminary language to be tested with COG board members and stakeholders:

We envision a fully connected region, not just via highways, but with greenways.

Our goal is that every person living, working, and visiting Central Ohio has an accessible and safe trail to connect with nature and each other. The health of our community depends on it.

Environmental Health — trails reduce the amount of emissions and pollutants in the air while also reducing traffic congestion.

Community Health — neighborhoods, regardless of income levels, will have equal access to trails.

Physical Health — diabetes, obesity, and other serious conditions can be managed and reduced through exercise.

Mental Health — increased happiness, improved moods, and reduced stress all happen with just minutes in nature.

Economic Health — attracting and retaining talent is fundamental to company and organizational bottom lines.

Family Health — no-cost opportunities for families to engage in recreation and create connections and memories.

Regional Health — building trails within an 11-county service area means that tourism can happen locally.

And, we depend on you.

Your support of the Central Ohio Greenways expansion project will add 500 new trail miles over the next ten years. Combined with the more than 225 miles of trails that already exist, our region would have the trail equivalent of the highways needed to drive from Columbus to Omaha.

That level of connectivity would have a huge impact on the health and wellness of Central Ohio for generations to come.

Let me tell you the story of ... (trail user).

We are Central Ohio Greenways. Using trails to improve the quality of life in Central Ohio drives our work.

# EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

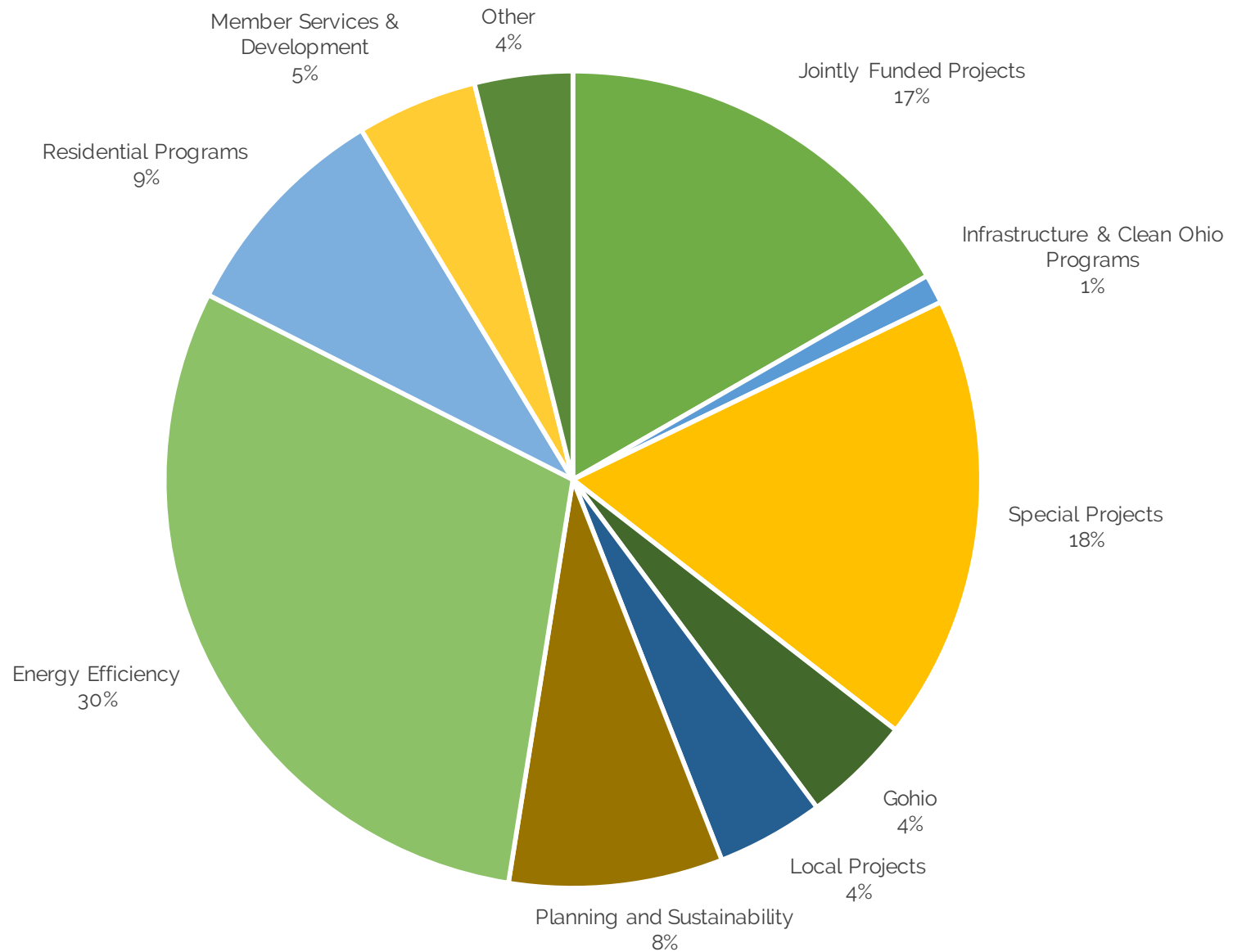
Based on the most recent financial statement, the FY19 operating budget of MORPC is \$18 million, an increase of \$200,000 from FY18.

The following pie chart illustrates MORPC's FY19 operating budget. Energy efficiency is the largest line item, and the Columbia Gas WarmChoice grant is the largest source in that category. **Greenways funding falls in the Planning and Sustainability category with funding of \$180,000, which is only 4% of that category and 0.9% of the overall budget.**

MORPC has multiple sources of funding. Federal grants and contracts are the largest with nearly \$7 million, followed by utilities funding of \$4.8 million and local funding of \$4.2 million. It should be noted that private support is negligible.

# EXTERNAL FEASIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

## FY19 MORPC OPERATING BUDGET



# CONCLUSION

Your goals and priorities are ambitious.

It was evident through the interviews and conversations that this is not easy work; however, trails are valued across the region.

During our consultancy, we utilized the Association of Fundraising Professionals Campaign Readiness Evaluation, a 20-question assessment to evaluate the readiness of nonprofits to launch a campaign (*see Appendix F*).

The scoring rubric for the AFP assessment is:

- 85–100 — The campaign is ready to launch immediately.
- 70–84 — Some improvements are necessary.
- 55–69 — Extensive preparation is essential to the success of the campaign. Serious re-organization [organization] is needed before beginning.

The Central Ohio Greenways' AFP Campaign Readiness Evaluation score was 49/100.

This score illustrates the focus needed to build the operational infrastructure behind the expansion project before efforts to secure private funds can take place. COG scored a zero or one on five of the questions that pertained to fundraising and marketing experience and efforts. There were at least three other questions related to staffing, board, and capacity in which COG scored very low. This reinforces the notion that efforts to build operations and fundraising supports will significantly increase the organization's readiness.

We have seen evidence of your commitment to this work throughout our partnership. We are confident that pausing and reflecting on these findings and recommendations will propel you to realizing the impact and vision of a connected trail system. And in the end, because of the work of Central Ohio Greenways in collaboration with the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, we will have a connected region.

A paved road with a yellow center line and white dashed lane markings curves through a lush, green forest. The trees are dense and vibrant, with sunlight filtering through the canopy. In the foreground on the left, there are tall green plants with yellow flowers. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

# APPENDIX

# APPENDIX A

## INTERVIEWS AND SURVEYS

Our interviews consisted of 18 initial questions and each interview was tailored to the interviewee. Interview participants represented a wide range of stakeholders, including

- potential donors;
- community leaders and stakeholders;
- trail advocates; and
- MORPC/COG leadership.

Approximately 43 people were contacted to be interviewed and 36 people accepted the interview request. Interviewees included:

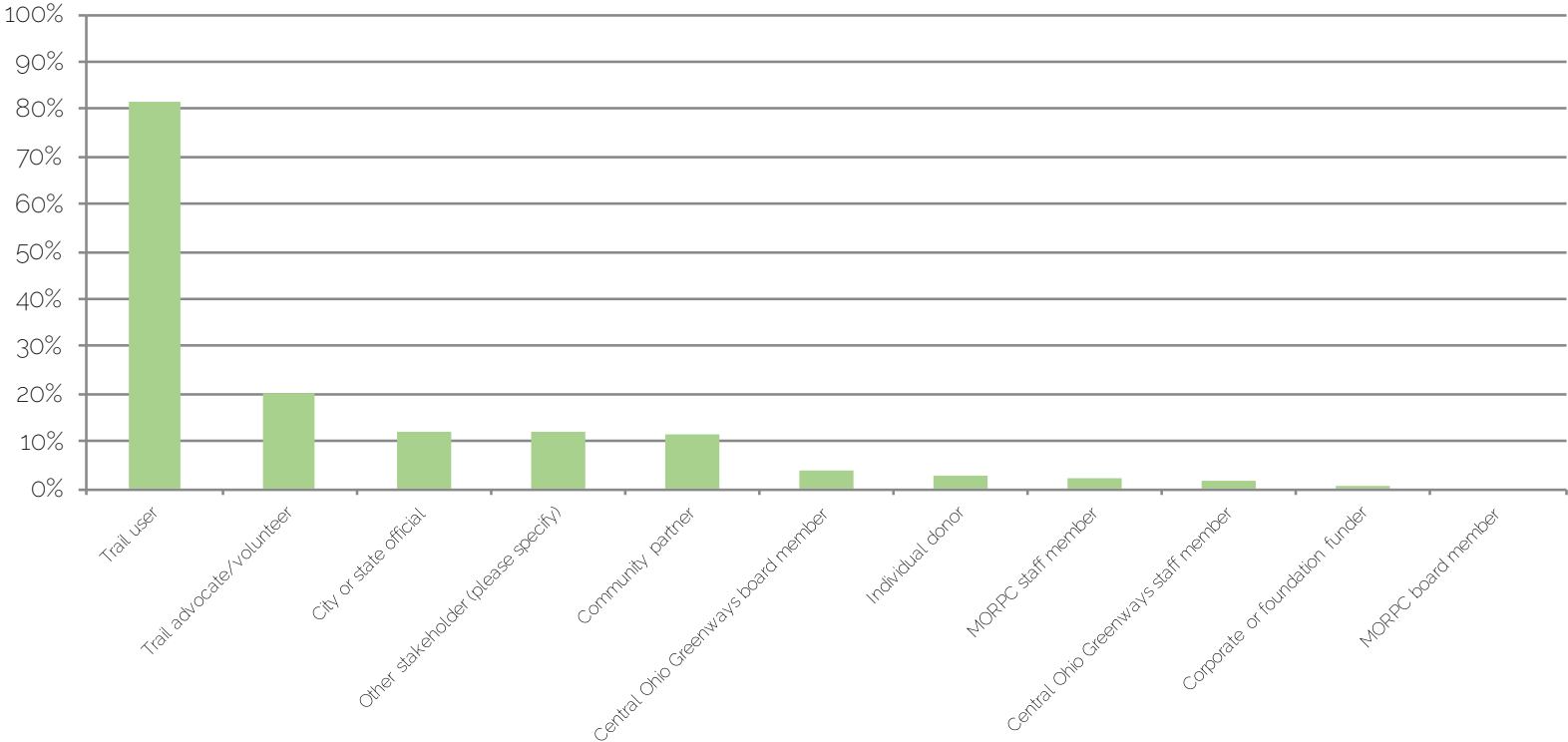
1. Alex Fischer, Columbus Partnership
2. Amy Swanson, UnitedHealthcare
3. Bobbie Trittschuh, Honda
4. Brandi Braun, SMART Columbus
5. Catherine Girves, Yay Bikes!
6. Chad Jester, Kristen Rost, and Karen Blickley, Nationwide
7. Dale Heydlauff, AEP
8. Donna Zuiderweg, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium
9. Doug Ulman, Pelotonia
10. Frederic Bertley, COSI
11. Janelle Coleman, L Brands
12. Jen Bowden, IGS Energy
13. Jen Peterson, Easton
14. Jessie Cannon, Cardinal Health
15. Joanna Pinkerton, COTA
16. Jody Dzurainin, trail advocate
17. Karen Morrison, OhioHealth
18. Kate Bauer, Columbia Gas
19. Keith Myers, OSU
20. Kenny McDonald, Columbus 2020
21. Kimber Perfect, City of Columbus
22. Lori Totman, Knox County Park District
23. Mark Wagenbrenner, Wagenbrenner Development
24. Philip Heit, Healthy New Albany
25. Sandy Doyle-Ahern, EMH&T
26. Shannon Hardin, Columbus City Council
27. Sonya Higginbotham, Worthington Industries
28. Stuart Hunter, roll: Bicycle Company
29. Su Lok, Scotts Miracle-Gro
30. Susan Tsen, MORPC
31. Tim Moloney, Metro Parks
32. Tom Katzenmeyer, Greater Columbus Arts Council
33. Tony Collins, Columbus Recreation and Parks
34. Tony Wells, Wells Foundation
35. William Murdock, MORPC
36. Yaromir Steiner, Steiner + Associates

The survey portion of our research had a positive response rate. After carefully crafting and tailoring 31 survey questions to align with our interviews, we received 193 responses. The MORPC board was then sent the survey separately and we received 14 board responses.

Surveys were sent to MORPC and COG staff, board, forum members, and was posted on COG social media sites. Of the respondents, 158 of 193 (82%) self-identified as "trail users." Respondents had the opportunity to self-identify in more than one given category, but nearly 100 of the 158 "trail users" only identified as trail users.

It's significant to note donors' perspective vs. that of trail advocates and users when analyzing the results.

**SURVEY RESPONDENTS**



# APPENDIX B

## INTERVIEW PRE-READ



### **Central Ohio Greenways... who we are and what we do.**

Central Ohio Greenways (COG) is a committee of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) chartered to develop and support an extensive series of trails that connects the Central Ohio region. With over 220 miles, these trails create a unique experience by joining the natural wonders of our scenic rivers with the diverse neighborhoods and attractions of the city.

The mission of COG is to increase the number of trails and the number of people using the trails.

The vision is a world-class network of trails easily accessible to every Central Ohioan.

WOSU Public Media's "Columbus Neighborhoods" featured the Central Ohio Greenways trails on their recent Getting Outdoors episode, which can be viewed here: <http://bit.ly/TrailSystem>.

### **Greenways expansion and its impact.**

The COG board is proactive in its planning of the future of Central Ohio Greenways. Through Insight2050 and MORPC's demographic projections, we learned that Central Ohio could be a region with 3 million people by 2050. Innovative transportation options will be needed to accommodate an expanding and diverse population.

**The four pillars** of trail impact are economic development, social equity, health, and the environment.

Greenways are important to a community's quality of life and offer numerous benefits to residents and visitors of all ages: they provide space for health and wellness activities, create places to enjoy nature, connect communities to jobs and other destinations, and conserve natural resources. Greenways improve the well-being and quality of life of the entire region. In 2015, the United States' local park and recreation agencies generated more than \$154 billion in economic activity and more than 1.1 million jobs.

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**The Columbus Board of Realtors have called the Central Ohio Greenways**  
**"an incredible asset within our region."**

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**The potential campaign.**

To meet the expanding footprint of Central Ohio, the board seeks to significantly expand the trail network through a capital campaign.

**To accomplish this goal, COG must raise private resources to leverage the public investment.**

Through extensive planning, the board created a trail [vision map](#), which includes adding at least 500 new trail miles to the existing regional trail network. The cost of construction is projected to be \$250 million, with 40%-60% coming from the public sector, and the remainder from private resources including philanthropy.

At the same time, the board plans to increase the number of people using the trails through:

- Trail network expansion
- Increased programming
- Improved branding and marketing highlighting access and easy use of the trails
- New and expanded partnerships

**Central Ohio Greenways Board**

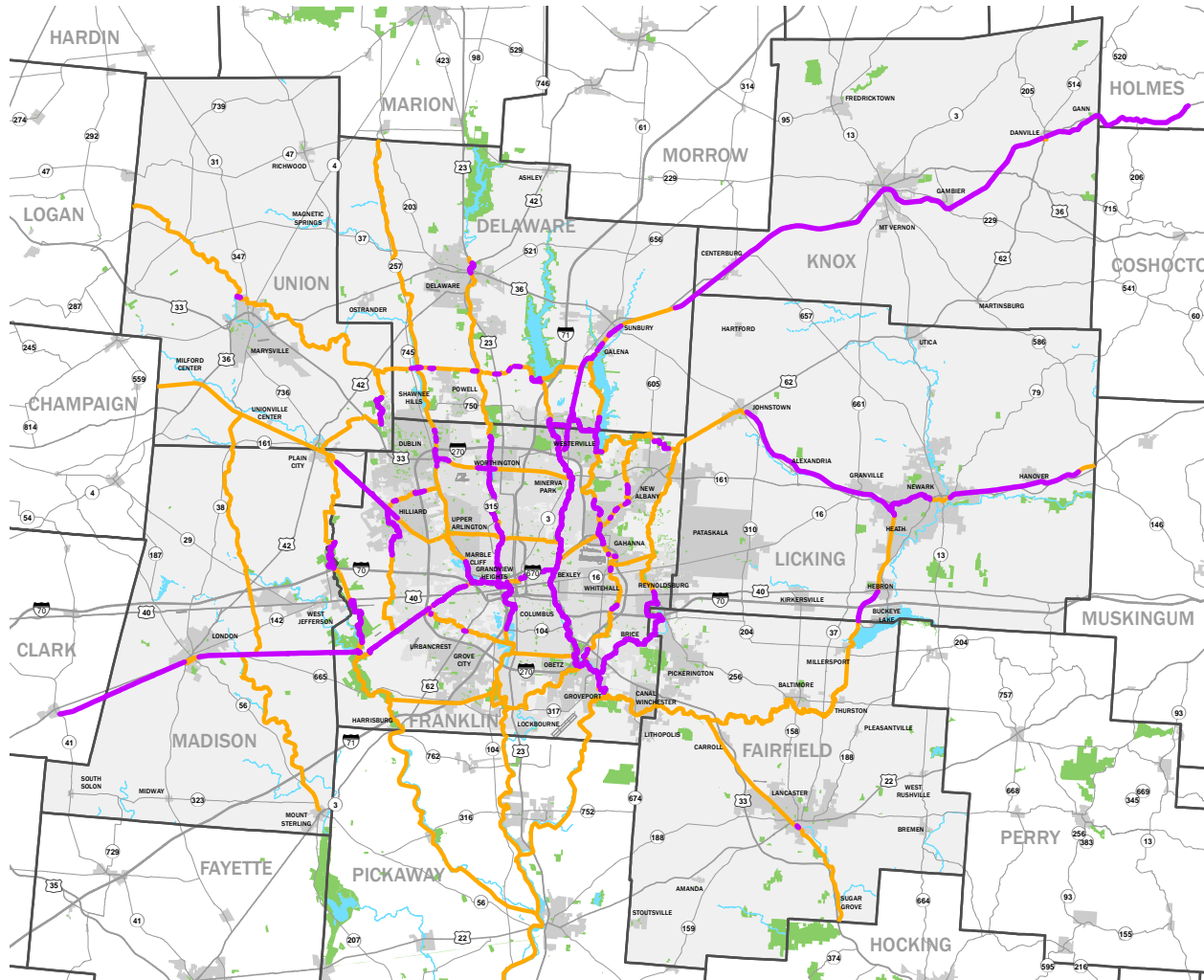
The Central Ohio Greenways Board, a committee of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), was formed in 2015. COG’s board members are diverse representing multiple municipalities and park systems across a network that spans nine counties and growing.

**Central Ohio Greenways board members include:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Tony Collins, Chair, City of Columbus Recreation and Parks                  | • Dan Kaderly, Columbus & Franklin County Metro Parks                        |
| • Ted Miller, Vice Chair, Preservation Parks of Delaware County               | • Gregory Lestini, Bricker & Eckler, LLP                                     |
| • Chad Anderson, African American Male Wellness Walk Initiative               | • Alex Nouanesengsy  |
| • Laura Ball, Chair of Trail Development, City of Dublin Parks and Open Space | • Eric Oberg, Chair of Marketing Rails-to-Trails Conservancy                 |
| • Ted Beidler, PE, Franklin County Engineer’s Office                          | • Andrew Overbeck, MKSK  |
| • Kacey Brankamp, Capital Crossroads & Discovery SID’s                        | • Abby Rhodebeck, Chair of Partnership REI, Ohio Outdoor Programs & Outreach |
| • Chad Flowers, City of Marysville  | • Letty Schamp, City of Hilliard Engineer Office                             |
| • Catherine Girves, Yay Bikes!  | • Kelly Scocco, Columbus Department of Public Service                        |
| • William Habis, Granville Township   | • Mayor David Scheffler, City of Lancaster                                   |
| • Adrienne Joly, City of New Albany   | • Tony Slanec, OHM Advisors  |
|   | • Scott Ulrich, Columbus Public Health                                       |
|   | • Brad Westall, City of Columbus Recreation & Parks                          |

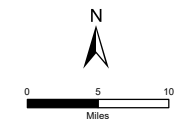
# APPENDIX C

## NETWORK VISION MAP



### Central Ohio Trail Vision

- Regional Trail of Significance
  - Existing Multi-Use Path
  - Proposed/Future
- 733 Total Miles  
 233 Existing Multi-use Path  
 500 Proposed/Future



The information shown on this map is compiled from various sources made available to us which we believe to be reliable. N:\ArcGIS\CORE\COG\COTR\Vision.mxd 7/16/2018

# APPENDIX D

## INDIANAPOLIS, ATLANTA, AND HOUSTON RESEARCH

To align with the strategic plan, we have provided insight on how Indianapolis, Atlanta, and Houston have funded their trail systems with both public and private support.

	<b>COLUMBUS</b> 500 MILES <sup>5</sup> REGIONAL	<b>INDIANAPOLIS/INDIANA</b> >1,500 MILES <sup>6</sup> STATE-WIDE	<b>ATLANTA</b> 33 MILES <sup>12</sup> CITY-WIDE	<b>HOUSTON</b> 80 MILES <sup>4</sup> CITY-WIDE
<i>Budget</i>	<b>\$250M<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>-\$90M statewide<sup>8</sup></b> (trail mileage goal above is not directly associated w/ this \$90M)  -\$63M Indy Cultural Trail (8 mi) <sup>7</sup>	<b>-\$4.8 billion for entire BeltLine<sup>12</sup></b>  -\$800M originally projected to acquire and develop <b>parks and trails</b> <sup>13</sup>  -\$43M <sup>14</sup> Atlanta BeltLine's Westside Trail (3 mi)	<b>\$220M<sup>20</sup></b>
<i>Public Funding</i>	-COG funded through MORPC by: City of Columbus Public Utilities, Franklin County Engineer's Office, and Franklin County Metro Park <sup>4</sup>  -Prelim. estimate: 40-60% of expansion project from public sector <sup>5</sup>	<b>-\$90M from state</b> to be distributed via the grant program — \$70M for regional and \$20M for local <sup>8</sup> ; grant program covers 80% of individual project costs <sup>8</sup>  <b>-Next Level Trail<sup>8</sup></b> ; part of the governor's initiative on infrastructure <sup>9</sup> ; funding from <b>35% Indiana toll hike on trucks<sup>10</sup></b>  -\$35.5M Indy Cultural Trail from federal transportation funding, w/ \$20.5M from TIGER Grant <sup>7</sup>	<b>-Tax Allocation District (TAD)</b> - 2004, revenue from Atlanta City Schools, City of Atlanta, and Fulton County property tax increases re-directed to the BeltLine <sup>12</sup> (~33% of funding <sup>13</sup> )  <b>-0.4-cent sales tax</b> - 2016- city referendum passed for sales tax to acquire right of way = \$56.9M to close the loop 22 mi loop <sup>12</sup>  -Other public funding: federal funding, govt. funding for streetscapes, local funding for parks <sup>16</sup>  -As of 2015, \$355M collected in public funding <sup>12</sup>  -Westside Trail- \$18M TIGER Grant from USDOT <sup>14</sup>	<b>-\$100M city bond</b> referendum passed in 2012 <sup>20</sup>  -Proximity property tax <sup>4</sup>
<i>Levy?</i>		No	Yes — TAD passed w/ "overwhelming community support" <sup>10</sup>	Yes
<i>Private Funding</i>	-Prelim. estimate: 40-60% of project funding from private sector <sup>5</sup>	-Next Level Trail, 20% match could be public or private funding <sup>9</sup>  <b>-\$27.5M Indy Cultural Trail<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>-\$39M</b> , as of 2015, raised through private philanthropic grants <sup>12</sup>  -Multiple trail-focused capital campaigns launched by ABP <sup>12</sup>	-\$120M needed in total <sup>20</sup>  -As of 2/2016, \$90M raised <sup>20</sup>
<i>Lead gift(s)</i>		-Indy Cultural Trail- <b>\$15M</b> from private donors, Eugene and Marilyn Glick <sup>7</sup>	<b>-Westside Trail - \$5M</b> from Jim Kennedy, honorary co-chair of Atlanta BeltLine Capital Campaign Committee, by way of the James M. Cox Foundation and PATH Foundation <sup>17</sup>	<b>-\$50M</b> from Krinder Foundation pledged in 2013 <sup>20</sup>

# APPENDIX D CONTINUED

Timing		<p><b>-In 1991</b> Indiana Greenways Foundation founded with regional scope, shifted to state-wide in 2006<sup>11</sup></p> <p>-State-wide goal <b>to complete by 2020</b></p> <p>-2001-2013 Indy Cultural Trail<sup>7</sup></p>	<p><b>-2005-2030</b> BeltLine: <sup>12</sup></p> <p>-Westside Trail (3 mi): 5 years<sup>14</sup></p> <p>-West End Trail (4.5mi): 10 years<sup>18</sup></p>	<p>-2012 bond passed<sup>20</sup></p> <p>-75% of private funding raised by 2/2016<sup>20</sup></p> <p>-Project <b>to complete by 2020</b><sup>20</sup></p>
Prioritization		<p>-Grant application criteria focus on: <b>1) connectivity; 2) partnership opportunities; 3) quick timelines. See below for full listing</b><sup>8</sup></p>	<p>-Trail prioritization established w/ public input: <b>1) project readiness, 2) development impact, 3) equity, 4) leverage of existing trails/parks, 5) financial options</b><sup>16</sup></p> <p>-3 Implementation periods based on construction management, not fundraising<sup>16</sup></p>	<p>-Location- bond funding limited to trails w/in the city<sup>20</sup></p> <p>-2014 <b>public survey to gain perspective</b> on the public's priorities; attitude that the trail system is for the white and wealthy<sup>21</sup></p> <p><b>-Connecting Houstonians to the trail is top priority</b><sup>21</sup></p>
Entity/Partners	<p>-Central Ohio Greenways (COG)</p> <p>-W/ City of Columbus, Franklin County Metro Parks, MORPC and Rails-to-Trails Conservancy = COG Network<sup>4</sup></p>	<p>-Indiana Greenways Foundation<sup>11</sup></p> <p>-Next Level Trails- Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources &amp; Indiana Dept. of Transportation<sup>8</sup></p>	<p>-The Atlanta BeltLine Partnership (ABP)<sup>12</sup></p> <p>-Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.<sup>12</sup></p>	<p>-Houston Parks Board<sup>20</sup></p> <p>-W/ Houston Parks and Recreation Dept.<sup>20</sup></p> <p>-W/ Harris County Flood Control District<sup>20</sup></p>
Overall Messaging	<p>Strategic plan: 1) advocating for a connected network of trails among local jurisdictions; 2) promoting and coordinating trail development in the region; 3) creating a cohesive branding system for the region<sup>4</sup></p> <p>-Feasibility pre-read: 4 areas of impact: 1) economic development, 2) social equity, 3) health, and 4) the environment<sup>5</sup></p>	<p>-State-wide: benefits=<b>health/wellness, economic, transportation</b><sup>10</sup></p> <p><b>-Increasing connectivity, filling in gaps</b><sup>8,10</sup></p> <p>-Access- "a trail within 5 miles of every Hoosier"<sup>10</sup></p>	<p>-Building resiliency — socially and economically<sup>12</sup></p> <p>-General focus on <b>economic impact</b> and ROI<sup>12</sup></p> <p>-Making use of underutilized properties<sup>12</sup></p> <p>-"One of the largest, most wide-ranging urban redevelopment programs in the United States"<sup>12</sup></p>	<p>-Bayou Greenways 2020<sup>20</sup></p> <p>-"Parks By You!" political campaign<sup>20</sup></p> <p>-Tied to flood mitigation<sup>20</sup></p> <p>-Why it matters: <b>1) equitable distribution; 2) places for Houstonians to connect; 3) accessibility; 4) nature</b><sup>20</sup></p> <p>-"Century-old vision"<sup>20</sup></p>
Other Notes				<p>-Bayou Greenways 2020 is part of the Bayou Greenways Initiative, which is county-wide<sup>20</sup></p>

Indiana Next Level Trail System Grant Criteria:

- "Projects that further the completion of the State Visionary Trail System.
- Projects that connect multiple cities, towns, or counties.
- Projects that are a part of an existing regional or comprehensive plan.
- Projects that connect schools, parks, neighborhoods, commercial centers or local attractions.
- Projects that connect or extend existing trails.
- Projects that maximize partnerships, based on the number of partners providing substantial financial or other valuable resources.
- Projects with an accelerated timeline, based on estimated completion date (less than 1 to 4 years)."
- Other items of consideration: projects that collaborate w/ another applicant, out-of-state trail connections, distribution of funding across the state, increased trail access, trail mileage, potential for diversity in trail usage, projects w/ over 20% match capabilities.<sup>8</sup>

""The Atlanta BeltLine is an **enormous multi-billion development project**, as seen in the above chart.

- Includes: "introduction of a 22-mile transit system, 33-mile trail network, 1,300 acres of new and 700 acres of restored greenspace, public art, historic preservation, 28,000 new and 5,600 affordable housing units, 30,000 permanent and 48,000 construction jobs, and up to \$20 billion in total projected economic development."<sup>12</sup>

""This was the preliminary cost projection made in 2011 on the MIT Atlanta BeltLine report.<sup>13</sup>

""Generally, white and wealthy Houstonians prioritized connectivity, whereas black & Latino populations prioritized upgraded/cleaner facilities at parks and park safety. Initial survey respondents were largely white, wealthy Houstonians, so the department funded another survey to gain greater clarity.<sup>21,22</sup>

""Houston's Bayou Greenways 2020 tied its messaging to typical trail benefits, as well as future **flood mitigation** and redeveloping the area in the wake of **Hurricane Harvey's** recent destruction. Not only is the Houston trail project an anomaly in terms of garnering such a large lead gift, but this also increases its status as a special case.

# APPENDIX E

## GIFT CHARTS

A gift chart is an illustration of the math needed to achieve a goal — how many donors and at what levels would need to be raised to achieve the fundraising goal.

It is important to note that gift charts are dynamic and will change as fundraising progresses. There are multiple scenarios to achieve each goal, but these point-in-time charts are a way for the COG committee to see what it would take to succeed.

### \$125M GOAL

	No. of Gifts	X	Gift Range	=	Total Value
<i>Leaders</i>	1	X	\$25,000,000 +	=	\$25,000,000
	5	X	\$10,000,000- \$24,999,999	=	\$50,000,000
	10	X	\$1,000,000- \$9,999,999	=	\$10,000,000
	20	X	\$500,000- \$999,999	=	\$10,000,000
	40	X	\$250,000- \$499,999	=	\$10,000,000
					<b>\$105,000,000</b>
<i>Champions</i>	60	X	\$100,000- \$249,999	=	\$6,000,000
	80	X	\$50,000- \$99,999	=	\$4,000,000
	100	X	\$25,000- \$49,999	=	\$2,500,000
	140	X	\$15,000- \$24,999	=	\$2,100,000
	200	X	\$10,000- \$14,999	=	\$2,000,000
					<b>\$16,600,000</b>
<i>Advocates</i>	300	X	\$5,000- \$9,999	=	\$1,500,000
	400	X	\$2,500- \$4,999	=	\$1,000,000
	500	X	\$1,000- \$2,499	=	\$500,000
	600	X	\$500-\$999	=	\$300,000
	1000	X	\$100-\$499	=	\$100,000
					<b>\$3,400,000</b>
<i>Raised to Date</i>					<b>\$0</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3456</b>				<b>\$125,000,000</b>

Lead gift: 20% of goal \$25,000,000  
 Leaders: % of goal 84%

# APPENDIX E CONTINUED

## \$50M GOAL

	No. of Gifts	X	Gift Range	=	Total Value
<i>Leaders</i>	1	X	\$10,000,000+	=	\$10,000,000
	3	X	\$5,000,000-\$9,999,999	=	\$15,000,000
	5	X	\$1,000,000-\$4,999,999	=	\$5,000,000
	9	X	\$500,000-\$999,999	=	\$4,500,000
	18	X	\$250,000-\$499,999	=	\$4,500,000
					<b>\$39,000,000</b>
<i>Champions</i>	30	X	\$100,000-\$249,999	=	\$3,000,000
	50	X	\$50,000-\$99,999	=	\$2,500,000
	60	X	\$25,000-\$49,999	=	\$1,500,000
	70	X	\$15,000-\$24,999	=	\$1,050,000
	85	X	\$10,000-\$14,999	=	\$850,000
					<b>\$8,900,000</b>
<i>Advocates</i>	150	X	\$5,000-\$9,999	=	\$750,000
	300	X	\$2,500-\$4,999	=	\$750,000
	350	X	\$1,000-\$2,499	=	\$350,000
	400	X	\$500-\$999	=	\$200,000
	500	X	\$100-\$499	=	\$50,000
					<b>\$2,100,000</b>
<i>Raised to Date</i>					<b>\$0</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2031</b>				<b>\$50,000,000</b>

Lead gift: 20% of goal \$10,000,000  
 Leaders: % of goal 78%

## \$25M GOAL

	No. of Gifts	X	Gift Range	=	Total Value
<i>Leaders</i>	0	X	\$10,000,000+	=	\$0
	1	X	\$5,000,000-\$9,999,999	=	\$5,000,000
	6	X	\$1,000,000-\$4,999,999	=	\$6,000,000
	10	X	\$500,000-\$999,999	=	\$5,000,000
	15	X	\$250,000-\$499,999	=	\$3,750,000
					<b>\$19,750,000</b>
<i>Champions</i>	16	X	\$100,000-\$249,999	=	\$1,600,000
	18	X	\$50,000-\$99,999	=	\$900,000
	26	X	\$25,000-\$49,999	=	\$650,000
	40	X	\$15,000-\$24,999	=	\$600,000
	50	X	\$10,000-\$14,999	=	\$500,000
					<b>\$4,250,000</b>
<i>Advocates</i>	75	X	\$5,000-\$9,999	=	\$375,000
	125	X	\$2,500-\$4,999	=	\$312,500
	150	X	\$1,000-\$2,499	=	\$150,000
	225	X	\$500-\$999	=	\$112,500
	500	X	\$100-\$499	=	\$50,000
					<b>\$1,000,000</b>
<i>Raised to Date</i>					<b>\$0</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1257</b>				<b>\$25,000,000</b>

Lead gift: 20% of goal \$5,000,000  
 Leaders: % of goal 79%

# APPENDIX F

## AFP CAMPAIGN READINESS EVALUATION

Getting Ready for a Capital Campaign

### Campaign Readiness Evaluation

**Instructions: Circle a number from 0 to 5 for each statement where 0 = serious problem exists 5 = goal completed**

**Use the questions below each statement to aid in determining the appropriate rating for that statement.**

**1. Organization has met all legal requirements to engage in fundraising activities.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Does the organization have IRS ruling as 501(c) 3 or other charitable designation?
- Is the organization registered with the state's regulatory authority, if required?
- Has it met requirements of or have approval from United Way, local capital campaign review board, its national office, or other funding or regulatory agencies?

**2. Organization has a solid infrastructure.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Does the organization have appropriate staff in place?
- Does the organization have written mission/vision statements?
- Are gift acceptance policies in place?
- Are data entry procedures in place?
- Does the organization have an adequate and up-to-date donor software system?

**3. Organization is financially stable.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Does the organization have a qualified, experienced financial officer on your staff?
- Does the board's financial committee understand the organization's fiscal status?
- Have revenues increased or deficits decreased in the past two years?
- Has the organization had a balanced budget for at least two years?
- Does the organization have a line of credit or availability of a bridge loan during construction?

Getting Ready for a Capital Campaign

**4. The board president is recognized as a strong, able community leader.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Has the president been on the board of directors at least two years?
- Has the president been on the board less than six years?
- Is the person known and respected in the community?
- Does the person show good judgment?
- Has the president made a leadership gift?

**5. The board of directors has at least seven members who have affluence and influence.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Does the organization have representatives from the business community on the board?
- Are they the decision makers for their companies?
- Does the organization have people of wealth who are well respected in the community and have worked on other campaigns?
- Do at least 80 percent of the board members make generous annual gifts?

**6. The board has consensus on the campaign plan and goal.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Has the board participated in the feasibility study?
- Does everyone on the board approve of this project?
- Does at least 80 percent of the board feel it is possible to reach the goal?

**7. The board is willing to work on campaign.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Does the organization have influential community leaders who will work on the campaign?
- Will at least three members of the board serve on the campaign cabinet?
- Will everyone on the board play some role—solicitation, public relations, phonathon, special events, etc.?

**8. The CEO has been with the organization at least two years.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Does the CEO have at least 10 years experience in the field?
- Is the CEO well known and respected within the field?

**9. The CEO is experienced and respected in the community.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Is the CEO active in chamber of commerce, civic or professional organizations?
- Is the CEO asked to serve as a spokesperson for issues relating to the field?
- Is the CEO known as a community leader?

**10. The staff has experience and knowledge in the area of fundraising.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Does the organization have a full-time director of development?
- Is the development staff person a member of AFP, CASE, AHP or other professional association?
- Is the chief development officer a CFRE or ACFRE?

**11. The staff has time to work on the campaign.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Is the staff free from over-involvement in special events?
- Does the organization have adequate clerical support?
- Is the staff free from over-involvement in tasks not related to development?

**12. A long-range plan with written goals is in place.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Have the board and administration developed or updated the organization's strategic plan within the last three years?
- Is the plan reviewed at least quarterly?
- Are objectives specific and measurable?

**13. An annual giving program is in place.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Has the organization done an annual campaign in the past two years?
- Has annual giving increased over the past two years?
- Does the organization have an integrated development program (special events, phone, direct mail, foundation grants, corporate appeal, etc.)?

**14. A marketing and publicity plan is in place.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Does the organization have a marketing staff, board members, or consultants to develop the plan?
- Does the organization have a marketing plan that was developed or updated in the past three years?
- Is the plan evaluated regularly?
- Does the organization's public relations effort result in increased donation, volunteers, and clients?

**15. The organization serves a real need in the community.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Has the organization recently done a market study to evaluate community needs?
- Has the organization been in existence for two years or more?
- Does the organization have a limited amount of competition for its programs?

**16. Users of the organization think highly of its programs.**

0 1 2 3 4 5

- Has the organization done client-satisfaction studies?
- Do the organization's users support it financially?
- Do the organization's users volunteer for the organization?

**17. The organization has a high public image.**

0    1    2    3    4    5

- Does the organization have an easily identifiable logo?
- Are an organizational video and/or brochures available?
- Are an annual report, newsletter, and press releases regularly published?

**18. Individuals are available who could give 10 percent of the goal if they desire to do so.**

0    1    2    3    4    5

- Does the organization have at least one board member capable of giving 10 percent of goal?
- Does the organization have a list of major donors capable of making a gift of this size?
- Does the organization have giving histories of its top donors?

**19. The top 100 donors have been identified and cultivated.**

0    1    2    3    4    5

- Can the organization’s staff pull a list of the top 20 percent of its donors with ease?
- Is a donor recognition program in place?
- Is a donor cultivation program in place?

**20. The campaign initiative is innovative, exciting, ambitious, and worthy of support.**

0    1    2    3    4    5

- Has a feasibility study been done to determine community support?
- Has a market study been done to determine the need for this project?
- Has an architectural study been done to determine the feasibility and costs of project?
- Has the organization considered and evaluated endowment needs?

**Tallying the score:**

0 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

1 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

2 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

3 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

4 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

5 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interpreting the score:**

- 85-100    The campaign is ready to launch immediately.
- 70-84     Some improvements are necessary.
- 55-69     Extensive preparation is essential to the success of the campaign. Serious re-organization is needed before beginning a capital campaign.

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