

MORPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Revision Update

November 4, 2026

What is a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)?

- Serves as a **strategic, regional blueprint for economic and community development**.
- The result of a **regionally-owned planning process** designed to **build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency** of a region.
- Prerequisite for designation by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) as an **Economic Development District (EDD)**.
- Enables the region to attract more **federal funding and technical assistance**.

EDA
U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

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2021-2026 CEDS

- Collaboration between **MORPC** and **One Columbus**, guided by **over 30 regional partners**.
- A consultant assisted with data gathering and analysis.
- Key priorities identified:
  - **Build on Economic Development Success**
  - **Increase Labor Force Utilization**
  - **Increase and Align Infrastructure Investment**
- Covid-19 Policy Briefs
- CEDS was **approved by the EDA** on February 1, 2022.

EDA mandates a CEDS update every five years



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Who is the CEDS Committee?

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- The development of the CEDS is guided by a strategy committee, which, in addition to **local economic developers**, includes **private sector representatives**, **transit agencies**, **higher education** and **workforce development stakeholders** from around the region.

Morrow County
Love life. Live rural.

P3

City of Sunbury

Consolidated Cooperative

ASPYR
Workforce Innovation

Huntington

Lancaster Port Authority

Columbus State Community College

Knox County
Area Development Foundation

GROW Licking County

rev1ventures

Columbus-Franklin County Finance Authority

Honda

Connect Real Estate

City of Dublin
Ohio, USA

Ohio State

Madison County Ohio

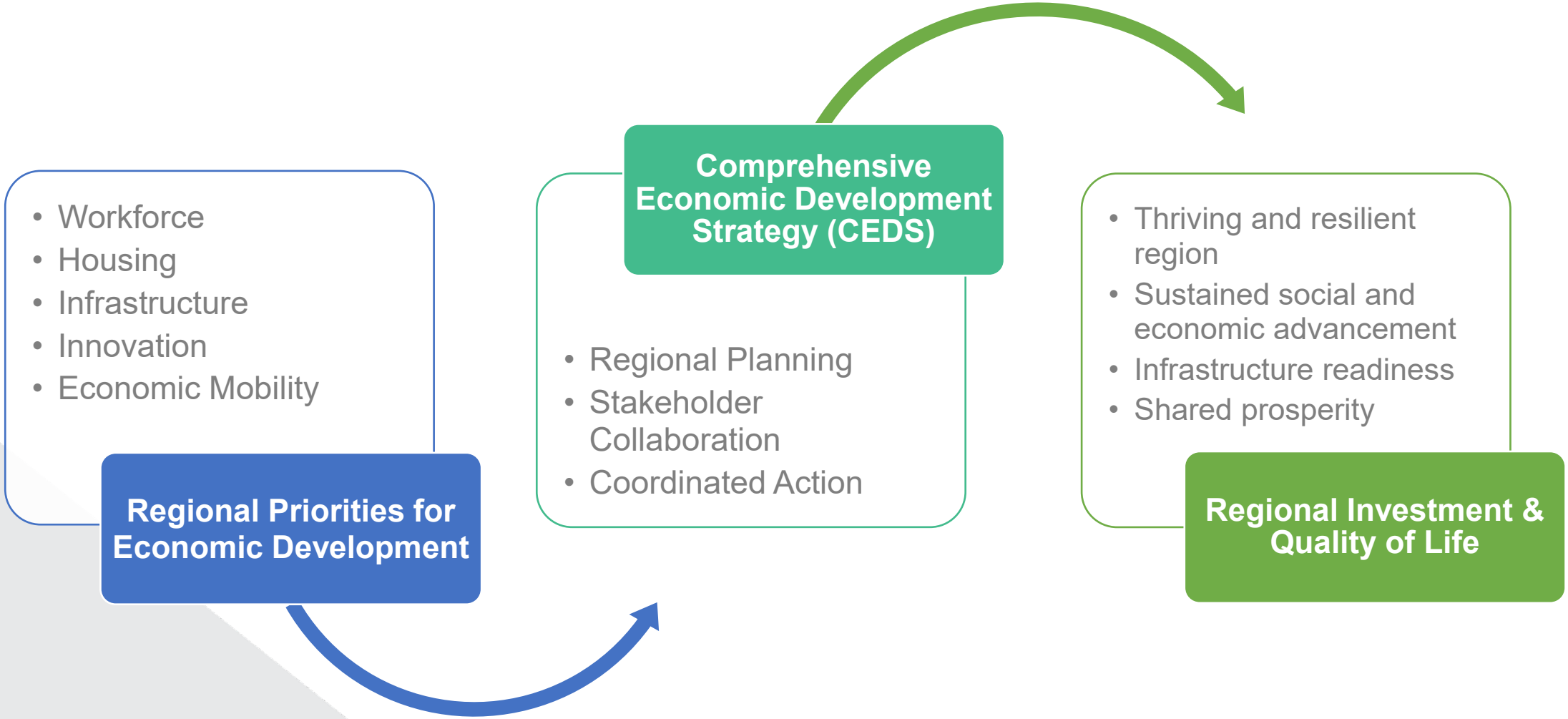
OhioHealth

City of Groveport

Columbus Partnership

MODE
mid-ohio development exchange

WHY DOES THE CEDS MATTER?



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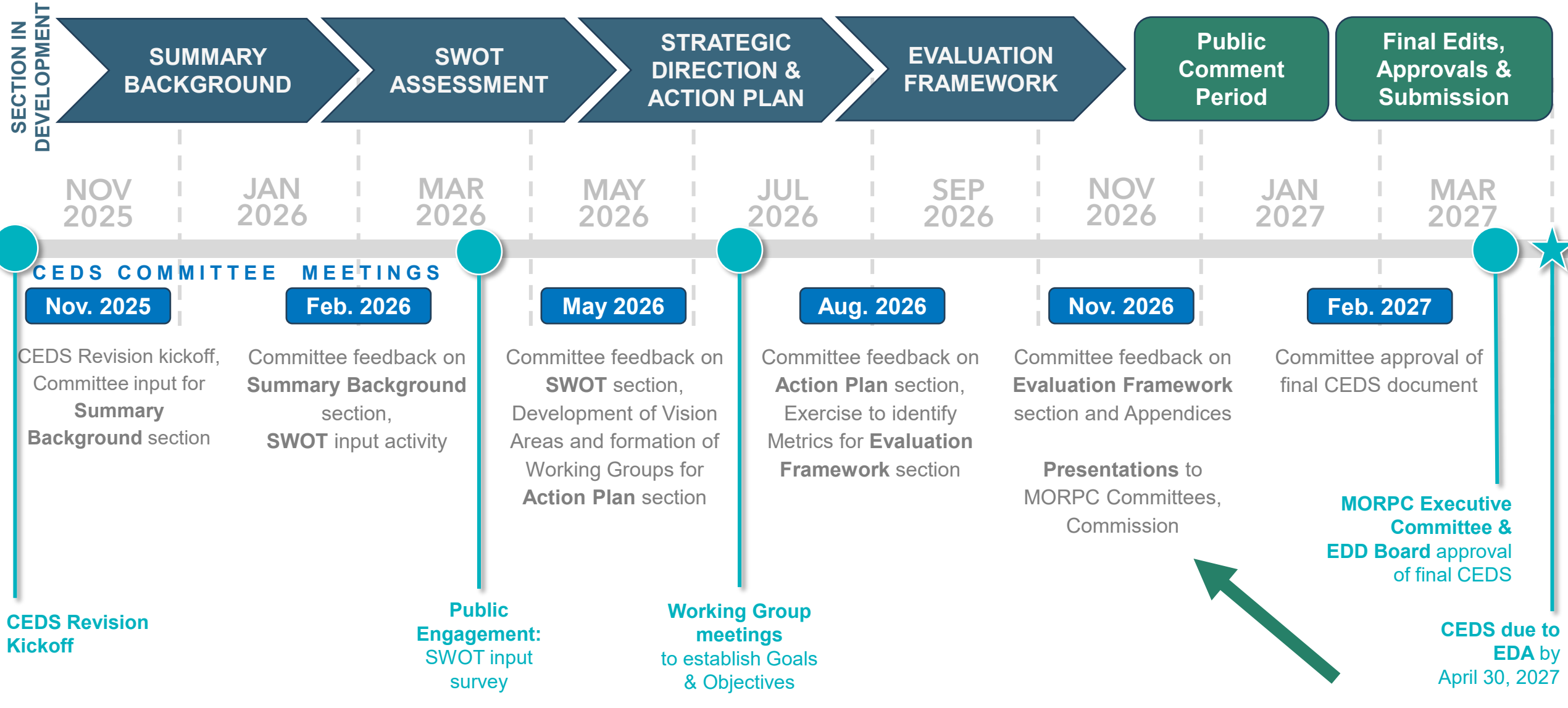
HOW DOES THIS UPDATE RELATE TO MORPC'S TRANSPORTATION PLANNING WORK?

- **Infrastructure Development & Maintenance** thematic area
- Importance of supporting **transit-oriented development** to accommodate growth while encouraging more public transit use.
- **Access to reliable and affordable transportation** determines whether people can access jobs, education, healthcare, childcare and other opportunities that support long-term financial stability.
- Increase investments to both **updating aging infrastructure** and **building new infrastructure**
- Implement a **coherent, holistic approach to infrastructure planning** that integrates feasibility studies (including existing asset management), project planning and design, financing, construction and long-term operations altogether in one process.

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STATUS UPDATE

CEDS REVISION TIMELINE



THE "WHO" OF THE CEDS REVISION

MORPC's CEDS Committee
31 members
Meets quarterly

+

External Subject Matter Experts
17 invited individuals
Represent key sectors

=

CEDS Advisory Committee
48 members
Meets during quarterly CEDS Cmte Mtgs

Working Groups
Made up of CEDS Advisory Cmte members
Organized around Vision Areas

MORPC's Economic Development staff
Project Management
CEDS drafting

Public Input
SWOT Assessment
Public Comment Period

CEDS Revision webpage

CEDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

External Subject Matter Experts

Name	Affiliation
Matt Martin	Columbus Foundation
Brittany Misner	Village of Hebron
Carlie Boos	Affordable Housing Coalition of Central Ohio
Matt Hill	LCATS
Zach Sunderland	COTA
Caitlin Feasby	Groundwork Ohio
Bryan Clark	City of Columbus
Joe Flarida	Power a Clean Future Ohio
Rick Dunlop	Del-Co Water Company
Cherrelle Turner	Formerly Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical Schools
Christie Hooks	USDA Rural Development
Sally Gladwell	Mannik & Smith Group
Maurice Woods	Columbus City Schools
Dr. Rob Griffiths	The Ohio State University
Jamie Greene	planning NEXT
Tod Bowen	Building Industry Association of Central Ohio
Megan Meyer	Formerly City of Bexley

CEDS Committee Members

ACTION PLAN WORKING GROUPS

Housing Availability & Affordability

- **Carlie J. Boos**, *Affordable Housing Alliance of Central Ohio*
- **Tod Bowen**, *Building Industry Association of Central Ohio*
- **Christie Hooks**, *USDA Rural Development*
- **Brittany Misner**, *Village of Hebron*
- **Megan Meyer**, *City of Bexley*

Economic Access & Mobility

- **Matt Martin**, *Columbus Foundation*
- **Jamie Greene**, *planning NEXT*
- **Peter Korda**, *formerly Crane Group*
- **Daryl Hennessy**, *City of Sunbury*
- **Michael Loges**, *City of Groveport*

Infrastructure Development & Maintenance

- **Bryan Clark**, *City of Columbus*
- **Zach Sunderland**, *COTA*
- **Joe Flarida**, *Power a Clean Future Ohio*
- **Rick Dunlop**, *Del-Co Water Company*
- **Matt Hill**, *LCATS*
- **Sally Gladwell**, *Mannik & Smith Group*
- **Savannah Andrews**, *Madison County*
- **Jamie Brucker**, *Morrow County*
- **Jackie Kemble**, *Columbus Region Green Fund*

Education & Workforce Development

- **Caitlin Feasby**, *Groundwork Ohio*
- **Maurice Woods**, *Columbus City Schools*
- **Rob Griffiths**, *OSU*
- **Cherrelle Turner**, *formerly Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical Schools*
- **Lauren Rummel**, *Aspyr*
- **Rick Szabrak**, *Fairfield County*

Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development

- **Julia Dewey**, *Rev1 Ventures*
- **Doug McCollough**, *Color Coded Labs*
- **Jeremiah Gracia**, *City of Dublin*
- **Kristin Mallory**, *Columbus Chamber of Commerce*
- **Jesse Longoria**, *Ohio Health*

CORE ELEMENTS OF A CEDS



SUMMARY BACKGROUND

RESEARCH

Answers the question, *"Where have we been?"*

Presents a clear understanding of the local economic situation, supported by current, relevant data.



SWOT ASSESSMENT

ANALYSIS

Answers the question, *"Where are we now?"*

Identifies the critical internal and external factors that speak to the region's unique assets and competitive positioning.



ACTION PLAN

GOAL SETTING

Answer the questions, *"Where do we want to go?"* and *"How are we going to get there?"*

Vision statement, goals, and objectives



EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

ACCOUNTABILITY

Answers the question, *"How are we doing?"*

Performance measures to evaluate the implementation of the CEDS and its impact on the regional economy.

KEY LEARNINGS

SUMMARY BACKGROUND

- According to One Columbus, there were over **500 new project announcements** over 2016-2025 with a commitment of 55,000 new jobs and $48 billion in new investments. Advanced Manufacturing projects account for 2/3 of the pipeline. 18 Fortune 1000 HQ in the Columbus Metro.
- **Transportation and Warehousing** is one of the top 10 industries in the region employing over 90,000 people in 2025.
- **Mobility** remains an issue in the region. The average Ohio household spends more than the national average on transportation—27% of income (or $13,781 per year) compared to 22%—and 12 percentage points higher than the recommended threshold of affordability.
- The region will benefit from several **transformative, large scale infrastructure investments** designed to improve connectivity and resident access to different modes of transit. Namely, Central Ohio Transit Authority's LinkUS program and the new terminal under construction at John Glenn International Airport.
- Columbus is the largest city in the country without access to **passenger rail**. MORPC, along with its partners, is actively advancing passenger rail in Central Ohio through funding and planning for the "Midwest Connect" (Chicago-Columbus-Pittsburgh) and "3C+D" (Cleveland-Columbus-Cincinnati) corridors

SWOT ASSESSMENT

- **Five priority areas** emerged from the assessment: 1) Housing Availability & Affordability, 2) Economic Access & Mobility, 3) Infrastructure Development & Maintenance, 4) Education & Workforce Development and 5) Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development.

Strengths

- A welcoming, multicultural society
- Ohio's public library system is consistently identified as a key community asset
- Strategic initiatives such as LinkUS and the Airport's terminal expansion promise long-standing impact
- Network of quality higher education institutions
- Region has abundant land and water and is well connected to markets

Weakness

- Small businesses face multiple barriers
- Aging infrastructure is affecting community preparedness
- Columbus is the largest city in the country without passenger rail connectivity
- Lack of mobility options is a constraint affecting underrepresented groups
- Car-centric communities and sprawl make small business viability a challenge

Opportunity

- Initiatives like LinkUS, airport expansion
- City of Columbus' Zone In initiative
- Region is growing
- Rise of AI and its impact on productivity
- Emerging technologies in modes of transit

Threat

- Widening wealth gap among the different job sectors
- AI deployment will happen fast and will likely affect most sectors
- Inflationary pressures are diminishing affordability
- Defunding of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
- Uncertainty around the issue of property tax

ACTION PLAN STRUCTURE

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THEMATIC AREA: Economic Access & Mobility	
GOAL: Address barriers to economic opportunity to advance upward mobility.	
ACTION: **Support transit-oriented development** to accommodate growth while encouraging greater public transit use.	**PROSPECTIVE PARTNERS:** COTA ODOT Regional transit agencies Local and Regional planning organizations Local governments

ACTION PLAN: SELECT CRITICAL ACTIONS

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Economic Access & Mobility	• Create model zoning language to enable communities to **modernize zoning codes** to ensure each part of the region is prepared to meet population growth needs.
Education & Workforce Development	• Encourage key industry sectors in the economy to create a **streamlined and standardized framework for skills and credentials** needed by workers to thrive in those sectors.
Housing Availability & Affordability	• Support communities in **creating and adopting comprehensive plans, modern zoning codes and land use policies** that offer a variety of housing options at different price points.
Infrastructure Development & Maintenance	• Develop an **interactive map of existing infrastructure assets and current conditions** in the 11-county region to serve as a gap analysis of the region's hard infrastructure and a capacity analysis for development planning.
Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development	• Support existing and create additional **programs that connect high school students with entrepreneurship training and opportunities**. Include training on managing existing businesses to foster succession planning.

MORPC WILL PARTNER TO SUPPORT

- **Advocate** for increased funding to state and local housing assistance programs including advocacy on modernizing the zoning code to meet population growth needs.
- **Engage and educate elected officials** on the interdependence of housing and economic development, as well as the pressing housing needs of our region and national best practices for meeting those needs.
- **Develop an interactive map** of existing infrastructure assets and current conditions to provide information on capacity and areas needing development planning.
- **Provide technical assistance** to local governments to strengthen their applications for infrastructure funding in the state capital budget.
- **Improve** civic leadership across the region to reduce income disparities, improve economic security, and enhance access to social services.

FINAL VISION STATEMENT

We envision Central Ohio as…

"a thriving and resilient region where collaboration and innovation drive sustained social and economic advancement, infrastructure readiness and shared prosperity, ensuring every resident and community has the opportunity to enjoy a high quality of life and reach their full potential."



FINAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES



NEXT STEPS

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

December 7, 2026 – January 15, 2027



QUESTIONS



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