

REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA

2025 - 2028

Local Actions, Lasting Impacts



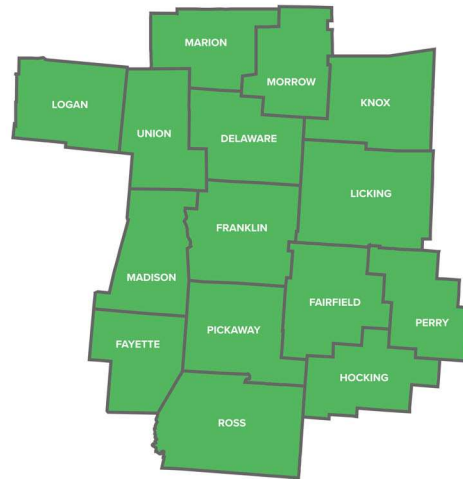
MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION



WHO WE ARE

MORPC is Central Ohio's regional council for 90 members and community partners. We take pride in bringing communities of all sizes and interests together to collaborate on best practices and plan for the future of our growing region. We do this through a variety of programs, services, projects, and initiatives that help improve the quality of life for everyone in the Central Ohio region.

MORPC SERVICE AREA



OUR AGENDA

The 2025-2028 Regional Sustainability Agenda was developed by a working group of MORPC's Regional Sustainability Roundtable, comprised of professionals from local governments, universities, non-profits, and other regional partners. It also included members of MORPC's Regional Sustainability Roundtable, chaired by City of Bexley Mayor Ben Kessler. This collaborative agenda details goals, measurable objectives, and strategies to drive the future prosperity and sustainability of the Central Ohio region.

OUR MISSION

The Regional Sustainability Agenda (RSA) unites Central Ohio and its communities through shared goals, fostering collaboration, education, and innovation to ensure that sustainability benefits are accessible to all and drive lasting prosperity. To advance these goals, MORPC convenes regional events and fosters ongoing conversations that inspire coordinated efforts and measurable progress in sustainability.

OUR VISION

We envision a healthier, more resilient, and prosperous region – where public health is safeguarded, natural resources are conserved, communities are connected, and economic opportunities are sustainable. Our goal is a thriving future where people, nature, and the economy flourish, enhancing the quality of life for all.

OUR STRATEGY



PAY IT FORWARD: MORPC enhances public service leadership and builds capacity in communities.



DRIVE INVESTMENT: MORPC competes for investments for all our communities to enhance their assets.



BUILD VALUE FOR MEMBERS: MORPC works diligently to find creative ways to increase our members' returns on investment.



CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT FOR PROSPERITY: MORPC delivers essential tools for the region to get better as it grows bigger.





OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

1.1 Reduce overall energy consumption and dependence on fossil fuels

- a. Complete energy audit(s) to identify energy saving opportunities and implement energy efficient improvements in buildings and facilities.
- b. Benchmark energy use in buildings to manage and track energy performance and to inform energy plans and investments.
- c. Create and/or promote financial resources to support energy efficiency and clean energy projects.
- d. Educate and promote energy efficiency improvements and practices.
- e. Include energy performance and sustainable practices as core requirements in the design, construction, and renovation of buildings.
- f. Maintain and operate buildings according to sustainable building performance standards.
- g. Reduce unnecessary outdoor light pollution while maintaining community safety standards.

1.2 Reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled

- a. Create development practices, policies, and incentives that minimize vehicle travel by promoting mixed-use and higher density development and shared or reduced parking among neighboring entities.
- b. Adopt, implement, and update as needed a Complete Streets Policy or Active Transportation Plan.
- c. Encourage development in locations accessible by existing transit, multi-use paths, and sidewalks.
- d. Implement programs that reduce vehicle miles traveled and single occupant vehicle travel by focusing on sustainable modes and mode-shift.
- e. Provide workplace incentives to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transportation including transit, biking, walking, and ridesharing.
- f. Create a telecommuting policy that supports a diverse workplace and employee needs.

1.3 Increase alternative fuel vehicles and infrastructure

- a. Complete a fleet analysis and develop plans for future fleet conversion.
- b. Replace fleets/vehicles with EVs or alternative fuel vehicles.
- c. Adopt policies, practices, and incentives for enabling broader vehicle adoption and equitable EV charger expansion.
- d. Adopt an EV readiness ordinance to ensure that newly created parking facilities have EV charging stations installed or can be easily installed in the future.
- e. Install widespread public charging and alternative fuel stations to support electric vehicle and alternative fuel vehicle use in all neighborhoods.
- f. Support a collaborative regional approach for medium/heavy duty and freight electrification and alternative fuel adoption.
- g. Educate the public about EVs, alternative fuels, and available infrastructure through educational materials, newsletters, ride and drive events, and more.
- h. Achieve Charging Smart or similar designation to support EV infrastructure investment and expansion.

1.4 Increase local and regional clean energy consumption and generating capacity

- a. Update local codes, zoning, and permitting processes to encourage local renewable energy generation.
- b. Establish a clean energy procurement initiative by implementing programs like community-wide clean energy aggregation or directly sourcing clean energy.
- c. Install or increase the generating capacity of solar systems or other clean energy technologies.
- d. Achieve SolSmart designation to encourage solar development.
- e. Promote residential solar generation opportunities, such as co-ops, to increase capacity.

1.5 Reduce regional greenhouse gas pollution

- a. Conduct a greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory to establish a baseline or continue to track emissions.
- b. Create and/or implement a plan that includes GHG emission goals and strategies for meeting the goals.
- c. Implement measures from the Central Ohio Climate Action Plan that impact the largest sources of emissions based on county-level data.
- d. Conduct public education and engagement to reduce individual climate impacts.

1.6 Increase the number of days that meet federal standards for ozone and fine particulate matter pollution

- a. Implement and support air quality sensors at the neighborhood level to inform local solutions.
- b. Adopt an organizational vehicle policy that discourages vehicle idling and supports fuel conservation and vehicle efficiency.
- c. Replace gas-powered equipment with electric or battery-powered equipment.
- d. Establish or support incentives for residents, businesses, and organizations to replace gas-powered lawn equipment with battery and electric powered equipment.
- e. Establish an Air Quality Alert Day action plan to minimize emissions when high-pollution days are forecasted.
- f. Distribute MORPC Air Quality Alerts across communications platforms and promote/enroll people to directly receive Alerts.
- g. Adopt an Air Quality Awareness Week Proclamation to elevate awareness of and support for clean air initiatives.
- h. Incentivize and/or promote sustainable mobility options for large community-wide events or festivals, especially during ozone season (March 1 – Oct. 31).



GOAL 2

Protect and restore natural resources

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

2.1 Improve water quality in Central Ohio watersheds

- a. Implement and promote green infrastructure best practices to reduce flooding and stormwater pollution.
- b. Expand stormwater treatment requirements to major additions, hardscape expansions, and new structures under one acre.
- c. Repair and preserve stream corridors, flood plains, wetlands, and native buffers along waterways.
- d. Implement and promote best management practices for weed and pest control.
- e. Plant native trees, shrubs, and perennials.
- f. Host/participate in community activities that improve local waterways.
- g. Implement pollution prevention strategies and provide staff training to minimize runoff from parking lots, fleet management, and storage of waste, fuels, chemicals, and road salt.
- h. Identify and reduce sanitary sewer inflow and infiltration through maintenance, repairs, sustainable stormwater management, including on private property.
- i. Collaborate with communities and stakeholders across the region to support comprehensive water quality monitoring and increase data resources to better target solutions.
- j. Promote awareness campaigns on reducing household pollutants such as motor oil, chemicals, pet waste, and proper septic system maintenance.

2.2 Increase land area designated for conservation of biodiversity and natural resources

- a. Utilize and/or promote federal, state, and local programs that fund preservation.
- b. Establish a tree canopy policy or plan for protecting, maintaining, and expanding the local tree canopy on public and private property, with a variety of native species.
- c. Integrate natural resource conservation into community plans, and address gaps in natural areas, greenspace, and tree canopy.
- d. Support/incentivize land management practices to support biodiversity.
- e. Support and promote land conservancies across the region.

2.3 Support agricultural best management practices that enhance production and environmental quality

- a. Support programs and partnerships to reduce agricultural runoff and erosion.
- b. Support/incentivize cover crops, no-till and other soil and forestry best management practices.
- c. Support development of integrated pest management plans.
- d. Include environmentally friendly practices in local plans for community gardens and urban agriculture.

2.4 Reduce the amount of solid waste disposed of in the landfill

- a. Support reuse, waste prevention, and landfill diversion activities through public outreach and education.

- b. Implement community-wide curbside recycling including commercial and multi-family units, or increase recycling tonnage of existing programs.
- c. Implement and promote food waste prevention, rescue, and compost programs for residents, businesses, and institutions.
- d. Adopt a zero-waste policy and/or implement best practices for event waste reduction, diversion, and reuse working toward a zero-waste goal.
- e. Support re-use, donation, and proper handling of household hazardous waste, electronics, and other hard-to-recycle items.
- f. Where feasible, require new development projects to allocate adequate space for recycling vehicles and containers.
- g. Develop a plan to set waste reduction and diversion goals and implement them across all facilities.
- h. Establish a procurement policy or guidance to encourage reusable products and those made from reusable, recycled, biodegradable, and compostable materials.
- i. Reuse and recycle materials from construction and demolition processes.

2.5 Reduce water consumption

- a. Install water efficient fixtures, toilets, and appliances.
- b. Monitor and repair water leaks in buildings and more broadly in water infrastructure.
- c. Improve or invest in water lines and meters where needed to enhance quality, reliability, and efficiency.
- d. Deploy real-time water consumption monitoring and alert service to customers.
- e. Establish education and outreach programs, incentives, and resources to assist low-income households in reducing water consumption and costs.
- f. Install graywater systems in buildings or other best practices to recycle non-potable water and promote available programs to encourage community participation.
- g. Promote, incentivize, and implement best practices for water reuse.



GOAL 3

Advance healthy, connected, and safe communities

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

3.1 Improve public transit and active transportation safety and quality for all residents

- a. Implement infrastructure projects that prioritize safety along the high-injury network and/or at high-crash locations.
- b. Commit to Vision Zero strategies with a “safe system” approach to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries.
- c. Conduct education and outreach across diverse audiences about distracted, impaired, and reckless driving.
- d. Implement traffic calming and speed management design strategies along urban and residential corridors.
- e. Expand and create a low-stress network for non-motorists, such as protected bike lanes and multi-use trails, to improve user comfort.
- f. Include and expand the role of street trees in safe road design for traffic calming, comfortable walking and biking spaces, reducing temperatures, and managing stormwater.

3.2 Increase and enhance transportation options for all users

- a. Establish processes or policies that prioritize transit access and filling gaps in sidewalk coverage, crosswalks, and lighting along active transportation infrastructure.
- b. Establish connections among pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure.
- c. Prioritize investments in areas where there are disparities in sidewalk coverage and areas underserved in multi-modal transportation options.
- d. Implement/support initiatives that enhance mobility options for seniors, children, and people with disabilities.

3.3 Increase access to parks, greenspace, and regional trails

- a. Adopt a multi-use trail plan and ensure implementation of and access to the Regional Trail Vision.
- b. Prioritize infrastructure investments to construct trail network segments, and close gaps in the trail network to increase trail miles, connectivity, and accessibility.
- c. Increase safety and accessibility of routes to parks and trails.
- d. Prioritize trail and trail access investments in accordance with the Regional Trail Prioritization.
- e. Include parkland acquisition and designation in community plans and budgets.
- f. Implement inclusive public engagement and outreach when locating and designing parks and trails.

3.4 Reduce household energy cost burden

- a. Promote and increase participation in MORPC's residential energy efficiency and related programs for income-qualified households across the region.
- b. Target resources, tools, and outreach programs to address energy consumption in areas with unaffordable household energy burden.
- c. Support and/or implement programs and incentives to advance clean energy initiatives that reduce costs for consumers, create job opportunities, and improve community health.

3.5 Reduce the rate of elevated blood lead levels among children

- a. Encourage lead testing and conduct educational programs to reduce lead exposure in vulnerable populations.
- b. Implement lead service line replacement.
- c. Implement or promote existing lead abatement and safety programs for all buildings.
- d. Establish processes or policies that require soil testing in locations where land use may have contributed to contamination.

3.6 Increase access to and knowledge about sustainable local foods and agricultural products

- a. Procure sustainable food and agricultural products, prioritizing seasonal and organic options.
- b. Support local food through institutional purchasing, farmer's markets, community gardens, seed banks, etc.
- c. Include community agriculture in community plans and zoning.
- d. Promote farm-to-school, programs, vocational programs, FFA, and 4-H.
- e. Support local soil and water conservation districts, extension offices, USDA, and county fairs.
- f. Increase awareness of local, sustainable foods through educational campaigns, outreach opportunities, community-based cooking programs, farm tours, and interdisciplinary events.



GOAL 4

Advance sustainable and equitable economic growth and development

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

4.1 Prioritize sustainable development along existing infrastructure and encourage density

- a. Include considerations for infill, redevelopment, and mixed-use development in community plans, land-use policies, and zoning codes.
- b. Use a fix-it-first strategy to maintain and repair existing transportation infrastructure.
- c. Retrofit and preserve existing buildings, housing, and structures wherever possible.
- d. Remediate brownfields for productive use.
- e. Increase the availability of housing options near transit or job centers.

4.2 Increase support for businesses and institutions to develop and execute sustainability policies and practices

- a. Support and promote businesses and institutions with sustainable practices, products, and services.
- b. Create programming that directs businesses and institutions towards available sustainability funding, tools, and resources.
- c. Promote, participate in, or create new programs that support institutional adoption of sustainable practices.

4.3 Increase employment in and availability of environmental careers

- a. Engage higher education institutions in developing applied degrees, certifications, apprenticeships, and career pathways tied to regional sustainability priorities.
- b. Collaborate with workforce development programs and local employers to create and promote job opportunities in underserved communities.
- c. Target tools and resources to support sustainability innovation in new and existing businesses.
- d. Create policies or guidelines to support environmentally friendly purchasing and contracting.

4.4 Conserve working agricultural lands that are vital economic assets

- a. Target financial tools to incentivize preservation of farmland and environmentally sensitive areas.
- b. Utilize conservation easements, agricultural protection zones, and other tools to protect valuable agricultural assets.
- c. Utilize a balanced and strategic approach for development, with priority areas identified for conservation, development, and agriculture in community plans.
- d. Enable the deployment of agrivoltaics.



GOAL 5

Create communities that are aware, prepared, and resilient to climate impacts

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

5.1 Increase preparedness for extreme weather events

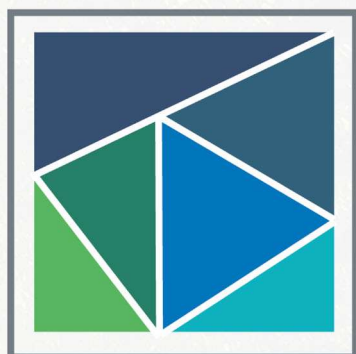
- a. Conduct community preparedness campaigns to educate all residents, including underserved populations and those without shelter, on extreme weather alerts, preparedness, and evacuation procedures.
- b. Conduct hazard and vulnerability assessments and update them at regularly defined intervals.
- c. Coordinate with neighboring communities to close gaps in severe weather communication, resources, and response.
- d. Identify community cooling centers and water-based recreation opportunities to combat extreme heat.
- e. Identify community warming centers and shelters to combat extreme cold.
- f. Equip essential community resources, such as emergency responders and cooling centers, with back-up generators.
- g. Support and create disaster readiness plans.

5.2 Increase community resilience to flooding, severe weather, and extreme temperatures

- a. Promote resilient energy systems with local and diverse energy sources, grid modernization, energy storage, backup solutions, and rapid response strategies to reduce disruptions.
- b. Adopt climate resilient landscape design standards into local zoning codes and land-use planning.
- c. Adopt climate resilient farming practices.
- d. Coordinate with emergency management and waste management sectors to plan for disaster debris management.
- e. Promote resources that educate communities and businesses on common climate impacts.

5.3 Create more resilient infrastructure and buildings

- a. Prioritize engineering best practices for resilient roads and bridges.
- b. Encourage passive heating and cooling infrastructure in new buildings.
- c. Increase awareness of climate adaptation measures and empower stakeholders to take action.
- d. Conduct an inventory of structures within floodplains and create an action plan to improve structural resilience during flood events.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Brandi Whetstone

Sustainability Director
bwhetstone@morpc.org
614.233.4174

Jessica Kuenzli

Chief Regional Planning Officer and Sr. Director of Planning
jkuenzli@morpc.org
614.233.4162

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

111 Liberty St. Suite 100
Columbus, Ohio 43215
P. 614.228.2663 | F. 614.228.1904
info@morpc.org | www.morpc.org

