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MORPC Report 9/21/2020

KEY ACTION ITEMS

Census 2020 - Please help spread the word about Census 2020. The big push right now is for non-response follow up. As of now - pending some court decisions - the census data collection is set to end September 30. This leads to concerns about people being undercounted. MORPC signed a letter to congressional leadership with other regional councils expressing concern about undercounting, and we encourage you to reach out to Central Ohio’s congressional members about extending the timeline to October 31.

Residential Services - If you’re a community that has benefited from our residential services, please help us get the word out about these programs to your residents. Our team is back to work after the COVID-19 hiatus and ready to take on more clients!

GENERAL RESOURCES & REMINDERS:

COVID-19 Resource Hub - We continue to update [morpc.org/covid19](https://www.morpc.org/covid19) <https://www.morpc.org/covid19>, most recently with additional info on CARES Act funding. Watch your calendars for updated dates and times of our monthly community impact calls.

Broadband Access Pilot Program - We’re excited to be in a partnership to help up to 10,000 students stay connected with internet hotspots and devices as they start school. Families can now register at <https://www.pcsforpeople.org/ohio>, so help us spread the word. More info is available at [morpc.org/broadband](https://www.morpc.org/broadband) <https://www.morpc.org/broadband>.

SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

- Dr. Kerstin Carr shared some of the highlights of our **Regional Housing Strategy** during the commission meeting. We now have an “implementer’s toolkit” of strategies designed to flex as the region grows and changes over time - with a number of potential actions communities can take today using the public and private resources currently available. The entire toolkit from the strategy is available online and can be filtered by community and each of the 100+ action items. Visit www.morpc.org/rhs <<http://www.morpc.org/rhs>>.
- A resolution was passed to adopt the Columbus Region **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**. This will allow us to take a variety of actions, including going after federal funding to better help Central Ohio communities and businesses. The draft document is available [here](https://www.morpc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Columbus-Region-CEDS-vF.pdf) <<https://www.morpc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Columbus-Region-CEDS-vF.pdf>>. This is the first step in the process of becoming an economic development district.
- Thea Ewing provided a short update on the **impacts of COVID-19 on the transportation system**, we’ll have a more detailed update in October. You can view the available maps at www.morpc.org/covid19-impacts <<http://www.morpc.org/covid19-impacts>>.

COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Regional Data Advisory Committee - RDAC recently received updates on the Regional Housing Strategy and 2020 Census. Its working groups are pushing along, with a major focus on the Regional Sustainability Dashboard that will launch during the Summit on Sustainability and identifying revisions to the Regional Data Agenda.

Our Data & Mapping department is also working on COVID-19 related research briefs to track data related to economic, social, demographic, and growth impacts that COVID-19 poses for our region. We’ll be publishing the briefs in November, followed by community dialogue and outreach.

Regional Policy Roundtable - Work continues on the 2021-2022 Public Policy Agenda. The legislative update highlighted Senate Bill 357 (CARES Act funding), Senate Bill 346 (repealing the House Bill 6 energy legislation), Senate Bill 285 (hands free distracted driving), and House Bill 606 (COVID-related liability protection). Other legislation at the state level is expected to extend the provisions for virtual public meetings. At the federal level, we discussed the appropriations deadline this month, transportation reauthorization, and further COVID-19 relief.

Sustainability Advisory Committee - Our region is pursuing a national SolSmart designation, which recognizes those that foster development of mature local solar markets; a resolution was passed to this effect. Also, MORPC has received a \$20,000 grant from the Columbus Foundation as well as \$7,500 from the Columbus Board of Realtors to conduct an economic impact of trails study.

Transportation Policy Committee (Metropolitan Planning Organization Report) - ODOT suspended this year’s TRAC funding round as a result of budget shortfalls, so we are no longer soliciting comments on those projects. Resolutions were passed to amend the Transportation Improvement Program (to add or modify various projects) and accept the completion report for the 2020 Planning Work Program, which lays out what we accomplished over the past year in our transportation work.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Transportation Safety Forum - 2-4 p.m. Sept. 15. This forum will provide a regional update and

discussion on transportation safety in Central Ohio. Keith Benjamin II, Director of the Department of Traffic and Transportation for the City of Charleston, South Carolina, will be the keynote speaker. [Register <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/morpc-regional-safety-forum-tickets-116737425783>](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/morpc-regional-safety-forum-tickets-116737425783)

Regional Collaboration (Southwest) - 9:30-10:30 a.m. Sept. 22. We welcome public service and other staffers from the SW quadrant of the region for this virtual meeting covering the latest on development, mobility, and sustainability. [Register <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/morpc-regional-collaboration-southwest-area-tickets-114890512616>](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/morpc-regional-collaboration-southwest-area-tickets-114890512616)

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting <https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MWEwZDM1NmEtMWE1OC00YTA3LWJkZWltY2U4OGEwNTBmNTI1%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22d225c0aa-f4a0-4925-bc81-eaff87943970%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22dd79d673-7ff9-4f3f-a880-39bdf2f014c7%22%7d>](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MWEwZDM1NmEtMWE1OC00YTA3LWJkZWltY2U4OGEwNTBmNTI1%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22d225c0aa-f4a0-4925-bc81-eaff87943970%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22dd79d673-7ff9-4f3f-a880-39bdf2f014c7%22%7d)

Election 2020 Voting Update - 3-4 p.m. Sept. 25. Join MORPC and Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose to an election update and preview - including the impact of COVID-10, dates to remember, and what's at stake. [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting <https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_OWJkMzBiZTUtNGMzMS00ZTJjLTNmZDUtZTBINjhkNDIwNjNm%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22d225c0aa-f4a0-4925-bc81-eaff87943970%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22be2849ec-f953-48fa-b16d-fd97b2dc280c%22%7d>](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_OWJkMzBiZTUtNGMzMS00ZTJjLTNmZDUtZTBINjhkNDIwNjNm%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22d225c0aa-f4a0-4925-bc81-eaff87943970%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22be2849ec-f953-48fa-b16d-fd97b2dc280c%22%7d)

Summit on Sustainability - Oct. 15-16. Our signature environmental conference is taking place virtually this year, and in partnership with the Atlanta Regional Commission. [Register <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2020-summit-on-sustainability-tickets-117760204943>](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2020-summit-on-sustainability-tickets-117760204943)

FINAL THOUGHTS:

Last week, MORPC said goodbye to Senior Planner Brian Williams, who retired after 10 years with us. Brian came to MORPC as the agency's first agriculture specialist, bringing energy and focus to the issues of local food and food security in our communities. He led the creation of the nation's first regional local food action plan, which is still available [here <https://www.morpc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/LocalFoodPlan.pdf>](https://www.morpc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/LocalFoodPlan.pdf). He has also contributed to many other efforts at MORPC as a member of the Planning & Sustainability team.

To pay it forward and honor his legacy, we are accepting donations to the **Leaders & Legacy Intern Award** in honor of Brian to fund an intern scholarship for an intern to work in a MORPC rural community for the summer of 2021. Please let me know if you'd like more details. Join me in wishing Brian well!