

SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
April 28, 2015
Meeting Summary

MORPC
111 Liberty Street, Suite 100
Columbus, Ohio
2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Attendees: Steve Stolte, Mark Barbash, Kate Bartter, Jack Knapp, Paul Wise, Michelle Crandall, Tom Pendrey, Maryellen O'Shaughnessy, Tony Collins, and Erin Miller.

MORPC Staff: William Murdock, Claire Jennings, Amanda McEldowney, Brandi Whetstone, Brian Williams, Evelyn Ebert, David Rutter, David Abel, and Marion Dean.

1. **Welcome & Updates.** Co-Chair Steve Stolte called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and welcomed guests. An announcement was made that Marilyn Brown stepped down as Co-Chair and Jim Schimmer would be taking her spot. The Regional Sustainability Agenda was adopted by the Commission. Steve thanked everyone for the help that was given to complete this task; this agenda allows for a direction to guide the groups and staff at MORPC.
2. **Meet our members** Mark Barbash gave a brief description on his role as the Executive Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at the [Finance Fund](#). He is responsible for indentifying funding opportunities, developing relationships, and proposing strategic initiatives that can have a major impact on Finance Fund's performance. The Finance Fund is a statewide non-profit community development entity that moves public and private capital into low-income communities to improve the quality of life for people. It is one of the largest recipients for new market tax credits, and it invests that money into community development projects through grants, revolving loans, and more. He also serves as one of the co-chairs of the Regional Food Council.
3. **Central Ohio Greenways Board.** Tony Collins gave a presentation on a new proposed direction of the Central Ohio Greenways (COG) & Trails working group. The group started in 2005 with a mission to develop a regional trail system as a way to protect our waterways in Central Ohio. Its three main objectives are advocating for trail development among local governments, promoting trail development, and coordinating trail development efforts with stakeholders.

Ten years later, Central Ohio now has standardized trail way finding signage, GIS mapping, cross-jurisdictional collaboration, quarterly trail-focused forums, a dedicated website, brochures, and over 180 miles of built trails. The goal for the coming years will be to build more trails, provide more connections, and add more users.

A subgroup of the COG working group started meeting in October 2014 to think about COG's future: How can COG continue to make great impact on our central Ohio communities, residents, and visitors? How can we continue to build more trails and connections and get more users out using them? Are there partnerships and funding opportunities that are missing? What can we learn from other places around the country? The proposal that came out of this process was to establish a formal COG Board. The board would report directly to the SAC and will be supported by four working teams that will address key regional issues, such as trail development, funding, education and programming, and marketing.

The board would be topped at 22 members maximum and supported by MORPC's Department of Planning and Environment. The board would have a diverse representation from parks and recreation, education, health, economic development, engineering, business, non-profit, education, and community interests.

There was discussion about how the Central Ohio Greenways and Water Quality working group was originally established. In the last few years, the water and trail groups had split their meetings, except for one joint meeting. This yearly joint meeting would still take place under this new arrangement. While this new organization of COG would also allow for more work on on-road bicycle facilities, there would be a continued interest in trails along waterways.

Steve Stolte motioned to approve the acceptance of the COG Board as a member of the SAC. Mark Barbash moved the motion, Erin Miller seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The COG Board was approved as a member of the SAC.

Steve Stolte motioned to make Tony Collins the COG Board Chair. Erin Miller moved the motion, Maryellen O'Shaughnessy seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved to make Tony Collins the COG Board Chair.

- 4. PACE Update.** MORPC is working to establish a regional PACE district in Central Ohio. PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) can be used as a project financing tool for accessing capital for energy efficiency and other alternative energy improvements to non-residential properties. Property owners can seek funding through property tax assessments facilitated by an Energy Special Improvement District (E-SID). PACE was identified by a core group of Central Ohio communities, including the Cities of Columbus, Dublin, and Worthington, as a tool for the redevelopment of commercial and industrial properties. This group requested MORPC to lead and administer a regional Property Assessed Clean Energy program that would provide shared services across multiple jurisdictions.

Ohio House Bill 72, introduced by Representative Conditt, would enhance and expand the ability to create E-SIDs in Ohio and expands eligible energy special improvement projects. MORPC is supportive of HB 72 and will give proponent testimony. We will continue to work on a regional approach to develop needed tools for financing building energy improvements.

- 5. Working Group Updates.** Updates were given by the following working groups (please see the attachment for more details)

Air Quality & Energy: Comments were submitted to the US EPA on March 17 in favor of their proposal. The Columbus Public Health has convened a stakeholders group of those working on air quality and health concern and solutions with regard to climate change.

Central Ohio Greenways and Water Quality: The subgroup last met on February 6. The next meeting will be on May 1. [Riverfest](#) on Tour is gearing up again and will have five paddling events around the region. More information about Riverfest and to register can be found at: www.morpc.org/riverfest.

Materials Management: The group met on March 25 with updates from SWACO and Ohio EPA. The group also discussed the Organics Diversion Sub-Committee efforts. This sub-committee was created in March to address the barriers suddenly faced by

environmentally conscious local businesses that are trying to compost their organic waste or find other ways to recycle it. The next meeting will take place on May 27.

Regional Food Council: The group last met on March 11 where county food councils provided updates about their activities and where its 2015 task forces were finalized and their tasks prioritized.

6. **Program Outlook.** The 2015 MORPC [Summit on Sustainability & Environment](#) will be on Friday, October 2at the Hilton Columbus Downtown. It will have a Transportation as well as Policy track this year. William Murdock encouraged everyone to save the date and asked for suggestions for keynote speakers.

William Murdock gave an update to insight2050. It has reached Phase II, which is focused on Outreach, Peer Learning, Best Practices and Development Resources.

Brandi Whetstone gave an update on the Air Quality Program. They have submitted comments on the proposed ozone rule to the EPA on March 17. The Ohio Air Quality Development Authority provided match funding to the Air Quality Program to pilot a marketing partnership.

7. **New Business.** The 2014-2015 Regional Sustainability Agenda is now official and [available online](#).
8. **Adjourn.** Steve Stolte adjourned the meeting at 3:30pm. Next meeting will be July 21, 2015.