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*Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Representative Report to City Council*

*April 21, 2025*

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MORPC Board of Commissioners Meeting

- The Commission met on **April 10, 2025**. Due to changes in Ohio Revised Code 121.221 regarding public bodies and virtual meetings, the Commission/Transportation Policy Committee Meeting was aired via live stream.
  - [Upcoming Commission Meeting](#): May 8, 2025
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**April Legislative Update:** The Ohio House passed its budget, including brownfield funds and rail commission reinstatement, while energy legislation debates continue. [Read the April Legislative Update & Budget Highlights](#).

- **Bills to Watch:**
  1. **House Bill 54 - Transportation Budget (FY 2026-27):** Allocates funding for transportation projects.  
*Status: Enacted (3/31/2025)*
  2. **HB 96 - Operating Budget (FY 2026-27):** State appropriations for FY 2026-27, reflecting the Governor's recommendations.  
*Status: Passed by the House (4/9/2025)*
  3. **Senate Bill 2/House Bill 15 - Energy Generation:** Changes to public utilities and electric company property taxation, repealing parts of HB 6.  
*Status: SB 2 Passed by Senate (3/19/2025); HB 15 Passed by House (3/26/2025)*
  4. **House Bill 28 - Replacement Property Tax Levies:** Eliminates the ability of local governments to levy replacement property taxes.  
*Status: 1st Hearing - Senate Ways & Means (4/9/2025)*
  5. **House Bill 109 - Short Term Rentals:** Limits local government regulation of short-term rentals and extends lodging taxes.  
*Status: 1st Hearing - House Development Committee (3/26/2025)*

- **Summary of Operating Budget (As Passed by the House):**
  - No Passenger Rail Funding: Advocacy for \$2 million/year for Corridor ID and \$3 million for an Office of Passenger Rail was not included.
  - MIPRC Membership: Ohio rejoined the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission.
  - Brownfield & Demolition: \$125 million/year for Brownfield Remediation and \$21.5 million/year for demolition.
  - Housing Incentives: \$2.5 million/year for pro-housing policies, expanded Welcome Home Ohio eligibility.
  - CRAs: Extends CRAs to 30 years for megaprojects.
  - Eminent Domain for Trails: Bans eminent domain for recreational trails.
  - Lead Abatement: \$250,000 for local lead abatement.
  - County Coroners: Appointed by commissioners instead of elected.
  - Zoning Referenda: Exempts megaproject zoning from referendum.
  - Pay Raises: 5% raises for public officials, COLA capped at 3% after 2030.
  
- **Transportation Budget (Enacted):** Reduced CORPO Funding: Reduced from \$5 million/year to \$3 million/year.
  
- **Comprehensive Energy Legislation:** Two similar energy bills, HB 15 and SB 2, are advancing through the Ohio Statehouse, with support from groups like the Ohio Consumers' Counsel, Ohio Manufacturers' Association, and environmental organizations. Both bills have passed their originating chambers and are now with the respective energy committees. The provisions in both bills are generally pro-consumer.
  
- **Community Project Funding:** Congress will soon begin negotiating the FY 2026 federal budget, offering a key chance to submit local project funding proposals.

The following submission deadlines for FY 2026 federal budget proposals are confirmed:

- Senator Bernie Moreno: Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>
- Senator Jon Husted: Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup> (6pm)
- Congresswoman Joyce Beatty: Monday, April 21<sup>st</sup> (6pm)

### MORPC Program Highlights

- **Public Meetings:** Beginning this month, MORPC meetings will continue to be livestreamed, but viewer chat and **communication** features will be disabled to comply with Ohio Revised Code 121.221, effective April 9, 2025; members who view the livestream will still be noted.
  
- **Member Benefit of the Month - Gohio Commute:** MORPC's Gohio Commute program offers tools like carpool matching, route planning, and commuter incentives to support workforce mobility. Contact Patty Olmsted at polmsted@morpc.org for details.

- **Transportation Improvement Plans:** MORPC and the Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization held an Open House on April 2, 2025. [Read more.](#)
- **Community Housing Resource Fair:** MORPC hosted a Community Housing Resource Fair on April 12, 2025. [Read more.](#)
- **Regional Sustainability Agenda Info Session:** Join MORPC virtually on Wednesday, April 23, from 12–1 p.m. to learn about the Regional Sustainability Agenda, a collaborative effort to shape a sustainable future for Central Ohio. RSVP [here.](#)
- **Franklin University Virtual Info Session:** Join MORPC and Franklin University on Tuesday, April 29, from 11:30 a.m.–12 p.m. to learn about educational benefits and programs available to MORPC members and their associates. Register [here.](#)
- **Air Quality in Central Ohio: From Background to Action:** Join MORPC’s virtual webinar on Tuesday, April 29, from 12–1 p.m. to learn about air quality forecasting, its health impacts, and steps you can take to support cleaner air during ozone season. RSVP [here.](#)
- **Strategic Training for Effective Planning and Zoning (STEPZ) Workshop:** Join MORPC on Tuesday, May 20, from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for a workshop designed to enhance the skills of planning staff and officials at all levels. Register here to learn more and participate. RSVP [here.](#)
- **Rural Forum: Dynamic Community Engagement:** Join MORPC on Wednesday, May 21, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Canal Winchester City Hall for a forum on building trust, handling conflict, and co-creating solutions for effective community engagement. Lunch provided. MORPC Members attend for free. For more info, contact Eileen Leuby at [eleuby@morpc.org](mailto:eleuby@morpc.org). RSVP [here.](#)
- **Economic Development:** MORPC’s Economic Development efforts support regional prosperity by engaging members, driving investment, and providing resources to advance local initiatives. [Read more.](#)
  - Economic Development District
  - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
  - Competitive Advantage Projects
  - Brownfield Redevelopment
  - Freight Planning
  - Drive Investment Portal
  - Economic Development Administration Resources
  - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
  - Additional MORPC Funding Resources
  - Drive Investment Newsletter
- **The Columbus Outdoor Trail Pass:** Explore Central Ohio’s trails with the Columbus Outdoor Trails Pass—hike, bike, paddle, and earn rewards while discovering new outdoor adventures! [Read more.](#)
- **Passenger Rail News:** Sign up for quarterly updates on passenger rail and receive the first newsletter this spring! [Read More.](#)

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### Money Mondays

Every Monday from 1:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., MORPC hosts “Money Mondays” virtual presentations. These sessions are an opportunity for members to ask questions and learn more about key funding opportunities.

- April 21 – Operating and Transportation Budgets
- April 28 – Public Finance Investment Banking

[Click here to register for Money Mondays and be added to our calendar invite list.](#)

[Click here to view the video archive of past Money Mondays webinars.](#)

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