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

March 3, 2023

MORPC Highlights:

- **MORPC's Data Day, Driving the Region Forward with Data**, was held Wednesday, March 1, 2023, at Ohio University Dublin's Integrated Education Center. Sessions attended included "Winning Public Private Partnerships: A Case Study," the lunch plenary with Michael Wilkos "Storytelling with Data," "Diving into Public Library Data," and "A Drive Into the Future: Data & Technology at ODOT."
- **MORPC Executive Committee** met on Thursday, March 2, 2023. [More information on the Executive Committee meeting packet here.](#)
- **Air Quality Alerts** are now available as ozone monitoring season begins. Residents can sign-up online or by phone for these alerts. [More information on Air Quality Alerts here.](#) To help to reduce emissions contributing to air pollution, residents are encouraged to choose alternative modes of transportation such as carpooling, biking, walking, or taking the bus. With MORPC's Gohio Commute available at morpc.gohio.com, residents can explore the many commuting options available in Central Ohio. *More details below in Media Release section.*
- **Leaders Listen Survey** is open now. MORPC wants to hear Central Ohio residents' opinions on transportation-related experiences and services in the region. *To take the survey, visit this [link](#).*

Upcoming Events/Important Dates:

- *Thursday, March 9 from 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.*
MORPC Commission Meeting - MORPC's board of commissioners determine the strategic direction of the agency. All meetings are open to the public. [More information here.](#)
- *Friday, March 10 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.*
MORPC Executive Committee Retreat – to be held at the Philip Heit Center in New Albany.
- *Tuesday, March 28 from 3:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.*
MORPC Open House on the Transportation Improvement Programs impacting Delaware and Franklin counties and portions of Fairfield, Licking, and Union counties. [More information on Transportation Improvement Programs \(TIP\) here.](#)
- *Friday, March 31 from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.*
MORPC State of the Region - highlighting community accomplishments and showcase upcoming plans for the leading our region into the future. Keynote Speaker will be Deputy Assistant Secretary Charles Small, U.S. Department of Transportation. *More details below in the Media Release section.* [More information on the State of the Region agenda and registration here.](#)

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MEDIA RELEASE

Air Quality Alerts Available as Ozone Monitoring Season Begins Today

Residents Can Sign Up for Air Quality Alerts Online or By Phone

[COLUMBUS, OH, March 1, 2023] – March begins the start of ozone monitoring season – a time when air pollution can reach unhealthy levels for sensitive groups of individuals. The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is part of a network of agencies across the country that issues daily air quality forecasts and notifies the public when these levels become a threat to public health.

“Air quality is key to the health of our communities in Central Ohio,” said MORPC Chief Regional Strategy Officer and Senior Director of Planning Dr. Kerstin Carr. “By signing up to receive Air Quality Alerts, residents – especially those who are sensitive to pollution like children and people with asthma – can take action to protect their health as temperatures and pollution levels begin to rise.”

Central Ohio experiences higher levels of ozone pollution during the warmer, spring and summer months. Ground-level ozone is a gas produced when emissions from vehicles, lawn equipment and industry combine in the presence of sunlight. MORPC also monitors particle pollution, a mixture of solids and liquid droplets in the air, from sources including car and truck exhaust, electrical power plants, and industrial facilities.

MORPC uses the Air Quality Index (AQI) to inform the public about daily ozone and particle pollution levels in Central Ohio. The AQI scale runs from 0 to 300 — the higher the AQI value, the greater the health concern. When levels register above 100, air quality is considered to be unhealthy for sensitive groups, which includes people with respiratory and heart disease, children, and older adults. MORPC issues an Air Quality Alert to the public when pollution levels are forecasted to reach 101 or higher.

Sensitive groups are more likely to suffer an increase in the number and severity of symptoms during an Air Quality Alert. Individuals who are active outdoors should be aware of respiratory or cardiovascular effects resulting from unhealthy air including coughing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness. To decrease the potential for health problems, individuals in the sensitive groups are urged to limit prolonged outdoor exertion. Exposure to air pollution can be reduced by conducting strenuous outdoor activities in the morning when pollution levels are generally lower.

“With the Central Ohio region’s anticipated growth and development, it’s more important than ever to elevate clean air solutions that support the health and quality of life for our residents while reducing transportation and energy costs,” said MORPC’s Sustainability Officer Brandi Whetstone. “Local mobility providers and programs, such as MORPC’s Gohio Commute program, Downtown C-pass, and Smart Columbus all help in keeping harmful pollutants out of the air.

To help to reduce emissions contributing to air pollution, residents are encouraged to choose alternative modes of transportation such as carpooling, biking, walking, or taking the bus. With MORPC's Gohio Commute available at morpc.gohio.com, residents can explore the many commuting options available in Central Ohio. Other simple actions to take for air quality include not idling vehicles, refueling vehicles in the evening hours, and avoiding the use of gas-powered lawn equipment on Air Quality Alert days.

To learn more about MORPC's Air Quality Program or to sign up for alerts, visit www.morpc.org/airquality or by calling MORPC's toll-free air quality hotline at 1.888.666.1009. English and Spanish language options are available. Those who wish to sign up for notifications through ALERT Franklin County can visit alertfranklincounty.org.

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The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is Central Ohio's regional council with more than 80 local governments 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 growth and sustainability of our region.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA ADVISORY

MORPC TO HOST OPEN HOUSE TO REVIEW TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

Public comments on the final drafts to be accepted from March 10 through 5 p.m. on April 10

[Columbus, OH – March 1, 2023] – The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) will hold an Open House to provide information and obtain public feedback on two different Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP).

Who:

MORPC, CORPO, partners, including the Ohio Department of Transportation, and community members.

What:

The TIP is a schedule of transportation projects proposed for construction from 2024-27. The [MORPC TIP](#) includes projects within Delaware and Franklin counties; Bloom and Violet townships (Fairfield County); New Albany, Pataskala, and Etna Township (Licking County); and Jerome Township (Union County). The [Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization \(CORPO\) 2024-27 TIP](#) identifies projects in Fairfield, Knox, Marion, Madison, Morrow, Pickaway, and Union counties.

When:

Tuesday, March 28, 2023, 3:30-6:30 p.m.

Presentation will be held at 5:30 p.m.

Where:

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, 111 Liberty St., Suite 100, Columbus, OH, 43215

Why:

Public involvement is a critical component of the TIP development process.

How:

The public can preview aspects of the draft 2024-27 TIP during the Open House or by calling MORPC at 614.228.2663. The draft TIP will be available on MORPC's website at www.morpc.org/tip beginning March 10, 2023. Comments also can be submitted via email to tip@morpc.org or in writing via USPS to the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, 111 Liberty St., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43215 from March 10 through 5 p.m. on April 10, 2023.

CORPO will consider final approval of the state fiscal year 2024-27 CORPO TIP on May 1, 2023, after which ODOT will incorporate the program into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. Copies of the final draft of the CORPO TIP can be viewed at the Open House, obtained by calling CORPO at 614.228.2663 or viewed online at www.morpc.org/committees/corpo starting March 10, 2023. Questions or comments on proposed projects can be submitted via email at corpo@morpc.org or in writing to the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, 111 Liberty St., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43215 from March 10 through 5 p.m. on April 10, 2023.

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The Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization is staffed and administered by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission.