



**Karen J. Angelou**

Councilmember At-Large  
[karen.angelou@gahanna.gov](mailto:karen.angelou@gahanna.gov)

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

December 15, 2023

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MORPC Highlights:



- **Passenger Rail Announcement** – The Federal Railroad Administration has approved two applications for Central Ohio to be part of the Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program, a comprehensive planning and development program that will help guide intercity passenger rail development throughout the country and create a pipeline of projects to support future service. The two applications will provide Central Ohio with \$500,000 for each project to expand passenger rail service which will include the Cleveland-Columbus-Cincinnati-Dayton Corridor (3C+D) and the Midwest Connect (Chicago-Fort Wayne-Columbus-Pittsburgh), a critical first step in bringing passenger rail back to the region. The last passenger train pulled out of Columbus in 1979. Since then, the region has grown exponentially, adding more than a quarter million residents in the last decade. [More information here.](#)

(Passenger Rail Media Coverage – links listed at the end of this report)

- **State of the Region** – Friday, March 15th from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Hilton Columbus Downtown. Award nominations and registration are now open for the 2024 State of the Region! Nominations close on Friday, December 29, 2023. [More information here.](#)
- **US EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG)** – is a US Environmental Protection Agency program that supports strategies for reducing greenhouse gases and improving air quality. Central Ohio has already received \$1 million to support these goals. The CPRG program has two phases. The first planning phase requires a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) due March 1, 2024. In the second phase, \$4.6 billion will be available through competitive grants nationwide to implement the climate action plan objectives. Currently, MORPC is developing a regional application for this competitive phase two grant. [More information here.](#)

- **Drive Investment Portal** - MORPC is committed to supporting the region around available funding opportunities across a series of program areas. The Drive Investment Portal is a MORPC member-oriented tool that is designed to help Central Ohio communities learn about available funding opportunities. This portal holds information on active and forecasted grant and loan programs from federal, state, and local organizations. This tool is designed to account for a variety of projects with various levels of funding needs. [More information here.](#)
- **MORPC Legislative Update** – Includes analysis and information on the following topics: “FRA Designates Central Ohio for Passenger Rail Expansion,” “Recreational Marijuana Legal, But Modifications to Law on Horizon,” and “Virtual Meetings Legislation Passes Ohio House” [More information here.](#)

#### Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- **DATA DAY 2024** – Wednesday, February 7, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Ohio University Dublin. [More information here.](#)
- **GOVERNING ESSENTIALS FOR LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS** – Hosted by the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service. Beginning Friday, March 1, 2024 at OU Dublin and Online. Designed for newly elected officials (or experienced officials seeking a refresher), this introductory series promotes a high-level of understanding of topics essential to services as a local council, board, or commission member. [More information here.](#)



MID-OHIO REGIONAL  
**MORPC**  
PLANNING COMMISSION

111 Liberty St., Suite 111  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
[www.morpc.org](http://www.morpc.org)

## **FRA/Passenger Rail Announcement Media Coverage**

(Updated: 12/11/2023)

### **BUSINESS FIRST OF COLUMBUS**

[Amtrak service in Ohio lands federal funding - Columbus Business First \(bizjournals.com\)](http://bizjournals.com)

### **COLUMBUS UNDERGROUND**

[Ohio Chosen for Amtrak Expansion - Columbus Underground](#)

### **WBNS-10TV**

[Plans announced to expand Amtrak in Ohio | 10tv.com](http://10tv.com)

### **SCIOTO POST**

[Passenger Rail One Step Closer to Returning to Central Ohio after 40 Years - Scioto Post](#)

### **CBUS TODAY**

[Columbus included in \\$1 million Amtrak expansion funding - CBUS today \(6amcity.com\)](http://6amcity.com)

### **WSYX-ABC6**

[Amtrak expansion could include more routes connecting Ohio cities | WSYX \(abc6onyourside.com\)](http://abc6onyourside.com)

### **CLEVELAND.COM**

[Proposed Amtrak route linking Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati wins key federal funding for future planning](#)

### **WKYC**

[Amtrak expansion in Ohio may become reality after state receives federal funds for 4 corridors, including Cleveland-Columbus-Cincinnati](#)

### **LIMA NEWS**

[Lima passenger rail route wins planning funds](#)

### **QFM96**

[One step closer to passenger rail returning to Columbus - QFM96](#)

**William Murdock, AICP**  
Executive Director

**Chris Amorose Groomes**  
Interim Chair

**Michelle Crandall**  
Interim Vice Chair

**Ben Kessler**  
Interim Secretary



**SPECTRUM 1 NEWS**

[Impact of rail line connecting Ohio's largest cities \(spectrumnews1.com\)](https://www.spectrumnews1.com)

**WOUB PUBLIC MEDIA**

[Ohio Amtrak expansion expected to bring jobs, revenue - WOUB](#)

**DELAWARE GAZETTE**

[Passenger rail step closer to returning to central Ohio - Delaware Gazette \(delgazette.com\)](https://www.delgazette.com)

**TIMES REPORTER**

[Very excited: Local leaders support expansion of Amtrak passenger service in eastern Ohio](#)

**PITTSBURGH UNION PROGRESS**

[All aboard! Passenger rail expansion took big step forward last week](#)

**AMTRAK MEDIA**

[Amtrak and partners receive federal grants to improve and expand passenger access across America](#)

**MARYSVILLE JOURNAL TRIBUNE**

[Amtrak expansion will include Marysville – Marysville Journal-Tribune \(marysvillejt.com\)](https://www.marysvillejt.com)

**PROGRESSIVE RAILROADING**

[Amtrak, passenger-rail advocates laud FRA grants to improve, expand service](#)

**INSIDE INDIANA BUSINESS**

[INDOT to study expansion of Indy to Chicago train service](#)

**AXIOS COLUMBUS**

[Here's what is next for Ohio passenger rail plans - Axios Columbus](#)

