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

September 16, 2024

Highlights

- **MORPC Commission/Committee Meeting:**
 - MORPC held its monthly commission and committee meetings on Thursday, September 12, 2024. [More information here.](#)
 - Next meeting – October 10, 2024.

- **MORPC Awarded \$15 Million EV Infrastructure Grant**
 - MORPC was recently awarded a \$15 million Charging and Fueling Infrastructure grant from the Federal Highway Administration. These funds will catalyze over 400 new EV charging ports all across our region and improve EV accessibility. You can read more in our press release [here](#).

- **Register for the Summit on Sustainability**
 - Registration is now open for MORPC's premier annual environmental conference, the Summit on Sustainability, October 29, 2024. This year's Summit will be headlined by city planner and author Jeff Speck. Tickets are limited and are expected to sell out - get yours before they're gone! More information [here](#).

Legislative Update:

- While statehouse lawmakers remain on summer break, Congress faces another looming budget deadline. Meanwhile, the H2Ohio program bears fruit in Delaware County, and ODOT Director Jack Marchbanks announces he is stepping down.

- **Bills to Watch**
 - House Bill 2 - One-Time Strategic Community Investment Fund (OTSCIF) - Makes capital appropriations for FY 2025-2026 from state bond funds and the \$700 million OTSCIF created in House Bill 33. Status: Effective (6/28/2024)

- House Bill 315 - Revise the Township Law - Omnibus bill making numerous minor modifications to township law. Due to MORPC advocacy, now includes housing technical assistance funding opportunity for all political subdivisions. Status: Passed by the House (6/26/2024)
- House Bill 536 - Seat Belts, Primary Offense - Makes failure to wear a seat belt and failure to properly secure a child in an appropriate booster seat or seat belt a primary offense. Status: 3rd Hearing in House Criminal Justice Committee (6/25/2024)
- House Bill 340 - Employee Mobility Grant Program - Creates a grant for employers in rural counties to hire charter transportation services for employees. Status: 3rd Hearing in House Economic & Workforce Development Committee (6/18/2024)
- House Bill 79 - Permit Electric Distribution - Utilities to Establish Energy Efficiency Programs Permits electric distribution utilities to establish voluntary energy efficiency and demand reduction portfolios, subject to approval of the PUCO. Status: Passed by the House (6/26/2024)

Member Benefit of the Month: Data and Mapping Services:

- MORPC's data & mapping staff specialize in the sharing of data using commercial and open-source data. Our member governments are able to request eight hours of free data and mapping services by emailing dataandmaps@morpc.org.

Watch Our Update on the 15-County Water Study

- MORPC is in the process of conducting a region-wide study on our water resources to inform our members and partners of current and future needs and management options. Click [here](#) to watch our second update meeting from August 28, 2024, to hear the latest!

Grant of the Month: Railroad Crossing Elimination Program

- The USDOT Railroad Crossing Elimination Program provides funds to eliminate at-grade crossings and provide safer passage for freight rail and motor vehicles. The Ohio Rail Development Commission is requesting that applicants for the USDOT program also participate in the Ohio Grade Crossing Elimination Program, where applicants can receive additional planning and technical assistance for their applications. Learn more about the USDOT program [here](#).

Money Mondays: How to Access One-Time Strategic Community Investment Funds with OBM Director Kimberly Murnieks

- This past Monday, Office of Budget and Management Director Kimberly Murnieks joined the Drive Investment team for a special Money Mondays, in which she detailed the state budget process and provided helpful information on how to access One-Time Strategic Community Investment Funds in House Bill 2. You can re-watch the full conversation [here](#)! Upcoming Money Monday sessions include:
 - September 16 – Affordable Housing Efforts – Vincent R. Coleman, Columbus Realtors
 - September 23 – Sustainability Projects – Chad Gibson, City of Upper Arlington

- September 30 – Findlay Formula for Economic Development – Dan Sheaffer, City of Findlay/Hancock County

Upcoming Events

- **Long Street Bridge & Cultural Wall 10-Year Celebration**
Wednesday, September 18, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

On July 10, 2014, the newly reconstructed Long Street bridge was unveiled as part of the Ohio Department of Transportation's I 70/71 Columbus Crossroads Project. This complete street design created a unique opportunity to connect the historic King-Lincoln District and the Near East side to downtown Columbus. Join us as we commemorate a decade of the revitalized Long St. Bridge and inception of the Cultural Wall. This milestone will be honored with guest speakers, live music, local visual artists, food trucks, community resources and more.

- **Southwest Area Update Luncheon**
Wednesday, September 25, 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Jackson Township Fire Department

Wednesday, September 25, 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Jackson Township Fire Department MORPC convenes local governments to work collaboratively on short- and long-range community planning. Ideal participants include public officials, local government staff and community partners with responsibilities for transportation, development, community planning and sustainability. Communities located in and around the Southwest side of the metro area the focus. Register [here](#).

- **Safe Streets Central Ohio: Creating Vibrant Communities**
Thursday, September 26, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Wigwam Event Center

Safe Streets Central Ohio is an annual event hosted by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) in collaboration with key partners to highlight efforts throughout the region to reduce the number of traffic fatalities and severe injuries occurring on our roadways. This event provides an opportunity for local decision-makers, transportation professionals, and public health practitioners, advocates, and other partners to come together to share, learn, and network with a focus on transportation safety. Register [here](#).

- **World Rivers Day Clean-Up**
Saturday, September 28, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

MORPC is partnering with 10 other regional stakeholders to cleanup Central Ohio's rivers. With 8 different cleanup locations, there's room for everyone to join in the fun! Learn more and register [here](#).

- **Rural Forum: Zoning for the Future**
Wednesday, October 23, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Perry County Opportunity Center

This forum is focused on how to start a zoning process in communities that have little to no zoning plans. Participants will learn why effective zoning programs help preserve valuable community assets while enabling leaders to plan for the future. Registration is free to MORPC members and lunch will be provided. Nonmembers are welcome to attend at the \$15 rate. [Register here.](#)