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

May 5, 2025

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

MORPC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **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 and State Operating Budget Highlights](#).
- **Air Quality in Central Ohio**: MORPC held a virtual webinar on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, regarding air quality forecasting, its health impacts, and steps you can take to support cleaner air during ozone season.
- **Upcoming**
 - **Securing Our Energy Future: Landscape of Energy Planning**: Informational workshop on May 15, 2025, 12:30-2:30 p.m. at MORPC 111 Liberty St., Columbus, Ohio 43215 – [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](#).

DRIVE INVESTMENT

- **CAP Relaunch**: MORPC's Competitive Advantage Projects (CAP) Program will relaunch this summer, expanding opportunities for more Central Ohio communities to advance strategic investments.
- **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](#).

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- [Economic Development Academy Survey](#): MORPC is creating its first Economic Development Academy and requests your insights.
- **Educational Benefits for MORPC Members**: MORPC and Franklin University held an informational session on April 29, 2025, to learn about educational benefits and programs available to MORPC members and their associates.
- [Housing Technical Assistance Program](#): The Ohio Department of Development will offer \$10,000–\$100,000 grants for comprehensive plan or zoning updates, open to villages, cities, townships, counties, and regional planning organizations, starting April 22, 2025, until May 16 or until \$2 million is allocated.
- [Leaders Listen Survey Results](#): MORPC’s Leaders Listen survey found top concerns were housing costs, job opportunities, and childcare, with priorities on affordable housing and small business support.
- [MORPC Commute Action Fund](#): The MORPC Commute Action Fund offers \$2,500–\$5,000 awards for companies in the 15-county region to match spending on sustainable commuter benefits, with a rolling application deadline
- [MORPC Freight Planning](#): Central Ohio’s proximity to key markets and freight assets, like Rickenbacker Airport, supports over 20,500 freight-reliant businesses employing 351,000 people. Enhancing the freight network is vital for continued economic growth.
- **MORPC Hosts Peer Exchange with SEMCOG**: MORPC hosted Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) for a peer exchange, sharing insights on EDD work and strategies to strengthen regional development.
- [Natureworks](#): The Ohio Department of Natural Resources' NatureWorks program offers \$150,000 per county for local governments to fund park acquisition, development, or rehabilitation projects, with applications due by June 2, 2025.
- **Ohio House Advances Brownfield Funding in Budget**: The Ohio House of Representatives passed its budget, including \$125 million annually for brownfield cleanup; more highlights are anticipated as Senate discussions begin on the budget.
- **Passenger Rail News**: Sign up for quarterly updates on passenger rail; [read more](#).
- **Regional Sustainability Agenda**: MORPC held an information session on April 23, 2025, about a collaborative effort to shape a sustainable future for Central Ohio.
- [Safe Streets and Roads for All](#): The U.S. Department of Transportation's Safe Streets and Roads for All program offers \$982.26 million in funding for safety planning and implementation projects, with applications due by June 26, 2025, open to metropolitan planning organizations, local governments, and federally recognized tribes.
- **Tell MORPC Your Story**: As MORPC establishes an Economic Development District, they ask for members to share ongoing projects and future priorities. Contact MORPC at economicdevelopment@morpc.org and economicdevelopment@morpc.org.

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.

- **May 19: Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program** – Charles A. Dietz, Community Program Director, United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development, Ohio Office
- **May 12: Air Quality and Funding** – Brandi Whetstone, MORPC
- **May 5: Data to Support New Federal Priorities** – Adam Porr, MORPC

[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.](#)
