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

December 2, 2024

MORPC BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

- Next meeting [December 12, 2024](#)
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HIGHLIGHTS

- MORPC'S 2025 DATA DAY REGISTRATION OPEN

On Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2025, MORPC holds its third annual Data Day. This year's event, *Making Impacts Through Trust in Data*, includes opportunities to learn how the region promotes data-driven decision making and how various communities use data, secure, govern and visualize data. Call for session proposals closes on Saturday, Nov. 30.

[Learn more about Data Day, register or submit a proposal here.](#)

- ED 411 REGISTRATION OPEN

Registration is now open for Economic Development 411 (ED 411) hosted by One Columbus and the Mid-Ohio Development Exchange. This year's event, that takes place on December 6, 2024, will include a variety of breakout sessions and keynote addresses from Kevin Kelley, Principal at Shook Kelley, and Peter Goodman, Global Economic Correspondent.

[You can get tickets to the event here.](#)

- HELP MORPC MONITOR AIR QUALITY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

MORPC is looking for locations to host air quality sensors. Ideal sites have outdoor Wi-Fi access, an outdoor plug, and space to mount a sensor using zip ties or screws. If your home, business, or place of worship qualifies, consider supporting this vital program.

[Contact airquality@morpc.org](mailto:airquality@morpc.org)

- **SHAPE THE FUTURE OF PASSENGER RAIL IN OHIO**

MORPC is working with partners from Fort Wayne, IN, to Pittsburgh, PA to bring passenger rail to the region. Now, the State of Ohio Rail Plan wants you to weigh in on the state's rail system. Review Ohio's existing rail infrastructure and share how passenger rail could enhance the state's multimodal transportation network. Shape the future of rail in our region: [share your input](#).

- **\$4.9 MILLION AWARDED FOR GREEN SPACE AND WATERWAYS**

Five projects in Franklin County have been awarded \$4.9 million for environmental conservation through the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund to support the preservation of green space and the protection of waterways. District 3 NRAC also is seeking nominations for three board vacancies. Nominations are due Friday, Dec. 20. [Read more](#).

- **MORPC APPLIES FOR USEPA BROWNFIELDS GRANT**

MORPC's economic development team has submitted an application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for \$500,000 Communitywide Assessment Grant. Funds would go toward phase 1 and 2 assessments, cleanup planning, and other assessment activities. Projects across MORPC's 15-county region would be eligible to participate if awarded. Awards are expected to be announced mid-2025.

- **JOIN THE MORPC TEAM**

Looking for a new career? MORPC is hiring! MORPC recognizes the value of a healthy work-life balance for their team members and as such, they provide a variety of benefits to promote that balance. Learn more about positions available at MORPC. [Read more](#).

MEMBER BENEFIT OF THE MONTH: ODOT PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE SPECIAL SOLICITATION

- Department: Ohio Department of Transportation
- Applications can be submitted any time and are awarded quarterly. Reviews take place in January, April, July, and October
- Eligible applicants: Political subdivisions and non-profits with support from a political subdivision
- Eligible projects: Plans and studies, data collection, education and promotion, short term infrastructure, traditional infrastructure

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- **DRIVE INVESTMENT PORTAL**

Curated and regularly updated by MORPC staff, the Drive Investment Portal tool provides up-to-date information on forthcoming funding opportunities for our local governments, including NOFOs, deadlines, and eligibility information. Have questions? Specialized MORPC staff are listed with each opportunity to help you with your application. [Click here to enter.](#)

- **GRANT FINDER SERVICE**

- MORPC provides a one-of-a-kind opportunity for each member government to be able to access a GrantFinder service, which tracks over 10,000 grants. GrantFinder is a real-time, online, searchable database of 60 billion dollars' worth of sources from federal, state, foundations, and corporate grants available to local governments and their community partners.
- The service allows a representative to search the site with filters, dates, and links to application information, as well as a system to receive updates and weekly alerts on specific categories of grants. Contact Eileen Leuby (eleuby@morpc.org) for more information.

- **ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES**

- [Advanced Energy Fund Grant - Available Funding: \\$8.5 million](#)
- [Rural Housing Site Loans - Available Funding: 5 Year loan with 3%, or below market rate, interest rate](#)
- [Recycle Ohio - Available Funding: Awards will range from \\$10,000 - \\$300,000](#)
- [Local and Regional Project Assistance Grants \(RAISE\)](#)
- [Click here to explore additional funding opportunities.](#)

- **REGIONWIDE INITIATIVES**

- In addition to providing members better access to funding opportunities, MORPC is a key partner on several regionwide grant applications to draw down federal funds for Central Ohio. Click the links below to read more:
 - [HUD PRO Housing Grant & Regional Housing Strategy](#)
 - [USDOT SMART Grant](#)
 - [USDOT Grants – LinkUS West Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit Corridor](#)
 - [USEPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant \(CPRG\)](#)

- **INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT (IIJA)**

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) was signed into law on November 15, 2021. This legislation is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Central Ohio and MORPC stands ready to bring this investment back to its members. Based on formula funding alone, Ohio would expect to receive \$9.2 billion for federal-aid highway apportioned programs and \$483 million for bridge replacement over the next five years. There are

numerous other funding opportunities, from earmarks to broadband grants to RAISE grants and more, that could have a transformative impact on your community and MORPC is here to help. As a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and a Regional Council, MORPC is uniquely positioned to provide assistance in finding and competing for these needed dollars. Therefore, MORPC is creating an intergovernmental investment team and hiring a grants officer that will be dedicated to bringing this investment back to our region. The following links provide additional information on the Bipartisan Infrastructure, MORPC funding opportunities, and other resources. You can also find relevant IJA opportunities in the [Drive Investment Portal](#).

- [Build.gov](#)
- [Bipartisan IJA Bill Summary \[26\]](#)
- [OHIO Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act State Fact Sheet](#)
- [Full Bill Text, Titles](#)
- [Federal Highway Administration IJA Resource Page](#)
- [November 18, 2021, MORPC Membership Bipartisan Member Update](#)
- [RAISE Grant](#)
- [Building a Better America – Competitive Infrastructure Funding Opportunities for Local Governments](#)
- [Rural Infrastructure Playbook](#)

- **INFLATION REDUCTION ACT (IRA)**

The Inflation Reduction Act was signed into law on August 16, 2022. This legislation created numerous new opportunities for clean energy investments both in the private and public sectors. At MORPC, energy and sustainability staff are hard at work to leverage these new opportunities. Whether it's rooftop solar, electric vehicle infrastructure, or energy efficiency programs, there has never been a better time to prioritize environmentally sustainable energy sources and practices. Find out more about these funding sources at the links below or check out our [Drive Investment Portal](#).

- [CleanEnergy.gov](#)
- [IRA Guidebook](#)
- [Bill Analysis and Bill Text](#)
- [IRA Miniguide from Urban Sustainability Directors Network \(December 2022\)](#)

- **SHARE YOUR PRIORITIES**

As MORPC moves toward establishing an Economic Development District, they value your willingness to partner with them by sharing your ongoing projects and future priorities. Building a competitive pipeline of projects is key to leveraging federal funding. Contact them at: economicdevelopment@morpc.org.

- **TELL YOUR STORY**

Do you have a project you are proud of that you would like to share with the region? Send a narrative of your project to MORPC's Regional Investment Officer, Dr. Todd Bradley (tbradley@morpc.org) to be featured in a future Drive Investment newsletter

UPCOMING EVENTS

- [ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 411 \(ED 411\) – DECEMBER 6, 2024](#)
 - [THIRD ANNUAL DATA DAY – FEBRUARY 5, 2025](#)
 - [STATE OF THE REGION – MARCH 21, 2025](#)
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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.

- **Dec. 2:** Brandi Whetstone, Director of Sustainability, MORPC - Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grants
- **Dec. 9:** Ukeme Awakessien Jeter, Mayor & Council President, City of Upper Arlington – State and Federal Funding for Priority Projects in Upper Arlington
- **Dec. 16:** Small Surface Water and Groundwater Storage Projects (Small Storage Program)

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.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Vision Zero: To End Fatal Crashes](#)
 - [Mobility Management](#)
 - [Addressing Growth with MORPC](#)
 - [Benchmarking Central Ohio - Part 1: Population Vitality & Economic Strength](#)
 - [Gohio Commute TDM Hub](#)
 - [Weatherization and Home Repair](#)
 - [LinkUs Newsletter](#)
 - [Workforce Mobility Solutions](#)
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