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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Central Ohio Commuters Take Advantage of Transit, Make Dent in Air Pollution

(COLUMBUS – June 20) The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA), car2go and CoGo have announced the impact that the inaugural Central Ohio Commuter Challenge has had since starting June 1, 2016. By choosing sustainable modes of transportation, participants are reducing vehicular congestion and improving air quality throughout the region.

While the City of Columbus awaits the U.S. Department of Transportation’s decision on the Smart City Challenge, local commuters are already taking action to shift modes to more alternative and sustainable transportation options. More than 540 people have already participated in the Central Ohio Commuter Challenge, causing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) to be reduced by 46,164 miles. Participation in the challenge has also reduced the amount of tailpipe greenhouse gas emissions by 35,823 pounds.

The Central Ohio Commuter Challenge encourages commuters to vanpool, carpool, take the bus, walk and bike to work, social events and other locations in an effort to reduce congestion and improve air quality. The campaign is targeted toward all of Central Ohio, with an emphasis on downtown employees and residents, young professionals, and new transit users.

“I started making a point to walk or bike to work a few times a week. It started out as a way to fit some exercise into days that I had a busy evening. Now I enjoy my daily commute so much more that I usually pick walking or biking to work as the default mode of transportation,” said Letty Schamp, a Hilliard resident. “So far this month I have walked, biked or taken transit every day. I feel great, and I use considerably less gas in my car. I plan to continue my healthier and more sustainable commute long after the challenge ends.”

Schamp was the first of many participants to win a prize for choosing a sustainable travel mode. After signing up at MakeYourMilesMatter.com, individuals who log their sustainable commutes are entered into a daily drawing for a \$20 gift card to such places as Café Briosio, Jeni’s, Kroger, North Market, Target and World Market. Each day a participant logs his or her sustainable commute, they also earn an entry into the grand prize drawing for either a \$500 Visa card, \$200 Visa card, or a free Chipotle entrée every week for a year.

The Commuter Challenge will conclude at the end of the month, with a celebration to be held at noon on July 6, 2016 at the Columbus Commons. The first 100 attendees will receive complimentary Jeni’s ice cream, with discounts thereafter. The celebration is free and open to the public.