



Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission 2012 Public Policy Agenda

Lead–Opportunities for legislative and public policy leadership

Objective 1: Promote regionalism at the local, state and federal levels of government in order to promote economic prosperity and a high quality of life for central Ohio residents.

- Advocate policy and legislation that encourages local governments to collaborate, enhance infrastructure, protect natural resources by responsible planning and zoning, provide efficiencies and cost savings, and increase economic development to strengthen the region.
- Promote state designation and recognition of metropolitan planning organizations and their regional approach to transportation planning and funding.
- Work with our regional partners to identify significant projects and grant opportunities to benefit the region.
- Promote State tax and budget policies that are business friendly while also ensuring the ability to provide vital local government services to residents.

ACTION STEPS:

- Identify successful cooperative arrangements in central Ohio and elsewhere, which reduce the cost of local governments to provide services, and advance these cooperative arrangements in central Ohio.
- Educate members of the General Assembly about the benefits and complexities of local tax and resource sharing and advocate for alternative approaches and the elimination of barriers that stand in the way.
- Meet regularly with our state and federal legislative delegation in an effort to inform and educate them about the benefits of regionalism and the vital role played by local government in the provision of critical services.
- Participate in coalitions and partnerships for MORPC local government members to understand, engage and better position themselves for federal funding through appropriations bills, grants and other possible options.
- Promote the alignment of state and regional district boundaries.



Objective 2: Promote multimodal transportation and maintain, improve and expand transportation infrastructure to advance the safety, security and economic vitality of central Ohio.

- Seek additional revenue and alternative, long term funding mechanisms for transportation at local, state and federal levels. MORPC will lead the region in discussions of the reauthorization of the federal transportation bill and work collaboratively with the Columbus Chamber Logistics Council and state and national partners on this initiative.
- Advocate a regional vision for transportation for our residents that encompasses a broad spectrum of options including intra-and inter-city passenger rail, transit, light rail, rideshare, biking, walking and cars.
- Identify legislative and policy changes needed to achieve the vision for central Ohio's future transportation system.

ACTION STEPS:

- Articulate and advocate for key state transportation priorities, including adequate funding for transportation infrastructure, long term stable funding for transit, walking and bicycling and conducting a state study in parallel to the federal study on the future of the gas tax.
- Articulate to Congress and the Administration central Ohio's position on key components of federal transportation authorization, including the necessity of full funding for transportation authorization and full funding and local flexibility for Transportation Enhancements.
- Include in the next biennium transportation budget a permissive increase in vehicle licensing fees to provide local communities with a tool to maintain their transportation infrastructure.
- Participate in the development and implementation of infrastructure and deployment strategies of alternative fuels, including Compressed Natural Gas and Plug-In Electric Vehicles, which will help position Ohio and central Ohio to become leaders in the Midwest for manufacturing, economic development, research and preparation to meet the needs of alternatively-fueled and hybrid vehicle users.
- Work with the State on developing public and private transportation projects in our region.
- Support local communities' efforts to make travel by all users safer through Complete Streets and similar policies.
- Encourage establishing a Transportation Caucus in our state legislature with our statewide partners.



Objective 3: Preserve and protect natural resources to maintain a healthy environment and promote prosperity.

- Maintain air quality attainment in central Ohio and find innovative means to reduce emissions and protect public health by working with local, state and federal partners.
- Support appropriations for the Clean Ohio Fund.
- Promote local food systems. Specifically, ensure that the economic and environmental benefits of local food systems and farmland preservation are integrated into state policy.

ACTION STEPS:

- Update state land-use policies to encourage local comprehensive plans, zoning, density, farmland preservation and urban revitalization.
 - Promote transfer of development rights (TDR) and statewide legislation to create this tool for communities.
- Encourage urban agriculture, food-waste composting, rain gardens and other sustainability measures through model ordinances and removal of regulatory barriers.
- Encourage state and local agencies and institutions, including school districts and universities, to support Ohio agribusiness by showing a preference for Ohio grown food products to keep food dollars in Ohio.
- Re-establish some form of the Ohio Food Policy Advisory Council and the Ohio Neighborhood Harvest program and strengthen programs, like Ohio Proud, which promote Ohio-grown and processed foods.
- Advocate for continuation of state and federal programs that reduce emissions from vehicles and heavy-construction equipment to address the impact on local air quality.



Objective 4: Promote the reduction of per capita energy consumption and the production of energy from renewable local sources to increase affordability and resilience of regional energy supplies.

- Promote energy efficiency and conservation, as well as renewable and alternative energy.
- Develop model ordinances, regulations and policies to remove local government barriers to the deployment and utilization of energy efficient technologies and renewable energy systems.
- Coordinate and create new policies to ensure job growth in new, emerging fields of energy and environment.

Objective #4 ACTION STEPS:

- Extend energy efficient residential programs so that more individuals may benefit from the programs.



Collaborate - Opportunities to form coalitions with like-minded organizations

Agriculture

Support farmland preservation as a way to promote better land use, protect waterways and strengthen local economies. Work with other organizations to educate citizens and public officials about the importance of agriculture and farmland. Encourage sustainable practices that provide locally produced food, feed, fiber and fuel.

Energy & Environment

- In co-operation with its partners, work for the success of Columbus Hub of Advanced Energy Manufacturing and Storage.
 - Renewable energy and energy storage component manufacturing
 - Infrastructure needs for the Hub area
 - Facilitate planning for electric car charging station locations
 - Encourage proliferation of plug-in electric vehicles
- Educate and prepare MORPC members and policy-makers for future climate change legislation.
- Promote changes in state law to modernize land-use regulations and planning tools as a way to promote sustainable growth; preserve sensitive natural areas; assist farmers in protecting productive farmland; and reduce energy consumption.
- Work with the Columbus Advanced Logistics Council to establish a Rickenbacker Green Energy Zone Collaborative so the industry becomes less fossil fuel dependant with actions that help meet clean air standards.
- Advocate for steady improvements to Ohio's building codes over time to meet new international code so that all new buildings are increasingly efficient providing significant savings on energy bills and reduce energy usage and energy production.
- Educate members on the issues regarding hydraulic fracturing.
- Advocate to maintain the renewable energy requirements in SB 221 passed by the 127th General Assembly.

Economic Development

- Promote a robust economy for the region and actively collaborate to achieve national and state policies and funding to achieve this goal.



- In collaboration with MODE, Columbus 2020! and other economic development administrators within the region, develop an economic development plan that will allow central Ohio to be eligible for Economic Development Agency funds.
- Support continued development of the regional “inland port” concept including intermodal facilities, rail, and other freight investments.
- Advocate for the continuation of ODOT’s efforts to support Ohio’s economy and its communities by transforming Ohio’s road, rail, transit, maritime, air and bicycle/pedestrian transportation assets into one, fully integrated, technically-advanced system.
- Support JobsOhio and Columbus2020 for the purposes of regional economic development while working with state and local governments.
- Preserve Third Frontier Funding.
- Cooperate with local and state partners in developing a capable, qualified, and robust workforce.
- Support the recommendations of the MORPC Local Government Review Working Group pertaining to economic development.

Housing

- Advocate for the continued funding of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund.
- Support continuation of state and federal new market tax credits for low to moderate income housing projects.
- Develop policies and programs at the regional and state level that would make energy efficiency improvements even more affordable to Ohio families and their homes.
- Work with regional and statewide partners to secure additional funding for foreclosure counseling at the state and federal levels.
- Advocate for the enactment of the federal PACE Protection Act of 2011 or comparable legislation for all units of government.
- Collaborate with others to create state policies and programs that promote independent living for central Ohio seniors and people with disabilities.

Land Use & Planning

- Work with others to review or develop new statewide planning legislation.

Transportation

- Advocate for legislation and policies that improve driver safety in Ohio.
 - Advocate for an Ohio Primary Seat Belt Law to reduce traffic crash fatalities, prevent injuries and reduce the economic costs associated with crashes.
 - Support state and local legislation to reduce distracted driving.



- Work with ODOT and local communities and stakeholders to advance central Ohio's major transportation projects to Tier I of the TRAC process.
- Support the continuation of ODOT's Office of Innovation, Partnerships, and Energy, which seeks to create prosperity and jobs for the state, and to make Ohio a leader through its innovative projects and research on emerging technologies and support for Ohio businesses.



Follow - Opportunities to express support for a broader set of issues

- Improve financial stability of our region's low and moderate income households.
- Support initiatives for statewide implementation of 2-1-1.
- Ensure that we have a workforce ready and able to meet employers' needs today and into the future.
- Encourage local, state and federal public officials to implement policies that make it easier for individuals and businesses to buy and redevelop vacant and abandoned property.

For more information:

Laura Koprowski, Director of Public & Government Affairs
Lkoprowski@morpc.org
614-233-4126

Include along with our website, these ways to follow MORPC news and events:

