



Contact: **Bernice Cage**
Tel.: 614-233-4157
Cell Phone: 614-626-1117
Email: bcage@morpc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Columbus, Ohio lands the National Safe Routes to School Three-Day Conference

(Columbus-February 4, 2015) The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), the [Safe Routes to School National Partnership](#) and the [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#) are pleased to announce that the fifth Safe Routes to School National Conference will be held in Columbus, Ohio. The event, sponsored by these two national organizations and hosted by MORPC will take place April 5-7, 2016 at the Hilton Columbus Downtown.

Safe Routes to School is a national and international movement to create safe, convenient and fun opportunities for children to bicycle and walk to and from schools, and it can also play a critical role in providing more physical activity and enhancing traffic safety.

"MORPC is excited to host the 2016 National Safe Routes to School Conference. We are proud to partner with the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, the National Center for Safe Routes to School, the Ohio Department of Transportation and the City of Columbus on this conference," states William Murdock, MORPC Executive Director. "We have promoted Safe Routes to School since 2009 and are proud of the progress that has been made in Central Ohio to provide a safe environment for children to walk and bike to school safely."

"The Safe Routes to School National Conference is an essential opportunity to join hundreds of advocates and supporters from around the country for networking and sharing best practices. We are excited to leverage the leadership and expertise of MORPC and community partners in Central Ohio in hosting what is sure to be a fantastic event," said Margo Pedroso, deputy director of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership. "We look forward to bringing together advocates, policy makers, school officials, and everyone interested in the health and safety of our children to experience all Columbus has to offer for walking, bicycling, Safe Routes to School and healthy community design."

"MORPC's commitment to safe, more walkable communities is great fit for the goals of Safe Routes to School and the National Conference," said Lauren Marchetti, director of the National Center for Safe Routes to School. "We are happy to see the diversity of organizations represented at this event and are excited for an innovative conference program and speakers."

-more-

Working to Build a Better Region

**111 Liberty Street, Suite 100
Columbus, Ohio 43215-5222
Phone (614) 228-2663 Fax (614) 621-2401
www.morpc.org**

2-2-2

The conference brings together program representatives, state departments of transportation, planners, elected officials, and community members to provide an opportunity for individuals, agencies, and organizations involved with Safe Routes to School to network, engage in educational opportunities, become inspired, and form partnerships to enhance their Safe Routes to School work.

Obtaining the conference was very competitive as MORPC and its partners competed against several cities across the country known for their support of bicycling and walking. The last Safe Routes to School National Conference, held in Sacramento, California, had more than 600 participants in attendance, and was a resounding success. To learn more about the 2013 conference, visit www.saferoutesconference.org.

-30-

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is a voluntary association of local governments and regional organizations which envisions and embraces innovative directions in economic prosperity, energy, the environment, housing, land use, and transportation. Our transformative programming, services and innovative public policy are designed to promote and support the vitality and growth in the region.

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership is a nonprofit organization that improves the quality of life for kids and communities by promoting active, healthy lifestyles and safe infrastructure that supports bicycling and walking. We advance policy change; catalyze support for safe, active and healthy communities with a network of more than 700 partner organizations; and we share our deep expertise at national, state and local levels with those who are helping propel our mission forward. Founded in 2005, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership's mission is to advance safe walking and bicycling to and from schools, and in daily life, to improve the health and well-being of America's children and to foster the creation of livable, sustainable communities. For more information, please visit www.saferoutespartnership.org.

The National Center for Safe Routes to School, which serves as the clearinghouse for the federal Safe Routes to School program, assists communities in enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bicycle to school. Established in May 2006, the National Center strives to equip Safe Routes to School programs with the knowledge and technical information to implement safe and successful strategies. The National Center is maintained by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center with funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. For more information, please visit www.saferoutesinfo.org.