



TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS



Fall
2005

A Publication of Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

Introduction: Transportation Connections is designed to inform the public of MORPC's work to develop the Long Range Regional Transportation Plan (Tplan). The Tplan helps local governments in the region better coordinate transportation improvements and is required by federal law for central Ohio to obtain federal funding for transportation projects.

This issue includes an insert on the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) Long Range Plan. MORPC and COTA work closely together since transit is a component of the regional transportation system and COTA's long and short range planning efforts are included in the Tplan.

MORPC Adopts Goals for Regional Transportation Plan

The first step in determining central Ohio's transportation needs is to identify what is important to the region. This determines regional priorities and how we should spend our regional transportation dollars to meet those priorities.

MORPC, along with input from advisory committees and the general public, recently updated the goals and objectives for the region's transportation system to guide the development of the next transportation plan.

During the transportation planning process, these goals and objectives will be used to develop criteria for evaluating proposed transportation projects and programs. The resulting evaluations help determine the projects and programs that are most necessary and appropriate for our region and are to be included in the Tplan and eligible for federal funding.

A brief summary of the goals and objectives are listed. For a more complete overview of these goals, visit the MORPC website at transportation.morpc.org.

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REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

VISION: A transportation system that enhances environmental, social and economic well being of the region.

Goal I: Provide a safe, secure and efficient transportation system

- 🚗 Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.
- 🚗 Ensure infrastructure and development are built concurrently.
- 🚗 Use technology to better inform the public of real-time travel options.
- 🚗 Design travel ways for appropriate speeds and desired volumes of traffic.
- 🚗 Prioritize projects that result from a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional process.

Goal II: Provide an accessible transportation system with a range of choices

- 🚗 Provide facilities for desired levels of pedestrian, bicycle and transit travel.
- 🚗 Ensure connection of facilities to the regional transportation network.
- 🚗 Ensure simple and convenient intermodal connections for both passenger travel and freight movement.
- 🚗 Prioritize infrastructure that minimizes automobile travel.

Goal III: Protect the social, environmental and economic well being of the citizens of the region

- 🚗 Prioritize infrastructure for developments that minimize the need for automobile travel.
- 🚗 Advance projects that do not shift economic activity away from developed areas.
- 🚗 Ensure that facilities are accessible by all users.
- 🚗 Reduce transportation's contribution to regional noise, air and water quality problems.
- 🚗 Incorporate enhanced landscaping and design practices into new facilities.
- 🚗 Protect habitat, natural areas and cultural resources.
- 🚗 Reduce the transportation system's energy demands.



Transportation Plan - Goal III

MPO's Role in Air Quality

Vehicles including trucks, buses and cars have been recognized as significant contributors to air pollution. Ozone, which results from a combination of emissions from motor vehicle exhaust, and fine particular matter (PM_{2.5}), such as soot, are major problems. Both have health and other negative repercussions.

The Columbus area, along with most other urban areas, does not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, for either ozone or PM_{2.5}, making this a "non-attainment" area.

Because transportation is a major source of these pollutants, agencies such as MORPC, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) and others, have joint responsibilities to monitor and promote strategies that reduce air pollution. MORPC's responsibilities include testing whether transportation projects planned in the non-attainment area conform to state plans for reductions in pollutants.

MORPC raises awareness of the air quality problems through public information efforts. These include the air quality alerts that MORPC issues when air quality conditions are particularly bad, and information on steps to take to reduce pollution.

Transportation contributes far less to air pollution than it once did. With continued work, air quality will continue to improve.

Contact David Abel at (614)233-4197 or visit airquality.morpc.org for information.

Transportation Plan - Goal II

Sharing the Ride (and Avoiding the Gas Station)

Do you dread filling up at the gas station? Have you been tied-up in traffic on central Ohio's roadways? If so, then you understand the drawbacks to frequent driving and the need to budget wisely to get the most out of both personal and public finances.

Transportation demand management (TDM) strategies are techniques to reduce transportation costs and traffic congestion by reducing travel during rush-hour and other busy times. These techniques help to better match the number of people and vehicles trying to travel with the amount of space available on our roads. Transit is one example of a TDM strategy. Another common TDM strategy that can reduce both gasoline bills and traffic delays is to share your work commute.

Ridesharing (carpooling and vanpooling) provides benefits to both individuals and the public. Individuals save money by sharing the costs of their commute with other people. The public benefit from fewer air quality emissions and the delay or avoidance of expensive roadway expansions and projects. When you see construction, remember that that project may be the result of too many vehicles trying to use the roadway at one time. As a result of these factors, MORPC considers TDM strategies in the Tplan in order to reduce travel costs and better utilize taxpayer dollars.

MORPC promotes ridesharing by providing a car and vanpool matching service called RideSolutions. If you are interested in reducing commuting expenses and stress associated with driving, contact RideSolutions at 1 888-742-RIDE or visit the program's website for more details at: ridesolutions.morpc.org.





Transportation Plan - Goal II

MORPC Updates Regional Bikeway Plan

Bicycling provides an alternative way to get to work, school or shopping. It is particularly suited for shorter neighborhood travel. Some bicyclists choose to bike for longer-distance commuting and other trips.

Providing a safe bicycling network that connects destinations is an important goal of MORPC's transportation planning and of the Regional Bikeway Plan, which is currently being updated. A bicycle network includes separate bike paths, such as along the Olentangy River, bike lanes along existing streets such as on Schrock Road, and signed routes shared with motor vehicles.

The MORPC Regional Bikeway Plan includes a map of existing and potential routes throughout the region. The Plan also proposes policies and strategies, identifies potential funding sources and discusses MORPC's 2004 Routine Accommodations Policy. A draft plan will be available by spring 2006.

Please contact Bernice Cage at (614) 233-4157 or bcage@morpc.org for information.



614-645-PAVE

www.pavingtheway.org

One-stop-shop for
road construction information.

Update on Major Transportation Studies

I-70/I-71 South Innerbelt Study - ODOT is currently evaluating four alternatives and hoping to reduce them to one or two on both the east and south legs of the innerbelt. Further analyses are expected in 2006. For more information go to www.dot.state.oh.us/7071study/

I-270 Columbus North Central Outerbelt Study - ODOT is continuing the detailed design of the improvements of the I-270 interchanges at SR 315, US 23, I-71 and US 23 north of I-270. For more information go to www.dot.state.oh.us/I-270/

I-270/US 33 Northwest Freeway Study - The study team is identifying and evaluating solutions to address mobility and congestion problems. Initial concepts are expected to be available to the public in early 2006. Go to I270-US33.morpc.org for more information.

North Corridor Transit Project - COTA's consulting team began preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement in August 2005 which is expected to be completed by the fall of 2006. The study will evaluate different modes and alignments, assess the potential impacts and propose remedies. COTA will be holding several events to seek public input.

Far East Freeway Study - In July 2005 ODOT presented initial alternatives for mainline and interchange improvements to enhance safety and reduce congestion problems on I-70 from east of downtown to SR 256. Go to www.I-70.org for more information.

I-71 South/Grove City Major Investment Study - The study team is completing its examination and recommendations for the I-71 corridor from I-270 to the Franklin/Pickaway County line. For more information, contact Grove City at 614-277-1100.

I-270 South Major Investment Study - ODOT is studying improvements to the last four lane stretch of I-270, including the two interchanges, between US 23 and I-71 in southern Franklin County. Initial concepts are expected to be available in early 2006. For more information contact ODOT District 6 at 800-372-7714.

New Traffic Count Maps on MORPC's Website

Traffic counts are the number of motorized vehicles passing by a particular point on a roadway during a set period of time, such as 24 hours. MORPC, as the regional depository for traffic counts, produces new maps every two years showing daily traffic volumes at about 6,000 individual locations throughout central Ohio.

Traffic counts have many uses. In government, they can be used in traffic studies and analyses. These studies include monitoring traffic growth over time to determine the need for roadway improvements, adjust the timing of traffic signals, or justify the placement of new signals. Private businesses use information on how much traffic is passing by a particular site in decisions on where to locate new stores.



MORPC's traffic counts are available in a booklet (\$50), a CD (\$5), and on the MORPC website (free). Counts taken through the end of 2004 are included. Visit www.morpc.org/services.htm under the "Data & Informational Technology Services" tab or contact Jason Kaper at jkaper@morpc.org or (614) 233-4111.

Dates to Remember

Date	Time	Meeting
February 27	5:30 p.m.	Citizen Advisory Committee
April 3	5:30 p.m.	Citizen Advisory Committee
May 8	5:30 p.m.	Citizen Advisory Committee
May 23	5:30 p.m.	Certification Open House Transportation Planning Process
May 30	5:30 p.m.	Citizen Advisory Committee

All meetings are held at 285 E. Main Street, Columbus, Ohio. Visit our website at <http://calendar.morpc.org> to see a complete listing of meetings and agendas.

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