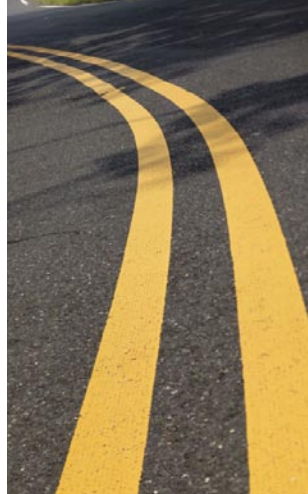


MORPC's Federal Obligation Listing Now Available

In an effort to improve the transparency of the expenditure of federal transportation funds, MORPC publishes a listing of projects using federal funds. This annual listing includes investments in pedestrian walkways, bicycle facilities, COTA transit projects, road widenings and resurfacings, bridge replacements, interstate improvements, signage, grade crossings and more. To see a complete listing, visit www.morpc.org and visit the transportation section.



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Upcoming Meetings

Citizen Advisory Committee

Monday, March 31, 5:30pm
Monday, April 28, 5:30pm

Transportation Advisory Committee

Wednesday, March 5, 9:00am
Wednesday, April 2, 9:00am
Wednesday, April 30, 9:00am

Policy Committee

Thursday, April 16, 10:00am
Thursday, May 8, 1:30pm

Special Events

Ohio Transportation Leadership Forum

Hyatt on Capitol Square, Governors Ballroom
Wednesday, March 19, 8:30am-4:00pm

CapitalWays Transportation Plan Open House

MORPC's Offices, 111 Liberty Street, Ste. 100
Thursday, April 3, 4:00pm-7:00pm

MORPC's State of the Region Luncheon Event

Hyatt Regency Ballroom at the Greater Columbus Convention Center
Wednesday, April 16, 11am-1:15pm

MORPC meetings and agendas are available at:
www.morpc.org.



TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS

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March 2008

"Capital Ways" Regional Transportation Plan

The "Capital Ways" Regional Transportation Plan is a forward-looking plan, anticipating the needs of Central Ohio through the year 2030. Predicting how busy roads will likely be, how much people will travel, and where people will be going, a regional transportation plan shows where we will need new roads and more bikeways, and the extent to which old roads will need repairs and transit service to be expanded. Because of the complexity of the transportation system, "Capital Ways" Regional Transportation Plan contains many components: safety, freight, roads, bikeways, pedestrian services, public transit, transportation maintenance, transportation security, the Intelligent Transportation Systems (which includes computerized message signs), analysis for air quality, and the forecasting of future land use.

MORPC developed the "Capital Ways" Regional Transportation Plan over the course of four years. First, transportation planners analyze land use and development data and establish the numbers and locations of people and jobs in the region. Then, they work with local governments, transit agencies, state agencies, and members of the private sector that have a role in transportation to identify transportation needs and viable projects and strategies to address them. Finally, they evaluate which of the projects and strategies best meet the transportation needs of the region within the financing expected to be available.

The "Capital Ways" Regional Transportation Plan, in particular, demonstrates a shift in focus that ultimately may transform the way residents of Central Ohio travel. "As sustainability becomes increasingly important to make our region's future successful, the transportation plan reflects a movement toward public transit and non-motorized transportation yielding financial, environmental, and health benefits for all travelers," says Chester R. Jourdan, Jr., Executive Director of MORPC. Beginning to address these issues, the "Capital Ways" Regional Transportation Plan includes such projects as an aggressive expansion of the bikeways network.



The "Capital Ways" Regional Transportation Plan demonstrates a shift in focus that ultimately may transform the way residents of Central Ohio travel.

MORPC must also contend with funding the projects outlined in the "Capital Ways" Regional Transportation Plan. Current funding sources are based on fuel use, not actual travel or use of the transportation system. As fuel economy increases and the costs of gasoline cause reductions in driving, revenues for transportation decrease. MORPC is taking a two-part approach to solve this gap in funding: (1.) work with state and national leaders to develop a new funding system that reflects actual use of the transportation system, and (2.) explore less expensive ways to expand and maintain the system.

The residents of central Ohio can do their part to help solve the region's transportation problems. "The choices we make every day, the means we use and the number of miles we travel, the number of trips we take, and where we go all directly dictate what the transportation system looks like and how sustainable it is," says Principal Planner Chris Gawronski.

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Report on Intelligent Transportation Systems

Traffic signals that are responsive to traffic movements, automatic vehicle locators and dynamic message signs are all Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). MORPC Senior Planner Kerstin Carr has been preparing a report that identifies and co-ordinates ITS throughout the region.



Although local governments oversee ITS within their own communities, there is cooperation among them. "Travelers don't care if they are travelling through different jurisdictions. They just want a continuous flow of traffic," said Carr. The Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT) dynamic message signs are located on the highway and warn drivers about changing conditions, such as traffic congestion, ramp closures, and crashes. The signs are one of the many technologies used to help ease highway congestion.

MORPC's report entitled "The Regional ITS Architecture" helps ODOT and local governments to continue to work together to improve transportation safety and efficiency. The report will be available at www.morpc.org in the near future and a summary is included in MORPC's "CapitalWays" Regional Transportation Plan.

Financing the "CapitalWays" Regional Transportation Plan

A financial plan is a key element of any transportation plan, and the "CapitalWays" Regional Transportation Plan is no exception. The financial plan takes into account projects needed and their estimated cost as well as projected sources of funding. Due to significant inflation in construction costs and a growing need for transportation improvements, the transportation system is facing the largest funding deficit ever forecasted for a central Ohio transportation plan.

Funding from federal, state, and local sources for the "CapitalWays" Regional Transportation Plan is projected at \$14.8 billion, but the need for maintenance, operation, improvement, and expansion of transportation in the region requires a great deal more funding. For instance, freeway and interchange expansion necessary to the region's economic health and growth requires \$7.4 billion in funding, but the projected funding from available sources is only \$2 billion of the \$14.8 billion.

One option to alleviate some of the deficit is to turn to new sources of funding. Federal, state, and local governments may implement a fuel tax dedicated to funding transportation projects. Governmental bodies might also initiate a new and used vehicle sales tax, traffic congestion-related fees, new tolls, or Vehicle-Miles-of-Travel (VMT) fees for the same purpose. In addition, at the local level, incentives could encourage participation in transportation funding from the private sector.



For more information contact Nick Gill at 614-233-4151 or ngill@morpc.org.

MORPC Coordinates Regional Transit Plan

Climate change and increased fuel prices are driving home the consequences of our reliance on everyone driving their own automobiles. For these reasons and to make our city more "livable" the general public and local leadership are increasingly interested in public transit. MORPC has worked with the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA), the City of Columbus street car project, Delaware Area Transit Agency (DATA), Pickaway Area Rural Transit, Licking County Transit Board, Fairfield County Lancaster Public Transit System, and Newark-Heath taxi services to help prepare plans for their agencies or to co-ordinate their activities with each other.

MORPC's "CapitalWays" Regional Transportation Plan summarizes all of the transit strategies and projects in the region and shows how they relate to other activities such as land development, walking, bicycling, and carpooling. In addition to an expanded bus system operated by COTA, the regional plan also recommends consideration of the Columbus downtown street car project. MORPC's "CapitalWays" Regional Transportation Plan gives the big picture overview of all transit related projects and strategies and how they will improve the quality of life in central Ohio," said MORPC Senior Planner Dilip Karpoor.

This compilation will help the public and local leaders understand the importance of transit and the role it plays in the region's transportation system. "This regional perspective on transit will be especially helpful in enhancing urban mobility and promoting transit-friendly land development - key factors in attracting and retaining young professionals in the region," said COTA's Vice President of Planning and Customer Service Doug Moore.

Individual transit agencies can use the plan to quickly see how their services fit with their counterparts in the region. "CapitalWays" Regional Transportation Plan including the transit component will be available for review at www.morpc.org.



Update on Major Transportation Studies

I-70/I-71 South Innerbelt Study - ODOT is recommending the use of Mound and Fulton for the south leg of the innerbelt. ODOT is also continuing to develop design enhancements that can be incorporated into the east and south side legs. Visit www.7071study.org for more information.

I-71 South/SR 665 Grove City Study - The study team selected a single-point urban interchange (the I-270/Sawmill interchange is an example) as the preferred interchange design. The study team is finishing some environmental studies to allow selection of the Haughn Road relocation option in the near future. For more information, contact Grove City at 614-277-1100.

I-270 South Major Investment Study - The Existing and Future Conditions Report, which documents the current roadway system and congestion issues on I-270, and the Draft Purpose and Need Statement, which outlines the goals of the improvements to I-270, have been finalized as well as concepts for interchange improvements at US 23 and I-71. For more information, contact ODOT District 6 at 800-372-7714.

SR 310 Corridor Traffic Study - The study team is incorporating the comments on the Existing and Future Conditions Report, which documents the current roadway system and congestion issues on all roads in the study area and the Draft Purpose and Need Statement, which outlines the goals of the improvements to the SR 310 corridor. The study team started testing a potential set of alternatives.

Focus on Roadway Safety

MORPC is working with local governments and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) to make the region's transportation system more safe and efficient. In 2007 MORPC released a Safety Report which examined crash trends in central Ohio and compared them with state and national experience.

MORPC is now releasing a new analysis of traffic crash trends in the region which identifies high crash locations as well as the behaviors and conditions which were the predominant causes. For example, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs or not wearing seatbelts are significant contributors to crashes resulting in fatalities and injuries. MORPC coordinated this new Safety Plan, with the comprehensive safety plans from the ODOT and the Ohio Department of Public Safety.

Those who are often at risk for collisions such as pedestrians, bicyclists and young adult and senior drivers were also reviewed in the plan. MORPC is using the new plan to encourage traffic crash prevention. "We are proposing to look at safety from a long term and proactive perspective. The Safety Plan will determine where our focus should be for the region in regards to safety," said Carr. The safety plan is a part of MORPC's "CapitalWays" Regional Transportation Plan recently released in draft form.

For more information about MORPC's safety efforts contact Kerstin Carr at 614-233-4163 or kcarr@morpc.org.



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