



MID-OHIO REGIONAL **MORPC** PLANNING COMMISSION

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NOTICE OF A MEETING CENTRAL OHIO GREENWAYS TRAIL DEVELOPMENT & PARTNERSHIPS JOINT WORKING GROUP MEETING MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

REMOTE MEETING
April 20, 2023, 9:30 am – 10:30 am

AGENDA

Welcome

Strategic Plan Updates

Melinda Vonstein reviewed progress on the 2016 Strategic Plan. The Trail Development Working Group has completed or established maintenance strategies for all assigned tasks. Other Working Groups, such as Partnerships and Programming, may need to reassess their focus due to outdated or irrelevant tasks.

Key themes from the March 2023 COG Board Retreat were discussed:

Elevating Access

Emphasis on making trail and transit access dignified and welcoming. Suggestions included mapping overlapping access points and establishing consistent design standards.

Trail Awareness

Many residents are unaware of nearby trail access. Ideas included identifying “trail-accessible neighborhoods” and enhancing public-facing maps.

Shared Messaging

A need for coordinated marketing with partners like RAPID5 and LinkUS was identified.

Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration

Attendees emphasized the value of MORPC-facilitated regional meetings to share updates and coordinate planning, especially for grant applications and trail visioning.

Engaging the Business Community

Forum attendees discussed defining the purpose of business engagement, with suggestions to explore benefits and align with the Trail Towns initiative.

On-Road Connections

Interim trail routes should be included in user maps and wayfinding tools to improve current usability.

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director

Erik J. Janas
Chair

Chris Amorose Groomes
Vice Chair

Michelle Crandall
Secretary

Trail Access Projects

Aligning trail access with other funded initiatives could enhance project viability and funding opportunities.

Trail Count Data

Forum attendees discussed using trail count data to demonstrate the impact of closures and advocate for network redundancy.

Environmental Integration

Melinda proposed collecting environmental data to inform planning and engage conservation partners. Attendees supported involving environmental experts and balancing mobility with ecological concerns.

Funding Strategies

Forum attendees discussed advocating for dedicated funding through the Legislative Trails Caucus and developing communications to align trail benefits with funding source missions. Additional ideas included researching MPO funding models and developer cost-sharing strategies.

Technical Assistance Program

Jordan Petrov presented information regarding the Technical Assistance Program Projects:

Berlin Township

The team analyzed existing conditions and identified opportunities for trail development, particularly along the State Route 36/37 corridor. The Township's new zoning overlay mandates multi-use trail construction in new developments, offering significant connectivity potential to four regionally significant trails.

Grove City

A Stakeholder Workshop confirmed the preferred alignment for a trail segment connecting I-270 to Scioto Grove Metro Park. Challenges include navigating active quarry property. Alternative connections are being explored, including leveraging infrastructure projects like the Gantz Road bridge reconstruction and improvements on Hardy Parkway and Brown Road.

Brown Township

The focus is on connecting Perry Oaks Metro Park to the City of Hilliard and nearby schools. The goal is to integrate the Township into the broader trail network, enhancing student and community access.


Violet Township

Jordan shared a map and update on efforts to improve trail connectivity in unincorporated areas. The project aims to link residents to the Blacklick Trail and Pickerington Ponds through corridors like Route 204 and Refugee Road. A stakeholder meeting is scheduled for May 8, 2023.

Melinda noted a recurring theme across projects: the need for a mid-tier trail classification between park-like trails and on-road connectors. This will be addressed in the upcoming Wayfinding Strategy.

Wayfinding Strategy

Melinda announced that Designing Local has been contracted to lead the Wayfinding Strategy Project. Focus areas include establishing trail hierarchy and nomenclature. The Strategy will also consider how to represent interim trail connections



Trail Count Program Updates

Melinda reported that the trail count program is being updated. She highlighted the importance of using data to understand the impact of trail closures and to advocate for redundancy in the trail network.

MORPC & Member Updates

Trail Towns Program

MORPC has extended its contract with Amy Camp to expand the Trail Towns framework, including a soft launch and prioritization of action items. Legislative strategies for funding are also being explored.

Website Integration

The Central Ohio Greenways website has merged with MORPC's site. A new trail alerts and closures page has been launched. Members are encouraged to share updates for inclusion.

Next Steps

Draft strategic plan updates will be shared with the COG Board in May.

Members are encouraged to provide feedback via email or at the next COG Board meeting.

Adjourn

Please notify Lynn Kaufman at 614-233-4189 or LKaufman@morpc.org to confirm your attendance for this meeting or if you require special assistance.

**The next Central Ohio Greenways Trail Development Working Group Meeting
Will be June 15, 2023, at 9:30 am.
This Meeting will be held remotely; details to follow.**



Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
Remote Meeting

Central Ohio Greenways Trail Development & Partnerships
Joint Working Group Meeting

April 20, 2023

Members Present

- Mike Andrako, Franklin County Engineer's Office
- Kacey Brankamp, Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District
- Nina Duerk, Strand Associates, Inc.
- Beth Hugh, Korda Nemeth Engineering
- Wayne Roberts, Friends of Madison County Parks & Trails
- Letty Schamp, City of Hilliard
- David Shipps, Toole Design Group

Staff Present

- Jon Hyder
- Lynn Kaufman
- Jordan Petrov
- Melinda Vonstein

CENTRAL OHIO GREENWAYS BOARD MEMBER RETREAT MARCH 3, 2023



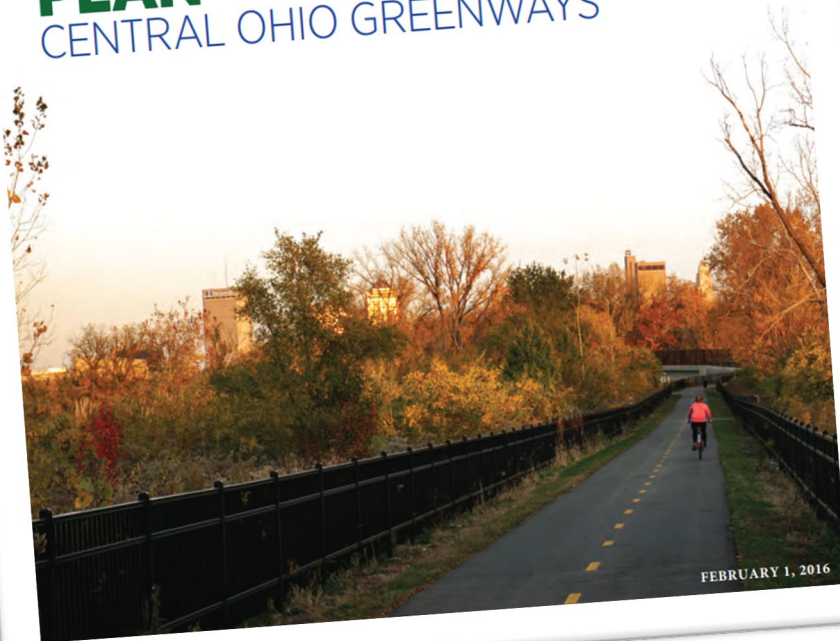
Purpose

To reflect on COG accomplishments, progress, and evolution from 2015 – today; and to recommend updates to the Strategic Plan

Workshops

Partnership Development
Strategic Funding
Trail Towns

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN CENTRAL OHIO GREENWAYS



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Establish Quadrant Boundaries	✓
Gather existing trail data from surrounding communities	Ongoing
Meet with quadrant stakeholders	Ongoing
Develop COG Corridor Plan	✓
Meet with quadrant stakeholders in surrounding counties	Ongoing
Review existing trail design guideline	✓
Expand COG Corridor Plan to region	✓
Prioritize trail projects	✓
Maintain COG Corridor Plan	Ongoing
Maintain trails database	Ongoing
Establish recommended trail design guidelines	✓
Connect trails with all adjacent counties	✓
Complete gaps in existing trail network	Ongoing
Regularly review trail design guidelines	Ongoing

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

PROGRESS SUMMARY

The trail development working group has successfully completed assigned tasks or has developed a manageable cadence for maintaining ongoing work.

WORKING GROUP NEXT STEPS

The group may continue to maintain the regional trail vision, gather data from local government partners, and further **support funding applications and strategies.**

SUPPORT WORKSHOP

The Strategic Funding Workshop



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Assess value of existing system.	In progress
Identify type of support and develop sponsorship levels	✕
Coordinate with Marketing Working Team	Ongoing
Identify potential partners, future resources and COG Board regional champions.	In progress
Schedule meetings with potential partners.	In progress
Identify long-term operations and capital budget	✕
Secure funding	✕
Develop endowment strategy	✕

PARTNERSHIPS

PROGRESS SUMMARY:

Many tasks are incomplete and potentially not relevant to COG as other organizations have evolved.

WORKING GROUP NEXT STEPS

COG could continue to meet with partner agencies to Champion the COG mission and related mission. This group could benefit from a mission reset.

SUPPORT WORKSHOP

Strategic Partnership Development



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Explore current programming protocols	✕
Identify existing snow removal standards	Ongoing
Identify locations of programming	✕
Coordinate with Marketing Working Team	Ongoing
Investigate trail business program	In progress
Inventory existing programs	✕
Implement business program	In progress
Expand trail forum	Ongoing
Identify and highlight cultural destination spots	In progress
Advocate for bicycle tourism	In progress
Develop wildlife / natural programs	✕
Advocate the greenways for transportation	Ongoing
Advocate for non-vehicular access to trail heads	Ongoing
Develop personal safety training	✓
Develop a review protocol for trail programming	✕

PROGRAMMING

PROGRESS SUMMARY:

The Programming Working Group (later renamed and refocused, Operations & Access Working Group) has made decent progress, and is starting to pick up momentum with the wayfinding and trail towns work.

WORKING GROUP NEXT STEPS

Many of the in-progress tasks are associated with a trail towns initiative. This working group could be renamed Trail Towns Working Group.

SUPPORT WORKSHOP

Trail Towns Programming



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Update brand guidelines	✓
Create and maintain marketing material templates	Ongoing
Improve the COG website	Ongoing
Develop a social media calendar	Ongoing
Campaign annually at targeted audiences	Ongoing
Tell the story of the trails with data	In progress
Create a booth and coordinate attendance at events to promote COG.	Ongoing
Host a trail tour for media	✗
Capitalize on local media opportunities	✗

MARKETING

PROGRESS SUMMARY

The Marketing Group has made good progress. Although Impacts of Trails reports have been completed, more could be done to communicate the benefits of trails.

WORKING GROUP NEXT STEPS

The in-progress tasks are associated with a trail towns initiative. This groups could stand alone or merge with the Programming Group. A brand refresh is possible.

SUPPORT WORKSHOP

Trail Towns Programming



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COG BOARD RETREAT THEMES

- Elevate Access to a place of dignity
- Access to Trails - Not everyone knows they have it.
- Getting people around without a car is not about a single mode - the messaging is bigger.
- Support Collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries
- How do we engage the business community?
- Improve on road connections so people can get to more places.
- Understand the role of conservation
- We don't have a dedicated source of funding, so we rely on a variety of sources and partnerships
- Grant applications favor local, non-agency funding matches.

CENTRAL OHIO GREENWAYS BOARD MEMBER RETREAT MARCH 3, 2023



Purpose

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COG BOARD RETREAT THEMES and DRAFT ACTION ITEMS

Elevate Access to a place of dignity	1. Establish improved coordination between the alternative mobility efforts and delineate each groups individual identities and roles.
	2. Establish design consistencies or protocols.
	3. Identify where high use trail access, transit access, and park access overlap and encourage improvements in those areas.
Access to Trails - Not everyone knows they have it.	4. Develop a “trail accessible” neighborhood information/data
Getting people around without a car is not about a single mode - the messaging is bigger.	5. Develop a shared marketing message with RAPID 5, LinkUS, and Blueways



COG BOARD RETREAT THEMES and DRAFT ACTION ITEMS

Support Collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries	
How do we engage the business community?	6. Implement a Trail Towns Effort that includes action items such as....
Improve on road connections so people can get to more places.	7. Update the COG user map to include “interim” trail connections. 8. Support and identify trail access projects and identify how the access may align with related initiatives such as TSI, Blueways, Roadway Improvements, etc. 9. Use trail count data to understand how limiting access to trails impacts trail use. Make a case for more redundancy in the trail network.



COG BOARD RETREAT THEMES and DRAFT ACTION ITEMS

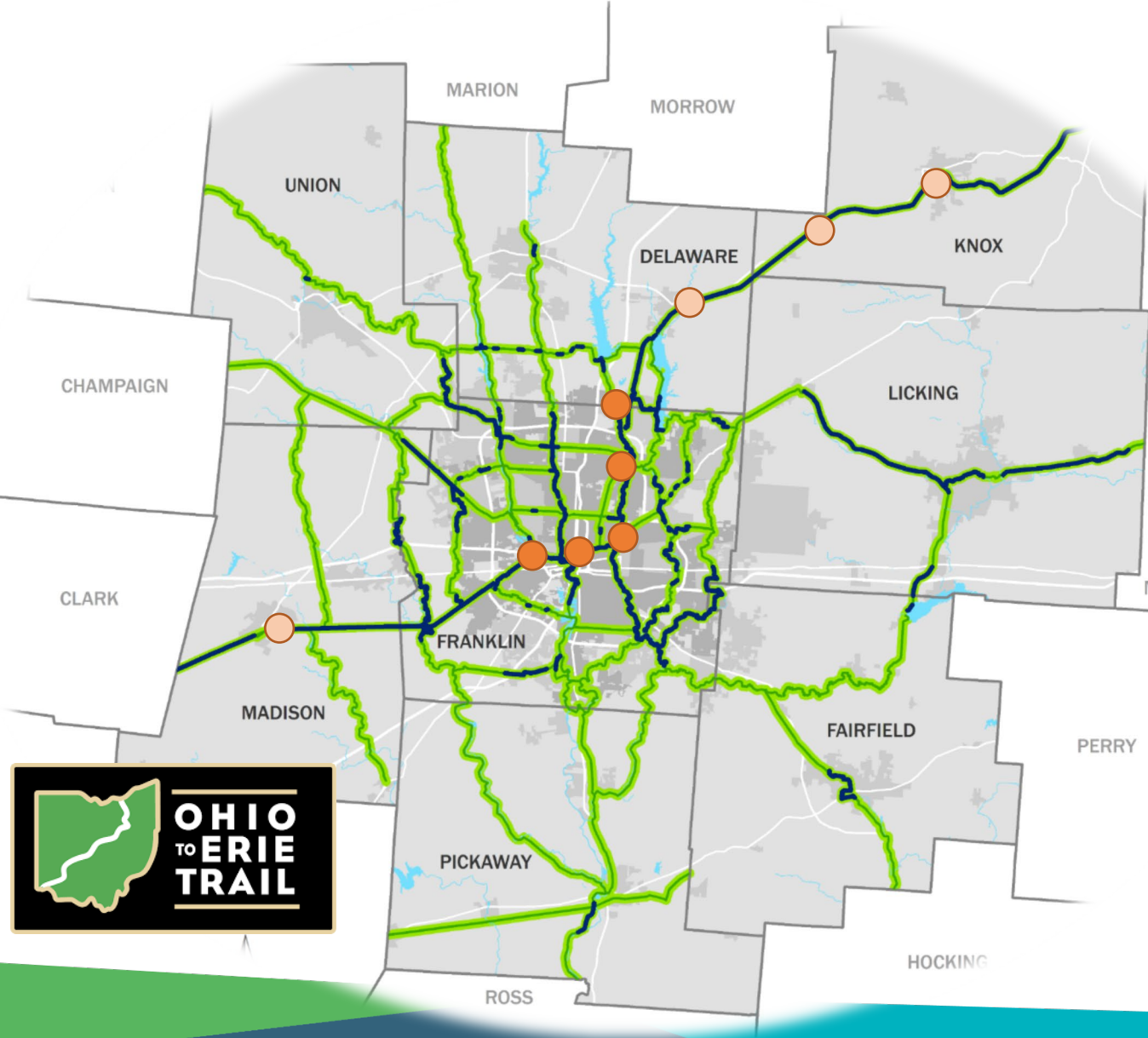
Understand the role of conservation and engage with environmental community	10. Collect environmental, riparian, and conservation special data to include in planning and communications mapping. 11. Develop a shared Climate Action Plan
We don't have a dedicated source of funding, so we rely on a variety of sources and partnerships	12. Engage with the legislative trails caucus to advocate for more dedicated funding 13. Develop a communications that clarifies the relationship between trails and the mission of various funding sources
Grant applications favor local, non-agency funding matches.	14. Research other MPO funding strategies 15. Explore developer cost share strategies – to cover local matches



URBAN TRAIL TOWN FOCUS AREA



MORPC



- Mt Vernon
- Centerburg
- Sunbury
- Westerville
- Easton
- Bexley
- Downtown Columbus
- Valleyview / Hilltop
- London



WAYFINDING 2023

- **Inventory** destinations, signage, and amenities
- Develop a **cohesive wayfinding strategy** that leverages the investments already made in signage and wayfinding overtime



WEBSITE

- User Map
- Closures/Alerts
- Events?
- Other



Central Ohio Greenways (COG): Alerts and Closures

Central Ohio Greenways Alerts and Closures is your reliable source for bike trail alerts and closures in the region. Keep yourself informed on the latest developments, closures, and detours to ensure a safe and pleasant biking or walking experience on the trails and greenways. Kindly report any unlisted trail disruptions to our Facebook or Instagram, as closures and restrictions across Central Ohio may change, and we aim to update our information as soon as possible.



Current Alerts and Closures:

Downtown Connector Trail Closure (March 7th through June 2023)

– Approximately 2 miles of this trail between the western limit at Cleveland Avenue and the eastern limit at Leonard Avenue/bridge over IR-670; there is a planned detour utilizing Leonard Avenue during the trail closure.

Alum Creek Trail Section Closure (April 17th through July 16th, 2023)

– The bridge on Alum Creek Trail which crosses the creek near Champions Golf Course and Sunbury Road, will be closed for repairs with no planned detour at this time.

Olentangy Trail Section Closure (May 10th through July 9th, 2023)

– West Wilson Bridge Road is closed for repairs at the bridge which crosses State Route 315 and the Olentangy River; this closure includes the bridge's bike lanes with no planned detour at this time.

Olentangy Trail Section Closure (May through November 2023)