



MID-OHIO REGIONAL  
**MORPC**  
PLANNING COMMISSION

111 Liberty St., Suite 100  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
[www.morpc.org](http://www.morpc.org)

**NOTICE OF A MEETING  
CENTRAL OHIO GREENWAYS TRAIL TOWNS WORKING GROUP  
MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

**REMOTE MEETING  
May 13, 2024, 10:00 am**

**AGENDA**

**Welcome and Introductions – Laura Ball, Working Group Co-Chair**

**Grants:**

**RAISE Grant**

Melinda Vonstein reported that MORPC submitted a proposal for the “Trail Towns and the Nation’s Heartland” project, aiming to support three rural communities in developing trail town plans and preparing for infrastructure grants. The project also includes expanding the Trail Vision to a 15-county area.

**ATIP Grant (Active Transportation Infrastructure Program)**

Melinda reported that MORPC is considering a partnership with the City of Columbus, which is proposing planning funds for connecting neighborhoods to the downtown Capital Trail. MORPC’s potential contributions include:

- Creating a regional active transportation network by synthesizing local plans.
- Conducting public engagement in communities near the downtown trail to update the trail town map and vision.

Members and staff discussed the merits of both ideas. Member Ball supported the public engagement approach and suggested surveying Ohio to Erie Trail users. Member Reed emphasized the importance of identifying local organizational infrastructure. Member Bilcze suggested pairing communities for shared learning and emphasized community attitude and environment. Member Oberg proposed a training program for local business staff to foster stewardship and awareness. Member Kauffman highlighted the role of destination marketing organizations in supporting trail towns.

The Working Group agreed on the value of developing a training program and toolkit, potentially piloted in three communities. Estimated funding needs were discussed, with a consensus around \$100,000–\$200,000 per community.

**Trail User Map:**

Melinda shared that MORPC intern Jesse Sampson had been working on using ESRI tools to enhance trail user communication. Jesse will return to MORPC in the Fall after a summer internship. Due to time constraints, detailed discussion on the Trail User Map was deferred to a future meeting.

**William Murdock, AICP**  
Executive Director

**Chris Amorose Groomes**  
Chair

**Michelle Crandall**  
Vice Chair

**Ben Kessler**  
Secretary

**COG Summer Intern Scope of Work:**

A new intern, Harry Deanda, will begin work at MORPC as part of the Easton Future Visions Fellowship. Melinda proposed potential projects:

- Implementing the Wayfinding Strategy in the Easton area.
- Developing a Trail Town User Map or web presence for Easton.

Member Oberg suggested creating a brochure to market Easton as a car-free destination for both residents and visitors. Member Reed emphasized the need to align the project with Easton leadership's interests and use it as a sales tool for buy-in. Members and staff discussed layering wayfinding recommendations into the marketing strategy to support advocacy and implementation.

**COG Summer Forum:**

Melinda announced plans for a Summer Forum, potentially including a canoe/kayak activity offered by Metro Parks. The Forum will likely focus on Wayfinding and the Trail Town Framework. Volunteers and agenda suggestions were welcomed.

**Summit on Sustainability Trail Session Planning:**

This item was not discussed and may be addressed in a future meeting.

**Closing – Laura Ball, Working Group Co-Chair**



Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

Central Ohio Greenways Trail Towns  
Working Group  
Attendance

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May 13, 2024, 10:00 am

Members Present

Laura Ball, City of Westerville

Tom Bilcze

Jody Dzurainin, Friends of Camp Chase Trail

Karie Kauffman, Experience Columbus

Eric Oberg, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Meredith Reed, Designing Local

MORPC Staff Present

Lynn Kaufman

Katie McMahon

Jonathan Miller

Melinda Vonstein