



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

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REGIONAL POLICY ROUNDTABLE

February 23, 2021 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions – Ben Collins, Chair

Chair of the Regional Policy Roundtable, Ben Collins called the meeting to order and gave introductory remarks, highlighted the media coverage of the Public Policy Agenda, and reviewed the agenda.

2. Member Update – Kyle Strickland, Kirwan Institute & Roosevelt Institute

Kyle Strickland of the Kirwan Institute and Roosevelt Institute provided a member update on how discrimination and structural racism influence our country's racial history on policies, practices that perpetuate racial inequity. Also, he described how racial healing and reconciliation should proceed and how to build equitable and inclusive structures that create equitable outcomes.

A clarification question was asked by Chair Collins about the data shown in the Franklin County, OH Racial Distribution Map slide in Mr. Strickland's presentation regarding the collection period of the data. The data shown was from the 2010 census, and Mr. Strickland will be updating the slide when new data is available. Mike Schadek from the City of Columbus asked how Columbus and the MORPC region are doing compared to other regions in Ohio. Information will be investigated and sent out to the group.

Ralonda Hampton raised a question on how to have these conversations with groups that are not ready or comfortable talking about race. A response was given that stated the work should not be the work of one person, department, and/or leader. Racial justice and equity should not be shipped but is for everyone and should not solely be the work of the leader. Ways to engage include providing tiered steps, resources, book groups to normalize the conversation. The book, *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We can Prosper Together* was suggested by Mr. Strickland.

3. Transit Funding Update – Aslyne Rodriguez, COTA

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director

Karen J. Angelou
Chair

Erik J. Janas
Vice Chair

Chris Amorose Groomes
Secretary

Aslyne Rodriguez, Government Affairs Director of the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) gave an update on transit funding, current budget proposal will cut transit funding by 90%. COTA gave interested party testimony along with transit stakeholders from across the state. COTA's testimony can be found [here](#), additionally, Ms. Rodriguez suggested reviewing Carrie Woody's testimony which can be found [here](#). Ms. Rodriguez also asked for support by having businesses, seniors, disability groups, non-profits, and veterans' groups sign on to letters of support for increased transit funding. Information was circulated to the Regional Policy Roundtable members afterward via email.

A clarifying question was asked by member Steve Tugend regarding funding and why COTA could not use federal COVID-19 relief funding. The use of one-time dollars should not be used to maintain the transit budget, additionally to draw down federal dollars they need state dollars as well. The disproportionate impact on low-income communities will be devastating and will place transit funding at a deficit for the next budget period. Lastly, Ms. Rodriguez noted that Ohio ranks for 46 in transit funding per capita, South Dakota ranks above Ohio.

4. Legislative Update – Joe Garrity, MORPC and Steve Tugend, Kegler Brown Hill & Ritter

Last year the Public Policy Working group developed the Public Policy Agenda (PPA) which was published in January. The MORPC Government affairs team has been promoting the newly adopted PPA and advocating on behalf of MORPC's local government members. Staff have held meetings with the following member of the Ohio General Assembly:

- Senate President Matt Huffman
- Senator Peterson
- Sen. Kunze
- Rep. Fraizer
- Rep. Johnson
- Rep. West

In coordination with these advocacy issues, William Murdock, Executive Director of MORPC provided interested party testimony on House Bill 74 to the Ohio House Finance Committee the State's 2022-2023 transportation budget and made four recommendations. These recommendations are in alignment with the 2021-2022 Public Policy Agenda include:

- Increasing funding for transit
- Making roadways safer for everyone
- Investing in rural Ohio
Development Associations in this effort.
- Funding trails

Central Ohio is well-positioned, in the Senate, the bill goes to the Transportation Committee chaired by Senator Kunze. The political environment in the Ohio Legislators has returned to a conventional relationship, where the Senate and House leadership are not adversarial. We anticipate seeing a lot

of legislation within this legislative period. Also seeing the concept of the rocket docket created by Senator Seitz, to move legislation that did not make it to the governor's desk and repelling a significant portion of HB 6.

Looking at the operating budget there are no changes in the local government funding despite paltry budget outlook. The budget revenue forecast from the administration is conservative and looks like there will be additional wiggle room as additional revenue is expected around Labor Day. Broadband is on the mind of many legislators. Senate Bill 8 and House Bill 2 both bills would create the Residential Broadband Expansion Program funded at \$190 million and creates the Broadband Expansion Authority within the Development Services agency. MORPC as a member of OARC supports the initiative to utilize regional planning commissions in assisting DSA and the Broadband Expansion Authority as it allocates those monies and creates efficiencies.

One item that will be under consideration is to continue that Permanent Supportive Housing is not taxed. Hopefully, will be in the operating budget in June. Also, under consideration is shore up the state Housing Trust fund through the property transfer fee however less certain. The beginning stages of an Affordable Housing Tax credit with various stakeholders to develop language that would create that tax credit. It will most likely be introduced as independent legislation and not in the operation budget.

Chair Collins has a question regarding federal COVID relief funding and state local government funding. Steve shared that any cuts because of this reason would be unlikely because federal funding is one-time only. The state's local government funding formula would need to be changed and there is not much appetite to do this.

5. Central Ohio Defense Group Update – Joe & Steve

As MORPC continues to elevate the work of the Central Ohio Defense Group with our local government members, the Government Affairs team and lead partners at Kegler have laid out a plan and will meet over the next year to identify defense contracts and strengthen our unique defense assets in the region and align the work of local economic development officers.

MORPC has completed an application to join the Association of Defense Communities to strategically align our region with other communities across the country.

Steve shared that the focus will also include the private sector in assessing the Department Defense's economic impact in our region. The Columbus of Chamber is also working to obtain Department of Defense vendors that are in our region.

6. Other Business – All Members

Nikki Scarpitti shared that libraries are open and can physically go into the building. The CML is in phase two of the Speak Out Speak Up series. <https://www.columbuslibrary.org/speak-up-speak-out>

Mayor David Scheffler changing zoning laws to make certain types of housing easier to build and had a public hearing last night at Council.

Bob Bitzenhofer, CMHA is advocating for free or discounted broadband throughout the county and currently has an RPF out.

Nancy Richardson, the city of Dublin is having a reverse Greenest Grandest Parade on March 13. <https://www.irishcentral.com/news/dublin-ohio-reverse-st-patricks-day-parade>

William Murdock, MORPC will host its State of the Region event on March 31, 2021, with Jonathan Rose. Registration: <https://www.morpc.org/event/state-of-the-region/>

Eileen Leuby, Cities and Townships COVID call will be tomorrow with information on domestic terrorism.

Ralonda Hampton, Invited members to join a **21-Day Racial Equity and Social Justice Challenge!** The Columbus YWCA is challenging individuals to create more effective social justice habits every weekday from March 1-29. At no cost, engage in self-learning to increase awareness regarding moving communities forward. Participants will be presented with activities such as reading articles, listening to podcasts, reflecting on personal experiences, and more. Register at <https://www.ywcaohio.org/>

7. Good of the Order/ Adjourn – Ben Collins