

CENTRAL OHIO STATE OF SAFETY 2017-2021 REPORT



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

COTSP: *Central Ohio Transportation Safety Plan*

HSIP: *Highway Safety Improvement Program*

LPA: *Local Public Agency*

MORPC: *Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission*

MPO: *Metropolitan Planning Organization*

MTP: *Metropolitan Transportation Plan*

MVMT: *Million Vehicle Miles Traveled*

OACP: *Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police*

ODOT: *Ohio Department of Transportation*

ODPS: *Ohio Department of Public Safety*

OPWC: *Ohio Public Works Commission*

SHSP: *Strategic Highway Safety Plan*

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY IN CENTRAL OHIO

INTRODUCTION

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is the principal public agency conducting regional transportation studies for the Central Ohio area because it serves as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Columbus Urbanized Area. It covers Franklin County, Delaware County and portions of Licking, Fairfield, and Union counties.

As an MPO, MORPC must seek to increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users. MPOs must also coordinate with state departments of transportation to develop performance measures that aim to realize a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.

Since 2005, MORPC has analyzed regional crash data for the MPO area, or Transportation Planning Area (shown in the map on the following page), in order to better understand regional crash trends. The majority of crash data analyzed and represented within this document is received from standardized police reports that are generated each time a traffic crash occurs and law enforcement responds. This data includes crash type, crash severity, recorded contributing factors, road condition, driver behaviors, and other relevant information about the crash and people involved.

The Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) is responsible for compiling, analyzing, and publishing crash data and statistics in the State of Ohio. The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) works closely with ODPS to disseminate this information to various safety partners within the state for the purposes of identifying transportation safety issues and determining which strategies seem most appropriate to address them.

STATE OF SAFETY REPORT

The information that follows in this report is meant to provide a brief summary of the current state of transportation safety within the Central Ohio region. This information is produced on an annual basis to track the region's progress toward established goals and targets related to transportation safety that have been adopted in the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and also established in the Central Ohio Transportation Safety Plan (COTSP). Additionally, this report will provide an update on implementation of the COTSP Action Plan.

For a more detailed look at crash trends in our region, please review the COTSP available on MORPC's website. The COTSP is a comprehensive safety plan for the Central Ohio region that identifies the most significant causes of serious injuries and fatalities on the local roadway system. The plan establishes a series of goals and benchmarks for safety improvements, identifies existing trends and critical safety priorities, and sets up a framework for how collaboration can improve safety throughout the region. The COTSP follows the framework set by the State of Ohio's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), and will be updated every five years.

TRENDS IN REGIONAL SAFETY

CURRENT FIVE-YEAR TRENDS

Across the country, throughout the state of Ohio, and within the Central Ohio region, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted some troubling trends in transportation safety in 2020. Traffic volumes on our roadways decreased significantly with the shutdowns that occurred in March of 2020 and remained low for much of the year, which contributed to a similar decrease in the number of traffic crashes occurring on the roadways. However, with that decrease in traffic also came an increase in aggressive driving, speeding, and impaired driving.

Between 2017-2021, 653 people lost their lives in traffic crashes in Central Ohio. In 2021 in particular, we saw record high numbers of fatalities and serious injuries on Central Ohio roadways. The chart in Figure 1 includes an overview of the crash trends in Central Ohio by year for the 2017-2021 time period.

From 2017 to 2021:

- » Total crashes decreased by 32.6 percent.
- » *Fatal* crashes increased by 33.0 percent.
- » The injury rate increased by 30.5 percent.

In 2021, Central Ohio experienced the highest number of traffic fatalities on record -- 153.



Figure 1. Crash Trends in Central Ohio by Year (2017-2021)

| YEAR | CRASH STATISTICS | | | | OCCUPANT STATISTICS | | | | | SAFETY METRICS | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------|--|
| | Fatal Crashes | Injury Crashes | Property Damage Crashes | Total Crashes | Fatalities | Serious Injuries | Minor Injuries | No Injuries | Total People Involved | Injury Rate | EPDO | Fatalities and Serious Injuries / 100,000 Population |
| 2017 | 106 | 11005 | 30653 | 41764 | 112 | 848 | 14725 | 89560 | 105245 | 26.6% | 2.96 | 62.11 |
| 2018 | 102 | 10568 | 28956 | 39626 | 110 | 791 | 14178 | 83584 | 98663 | 26.9% | 2.96 | 57.28 |
| 2019 | 121 | 10661 | 29300 | 40082 | 130 | 830 | 14556 | 85781 | 101297 | 26.9% | 3.04 | 60.24 |
| 2020 | 139 | 8763 | 17609 | 26511 | 148 | 825 | 11885 | 51002 | 63860 | 33.6% | 3.80 | 60.03 |
| 2021 | 141 | 9625 | 18370 | 28136 | 153 | 963 | 12821 | 55232 | 69169 | 34.7% | 3.94 | 67.78 |
| 5-Year Total | 609 | 50622 | 124888 | 176119 | 653 | 4257 | 68165 | 365159 | 438234 | | | |
| Annual Average | 122 | 10124 | 24978 | 35224 | 131 | 851 | 13633 | 73032 | 87647 | 29.7% | 3.34 | 61.49 |
| Percent Change 2017-2021 | 33.0% | -12.5% | -40.1% | -32.6% | 36.6% | 13.6% | -12.9% | -38.3% | -34.3% | 30.5% | 33.1% | 9.1% |

Note: The data shown in the chart above represent the raw data reported during this time period. Cells highlighted in orange represent the year with the highest statistic for that category.

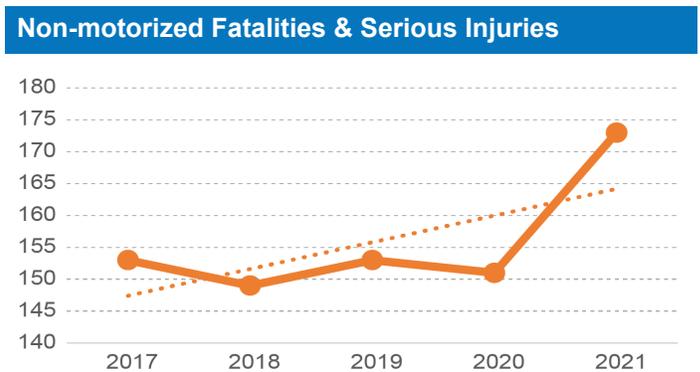
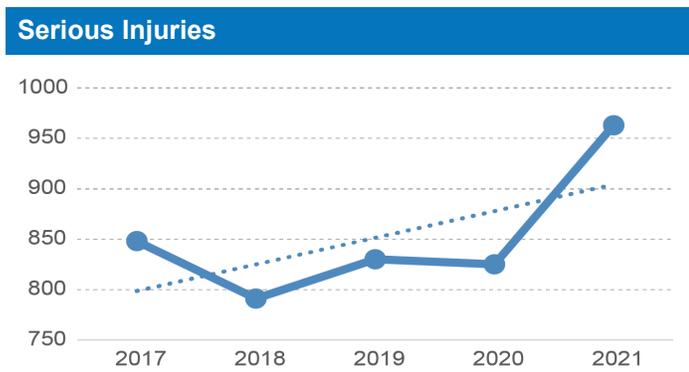
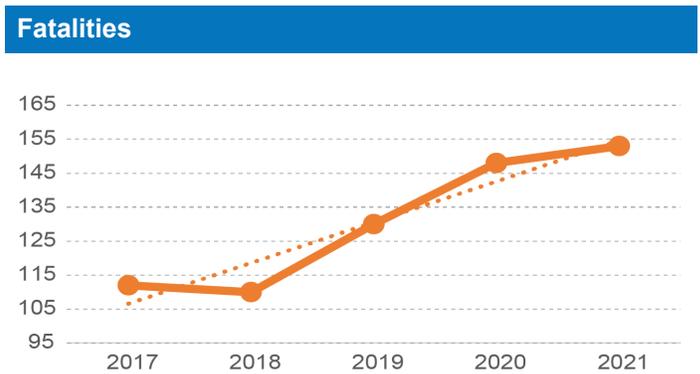
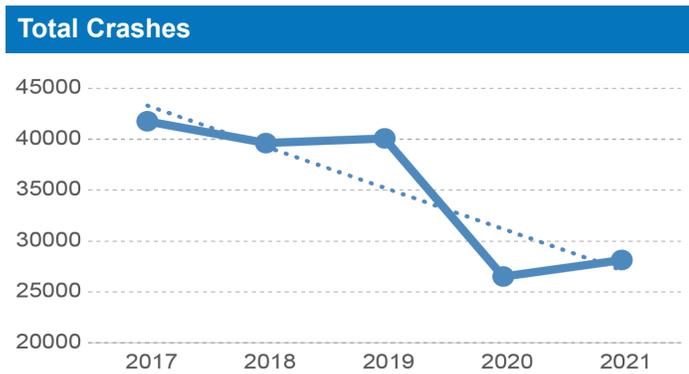
REGIONAL PERFORMANCE

The chart in Figure 2 indicates the current trends in relation to the targets established in the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the goals set by the COTSP. The data in this chart represents 5-year rolling averages for the 2017-2021 time period, which helps to illustrate the overall trend by averaging out any significant peaks or declines that occur on a year-by-year basis. The overall trends for each target indicate that **our region is not currently meeting any of the five established targets**. The graphs in Figure 3 illustrate how the trends in total crashes have been decreasing, while fatalities and serious have been rising.

Figure 2. Annual Performance Toward Targets

| PERFORMANCE MEASURE | 2020 Benchmark | 2025 | | 2050 | GRADE |
|---|----------------|-----------|---------------|------------|-------|
| | | TARGET | TRACK | TARGET | |
| Number of Fatalities | 106 | -8% (97) | +91.1% (203) | -27% (77) | X |
| Number of Serious Injuries | 868 | -8% (798) | +16.3% (1010) | -27% (634) | X |
| Non-Motorized Fatalities & Serious Injuries | 145 | -8% (133) | +24.8% (181) | 106 | X |
| Rate of Fatalities / 100 MVMT | 0.74 | 0.69 | 1.80 | 0.54 | X |
| Rate of Serious Injuries / 100 MVMT | 6.11 | 5.64 | 9.36 | 4.43 | X |

Figure 3. Trend Graphs (2017-2021)



ANNUAL REPORTING

Each year, in alignment with the Regional Safety Forum held in September, MORPC will produce an updated State of Safety report that tracks the region's progress toward meeting the goals established in the COTSP as well as the action items identified in the action plan. This annual reporting process will help to determine whether progress is being achieved toward each action item and if any output measures may need adjustment.

PLAN MAINTENANCE & UPDATING

As the COTSP is implemented and progress toward the goals is evaluated, there will be a need to revise and update the plan. The following are key elements of this update process:

- » Identifying any barriers to implementation
- » Modifying action items as issues or new opportunities arise
- » Providing updates and additional guidance on specific programs, activities, etc.

The COTSP document will be updated on a five-year cycle, while the State of Safety report will provide annual updates on key highlights in overall regional crash trends.

COTSP ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

Since the release of the COTSP in September of 2019, the region has made great strides toward implementing the Action Plan. Even through the shutdowns and limitations associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, MORPC and local partners have been continuing to work on critical transportation safety efforts. The chart in Figure 4 lists some of the action items that have been initiated, continued, or completed in the last year.

Please refer to the full COTSP Action Plan document at www.morpc.org/safety for more detail.

Figure 4. Action Plan Progress

| Action Item | Action Leads | Description | Progress |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Driving Safety Concerns #1.5 | LPAs, MORPC, ODOT, Safe Communities | Schedule social media posts to share safe driving habits, increasing frequency during holiday seasons and during major events. | MORPC continues to prioritize traffic safety messaging and safe driving tips on social media. These messages are posted every month and around key holidays and events to promote safe driving. |
| Driving Safety Concerns #1.7 | LPAs, MORPC, Safe Communities | Host periodic events with Distracted Driving Simulators to provide greater educational opportunities | MORPC hosted a Distracted Driving Awareness Luncheon with Commission Members and provided access to the Safe Communities Distracted Driving Simulator. |
| Driving Safety Concerns #3.2 | MORPC, ODOT, ODPS | Work with the state legislature on a primary distracted driving law. | Legislation on distracted driving was adopted by the State that makes the use of a hand-held device while driving a primary offense. The law takes effect in April 2023. |
| Driving Safety Concerns #4.1 | MORPC | Study impacts of existing speed limits and explore options for reducing speed limits in priority locations. | MORPC has initiated data analysis and local discussion regarding the impacts of speed, and statutory speed limits, on crash severity. |
| Driving Safety Concerns #4.2 | LPAs, MORPC, ODOT | Participate on ODOT’s Speed Management action team to develop a regional plan for setting speed limits and deploying research-based speed management techniques. | MORPC and local partners continue to participate in ODOT’s Speed Zoning Committee to contribute to an improved process for appropriately lowering speed limits and managing safe speeds throughout Ohio. |
| Driving Safety Concerns #4.3 | LPAs, MORPC, ODOT | Support ODOT’s plan development for setting speed limits and deploying research-based speed management techniques. | MORPC, ODOT, and local partners have initiated discussions and research regarding the latest best practices for setting and managing safe speeds. |
| Serious Crash Types #1.5 | LPAs, MORPC | Increase awareness of regional safety issues and appropriate countermeasures to address them. | MORPC continues to host the Central Ohio Transportation Safety Forum to provide updates on regional crash trends and the latest best practices to address those trends. |
| Serious Crash Types #2.2 | MORPC, ODOT | Educate local governments on available project funding and opportunities. | MORPC provides regular updates regarding funding opportunities through a variety of resources, including regular committee meetings, newsletters, and weekly “Money Monday” meetings highlighting key details. |
| Serious Crash Types #3.2 | MORPC, ODOT | Establish systemic safety pilot with ODOT to provide funding for engineering body oversight on installing low-to-medium cost improvements targeting rural roadway departure crashes. | ODOT launched a statewide Systemic Safety program within the Highway Safety Improvement Program in 2022. Current priorities within the Systemic Safety program include addressing roadway departure crashes, as well as pedestrian-involved crashes. |
| Vulnerable Roadway Users #1.4 | LPAs, MORPC | Work with communities to adopt/update and implement Complete Streets policies. | Through the MORPC Technical Assistance Program and partnerships with Franklin County Public Health, MORPC has provided and continues to provide assistance to multiple communities to develop Complete Streets policies and Implementation Toolkits. |
| Vulnerable Roadway Users #1.6 | LPAs, MORPC, ODOT | Work with communities to adopt/update active transportation plans. | Through the MORPC Technical Assistance Program and partnerships with Franklin County Public Health and ODOT, MORPC has provided and continues to provide assistance to multiple communities to conduct active transportation planning and/or develop active transportation plans. |
| Vulnerable Roadway Users #4.2 | LPAs, MORPC, ODOT | Conduct walk and bicycle safety audits on high-priority corridors. | Through partnerships with Franklin County Public Health, MORPC has conducted and continues to conduct walk audits on high-priority corridors. In 2022, walk audits were conducted with the City of Grove City, the City of Whitehall, and the City of Reynoldsburg. |

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & FUNDING

MEMBER ASSISTANCE

MORPC provides technical assistance related to transportation safety work to local agencies within the MPO area. The High Injury Network (HIN) identified for the 2013-2017 time period will be used to prioritize locations for technical assistance. MORPC will coordinate with local agencies to study the corridors and locations along the HIN in more detail and identify funding opportunities for improvements. MORPC will work with each local agency to determine the appropriate strategy for the locations within their jurisdiction. This assistance could include any of the following:

Road Safety Audits

Road Safety Audits (RSAs) address locations that have received significant attention around roadway issues. RSAs are performed by a team of specialists – engineers, safety professionals, agency representatives, etc. – that formally audit the location and provide an official report with recommendations to improve it. Recommendations often involve medium- to low-cost spot safety treatments. MORPC can assist local governments with RSAs and provide support for an application for safety funds to implement the recommended countermeasures. For more information on conducting RSAs, see the Regional RSA Implementation Guide on MORPC's website at morpc.org/tool-resource/local-safety-initiative.

Safety Studies

Safety studies provide in-depth evaluation of a location that is used to develop high- to medium-cost spot safety treatments. These locations generally show a high frequency of severe to fatal crashes and often require significant improvements to address them. Safety studies utilize both internal (MORPC) and external resources to complete, and can then be used to apply for safety funds to implement the recommended countermeasures.

Systemic Safety Improvements

Systemic safety improvements (SSIs) are different from traditional safety projects that address specific types of crashes at a specific location. SSIs look at crash data more holistically across a region or throughout a jurisdiction to identify trends or common threads. These improvements usually involve low-cost, risk-based treatments that can be implemented across a series of locations.

SSIs are conducted in a more systematic manner compared to the in-depth and focused site analysis required of an RSA or safety study. The intent is to address widespread safety concerns at multiple locations by analyzing potential risk based on similar characteristics present throughout the region, then implement system-wide safety improvements. For more information on SSIs, see the Guide to Implementing Regionally-Based Systemic Safety Improvements on MORPC's website at morpc.org/tool-resource/local-safety-initiative.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Many of the action items identified in the action plan will require a source of funding in order to complete their implementation. MORPC will work with local partners to identify relevant sources of funds to implement the strategies of the action plan.

There are many financial resources available for the programs, projects, and services that make our region successful. Information about funding and grant opportunities that are available to local communities and organizations can be at www.morpc.org/funding. Some highlights of key funding programs are listed below.

Safe Streets and Roads for All

The Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant program is a new federal discretionary grant program that will provide \$5 billion in funding over the five-year time period between 2022 to 2026. The primary focus of this grant is addressing roadway safety through the reduction and/or elimination of roadway fatalities and serious injuries.

Each year, approximately \$1 billion in potential funding will be available for local agencies. There are two pots of funds available within the program:

- » Approximately 40% of available funding will be designated for developing comprehensive safety action plans, or supplemental planning efforts.
- » Approximately 60% of available funding will be designated for implementation of projects and/or activities identified in an existing action plan.

In order to be eligible for the implementation funds, the applicant must have a qualifying action plan already in place. The Central Ohio Transportation Safety Plan (COTSP) released by MORPC in 2019 is considered a qualifying action plan and could potentially be used to identify appropriate applications for Implementation Grants within the MORPC MPO area.

MORPC staff are available to brainstorm potential applications and assist with the application process. More information about SS4A can be found at www.transportation.gov/SS4A.

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) operates a statewide Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) that provides more than \$180 million in funding each year to improve roadway safety. The funding is available to both ODOT and local agencies throughout the state through a competitive application process. The funds can be used to make safety improvements on any public roadway and funding is available for all stages of project development. Following is a summary of the three options for applying for this funding:

- » **Abbreviated Applications:** Spot safety improvements that are relatively simple projects with an estimated cost lower than \$500,000 are eligible for the Abbreviated Safety Application process. Priority is given to locations with a higher severity of crashes or that include pedestrian safety improvements. Locations included in the application must have a minimum of three crashes per year and should address priorities identified within a state, county, or regional priority list or plan. Funding is available for construction only and projects must be completed within two years.
- » **Formal Applications:** Spot safety improvements that are more complex and have estimated costs greater than \$500,000 must submit a Formal Safety Application. Projects submitted through the Formal Application process should have a history of fatal and/or injury crashes and have demonstrated that lower cost safety improvements are not able to address the identified safety issues.
- » **Systemic Applications:** The newest HSIP application type is the Systemic Safety Funding Application. This portion of HSIP funding is dedicated to projects that proactively address common safety issues throughout the entire roadway system, whether or not a particular location has a history of crashes.

More information on HSIP funding can be found on ODOT's website at www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/ProgramManagement/HighwaySafety/HSIP.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

MORPC-Attributable Funding

As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Columbus Metropolitan Area, MORPC is responsible for allocating federal funding to transportation projects throughout the MPO area. This federal funding includes funds authorized through the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program, the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), and the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). These funds are what comprise the MORPC-Attributable Funds. In recent years, the funding available annually to the MORPC MPO area has been around \$37 million. However, additional funding is expected to be available beginning in 2022 through the new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), or the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

There is a competitive application and evaluation process for local agencies interested in receiving these funds for transportation projects. **The funding cycle operates on a biennial process, with the next application window opening in summer 2024.** Local agencies can apply for funding for a variety of project types, including system preservation projects, roadway capacity/operational changes, and stand-alone bicycle and pedestrian facility projects. In order to be eligible for this funding, a project must already be identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), as either a specific mapped project or a general line item. General line item funding includes allocations for stand-alone bicycle and pedestrian facility projects that are not specifically identified in the plan. Additionally, all projects that receive MORPC-Attributable Funding are required to comply with MORPC's Complete Streets Policy.

Because MORPC-Attributable Funds are federal dollars, there are certain requirements and restrictions that can make the use of the funds more complicated than using local funding sources. For this reason, it is typically recommended that a local agency only apply for MORPC-Attributable Funds for large-scale transportation projects (e.g., a minimum cost of around \$1 million), or find a way to bundle smaller projects to create a larger project.

Additionally, these funds require a 20% local match. It is also important to note that this funding will not be immediately awarded to a local agency. The 2022 Attributable Funding Cycle will be allocating funds that will likely not be awarded until 2027 or later.

More information about MORPC-Attributable Funding, eligibility, and how to apply can be found on MORPC's website at: www.morpc.org/program-service/morpc-attributable-funding-for-transportation.

ODOT Safe Routes to School

The ODOT Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program provides funding on a competitive basis to assist with planning for and implementation of projects that encourage and enable students to walk and bike to school. This funding was previously only available to K-8 schools, but the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) established new guidelines that allow SRTS funding to now be used for K-12 schools.

The annual budget for the SRTS program was also recently increased from \$4 million to \$5 million. As a result of the increase in funding for this program, the caps for individual award amounts have also increased:

- » **Infrastructure projects** can receive up to \$500,000 in funding and often include repair and/or construction of new sidewalks, pedestrian crossing improvements, traffic calming, etc. The project must be within a 2-mile radius of a school and the applicant community must already have a School Travel Plan in place.
- » **Non-infrastructure activities** can receive up to \$60,000 and often include materials for education and encouragement, or programming within the school to encourage walking to school.

The application window for SRTS funding is January through March of each year. More information about the ODOT SRTS program can be found at www.transportation.ohio.gov/programs/safe-routes-srts.

Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC)

The Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) provides local infrastructure funding through the State Capital Improvements Program (SCIP) and the Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP). Local subdivisions, such as counties, municipal corporations, townships, sanitary districts or regional water and sewer districts, are eligible to apply.

- » **State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP):** Counties, cities, villages, and townships can apply for SCIP funding that is provided through grants, loans, and loan assistance or local debt support. Grants are available for up to 90 percent of the total project costs for repair/replacement and up to 50 percent for new/expansion. Loans can be provided for up to 100 percent of the project costs. Grant/loan combinations are also available.
- » **Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP):** Counties, cities, villages, and townships can apply for LTIP funding that is provided through grants and may cover up to 100 percent of project costs.

More information about the SCIP and LTIP funding process can be found on MORPC's website at www.morpc.org/tool-resource/franklin-county-scip-ltip or general program information can be found on the OPWC website at www.pwc.ohio.gov/Programs/All-OPWC-Funding-Programs.

AARP Community Challenge Grants

The AARP Community Challenge Grant provides small grants to help fund quick-action projects that improve community livability for people of all ages and abilities. Transportation projects are just one of many eligible project types, and this includes both permanent physical improvements as well as temporary demonstration projects. Most grants awarded through this program are \$15,000 or less. In 2022, the application window for this grant was January through March, with awardees being notified in mid-May and the requirement that all projects must be completed by the end of November.

More information about the Community Challenge Grant can be found at www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge.

