MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

111 Liberty St., Suite 100
Columbus, Ohio 43215
www.morpc.org

NOTICE OF A MEETING

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
111 LIBERTY STREET, SUITE 100
COLUMBUS, OH 43215
BOARD ROOM

Thursday, March 5, 2026
1:30 p.m.

Virtual Option
To join by video, click on "Join Microsoft Teams Meeting" below.
Join Microsoft Teams Meeting
Meeting ID: 276 325 053 595 41
Passcode: bs22Cx73

If you choose to participate virtually, please provide notification to Shari Saunders by March 3. Reminder, you must be on camera during the meeting.

If you are unable to attend in person or virtually but would like to listen live, use the conference call information below. Please note you will be unable to vote.
+1 614-362-3056, Columbus
(888) 596-2819, (Toll-free)
Phone conference ID: 668 291 823#

AGENDA

1. **Welcome** – Ben Kessler, Chair

2. **Consent Agenda**
   - **Approval of February 5, 2026 minutes**

3. **Executive Director's Report** – William Murdock, Executive Director

4. **Boards, Committees & Roundtables Updates**
   - **Nominating Committee** – Laurie Jadwin, Chair
   - **Central Ohio Metropolitan Planning Organization Board** – Parag Agrawal, Chief Mobility & Development Officer

William Murdock, AICP *Executive Director*
Chris Amorose Groomes *Chair*
Ben Kessler *Vice Chair*
Laurie Jadwin *Secretary*

- **Regional Sustainability Roundtable** – Jessica Kuenzli, Chief Regional Planning Officer
- **Regional Policy Roundtable** – Joseph Garrity, Chief Strategy Officer & Senior Director of External Relations

5. **Proposed Resolution 04-26**: **"Accepting Sharon Township (Franklin County) as a member of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)** – William Murdock, Executive Director

6. **Mobility & Development (MODE) Plans** – Parag Agrawal, Chief Mobility & Development Officer and Maria Schaper, Transportation Study Director

7. **Draft Commission Agenda**

8. **Other Business**

PLEASE NOTIFY SHARI SAUNDERS AT 614-233-4169 OR ssaunders@morpc.org IF YOU REQUIRE SPECIAL ASSISTANCE.

The next Executive Committee Meeting is
Thursday, May 7, 2026 at 1:30 p.m.
111 Liberty Street, Suite 100
Columbus, Ohio 43215

PARKING AND TRANSIT: When parking in MORPC's parking lot, please be sure to park in a MORPC visitor space or in a space marked with a yellow "M". Accessible parking is available at the side of MORPC's building. Electric vehicle charging stations are available for MORPC guests.

Indoor bike parking is available for MORPC guests.

MORPC is accessible by COTA BUS. The closest bus stop to MORPC is E. Fulton St./S. High St. Bus lines that accommodate this stop are Numbers 1, 4, 8, and 51.

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: February 5, 2026
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Location: MORPC Board Room

Members Present

LaGrieta Acheampong
Chris Amorose Groomes
Jeff Benton
Jeff Fix
Laurie Jadwin
James Jewell
Ben Kessler
Kris Long
Haley Lupton
Steve Schoeny
Kelly Scocco
Matt Starr
Joe Stefanov

MORPC Staff Present

Parag Agrawal
Steve Armstrong
Matika Fields
Joe Garrity
Ralonda Hampton
Tessia Haymaker
Shawn Hufstedler
Jessica Kuenzli
Eileen Leuby
Kelsey Matson
William Murdock
Shari Saunders
Robert Williams

Guests Present

Grant Ames, COAAA
Melissa McMillan, COAAA
Kattie White, COAAA

Welcome – Ben Kessler

Chair Ben Kessler called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. and welcomed guests from the Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging (COAAA): Katie White, Executive Director; Melissa McMillian, Executive Assistant; and Grant Ames, Director of Government and Strategic Conditions.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

Executive Director's Report – William Murdock

William Murdock presented the Executive Director's Report. Mr. Murdock explained that the Executive Committee will meet eight times in 2026, following a pattern of two consecutive months of meetings followed by a month off, and noted that the Commission will follow the same cadence. He invited members to request calendar invites if needed.

Mr. Murdock and LaGrieta Acheampong, Chair of the Reserve and Investment Subcommittee, discussed ongoing efforts to review and potentially adjust policies related to the organization's operating reserve, including engaging the Reserve and Investment Subcommittee and considering the use of consultants if recommended.

Mr. Murdock and Jeff Fix give an update on the Regional Housing Coalition. Stakeholders have been working with the Columbus Partnership and Mayor Ginther since December to establish the framework for the advisory committee and review group. Invitations were sent between mid-December and mid-January. Participation was secured from several high-profile leaders, so it is shaping up to be a strong group. The first meeting is February 26. The Columbus Partnership brought in Ann Aquillo to lead the effort.

Mr. Murdock recognized the leadership of the Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging (COAAA), who are observing and learning from our processes. MORPC recently completed its role as the transition agent, moving COAAA from the City of Columbus to a new Regional Council of Governments (COG). As of January 1, the new COG is officially up and running with a new executive director. Mr. Murdock is

serving as board chair. The COAAA serves eight counties with over 400 employees supporting older adults. Mr. Murdock thanked Commissioner Jeff Benton for his leadership in getting this effort started, and Executive Director Katie White for her continued work.

Mr. Murdock introduced MORPC's new Human Resources (HR) Director Tessia Haymaker. Ms. Haymaker has been in HR for eleven years starting with the City of Columbus Civil Service Commission. She later served as the City of Wheeling, West Virginia's HR director. After relocating back to Columbus, she moved to the private sector with the George J. Igel company, gaining experience in a completely different environment. She is excited to be at MORPC where she can bring together her experience in both municipal and private-sector HR.

Mr. Murdock shared highlights from this month's MORPC By the Numbers:

- 14 media hits for December 2025 and January 2026
- 614 applications received so far for the 2026 Summer Intern Program
- MORPC & CORPO received a $4.8 million grant for the Coalition for Integrated Road User Safety (CIRUS) planning initiative
- 63 people participated in the January 27 webinar focused on Scooting Smart
- 1 new proposal going to Columbia Gas from Residential Services

Mr. Murdock, the Board Officers, and other MORPC Team Members attended the National Association of Regional Councils conference in Washington, DC, February 1-4. They met with Central Ohio's full congressional delegation and received updates on transportation reauthorization and federal agency priorities. They also participated in leadership training and major-metro sessions. Mr. Murdock thanked Joe Garrity and his team for the extensive preparation and seamless coordination, including organizing visits with eight legislators in one day and presenting at the national conference.

In January, a MORPC delegation traveled to Las Vegas for the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) to learn about emerging technologies in mobility, energy, and AI that could impact local governments. The primary purpose, however, was to visit Brightline West, the new high-speed rail system now under construction and expected to open in 2028–29. After visiting Brightline Florida last year, seeing this second line firsthand and meeting with Brightline leadership was especially valuable in preparing to submit the passenger rail grant application tomorrow. Their team and consultants, including those who worked on both Brightline projects, advised MORPC on how to strengthen Central Ohio's proposal.

Parag Agrawal shared more information about the Federal State Partnership (FSP) grant application due February 6. The project, called the Heartland Rail Connectivity Initiative, focuses on four key areas: reducing at-grade crossings for safety, completing preliminary engineering for the Convention Center station, analyzing non-freight corridors that could support passenger service, and studying transit-oriented development and value-capture opportunities around proposed station areas. The total project cost is $6 million, with $4.8 million requested from the federal grant and a $1.2 million local match from the Convention Center Authority. Several members of Central Ohio's congressional delegation pledged support during the Hill visits.

Mr. Agrawal provided an update on the Midwest Connect (Chicago to Pittsburgh) project which has entered Step 2 with $2 million in funding from the FRA. Mr. Agrawal clarified that the FSP grant and the Corridor ID are parallel processes, each with distinct objectives and work groups. The 3C&D line has also entered Step 2.

Mr. Murdock shared that MORPC is working with the firm PFM and the Ohio Department of Transportation to establish the Advance Fund, modeled after successful funds in Dallas and Des Moines, with more details expected by March.

Mr. Murdock and Robert Williams reported the weatherization program ended the year with a $76,000 surplus due to structural adjustments with the goal of maintaining a break-even, sustainable operation. Mr. Williams described the development of a proposal to Columbia Gas and WarmChoice to raise the income eligibility threshold to 80 percent of the median, addressing the gap for low- and moderate-income homeowners, and noted that the proposal will be submitted next Friday. He explained that the Google Grid grant, which uses the proposed higher income guideline, has already resulted in ten approved applications and five jobs underway within 60 days, doubling the application approval rate compared to previous guidelines. Mr. Williams plans to use the success with WarmChoice as a springboard to request similar changes from the Ohio Department of Development, leveraging the precedent set by HUD's acceptance of 80 percent median income clients.

Upcoming events:

- Data Day, Tuesday, February 10
- Pre-Commission Luncheon with Steve Stivers, CEO of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Thursday, March 12
- State of the Region, Friday, March 20 with Keynote Greg Lindsay

Mr. Murdock shared that the first *Business First* issue of the year highlighted Parag Agrawal in a full-featured section about our passenger rail initiatives across the state. It was great to see our work showcased so prominently.

Quarterly Financial Statements – Shawn Hufstedler

Shawn Hufstedler presented the Quarterly Financial Report noting the full report is in the meeting packet. Mr. Hufstedler informed Executive Committee members that the Auditor of State started planning for the annual audit and requested that all members respond to the fraud risk questionnaire, which is a standard process and not indicative of any issues.

Mr. Hufstedler reported that 80 to 81 percent of the budget was spent by year-end, with underspending in the 5310 enhanced mobility, EVC RAA, and HWAP programs due to timing and delays in program starts and funder contracts.

The fringe and indirect cost variances are negative for the year. Under MORPC's indirect cost methodology, those variances will be recaptured two years later and incorporated into the 2027 Indirect Cost Allocation Plan and recover the amounts through that plan.

Mr. Hufstedler noted that the cash balance at year-end was just over $800,000, lower than desired, with over $1.8 million in investments, and emphasized the importance of increasing reserves to manage funder delays. Accounts receivable decreased by $370,000 compared to the previous year with significant outstanding balances from HUD and HWAP due to processing and system delays. Recent collections are improving.

Central Ohio Metropolitan Planning Organization Board – Parag Agrawal

Parag Agrawal shared three items on next week's Central Ohio Metropolitan Planning Organization Board consent agenda. Resolution T-01-26 is a routine administrative action involving three projects. Resolution T-02-26 adopts the Public Participation Plan, a federally required document that guides all

community engagement in the transportation planning process. Although currently listed as a consent item, it may be moved to the regular agenda for a brief presentation.

Resolution T-03-26 authorizes the Transportation Director to approve certain air quality determinations required under the Clean Air Act. The change aligns with updated ODOT guidance and streamlines workflow by eliminating the need for board resolutions for these routine approvals.

Next week's report includes a short presentation that outlines the MPO's eight planning initiatives for the year:

- Freight plan
- Active Transportation Plan
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Passenger Rail Efforts

Team Members are working to identify synergies across these initiatives to coordinate community engagement, reduce duplication, and limit the need for multiple consultants.

Regional Sustainability Roundtable – Jessica Kuenzli
Jessica Kuenzli reported that MORPC continues to advance the EVC RAA grant work following the extension through April. No update on the pending CFI award.

While in Washington, DC, Ms. Kuenzli met with the U.S. EPA office overseeing water infrastructure funding to better understand options for PFAS treatment. U.S. EPA confirmed that PFAS emerging contaminant funding is expected to be available in 2026 and 2027, ahead of the 2029 compliance deadline.

Team Members are meeting with stakeholders across the five counties to share draft policies and gather feedback regarding the 208 Designation, while also coordinating with Ohio EPA and reviewing their recent comments.

Ms. Kuenzli shared that Senior Planner, supporting sustainability and community development, Laura Quiceno joined MORPC on January 6. Ms. Quiceno comes from Ohio EPA.

Regional Policy Roundtable – Joseph Garrity
Joe Garrity thanked the Board Officers for attending the Washington, DC meetings. Their participation strengthened MORPC's message. MORPC held eight meetings, including with U.S. DOT, highlighting recent successes and the upcoming FY27 project submission process. MORPC will host a webinar to help members prepare competitive projects.

The delegation also discussed work on the intergovernmental support agreement with the Defense Supply Center Columbus, which requires an amendment to the National Defense Authority Act. Both Congresswoman Beatty and Congressman Carey expressed bipartisan support and will issue a joint letter.

Mr. Garrity thanked Kyle Probert for his work putting together the Washington, DC trip and Mr. Agrawal's team for their work on the Competitive Advantage Projects which continue to receive strong positive feedback from federal partners.

On the state side, Team Members met with House Finance Chair Brian Stewart regarding House Bill 445 and do not expect movement this session. He also provided helpful guidance on the upcoming state capital budget, with project submissions due in March and completion expected by June.

The next Regional Policy Roundtable meeting is February 17.

Proposed Resolution 01-26: "Accepting Norwich Township (Franklin County) as a member of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)" – William Murdock
Resolution 01-26 was approved by unanimous consent.

Proposed Resolution 03-26: "Accepting Hamilton Township (Franklin County) as a member of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)" – William Murdock
Resolution 03-26 was approved by unanimous consent.

Proposed Resolution 02-26: "Authorizing the executive director to enter into agreements with, and receive funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation to execute the FY25 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Funding Award" – Parag Agrawal
Parag Agrawal explained that the $6 million project, with $4.8 million from the grant and $1.2 million in matching funds, will launch the Coalition of Integrated Road User Safety (CIRUS) initiative, a public-private partnership aimed at improving road safety in rural communities.

Resolution 02-26 was approved by unanimous consent.

Quarterly Membership Update – Eileen Leuby
Eileen Leuby presented the Member Services Update highlighting:

- Membership
- Membership Services
- Board Representatives
- Member Visits
- Area Meetings
- External Forums
- Summer Intern Program
- External Events
- Return on Investment

Draft Commission Agenda
The Executive Committee reviewed the draft February 12, 2026 Commission Meeting Agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

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Laurie Jadwin, Secretary
Executive Committee

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Memorandum

TO:	Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission Executive Committee Officers and Board Members
FROM:	William Murdock Executive Director
DATE:	February 27, 2026
SUBJECT:	Proposed Resolution 04-26: **"Accepting Sharon Township (Franklin County) as a member of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)"**

On February 18, 2026, the Board of Trustees for Sharon Township passed a resolution to join the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC). This resolution accepts Sharon Township as a member of MORPC, effective March 12, 2026, which helps meet the desire of MORPC's membership to continue to grow the organization for the benefit of a stronger Central Ohio region.

The 2026 dues assessed for Sharon Township are $1,042.

Attachment: Resolution 04-26

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director

Chris Amorose Groomes
Chair

Ben Kessler
Vice Chair

Laurie Jadwin
Secretary

RESOLUTION 04-26

"Accepting Sharon Township (Franklin County) as a member of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)"

WHEREAS, Sharon Township recognizes the need for collaborative, cooperative planning in order to ensure continued growth and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, MORPC's vision is to drive the future prosperity and sustainability of the Central Ohio Region; and

WHEREAS, Sharon Township has petitioned for membership in MORPC; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of MORPC's members to continue to grow for the benefit of strong collaboration on regional issues; and

WHEREAS, Sharon Township will be assessed dues based on the 2025 population projections; and

WHEREAS, on February 18, 2026, the Sharon Township Board of Trustees passed a resolution accepting the conditions of membership contained in MORPC's Articles of Agreement; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE **MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**:

Section 1. That Sharon Township is accepted as a member of MORPC effective March 12, 2026.

Section 2. That the Bylaws provide that one (1) representative appointed by Sharon Township is eligible to serve as a voting member on their behalf at the MORPC Commission meetings.

Section 3. That 2026 net dues will be assessed to Sharon Township in the amount of $1,042.

Section 4. That Sharon Township is entitled to the same regular services of MORPC as are other members and that any special services will be purchased by the Township based on standard MORPC rates.

Section 5. That the executive director is authorized to take such other action and execute and deliver such other documents as, acting with the advice of legal counsel, he shall deem necessary and appropriate to carry out the intent of this resolution.

Section 6. That this Commission finds and determines that all formal deliberations and actions of this Commission concerning and relating to the adoption of this resolution were taken in open meetings of this Commission.

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Chris Amorose Groomes, Chair
MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Effective date:	March 12, 2026
Submitted by:	William Murdock, Executive Director
Prepared by:	Eileen Leuby, Membership Services Officer
Authority:	Ohio Revised Code Section 713.21
For action date:	March 12, 2026