

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

From Brian O. Martin, AICP
mvrpc.org



MIAMI VALLEY

Regional Planning Commission

Shaping Our Region's Future Together

January 6, 2017

Happy New Year and Welcome 2017 to All MVRPC Volunteers and Partners!

From the MVRPC staff, Happy New Year! We hope you and your family had a wondrous holiday season and you're now rested and prepared to start looking at what 2017 will bring. Your staff will be watching President-Elect Trump's infrastructure policies in regards to surface and air transportation, water quality, and the environment. The new president, combined with a new Congress, will start impacting federal legislation and agencies through their annual appropriations and through any rewriting of the current federal transportation law, Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) of 2015, which expires in September 2020. We will also be following and advocating for more funding at both the Ohio and federal levels in 2017. Please stay informed about these and other matters by reading these monthly updates and attending scheduled meetings.

I hope you noticed a new document in with your 2017 MVRPC committee delegate forms and invoice. The *2015 Benefits of MVRPC Membership* summary report displays, at a glance, the most relevant and unique member information and facts for our Local Government Members which pay dues on a per capita basis annually. This graphical two-page document lays out a summary of the planning and funding activities undertaken in the previous calendar year. It includes a Return on Investment (ROI) percentage: the difference between the member's Return and Investment divided by the Investment. The Investment is made up of your MVRPC dues paid plus local match toward transportation project funding received. The range of ROI varied from a high of 634 percent to a low of 7.3 percent. In the high ROI category were members who paid membership dues and received MPO planning services on the year. The lower ROIs were typically member agencies that received planning services plus project funds and local over-match funds from various sources including Ohio Public Works and local general funds. Even the lowest ROI annual return is still a better return than an individual, business, or government agency would receive on savings at a bank or in most years in a retirement plan. Your membership in MVRPC, and the use of our services and funding, is a smart long-term investment in infrastructure and quality of life for member jurisdictions! Thank you for your involvement and investments in the Miami Valley.

Update on Greene County US 35 "Superstreet"

We're looking forward to a design that replaces the old traditional design, that includes both signalized and unsignalized intersections on US 35 in Greene County, with the innovative Superstreet design. The Superstreet provides more green light time to traffic on US 35, plus left and right turns onto side streets. For the side streets, vehicular movements will be permitted only at signalized intersections. Motorists who desire to continue along the side street, or to turn left (to go the opposite direction) onto US 35 will use a median u-turn. The entire Miami Valley, visitors, and commuters are looking forward to the redesign of the Greene County section of US 35 and the improved operations and fewer crashes the new design will bring.

It appears that all federal, state, and local funding requests are on track to be approved by the end of March 2017 for the \$15.8M design-build project. Federal safety funds and Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) construction funds, from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), totaling approximately \$11M will likely be approved by the end of January. Also included in this mix of funding is \$3M of MVRPC's Federal Surface Transportation Program funds. Thanks to a strong local match of \$1.5M, MVRPC's Technical Advisory Committee and Board of Directors will have their opportunity to approve MVRPC funding for this project on February 16 and March 2, 2017, respectively. Congratulations to Greene County, Beaver Creek Township, and the City of Beaver Creek, as well as MVRPC and ODOT staff for their hard work thus far. This collaboration is an excellent example of our tag line: *Shaping Our Region's Future Together*.

U.S. DOT's MPO Coordination Rule to Become Effective January 17, 2017

The MVRPC Board of Directors, along with 200 regional councils and supported by local and state governments, elected officials, and businesses, provided more than 600 letters in opposition to the proposed coordination rule as released in June. The proposal would merge or require combined planning documents for one-third of all MPOs in the country (142 of 409 MPOs). The Miami Valley and our neighbors in Cincinnati and Springfield would be impacted and are united in opposition to this rule. The rule requires full compliance no later than two years after the date the Census Bureau releases its notice of Qualifying Urban Areas following the 2020 Census. Typically, the notice is published two years after the Census and so, barring withdrawal of the rule, compliance would be required in 2024. The latest draft of the rule allows for an exception in the case that affected regions feel they are already coordinating with one another in the spirit of the rule. The exception requires approval by the impacted regions, Governor, and Secretary of the U.S. DOT.

Currently, it is unclear what will result from this rule. It could remain in place or be dumped by the new Secretary of the U.S. DOT. What we know now is what is in front of us – the rule is to become effective January 17, 2017. There will be numerous discussions among MPOs about next steps in the coming months and years until the date for compliance with the rule or the rule is suspended. We'll provide more information in a future Executive Director's Update when it is available.

Grants & Funding Resources

Each month, MVRPC highlights several grant funding opportunities available at: <http://www.mvrpc.org/our-vision/planning-services/grant-and-funding-opportunities>, you will find a description, contact information and program links found in GrantFinder, a grant-seeking tool leased by MVRPC and a key first step in attracting funding. If you need assistance with your grant pursuit or need further grant research, contact Lynn Zuch, Research Associate, at 937.223.6323 or lzuch@mvrpc.org.

This month we are featuring the following grants:

- Ohio Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School Program; Deadline – Submit online application between January 3, 2017 - March 3, 2017
- Lowe's Community Partners Grants – Deadlines: Spring Cycle: March 19, 2017 – May 11, 2017, and the Fall Cycle: July 2, 2017 – August 24, 2017

Upcoming MVRPC Meetings:

01/18/17 10:00 a.m. STP/CMAQ/TA Project Sponsor Mtg. – 10 N. Ludlow St. – Suite 700
01/19/17 9:30 a.m. Technical Advisory Committee – 10 N. Ludlow St. – Suite 700
01/24/17 9:30 a.m. Areawide Facility Planning Subcommittee – Goodwill Easter Seals – 600 S. Main.
02/02/17 8:30 a.m. Executive Committee; 9:00 a.m. Board of Directors – 1515 S. Main