

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

From Brian O. Martin, AICP  
mvrpc.org



**MIAMI VALLEY**

Regional Planning Commission

Shaping Our Region's Future Together

**October 1, 2015**

## **A Word About Funding - a Common Topic Each Fall (Part 1)**

Fall is a beautiful season and the September weather has been truly outstanding this year. While the weather is great, there is one painful fact that we all are being confronted with – a flat and shrinking infrastructure funding outlook in Ohio and throughout the country. From the remainder of calendar year 2015 through March, 2016, the Board of Directors and staff will be determining which regional projects are funded through the MVRPC solicitation cycle which expires October 8, the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) run by the State of Ohio, and the Project Development Advocacy Committee (PDAC) selection process coordinated by the Dayton Development Coalition. All 3 of these programs are tied to our national transportation funding policy. Over the same period, MVRPC and the industry will be advocating for a long term funding bill prior to expiration of the current short term bill.

As residents of the Miami Valley, our strong and expansive transportation network has helped our Region be a “Live, Work & Play” destination. Every asset requires periodic maintenance and expansion and our transportation network is certainly in need of more funding.

### TRAC: May - October

This month, we are focused on the State of Ohio's TRAC process. This 9 member body allocates the state's funding to projects across Ohio. Here in the Miami Valley, the current improvements to I-75, investments in the I-70/75 interchange, and the I-75 interchanges at Dixie Drive and Austin Pike were funded through the TRAC process.

In this year's TRAC cycle, we have two excellent projects to advance: US 35 widening from Livingston Avenue to I-675 and the US 35 Interchanges project from Shakertown Road to Valley/Trebein Roads. Millions have been invested so far in studies, environmental documents, design plans, and some construction costs. To continue development of these projects, \$61.5M is being sought from the State of Ohio in this round of TRAC. There will be requests for additional funding in future years. While it is unclear how much funding will be secured this year, it is clear that there isn't enough funding to go around to every project across Ohio. We feel that it is important to advance the projects with new funding this year.

### PDAC: September – March 2016

In addition to the TRAC projects, other regional projects will be reviewed by the Transportation and Government Services Committee of PDAC which is coordinated by MVRPC. Traditionally, there have been a half dozen or so transportation projects and several government services projects included on the Region's list of priorities. Beginning this month and running through March, MVRPC staff, TAC, and Board will be heavily involved in this project selection process.

*Part 2 of this article will appear in November.*

## **Grant Announcements**

MVRPC has recently subscribed to Grant Finder, a grant search tool that allows subscribers to investigate grant announcement prospects from various Federal, State, and foundation sources from around the country. Below are some recently announced that may interest our members.

[The James M. Cox Foundation](#) - The James M. Cox Foundation offers grant support to non-profit organizations working in a number of community development arenas, including health; early childhood education; conservation and support of the environment; and family empowerment schemes. The Foundation also supports capital campaigns for construction and renovation projects. The James M. Cox Foundation typically makes a number of small grant awards of up to \$5,000. Good candidates: 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations working in a region where Cox enterprises or one of its subsidiaries does business. For more information, including a list of eligible businesses and locations of Cox enterprises, click the link below: <http://coxenterprises.com/corporate-responsibility/giving/foundations.aspx#.VqCZWWRVikq>

[Honda of America Mfg., Inc.](#) - Since 1979, Honda of America has contributed more than \$54 million in charitable support to fund community-based projects in our Ohio communities. Requesting organizations must serve the communities in the following MVRPC counties: Darke and Miami.

Priority is given to those projects that:

- Promote advancements in the areas of environment, safety, cultural diversity and youth education
- Respond to the unique social needs and priorities of our communities
- Promote the cultural enrichment of our communities at large

Deadline: The grant request window for 2016 funding is currently open until November 30, 2015. See more at: [http://ohio.honda.com/philanthropic-grants#request\\_grant\\_support\\_step8](http://ohio.honda.com/philanthropic-grants#request_grant_support_step8)

[Ohio Humanities Cultural and Heritage Tourism Grants](#) - Ohio is filled with significant historic sites and remarkable natural resources. The humanities help draw attention to Ohio's tourism assets by offering compelling stories and creating vital visitor experiences. Most importantly, quality humanities content can make Ohio's cultural assets relevant and distinguish them in the tourism landscape. Visitors make decisions on where to travel for reasons beyond a location's cultural and natural assets. A place that tells its story well creates a captivated audience, and the invitation to enter the stories of a place should happen even before visitors arrive.

Projects should focus on tourism as a learning opportunity for travelers and local residents, enhance community life, and support local economic development.

Deadlines:

Planning Grants (max \$2,000) are due the first business day of the month 8 weeks before the start of funded activities.

Implementation Grants (max \$10,000) are due November 15 and February 15 at least 3 months before the start of funded activities.

See more at: <http://www.ohiohumanities.org/grants1/tourism-grants.html>

## **MVRPC staff changes**

Unfortunately, we had to say "goodbye" to our Transportation Planner, Omar J. Peters, who had been a member of MVRPC's Long Range Transportation Planning team since 2011. He accepted a position with Valley Metro, the public transportation authority serving the greater Phoenix area. Omar is a native of St. George's, Grenada, and moved to Dayton after getting his Master's Degree in Regional Planning from the University of Albany – SUNY. He has relocated to Tempe, Arizona, just in time for the 100+ degree weather they are having, and is missing our Region's paved bike trails since those in Arizona are

gravel. So, they might have better weather, but we have better trails! We'll be advertising in October to fill this Transportation Planner position.

We are pleased to welcome our newest intern, Alex Ketron, who is working with the Long Range Transportation Planning team. He is currently a senior at Miami University in Oxford, majoring in Urban and Regional Planning. As a cyclist too, he was involved in the planning and implementation of bike lanes around the Oxford campus. Alex was also part of a team that focused on raising awareness around campus regarding becoming LEED Certified. Due to his team's efforts, Miami University is implementing strategies to become a more "environmentally-friendly campus" including plans to rebuild Shideler Hall as a LEED Certified building. During his free time, Alex volunteers for Habitat for Humanity and enjoys being part of Miami University's Rowing Club. Welcome, Alex!

**Upcoming MVRPC meetings:**

10/07/15 - 4:00 p.m. - Public Participation Mtg. – Draft Public Participation Policy Update –10 N. Ludlow  
10/15/15 - 9:30 a.m. - Technical Advisory Committee Meeting, 10 N. Ludlow  
10/20/15 - 4:00 p.m. - Public Participation Mtg. – 2040 Long Range Transp. Plan – Troy Public Library  
10/21/15 - 4:00 p.m. - Public Participation Mtg. – 2040 Long Range Transp. Plan – 10 N. Ludlow  
10/22/15 - 9:00 a.m. - Sustainability Roundtable – Best Practice Snow & Ice Removal – 10 N. Ludlow  
10/22/15 - 4:00 p.m. - Public Participation Mtg. – 2040 Long Range Transp. Plan – Greene Co. Library  
11/05/15 - 8:30 a.m. - Executive Committee; 9:00 a.m. Board of Directors – 1515 S. Main