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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## MORPC Announces Bike Training Pilot Program for Downtown Area Workers & Residents

**(Columbus – June 9, 2015)** The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) has announced the launch of the pilot “Ride Buddy” – a commute by bike training program. MORPC has partnered with YayBikes!, a local bicycle education and training non-profit, to educate and empower Downtown Columbus employees and residents to shift from driving alone by car to and from work to commuting by bicycle.

The pilot program is free and open to anyone who works or lives in the Downtown area during the month of June. The goal is to increase the number of people who bicycle to work, or bicycle during the day to meetings or lunch.

“This is an opportunity for Downtown employees and residents to safely try shifting their work commutes from car to bike to be more active, improve vehicle congestion on our roadways and contribute to cleaner air in Central Ohio,” said MORPC Director of Transportation Systems & Funding Thea J. Walsh.

The program uses educational bike rides that include free use of CoGo Bike Share bicycles and intensive one-on-one coaching and shadowing with a Yay Bikes! Ride Buddy. Yay Bikes! also offers free informational presentations that provide specific information for riding on urban streets.

“We want to break down as many barriers as possible for new riders, and to make this a positive and fun experience,” said Yay Bikes! Executive Director Catherine Girves.

Several free trainings are available. Bicyclists can sign up for one or all of them:

- **Work commutes.** A Yay Bikes! Ride Buddy will ride with employees on their first bicycle commute, either directly from/to their homes or from/to a predetermined Park & Pedal location.

Park & Pedal is a new program sponsored by MORPC and the City of Columbus. It is specifically designed for commuters who drive five or more miles to work, so they can enjoy the last few miles of their commute by bike by parking their cars at designated locations in local parks. Park & Pedal currently has two pilot locations: Academy Park, at 250 S. Nelson Road on the near east side and Dodge Park, at 667 Sullivant Avenue on the near west side.

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- **CoGo rides:** During lunch hour rides, a Yay Bikes! Ride Buddy will familiarize employees with the CoGo Bike Share system and escort them to destinations Downtown, like their favorite lunch spots or frequent meeting locations.
- **Social / teambuilding rides:** During after work rides, a Yay Bikes! Ride Buddy will offer unique educational experiences to groups of employees who want to explore Downtown destinations and/or a particular theme by bike (such as touring the facilities offered by several bike friendly businesses).

In addition, free professional development rides will be offered during the workday focused on a specific theme for professionals whose work involves bicycling to give them a hands-on experience with a Ride Buddy. For example, there could be bicycle infrastructure rides for public service employees or neighborhood rides for staff at a non-profit organization or charitable foundation.

The Ride Buddy pilot is funded by MORPC's Ride Solutions program that promotes alternatives to driving alone to work. For more information, contact Mary Ann Frantz, MORPC Alternative Transportation Manager, by calling 614-233-4156 or e-mailing [mafrantz@morpc.org](mailto:mafrantz@morpc.org). Additional details on the specifics of the program can be obtained by contacting Yay Bikes! at (614) 470-4220 or [info@yaybikes.com](mailto:info@yaybikes.com).

*The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is a voluntary association of local governments and regional organizations which envisions and embraces innovative directions in economic prosperity, energy, the environment, housing, land use, and transportation. Our transformative programming, services and innovative public policy are designed to promote and support the vitality and growth in the region.*