



Date: August 22, 2024

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Location: Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

Members Present in Person

Sloan Spalding (Vice Chair)

Todd Bailey

Gerard Basalla

Robert Bitzenhofer

Kristen Easterday

Kelsey Ellingsen

Chris Amorose Grooms

Megan O'Callaghan

Lauren Rummel

Steve Tugend

Jason Warner

MORPC Staff Present in Person

Parag Agrawal

Joseph Garrity

Kyle Probert

Guests Present in Person

Ann Aquillo

Congressman Mike Carey

Blaine Kelly

Attending Remotely

None

The meeting was called to order at 11:35 a.m. by Vice Chair Spalding.

Members of the Roundtable provided introductions.

Ms. Amorose Grooms introduced the special guest, Congressman Mike Carey.

Congressman Carey highlighted the community projects that received funding in the federal budget. \$50 million were appropriated in his district over last two years.

Mr. Basalla added that the state looks at federal investment for the capital budget, and that these federal investments make a difference.

Mr. Carey noted tax legislation will be needed in early 2025. The House Ways and Means committee will be leading in this area and has a good bipartisan working relationship. The child tax credit, R&D, and expensing have been resolved already due to this work. This sets up precedence for permanence via another bill. The committee is hoping for long term solution going into 2025, including an extension of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. Working groups are meeting across the country to gather feedback. Additionally, the SALT deduction needs to be addressed to move a tax package in a bipartisan fashion.

Vice Chair Spalding asked what Republicans hope to accomplish in negotiations.

Mr. Carey responded that Many Republicans and some Democrats don't want to touch the SALT deduction because their constituencies do not qualify for it, but it adversely impacts many high-value homes in states like New York and California. Republicans only have a 3-vote majority currently. It will have to be a bipartisan effort.

Vice Chair Spalding noted that many people think Congress is dysfunctional and asked why that is not true.

Mr. Carey responded that media doesn't always cover when things go well – they tend to cover when things go wrong. Most members of Congress really do want to get work done across the aisle.

Mr. Agrawal asked Mr. Carey for his view on passenger rail expansion.

Mr. Carey responded that Central Ohio will need it and he is all in. His office had a briefing with COTA yesterday. Given the growth in Central Ohio, the region can be a hub. He is willing to do whatever we need to do to support the effort. He added that electric vehicles are not only more expensive to buy but also to maintain, and that this may change how people choose to move.

Mr. Garrity asked Mr. Carey to expand on his pedestrian safety efforts in Congress.

Mr. Carey responded that the inner suburbs and inner cities are lacking in pedestrian infrastructure. The Save Our Pedestrians Act would dedicate federal funds to states through HSIP for pedestrian infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Bailey emphasized appreciation for the conversation and bipartisan work and getting results.

Mr. Spalding and Mr. Probert provided an update on the Public Policy Agenda Working Group. The Working Group has one meeting remaining and will present its final version at the November Roundtable meeting.

Mr. Bailey added that he appreciates the leadership to create an ambitious agenda that is pragmatic in challenging environments.

Mr. Garrity also extended appreciation to the leadership of Roundtable members in the PPA Working Group. He also highlighted some wins from the agenda: RTPO funding, the Economic Development District, increasing competitive bidding thresholds, and funding from the One-Time Strategic Community Investment Fund (OTSCIF).

Mr. Basalla thanked the group and added the OTSCIF was a team effort – our collaborative spirit is why we did so well.

Mr. Garrity continued with a legislative update. He noted Sept. 9th MORPC will host a dedicated Money Mondays regarding how to get OTSCIF and Capital Budget funds after they've been appropriated.

Mr. Basalla noted many communities and organizations in the community will appreciate the guidance.

Vice Chair Spalding suggested producing a one-pager on top questions in that subject.

Mr. Garrity shared All Aboard Ohio is seeking \$10 million for Corridor ID Step 2. This would help all four Ohio passenger rail routes get their local match and create an Office of Passenger Rail. HB 488 (to rejoin the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission) is also a priority.

Mr. Tugend added that affordable housing is a priority – the state has begun to look at it via the Senate Select Committee on Housing and is considering language in HB 315 to create a Housing Technical Assistance Grant Program. Another bill, HB 340, would provide dedicated funds for rideshare programs. MORPC is advancing an amendment to include GOHIO in that grant program.

Mr. Tugend provided a defense update. He shared that the Columbus Regional Airport Authority was successful in securing funds to revitalize a runway at Rickenbacker ANGB. We are continuing to monitor The National Defense Authorization Act. Language is in the bill to safeguard the KC-135s at Rickenbacker. We are also advocating for the KC-46 to be based at Rickenbacker as well. If we don't get the KC-46, we want to score well to go after other aircraft in the future.

Other business:

Mr. Bailey moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Mr. Basalla seconded the motion. The minutes were approved without objection.

Mr. Garrity reminded members that LinkUS will be on the ballot on November 5th as Issue 47.

The meeting adjourned at 12:57 p.m.