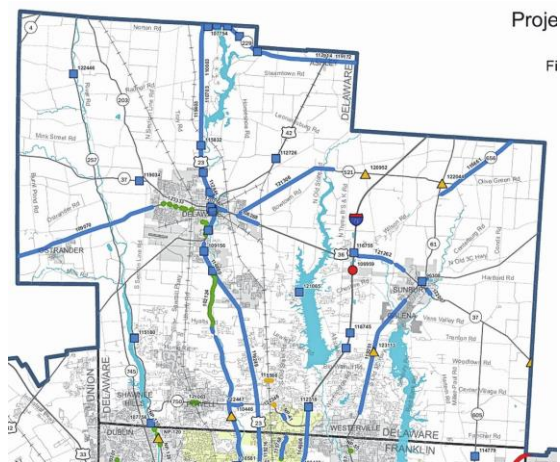


Planning aplenty for Delaware County

By Gary Budzak March 20, 2025



This map shows MORPC's highway TIP projects

COLUMBUS — Plenty of road construction projects are in the pipeline, so to speak, for Delaware County in the coming years, according to a report recently issued by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission.

MORPC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization tasked by Ohio to carry out provisions of the Federal Highway and Transit acts of 1962 and 1964 to provide “a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process.” This means it regularly updates a document called the Transportation Improvement Program.

The introduction to the State Fiscal Year 2026-2029 version of the draft, issued on March 10, said:

“The TIP for MORPC is a staged, four-year schedule of transportation improvements using (or expecting to use) funds administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), and other projects that have significant air quality impacts. MORPC's TIP is a component of the Statewide TIP (STIP).”

As expected, the majority of projects are slotted for Franklin County in particular and ODOT's districts 5 and 6 in general. However, there are also a lot of projects for the fastest-growing county in the state. The appendix to the TIP lists the Delaware County projects that will be incorporated into ODOT's TIP. Here is a list, with the construction year and total project estimate cost.

State Fiscal Year 2026

- Building a new interchange on Interstate 71 at Sunbury Parkway south of U.S. Route 36/state Route 37 and connecting to Sunbury Parkway east of I-71 (2026, \$59.8 million).

- Bridge repairs to nine structures on U.S. 23 (2026-2027, \$15.3 million).
- U.S. Route 23 corridor projects — design and environment services from Pennsylvania Avenue to the Marion County line, excluding state Route 229 and Coover Road intersections (2026, \$10.3 million).
- Pavement reconstruction on S.R. 37 between U.S. Route 42/Lake Street and Foley Street (2026 and 2028, \$8.1 million).
- Bridge rehab on five structures on S.R. 229 from Norton to Horseshoe roads (2026, \$5.7 million).
- Work on Africa and Cheshire roads in Berlin and Orange townships, including adding turn lanes at the intersection of Africa and Plumb roads (2026, \$5.5 million).
- Building a roundabout at the intersection of state routes 61 and 521 (2026-2028, \$4.8 million).
- State Route 315 slide repair between Hyatts and Bunty Station roads “by resurfacing, installing roadside ditches, and replacing culverts and retaining walls,” the project description said (2026, \$4 million).
- S.R. 315 at Jewett Road intersection improvement (2026, \$4.2 million).
- Building a roundabout at S.R. 521 and Galena Road (2026-2028, \$3.7 million).
- Resurfacing S.R. 229 to Ashley’s east and west corporation limits (2026, \$3.5 million).
- Installing sidewalk and shared-use path segments in the City of Delaware along routes 36 and 42, South Sandusky Street and London Road (2026-2027, \$2.3 million).
- Spot paving repairs on U.S. 23 (2026, \$2.1 million).
- Installing a concrete median at the intersection of state Route 750 and East Powell Road (2026, \$445,280).
- Adding a turn lane and signal at the intersection of State Route 3 and Lewis Center Road (2026, \$250,000).
- Improved pedestrian crossings at Depot, Hall and Olentangy streets, and Traditions Way (2026, \$235,559).

State Fiscal Year 2027

- Orange Road grade separation (underpass) at Norfolk Southern/CSX railroad with sidewalk and shared-use path (2027, \$68.6 million).

- Build Sunbury Parkway from U.S. 36 to 3 B's and K Road and widen Sunbury Parkway between 3 B's and K to west of I-71 (2027, \$42.7 million).
- Priority resurfacing on I-71 in Delaware and Franklin counties (2027, \$24.7 million).
- Shoulder widening and resurfacing U.S. 36 to Union County line (2027, \$14 million).
- Resurfacing U.S. 23 in Delaware to north of Waldo in Marion County (2027, \$10.2 million).
- Reconstructing and widening East Granville Street to two 12-foot lanes with a 10-foot shared-use path on one side. The termini are South Morning Street to Letts Avenue in Sunbury. "Also includes connecting the Ohio and Erie Trail by removing the old railroad bridge abutments and constructing a new pedestrian bridge over the roadway," the description said (2027, \$7.5 million).
- Resurfacing U.S. 23 to City of Delaware's north corporation limit (2027, \$6.3 million).
- Guardrail and pavement work and resurfacing to state routes 3, 37, 203, 521 in Delaware and 656 in Morrow County (2027, \$6.3 million).
- Resurfacing U.S. 23 south of Cheshire Road to south of U.S. 42 (2027, \$5 million).
- Building a roundabout at S.R. 37/County Line Road in Licking County (2027, \$3.7 million).
- Bridge and culvert repair on U.S. 23 between the Olentangy River to Main Road (2027, \$2 million).
- Resurfacing and bridge work on S.R. 521 leaving Delaware (2027, \$1.2 million).
- Culvert and storm sewer upgrade on S.R. 37 (2027, \$660,000).
- Culvert maintenance with slip liner on I-71 just north of Plumb Road (2027, \$572,000).
- Drainage solution (new storm sewers or drainage ditches with slope stabilization) for State Route 750 from bridge over the Olentangy River to west of Highmeadows Village Drive (2027, \$385,000).

State Fiscal Year 2028

- Pavement maintenance and guardrail improvements to U.S. 23 (2028, \$6.6 million).
- Pavement maintenance on state routes 257, 315, 745 and 750 (2028, \$6.2 million).
- "Full replacement of a 3-span concrete box beam bridge on Cheshire Road over an access road to portions of Alum Creek State Park," said the description. "Options ... will be investigated to minimize impact to important roadway corridor" (2028, \$956,700).

- U.S. 36 resurfacing (2028, \$678,628).
- Replacing a culvert on U.S. 42 (2028, \$312,000).

State Fiscal Year 2029

- Replacing bridge deck on Lewis Center Road over I-71 and Powell Road (2029, \$2 million).
- Culvert replacement on I-71 just north of 36/37 interchange (2029, \$572,000).
- Bridge replacement on S.R. 257 over Deer Run (2029, \$416,000).
- Replacing a concrete culvert on U.S. 36 over Prairie Run north of S.R. 37 (2029, \$269,500).

This gives the informed reader some idea of the complexity of keeping these projects organized, funded and scheduled.

Previously authorized projects

The 618-page document also includes projects with “phases included in the SFY 2024 to 2027 TIP that were authorized.” Among them:

- Sunbury Parkway was identified as an arterial expansion by MORPC, with a new interchange at I-71 south of U.S. 36/S.R. 37; a new roadway from U.S. 36 to 3 B's and K Road a new roadway/interchange modification from Africa Road to I-71; and preliminary engineering for a new interchange for I-71 at Big Walnut Road.
- Bridge maintenance for Warrensburg Road over the Scioto River was also listed.
- Resurfacing projects included Cheshire and Africa roads from Old State to Lewis Center roads; U.S. 62 and State Route 521 from William to Sandusky streets; and Sawmill Parkway from Seldom Seen to Home roads in Powell. Intersection modifications at S.R. 605 and Fancher Road; U.S. 37 at County Line Road; Lewis Center at Worthington/Rome Corners roads; and U.S. 23 at S.R. 229.
- Drainage and intersection improvements at State Route 315 from Jewett Road and Sherborne Lane was listed; as was maintenance on U.S. 36 from the Union County Line to east of Section Line Road; roadway rehab on Colomet to Pittsburgh drives; and median improvements at various locations.
- Projects delayed to SFY 2026-2029 were culvert maintenance on S.R. 315 from Hyatts to Bunty Station roads; culvert preservation on S.R. 37; major roadway rehab to U.S. 36 from Union County line to east of Section Line Road; minor roadway rehab S.R. 37 from Delaware corporation limit to Troy Road; new roadways at Merrick Boulevard to Troy Road, Sawmill Parkway from Innovation Court to South Section Line Road, Byxbe Parkway from U.S. 36 to Bowtown Road; intersection modification of Cheshire at Golf Course roads.

Transit projects

The TIP also lists projects for transit, such as the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA). As for Delaware County Transit, it will receive \$4,461,727 in operating assistance from the county in 2026; \$4,044,852 in 2027; \$4,919,053 in 2028; and \$5,165,006 in 2029. It will also receive \$1,044,000 for vehicle fleet replacements and expansion annually from 2026-2029. They also were listed under previously authorized projects.

COTA's Short Range Transit Plan (2023-2027) and DCT's Strategic Plan (2024-2028) were among the TIP appendices.

CORPO projects

Another TIP draft was also issued by the Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization (CORPO), representing counties surrounding Franklin and Delaware. There were two CORPO projects featuring Delaware County.

- Resurfacing project of route 229 in Delaware and Morrow counties (2028, \$1.1 million).
- Culvert invert repair of route 257 in Delaware and Marion counties (2029, \$39,371).

“MORPC and CORPO will host a public open house on Wednesday, April 2, from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. at MORPC's office, 111 Liberty St., Suite 100, in Columbus,” said a recent news release issued by the agency. “The open house will give attendees the chance to learn more about planned improvements and share their feedback with transportation planners.”

Also of note

The TIP describes Franklin County projects that will be of interest to readers:

- The 2026 \$12-million Sunbury Road-Big Walnut Trail is administered by the City of Columbus Parks and Recreation Department. The description reads, “Construct a dedicated 2.5-mile shared-use path along Big Walnut Creek from Turtle Station Way to Mt. Hood Court (Alum Creek Trail). This includes stream crossing, linkage to the west side of Big Walnut Creek to Shady Blossom Lane.”
- The Big Walnut Trail will go through Gahanna north of I-270 to Puzzuro Park, starting in 2026 to 2028, a \$5.5 million project. Next is a portion of the Big Walnut Trail to be built from Winchester Pike to Nafzger Park/Refugee Road in 2026-2027, costing \$8.3 million. Another 3.5-mile section of the Big Walnut Trail will be built from Refugee Road to East Main Street in 2028 at a cost of \$13.3 million. A further extension of the trail to Lockbourne Road would start in 2028 and cost \$7 million.
- North Hamilton Road in Columbus will be widened from S.R. 161 to Central College Road in 2026 at a cost of \$20.9 million.

- Polaris Parkway will be widened to add a right turn lane from Gemini Place to South Old State Road in 2026 at a cost of \$2.8 million.
- Starting in 2027, the Rocky Fork Creek Trail will be extended to Harlem Road. The project is slated to go into at least 2030 at a cost of \$2.1 million. Starting in 2029, the trail will be extended from Central College Road to S.R. 161 at a cost of \$6.7 million.
- From 2027 to 2029, the proposed Big Walnut Creek and existing Alum Creek trails will get a connector in Obetz at Three Creeks Metro Park in an \$8.5 million project. In future years, the trail will connect to the Blacklick Creek Trail, a \$21 million project.
- The Hanby Park Connector, a shared-use path connecting Uptown Westerville and the Ohio to Erie Trail, is expected to be built in 2028-2029 at a cost of \$1.1 million.