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Local Groups Support Upcoming Car Free Day through Alternative Parking Spots

Global PARK(ing) Day Initiative Hits Columbus on September 18, followed by World Car Free Day on September 22

(Columbus—September 17, 2009)—Mark your calendars for two events that encourage central Ohioans to reduce or eliminate the use of their car for just one day.

On Friday, September 18, several organizations will be participating in PARK(ing) Day, a global event originally created by Rebar, San Francisco art and design collective, where artists, activists, and citizens collaborate to temporarily transform parking spots into temporary, creative public spaces.

- The Columbus Planning Division and the Mayor’s Office will transform a parking spot in front of the Planning office at 109 N. Front St (corner of Front & Spring). The City of Columbus is using PARK(ing) Day to help promote green parking code changes.
- A bicycle-powered food demonstration in Columbus Public Health’s public parking lot at 240 Parsons Avenue will combine physical activity with fresh, local food. From 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., the bike will be in full motion demonstrating active living.
- The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) will create an outdoor office in one of their parking spots at 111 Liberty Street. Thanks to Executive Director Chester Jourdan’s bus commute on Friday, MORPC is able to utilize an empty space where staff can work throughout the day.
- Consider Biking will see how many bicycles can fill a parking space in front of Paradise Garage on High Street in the Short North. “This demonstration will show our support and need for bike parking in the City’s update to the parking code,” states Jeff Stephens, Executive Director.

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Working to Build a Better Region

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Photos of the PARK(ing) Day spots will be posted to the local Facebook event page, titled PARK(ing) DAY 2009 - Columbus, OH.

The groups also encourage central Ohioans to participate in Car Free Day Columbus on Tuesday, September 22. The event seeks to raise awareness of alternative transportation options available to central Ohio residents, such as walking, cycling, riding transit, and carpooling. "Using alternative forms of transportation is good for Columbus in so many ways," said Mayor Michael B. Coleman. "It makes us a greener city, it makes our people healthier and more active, and it makes our streets less congested and more pedestrian friendly. I urge all residents to join in celebrating Car Free Day."

The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) and MORPC representatives will be on hand at Broad and High Streets on Monday, September 21 to promote Car Free Day, helping the lunch-time (11 a.m. to 1 p.m.) crowd find better travel alternatives. The goal of Car Free Day is to introduce a new and different way of getting around. For instance, COTA's Google Trip Planner allows users to plan their own bus routes, and their Bike N' Bus program gives central Ohioans the opportunity to bike part of their commute.

"COTA is pleased to participate in Car Free Day as an alternative to driving," said Bill Lhota, COTA President/CEO. "Our Car Free Day partnership with MORPC helps introduce COTA's service to many people who may not have used public transit. During a time when we're facing significant economic and environmental challenges, Car Free Day reminds commuters to consider public transit as a way to leave their cars behind, save money and help reduce America's dependence on foreign energy."

If being completely car free isn't an option, then consider riding together in one car. MORPC's RideSolutions program offers free services to help interested commuters share a ride to and from work. MORPC's Guaranteed Ride Home program takes the worry out of being stranded in case of an emergency.

Other options to be car light on Car Free Day include taking an ECT Pedicab to lunch instead of driving; or renting a bike from the first-ever free bikeshare program, EveryoneBikes, to run errands or grab lunch around the Short North area.

"Alternative transportation is not just for recreation, it's a viable alternative to automobile travel—reducing air pollution and improving our health," said MORPC Executive Director Chester R. Jourdan, Jr. "Hopefully with Car Free Day we can convince others to replace a trip that they would normally take with their car and ride their bike, walk or take the bus instead."

Interested participants are encouraged to pledge to be car free at www.carfreedaycolumbus.org.