Local Government Internship: MORPC and City of Lancaster
Molly Ridge

Background
This summer I worked for the City of Lancaster through the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission’s (MORPC) Local Government Internship.

MORPC’s Mission:
MORPC is Central Ohio’s regional council for more than 75 members comprised of counties, cities, villages, townships, and regional organizations. We take pride in bringing communities of all sizes and interests together to collaborate on best practices and plan for the future of our growing region. We do this through a variety of programs, services, projects and initiatives – all with the goal of improving the lives of our residents and making Central Ohio stand out on the world stage.

On The Job
▪ Conducted plan reviews for zoning bulk and area requirements, setbacks, and signage.
▪ Led city initiative to be SolSmart certified.
▪ Webpage creation: Solar power and small business.
▪ Conducted a zoning study on signs on Memorial Drive.

Experiences
▪ Shadowed city departments including the Port Authority, Code Enforcement, and Community Development.
▪ Assisted Port Authority with RFI and RFPs
▪ Wrote zoning code about solar power, short term rentals, and group homes.

I was also able to see some behind-the-scenes work for the Lancaster Festival and was able to attend some of the Festival’s events.

Reflection
This experience related to my future career plans as I hope to work within the intersection of sustainability and planning. These two fields work together in so many ways - housing, food access, transportation, zoning, and more.

Moving forward, I am hoping to get an internship in a more specific facet of planning. Currently, I am looking at options relating to housing and food systems. I would like to move out of government and into either a startup, private company, or nonprofit - I think there is lots of room for innovation in these settings!

For a student interested in a similar experience, I would recommend taking advantage of all the networking opportunities working for an organization like MORPC can offer. I would also recommend continuing to work on your resume and seek involvements that are meaningful to you and your desired field.