

Riparian Setbacks Agreed to In Lucas and Northern Wood Counties

Members of TMACOG's Stormwater Coalition have been working with developers, city engineers, and others to agree on how much land should be left vegetated around ditches, streams and rivers in Lucas County and northern Wood County. Vegetation growing on the banks of waterways provides a natural filter that can treat some contaminants and prevent erosion. Discussion centered on how wide of a riparian setback is effective and should be built into local zoning and building regulations. Members of the working group have agreed on new model language that is included in the *Stormwater Management Standards Manual*. The language in the manual is recommended; regulations only become official when adopted by jurisdictions.

To help builders and others see what land is affected by the recommended setbacks, members of the coalition will create detailed maps. These are still in development but for more information contact TMACOG at 419.241.9155, ext. 103. In general, the recommendation for riparian setbacks is 100' from a major stream, 40' from a minor stream, and 30' from a small ditch. Major, minor, and small waterways are defined based on the amount of land drained by the waterway. The Maumee River and the Lake Erie shoreline are the only areas where a 300' setback is recommended. Jurisdictions note that even when riparian setbacks are incorporated into zoning regulations variances may be possible.

Sandusky County Member Reception

Sandusky County members of TMACOG, elected officials, and interested parties are invited to a reception Tuesday, April 29, 5-7 p.m. at Terra Community College in Fremont. Kay Reiter, Director of the Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation, will present an update on county-wide economic development efforts and describe the services her office can provide to local jurisdictions.

Bike to Work Day 2008 – Tuesday, May 20

Start a healthy new habit. TMACOG and the members of the Pedestrian & Bikeways Committee want you to try commuting to work on a bicycle on Tuesday, May 20. Bike to Work Day is a reminder that a bicycle is a great commuter vehicle: practically free, good for your health and the environment.

To participate in Bike to Work Day, simply get out your bike and helmet and ride on May 20. If you want to ride with a group, meet up with other riders at Ottawa Park in west Toledo, or Walbridge Park near the Toledo Zoo. Riders will be leaving those locations at about 8:30 a.m. on May 20. Or TMACOG can help map a safe and fun route for your group. For more suggestions on organizing Bike to Work Day or help with a map, call Kent Gardam at TMACOG at 419.241.9155 ext. 116. If you do become a biking commuter, please let us know about your experiences.

Request Made for Required Ohio Hub Study

Plans for a state-wide system of fast, modern passenger trains have advanced to the point where the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) has requested federal funding for a first-tier, or program level, environmental impact analysis. The ORDC has proposed routes and is considering general locations for rail stations. The environmental analysis would resolve decisions regarding routes and stations and address the capital improvements needed, community priorities, and environmental impacts.

The ORDC is asking elected officials and others interested in modernized passenger rail service to submit resolutions and letters of support to Representative Marcy Kaptur. For more information about the Ohio Hub plan, see www.dot.state.oh.us/ohiorail.

Transportation Safety Studies

TMACOG has been working with area jurisdictions and a consultant to list locations where serious and frequent traffic accidents happen and to recommend measures to improve safety at those locations.

Evaluation of the statewide database of accidents with input from safety personnel and engineers in the jurisdictions in Wood and Lucas Counties has identified specific intersections and corridor locations. Elements that define a safety problem include severe and/or frequent accidents as well as those resulting in injuries or fatalities. The sites identified as dangerous are then examined with the help of ODOT safety personnel to evaluate the factors causing these accidents and to determine what improvements may help reduce or alleviate any unsafe conditions. The results of these evaluations will be made available to the various jurisdictions charged with the maintenance of these roadways in order that they may use this information in applying for the annual Safety Program Funding available through ODOT. TMACOG will continue to update this information to provide appropriate area rankings for future use.

FEMA Floodplain Maps Anticipated in June

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is reviewing floodplains in all coastal areas of the United States. In our region, Lucas County falls into that category. The purpose of the review is to better define flood-prone areas using current data and modern mapping technology. The new FEMA maps will help communities qualify for reductions in flood insurance rates for those households and businesses that are required to purchase flood insurance. FEMA projects a release date of draft maps by the end of June, 2008 followed by a public review period. The timeline for new floodplain delineations anticipates completion by March, 2009.

April Executive Meeting to Mark 40th Anniversary

In April of 1968 the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments was officially established, with bylaws and elected officers. The newly formed Executive Committee held their first meeting in the council chambers of the City of Oregon. In celebration of TMACOG's 40th year, the April 16, 2008, meeting of the TMACOG Executive Committee will also be held in Oregon, in the Community Room of the Oregon Municipal Building. The noon meeting will include regular business and lunch with some special guests through the hospitality of Mayor Marge Brown and the City of Oregon.

ITS System Moving Ahead in Toledo Area

Over the last few years, TMACOG and its partners developed a comprehensive Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) architecture for our region. The architecture is an inventory and plan for linking all the existing and planned information-sharing systems in the area. Examples of ITS systems include cameras that detect traffic slowdowns which could link to roadway signage to advise drivers of alternate routes, or kiosks in bus stations to tell people when their bus will arrive. Other systems are designed to help emergency personnel navigate more quickly or allow traffic signals to change in response to traffic flow. In early March, an ODOT advisory committee met for first time to look at the plans. The ITS architecture is slated for detailed design in 2009 and construction in 2011.

TMACOG Speakers Bureau Shares Information

TMACOG's professional staff and members are frequently invited to make presentations to area clubs and organizations in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. Currently, TMACOG is working actively to get the word out to describe our region's long range transportation plan, the 2035 Plan. To request a speaker to share information about the 2035 Plan, or any other transportation, environmental, or commuter services topic, contact Greg Gettum at 419.241.9155 ext. 132.

Donate Used Cars and Trucks to TMACOG

TMACOG is now accepting donations of vehicles to support the work of the Commuter Services department. To donate a vehicle, contact Russ Stasiak: 419.241.9155 ext. 158, or stasiak@tmacog.org. TMACOG will handle all the details, arranging to tow your vehicle if necessary, and managing the paperwork. For more information on the program, see www.tmacog.org/givetoleadowheels.htm.

Welcome New TMACOG Members

TMACOG welcomes Suburban Natural Gas, a privately owned business established in 1882. Woodville Township has also rejoined TMACOG.

Save the Date

September 15

2008 Transportation Summit, SeaGate Centre, Toledo.

September 16-17

2008 Ohio Conference on Freight, SeaGate Centre, Toledo. Contact Warren Henry for sponsorship opportunities at 419.241.9155 ext. 129.