

City of Toledo Accepts Loan for Martin Luther King, Jr. Bridge Repairs

The project to rehab the Martin Luther King Jr. Bridge in downtown Toledo has experienced significant delays and costs have risen far beyond what was budgeted in TMACOG's 2006-2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). To complete the repairs, the City of Toledo is borrowing from TMACOG against future TIP funding. This loan will not short-change or jeopardize funding for transportation projects in other jurisdictions.

Cost overruns are not uncommon in transportation construction projects. It is the position of TMACOG, its members, and the TIP Committee that the TIP Committee will try to be of financial assistance when requested by the project sponsor. The City of Toledo requested help in 2006 when the need for more funds became apparent. In 2008, the city has now drawn on that \$4.5 million loan. The city intends also to solicit grants to attempt to cover additional costs of the reconstruction which will exceed the loan amount.

Project delays resulted from engineering complications, discovery of deteriorated internal concrete, and weather-related scheduling difficulties. Last winter, extreme cold kept workers from the site for some time, and wind and currents broke two barges loose in icy water. In 2008, the Coast Guard has determined that bridge repairs which close the bridge to traffic can proceed between January 7 and March 14, weather permitting. Work did resume in the first week of January and is expected to be complete in summer 2008.

Swan Creek Pilot Project Meetings Scheduled

Stakeholders from throughout the Swan Creek watershed have developed draft maps that chart priority conservation and priority development areas. These maps are available for review at www.tmacog.org/Environment/swanpilot.htm. The maps will not be used for creating new regulations, but will help state agencies to direct incentives to needs identified by the community. In order to qualify for incentives, the Swan Creek Pilot Plan must be formally endorsed by 75% of the 22 political jurisdictions in the watershed. TMACOG is arranging presentations to groups throughout the region.

Wednesday, February 27, 9 a.m.

Presentation to the Toledo-Lucas County Plan Commissions

Thursday, March 13, 9 a.m.

Technical Committee Meeting, Toledo Express Airport

Speed on the Rails

TMACOG is working with the Indiana High Speed Rail Association to bring a special presentation called "The Fastest Train in the World" to our region. The presentation will be shown Thursday, March 27 as a lunchtime program. Watch for details in the March *Big Picture* and on www.tmacog.org.

Changes to Stormwater Permits for Small Municipal Systems and Construction Sites

At the end of 2007, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released draft versions of revised stormwater regulations affecting the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) and Statewide General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity. The drafts of both renewal permits are available for review at www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw/. Although Ohio EPA is requesting comments on these seven conditions in particular, jurisdictions which are MS4 municipalities should review the draft-renewal permit in its entirety. Comments must be received by the deadline. See the website for dates and for instructions for submitting permits. Members of TMACOG's Stormwater Coalition are reviewing the draft regulations and will have comments.

Draft Renewal General Permit for Small MS4s

If the regulations are adopted, Small MS4 municipalities will be required to include more specific information in the permit holder's Stormwater Management Plan to ensure that the community is in compliance with state and federal regulations. There are seven conditions or requirements in the new draft that differ from the first generation of general permits. These seven conditions can be found on the fact sheet at the Ohio EPA's website, and are summarized below.

- The draft language requires a table of organization which indicates who is responsible for implementation of the municipality's stormwater management plan.
- Requires more specific standards for measurable goals.
- Expands mapping requirements to include catch basins, pipes, ditches, and public and private stormwater facilities.
- Small MS4 jurisdictions have been required to find and fix home septic systems that affect water quality. The draft regulations clarify actions that are required by municipalities.
- The draft language would require that local ordinances for construction site stormwater practices be at least as stringent as and not conflict with the Ohio EPA's statewide construction permit.
- Any municipally owned facility which would require a permit if it was privately owned would be required to develop a stormwater pollution prevention plan under the draft regulations. An example is a city-owned vehicle maintenance facility.
- The draft permit would require the use of a standardized annual report form to simplify reporting procedures.



Air Quality Maintains Full Compliance with Standards

When Lucas and Wood counties were recognized as being in full compliance with all six monitored air pollutants in 2007, it was thought that the accomplishment wouldn't last long. The EPA revises standards regularly and it seemed that newer regulations for particulates would put our area out of compliance. However, based on both past measurements of particulates and modeling using current trends, the Ohio EPA is recommending to the U.S. EPA that our region remain in compliance with regulations. Monitoring for all pollutants is on-going. Our region's continued ranking is based on continued good measurements from monitors around the region.

Certifying TMACOG's Planning Process - Public meeting February 28 at TMACOG

One of TMACOG's responsibilities as our region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is maintenance of a public involvement program that ensures that all interested people in the region can contribute to our region's plans. At the end of February, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will be performing an audit of TMACOG activities and procedures to ensure that TMACOG is fulfilling those responsibilities. As part of that process, a public meeting will be held Thursday, February 28, at noon in the TMACOG boardroom. This meeting is an opportunity for people to comment on their experience with TMACOG's public input process. For more information or to comment directly, contact Diane Reamer-Evans at 419.241.9155 ext. 117 or evans@tmacog.org.

Elected Officials in Ohio Can Take Required Seminar Close to Home

If you are an elected official in Ohio, you or a designee are now required to attend a seminar on public records laws one time during each elected term. As a service to members, TMACOG is sponsoring a certified training seminar Saturday, March 15 at Owens Community College that will satisfy the requirement. Elected officials who are members of TMACOG will receive more information as details are confirmed. The seminar is free and also open to non-TMACOG members. The training regulation applies to township trustees, school board members, county commissioners, and all other officials in Ohio elected or appointed to public office. The State Auditor will audit public offices for compliance with the policy.

Registration is through the Ohio Attorney General's website. Go to www.ag.state.oh.us/publicrecords/training.asp and look for the training session calendar, or call the Attorney General's Help Center at 1-877-AG-4-OHIO. Much more information on Ohio's public records policies is on the website.

Transportation Enhancement Proposals Sought

TMACOG's Transportation Improvement Program (the TIP) will be issuing a call for applications for transportation enhancement funds in June 2008. The applications will be due in early September. Enhancement funds are federal transportation dollars designated for bikeways, historic transportation facilities, scenic and environmental enhancements, and related projects. For more information, contact Diane Reamer-Evans at evans@tmacog.org or 419.241.9155 ext. 117.

Mark Your Calendar

Thursday, February 14, 4-6 p.m.
Leadership Orientation, TMACOG offices

September 15 -17
2008 Transportation Summit (Sept. 15), and 2008 Ohio Conference on Freight (Sept. 16-17), SeaGate Centre, Toledo. Contact Warren Henry for sponsorship opportunities at 419.241.9155 ext. 129.