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Research, reports, and other documentation can be found
on the **TMACOG** website. The website is updated often with
results of task force meetings, survey results and more.

www.tmacog.org

Building The Case



Transportation Needs and Opportunities Summary

Report from Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments
"On the Move: 2007-2035 Transportation Plan"



On the Move



2007-2035 TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Vision and Goals of the TMACOG Plan “On the Move: 2007-2035 Transportation Plan”

We envision a vibrant region with a dynamic economy and high quality of life where transportation is a core strength.

Our region and its transportation system will:

- Be a top quality multi-modal passenger transportation hub
- Be a world-class multi-modal freight transportation hub
- Be a center of transportation research and innovation
- Protect and sustain community and natural environments
- Protect the region's investment by maintaining and preserving the existing system
- Be designed and operated for an efficient level of service and safety
- Be successful in obtaining adequate funding for transportation facilities

Next Steps

This report shows what we have learned so far. Through research and discussion, modeling and forecasting, we identified problems. Envisioning our region as one where transportation is a core strength, we have identified goals and opportunities.

Specific next steps include the development of solutions and evaluation of those solutions against constraints. Some constraints are obvious: transportation infrastructure costs money. We need solutions that people will be willing to pay to see developed, we need a private sector that will invest in transportation. Other constraints are less clear: the imagination to see possibilities, the will to dedicate resources when the payoff could be a generation away.

Driving Toward Our Goals

We invite all citizens to bring will and dedication to the work of developing our region as a transportation hub.

- Tell elected officials that you want to invest in the future of this region by investing in transportation.
- Private sector investment is essential to implementing solutions and developing our potential: support local business initiatives, make investment decisions that build on our potential.
- Support local and regional efforts to improve personal mobility by implementing better transit, passenger rail, and bike and pedestrian transportation and improving street systems.
- Support improvements that provide better freight transportation.
- Monitor www.tmacog.org. Our transportation research and milestone information is updated often.

A powerful transportation network will take time and it will take commitment. But bold imagination and solid planning will pay off. The reward will be economic development for the entire region, and a safe, efficient transportation system that helps all citizens contribute to our community and enjoy a good quality of life.



Goals and Opportunities

Identifying and fixing problems is how we guarantee that our foundation is solid. To build a dynamic economy through transportation requires more. We need to set our sights on the future. Public input and area expertise have led us to a series of goals and promising opportunities.

Engineer current infrastructure for safety and capacity

- Maintain roads, ports and airports for maximum capacity and safety.
- Pursue opportunities for smart signs and integrated communication systems.
- Investigate new traffic calming methods like roundabouts.

Build world-class facilities for the movement of goods

- Create innovative connections between port, airport, truck, and train.
- Improve road access for trucks.
- Expand airport capacity and support year-round operation of Great Lakes shipping.

Create a modern interconnected system for personal travel

- Improve the transit system to connect people throughout the region to school, work and services, planning now to maintain services for an older population.
- Create safe and interconnected bikeways and sidewalk systems that can be used for reaching work, school, parks, and shopping.
- Increase rail capacity and speed and create a modern intercity passenger rail system.
- Develop light rail/trolley connections to strengthen our urban center and build a regional technology neighborhood.

Invest in transportation-related research

- Research alternative energy sources: hydrogen, ethanol, and biofuels, solar and wind energy.
- Research technology to improve signage, traffic signals and other communications systems.
- Study logistics of moving goods and people, and develop innovative transportation technologies.

Establish adequate funding to support plans to maintain and to build our transportation system

- Pursue transportation funding outside of federal and state subsidies.
- Encourage private/public partnerships to develop transportation infrastructure.



Introduction

People from northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan understand that our geographical position in North America is a natural resource. Because of our location, our quality of life includes many transportation options – highways, bikeways, rail, water, and air. We also recognize that our location can be an economic engine: the region is positioned to be an international, all-mode transportation hub.

The Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments is developing a plan that will capitalize on our potential. Public and private support for an integrated plan is essential for our region's brightest future.

Part of TMACOG's mandate is to maintain a 20-year plan, a process that involves collaboration and research.¹ Beginning the process in the fall of 2005, TMACOG conducted research to define current transportation needs and opportunities.² We analyzed projections and data, and we sought public input from across the region – from freight haulers and business leaders, students and retirees, local institutions, neighborhood groups, and elected officials. We found broad agreement on big problems that affect a lot of people, and deep concern for narrower issues that affect specific groups.

This report summarizes key findings from our research and public surveys. It builds the case for commitment to developing our region's transportation infrastructure.

¹ The current long-range plan in development is called "On the Move: 2007-2035 Transportation Plan."

² For a description of methodology for the On the Move planning process, see www.tmacog.org.

Identifying Needs

To make transportation a core strength of this region, what are our significant needs? We need to fully maintain and operate our system in top condition, and strengthen our choices for personal and freight mobility. This is what we heard from the public and saw in our research.

- To support economic development, our region needs better freight transportation connections between highways, railroads, airports, and water ports.
- Commuters and people in the freight industry expect that roads will only get busier. They want to see less congestion, more maintenance and fewer crashes. (fig. 1)
- Environmental issues are a concern for everybody. People want transportation investment to reduce air and water pollution, and through aesthetic design and landscaping improve community appearance.
- Citizens need to get around the region and wish they had practical alternatives to the automobile. (fig. 2)

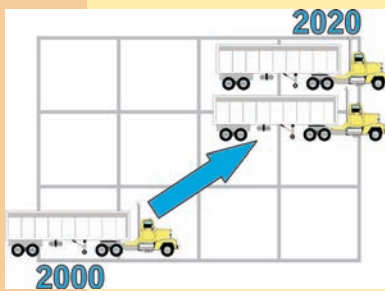


Fig. 1: Freight traffic on the region's roads is expected to double by 2020. Upper Midwest Freight Report, "Highway Congestion in 2020," Midwest University Transportation Center (2005)



Street cars in Portland, Oregon

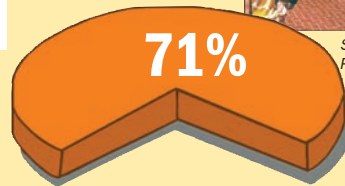


Fig 2: 71% of survey respondents said lack of real transportation choices was a big or medium problem. Transportation Needs and Opportunities, Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (2005)

Paying For It

Our current sources of funding are not adequate now to pay for projects that are important to local communities. We also lack funds to tap for future opportunities. We know that we can't rely on any additional single source – federal, state, or private – for needed additional funds to meet our region's transportation goals.

- While federal dollars coming to our region have held steady or increased slightly over the past few years, construction costs and material costs have increased significantly. (fig. 7)
- We have nearly 400 lane miles in Lucas and Wood counties that are in fair or poor condition. The cost to fix them – not add anything new but simply repair – is an estimated \$289,322,000.³
- Amtrak operates in deficit, with no reliable funding source. Statewide passenger rail systems are in planning stages with no secure funding identified.
- The national Highway Trust Fund, which funds most highway improvements through the federal gas tax, is running out of money. By the end of 2009, this fund balance could be negative.⁴

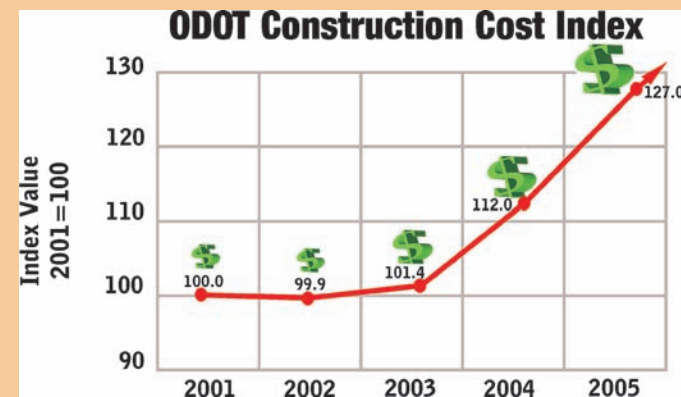


Fig. 7: Ohio Department of Transportation, Office of Estimating (2005)

³ TMACOG projection, based on \$750,000 lane/mile. See *Transportation Needs and Opportunities*, Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (2005)

⁴ Statement of Phyllis F. Scheinberg, assistant secretary for budget and programs and chief financial officer, US DOT. Speaking before Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, U.S. House of Representatives, Feb. 15, 2006

Bicycle and Pedestrian

Travel by foot and by bicycle is desired but is considered difficult in our region. After gasoline prices, bicycle travel brought the strongest responses in the needs survey.

- People think that it is dangerous to ride on the streets and they would prefer separate bike paths or special bike lanes. (fig. 5)
- Bike trails and marked bike lanes don't link together to make useful commuting routes. (fig. 6)
- Major intersections don't adequately accommodate bikes or pedestrians.
- Citizens feel bikeways and sidewalks are not sufficiently included in community plans and road projects.



Fig. 6: Bike lanes and trails don't link together.

49% say there are not enough bike paths to get places.

47% say it's not safe to ride on streets.

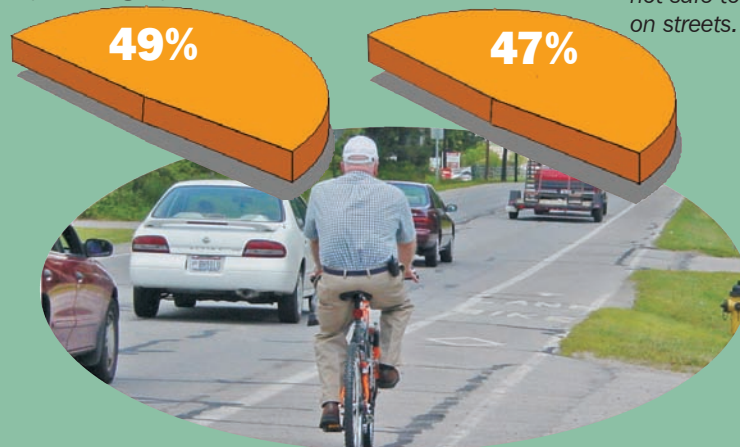


Fig. 5: Transportation Needs and Opportunities, Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (2005)

Defining Problems

Research, projections, and a survey of needs elicited some very specific responses ranging from busy railroad crossings to awkwardly timed traffic signals. But a few themes were nearly universal – mentioned by nearly every group, and cited as important by most people.

Rail

Passenger rail travel is seen as practical and desirable but current service is limited. (fig. 3)

- Light rail within Toledo could create new opportunities – linking downtown to schools and universities and forming a physical backbone for a technology corridor.
- Rail connections to and between the region's airports are desired.
- Area residents favor a state-wide or multi-state system of fast, frequent passenger trains that would connect population centers – offering safe, quick and comfortable travel.

Support for state efforts to develop passenger train services in Ohio

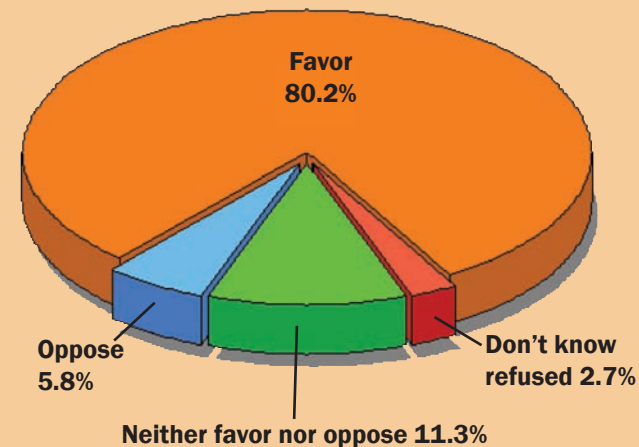


Fig. 3: Buckeye State Poll, The Ohio State University Center for Survey Research (2001)

Highway Congestion, Safety and Maintenance

A significant category of problems is related to the increasing traffic on roadways. More traffic leads to more congestion and accidents, and it costs more to maintain heavily used roads. People recognize that problems exist now and will get worse as traffic increases.

- People cited frustration with traffic delays, attributing delays to rail crossings, poorly timed traffic lights, increased numbers of trucks, more driveways serving new development, and traffic accidents.
- Increased traffic is adding to maintenance problems: potholes, bridge repair, and broken curbs.
- Crashes are increasing in congested areas, and pedestrians have trouble crossing busy roads.
- Lots of cars and slow-moving traffic are seen as contributing to air quality problems.



Public Transit

Public transit is the issue cited most frequently, is seen as a very significant problem, and also seen as a solution to problems of congestion, mobility, and environmental concerns.

- People who don't have a car – including older people, students and disabled people – have trouble running errands, getting to jobs or to school. Buses run infrequently at night or on weekends.
- Some Toledo suburbs and most smaller towns in the region are not connected to each other or to Toledo by any public transit system. (fig. 4)
- When buses are available, bus routes and transfers make the trip much longer than a car ride would be.
- There is no public transit connection to Toledo Express Airport or to Detroit Metro or from one to the other.

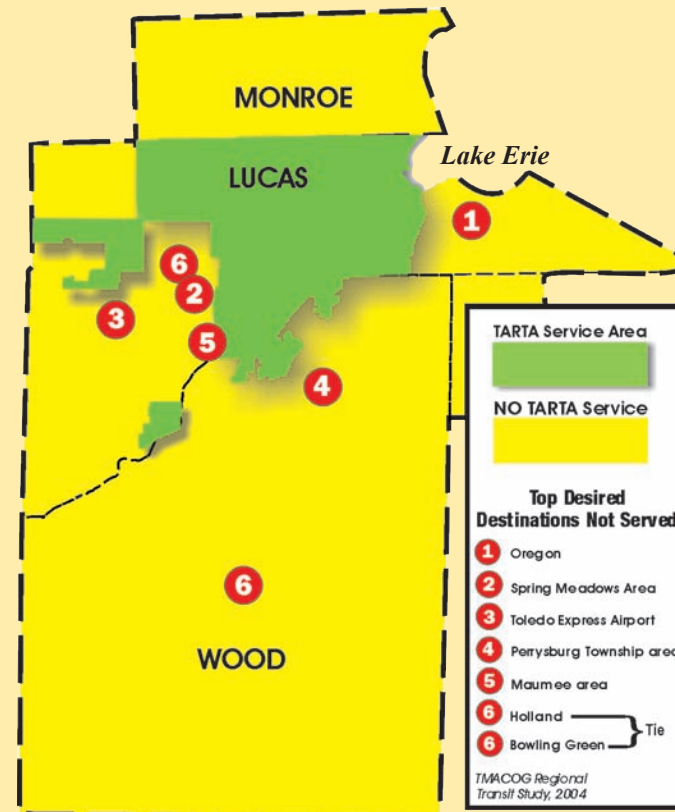


Fig. 4: 90% of the geographic area is not served by a fixed route, full-service public transit service.

54% of survey respondents said there are places they need or want to go that are not served by bus.

TMACOG Regional Transit Study, Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (2004)