

Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG)
PASSENGER RAIL COMMITTEE
Monday, April 30, 2007 — 10:00 a.m.

Draft Notes (for committee review and approval)

I. Welcome, introductions; approve January notes & agenda *--Chairman Patrick Miller*

Chairman Miller convened the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves. The January notes were approved but some corrections will be made post-meeting.

II. “On the Move: 2007-2035 Regional Transportation Plan” *--Staff, Task Force members*

The draft plan report is nearly completed. It will be posted on the TMACOG website for any final comment.

III. Ann Arbor-Detroit Rapid Transit Study Update (www.annarbordetroitrapidtransitstudy.com/)

Tiffany Draper, SEMCOG, gave a presentation on the current status of this study. She began by noting the transit plan for the southeast Michigan region includes rapid bus transit and standard fixed route bus service (which needs to be upgraded). The Ann Arbor-Detroit study looked at introducing commuter rail transit. In 2006, their analysis of the corridor was released. It showed 2,100 daily riders, an annual operations and maintenance cost of \$93-111 million, and capital costs of \$618-1,474 million. Because of low ridership and a high cost per rider, this would not be a competitive project for federal New Starts funding.

Demo projects have been done in other cities, so SEMCOG is pursuing a demonstration project using existing infrastructure. They will use the demo to prove there would be sufficient ridership in the corridor. To reduce costs, they will reduce the number of stations; they used household and employment densities to choose the stations. The 3-year demo will use 3 existing Amtrak stations (Dearborn, Detroit, and An Arbor) and build platforms at Ypsilanti, Greenfield Village, and Merriman (Detroit Airport access). They are negotiating with the railroads for permission to run 10-20 trains/day, covering morning and evening peak commuter times plus midday. Ann Arbor to Dearborn is Norfolk Southern (NS); Dearborn and east is Conrail shared assets trackage; and there is also Canadian National (CN) trackage in Detroit. (CN says no.) They are working with existing transit systems to increase connections with them. The connection to the airport would likely be bus; they are working with the airport which is currently doing a master plan.

SEMCOG is investigating purchase of coaches from Amtrak, which would cost about \$500,000 to upgrade. They plan to include Wi-Fi (wireless internet connection) on the trains, which should be a real draw. They are working with NS on costs, and have applied for FY 2008 appropriations funds from SAFETEA-LU (federal transportation act). They would also like to apply for a TCSP (Transportation Community System Preservation) grant. The project timing depends on NS negotiations over the next three weeks. Once they have a green light, it would take six months to get up and running. SEMCOG does not have a standing Passenger Rail Committee like TMACOG's, but a new committee, the Detroit Regional Chamber Intermodal Freight Transportation Advisory Group (which includes a transit subcommittee) hopefully will be working to promote this project.

IV. State update: the Ohio Hub Study *--Don Damron, ORDC (via telephone)*

The Ohio Rail Development Commission is seeking a federal earmark for a Ohio Hub programmatic environmental impact study (PEIS). They have developed a preliminary scope of work to include Cleveland-Columbus-Dayton-Cincinnati and Pittsburgh-Cleveland-Toledo-Detroit. the PEIS would define what a startup service would look like. The Governor's staff has tentatively agreed to support the request for federal funds. a \$1.25 million match would be needed. The PEIS would look at the best

route to Detroit (two alternatives have been identified). The final Ohio Hub study report and the economic impact studies should be released soon. A search for a new ORDC director is in process. The state budget process has so far produced a proposed flat-line budget for the ORDC.

V. Midwest Regional Rail Initiative economic impact report – Don Damron, ORDC

-Economic benefits for Ohio cited (see [news release](#)).

A summary brochure fro Ohio is available; TMACOG staff will forward it to the committee when obtained. Don Damron discounts the MRRRI economic impact figures for Ohio: they are too low because they don't take into account the Ohio Hub trains and the linkage to a national network. The Ohio Hub figures tentatively show \$3 billion in infrastructure and an \$9 billion impact. Once these figures are released (within one month), the Ohio Congressional delegation needs to hear from our region in support of moving forward on the Ohio Hub to reap its economic benefits.

VI. Federal update --Chairman P. Miller

Senate bill 294 was approved by the US Senate Commerce Committee. It will go to the full Senate in the near future; no word on progress in the House. Bill Gill noted the National Association of Railroad Passengers guide lists who is on what congressional committee.

VII. Projects in Progress -- reports on new developments

A. Michigan update No update other than agenda item III. --Patrick Miller

B. Rail Users Network; Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers --Bill Gill, Beth McCray

At the March RUN meeting in Chicago, Jim Coston (chairman of Corridor Capital company and former Amtrak Reform Council member) gave an upbeat and cutting speech. He supports grassroots efforts and urges community support. The OARP local chapter is supporting an upgrade of the Toledo station by adding a first class lounge. They are also working in a "museum" of rail-related items and are looking into grants from the National Railway Historical Society. Bill Gill handed out OARP's proposal for increasing rail service through Ohio.

C. MLK Station Environs Plan– Progress on redevelopment plan partnership --staff

Diane noted TMACOG is still working with local partners to find funding needed to undertake this plan. Bill Kelly said TARTA is proceeding with development of the new TARPS facility adjoining the station, and would expect completion in 2-3 years. They are not negotiating with Greyhound at this time regarding bringing them to the station.

VIII. Announcements, Other Business

Patrick Miller noted the joint TMACOG-SEMCOG transportation meeting will be held in June at Cabella's. Committee members are welcome.

IV. Adjourn

Meeting Schedule for 2007	
Full Committee	Last Monday, first month of each quarter, 10:00 a.m. (at TMACOG): 2007—January 29, April 30, July 30, October 29
Steering Committee	As needed one month prior to the full committee meeting.
Annual Transportation Summit	?
2007 Ohio Conference on Freight	September 17-18, Park Inn (former Radisson), Summit Street, Toledo. Draft agenda includes ORDC presentation and other presentations related to freight rail.