



Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG)

PUBLIC TRANSIT & PASSENGER RAIL COMMITTEE

Wednesday, August 19, 2015 — 2:30 p.m.

TMACOG Boardroom

Notes

1. **Welcome;** introductions; review agenda; February notes were approved
Attendees include: Colette Cordova, Tom Galloway, Jim Gee, William Gill, Robert Greenlese, Bill Kelly, Patrick Miller, Tim Porter, Donald Rozick, Roger Shope, Jerry Wicks, David Gedeon, and Rebekka Apardian

2. **Transit Coordination**
 - a. **Snow Removal Update:** Rebekka and David updated the committee about the snow removal issue on sidewalks. There had been concerns in the past years that snow wasn't being removed on sidewalks, particularly near bus stops. Staff spoke with Kris Cousino with the city, who said that 900 fines were issued to properties not in compliance with the 24 hour clean-up rule. We will be monitoring this as winter approaches.
 - b. **Mobility Management:** Jim Gee updated the Committee on the status of the 5310 funds. He said that the grant was approved 3 weeks ago and an advertisement for the mobility manager is posted and should be in the paper. They are looking to hire someone and get started within a month or two. There are three main tasks that Jim said the mobility manager will be responsible for doing: 1) setting up a one call-on click center; 2) vehicle procurement for non-profit agencies; 3) help in creation of a vanpool for more rural areas of the region.

3. **NORA Earmark**

David informed the Committee that there is still no news from ODOT concerning the release of the funds earmarked for the passenger rail study through NORA. At the current moment, it is at a standstill. There is a meeting in Columbus next week where this will be a standing agenda item to discuss. Rob said that Kaptur won't let this die easily. He also noted that the current climate at the ORDC favors physical, "brick and mortar" projects rather than studies. They don't want to fund any studies. A while back, he noted that estimates for fixing the platforms at Central Union Station were \$250-300,000. If the Port is interested in pursuing the funds earmarked for the study for other purposes such as these capital improvements, they will have

to come up with 20%. David read an email from Joe Cappel of the Port that listed the type and cost of repairs and improvements he'd like to see in place of using the funds for the study. The approximate total cost of the physical repairs and improvements were just over a million dollars.

4. Events

- a. Passenger Rail Fall Forum, date will be either October 19 or 26, depending on who the speaker will be.
- b. Ohio Conference on Freight will take place in Cincinnati from September 14-16. David said that this conference is looking to have the highest attendance yet, with about 350 so expected. Rob asked if this conference will begin to take on a life of its own and lose its identity as an Ohio conference. David said that he doesn't think that will happen. It will stay a TMACOG-coordinated event, although additional statewide help will be brought to the table; for example OKI, who is helping this year.
- c. TMACOG Tech: Will take place at Monroe Bank & Trust on October 16 from 8-1 as a discussion on economic development surrounding the new possibilities that may be opened up by the new Gordie Howe Bridge that will be built in Michigan and Canada. Roger noted that this may be a good time to build a commuter rail line from Michigan to Ohio.
- d. Ohio APA Conference is in Toledo this year from September 23-25
- e. 65th Anniversary of the Central Union Terminal on September 22. There will be a presentation, displays, and light refreshments that evening from 5-7.
- f. 40th Anniversary of the Lake Shore Limited, October 31
- g. All Aboard Ohio fall meeting in Toledo, October 31

5. Transit Updates and Issues

- a. It was noted that the M-1 in Detroit is moving along well. Jerry said that it was something for Toledo to strive for and to emulate.
- b. TARTA:
 - i. There will be a route change to accommodate the move of Greyhound when it happens. It will either be to move the line that runs through MLK Drive down to Emerald, or it will be a new line entirely.
 - ii. There was a fare increase in July and it went smoothly, customers were not upset about it, as they realize that TARTA is still one of the cheapest in the state.

- iii. Toledo Public Schools is contracting with TARTA again to bus the students. They will be moving to driving 300 hours a day for the students. They found 45 extra buses from nearby transit authorities and have hired extra drivers and extra mechanics.
- iv. Google Transit will be completed and up by the end of the year. An intern is working on this.
- c. Roger: All Aboard Ohio has had an RTA tour in Cleveland and saw the 51 miles of rail transit, very impressive and model to work from.
- d. WSOS: Moving forward on Wood County volunteer driver program via a grant from the National Center for Mobility Management. They did a case study in Sandusky (TRIPS), which revealed that dialysis patients were the number one customer and there is expected to be an increase in demand for transportation to dialysis appointments. There will be a stakeholder meeting on October 27. The WSOS program will launch in November with the target customer being the rural, low-income senior in need of dialysis, however the customer can be of any age and doesn't have to be in a rural location. The goal is for the program to have trip links: if a customer needs to go to a dialysis appointment, the volunteer driver will also take them to other destinations while they are out, such as the grocery store or the pharmacy. They are working with the Beverly Foundation to find volunteer drivers who will drive their own vehicles. The drivers will get 20 hours of training. The goal is to recruit 10 volunteers to start with.

6. Rail Updates

- a. Federal Railroad Administration-led Multistate Planning Project: Roger spoke about the new FRA-led planning project, informing the Committee that the feds have set aside funding for planning rail in the Midwest with the goal of filling in service gaps by expanding lines with 750+ miles. These routes will have federal operating support. Because the feds will be taking the lead on planning, states will no longer have the burden of coordinating with one another for longer lines. This is a big picture visioning, which could possibly include the Ohio Hub Plan.
- b. Roger and David spoke about the Federal Transportation Bill update, explaining that the current bill, MAP-21, has been given a 3 month extension. The bill currently in consideration to be the new one is called DRIVE. It is a 6 year bill with only 3 years of funding. It is expected by members that extensions of MAP-21 will occur until after the 2016 election. Roger pointed

out that the Innovation of Surface Transportation that was discussed in the previous meeting did not make it into the bill. He encourages organizations to make calls, write letters, engage with constituents, etc. in an effort to make your voice heard.

7. Committee Structure

David talked about how public transit was added to the existing passenger rail committee for convenience but isn't sure having the two in the same committee is the best scenario. The two groups mesh, but not fully. He discussed the advantages to splitting into two groups, including the possibility of attracting additional public transit people to the meetings if passenger rail isn't on the agenda.

Bill mentioned that it may make sense because they are funded by different sources and have different infrastructure, at least in Toledo.

Roger said that FTA funds were used to fund the M-1 in part and the streetcar in Cincinnati.

It may be advantageous to keep the two groups together in the interest of streetcars or light rail.

Dave: Maybe when we get streetcars or light rail.

Roger: How can we get them if we aren't together and advocating for them?

Colette: How would you define public transit?

Varying answers on this. The Committee agreed to think about this and vote on it during the next meeting. If the Committee decided to split, it would have to be approved by the General Assembly in January.

-Adjourn-

Schedule of Upcoming Meetings	
Committee	Quarterly, third Wednesday, 2:30 p.m.: Nov 18 , Feb 17, May 18
Steering	Quarterly, second Tuesday, 2:30 p.m.: Oct 13 , Jan 12, April 12