



Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG)
PUBLIC TRANSIT & PASSENGER RAIL COMMITTEE
Wednesday, August 17, 2011 – 2:30 p.m.

AGENDA WITH NOTES

- I. Welcome; introductions; approve May notes; review agenda** - *William Gill, vice chair*
May notes were approved on motion by Bill Thomas, second by Tom Galloway.
- II. New committee operating procedures** - *Tim Porter, steering group*
The steering group is recommending adoption of updated by-laws to reflect the expansion to a public transit and passenger rail committee. Tim Porter presented the proposed changes. Approved by voice vote, with motion by Tom Galloway, second by Ron Sheck. The revisions will go to Transportation Council for final approval.
- III. What do we know about public transit?** - *Ron Sheck, steering group; staff*
Based on committee input at the May meeting, the steering group decided the committee should begin looking at available information. Ron Sheck introduced this item. As a starting point, staff presented sample data and information from:
- a. **National Transit Database:** comprehensive data that transit systems must report. Allows comparison between systems (note that fixed route ridership is estimated based on sampling of routes, and operating costs are not measured exactly the same everywhere).
-See slide show for graphs comparing TARTA with peer agencies. Also see TARTA data 1999-2009; and TARTA peer agencies comparison table 2000-2009.
 - b. **State transit data:**
-ODOT Office of Transit does an annual report with a facts page for each transit agency in Ohio: www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/Transit/Documents/Programs/Publication/StatusOfPublicTransitinOhio2011.pdf
-ODOT Transit also provided peer agency comparison tables for: BG Transit; TRIPS (Sandusky Co.); TARTA
-MDOT posts transit data on their website. The only system in the TMACOG area is Bedford Dial-A-Ride, listed as “SMART-Bedford. See www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9625_21607-55117--,00.html
 - c. **Local transit system data:** A sample of local data was presented as part of the slide show (bar chart showing Call-A-Ride ridership).
 - d. **Local studies and analysis:** as highlighted in the slide show, three recent studies have looked at aspects of transit in our region:
-Regional Core Circulator Study and Transit Needs Study (both posted on the [Public Transportation Planning page](#) of the TMACOG website.
-TARTA Comprehensive Operations Analysis (large file) which recommended a regional funding base.
 - e. **National analysis:** an example presented was the Brookings report Missed Opportunity: Transit & Jobs in Metropolitan America that found a disconnect between transit systems and jobs in the largest 100 metro regions (including Toledo).
- IV. Introducing the ODOT transit office** - *Marianne Freed, Administrator, Office of Transit, Ohio Department of Transportation*
Ms Freed presented a slide show overview of programs and funding this agency administers, including rural transit programs and “specialized transportation” (grants for vans to transport elderly and disabled clients).

-She stated a [Mobility Improvement Study](#) is underway “to develop a statewide approach to coordinating all health and human services transportation.” A public forum for our region will be held at ODOT District 2 in Bowling Green on September 14 at 10:00 a.m.

V. New TARTA opt in/opt out law

-Staff; TARTA reps

A new law allows a two-year window for area jurisdictions (excluding counties) to opt in or opt out of TARTA if that jurisdiction’s electorate votes approval. Normally, membership changes require unanimous concurrence of existing member jurisdictions.

-Keith Haddad, Sylvania Township Trustee, stated his intent to provide transit in the township rather than staying with TARTA. He stated that if TARTA would consider a regional monorail, an idea he proposed 20 years ago, he would not want to opt out of TARTA.

-City of Perrysburg transit study committee members include Jeanne Weiss and Gil Lutz. Gil gave a status report on the study committee’s efforts. The committee is working with TARTA on needed improvements such as a more accurate voice mail system. Gil felt changes should not have taken so long, but is glad they are being made now.

-Jim Gee, TARTA general manager, thanked Gil for advocating for better transit. Jim noted that availability of new technology is helping TARTA implement changes.

-Warren Henry asked Marianne Freed if federal funds could be used for new transit systems like Sylvania Twp. is considering. Ms. Freed said it depended on whether the proposal met eligibility requirements.

VI. Hot topics

A. Oct 17 Passenger Rail Forum: Michigan high speed rail - *Tim Porter*

The luncheon forum (at the Toledo Club) will feature Tim Hoeffner, MDOT Rail, and a private sector presenter, who will speak on the exciting progress on high speed rail in the Detroit-Chicago corridor.

B. National Train Day Toledo (~~Apr 28~~, **UPDATE: May 5**, 2012) -*Bill Gill, Train Day Chairman*
The event committee will begin work in September. New members welcome.

C. Other:

-Guest attendee **Joseph Rubino**, transit consultant, said if existing resources are used, the solution to transit problems isn’t necessarily more money. An essential strategy in providing more and better transit is to incorporate use of existing vehicles, such as those owned by private companies and nonprofit agencies. He noted he is currently working with Lucas County on transit issues. (*See Easter Seals Project Action report: A Survey on the Use of Taxis in Paratransit Programs*)

-A **Rail Roundtable** was held Aug. 10 by All Aboard Ohio (TMACOG hosted) for rail advocates from northern Ohio and adjoining states. The Midwest High Speed Rail Assoc. announced they are seeking support for federal rail funding. (*See www.standupfortrains.org for sample letters and resolutions.*)

-**Amtrak news:** ridership is up. Pontiac, Michigan has a new transit center.

-Bill Thomas suggested **working subcommittees** for the Transit/Rail Committee to increase its effectiveness. The suggestion was referred to the steering group for consideration.

VII. Next steps for Committee

-Staff

The steering group will meet to plan next steps and topics for the committee.

VIII. Adjourn

Schedule for 2011-2012	
Committee	Quarterly, third Monday: August 17, November 16 , February 15, May 16
Special	Monday, Oct. 17, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Passenger Rail Forum, The Toledo Club (reservations required)