



## **TMACOG Passenger Rail Committee Agenda & Notes – August 2018**

Thursday, August 30, 2018, 2:30 p.m.

**Welcome and introductions** – Tim Porter, Committee Chair

- 1. TMACOG Transportation Legislative Agenda – 2019 document update and plan for committee input** – Austin Mack, TMACOG

The Transportation Legislative Agenda is used to inform legislators and decision-makers on what are the most important transportation issues facing the region. TMACOG staff member Austin Mack talked about the process and schedule for updating the 2017-18 Agenda and encouraged input from the committee on what needs to be included for passenger rail. Staff will send a follow-up email to committee members later this month with a plan for providing input. Final recommendations will be sent to Austin later this year.

- 2. 2018 Fall Passenger Rail Forum - Event information and needs for the October forum** – Tim Porter, Committee Chair/NOPRA

Tim Porter provided information on the annual Fall Passenger Rail forum. The date for the forum will depend on the availability of a keynote speaker. There are several potential speakers being considered and Tim will report to the committee when a speaker is chosen. The forum will be held in late October in the Grand Lobby at MLK Plaza. More information will be coming soon.

- 3. 2045 Plan 2020 Update Process - Long range plan update schedule and committee input** – Roger Streiffert, TMACOG

TMACOG staff is beginning the two-year process of updating our long-range transportation plan – the 2045 Plan. The Passenger Rail Committee will provide input on what rail-related projects, initiatives, and policies will be included. We will review the current plan and make recommendations on what should be changed or added. Look for an upcoming email with a schedule for the committee's involvement.

- 4. TMACOG Passenger Rail Study Seed Money - New plan for using the TMACOG money** – All Attendees

At our May 2018 meeting we discussed using the TMACOG seed money to add a Toledo component to the Ann Arbor to Traverse City Study (A2TC). After a lengthy discussion with Groundworks' Jim Bruckbauer, TMACOG staff found that this study would not work well for our investment. The main reason is that this study has been mostly completed and the consultant does not plan to add any other pieces. Adding a Toledo connection to the proposed route at this time would require an entirely separate study. Another reason is that the A2TC route will not tie-in to the east-west



rail line that connects Ann Arbor to Detroit. Toledo would not have a Detroit or Detroit Metro Airport connection via the A2TC route. As was discussed at previous meetings, this Detroit connection is an important part of any Michigan expansion. Based on this information, a Toledo component of the A2TC Study will no longer be pursued.

The committee now has \$20,000 in TMACOG seed money to invest in an existing or possible new study to improve passenger rail service. After discussion, the committee agreed that a connection to Detroit Metro Airport (and to the east-west line to Detroit) would be the priority project. The second choice is a connection south to Dunkirk and on to Columbus, and the third would be a new Maumee River bridge.

Staff will confer with SEMCOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments) in Detroit and MORPC (Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission) in Columbus to try to coordinate plans for rail service expansion both north and south from Toledo.

#### **5. Other Topics - *Other items of interest as time allows* – All Attendees**

The Passenger Rail Committee's operating procedures were updated with language that defines a quorum that is needed to vote on any action items. Previously, no quorum was needed for a vote. With this change, a simple majority of the committee's total members must be physically present at the meeting to have a quorum. This change brings the committee's procedures in line with those of Transportation Council and other transportation sub-committees. The revision was passed by the committee members present at the August 30 meeting, and by Transportation Council on September 5.

United Rail has acquired Toledo's US Rail and will move their operations hub into the US Rail Toledo office. United has plans to acquire other short line railroads.

Jerry Wicks provided a map of the proposed Ohio-Michigan Enterprise Corridor which would connect universities, medical institutions, and corporations by rail in Ann Arbor, Detroit, Monroe, Toledo, Bowling Green, Findlay, Delaware, and Columbus.

Bill Gill provided a handout of All Aboard Ohio's listing of Ohio's transit and rail needs.

#### **Meeting Adjourned**

Schedule of 2018 Passenger Rail Committee Meetings:

Thursday, November 15, 2018, 2:30 p.m.

Other meetings can be scheduled as needed