



**AGENDA**

**I. Welcome to expanded committee; introductions** - *Dr. Patrick Miller, chair*  
Introductions were made around the room. Twenty-nine people were in attendance.

**II. Key issues\*** -*Staff; committee members*  
What questions must our region answer?  
Table groups discussed this question and reported out. Issues raised as important to the region included interconnectivity of modes, funding, and developing more public support. *See attached for details.\**

**III. Snapshot 1: introducing public transit** -*TARTA, BG Transit, & Lake Erie Transit*  
Brief overview of the services provided by public transit agencies in our region. (*See map*)

- 1) BG Transit: 40,000 trips/year. Fare \$3.50; 65+ and disabled \$1.75. Demand responsive service. Within boundaries of City of Bowling Green. Serves many different trip purposes. (BGSU buses will also pick up public.)
- 2) Bedford Dial-a-Ride: 7 am-6 pm. One 30-foot bus and two vans). Two links with TARTA scheduled daily, plus one on-call connection at Miracle Mile shopping center. Mostly people who take transit out of necessity. Ridership is up (16,000 in 2009, 17,000 in 2010). Supported by ¼ mil property tax, farebox (5-10% of budget) and 30% from state support; annual \$300,000-\$350,000 budget. \$1 fare, \$.50 for half-price riders. Obtained hybrid bus through a capital grant.
- 3) TARTA: formed in 1971 as political subdivision of state of Ohio. Fixed-route bus service \$1. Passenger trips/year = 3.5 million. Adult ridership up 17%. Six separate call-a-ride services in suburbs, plus special shuttles to downtown sports events. Under contract to provide service to Owens Community College, currently carrying 90,000 riders a year. TARPS paratransit serves those who can't drive because of disabilities, 220,000 person trips/year (ridership has doubled over last three years, with growth in senior citizen population). Fare \$2. Supported by 2.5 mil property tax. Operating budget \$28 million/year. Primary TARTA trip purposes are work and school; primary TARPS purpose is to work.

Discussion: does TARTA have scheduling software that coordinates the call-a-ride and TARPS services? A: no; TARPS trips mostly prescheduled.

-Owens Community College: contracts with TARTA, 90,00-130,000 rides/year.

-Impact of gas prices: when price goes up, ridership increases, but transit operating costs go up, so may need to cut service. No elasticity in fares for TARTA riders (if raised, ridership decreases).

- 4) WSOS: Sandusky County demand-responsive service, go into adjoining counties sometimes. Mostly work and medical trips; mostly seniors. Have 16 vehicles. Constructing new building. Have New Freedom (federal) and other grants. 24/6 service. \$1.7 million/year budget. Seeing 20% growth/year.

**OVER**

#### IV. Snapshot 2: introducing passenger rail

-Ron Sheck, *All Aboard Ohio*

Brief overview of passenger rail in Ohio and Michigan

Three passenger rail routes through Ohio: Capital Limited (Chicago-Toledo-D.C.); Lake Shore Limited (Chicago-Toledo-NY/Boston); Cardinal (Chicago-Indianapolis-Cincinnati-D.C.). All are long-distance through routes operated and funded by Amtrak. [For more information, see Amtrak fact sheet: [www.amtrak.com/pdf/factsheets/OHIO10.pdf](http://www.amtrak.com/pdf/factsheets/OHIO10.pdf). ]

Michigan is a rail destination state: has Chicago-Detroit-Pontiac line (three round trips/day), Chicago-E. Lansing-Flint-Port Huron line, and Chicago-Benton Harbor-Grand Rapids line. Two of these three are partly supported by the state. [Fact sheet at [www.amtrak.com/pdf/factsheets/MICHIGAN10.pdf](http://www.amtrak.com/pdf/factsheets/MICHIGAN10.pdf) ]

Toledo is busiest station in Ohio: 65,000 passengers/year board or alight. In Michigan, Ann Arbor is the busiest Michigan station, with 140,000 boardings and alightings per year (many students and professionals), almost as many riders as all of Ohio's stations combined.

Ohio: Amtrak shares Norfolk Southern and CSX tracks.

Michigan: Amtrak owns the line from Porter IN to Kalamazoo MI (97 miles).

A light rail project is being advanced as a public-private partnership for Woodward Avenue in Detroit.

#### V. Hot topics

A. Ohio budget bill: potential impacts

-Jim Gee, *TARTA*

Ohio's state funding to support transit systems is very low compared to neighbor states, and is proposed to go lower: \$10.8 million in FY 2010, vs. \$6.5 million/year statewide proposed for FY 2011. Funds targeted for elderly and disabled fare assistance in the eight largest urban areas. This funding currently makes up 1.5% of TARTA's budget, 10% of WSOS's budget, and nearly 25% of BG Transit's operating costs in FY 2011. The proposed two-year Ohio budget bill also includes a last-minute amendment, introduced by Rep Randy Gardner, that was previously a stand-alone bill that did not advance. The amendment, narrowly targeted at TARTA, would change the local process by which jurisdictions join or leave TARTA. Jim stated this was a bad precedent for various special districts.

B. National Train Day Toledo (Apr 30)

-Bill Gill, *Train Day Chairman*

An estimated 6,000 people attended. Open house included a variety of indoor and outdoor equipment displays and informational booths. A great success highlighting passenger rail, freight rail, and public transit.

C. Michigan wins high speed rail funds\*\*

-Lee Markham, *Monroe Co Planning; MARP*

Michigan has just won a \$200 million federal grant to continue to upgrade Detroit -Chicago as a high speed corridor (110 mph Port-Kalamazoo is already in place.) *See attached report\*\**

#### VI. Next steps for Committee

A subcommittee will work with staff to outline committee objectives and activities: Bill Kelly, Ron Sheck, Patrick Miller, and Tim Porter.

The next full committee meeting will be Wednesday, August 17, 2011.

#### VII. Adjourn

Schedule for 2011: Quarterly, third Monday: <b>August 17</b> , November 16, February 15
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**\*Agenda Item II: Key issues** (brainstorming)

What is one question our region must answer about public transportation?

**Interconnectivity**

How will we create fluidity /connectivity between auto, bike, and pedestrian traffic and public transit (intra-city and inter-city), with connections to rail and the airport? (*Two very similar questions*)

**Transit funding**

How can transit be better funded?

How do we continue to finance transit in the region?

How can we coordinate funding resources?

How to leverage increased federal dollars into transit for our region.

(Wood/Lucas County partnership to apply for federal funds?)

(We should raise our voice to affect the new surface transportation bill that's in negotiation now.)

How to get transit funding support on the same level as public support for highways.

How does committee get region to think public and private? Entrepreneurial model?

Why does public transportation require public subsidy rather than being self-supportive from fare box alone?

**Expanding Usage**

Identifying potential users: who will use public transportation?

How to identify what's existing, how to use more efficiently.

How to educate potential users on benefits of different kinds of transportation.

How do we develop public transit options so that transit is viewed as a true choice and alternative to the single occupancy vehicle?

**Capturing the Benefits of Transit**

How do we improve the transportation options for our region to enhance personal mobility and contribute to economic development and growth?

How do we identify the transportation needs of all populations in the region and then attempt to meet those needs with limited resources?

How to connect citizens to the marketplace – recognizing that we're in an era of budget cuts plus lack of transit progress & opportunities.

**Locational issues**

How can we coordinate transportation with future growth, to concentrate population and employment in such a way as to make transit a viable option?

Regional system?

**General**

Data needs – data repository

**OVER**

**\*\*Agenda Item V. C. Michigan wins high speed rail funds:** report from John DeLora, Michigan Assoc of Rail Passengers

I won't be able to make today's meeting, but here is my report:

On May 10th, US-DOT Secretary Ray LaHood appeared at the Detroit Amtrak station to announce the award of two grants to Michigan. Although the event was announced as bringing high speed rail to Michigan, It is the first of several steps in doing so. The event was attended by Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder, both U.S. Senators, two Congressmen and the mayors of Detroit, Dearborn and Ann Arbor. The two announced grants are from money that Florida returned to U.S. DOT. Senator Levin had the best line of the day- "We need to thank Florida Governor Rick Scott for making this possible."

The first was for \$190+ million to stabilize the line from Dearborn to Kalamazoo. Norfolk Southern stopped maintenance on the line about two years ago, and has announced that it will downgrade passenger speeds to 30 mph effective June 1st. The line from Dearborn to Chelsea (west of Ann Arbor) has already been downgraded to 40 mph, adding about 5 minutes to running times. The grant will allow the entire line to be restored to 79 mph running. When asked if the grant money will be in time to prevent the downgrading, MI-DOT Director Kirk Steudel said "That's being negotiated." The grant was 100% federal money with no state match required.

The second grant was for about \$6 million for a new station in Ann Arbor. That grant will be matched by about \$3 million in city money. The station will have a much larger waiting room, the ability to serve two trains at once, and an 800 space parking garage which will also serve U of M Hospital. It is also designed to handle future commuter service.

All of the officials stressed that high speed rail is not a partisan issue. LaHood pointed out that there was a lot of press about three Republican governors returning HSR money. "What hasn't been as widely reported is that 24 governors, Republicans and Democrats alike, have filed over 100 applications totaling over \$10 billion for the \$2 billion available. High speed rail is coming to America, and nothing is going to be able to stop it."

At another event, FRA Administrator Joe Szabo said that agreements have not yet been worked out between FRA, Amtrak and NS for the Porter-Chicago improvements, which will benefit the Capitol and Lakeshore. "We've made a lot of progress lately, and I still expect the projects will be completed ahead of schedule."

Also announced was that a grant for equipment would also be approved. That grant is a joint application between Michigan, Illinois and Missouri. A formal announcement is expected in the near future.