



Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG)
PUBLIC TRANSIT & PASSENGER RAIL COMMITTEE

Wednesday, November 18, 2015 - 2:30 p.m.

TMACOG Boardroom

Draft Notes

- I. Introductions were given, notes were reviewed and accepted. Motion to accept by Bill Gill, seconded by Sherri McNeill.
- II. Transit Updates
 - a. Jim Gee updated the committee about the current events at TARTA, including the addition of TPS students riding to school, the addition of 20 new mini buses, and the discussions with Spencer Township to return service to their area. He also told the committee that 4 interviews for the Mobility Manager position were taking place this week.
 - b. WSOS updated the committee on their Volunteer Driver program that is intended to assist dialysis patients in getting rides to appointments. Todd Robinson talked about their updated business plan and offered a copy to anyone interested. They expect the procedures to be approved in January or February. Todd said that this program was intended to be a transportation option for the target audience, dialysis patients in rural areas, and that one way fares will be \$11.
 - c. BG Transit updated the committee about their ridership being up 10% over the past year. It was also noted that they have 2 new replacement modified minivans.
 - d. Scott Potter talked about HB 237. This would regulate transportation network companies (TNCs) at the state level, making Uber and Lyft regulated by PUCO. Currently, Ohio charges sales tax for taxicab service but not for Uber and Lyft services. There is current an uneven playing field for taxis vs. Uber and Lyft. Scott said that the taxi industry is getting what it deserves, nationally, and those companies that survive will come out better for it. Scott said he'd keep the committee updating on the legislation.
 - e. Dave updated the committee on the USDOT TIGER grants, saying that Ohio received one grant for Transit Tech Ohio, to improve scheduling and dispatching in rural Ohio. Part of this grant went to BG Transit who received money for their new modified minivans.
 - f. Patrick Miller mentioned the progress of the M-1 rail in Detroit, saying that it's expected to be operative starting spring of 2016. It's 3.3 miles long and efforts are being discussed to try to connect it well to DDOT and SMART. SEMCOG is pushing BRT on paper, he said, but only on paper. The funds for the M-1 were private money and it's expected that this will remain the trend if Michigan wants BRT/rail development. The new Michigan bill is supposed to have additional funds, however, with the raise of the gas tax.
- III. Rail Updates

- a. Bill Gill updated the committee on the new office space for NOPRA/Train Day/All Aboard Ohio in Toledo, telling them it's across the hall and still has the same phone number.
 - b. The 65th Anniversary of the Central Union Terminal event was recapped as a success and Bill handed out an article about the night, along with copies of the program.
 - c. Planning for Train Day 2016 is beginning and it's expected to be a good year. Bill noted the promotional poster hand out and also said that Wells Fargo may bring a passenger car to the event this year, which would be a big draw.
 - d. Tim Porter recapped the committee on the Passenger Rail Forum this year, explaining the featured speaker's topic of Cincinnati Streetcars. He noted that he has only heard positive feedback and that it went very well.
- IV. Federal Transportation Bill Update
- a. It was updated that the current bill would be again extended after it expires on the upcoming Friday, but it seems that Congress is getting closer to passing a long-term bill. TMACOG staff handed out a comparison of the two bills currently being considered, one by the House and one by the Senate. Funding amounts were noted, as were differences for public transit and passenger rail funding. All in all, the bills are very similar. Jim Gee noted that although the funding for the Senate bill is slightly higher, the House bill may be favorable because it would allow for more purchase of buses by transit agencies like TARTA.
- V. Discussion on Cleveland-Toledo-Detroit Rail
- a. Patrick Miller touched on the status of any sort of proposal for this corridor, saying that SEMCOG is interested in a connection between Ann Arbor and Detroit, but is not looking at Toledo to Detroit. Most progress with either of these will have to be with private funds.
- VI. Annual Work Program Suggestions
- a. TMACOG staff talked about the upcoming AWP for fiscal year 2017 and noted that it was time to start thinking about what the committees wanted to do or accomplish so that it can be put into the new AWP's. Todd Robinson suggested looking at software packages for mobility management for a streamlined approach. Passenger rail committee members wanted to wait for the committee separation to talk about their desires. It was asked by Jim Gee where the money comes from and Dave Gedeon said that most is via fundraising.
- VII. Committee Roundtable, other business
- a. Patrick Miller talked about the movement towards rail and transit at MSU and U of M, asking how we could get more involved with the students for student-friendly projects etc. Jerry Wicks brought up the idea behind OHERNS for the region's college campuses.
 - b. Dave mentioned a news article he read that Canadian Pacific wants to buy Norfolk Southern. Passenger rail members noted the regulatory nightmare when mergers happen and said this deal is unlikely to take place.
- VIII. Committee Structure
- a. Discussion: Scott Potter said that he favors splitting. Although he values the education on passenger rail, he feels it isn't very relevant to the reason he attends. Todd Robinson asked if the committee separated, would he be able to continue to attend passenger rail

meetings so he can learn about that form of transportation. He feels that rail could be a transportation link for mobility management in rural places. Rebekka Apardian said that in the event of a split committee, members can attend both meetings as often as they'd like; there is no intention to divide the two, only to focus on each more in depth. There may be an annual or as needed meeting with both committees, as well. Colette Cordova talked about her feeling that passenger rail was more macro-focused while public transit is more micro-focused. She asked if there would be a subcommittee with the existing Transportation Advisory Committee. Dave and Rebekka agreed that it would be worthwhile to make the Advisory Committee the Public Transit Committee. Jim Gee agreed this would make sense. It was noted that both the Public Transit and the Passenger Rail Committees would be subcommittees of the Transportation Council and each would be represented. Tom Galloway touched on the desire to see a multimodal hub at the current train station and cited this as his reason for wanting to remain as one committee. Tim Porter also said he'd like to see them stay together for the purposes of multimodal goals. Jerry Wicks said that it makes sense to him to split because there are different revenue streams, different agencies, etc.

- b. A motion to take a vote was made, and the motion was seconded. The vote result was 7 in favor, 6 against, and several abstaining. The committee will be separated. This will be taken to next month's Transportation Council and the rest of the details will be worked out, including bylaws etc. before the next meeting.