NOTES

1. Convene Meeting / Introductions / approve February notes – Jeff Ballmer, chair
Jeff Ballmer convened the meeting. Introductions were made, including Frank Burkett, Federal Highway Administration. Bill Kelly moved, Pat Etchie seconded, a motion to approve the February notes; motion passed.

2. Election of Officers (Vice Chair)
Earl Wilkinson has moved on – is now director of public works in Pueblo, Colorado. Ray Huber volunteered and was elected vice chair by acclamation.

Frank Burkett, FHWA, Columbus, noted their agency has focused on the American Reinvestment & Recovery Act (ARRA) for the last few months. They are currently reviewing ARRA projects. They lost their administrator; Patrick Bower is acting. Frank is statewide freight and statewide senior planning in addition to being assigned to work with MPOs (metro area transportation agencies) in the western part of Ohio.

Warren: attended the National Association of Regional Councils conference in June (Denver). Big issue is the next federal transportation act, with the House version supposed to be coming out in June, Senate version next year. Tomorrow there is to be a press conference with Congressman Oberstar, chair of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Warren provided a handout, a side-by-side House and Senate draft transportation bill comparison. All stars seem to be aligned for dealing with air quality and carbon emissions – note on page 2, the goals for the Senate bill include reducing carbon dioxide levels by 40% by 2030, and shifting freight transportation by 10% to non-highway or intermodal. At the conference there was much discussion about accountability and consolidating to reduce the number of federal transportation agencies. Hottest issue is how to pay for transportation programs – there’s no move to increase the federal gas tax even though the Trucking Association supports this. There was discussion of Vehicle Miles Traveled tax, but technology is not in place. Frank added they are hearing little from the administration. See AASHTO’s table regarding funding options.

Bill Saunders: any thought of graduated gas tax related to type of vehicle? Warren: no; has heard of indexing to inflation. Carol Van Sickle: should / can new mileage standards be factored in?

4. 2035 Plan Progress Report
   a. Initiatives—Diane presented a summary table of 2035 initiatives progress.
      #2 Transit – Bill Kelly stated all member jurisdictions of TARTA have been given a draft resolution to consider for adding Lucas County as a member and switching to a sales tax, thereby expanding transit to all of Lucas County.
      #3 System Preservation – Doug Stephens noted City of Toledo is looking into a pavement condition management tool from University of Illinois. Mike Stormer said Imad B’ddeiri at ODOT District 2 is the contact on this issue.
      #4 Bike Path Connectivity Study – Warren noted ongoing work on acquisition of Westside corridor.
      #8 Freight Database – TMACOG Freight Committee “listening sessions” and trucking survey, which are yielding information about freight transportation and needs, should also be noted.
      #15 Fuel Research – Ken Fallows noted a team from BGSU and UT is doing a request for biomass fuels funding (burn biomass in bales); TMACOG Air Quality Committee is writing a letter of support.
      #17 Sidewalk Policy Committee – Bill Saunders noted need for better legislation for provision of pedestrian facilities (townships have inadequate authority).
      #18 Education campaign on Funding Needs – The Legislative Agenda we prepare focuses on funding needs.
Harry Ward noted the importance of engaging the Toledo-Lucas County Plan Commissions in the 2035 initiatives as appropriate.

b. Implementing Plan Goals—In August, staff will present evaluation of whether we are meeting goals.

5. Federal Stimulus Funding—Airline Yard, port projects, and more —Warren Henry

Under ARRA requirements, ODOT must have authorized approximately $327.5 million of its $774 million stimulus allocation by June 29, 2009. The remaining amount must be authorized by March 1, 2010. States that meet these timeline requirements can compete for additional money lost by other states that fail to do so. $7 million that was to go towards environmental work on the Ohio Hub passenger rail system (plus funds for other planning work) are being shifted to shorter-term projects. TMACOG region will receive $11.7 million for projects. These funds have lots of monitoring and reporting requirements (there will be a training session in June). $180 million of ARRA funds are for transit – TARTA is first to use (buying buses and small vans). Dialogue is underway between Port, ODOT and Federal Highway Administration about eligibility of proposed Port Authority projects. Frank Burkett, FHWA, noted projects need to be directly related to transportation.

Ray Huber asked whether expansion of NS Airline intermodal Yard is a shovel-ready project and why the CSX yard in southern Wood County wasn’t also funded. Warren noted the City of Toledo submitted the Airline Yard project application by the deadline; also, CSX got $20 million for improving double stack clearance in the eastern part of the state (in the CSX corridor that leads to the Wood County yard). Warren noted that there’s both a 120 day deadline and a March 2010 deadline (second batch of projects must have detailed plans by December so they can be obligated by March 1). Ohio may not be moving as fast as other states in spending the funds, because Ohio took the more difficult route of allowing more local projects, which take a little longer.

6. Passenger Rail – heating up —Diane Reamer-Evans

The 3C corridor ridership and revenue study (Amtrak / Ohio Rail Development Commission) results are due in August. Ohio and other Midwest states are working together to pursue the $8 billion in high speed rail stimulus dollars. Bill Saunders suggested a tax on airline fuel to fund rail development.

7. Updates
   
a. Transit Forum – wrap up and next steps—Bill Kelly stated the hope was that at the end of the series of transit forums (with local mayors and other community leaders) there would be consensus on the future of transit. Mayor Waggoner of Maumee offered that the mayors should support one another before each others’ city councils on the issue of a more regional system and regional funding base. Each member jurisdiction would need to pass a resolution to make that happen.

b. Ohio State Funding Process (TRAC):  Warren noted the August 1 TRAC deadline for major projects ($5+ million). See www.dot.state.oh.us/trac/Documents/TRAC_Calendar_2009.pdf

c. Major highway projects: update on I-475/US 23 corridor; I-73/74; etc. —Mike Stormer

Work on the I-75/475 interchange continues. The 475 leg will sell in spring 2010. Douglas Rd and Central Ave. bridges are out of service until towards the end of 2009. The bridge you see now at Douglas is AT&T’s (utilities only). A pedestrian/bike bridge will replace the railroad bridge. Salisbury is down to one lane (3-year project). US 24: lots of dirt flying.

Warren noted TMACOG is experimenting with production of a map showing major construction projects.

8. Announcements / Other Business
   
- Ohio Conference on Freight, Dana Center / Hilton, Toledo; September 22-23, 2009
  www.tmacog.org/OCF_09/OCF_home_09.htm