



## **2016 Summer Caucuses & Forum with State Lawmakers**

### **Non-Governmental Members Summer Caucus Meeting Notes**

#### **Thursday, August 4, 2016**

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**Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions** – The Non-governmental Caucus met on August 4, 2016 at 9 a.m. at Penta Career Center (Room 1106), 9301 Buck Road in Perrysburg, Ohio.

Dennis McMickens, president & CEO of the Safety Council of Northwest Ohio and facilitator for the Non-governmental Members Caucus, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present. Introductions were made by everyone present.

#### **TMACOG members who were in attendance included:**

- Linda Amos – Principal Owner, Poggemeyer Design Group, Inc.
- Kent Bryan – Regional Manager, CT Consultants, Inc.
- Kerrie Carte – Planning & Development Coordinator, WSOS CAC, Inc.
- Jenny Carter-Cornell – Director of Funding and Govt. & Community Relations, Hull & Associates, Inc.
- Brian Dicken – Vice President, Advocacy & Public Policy, Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Brad Fisher – President, Eastern Maumee Bay Chamber of Commerce
- Dave Kuhn – Professional Engineer, Feller, Finch & Associates, Inc.
- Dennis McMickens – President & CEO, Safety Council of Northwest Ohio
- Lindsey Myers – Executive Director, Oregon Economic Development Foundation
- Hans Rosebrock – Manager, Economic Development & External Affairs, FirstEnergy Corp.
- Laura Saunders-Kowalec – V.P./Govt. Banking Relationship Manager, Huntington Bank
- Kathy Streng – Business Development Coordinator, DLZ Ohio, Inc.
- Tim Warren – Senior Engineer, Jones & Henry Engineers, Ltd.
- Steve Way – Principal, Managing Director, DGL Consulting Engineers, LLC
- Steve Wordelman – President, Jones & Henry Engineer, Ltd.

#### **Guest who was present included:**

- Tom Galloway – Northwest Ohio Passenger Rail Association (NOPRA)
- Allen Gallant – Manager, Public Policy and Grants, ProMedica
- Marlon Kiser – President & CEO, WGTE-TV 30

#### **TMACOG support staff that was present included:**

- Roger Streiffert – Transportation Planner II
- Lisa Householder – Transportation Planner/Database Analyst

**Introduction of Discussion Topics** – Caucus members spent a majority of the meeting discussing three topics including vacant industrial/commercial site redevelopment, attracting and keeping business in the region, and promoting the region to attract new business. Some commentary included the following.

- The vacant Southwyck Mall site in Toledo should be redeveloped as light industrial and not retail. This site was compared to a similar site in Rochester, New York that is using a former mall converted to light industrial as an anchor allowing small business in the area to flourish around it.
- The former Woodville Mall site in Northwood is in the process of being demolished. The City isn't sure what to do with the site, but it appears to not want retail. Maybe a combination of business and residential, however that may not do well in this area. The opinion is many people drive through on Woodville Road but do not stop along the way for shopping.
- Clean Ohio is doing some site development work but the brownfield redevelopment program needs improvement. There is a loan fund grant out there but businesses still have to pay for brownfield clean up. That is discouraging to new or expanding businesses because they do not want to pay for that extensive clean up nor do they want to wait a long time for the work to be completed. We need to advocate the State of Ohio to implement a Clean Ohio brownfield clean up grant. It will attract more businesses and make opportunities for businesses in a competitive time.
- Ann Arbor Railroad has acquired the former Raceway Park in Toledo and will develop it as a staging area for shipping vehicles from the nearby Chrysler plant. There are no rail spurs on this site currently (so movement of vehicles will be by truck) but one may be added in the future.
- Toledo is promoting itself as a nice place to live (nice parks, cultural places such as the Art Museum) so businesses, and especially CEO's, will want to move here.
- The Brookings Institute released a ranking this week for the top metro areas in the nation with advanced industries jobs (STEM jobs in science, technology, engineering, and math) from 2013-15. Toledo ranked 26<sup>th</sup> highest among the country's 100 largest metro areas in terms of percentage of advanced industry jobs. Toledo also ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in terms of advanced industries job growth (6.3%) and 21<sup>st</sup> in terms of productivity output (4.9%).
- Businesses not only have to promote the business to prospective employees but they also have to promote where their employees will live.
- The Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce has publications and programs to promote the Toledo region, including "It Matters Where You Make It" (a program aimed at attracting new people to the region), "The Little Green Book" (a book businesses use it to promote the region), and "Summer in the City" (a program for interns and people new to the region that helps them explore and network).
- Toledo needs to brand itself by making sure use of a particular site is consistent with the objective of the region.
- Ohio tourism isn't promoted enough despite being the No. 2 economic driver in the State.

- The biggest hurdle is the citizen nay-sayers who complain about living in this area. The attitude is improving but it is still troublesome having those negative statements out there in the media and on social media.
- Coordination is lacking between jurisdictions. Regionally, each jurisdiction is concerned about itself and getting the industry to settle within its borders. We need regional coordination to really sell the entire Toledo and western Lake Erie basin region.
- We need a vision of the region to improve our outlook. Persons from outside of this region just don't know what we have to offer here, such as the park system, cultural locations (such as the Art Museum and Zoo), and our industrial traditions. People hear bad news about the algae blooms and don't want to come here.
- This region needs to adopt the attitude of connectivity in business as we do with recreational trails. If you show more things happening within the region then more people will want to come here. A strong manufacturing base is really important, which will open the door for tertiary activity.
- The Maritime Academy will be starting a training program this fall for water quality technicians. Additionally, WSOS has a current program for state certified water operator training via the Operator Training Committee of Ohio.

**Questions for the Forum with State Lawmakers** – Based on the above discussion, Non-governmental Caucus members generated the following questions in preparation for the Forum with State Lawmakers.

1. Brownfield redevelopment was discussed and the need for sites to be clean and ready in order to attract/keep business. Will the State advocate for a Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund in order to keep up with brownfield redevelopment? Specifically, a general fund on an annual basis that communities can tap into to clean up some of the smaller sites and remain competitive.
2. The water quality issue extends beyond this region. There should be coordination with other states and with Canada. Is this happening? And is there any action on Great Lakes water quality on the federal level?
3. What, if anything, is being done to control and regulate the spreading of manure on fields?
4. Michigan has the “Pure Michigan” marketing campaign that really promotes tourism very well and attracts many people to the state. Ohio does not have a visible program such as this. Is there an opportunity to team up with Michigan to promote the Great Lakes tourism and bring bigger attention to this region of the country?

**Next Steps** – There were no requested actions from the caucus.

**Adjourn** – There was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.