



## **TMACOG Passenger Rail Advisory Group Agenda & Notes**

All Aboard Ohio Toledo Chapter combined meeting.

Thursday, August 21, 2025, 1:30 p.m. TMACOG Boardroom/Video Conference

**Attendees:** Alex Bourgeau, Frank Butwin, John Esterly, Sally Fish, Bill Gill, London Mitchell, Glenn Reihing, Ryan Simmons, Kimberly Smith, Peter Voorhees, Jerry Wicks, David Zavac, Beth McCray Gill, Brittanie Maddox, Tim Tegge, Brandon Waites, Libby Koppinger, Kurt Schwamberger, David Kiefer, Larry Foster, Armond Mathis, Roger Streiffert (TMACOG), David Gedeon (TMACOG), Sean Sammon (TMACOG).

### **1. Various passenger rail updates and progress reports from All Aboard Ohio – John Esterly, All Aboard Ohio**

John Esterly gave an update on rail advocacy efforts at All Aboard Ohio. John talked about Ohio's final transportation budget where the Senate removed all passenger rail legislation. Corridor ID moves forward with all Ohio projects having submitted a scope of work. The NS/UP merger will result in cross-national freight rail service and should not affect shorter length passenger rail projects. Developing long-distance passenger rail is more difficult and requires more coordination with freight railroads.

### **2. Toledo Chapter of AAO: Setting yearly goals – Sally Fish, All Aboard Ohio**

Sally discussed some goals for the Toledo Chapter including providing an advocacy tool kit and getting the universities involved in passenger rail advocacy. Finding the right people to contact at universities is a challenge. The idea of a "knowledge corridor" connecting BGSU, Findlay College, and the University of Toledo was discussed. Getting support from universities for passenger rail connections is difficult but is key to moving this idea forward. Other goals include getting more young people involved in passenger rail advocacy and organizing a train trip to Chicago or Cleveland.

### **3. Toledo On Track Day – September 19, 2025 – Sally Fish, All Aboard Ohio**

Toledo On Track Day is scheduled for Friday, September 19 from 11 am to 3 pm. The event will include speeches supporting passenger rail, food trucks, and vendors. Organizers are hoping for news coverage of the event.

### **4. Various updates from TMACOG – Roger Streiffert, TMACOG**

TMACOG staff shared some Amtrak ridership numbers. Amtrak achieved an all-time ridership record in FY 2024 with 32.8 million customers. The Capitol Limited and Lake Shore Limited routes through Toledo showed substantial ridership gains.

Toledo's Amtrak station's riders were down about 15% for FY 2024 while Cleveland was up about 20%. Toledo's dip in ridership could be due to one less passenger car serving Toledo resulting in lowered capacity.

TMACOG's passenger rail priorities include improving the east-west Amtrak corridor, connecting Toledo to Detroit, and eventually connecting Toledo to Columbus.

#### **5. Miscellaneous topics or announcements – All Attendees**

Developing a high-speed rail network across the U.S. would provide a fast and efficient alternative to highway or air travel. Building such a network is a step-by-step process and starts with developing an interconnected standard speed network.

TMACOG has a new contact at Canadian National Railway and will meet with him soon to discuss regional rail issues.

#### **Meeting Adjourned**

#### **Schedule for 2025 group meetings:**

Thursday, August 21, 2025, 1:30 pm

Thursday, November 20, 2025, 1:30 pm

Meetings will be in the TMACOG boardroom with a video conference option.