



TMACOG Passenger Rail Advisory Group Agenda & Notes

Thursday, May 15, 2025, 1:30 p.m. TMACOG Boardroom/Video Conference

Attendees: John Esterly, Bill Gill, Tim Porter, Glenn Reihing, Hans Rosebrock, Peter Voorhees, Russel Garriott (Fort Wayne), Thea Ewing (HNTB), Roger Streiffert (TMACOG)

1. Various passenger rail 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 discussed Ohio's House-passed Operating Budget which includes funding for Ohio to rejoin the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) and \$6m/yr for the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC). There is a proposed amendment for appropriation for the local match portion of the Midwest Connect Corridor ID step 2 funding. The budget will next go to the state Senate. We will follow the process at future meetings.

2. Midwest Connect (Chicago/Fort Wayne/Columbus/Pittsburgh) rail plan; Possible Fort Wayne to Toledo rail connection – Russel Garriott, City of Fort Wayne; Thea Ewing, HNTB

Russel Garriott from the City of Fort Wayne and Thea Ewing from HNTB presented on the Midwest Connect plan, a 545-mile route connecting Chicago to Pittsburgh. The City of Fort Wayne is the lead agency for Midwest Connect partnering with MORPC (Columbus) and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission. The project is in Step 1 (scope, schedule, cost estimate for a service development plan) of the FRA's Corridor ID program. An SDP would be completed in approximately 2028.

A key point is that Midwest Connect will serve as the preferred rail route from Chicago to the east coast, bypassing busy freight tracks and congestion. In Ohio, this route will be an important piece of a well-connected rail network serving public transit for the state. Russ and Thea's presentation was shared with the group and contains details on the plan, its progress, and future projections. Briefly mentioned was that TMACOG includes a Fort Wayne to Toledo rail connection in the long-range transportation plan.

3. Miscellaneous topics for discussion/member announcements – All Attendees

Ohio is updating its long-range transportation plan: Access Ohio 2050. A link to the Access Ohio website was shared with the group.

Meeting Adjourned

Schedule for 2025 group meetings:

Thursday, March 20, 2025, 1:30 pm

Thursday, May 15, 2025, 1:30 pm

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.