



TMACOG Freight Advisory Committee Agenda & Notes – July 2020

Wednesday, July 22, 2020, 11:30 a.m.

Welcome and introductions – Ray Huber, Committee Chair

1. COVID-19 Effects on Freight and the Economy – *Effects of the pandemic and where we go from here* – Roger Streiffert, TMACOG/All Attendees

The committee discussed some of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on freight movement and on the economy. Some of the discussion points:

- Consumers order goods to be delivered rather than shop in-person at stores. This pushes the shift from brick and mortar stores to e-commerce and this trend may grow faster than what was expected before the pandemic.
- There is a pandemic-related increase in delivery truck traffic and communities will need to plan for more trucks making their way through cities and suburbs.
- Food deliveries have become much more popular, including for those who have access to transportation but do want to shop in-person. This trend may continue.
- Working from home has greatly affected traffic volumes and patterns, with less auto traffic on the roads. Some trucking that supply groceries and other supplies saw a big increase while others have been hurt, depending on the freight.
- The effort to avoid a concentration of workers in plants and warehouses will spur more automation and high-tech handling of goods using robotics.
- Because many restaurants were closed, truckers were able to be served by food trucks in truck parking lots. This could continue in some areas as necessary.
- The committee looked at the Port of Toledo volumes through June 2020 as compared to previous years. Some commodities were up, and some were down depending on the demand or on the availability of the commodity.

2. TMACOG Transportation Legislative Agenda – *Review previous freight-related content and begin the process of updating the document* – Roger Streiffert/All Attendees

Developed collaboratively by a group of regional stakeholders, the Transportation Legislative Agenda provides insight into transportation assets and issues and informs federal, state, and local government policymakers, including legislators. The goal of the document is for stakeholders to speak with a unified voice on issues affecting Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan. It is updated every two years and will be updated for 2021-22 at the end of 2020.

The committee briefly reviewed the pages of the document that are related to freight transportation. We did not make any changes at this time, but staff would like for all committee members to review the document and send their



recommendations to streiffert@tmacog.org. Staff will then compile the recommendations into a draft to be submitted to the planning committee for consideration, a process much like the long-range plan update.

Some points made during the discussion were to include national and statewide policies but focus on regional policies; do not include small individual projects but instead look at bigger picture priorities; do not include a listing of assets; you are welcome to comment on all pages, not just freight.

We look forward to receiving your input into the update.

3. CSX NW Ohio Facility Area Freight Traffic – Possible effects of growing rail and truck traffic – Roger Streiffert, TMACOG

With a shift in how CSX uses the NW Ohio facility and with warehouse development underway at the NorthPoint facility across from the CSX yard, there is great concern about the number of trucks eastbound and westbound on SR 18. Some points from the discussion:

- The shift from a swap yard to a destination yard has resulted in fewer containers moving through the CSX facility but more trucks coming and going.
- The warehouse development across from the yard could add more trucks, but the number is not known at this time.
- Rail crossing blockages still occur in North Baltimore, Hoytville, and to a lesser extent, Bairdstown. CSX has been working with communities to move the trains through the crossings and keep the blockages to a minimal.
- The blockages can cause truck traffic to venture off the state routes onto township and local roads to find a way around the blocked crossings, resulting in wear and tear on non-truck routes.
- Finding solutions to these blocked crossing is included in TMACOG's long range transportation plan, but no definite solution has yet to be found.
- An updated traffic study may help to find a workable solution to the problem.

4. 2020 Highway Projects affecting Freight – Overview of current and upcoming major projects – Roger Streiffert, TMACOG

Some current and upcoming highway projects that affect freight movement:

- I-75 pavement reconstruction: Ohio line to Erie Rd in Monroe Co. (2019-2020)
- I-475 widening/new Dorr St interchange: Airport Hwy to Central Ave (2019-2021)
- I-280 resurfacing including the Veterans' Glass City Skyway: approximately Starr Ave to Manhattan Blvd (2020-2021)
- Front St/Millard Ave resurfacing/roundabouts: I-280 to Tiffin St (2019-2020)



- I-75 pavement reconstruction/bridge rehab, including ramp rehab at South Ave: South Ave to Dorr St (2018-2022)
- I-75 pavement reconstruction/bridge rehab, including replacement of the Disalle Bridge and ramp rehab at Miami St: Glenwood to South Ave (2019-2023)
- US 20A roundabout construction at SR 295, Whitehouse-Spencer Rd, and at Weckerly Rd. (2020)
- Ohio Turnpike pavement rehab near Swanton: MP 46.5 to MP 51.4 (2020)
- Ohio Turnpike pavement rehab near Elmore: MP 80.5 to MP 90.0 (2020)
- I-75 pavement reconstruction – Erie Rd to Otter Creek Rd in Monroe Co. (2021-2022)
- I-75 resurfacing – I-280 to Michigan line (2021)

5. Update on Various Freight Developments – *What’s going on in the region?* – Roger Streiffert/All Attendees

- NorthPoint warehouse development underway on SR 18 across from CSX.
- NS closing part of Bellevue terminal only five years after \$160 million expansion.
- Mennel Milling \$9.5 million expansion scheduled for Fostoria facility.
- Brenntag chemicals \$15 million brownfield redevelopment on Campbell St in Toledo, including new rail access.
- 150,000 square foot Amazon facility at old Southwyck site should open in the summer of 2021.
- 700,000 square foot Amazon facility in Rossford scheduled to open in fall 2020.
- Cleveland Cliffs scheduled to begin operations in January of 2021.
- Land-Air industrial park north of Toledo Express is working to land more tenants.
- BlueScope Steel expansion in Delta includes expanded rail connections.

6. Roundtable Discussion or Announcements – All Attendees

Tom Galloway talked briefly about the National Infrastructure Bank Bill, HR 6422. A link to further information on the bill will be shared with the committee.

Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: September 23, 2020 at 11:30 AM