



## **TMACOG Passenger Rail Committee Agenda & Notes – August 2020**

Thursday, August 20, 2020, 2:30 p.m. via Videoconference

**Welcome and introductions** – Tim Porter, Committee Chair

**1. Update on the Toledo to Detroit Passenger Rail Study and Funding Situation – Roger Streiffert, TMACOG**

As per Toledo City Councilman Christopher Delaney, the funding for the next phase of the Toledo to Detroit passenger rail study has been pulled from the city's budget as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and related costs to the city. The next phase would have cost \$300,000. There is no information on when the next phase may be rescheduled. In the meantime, TMACOG staff will continue to discuss the merits of the project with partners and stakeholders in hopes that it will eventually be implemented.

**2. Transportation Legislative Agenda Update - Roger Streiffert/All Attendees**

Staff presented a draft of the reworked passenger rail page from the legislative agenda. From our discussion and from committee input, staff will make further revisions to the page. The next draft will be emailed to committee members for comments. When a final draft is approved by the committee it will be submitted to the Planning Committee who are working on the overall update to the document.

**3. NCBT Chicago to NYC Bullet Train Proposal – Tim Porter, Committee Chair**

Tim Porter talked briefly about the Chicago to NYC bullet train proposal. This proposal is still in its earliest phase but gives us a look at the potential for high speed passenger rail in the future. A link to an article about the proposal will be sent to all committee members.

**4. National Infrastructure Bank, INVEST in America Act, other Legislation or Funding - Tom Galloway, Committee Vice Chair/All Attendees**

Tom Galloway talked about the proposal for a National Infrastructure Bank, that would be created as a government-owned depository/lending bank that loans money to states, counties, cities, authorities and cooperatives for infrastructure projects, including passenger rail projects. After a start-up appropriation, the bank would earn its own way like any commercial bank. The expected benefits are that the nation's infrastructure concerns would be addressed, jobs would be created, and the economy would grow. Further info on the NIB will be sent to all committee members.

The committee would like to submit a National Infrastructure Bank resolution asking that the Ohio General Assembly pass HR 348 which urges congress to establish a NIB.



Staff will work with the committee to complete this resolution and move it through the proper channels at TMACOG. The resolution will be presented to Transportation Council for their approval.

Tom also mentioned that the INVEST act (Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America) is currently stalled in the U.S. Senate. This transportation bill would authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, transit programs, and other purposes.

#### **5. Plans for Future Train Day Toledo or other Transportation Events – Bill Gill/All Attendees**

- As per Bill Gill, Train Day Toledo 2021 has been postponed due to the ongoing pandemic and will not be held in early May. No plans are in place yet for 2022.
- As per Tim Porter, the NOPRA Passenger Rail Forum for 2021 has also been postponed due to the pandemic and will not be held as a videoconference event.
- The 2021 TMACOG winter General Assembly will be held as a videoconference event over a four-day period in January. TMACOG is working out the details for the business meeting and for voting for Board of Trustees members.
- At this time, the TMACOG Transportation Summit will likely be held via videoconference in the spring of 2021, but a final decision has not been made.
- At this time, the 2021 Ohio Conference on Freight is scheduled to be held in person in Columbus in August. This plan could change later this year or next.

#### **6. Roundtable Discussion or Announcements - All Attendees**

Other discussion topic included:

- In October 2020 Amtrak is planning to cut long-distance service, including Toledo, to 3 days per week in response to low ridership as a result of the pandemic.
- Amtrak has now implemented Positive Train Control (PTC) on all its owned or controlled tracks and locomotives, increasing safety and preventing accidents.
- The November 19 TMACOG Passenger Rail Committee meeting will be a joint videoconference meeting with the Michigan Association of Rail Passengers.

#### **Meeting Adjourned**

Schedule of 2020 Passenger Rail Committee Meetings:

Thursday, November 19, 2020, **5:00 p.m.** (note time change)  
(Joint video-conference meeting with MARP)

Additional meetings scheduled as needed.