



## 2023 TMACOG General Assembly Special Districts & Authorities Caucus Notes Friday, January 20, 2023

**Call to Order/Welcome** – The Special Districts and Authorities Caucus met on Friday, January 20, 2023, at 8:15 a.m. in Parlor D at the Hilton Garden Inn in Perrysburg, Ohio. Allen Gallant, director of community development for Metroparks Toledo and the moderator of the caucus, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present. Introductions were made around the room. Mr. Gallant explained the purpose of the caucus for anyone new to TMACOG.

### **Caucus members in attendance included:**

- Scott Carpenter, Director of Public Relations, Metroparks Toledo
- Meghan Gallagher, E-ZPass Retail Program Manager, Ohio Turnpike
- Allen Gallant, Director of Community Development, Metroparks Toledo
- Cher Johnson, Chair, Wood County Port Authority
- Stefan Kondelka, Western Division Service Plaza Manager, Ohio Turnpike
- Sam Melden, Director of External Affairs and Communications, TARTA
- Tim O'Donnell, Airport Director, Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority
- Tim Porter, Chair, Northwest Ohio Passenger Rail Association, and Chair, TMACOG Passenger Rail Committee
- James Rossler, Member, Wood County Port Authority
- Chris Smalley, Director, Wood County Park District
- Josh Strickland, PACE Administrator/Senior Accountant, Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority
- Jannah Wilson, Executive Director, Park District of Ottawa County

### **Non-Caucus members present included:**

- Scott Grenerth, Director of Engagement, Truck Specialized Parking Services

### **TMACOG staff members in attendance included:**

- Lance Dasher, Transportation Planner
- Lisa Householder, Transportation Planner/Database Analyst

**Election of Representatives to the TMACOG Board of Trustees** – The first order of business on the agenda was the election of caucus members to this year's Board of Trustees. A ***motion*** was made by Tim Porter and ***seconded*** by Scott Carpenter to elect the following members to represent the Special Districts and Authorities Caucus on this year's Board of Trustees. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Trustees**

Chris Smalley  
Cher Johnson

#### **Alternates**

Allen Gallant  
Tom Uhler

**Discussion Topics** –The following topics were discussed by the caucus.

- **BIL Updates – What programs have been targeted in our region?**

- Lance Dasher provided an update on the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The \$1.2 trillion bill includes \$550 billion in new spending over a five-year period. Updates included that the Surface Transportation Block Grants (SBTG) program, which will focus on resurfacing projects in order to spread the money around; the application for rehabilitating the Craig Bridge was unsuccessful; funding for the Chessie Circle Trail bridge across the Maumee River is a focus for active transportation; and the Ohio Department of Transportation is examining projects to reconnect communities, such as pedestrian paths across the I-475 corridor.
- Wood County Port Authority wants to finish the connection of the Chessie Circle Trail from Bates Road to the W.W. Knight Preserve and would like ideas for additional funding sources. Lance Dasher suggested looking into ODNR Clean Ohio Trail funds, but there is a requirement of matching dollars.
- Allen Gallant asked how members can convene to discuss potential projects and needs for the BIL with the aid of TMACOG. Lance Dasher suggested, in the short term, joining the TMACOG 2055 Long Range Plan task force and alerting staff on any major news. In the meantime, staff will discuss how best to fulfill this request.
- Tim O'Donnell reported the Toledo Express Airport is updating its terminal with money from the Airport Terminal Program and should be completed in 2024. They are also pursuing funds for updates to the air traffic control towers.

- **Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Needs**

- Allen Gallant said we need to make sure the region is prepared for electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure and ready to apply for grants when they become available. Lance Dasher said TMACOG is going to develop an EV plan.
- Megan Gallagher said the Turnpike has four service plazas on the eastern and western sides of the state with EV charging stations and more planned. Multiple states are working to identify other areas along the I-80 corridor suitable for charging station infrastructure.
- Scott Greneth commented that Amazon will eventually have a full electric fleet that will charge overnight but will need more available chargers away from their facilities.
- Lance Dasher said the Carbon Reduction Program is a potential funding source and internal talks are ongoing on how to best utilize these funds.
- A suggestion was made for a general education session (TMACOG Tech) of what EV entails, including information on cost, maintenance needs, preparation needs, and the overall experience of installing the infrastructure.

- **Microtransit Update**

- Sam Melden provided an update on TARTA's effort to expand microtransit throughout Lucas County. More information is available at [www.tarta.com/flex](http://www.tarta.com/flex)
- Microtransit allows people to request rides on demand that do not need to be scheduled in advance. It began in certain areas of Lucas County on January 23 with expansions planned throughout Lucas County in the future. Rides will be \$3 per person and anyone requesting the service will need to allow for a 30-60 minute lead time for

an available vehicle. There will be some instances when a rider will have to combine using Flex and a fixed line service to get to certain parts of the county as this service expands.

- On March 27, TARTA will expand its fixed-line service into Springfield Township (specifically Spring Meadows). Additionally, EZ Fare was recently launched and ties to the fixed-line service.

- **Roundtable**

- Wood County Park District is seeking funding to resurface the entire Slippery Elm Trail and perform other deferred maintenance projects.
- Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority has a bond to fund projects in its PACE program, which will potentially include EV-related projects. Toledo Express Airport is working on its master plan and terminal assessment, with expected completion later this year. They are working with TARTA on Flex. They also have a program that aids people in navigating air travel, with three planned public programs this year.
- The Ohio Turnpike has three more EV sites almost finished and notes there is a large demand for this infrastructure. Work is also underway to upgrade toll plazas and gates. New barrier gates are opening along the corridor, including one near Swanton.
- The TMACOG Freight Advisory Committee is preparing to work on TMACOG's 2055 Long Range Transportation Plan.
- TARTA is reviewing fixed-line routes for efficiency and effectiveness. Service changes were approved at the most recent board meeting that will go into effect this spring. TARTA averages about 2 million riders a year and in 2022 had a 98-percent return to ridership since the start of the pandemic.
- Metroparks Toledo stated most of 2023 will focus on the Glass City Metropark, with Phase 2 opening this spring. The ice rink will open next winter. Work on the Glass City Riverwalk is also ongoing (mainly demolition work at this time).
- Wood County Port Authority is keeping tabs on several projects. Abbott Pharmaceutical will open a facility in Bowling Green. The First Solar facility in Lake Township is still under construction. There are corridor study plans for both State Route 795 and State Route 582, with significant potential for development along both routes.
- Ottawa County Park District is a relatively new park district and is focused on completing the North Coast Inland Trail throughout all of Ottawa County and making a connection to Wood County in Millbury.
- The Northwest Ohio Passenger Rail Association has a Passenger Rail Forum scheduled for February 27 at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza (train station) in Toledo. Tim Porter also mentioned the TEMS study looking at the feasibility of high-speed rail between Toledo and Columbus with an extension to Detroit Metro.
- TMACOG update: Staff is working on an analysis document regarding the safety of roundabouts in our region. Staff is also working on how best to allocate dollars available in the Carbon Reduction Program, which will provide \$5 million dollars over a five-year period. More information will be available this spring and summer.

**Next Steps** – No other business was discussed.

**Adjournment** – Allen Gallant adjourned the meeting.