



The Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers, Inc. (MARP) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation established in 1973 to improve passenger train service, travel conditions for passengers, and to work for the preservation of historic rail stations.

Monthly meetings are held at locations around the state. Check the website for dates and venues. The public is invited to attend.

MARP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2014-2016

Larry Krieg	Chair
Steve Vagnozzi	Vice-Chair
Position open	Treasurer
Kay Chase	Acting Secretary
John Langdon	Governmental/Public Affairs Coordinator
Position open I	Membership Coordinator
Kay Chase	Communications Coordinator
Adam Tauno Williams	Meetings Coordinator
Position open	Northern Region Chair
Robert Patterson	Detroit/Metro Region Chair
Warren Fritz	West Region Chair
Jim Wallington	East/Central Region Chair
<i>The Michigan Passenger Editor and Webmaster, Larry Sobczak ON TRACK Editor, Kay Chase</i>	

2016 MEETINGS

- 16 January** – REO Town Depot (former Grand Trunk Depot), Lansing
- February** – Cancelled
- 12 March** – Howell
- 16 April** – New Buffalo Library
- 21 May** – Jackson District Library
- 11 June** – Amtrak Station, Dearborn
- 9 July** – Executive Committee
- August** – tentative Marquette, in conjunction with 4th Annual MI Rail Conf
- 24 September** – Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station
- 8 October** – Dowagiac
- November** – TBA
- December** – Executive Committee

Visit www.marp.org
Email marprail@yahoo.com

MARP Annual Meeting to Include Election of Officers

The **Bylaws** of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers stipulate that “*The Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and At-Large Executive Committee Members shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Corporation held in even numbered years to hold office for a two (2) year term beginning at the close of the Annual Meeting at which they have been elected.*” Additionally, “*Regional Chapter Officers may be elected by their own regional chapter membership if more than ten members in that region so request.*” Otherwise, they shall be elected as specified above. The Treasurer is “*appointed by the Chair with the concurrence of the Executive Committee*” and “*is not subject to limitations on term of office*”.

Clark Charnetski, Steve Sobel, and Hugh Gurney, acting as the nominating committee, are currently seeking candidates for eleven executive committee positions. Election will take place at the Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station on 24 September. In addition to Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary, there are 4 At-Large Executive positions and 4 regional Chair positions (North, West, East-Central, and Metro Detroit). Duties of the officers and at-large members are described in **Article V of the Bylaws**. Regional Chair responsibilities are described in **Section 6.3 of the Bylaws**.

If you are interested in a position on the executive committee, or would like to suggest a candidate, please email Clark at camcharnet@aol.com or phone him at **734-761-3814**. The committee would appreciate hearing of your interest by June 29.

If you have always yearned to be part of the inner workings of your organization, this is an excellent opportunity. Your participation is invited.

Interim Appointments Are Available

Four positions are currently open and will be filled by appointment until the elections in September. The open positions include Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Coordinator, and North Region Chair. It is particularly critical that the Treasurer’s position be filled as soon as possible. You may not have the financial background necessary to fill this position, but if you know someone who does, please send an email to marprail@yahoo.com.

There will be no general membership meeting in July

The Executive Committee will hold a day-long working session on July 9 at the Ypsilanti District Library, 5577 Whitaker Road. Questions? Send email to marprail@yahoo.com

MARP May Meeting Notes

One of **Michigan's 53 Carnegie libraries** was the meeting venue for 16 members and guests on 21 May in Jackson. The building, currently housing the main branch of the Jackson District Library, is one of the grander examples with its imposing columns, inlaid terrazzo floors, marble staircase, and rich wood furnishings. Built at a cost of \$70,000, it opened in 1906. It was designated a State Historical site in 1979 and a National Historical site in 1980.

The meeting was designed as a "working session" to provide input to the MI Transportation Plan, also known as the **State Long Range Plan** or simply "the SLRP". The plan will set a policy framework to guide investment decisions over the next 25 years. Public comments were taken through 10 June and are taken into consideration in finalizing the plan that will be presented for adoption by the **State Transportation Commission** at its 21 July meeting. Phone 517-373-2110 to learn the meeting location.

As stated in the draft executive summary, the overarching goals of the SLRP include: *system improvement, efficient and effective operations, safety and security, and stewardship*. MARP has long supported enhancement and expansion of passenger services – train, intercity bus and local transit – as strategies to achieve those very goals.

Among the issues identified by the members as important – and subsequently included in the formal comment submitted by Chair Krieg to MDOT on 6 June - are these:

- support a system offering choice, efficiency, safety, and integration, funded from diversified sources that include innovative private sources together with dedicated state and federal funds for passenger rail
- support MDOT's vision of good stewardship, preserving existing transportation resources, and protecting the environment, and believe that frequent, reliable, and interconnected public transportation options are one of the most effective ways of doing this
- recommend that funding highway expansion be avoided
- support increased frequencies on the *Blue Water* and *Pere Marquette* routes
- recommend double-tracking the *Wolverine* route from Dearborn to Porter IN to accommodate the frequencies envisioned for 2040

(MEETING continues in next column)



We're waiting to hear from you
(And you know who you are!)

Go to **PayPal** to renew your membership

Or download a mail-in form **here**

(MEETING continued from previous column)

- favor connecting Michigan routes to the East Coast via Toledo as well as through Ontario
- advocate restoration of passenger train service connecting Detroit, Lansing, Grand Rapids, and Holland
- advocate new passenger train service between Ann Arbor, Traverse City, and Petoskey
- support the Southeast Michigan Regional Transit Authority and other regional bodies in establishing commuter and regional rail service in SE Michigan

In other business, MARP member Gerald Callison presented work he has done using Google Earth to create overlays showing major Michigan train routes. If others are interested in learning more about this project, he asks that you email him at gerrycallison@yahoo.com.

Treasurer Jeanie Merckel reported April income from dues and donations of \$844.00 and expenditures of \$618.87, leaving \$13,311.61 available for operations. The Pratt Fund (invested in Vanguard Index Fund VTSAX) was valued at \$18,454.62 as of 16 April 2016.

East-Central Chair Steve Vagnozzi reported continuing efforts to get wayfinding signage for the new East Lansing station. MSU will post information on its student orientation page about train and intercity bus transportation. Vagnozzi would appreciate volunteers to help with an outreach event at the Meridian Farmers' Market on 18 June.

Government Affairs Coordinator John Langdon reminded members that *Wolverine* trains are operating on a **revised summer schedule** to accommodate track and signal work.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2016 DUES



SEE WHERE THE TRAIN CAN TAKE
YOU THIS FOURTH OF JULY

[CLICK HERE](#)

KIDS RIDE FREE on MICHIGAN'S PERE MARQUETTE

Enjoy Savings on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday Travel
Purchase through August 30 for travel through August 31

BRING YOUR BIKE ALONG

Michigan's Blue Water & Pere Marquette Routes are included

BRING YOUR PET ALONG

SE Michigan Regional Transit Authority Taking Comments on Master Plan



[CLICK HERE for Larger Map](#)

The much-anticipated Southeast Michigan **Regional Master Transit Plan** has been released for public comment. A series of public meetings will be held during the month of June throughout the region. The draft plan may be accessed **online**. Download a **flyer** with the schedule of public meetings

and a list of libraries having copies of the plan available for viewing.

It has been widely acknowledged that the lack of an adequately funded and regionally coordinated transit system has been a major obstacle to progress in the four county area of southeast Michigan.

After many months of intense study and community conversation, the RTA has announced a plan that includes a mix of mobility options and a clear strategy for moving forward.

Of particular interest to MARP is the inclusion of regional rail to connect Ann Arbor with Detroit. As detailed by consultant Peter Vorhees at the recent MARP meeting in Dearborn, eight daily round trips are anticipated for the corridor, serving stations in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Wayne, Dearborn, and the Detroit New Center Amtrak station. Future expansion could extend the line west to Chelsea (or even as far as Jackson) and east to re-connect to Windsor via the Detroit River tunnel.

Another major element of the plan is the establishment of bus rapid transit (BRT) to serve the Woodward, Gratiot, Michigan Avenue, and Washtenaw Avenue corridors. Ten Cross-County Connectors will provide fast, frequent bus service to better connect the region. Job centers that are currently inaccessible by transit will be part of the system, including places such as Livonia, Canton, Novi, Wixom, and Rochester Hills. Also envisioned are express bus services on certain routes, as well as airport express service.

To make RAPID • RELIABLE • REGIONAL transit a reality, voters in Macomb, Wayne, Oakland, and Washtenaw will be asked to consider a 1.2 mill property tax increase on the November ballot. This amounts to about \$8 per month for the average homeowner in the four-county region.

[Regional Master Transit Plan](#)

[Schedule of Public Meetings](#)

[MAP showing proposed routes and modes](#)

The **Hoosier State Passenger Train**, averaging an on-time performance rating of 86% and a 20% increase in ticket revenue since October 2015, is now among the highest-rated Amtrak routes, with 90% of riders reporting in a recent survey that they are "very satisfied" with the service.

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION CLOSES JUNE 20



AUGUST 17TH Conference
\$100 Early Bird Registration

AUGUST 18TH Field Visit
\$35 Early Bird Registration

[CLICK HERE for Information and Registration](#)

Exciting Program Announced for the 4th Annual Michigan Rail Conference

Michigan Technological University, the Michigan Dept. of Transportation, and corporate sponsors have planned an interesting and varied program for the fourth iteration of what has become a well-regarded conference. This year's conference will take place on the campus of Northern Michigan University in Marquette on August 17 and 18.

The theme **Connecting the Dots: Business, Communities and Technology** will be explored in presentations and panels featuring industry leaders, educators, and public officials.

The luncheon speaker, Tom Baldini, MTU Trustee, will speak on "30 Years of U.P. Economic Development". The evening keynote speaker is Mr. Frank Patton, founder of **Great Lakes Basin Transportation** which has proposed building a 278-mile Chicago bypass rail line running from Milton WS to LaPorte IN.

The morning session will kick off with a presentation by Tim Hoeffner, MDOT Office of Rail. "*Passenger Operations in an Era of Lean Public Investment*" is the topic of a panel including Chad Cushman on Amtrak thruway service, Chris Bagwell of Great Lakes Central Railroad on restoration of passenger service in northern lower Michigan, Larry Krieg with an overview of Michigan passenger trains, and Frank Loetterle of Minnesota Passenger Rail Office on the **Northern Lights Express**, a proposed higher-speed rail project linking the Twin Cities and Duluth.

Another panel will highlight Upper Peninsula tech companies supporting the rail industry. Other presenters include the Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors, the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission, the Mineral Range RR, the Escanaba & Lake Superior RR, Michigan Railroads Assoc., and representatives of the mining and forest industries.

Field trips on the 18th include visits to Mineral Range Railroad; Lundin Mining – Humboldt Mill; Sawyer International Airport – Potlatch Rail Operations; Escanaba & Lake Superior Car Manufacturing; CN Railroad – Escanaba Ore Dock & Rotary Dumper.

[CLICK HERE](#) for complete information on registration, lodging, program, and field trips.

View from elsewhere . . .

“The renewed Hoosier State is an asset for tourism and transportation. Since state and local leaders added Wi-Fi, food service and refurbished heritage train cars nearly a year ago, customer-satisfaction scores, ticket revenue and on-time performance have all improved.”

-- Indiana Lt. Governor Eric Holcomb in a **recent news release** lauding 86% on-time-performance and 20% increase in ticket revenue since October 2015

“Instead of being discontinued, the Hoosier State train was improved. On-time performance and customer service leading to more riders will be key to future success and improvements.”

-- Ed Ellis, President of Iowa Pacific Holdings which provides equipment, maintenance and onboard amenities for the **Hoosier State** train

“Good to see how Iowa Pacific revamped a previously discarded service . . . Now, to what extent does Iowa Pacific, Amtrak, Indiana, Illinois, USDOT, CSX, and the communities enroute in Indiana sit down to address and prioritize the obvious issues that come even before increasing frequencies?”

-- Mark E. Singer, Principal at Marketing Rail, Ltd., **personal commentary** on increasing frequency



Serendipity on the Prairie

MARP member Kay Chase enjoys interrupting her annual cross-county train trip to visit small towns along the way. The *Museum of Antique Modes of Transportation* caught her eye as the *Empire Builder* pulled in to Malta MT. Exploring on foot, she discovered right next door, hidden behind a large box elder in the front yard, the H.G. Robinson House, a mail-order home that arrived via train in 1898 and was positioned to face the Great Northern Railway depot and “Siding 54”, later known as Malta. Look carefully in the museum window and you see a beautifully restored Ford Model A roadster originally purchased in 1930 at a local car dealership. Nearby are the Dinosaur Museum and Historical Museum.



MARP, INC
PO BOX 510842
LIVONIA, MI 48151-6842

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Congressional Switchboard 202-224-3121

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