



ON TRACK

The E-Bulletin of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers

www.marp.org

marprail@yahoo.com

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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.

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2018 MEETINGS

27 January – Okemos Public Library

February – TBA

March – TBA

April – TBA

May – TBA

June – Executive Committee

July – TBA

August – TBA

September – Annual Meeting at Durand Union Station

October – TBA

November – TBA

December – Executive Committee

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Passenger Train Studies Wrapping Up

“The purpose of the Program is to enhance intercity mobility along the Corridor from Chicago to Detroit/Pontiac by providing an improved passenger rail service that would be a competitive transportation alternative to automobile, bus and air service.”

The Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Passenger Rail Corridor Program **DRAFT Tier-1 EIS** (Environmental Impact Statement) was released for comment in September of 2014. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) are in the process of finalizing the EIS, after which a Record of Decision (ROD) will be issued identifying the Program’s selected route and service alternatives.

Associated with the EIS is a Corridor Investment Plan which will detail the specific actions that must be done over time to obtain the desired level of service. Before project implementation can begin, Tier 2 NEPA documents will be developed to quantitatively evaluate the environmental impacts within one of more specific logical sections or phases of the Program.

A key element of the program is to identify a dedicated route around the south end of Lake Michigan for the 14 daily Amtrak trains that traverse this very busy freight corridor. All currently available documents may be viewed on the FRA website at www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0658.

The **Midwest Regional Rail Planning Study** (MWRRP), which kicked off last March, recently completed the planned series of four day-long workshops and is moving into the final stages. Led by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) with the participation of a forty member **Stakeholder Planning Group**, the study seeks to develop a comprehensive vision for an integrated regional rail network and a governance model that could be used by the states to advance planning, procurement and operations issues for the Midwest passenger rail network over the next 40 years. Based on analyses of the information gathered from the workshops and other sources, a “high-level” draft plan will be developed over the next few months.

(STUDIES continues on page 2)



MARP Member Meeting

Saturday, January 27

10:30 am – Noon

Haslett Public Library

1590 Franklin Street, Haslett MI 48840

Map & Directions

Please join us for the first meeting of the New Year at which we traditionally have an update from MDOT on passenger train developments in Michigan and the Midwest. **Note the change to 10:30 am for the meeting start time.** Details on the website www.marp.org Or send email to marprail@yahoo.com.



(STUDIES continued from page 1)

The study employs a modeling tool called CONNECT with which a large number of analyses have been run exploring various service and routing combinations among the six core markets: Chicago, Detroit, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and St. Louis. Network planning lead Yoav Hagler noted, “The CONNECT modeling analysis is a very iterative process that has yielded some very clear answers, as well as some ambiguous results.” He continued with assurance that additional input from the stakeholder planning group is critical to clarifying these “less clear” outcomes. It is also useful to note that the CONNECT outputs are meant for relative comparison between corridors not as substitutes for detailed corridor and network planning.

The chart below defines the three service tiers envisioned for the network: core express, regional, and emerging. Distinctions are made among the corridors based on their relationship to the rest of the network. Corridors considered **integral to the network** significantly influence ridership on other corridors. Decisions about service on **network independent** corridors – those that do not add (or receive) significant ridership to/from connecting corridors – can be made independently of other network corridors. **Future corridors** could be included in the network in later years to provide additional internal connectivity within the network. **Small market** corridors currently have relatively low ridership but may have importance to local and regional markets.

Corridors	Top Speeds (mph)	Other Common Characteristics	Primary Markets Served	Minimum Reliability Target (On-time Performance)
Core Express	over 125	Frequent service; dedicated tracks, except in terminal areas; electric-powered	Serving major metropolitan centers	99%
Regional	90–125	Frequent service; dedicated and shared tracks; electric- and diesel-powered	Connecting mid-sized urban areas with each other or with larger metropolitan areas	95%
Emerging / Feeder	Up to 90	Shared tracks	Connecting mid-sized and smaller urban areas with each other or with larger metropolitan areas	85%

The strength of the approach being taken in this study is that it looks at corridors in relation to one another rather than as stand-alone routes connecting city pairs. The idea that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts is illustrated by the table below (this is slide 31 of the **workshop #4 presentations**).

Chicago-Kalamazoo-Detroit is one of four **pillar** corridors (slide 30) – Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison-Twin Cities, Chicago-Bloomington-St. Louis and Chicago-Indianapolis are the other three – all of which show a positive operation recovery ratio at the Regional and Core Express service levels in the context of the network. The overall network is projected to nearly cover

Benefits of Connectivity					
	Markets Served ¹	Intercity Ridership ²	Revenue	O&M Cost	Capital Cost ³
Sum of Standalone	280	32 M	\$1.5 B	\$2.5 B	\$137 B
Network	1340	43 M	\$2.2 B	\$2.5 B	\$131 B
Difference	379%	34%	47%	-3%	-4%

¹Total number of market pairs on network with maximum of one transfer.
²Year 2055 intercity demand.
³Nets out the capital cost associated with the existing network.

its costs, while the non-pillar corridors help improve the viability of the pillar corridors (slide 35).

Detailed analyses of market pairs are summarized on slides 34-56 of the recent **workshop #4 presentation**. The Chicago-Detroit corridor is outranked only by Chicago-Milwaukee among the top market pairs (slide 56). In a stand-alone context, there are 3.5 million corridor riders, while in the network context there are 7.0 million riders, half of which would transfer to a connecting corridor

(slide 50). Of particular interest is recognition of Michigan’s proposed Coast-to-Coast as an emerging corridor (slide 51), but one requiring connections to the Chicago-Detroit corridor to maximize ridership. In a standalone context, there are only 200,000 riders on the corridor. With connections in Kalamazoo and Ann Arbor, corridor ridership increases to 1.5 million. Detroit to Toronto garners considerable interest with 3.3 million riders, of which 1.7 million have an origin/destination in Canada but travel beyond Detroit to other markets on the American side of the network (slide 52). Further analysis is required to resolve questions raised by stakeholders (slides 58-67) and a fare sensitivity study may help in resolving questions of service tier levels (slides 68-82). **Go to MidwestRailPlan.org to view all documents and to submit comments.**

RENEW YOUR MARP MEMBERSHIP

Current members are asked to renew their membership at the beginning of each new year. However, if you are a new member who joined in the last quarter of 2017, your membership runs until the end of 2018. Visit the website to [renew online](#) or to [download a form](#) to mail in.

Beat the Winter Blahs

How are you coping with Michigan's wintery blast? Has your community planned some interesting activities to take the chill off and bring some cheer into your life?

A glance at the [Discover Kalamazoo](#) website reveals a wealth of interesting things to do in the next month and beyond. Two favorites are [Kalamazoo Beer Week](#) happening January 13-21 and the [Cooper's Glen Music Festival](#) which takes place indoors at the Kalamazoo Radisson on February 3. If your music tastes run to the classical, the [Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra](#) on February 24 will feature XV International Tchaikovsky Competition finalist, Pablo Ferrandez-Castro, in Haydn's Cello Concerto in C Major, along with Beethoven's 7th Symphony. Continuing until March 25 is a special exhibit at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts [Rhythmic Vitality: Six Principles of Chinese Painting](#). The [Kalamazoo Antique Auto Restorers Club](#) is presenting its 55th Annual Winter Auto Swap Meet which they assure "ain't no flea market!" On January 20, the Kalamazoo Public Library's [4th Annual Overdue Brew](#) program will sponsor a downtown bus tour highlighting the history of brewing in Kalamazoo. Kalamazoo has two outstanding historic inns located near downtown for those who may be thinking of a winter getaway. The [Henderson Castle Bed & Breakfast](#) offers a unique experience, while the nearby [Stuart Avenue Inn](#) anchors a neighborhood rich in the history of the city's early movers and shakers.

What about your town? Let us know what is happening in there during February and March and we'll publish it here in the next issue of ON TRACK. And, remember, if you take a train trip, we would like to hear about that, too.

Not only are there many interesting events taking place (mostly indoors) around Michigan, but [Amtrak's Winter Warm-Up Sale](#) is offering 20% off on trips in our state and throughout the Midwest now until the end of March. You could plan a day trip or make a weekend of it.

Kalamazoo's Amtrak Station is within walking distance of downtown events, shops, and eateries. And don't forget that you can use the [Amtrak mobile app](#) to access the [Lyft](#) app to request a ride. New users of [Lyft](#) rideshare service will receive \$5 off each of their first four Lyft rides by using the promo code **AMTRAKLYFT**.

MARP January Meeting

MARP's first meeting of 2018 will be held on Saturday, January 27, at the [Haslett Public Library](#). **Please note that the meeting will begin at 10:30 am, a half hour later than usual.** As has been our custom for the first meeting of the new year, Tim Hoeffner, MDOT Office of Rail, will update us on developments for passenger trains in Michigan and the Midwest, as well as what to look forward to in 2018.

MARP regrets that we are no longer able to obtain the favorable terms that allowed us to gather, in recent years, at the Grand Trunk Western Depot in Lansing to kick off our activities for the year ahead.

TRU Schedules Annual Meeting & Awards

Amid media reports of talks among the "Big Four" Southeast Michigan leaders about a transit tax on the fall ballot, [Transportation Riders United \(TRU\)](#) has announced its 2018 Annual Meeting and Awards Reception.

The event will take place on Wednesday, January 31, from 6 pm to 8 pm at [TechTown Detroit](#), 440 Burroughs St, Detroit MI 48202. Top leaders from the area's transit agencies have been invited to provide updates on progress in 2017 and plans for 2018. The event also features presentation of TRU's Regional Transit Awards.

The event is free and open all who care about the state of transit in Southeast Michigan. TRU will appreciate your **RSVP**. For those who can, a suggested donation of \$20 or more will help defray costs and support TRU's transit advocacy throughout the year.

Check detroittransit.org for additional details.

Renewed hope for regional transit?

[Bridge magazine](#) has reported that officials from Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Washtenaw counties, following discussions over several months, are close to agreement on changes they want in the [Regional Transit Authority](#) before they support a new transit ballot proposal. These changes will likely require legislative action. Renewed interest in improving transit in Southeast Michigan comes as the region vies to attract Amazon's second headquarters. The online giant has indicated that **good mass transit** is one of the things they expect in choosing a location.

When you shop at Amazon Smile, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers.

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View from elsewhere . . .

“To refer to the Gateway Program as a ‘local project’ is unrealistic as its breadth influences the entire country and our economy. The current rail tunnel is quickly deteriorating, and a new tunnel is needed to keep the entire Northeast Corridor up and running. The federal government must reconsider how it looks at this project in order to benefit the nation.”

–Jim Mathews, RPA (aka NARP) President, reacting to a **letter** from Federal Transit Agency deputy administrator K. Jane Williams that the Trump Administration will not move forward with the tunnel connecting New Jersey to Penn Station. Read more **here**.

“We are trying to do the best we can with available resources. Clearly, however, we need more capital dollars to continue to invest in our system and upgrade our assets.”

– Jim Derwinski Chicago Metra CEO and Executive Director, **quoted in a news release** that the agency has only 1/6 of the funding needed to achieve and maintain a state of good repair on its system.



Safety Enhancement at RR Crossing

139 miles of regional trails are now linked with the recent completion of the downtown portion of the **Kalamazoo Valley River Trail**. Metal fences have been installed at the rail crossings to alert bicyclists to the Grand Elk RR tracks near Bell’s Brewery as well as the Amtrak crossing near People’s Food Coop. Crowdfunding was used to raise about half of the funds needed to complete this east-west connection across the county. Nearly 250,000 bicyclists and pedestrians used the trail in 2016. Plans are advancing for a River-to-River Trail linking Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids.



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