



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 2016-2018

Steve Vagnozzi	Chair
Open	Vice-Chair
Stewart Bolinger	Treasurer
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John Langdon	Gov'l/Public Affairs Coordinator
Robert Tischbein	Membership Coordinator
Kay Chase	Communications Coordinator
Adam Tauno Williams	Meetings Coordinator
Robert Patterson	Detroit/Metro Region Chair
Mark Miller	Northern Region Chair
Charles Shong	West Region Chair
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The Michigan Passenger Editor and Webmaster, Larry Sobczak
ON TRACK Editor, Kay Chase

2018 MEETINGS

- 27 January** – Member Meeting
Okemos Public Library
- 20 February** – Executive Committee
- March** – Executive Committee
- 21 April** – Member Meeting
MSU Detroit Center
- May** – Executive Committee
- June** – Member Meeting
Location TBA
- 14 July** – Executive Committee
- August** – Michigan Rail Conference
- September** – Executive Committee
- October** – Member Meeting
Location TBA
- November** – Annual Meeting
- December** – Executive Committee

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

What Next for the RTA?

Speakers representing two of the most effective grassroots organizations working to bring Southeast Michigan’s public transportation system into the 21st century gave presentations to MARP members and guests assembled at the MSU Detroit Center on 21 April.

Megan Owens has led **Transit Riders United (TRU)** for more than a decade, mobilizing supporters and educating decision makers in the lead-up to the narrow defeat in 2016 of a ballot measure to fund a comprehensive transportation plan for the four-county region of Southeast Michigan. Mason Herson-Hord is responsible for organizing and training activities for the **Motor City Freedom Riders**, an organization founded four years ago to give a voice to the users of public transportation.

Both Owens and Herson-Hord expressed cautious optimism that **Connect Southeast Michigan**, the new plan recently put forward by Wayne and Washtenaw county executives will gain the support of their counterparts in Oakland and Macomb counties to be placed on the fall ballot. Failing that, there is support for a “Plan B” in which Wayne and Washtenaw counties would move forward with funding and implementing parts of the plan, importantly the commuter rail line connecting Detroit and Ann Arbor.

As stated in **Pursuing a Wayne-Washtenaw Transit Strategy**, a Motor City Freedom Riders position paper: “An interim two-county strategy will not solve all the region’s transit challenges. However, it would allow for significant improvements in transit . . . [and] also build political momentum for more comprehensive regional strategies in the future.”

If you reside in Southeast Michigan, you can help determine the final outlines of this plan. First, take a few minutes to **complete the online survey** to let the RTA know how you use transit and what improvements you would like to see. Then, attend one of the three remaining public listening sessions scheduled in the next few days. Two are scheduled on Wed May 2, 5:30-7:30pm: **Rochester Community House** 816 Ludlow Ave 48307; and **Ann Arbor Public Library** 343 S 5th Ave 48104. The final session is on Thu May 3, 5:30-7:30pm at **Mt. Clemens Public Library** 150 Cass Ave 48043.



MARP Member Meetings 2018

In addition to the Annual Meeting, which will take place in November, there will be two more general membership meetings in 2018. The next meeting will be held in June at a location to be determined. Details will be made available as plans are finalized and will be posted on the website www.marp.org. Feel free to contact members of the Executive Committee at any time. Send email to marprail@yahoo.com.

MARP Meeting in Detroit Features Update on Southeast Michigan Regional Transit

On a beautiful spring day (at last!), MARP members and guests gathered amidst a hum of activity at the MSU Detroit Center on Woodward Avenue in mid-town Detroit. Adam Tauno Williams, Meetings Coordinator, reported that the Executive Committee will meet at Durand Union Station in July. Plans are being made for a MARP-sponsored event in September during Grand Rapids' **Art Prize**. John Langdon, Governmental Affairs Coordinator, reported that the outlook is good for FY2018-19 funding for Michigan passenger train services. MDOT and Amtrak are partnering to provide special trains from Chicago and Hammond/Whiting on three May weekends for travel to the **Tulip Time Festival** in Holland and the **Senior PGA Championship Tournament** at Harbor Shores in Benton Harbor (see below).

Langdon reported that the feasibility study for the **Ann Arbor-Traverse City (A2TC) project** is about half completed. The legislature is considering making available \$3 million to upgrade the track between Kingsley and Traverse City to benefit current freight operations as well as to enable operation of excursion trains on the line. A study initiated by Patrick Waterman, Hudsonville city manager, envisions a *West Michigan Express* route employing bus rapid transit or commuter rail along the Grand Rapids to Holland corridor.

Chair Steve Vagnozzi reported a current bank balance of \$14,000. In 2017, expenses exceeded receipts by \$1750, highlighting the importance of MARP memberships to support the work of the organization. If you have questions or comments, please send email to marprail@yahoo.com.

Have You Renewed Your
MARP Membership?

NOW Would Be a Good Time

Pay **On-Line** with PayPal

or

Download a **Mail-In Form**



MIDWEST RAIL EVENTS

All Aboard Ohio Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 12, 2018

Makoy Center, Hilliard Ohio

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

MOVING FORWARD BY RAIL

Twin Cities & Upper Midwest Summit

Friday, June 1, 2018

Minneapolis Central Library

Co-sponsored by the

Rail Users' Network (RUN) & All Aboard Minnesota

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)



BOOK Tulip Train

BOOK PGA Train

Golf Tickets

**Tulip Time Visitor
Guide**

Extra Trains for Tulip Festival and Senior PGA Tournament

Effective Saturdays and Sundays, May 5 - 27, 2018

Sponsored by MDOT, Amtrak Midwest is providing extra service between the Chicago area and points in Michigan for the Tulip Festival in Holland and the Senior PGA Golf Tournament in St. Joseph.

Saturdays May 5, 12 and 26

- On May 5 and 12, *Pere Marquette* Trains 374 and 375 will operate an extra round trip between Chicago and Holland MI to offer service to and from the Tulip Festival.
- On May 26, *Pere Marquette* Trains 377 and 378 will operate an extra round trip between Chicago and St. Joseph MI for the Senior PGA Golf Tournament, stopping at Graham Road, which is walking distance to the golf course.
- These extra trains will make an additional stop at Hammond-Whiting IN on the above dates to accommodate passengers attending both events.

Sundays May 6, 13 and 27

Pere Marquette Train 371 will make an extra station stop at Hammond-Whiting to accommodate passengers wishing to stay overnight after the events and return to the Chicago area the next day.



Can the US rediscover rail to tackle climate change?

By Eva Grey

Excerpted from Railway-Technology

"Unlike highways, transit, and aviation, passenger rail lacks a source of predictable, dedicated funding."

In a commitment to drastic emissions reductions, 240 members worldwide, including the major railways of Europe, China, Russia, India and the U.S. committed to a 50 percent increase in rail's share of passenger transportation by 2030. The pledge is one of the top priority targets of the Low-Carbon Sustainable Rail Transport Challenge, launched by The International Union of Railways and participant member states in December 2015.

The shift from heavy-polluting means of transportation such as road and air is needed to cut energy-related CO2 emissions by more than half by 2050, and limit average global temperature increase to 2°C.

But while many countries can work towards shifting public perception to embrace transportation systems already in place, the case is different for the US, where access to public transportation is severely restricted.

The sheer lack of a well-connected railway network dissuades daily commuters from taking the train to their workplace, while those looking to travel to another city are best served by fairly affordable and frequent plane connections.

The US is currently the world leader in urban passenger transport emissions, with 670 megatons of CO2 produced annually and the anticipated surge in population could make this much worse. By 2045, America's population is expected to grow by 70 million, with 75% of people concentrated around mega-regions.

Without intervention, this increased demand is bound to put great pressure on the economy. According to a report by US Business Roundtable, subpar performance and the failure to invest in America's passenger rail infrastructure could cost \$570bn in 2020 and more than \$1tn by 2040.

But why have railways been relegated as a secondary means of transport by the American public and an unworthy financial pursuit by federal bodies while in other countries they are held up as the most promising means of sustainable mass transit?

For the American public, emulating the European model for rail transportation is not as straightforward as it may seem. With much bigger distances, and longer travelling times between metropolitan areas, intercity train travel is also rendered less practical by low population densities across

(CLIMATE continues in next column)

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many regions.

Alongside the geographical hurdles, a long history of under-investment and political animosity towards rail projects has also led to today's poor infrastructure and scarce connections.

Despite this, demand spurred by rapid population increase is already putting the system under strain. A new age of e-ticketing and improved broadband access on the railways is also driving popularity amongst the younger generation, with the numbers of rail passengers growing steadily year-on-year.

According to a survey organised by Global Strategy Group, 54% of millennials across ten major US cities said they would consider moving if another city had more and better transit options and 47% of them would give up their cars if their city had robust public transportation.

For now, America's relationship with rail is certainly improving. Over the past few decades, annual ridership has grown consistently and now intercity routes welcome 30 million passengers on a yearly basis, with a particular strong outlook for mega-regions such as the Northeast Corridor, the Chicago Hub area, and the West Coast.

Even amid shrinking petrol prices, people continue to use public transportation. Commuters are also slowly waking up to their own financial benefits of leaving their cars behind. Statistics compiled by the American Public Transportation Association in January 2016 show that commuters switching from private to public transportation can save an average of \$9,162 each year.

With the arrival of new lines, a steady stream of rail-focused funding and a shift in cultural and behavioural norms amongst passengers, it certainly seems that Americans could finally be persuaded to incorporate railway travel into their everyday lives, and in the process, become part of the solution to the global threat of climate change.

*The above article appeared in the 27 April 2016 issue of **Railway Technology**.*

"Switching to public transportation offers an immediate alternative for individuals seeking to reduce their energy use and carbon footprints. This action far exceeds the benefits of other household energy saving activities."

--Lawrence J.Hanley, [Huffington Post Blog](#)

View from elsewhere . . .

“Climate change is the defining issue of our times. Rail offers an important part of the solution because of its very low carbon intensity. Based on expert analysis of transport energy consumption and carbon emissions by the International Energy Agency, UIC has set three targets; improve efficiency, decarbonise power and achieve a more sustainable balance of transport modes.”

--Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, International Railway Association (UIC) and member of the UN High-level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport. Major railways of Europe, China, Russia, India and U.S. have signed on to the **Low-Carbon Sustainable Rail Transport Challenge** organized by UIC in 2015 to encourage rail energy efficiency and a modal shift to rail in order reduce total transport sector emissions.

“This plan is designed to serve riders where they are and where they need to go on a daily basis. It will expand economic opportunities for countless local residents who struggle to get to work, school, or even the doctor’s office. It will also take cars off the road, which will ease congestion, reduce emissions and increase productivity. It brings value to all four counties and is flexible enough to grow with mobility technology so we can adapt it moving forward.”

--Wayne County County Executive Warren Evans announcing **Connect Southeast Michigan**, a revamped transportation plan for the four-county region.



MSU Goes Greener

Not only do these solar panels provide shade for the cars beneath, they provide about 5-8% of the electricity used by the campus annually. MSU partnered with **Alterra Power Corp.** and **Inovateus Solar LLC** to install the panels over 4,500 parking spaces in Lot 89 at the corner of Mount Hope highway and Farm Lane, as well as in four other lots around campus. The MSU project is the largest solar carport project in North America and was awarded the Onsite Renewable Energy award by **Smart Energy Decisions**. Alterra will manage the project, which sells 100% of its power back to the University. Inovateus managed construction of the project and will also provide operation and maintenance services under a long-term contract. Inovateus, located in South Bend, has been recognized as one of the “Best Places to Work in Indiana” by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce.



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Congressional Switchboard
202-224-3121

Sen. Debbie Stabenow

Sen. Gary Peters

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