



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 2018-2020

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2019 MEETINGS

- 26 January** – Member Meeting
St. Johns
- 12 February** – Executive Committee
- 12 March** – Executive Committee
- 6 April** – Member Meeting
Detroit Metro Region Location TBA
- 14 May** – Executive Committee
- 22 June** – Member Meeting
Central Region Location TBA
- 9 July** – Executive Committee
- 7-9 August** – Michigan Rail Conference
Michigan State University
- 14 September** – 46th Annual Meeting
- 8 October** – Executive Committee
- 9 November** – Member Meeting
West Region Location TBA
- 10 December** – Executive Committee

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

Why Do Myths Persist?

Asking If A Route Is Profitable Misses the Point

Commentary by Jim Mathews, Rail Passengers President and CEO

Reprinted from Rail Passengers Association News

08 February 2019

Pepsi and Coke. Night and day. Good and Evil. All of baseball and the Yankees. Humans love binary choices. Science has proved time and again that our brains start subconsciously eliminating other considerations until we get to a simple yes or no option. And yet, science has also proved that this often leads us to make bad choices.

That's where we are in the false "debate" that continues over passenger rail in this country. Whether we're talking about Amtrak's Northeast Corridor (NEC) versus the National Network of long-distance trains, or passenger trains versus airliners, we're presented with a false choice, and it leads to bad policy. That's because the argument animating this idea never seems to go away: taxpayers should support the "profitable" travel modes and cut the "failing" travel modes.

That argument is an example of an unnecessary binary. We wind up in these kinds of debates because most of us have the very human tendency to oversimplify complex problems, as a way of coping with a world that is growing ever more complex every day. Reality is always more complicated than binaries.

Asking whether a particular route makes money misses the point. It's not about whether a route makes money, it's about **who** makes money from a particular route. Trains make money by acting as economic engines in the communities they serve. Normal, Ill., Meridian, Miss., Denver, Colo., and many other communities large and small have seen returns on their rail investment many times over – in jobs, in new retail, in mobility, in tourism and in real-estate development. That's where the "profit" goes: to the communities served and often to the tune of billions of dollars, even though it's not necessarily to Amtrak as the operator. **Just ask the communities that nearly lost service to bustitution on the route of the Southwest Chief.**

(**MYTHS** continues on page 2)



Photo by Steve Sobel

MARP Member Meetings in 2019

See page two for details of the April 6 meeting at the Dearborn Amtrak Station. Other meetings are planned for June 22 and November 9, along with the Annual Meeting on September 14. As the dates approach, details will be posted on the [website](http://www.marp.org). Executive Committee conference calls take place at 7 pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Email marprail@yahoo.com if you have issues for discussion or would like to join the conversation.

MAY 4 and MAY 11, 2019
AMTRAK MIDWESTSM TRAINS FOR TULIP
TIME, SPONSORED BY MDOT



Tulip Time Train Returns

MDOT and Amtrak have announced an extra train on two Saturdays during the **Tulip Time Festival** to enable same-day visits to this outstanding festival in Holland MI.

On May 4 and May 11, **Train 374** will depart from Chicago at 7:05 a.m., Hammond-Whiting IN, at 7:29 a.m. (both times Central), St. Joseph at 10:01 a.m., Bangor at 10:37 a.m., and arrive in Holland at 11:28 a.m. (all Michigan times Eastern). **Train 375** leaves Holland at 5:50 p.m., Bangor at 6:33 p.m., St. Joseph at 7:11 p.m., Hammond-Whiting at 7:51 p.m. and arrives in Chicago at 8:24 p.m. **BOOK NOW** for best pricing.

On **Train 374**, representatives from the Holland Area Visitors Bureau will assist with expert local information. Free parking is available at the Hammond-Whiting station.

The *Pere Marquette* also provides daily service between Chicago and Holland for travel during the nine-day festival, and all *Pere Marquette* trains will stop at Hammond-Whiting on May 4 & 5 and May 11 & 12.

For complete festival information, visit
www.tuliptime.com

MARP Membership Meeting at Dearborn Amtrak Station on Saturday, April 6, 10am-Noon MAP & Directions

MARP members and friends will have a unique opportunity to learn about **Michigan Mobility 2045** when we meet in Dearborn on April 6.

Michigan Mobility 2045 is the MDOT program that will set out a vision and establish priorities to guide development of our transportation network over the next three decades. The Dearborn meeting is a unique opportunity for MARP to be in on the ground floor in providing input to help shape the plan's final form.

Brad Sharlow, MDOT's project manager for **Michigan Mobility 2045**, will explain the process and goals of a new approach that will roll planning for all movement of people and goods into a single document. The resulting plan, as envisioned by MDOT, "will be a multi-modal effort that integrates all transportation modes, operators, and users." Tim Hoeffner, Office of Rail Director, has indicated he plans to attend. There will be ample time for Q&A and discussion.

MARP welcomes the participation of members of the Dearborn Area League of Women Voters, Healthy Dearborn, and Warriors on Wheels, all of whom have helped to promote this meeting.

The John D. Dingell Transit Center (Amtrak Station) is located at 21201 Michigan Ave, Dearborn MI 48124. There are bike racks and ample, free parking. It is served by SMART **Route 140** and **Route 250**, as well as the **FAST Michigan Route 261**.

If you are unable to attend, please take a few minutes to do the interactive survey at **MichiganMobility2045.metroquest.com**.

(MYTHS continued from page 1)

And that's okay. We taxpayers support Amtrak in part because we want these towns to thrive and their citizens to have access to jobs and mobility. We all need the economy to grow and be strong. We all have an interest in preventing towns in America's heartland from decaying and drying up – because paying for the consequences is often much more expensive than just paying to keep them linked to the rest of the country. If we have the foresight to invest in middle America, the whole nation would reap the benefits.

The National Network does for rural America what the so-called "Acela Corridor" does for the East Coast. Few passengers take the Acela from Washington, DC, to Boston; instead, many, many more ride between DC and New York, or Philadelphia and NY, or New York and Boston. Long-distance trains do the exact same thing. The Empire Builder

doesn't exist solely to take people from Seattle to Chicago. Overwhelmingly, passengers ride between intermediate stations. Even more important, for some rural, elderly and disabled passengers **it's the only plausible or affordable choice**.

Let's consider Fargo to Minneapolis, a \$37 Amtrak coach fare compared with a \$403 flight. Or how about Cut Bank, Montana, to Spokane? Yes, it's a three-hour flight versus an eight-hour train ride, but that doesn't include the 88-mile drive from Cut Bank to Glacier's airport. And the fares are not even close: \$64 for Amtrak, \$252 to drive and then fly. And that's assuming Grandma can even drive in the snowy dark winter.

These kinds of trips are why we have a National Network, for the same reason we have a Northeast Corridor. Part of Amtrak's congressionally chartered mission is to help connect America. And that means connecting **ALL** of America.

Now Arriving!

2019 Membership Dues Are Being Accepted

PAY ON-LINE with a credit card

Or download a mail-in form [HERE](#)

Rail Passengers Travel Review Off to a Good Start

With some 400 reviews submitted in its first seven weeks in operation, the [Rail Passengers Travel Review](#) appears headed for success. Launched in early February on the [Rail Passengers Association](#) website, the Travel Review is an effort to improve the travel experience for train passengers everywhere by providing valuable feedback to Amtrak and other interested passenger rail providers and transportation advocates.

The online survey can be accessed from your cell phone, takes less than 10 minutes to complete, and must be completed in one sitting at the end of your trip. If you travel more than one route to reach your destination, a separate [Travel Review](#) should be completed for each segment of the trip.

Carolyn Cokley, RPA Director of Customer Programs, asks that all members promote the Travel Review to both members and non-members who want to make their positive or negative Amtrak travel experiences known.

Let's keep Carolyn busy analyzing and summarizing the results.

Encourage your fellow passengers to visit the website

www.railpassengers.org/TravelReview



RAIL PASSENGERS
ASSOCIATION

Join the Rail Passengers Association
(formerly National Association of Railroad Passengers)

. . . You'll receive breaking rail news, travel alerts, valuable discounts from Amtrak and other travel-related companies, plus many other benefits!

Click Here To Learn More

"Putting butts in seats has occupied most of my career..."



In this 2018 photo from Trains Newswire, Joe Boardman, in his retirement, is seen rallying with supporters along the route of the Southwest Chief, then under threat of abandonment.

Joe Boardman's Death Shocks and Saddens Many

Rail advocates and passengers across the country have lost a true champion with the recent death of Joe Boardman. Boardman suffered a stroke while vacationing in Florida with his family and died on March 7. He was 70 years old.

Boardman served as Amtrak President and CEO from 2008-2016 and introduced innovations that are now taken for granted—and much appreciated: WiFi, electrical outlets for plugging in our devices, and electronic ticketing.

Boardman did not let retirement stand in the way of continuing to advocate for trains and the people who depend on them for basic transportation. This was particularly evident in his activism when communities along the *Southwest Chief* route in Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico were facing loss of their train service.

Growing up on a farm in New York State, he realized early in life the importance of buses and trains in connecting rural communities to each other and the wider world. As a student at Cornell University, he was employed as a bus driver. He led the New York State Transportation Commission for many years before becoming head of the Federal Railroad Administration. Truly a career—as he is reported to have said—of “putting butts in seats”.

RPA President and CEO Jim Mathews lauded Boardman as both a “passionate defender” of the National Network—even more so after his retirement—and a “passionate believer” in Amtrak, adding, “Joe Boardman believed in his bones that all Americans should have the ability to choose to travel by train.”

RENEW YOUR MARP MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

View from elsewhere . . .

"Congresswoman Slaughter was an ardent and vocal long-time supporter of passenger rail in Upstate New York and across the country. She was instrumental in advancing the construction of a new Amtrak passenger station for her hometown of Rochester. The beautiful new facility, which opened last fall, is a testament to her vision for a modern and passenger-focused rail network."

--Bruce Becker, Rail Passengers Association Vice-President of Operations and formerly President of the Empire State Passengers Association

[Amtrak is requesting] "Public policy that supports growth, expansion, and modernization of the national rail network . . . We need to modernize and expand to increase ridership and serve more customers, including underserved communities and major city pairs between 400 miles or less, and increase frequencies and/or improve schedules for existing routes."

--Statement found in Amtrak's **Fiscal Year 2020 Grant Request**. See commentary by Rail Passengers Association in the **29 March Hotline #1110**.



Rochester Station Named in Honor of Rep. Louise M. Slaughter

Described by her chief of staff as "a force of nature", Rep. Slaughter was a champion for passenger rail in her 16 terms in Congress, founding the Bicameral High Speed and Intercity Rail Caucus in 2011. In a recent ceremony, the station, opened in October 2017, was formally named in her honor on the anniversary of her death last year as a result of a fall in her home. To read more of her remarkable career as a crusader for equity in health policy, women's issues, and funding for arts and humanities, check out the **New York Times obituary**.



Butterflies are Blooming at Meijer Gardens

With Amtrak Thruway Service, you can take a train to Grand Rapids from places along any of Michigan's three passenger train routes.

Plan your trip at ExperienceGR.com

Book your tickets at amtrak.com



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