



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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2020 MEETINGS

15 January – Executive Committee

22 February – Member Meeting
Dearborn Amtrak Station

14 March – Member Meeting
TechTown Detroit

15 April – Executive Committee

09 May – Kalamazoo
Location TBA

20 June – Member Meeting
Owosso Steam RR Institute

18 July – Executive Committee
Durand Union Station

12 September – 47th Annual Meeting
Location TBA

17 October – Member Meeting
1st Congregational Church, Jackson

12 December – Executive Committee
Location TBA

Visit www.marp.org

Email marprail@yahoo.com

Midwest States Celebrate Progress Plan for the Future

The annual meeting of the **Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission** (MIPRC) took place October 21-23, 2019, in Washington, D.C. Combining the fall meeting—which usually takes place somewhere in the Midwest—with the Commissioner’s annual visit to the Hill was undertaken as a way “to amplify the region’s voice as Congress begins discussing renewal of the law that sets federal policy and authorizes spending on surface transportation”—the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation [FAST] Act of 2015 which expires in 2020.

In addition to a dozen **Commissioners**, the meeting was attended by a number of **Partners** and sponsors, as well as members of Minnesota and Wisconsin passenger rail advocacy groups. Thanks to a generous donation from a member, MARP enjoyed a visual presence on printed meeting materials as a sponsoring organization.

Laura Kliewer, MIPRC Director, opened the proceedings with a brief review of the year’s activities. In preparation for *Fast Act* renewal in 2020, a set of policy and funding principles to guide MIPRC lobbying efforts has been developed. (Look for more about *Fast Act* renewal in the February issue.)

The heart of the meeting is always the presentation of **updates from each of the nine states** that comprise the Commission. Ill-DOT led off with news of FRA funding for a study of congestion at Chicago Union Station and IL-DOT’s commitment to do what it can to help. Gov. Pritzker’s **Rebuild Illinois** program includes \$1B for passenger rail over the next six years and will reinstate the Chicago-Rockford passenger rail project (hoping to break ground in 2020) as well as provide \$225 million for new Chicago-Quad Cities service. Completion of the Springfield track realignment by 2025 is anticipated.

IN-DOT would like to reinstate *Hoosier State* service, which had seen increases in ridership and revenue before its discontinuance, but recognizes it will take millions to upgrade the track so that travel time can

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MARP Member Meeting

22 February 2020

10:00 AM - Noon

John D. Dingell Transit Center
21201 Michigan Ave, Dearborn MI

MAP & Directions

Come hear about “The Windsor Connector”, a proposal to facilitate travel by train to Toronto by providing a bus service connecting passengers from Ann Arbor, Dearborn and Detroit to the VIA Rail station in Windsor. Presented by Yuri O. Popov. Questions? Send email to marprail@yahoo.com.

Now Arriving!

2020 Membership Dues Are Being Accepted

PAY ON-LINE with a credit card

You may use PayPal as a Guest

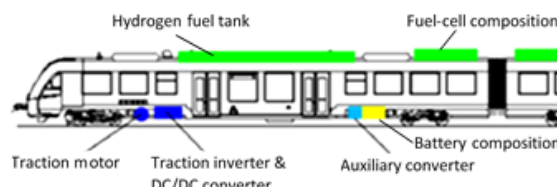
It is not necessary to register with a password

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

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carrier” and must be produced from something else. About 95% of U.S. production of hydrogen is currently from natural gas, but there are other feedstocks. Even with the use of natural gas to produce the hydrogen, there is a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in rail applications. Hydrogen, already used in many applications, is safe when handled properly. It is an odorless, colorless gas which dissipates rapidly into the air when released. It must be stored under pressure, thus requires very strong tanks.

The world’s first hydrogen fuel-cell passenger train, **Alstom's Coradia iLint** was launched in northern Germany in September 2018.



For a deeper dive into the subject, watch the **2017 William H. Hay Seminar** given by Dr. Hoffrichter for the NURail Center at the University of Illinois-Urbana,. This is an extended version of the talk given to MARP.

You may be interested in reading Hoffrichter’s **doctoral thesis on hydrogen as an energy carrier for railway traction**.

You Can Be a Volunteer Station Host

The East Lansing train station is looking for friendly people to join the ranks of the helpful cadre of volunteers who are greeting passengers, answering their questions and helping them board the trains quickly and efficiently. If interested, click here for **East Lansing Volunteer Station Host Application**.



The State of Transit

TRU's 20th Anniversary Annual Meeting
Thursday, January 30, 5:30 – 8:00pm
TechTown Detroit, 440 Burroughs Street

Transit Riders United (TRU) invites you to join in a lively discussion of the future of transit with new Oakland County Executive David Coulter and Wayne County Executive Warren Evans.

Everyone is welcome, so bring friends!
RSVP online today!

CORRECTION: The date of the February member meeting was incorrectly stated in the previous issue. The meeting will be held on 22 February from 10-Noon at the John D. Dingell Transit Center (Amtrak station) in Dearborn.

The Future is Here Hydrogen Moves Trains



Andreas Hoffrichter was a member of the University of Birmingham team that demonstrated the feasibility of hydrogen fuel cell technology to power a train, albeit a small one.

On November 16, 2019, two dozen MARP members and friends gathered in Kalamazoo to hear Dr. Andreas Hoffrichter, Director, Rail Education and Research at MSU, make the case for alternatives to the diesel-electric engines that move most trains in the U.S.

Transportation is responsible for about a third of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the U.S. and uses 90% of all fuel consumed, virtually all of it carbon-based. Although trains are a less energy intensive way to move people and goods than most other forms of motorized transport, they achieve only about 40% efficiency.

There are several factors driving the search for alternatives to carbon-based fuels: the need to improve air quality by reducing smog-forming NOx emissions; harmful effects of the particulate matter resulting from burning fossil fuels; volatility in fuel prices with instability in world markets; proposed Tier 5 emission regulations requiring zero emissions in designated areas.

Electrification of rail transport has the potential to reduce harmful GHG emissions, particularly when electricity is produced by renewable sources, but is expensive. Alternatives to wayside power supply (putting wires underground, converting to induction motors or linear motors) are even more expensive and are useful for small applications only.

On board power supply options involve use of energy storage devices (flywheel batteries, super capacitors) or use of alternative fuels/energy carriers (natural gas, bio-diesel, ethanol, hydrogen). Of those, hydrogen, the earth’s most abundant element, holds promise.

Hydrogen is an “energy carrier” and must be produced from something else. About 95% of U.S. production of hydrogen is currently from natural gas, but there are other feedstocks. Even with the use of natural gas to produce the hydrogen, there is a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in rail applications. Hydrogen, already used in many applications, is safe when handled properly. It is an odorless, colorless gas which dissipates rapidly into the air when released. It must be stored under pressure, thus requires very strong tanks.

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Stadler USA will build the first U.S. train powered by hydrogen. The FLIRT H2 train-sets will serve the San Bernardino Transportation Authority’s Redlands Passenger Rail Project beginning in 2024.

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be reduced and reliability enhanced. The state sees increased frequency as key to success. The state is in the process of developing its Long-Range Transportation Plan, focusing on a “forward facing” approach that integrates all modes, similar to what Michigan is doing with its **Michigan Mobility 2045** plan.

Kansas DOT has contributed \$1 million as it continues to work with communities along the route of the *Southwest Chief* to improve the infrastructure. The efforts have netted three TIGER grants, as well as a CRISI grant for PTC work between Dodge City KS and Las Animas CO. The state continues work to extend the *Heartland Flyer* north to Newton KS where it would connect with the *Chief*. The FRA is currently reassessing the estimated cost, reflecting opinions that the original \$133 million estimate was too high. It is anticipated that the \$75 million annual operating costs would be shared among Kansas, Texas and Colorado.

Michigan’s report was given by Sen. Roger Victory (R-Hudsonville). He stepped in for Tim Hoeffner, Director Office of Rail, who had suffered a minor bicycling mishap and had doctor’s orders not to travel. The power point presentation included information that Michigan has secured and matched a \$23.4 million federal grant to replace two railroad bridges in Jackson and complete track upgrades on either side of Jackson. Sen. Victory said that MDOT is “exploring the possibility of returning train service to the Michigan Central station in Detroit” and a feasibility study is underway funded by the Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority. Sen. Victory was surprised when he came to the slide mentioning the recently completed study of **Toledo to Detroit Metro Airport/Detroit/Ann Arbor passenger rail service**, commenting he “hadn’t been aware of it.” PTC implementation is finishing up and approvals for increased speeds are expected beginning with 110 mph between Kalamazoo and Battle Creek in Q2 of 2020 and extending to Jackson at the conclusion of trackwork in the 4th quarter of 2020, then between Ypsilanti and Townline in 2022, and between Jackson & Ypsilanti when curve modifications are completed on this section. The new Siemens coaches are expected to run on all Michigan services by 2022. The presentation concluded with mention of interest in Detroit to Toronto service, citing a number of structural, operational and financing challenges, while suggesting bus service “between the rail stations” could be an interim step.

A disappointment for all in attendance was the report from Peter Schwartz, FRA project manager, that the **Midwest Regional Rail Planning Study** is not yet complete. An extra stakeholder group meeting will take place in February with release of the final report anticipated in August 2020.

Kay Chase, MARP Communications Coordinator, attended the meeting as a representative of MARP.

What is MIPRC?

The **Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission** (MIPRC) brings together state leaders from across the region to advocate for passenger rail improvements. Formed by compact agreement in 2000, MIPRC’s current members are Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota and Wisconsin.

The main purposes of the compact are to:

- Promote both current improvements and long-range plans for intercity passenger rail service in the Midwest.
- Coordinate interaction among Midwestern state officials, and between the public and private sector at all levels (federal, state and local).
- Support current state efforts being conducted through state DOTs.

MIPRC Initiatives laid the groundwork that allowed the Midwest states to move forward with implementation of projects when significant funding became available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIAA).

- Between FFY 2009 and FFY 2011, Congress, for the first time, appropriated significant funding to states for passenger rail capital improvements and planning—more than \$10 billion in total
- Under the High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) program, the Midwest was awarded \$2.5 billion
- With a solid plan and 25% of the nationwide funding, the Midwest was able to begin implementation of its network plan beyond what had been possible for decades

Implementation continues through state planning and funding, and the continuation of federal funding made available through the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

Building on the two-decade long effort, MIPRC is now working with the Federal Railroad Administration on a **40-year vision for the region**.

VISIT THE WEBSITE

Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRII)

30 % of energy consumed in U.S. is used by transportation

92 % of energy consumed by transportation is petroleum-based

View from elsewhere . . .

Amtrak's fundamental problem today [is] the opposition of its own management to continuing its role as a truly national carrier. Richard Anderson, Amtrak's President, completely fails to understand the multiple markets his long distance trains serve and the vital role they play at connecting points like Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle, New Orleans, New York and Washington, DC in feeding connecting riders into its short-distance corridor services. This is particularly ironic coming from a former Delta Airlines CEO, as those transfer points--especially Chicago--are Amtrak's hub and spoke centers, precisely playing the role that Chicago O'Hare does for the airlines. It is also useful to note that it was Anderson's own predecessor as Amtrak President, Wick Moorman, who most recently revealed in Congressional testimony the fact that the Amtrak [long distance] trains fully cover their day to day costs from the fare box--with their Amtrak claimed losses reflecting overhead shifted primarily from the Northeast Corridor and from Amtrak's bloated central office ranks..."

--Comment by Carl Fowler, VC Rail Passengers Association, after viewing [Make America's Trains Great Again](#), a video by Tony Trifiletti focused on the current state of the Amtrak national network. Trifiletti headed the Western Interstate Trains Coalition until its recent dissolution



A Clever Twist on Public Transit

This billboard put up by the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority surely gets a second glance from the driver trying to find a parking space in the city's congested downtown. The role of public transportation, be it local transit or intercity buses and trains, is often not recognized as one of the most eco-friendly and cost-effective ways to relieve congestion on city streets or to lessen the need to spend billions adding lanes to the nation's highway system (and billions more repairing them).

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