USDOT Tier 1 University Transportation Center Final Report

NURail Project: NURail2012-MTU-E05

Michigan Rail Conference

By

Pasi Lautala, Ph.D., P.E.

Pamela Hannon

David Nelson

Michigan Technological University

Rail Transportation Program

1400 Townsend Drive

Houghton, MI 49931

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DISCLAIMER

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USDOT Tier 1 University Transportation Center Final Report

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Project: NURail2012-MTU-E05 Final Report December 11, 2015

Title

Michigan Rail Conference

Introduction

The 1st Michigan Rail Conference was conducted on August 27th, 2013, in collaboration between Michigan Technological University (Michigan Tech), the National University Rail Center (NURail), and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The objective was to promote railroad transportation, railroad education, and the role of rail transportation in economic development in the state of Michigan. Funding was provided through NURail grant funds, MDOT matching funds and revenues from conference registrations. Michigan Tech was tasked to lead the conference organization.

The conference was co-chaired by Dr. Pasi Lautala from Michigan Tech and Nikkie Johnson from MDOT. Dr. Lautala is an Assistant Professor and the Director of the Rail Transportation Program (RTP) at Michigan Tech and Ms. Johnson is the Local Crossing and Economic Development Project Manager at the Office of Rail within the Michigan Department of Transportation. The Chairs were responsible for guiding the organization team in all aspects of the conference, such as speaker and space arrangements, marketing aspects, registrations, etc. Chairs were supported by personnel at Michigan Tech and MDOT.

The final report attached in Appendix 1 includes only the inaugural conference in 2013, but Michigan Tech has continued to lead the annual organization of the Michigan Rail conference also in 2014 (Macomb County Community College in Detroit metropolitan area), and in 2015 in

(Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids). Planning for 2016 conference in Marquette is under way.

Results

The inaugural conference was conducted in a single day, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. and was also webcast on the internet to provide real-time viewing of the conference for those who wanted to attend but were unable to be at the conference site. 113 in-person attendees and 29 speakers participated in the conference in Lansing and 33 people participated through live webcast. In addition, Michigan Tech had a team of six people to handle the coordination at site and two IT professionals to handle the live web broadcast.

The Michigan Rail Conference had an overall positive review from the attendees, which included local, state and federal government officials, development groups, consultant groups, railroad company officials and various public/private groups with interests in rail. The opinions and views of the rail conference were collected via post-conference survey sheets. The one page surveys were distributed at the end of the conference to all the attendees and speakers and most were returned upon their exit from the conference center. Eighty percent of the participants (90 of 113), excluding speakers and organizers, completed the survey. The questions in the survey covered a broad range of concepts, including top interests, conference highlights, and suggestions for improvements in future rail conferences. The survey also asked what interest and stake the attendee had in rail development in Michigan and what persuaded them to attend the conference.

The 2014 and 2015 conferences have continued the success of the inaugural conference in 2013 with approximately 150 total participants each year. Since the dedicated funding from NURail and matching MDOT funds only covered 2013, some additional steps have been taken to secure the conference finances, especially inclusion of industry sponsorship. MDOT has also continued its generous support to the conference. From content perspective, the main adjustment has been increasing the size of the volunteer content organizing committee and addition of a half day of field visits, which have extended the total conference duration to 1.5 days.

Recommendations

Despite the fact that the timeline for inaugural conference organization was extremely tight, the 1st Michigan Rail Conference was considered a success. The following list provides key lessons learned from the first conference and suggestions for the future direction of the conference organization and content. Many of these suggestions have been incorporated in the 2014 and 2015 conferences.

- **Timeline:** Schedule for organizing the first conference was extremely tight, as the contract wasn't finalized until early 2013, leaving under nine months from beginning to the end. It's recommended that the conference task schedule is developed and

leadership is selected before the end of the year and start active development immediately in January, 2014. The Project Schedule (Appendix A) works as a good starting point for coordinating the activities. Special attention should be paid for getting the location, and some key speakers confirmed much earlier, so proper marketing can start latest in spring.

- **Timing and Duration:** Early fall is an ideal time for the conference from academic perspective, as classes haven't started yet. Several respondents said an extended conference would be interesting if it was hosted near or incorporated a field visit to an active railroad project site. There was also interest for more time allowed for networking. For 2014, it is recommended that conference is extended to include a social hour and following dinner to allow for more networking opportunities. It is also recommended that an optional half day field visit is included for the following day.
- **Budget and Funding:** The conference fee was stated to be reasonably priced by the respondents and it was conservative to cover the direct meal and refreshment costs. It is expected that 2014 conference could be organized close to similar budget, although one additional IT staff would be needed to live webcasts. Since there is currently no grant to cover the expenses of 2014 conference, alternative funding mechanism should be considered. With current level of participation and extent of conference (keeping speaker registration free), the fee would have to be placed around $150. This level of increase didn't seem to be a major concern for participants. A separate fee would be included to cover the cost of field visit for those interested and a low fee, perhaps $25-50) could be assessed to those participating in the conference via web. If event was expanded to cover social hour and dinner, registration fee would have to be increased accordingly. Unless grant funding can be secured to cover the conference expenses, registration fees can be replaced / supplemented via corporate sponsorship. Several companies expressed interest for sponsoring the conference. This could be either as sponsorship to conference program, or providing booths / tables at the conference for corporate marketing. This would be especially suitable, if conference is expanded to include social hour / dinner.
- **Conference fee for Public Officials:** A specific concern was the fee charged from staff members of public officials. Per guidance from MDOT, two free registrations were offered to staff members from house and senate (one for each), but these were not used. All others were recommended to participate via live web conference. Decision needs to be made earlier, how registration for public officials and staff members is handled.
- **Location:** Lansing was the top choice for location selecting for a future Michigan railroad conference in 2014. However, in the future, a change in location could be based on a shift in rail industry activity within the state and would allow for field visits in the vicinity of conference site. It is essential that the selected locations offer economical hosting to keep the conference fees reasonable.

- **Site:** Lansing Community College did excellent job hosting the conference, but few concerns also arose during the organization. Better layout of room as IT had different layout expectations which hindered webcast and lack of cell phone reception in the room were the main concerns.
- **Schedule:** Schedule for 2013 conference was extremely tight. Especially, more time as needed between breakout sessions (breakdown to breakout) and there needs to be better control on durations of presentations. If conference was expanded to dinner, a keynote speech could be moved to dinner, allowing the lunch to be used for networking.
- **Registration:** There were lots of inquiries for registration on day before conference. There needs to be more clear structure for cut off dates for registration with either no late registrations, or significant increase in conference fee. Late registrations require change in banquet food numbers, late fee for food added, sending last minute invoices for registration fees, and tables at site increased). There should also be policy for cancellations. No refunds will be extended after a specific date.
- **Format and Content:** While there were some suggestions for separating passenger and freight conference to provide relief to schedule, it is recommended that conference is maintained as a single event, at least for 2014. The level of participation doesn't warrant separating the two conferences. With proper and timely marketing (and potentially higher fees), it should be tested how many participants can be attracted to 2014 conference. Decisions for future conferences can be made after that. Conference topics / theme should be revisited by the content committee, but overall the content was well received and appropriate. Since panel discussion was such success, a separate panel discussion for passenger and freight could be considered in the next conference. Panel discussion in other topics, such as funding and policy could also be considered.

Publications/Examples

Conference program for the 1st Annual Michigan Rail Conference, as well as the final report submitted to MDOT (including the results of post-conference survey) are included in the appendix of this report.

Contacts

Pasi Lautala, Ph.D., P.E.
Michigan Technological University
Rail Transportation Program
1400 Townsend Drive
Houghton, MI 49931
ptlautal@mtu.edu

NURail Center
217-244-4444
nurail@illinois.edu
http://www.nurailcenter.org/

Appendix 1. 2013 Conference Program and Final Report to MDOT

Rail Transportation Program

Michigan Tech Transportation Institute • Michigan Technological University

Final Report to Michigan DOT

Michigan Rail Conference
August 27, 2013

Prepared by:

Pasi Lautala, Ph.D., P.E.
Jessica Juntunen
Pamela Hannon
David Nelson
Sean Pengelly

October 24, 2013

Michigan Tech

Project Background

The 1st Michigan Rail Conference was conducted on August 27th, 2013, in collaboration between Michigan Technological University (Michigan Tech), the National University Rail Center (NURail), and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The objective was to promote railroad transportation, railroad education, and the role of rail transportation in economic development in the state of Michigan. Funding was provided through MDOT and NURail grant funds and revenues from conference registrations. Michigan Tech was tasked to lead the conference organization. The specific tasks included:

- Lead the conference coordination effort in close collaboration with MDOT.
- Collaborate with MDOT in developing the program and soliciting speakers for the conference.
- Set up web conferencing capabilities on selected sessions, as agreed upon with MDOT.
- Provide staffing for conference registration and for two parallel sessions.

Conference Co-Chairs

The conference was co-chaired by Dr. Pasi Lautala from Michigan Tech and Nikkie Johnson from MDOT. Dr. Lautala is an Assistant Professor and the Director of the Rail Transportation Program (RTP) at Michigan Tech and Ms. Johnson is the Local Crossing and Economic Development Project Manager at the Office of Rail within the Michigan Department of Transportation. The Chairs were responsible for guiding the organization team in all aspects of the conference, such as speaker and space arrangements, marketing aspects, registrations, etc. Chairs were supported by personnel at Michigan Tech and MDOT. The project coordination tasks and schedule developed to assist in the organization are presented in Appendix A.

Conference Web Site

The official Michigan Rail Conference website was created to allow users to obtain directions and registration details for the conference, to submit data via a survey of pre-conference preferences for topics and format, and to view the program for the conference. After the conference, instructions for accessing video recordings of presentations from the conference, as well as links to photos of the event were also included (Figure 1). The Michigan Rail Conference site can be accessed at http://www.rail.mtu.edu/mi-rail-conf/.

Figure 1. Michigan Rail Conference Web Site

Content Development

The development of content relied on two activities, establishment of a Content Selection Committee and the implementation of an **online pre-conference survey**. The survey was developed and distributed to the stakeholders/prospective attendees of the conference via the conference web site. The objective was to help the content selection committee to gauge the amount of interest in either passenger or freight rail transportation and rank specific topics that received most interest. 47 stakeholders completed the survey. The survey and summary of survey results are included in Appendix B.

The Content Selection Committee was established from volunteer industry experts to lead the selection of topics from the pre-conference survey and to recruit speakers to the conference. The committee also assisted in marketing the conference and in collecting presentations and biographical information from the speakers. The Conference Content Committee consisted of:

- Jon Cool - Michigan Railroads Association

- Ron DeCook - DeCook Governmental Policy & Strategies
- Tim Fischer - Michigan Environmental Council
- Dennis Neilson - Michigan State University
- Nikkie Johnson - MDOT (Co-Chair)
- Pasi Lautala - MTU (Co-Chair)

Conference Program and Attendance

The conference was conducted in a single day, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. The complete program schedule with all speakers is included in Appendix C. The Conference was also webcast on the internet to provide real-time viewing of the conference for those who wanted to attend but were unable to be at the conference site. 113 in-person attendees, 33 real-time webcast attendees, and 29 speakers joined the Lansing conference. In addition, Michigan Tech had a team of six people to handle the coordination at site and two IT professionals to handle the live web broadcast.

The content of the rail conference included presentations and speakers representing all aspects of the railroad industry, including government agencies, educational institutions, railroad companies, railroad shippers/receivers and various rail project groups. The morning session included plenary presentations on the state of rail in Michigan, safety update by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and progress update from OneRail Coalition. Also included in the first half of the conference was a panel discussion on the impact of rail transportation on economic development which allowed for interaction, as a whole, between the attendees and the panel speakers.

During the afternoon, the program was divided between passenger rail and freight rail sessions. This format of content was intended to allow for industry component-specific attendees to view presentations that had the most relevance to their own interests as well as interact with individuals within the same interest group. For attendees with interests in topics pertaining to passenger and freight, the speaker's presentations were timed to allow for the attendees to shift from section to section in order to view various presentations.

Webcasting the conference enabled the recording of all presentations for later viewing by participants and other stakeholders. These recordings were uploaded and stored securely at the High Speed Rail Learning System (HSRLS) web portal that Michigan Tech has been developing under a grant from FRA. The HSRLS allows users to register for free and view all segments of the rail conference. To access the content, a user only needs to create a login and register for the conference recordings. The High Speed Rail Learning System can be accessed at: http://www.rail-learning.mtu.edu/ (Figure 2). As of October 20th, 2013, 22 individuals had signed up to view the presentations.

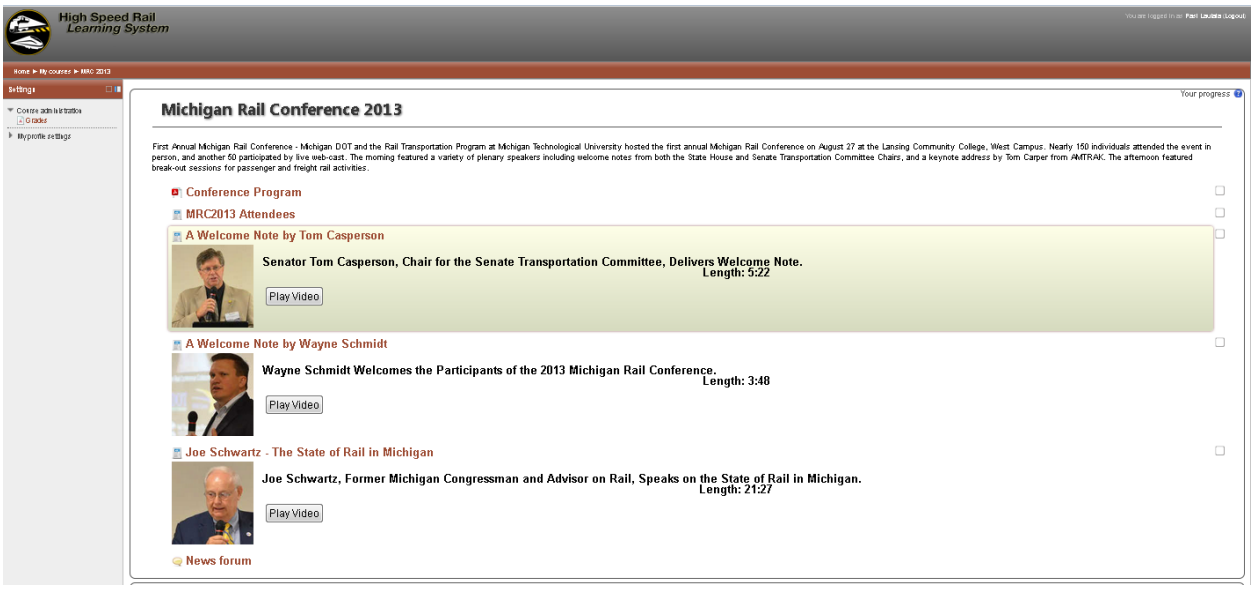

Figure 2. Michigan Rail Conference Presentations at HSRLS

Conference Finances

As previously mentioned, the conference was made possible through funding from NURail Center Grant and project funds from MDOT. The NURail grant covered Dr. Lautala's time and the MDOT grant was used to cover the expenses by the Michigan Tech staff and students, travel, supplies and services and other direct expenses. The conference was conducted within the original conference budget of $16,772.

Meals, refreshments, and travel expenses for selected speakers were covered through a $50 conference fee charged for all participants (excluding speakers and organizers).

Conference Outcomes and Feedback

The Michigan Rail Conference had an overall positive review from the attendees, which included local, state and federal government officials, development groups, consultant groups, railroad company officials and various public/private groups with interests in rail. The opinions and views of the rail conference were collected via post-conference survey sheets. The one page surveys were distributed at the end of the conference to all the attendees and speakers and most were returned upon their exit from the conference center. Eighty percent of the participants (90 of 113), excluding speakers and organizers, completed the survey. The questions in the survey covered a broad range of concepts, including top interests, conference highlights, and suggestions for improvements in future rail conferences. The survey also asked what interest and stake the attendee had in rail development in Michigan and what persuaded them to attend the conference. Survey results are summarized in the following figures and discussions.

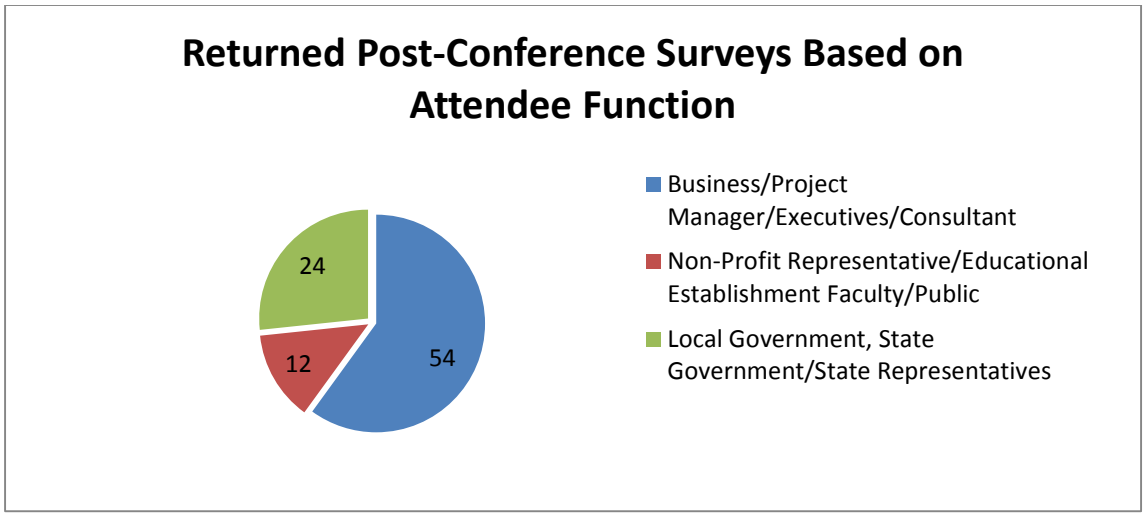

Figure 3. Conference Participants

A vast majority of the respondents were from the private sector, including railroads, rail-served industries, or consultants (Figure 3). These private sector respondents have a large stake in the Michigan rail infrastructure and their concern and interest for industry-wide improvement is supported by the involvement they had in the rail conference.

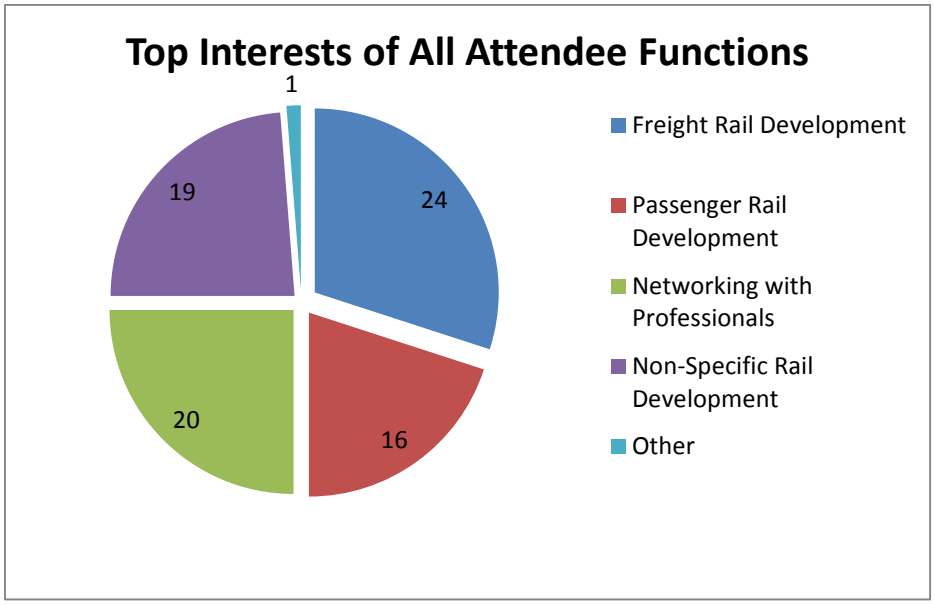

Figure 4. Main Interest Areas

Though time was allocated equally for freight and passenger rail development throughout the conference and the breakout sessions, there seemed to be more interest in freight development. Figure 4 shows a fairly even split between the top four interests categories (freight, passenger, non-specific rail development, and networking). The survey results show a slightly greater interest in freight rail development, but a more telling indicator was the attendance in the breakout sessions, where the

freight attendance was observed to be consistently higher. Additionally, networking among professionals was a reoccurring trend throughout the survey results. The ability for professionals and interests groups to collaborate in a public and open setting allows for discussion of future railroad developments that may not have occurred, if such a gathering had not taken place.

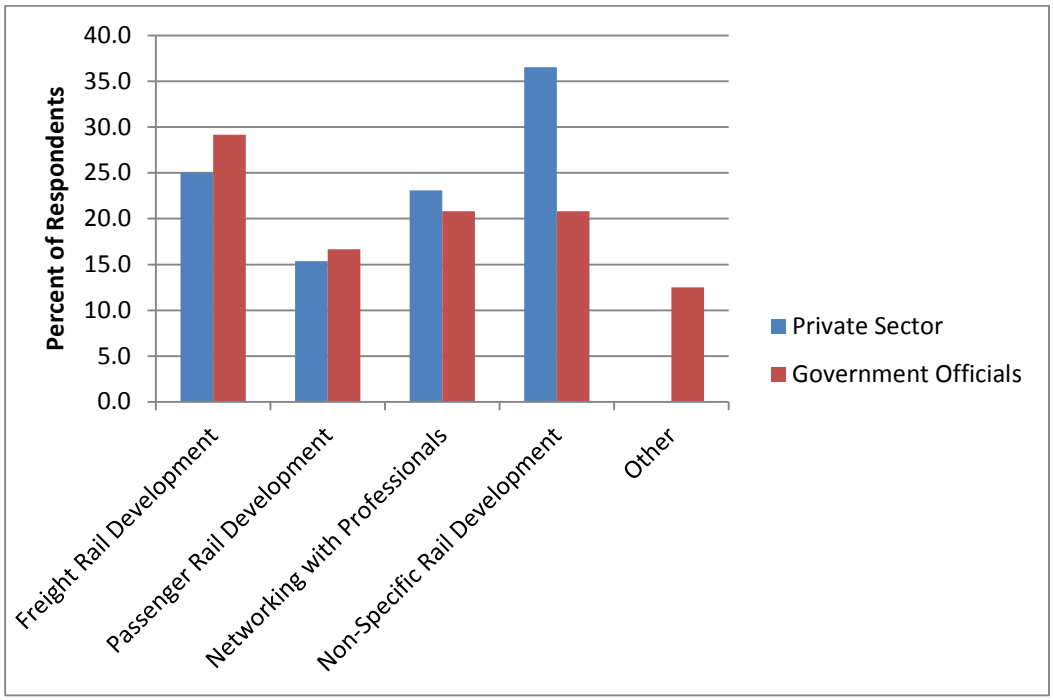

Figure 5. Interest Areas – Private vs. Public Sector

The graph in Figure 5 compares the amount of interest from the private sectors attendees (railroads, rail-served industries, consultants – 52 respondents) and government officials (federal, state and local – 24 respondents). Non-specific rail development, which includes topics that could fit into either freight or passenger rail development such as project funding and safety, took the lead for the private sectors interest and was followed by freight rail development. The top interest from the government officials was freight rail development which may be a slight surprise, as the recent focus and concern has been on passenger rail infrastructure, primarily development of high speed rail corridors.

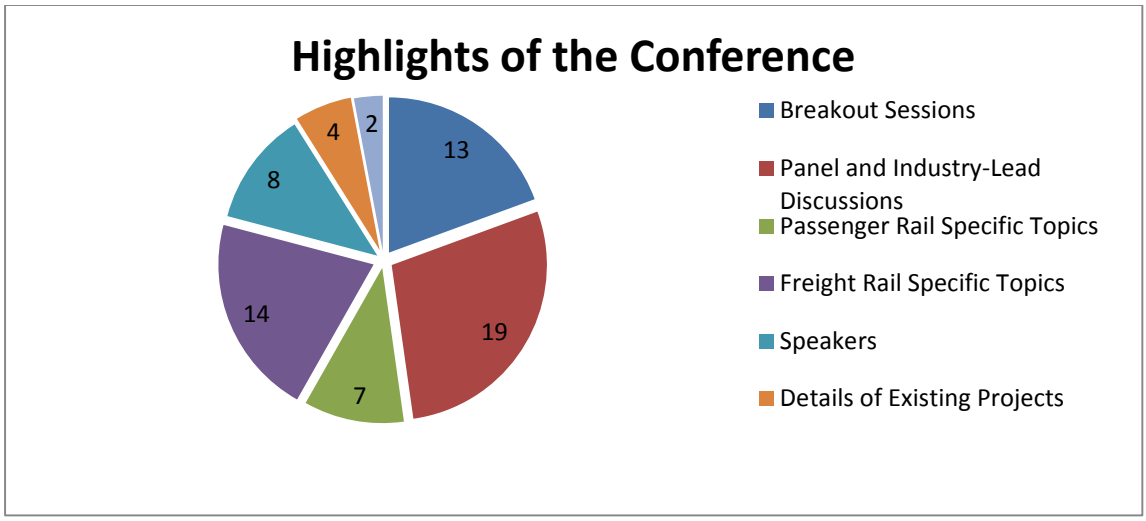

Figure 6. Conference Highlights

Figure 6 presents the greatest highlights of the conference as reported by the survey respondents. The results show the panel and industry-lead discussions were the most useful and of greatest interest. This panel discussion allowed for all attendees to participant in discussion regarding Michigan rail development, and also allowed for the beginning of networking and the sharing of ideas among individuals, companies and industries. Content covered in the conference received entirely positive feedback, with limited criticism and suggestions for improvements. The presentations that focused on developing and establishing a particular rail program or service were considered to have more importance than presentations regarding safety.

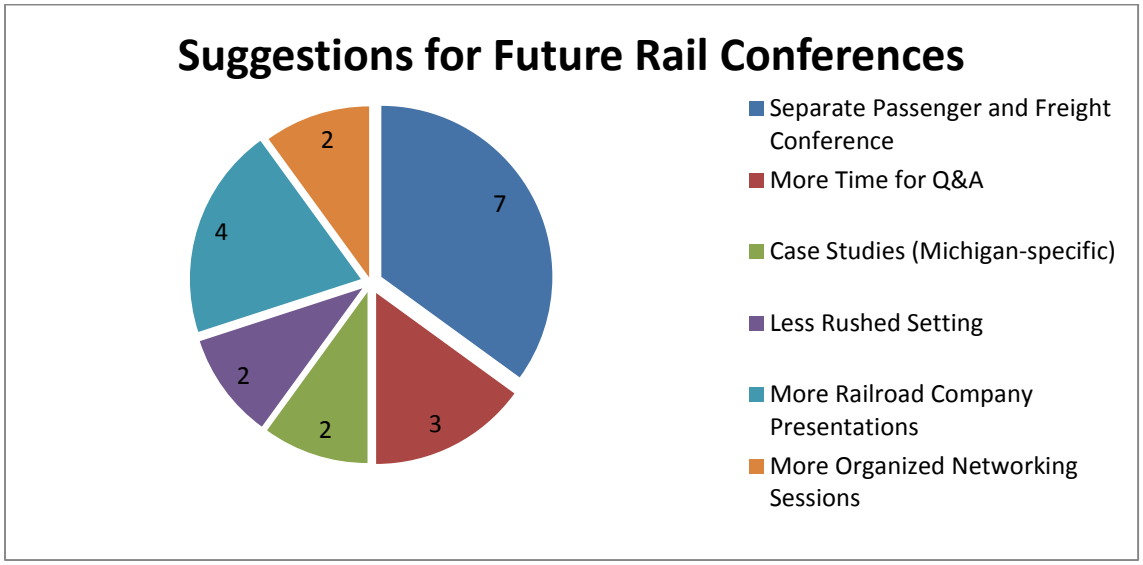

Figure 7. Suggestions for Future Rail Conferences

Figure 7, *Suggestions for Future Rail Conferences,* summarizes input from conference attendees and

valuable planning information for a future Michigan Rail Conference in 2014. This data was collected in the form of optional comments, and had a lower response rate than the overall survey, with only 20 respondents participating. Many of these respondents felt there should be a separate conference for passenger and freight rail development. Some attendees felt that there was a rushed atmosphere within the conference because of the diverse and large amount of information presented. The constant rush was believed to cause the lack of time for questions and answers as well as potential group discussions. A separate conference for passenger and freight transportation might be a practical solution.

Though networking was seen as a positive aspect of the conference in the survey, comments suggested that there should be more opportunities for networking, as well as a guiding structure for the networking process.

Attendees also suggested that there should be more direct involvement from the railroad companies operating in Michigan, such as presentations and interaction with attendees and interested groups. Presentations from each individual railroad company operating in the state highlighting progress, investment, and project plans might be considered in future planning.

Organizational Recommendations for Future Conferences

Various questions on the survey asked about topics regarding registration fees, duration, field visits and location for a potential Michigan Rail Conference in 2014. This information is highly valued because, if not used correctly in planning the next Michigan Rail Conference, the interest and/or ability for attendees may be hindered.

- For cost, respondents were asked about a reasonable cost for attendance. Though some suggested a higher registration fee (24 said $100, 5 said $150, 1 said $200 and 1 said $250), a majority of the respondents (55 of the 90 respondents) answered that the 2013 conference $50 fee is reasonable.

- For duration of the conference, nearly all respondents stated that the conference should be kept at one day, though some suggested a longer conference if a field visit was incorporated. Majority (58 of 90 respondents) expressed interest to a field visit as part of the conference.

- Lansing was the top choice for a location for a future Michigan Rail Conference (almost 100% of respondents). Other selections included Ann Arbor, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Battle Creek and Kalamazoo.

Lessons Learned and Next Conference(s)

Despite the fact that the timeline for conference organization was extremely tight, the 1st Michigan Rail

Conference is considered a success. The following list provides key lessons learned from the first conference and suggestions for the future direction of the conference organization and content.

- **Timeline:** Schedule for organizing the first conference was extremely tight, as the contract wasn't finalized until early 2013, leaving under nine months from beginning to the end. It's recommended that the conference task schedule is developed and leadership is selected before the end of the year and start active development immediately in January, 2014. The Project Schedule (Appendix A) works as a good starting point for coordinating the activities. Special attention should be paid for getting the location, and some key speakers confirmed much earlier, so proper marketing can start latest in spring.
- **Timing and Duration:** Early fall is an ideal time for the conference from academic perspective, as classes haven't started yet. Several respondents said an extended conference would be interesting if it was hosted near or incorporated a field visit to an active railroad project site. There was also interest for more time allowed for networking. For 2014, it is recommended that conference is extended to include a social hour and following dinner to allow for more networking opportunities. It is also recommended that an optional half day field visit is included for the following day.
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- **Format and Content:** While there were some suggestions for separating passenger and freight conference to provide relief to schedule, it is recommended that conference is maintained as a single event, at least for 2014. The level of participation doesn't warrant separating the two conferences. With proper and timely marketing (and potentially higher fees), it should be tested how many participants can be attracted to 2014 conference. Decisions for future conferences can be made after that. Conference topics / theme should be revisited by the content committee, but overall the content was well received and appropriate. Since panel discussion was such success, a separate panel discussion for passenger and freight could be considered in the next conference. Panel discussion in other topics, such as funding and policy could also be considered.

Appendix A. Project Schedule with Tasks and Dates

TASK	NOTES	TASK COMPLETE
Date	Confirm date in Late August (select day between 26, 27, 28) – 8 a.m.- 4 p.m.	May 15, 2013
Location	Confirm availability of MDOT Earl Center, Lansing, MI and determine max. # of live participants	May 15, 2013
Target groups	Identify main target groups (RRs, Amtrak, consultants, students, agencies / municipalities, elected representatives, MDOT employees). MRA, Trans4M, Semcog, Wally, others??? Develop mailing lists (RTP and CTT lists (Michigan Tech). Rail magazine upcoming events, MDOT mailing lists, AASHTO SCORT)	May 15, 2013
Program content	Launch online survey to solicit topics of interest . Select potential topics.	May 15, 2013
Marketing	Launch "Save the Date" postcard / email with conference web site address. MDOT, NURail and Michigan Tech Rail Program listed as sponsors / organizers – need logo/verbiage. (MDOT communications dept. needs to approve)	June 1, 2013
Food	Pick meals provided and define caterer and costs (Breakfast, Morning break, lunch and afternoon break)	June 15, 2013
Registration / Fees	Determine registration fee, based on meal costs. No fee for online registrants? Develop draft online registration form for review.	June 15, 2013
Program development	"Desired" List of sessions and speakers to solicit – Keynote speaker? Contacting responsibilities?	June 15, 2013
Equipment on site and IT	Per separate equipment list * Nikkie to confirm with Earl Center. Check for IT requirements for online sessions.	June 15, 2013
Conference Marketing	Draft conference program w/ tentative session schedule. Open site for registrations. Provide tentative agenda or date when available.	July 1, 2013
Manpower	Define conference staffing needs and responsibilities	July 15, 2013
Program content	Obtain first round of speaker commitments	July 15, 2013
Marketing	Biweekly registration reminders (including program updates)	July 15, 30,
Program content	Draft program and presentation schedule. Determine giveaways and conf. proceedings.	August 1, 2013
Program content	Presentations received. Final program completed and ready for print/proceedings. Presentations copied to flash drives. Evaluation forms created.	August 15, 2013
Site coordination	Setting up conference site.	Afternoon before conference
Follow up	Conduct follow-up survey and have debriefing	September, 2013

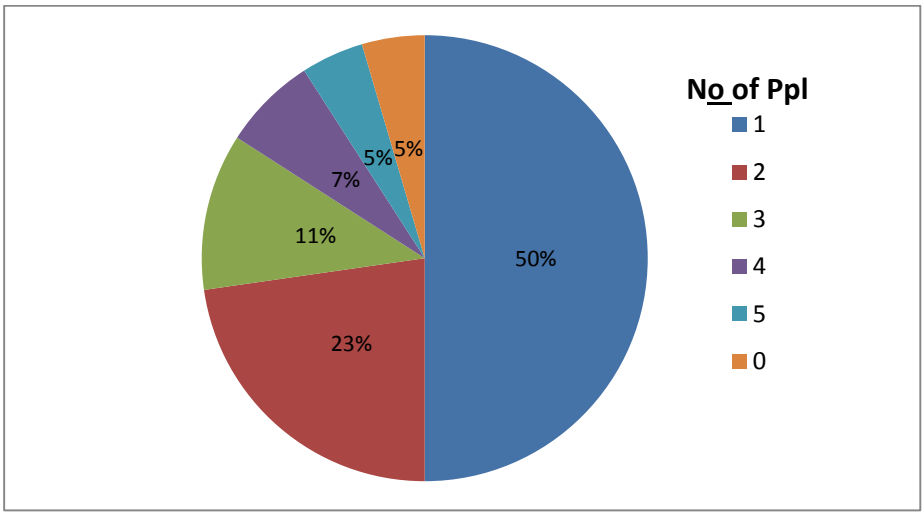
Appendix B. Analysis of Pre-Conference Survey Results

Total 47 respondents

1. Assuming conference fees are affordable (under $100), how many people from your agency/office do you anticipate will attend the Michigan Rail Conference?

Answered: 44 Skipped: 3

- Max: 5
- Min: 0
- Average: 1.81



2. If live online participation is offered via web conference, how many people do you expect to participate in person or via web conference?

Answered**:** 43 Skipped: 4

Total # of in person participation: **63**

Total # of web participation: **83**

	Max	Min	Avg.
In person	5	0	1.77
Web conference	13	0	2.22

- 11 respondents chose **In person** only
- 9 respondents chose in **Web-conference** only
- 22 respondents chose **both**
- 1 respondents chose **None**

3. Would you be more likely to attend the Passenger Rail or the Freight Rail breakout session in the afternoon?

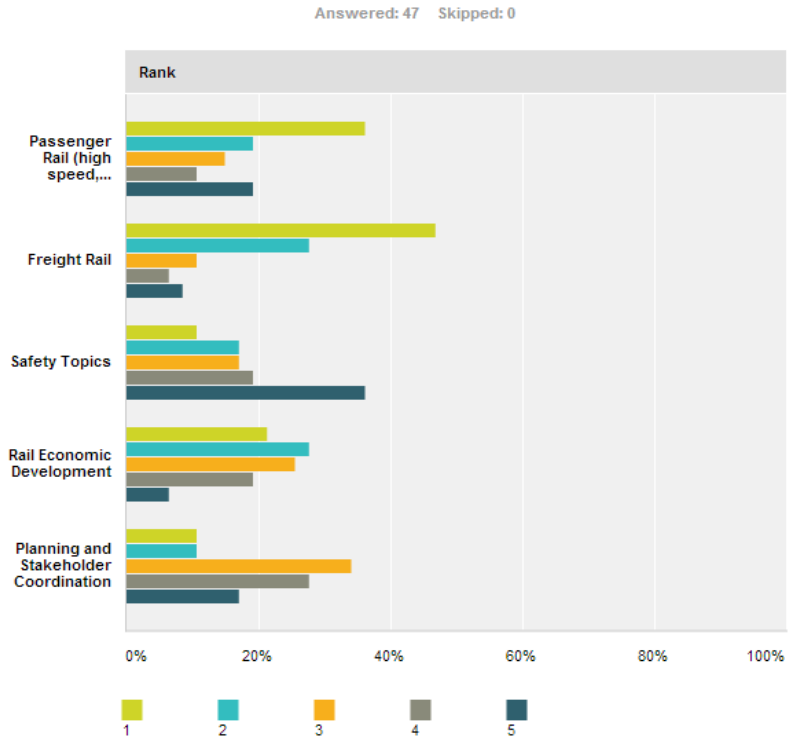
Answered: 43 Skipped: 4

Passenger Rail	**39.53%**
Freight Rail	**65.12%**

- 15 respondents chose **Passenger Rail only**
- 26 respondents chose in **Freight Rail only**
- 2 respondents chose **both**

4. Tentative topic categories for Conference include the following. Please rank the areas based on the level of interest to you (1 = highest, 5 = lowest).

Answered: 46 Skipped: 0



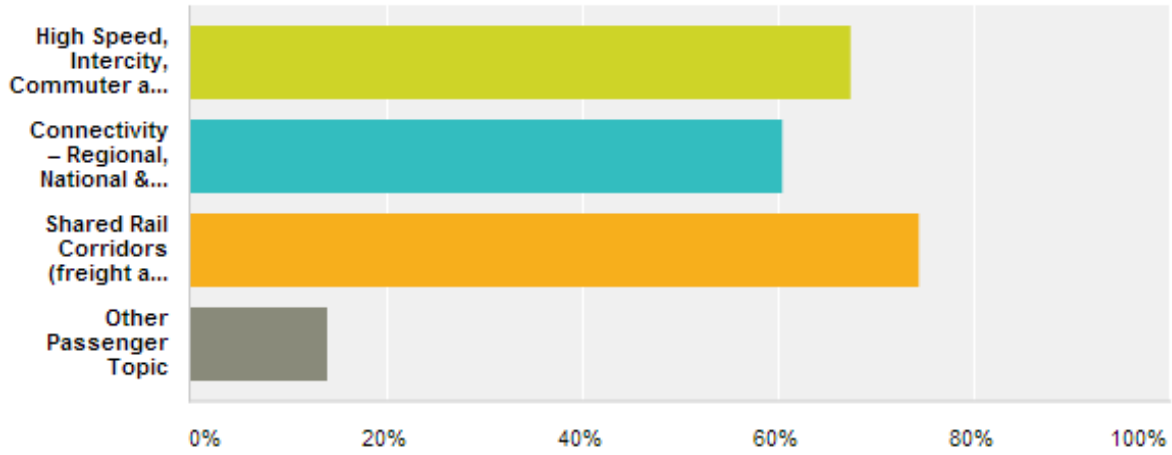
Rank						
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Passenger Rail (high speed, commuter, light rail)	36.17% 17	19.15% 9	14.89% 7	10.64% 5	19.15% 9	47
Freight Rail	46.81% 22	27.66% 13	10.64% 5	6.38% 3	8.51% 4	47
Safety Topics	10.64% 5	17.02% 8	17.02% 8	19.15% 9	36.17% 17	47
Rail Economic Development	21.28% 10	27.66% 13	25.53% 12	19.15% 9	6.38% 3	47
Planning and Stakeholder Coordination	10.64% 5	10.64% 5	34.04% 16	27.66% 13	17.02% 8	47

- **Additional topics suggested:**
  1. Museum operations! Remember, not all railroads in Michigan are freight!
  2. Simulation modeling for railroads, intermodal yards (we can provide speakers on both)
  3. Energy consumption reduction research
  4. Canadian-US rail trade relations
  5. Funding sources at the Federal, State and local economic level. Would like to know who to contact to determine the time of year these funding sources are announced
  6. Regulatory approvals/permitting
  7. Outreach to citizen and end point users
  8. Funding or financing sources for proposed projects in future More coordination necessary more passenger transportation Coordination of services at all transportation levels should be addressed as well as funding or financing of new projects in future(High speed rail particularly).
  9. Rail Coordination between states
  10. Getting rail access in Northern Michigan
  11. Upper Peninsula freight
  12. For passenger rail: web-enabled ticketing, online real-time multimodal scheduling and arrival/departure (status) information
  13. Education and generational information transfer.
  14. Suicide prevention & trespassing
  15. Right of Way sharing for snowmobiles and possibly non-motorized trails
  16. MDOT participation and future commitment to Rail Industry initiatives in MI A history of where we've been in MI - How much has been spent to date on improving Rail Infrastructure (Freight, Passenger and Commuter including public RAIL transit)
  17. Modal trade-offs and choice

5. We'd also appreciate your feedback to potential subtopics under each category. Please check all items that are of interest to you.

1. PASSENGER RAIL

Answered: 43 Skipped: 4

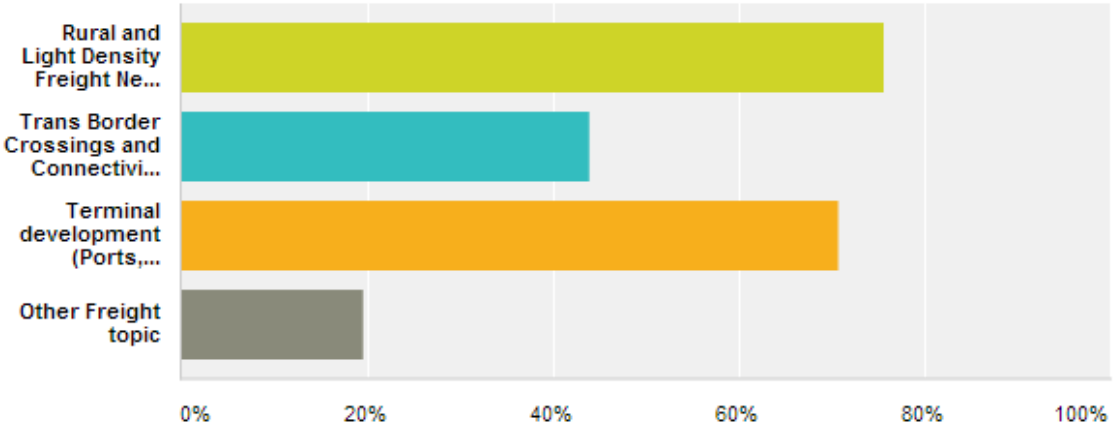


Answer Choices	Responses	
High Speed, Intercity, Commuter and Light Rail Development	67.44%	29
Connectivity – Regional, National & International	60.47%	26
Shared Rail Corridors (freight and passenger)	74.42%	32
Other Passenger Topic Responses	13.95%	6

1. Intercity rural connections
2. AMTRAK transparency in bidding out construction projects & material RFPs
3. TOURIST INDUSTRY POTENTIAL IN PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE
4. Stations, amenities, passenger/service information
5. Rural Passenger Transportation/Network Integration
6. Connections to other public transportation

2. FREIGHT RAIL

Answered: 41 Skipped: 6

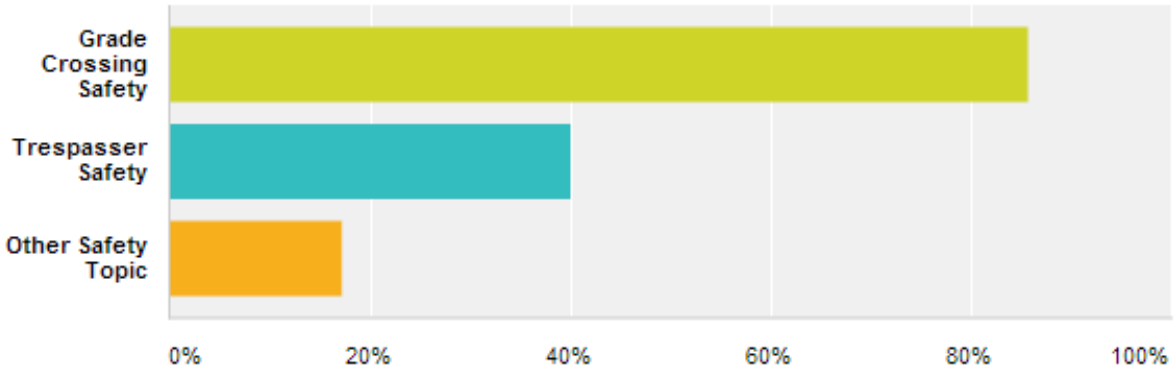


Answer Choices	Responses	
Rural and Light Density Freight Needs and Infrastructure Costs	75.61%	31
Trans Border Crossings and Connectivity – International Issues, Imports / exports	43.90%	18
Terminal development (Ports, intermodal, transloading)	70.73%	29
Other Freight topic Responses	19.51%	8

1. Railroad data sharing
2. Capacity
3. SHARED ACCESS WITH PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE
4. Upper Peninsula mining needs
5. Short-line/class 1 connection incentives
6. Intermodal
7. Permitting and re-use of old abandoned grades
8. Assistance available and commitment to serving remote viable locations by rail

3. SAFETY ISSUES

Answered: 35 Skipped: 12

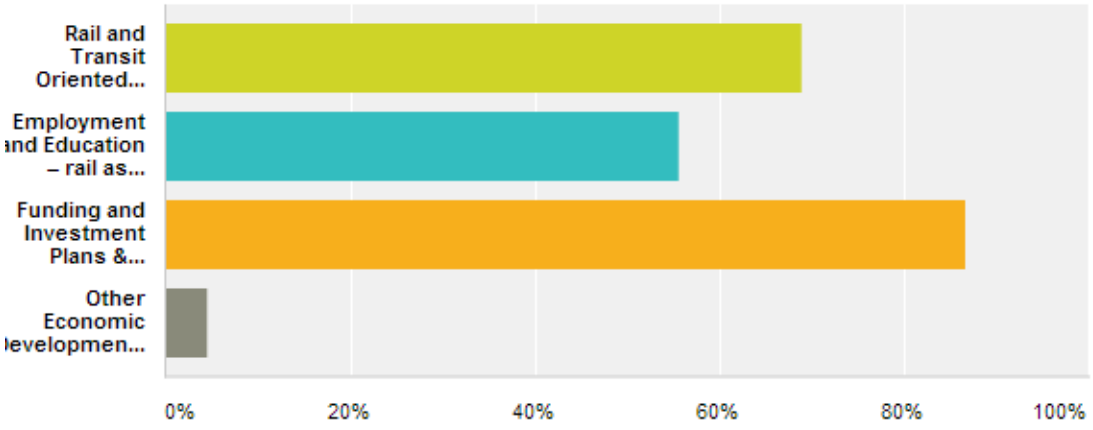


Answer Choices	Responses	
Grade Crossing Safety	85.71%	30
Trespasser Safety	40%	14
Other Safety Topic Responses	17.14%	6

1. RAILWAY VEHICLE SAFETY
2. grade separation incentives
3. PTC
4. Current legislation regarding trespass issues in MI - proposed legislation
5. PTC
6. Land planning for Grade Crossing avoidance

RAIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Answered: 45 Skipped: 2

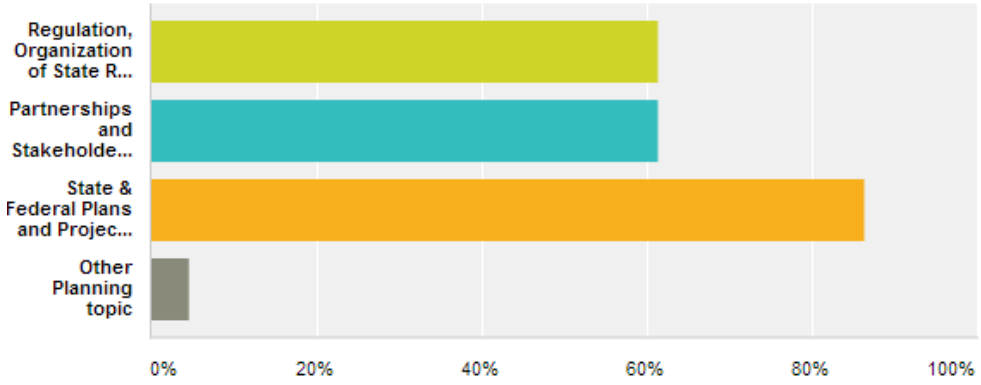


Answer Choices	Responses
Rail and Transit Oriented Economic Development	68.89% 31
Employment and Education – rail as economic development tool (impacts and challenges)	55.56% 25
Funding and Investment Plans & Packages – Federal, State & Private	86.67% 39
Other Economic Development topic Responses	4.44% 2
Total Respondents: 45	

1. Multimodal TOD, commercial development coordination, community/regional transit nodes
2. PPP and status of Design/Build in MI

RAIL PLANNING AND COORDINATION

Answered: 44 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses	
Regulation, Organization of State Rail Programs and Preservation of Rail Corridors	61.36%	27
Partnerships and Stakeholder Involvement	61.36%	27
State & Federal Plans and Projects – current & planned	86.36%	38
Other Planning topic Responses	4.55%	2

1. Joint applications with other states i.e. Wisconsin
2. Global transport literature referencing for (mature adult) activists and advocates

6. Please use the space below to provide any additional input to conference organization, potential speakers, etc…

1. I think that your target audience is quite limited to short line, regional, and major railroads, so sending this questionnaire to museum railroad operations such as ours doesn't seem to fit with the above questions that you are asking. Maybe if there was something about small freight operators, and I mean small, starting out to develop that avenue, it might have more attendees.

2. Would like to see AASHTO's SCORT committee have an up to date listing of each state's DOT individuals who are involved with rail matters

3. Libby Ogard -working on MN Freight Rail Economic Development project. Peer review.

4. To be successful, this conference must have strong input and attendance by Class I and regional railroads.

Appendix C. Program for Michigan Rail Conference 2013

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e Co-Chairs Nikkie Johnson and Pasi Lautala

The Michigan Rail Conference is the first step in a collaborative effort to bring stakeholders together to discuss issues related to passenger and freight rail transportation development in the State of Michigan. Rail transportation is drawing notable attention in the United States and the State of Michigan is no exception. A glance at the program demonstrates how vast and widespread the issues related to rail transportation are and we hope that today will initiate meaningful discussions among stakeholders that continue well beyond the conference. A single day is not sufficient to address every topic of interest, so we used a stakeholder survey to identify the topics in greatest demand. We have been able to recruit a remarkable group of nationally recognized speakers who are eager to share their expertise toward the development of rail in Michigan.

We are deeply indebted to our speakers for volunteering their time, to our conference content committee who selected the final topics and presenters, and to our conference organizing team from Michigan Department of Transportation and Michigan Technological University, who handled all coordination under tight time lines. We also want to acknowledge the financial support from the Michigan Department of Transportation, U.S. Department of Transportation through the National University Rail Center (NURail), and Michigan Technological University in making this first conference a reality. We are excited to see so many stakeholders participate in the conference, either in person or via our live web conference and we hope that today turns into an annual event to support the development of the rail transportation system in Michigan.

Welcome to the conference!

Organizers and Content Committee

Jon Cool, Michigan Railroads Association

Ron DeCook, DeCook Governmental Policy & Strategies

Tim Fischer, Michigan Environmental Council

Nikkie Johnson, MDOT

Pasi Lautala, Michigan Tech Rail Transportation Program

Dennis Neilson, Michigan State University

Michigan Rail Conference Program

Morning Session

7:30 AM - 8:15 AM	**Breakfast**
8:15 AM - 8:30 AM	**Welcome and Safety Briefing** Safety Briefing and Opening Statement, Pasi Lautala, Michigan Technological University Welcome Note by State Senator Tom Casperson, Chair, Senate Transportation Committee
8:30 AM - 10:15 AM	**Plenary Sessions** **Moderator: Pasi Lautala, Michigan Technological University** *State of Rail in Michigan*, Joe Schwarz, Former Michigan Congressman and Governor's Special Advisor on Rail *Rail- A Key Element of the Transportation System*, Anne Canby, OneRail Coalition *FRA Update*, Tammy Wagner, Federal Railroad Administration
10:15 AM - 10:30 AM	**Break**
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	**Panel Discussion: Freight Rail Transportation and Economic Development** **Moderator: Scott Pohl, WKAR Public Media from Michigan State University** Jim Byrum, MABA Bruce Southerland, MAC, Inc. Dale Yates, CSX John Rickoff, Lake State Railway Roger Velliquete, Great Lakes Packing Libby Ogard, PrimeFocus LLC David Closs, Michigan State University
11:30 AM - 12:45 PM	**Box Lunch & Keynote Speaker** Welcome Note by State House Representative Wayne Schmidt, Chair, House Transportation Committee Keynote Address: *Amtrak Passenger Rail Transportation Update*, Tom Carper, Amtrak

Afternoon Session

	Breakout Sessions (Passenger & Freight)	
12:45PM - 2:00 PM	**Freight Breakout 1** **Rural and Light Density Freight Rail** **Moderator: Jon Cool, Michigan Railroads Association** *Northern Michigan Rail Studies*, Tim Hoeffner, MDOT; Pasi Lautala, Michigan Technological University *Freight Rail Economic Development*, Libby Ogard, PrimeFocus LLC *CN Midwest Developments*, Tom Tisa, CN	**Passenger Breakout 1** **Michigan Passenger Rail Projects** **Moderator: Tim Fischer, Michigan Environmental Council** *Ann Arbor to Detroit Commuter Rail*, Mayor John O'Reilly, City of Dearborn *Woodward Avenue Light Rail*, Heather Carmona, M-1 Rail *MDOT Accelerated Rail Update*, Tim Hoeffner and Mohammed Alghurabi, MDOT
2:00 PM - 2:15 PM	**Break**	

continued →

afternoon session continued

Breakout Sessions (Passenger & Freight)		
2:15PM - 3:30 PM	**Freight Breakout 2** **Terminal Development** **Moderator: Nikkie Johnson, MDOT** *The Detroit Intermodal Terminal (DIFT)*, Terry Stepanski, MDOT *Improving Rail Freight at the Detroit-Windsor Border*, Marge Byington, Continental Rail Gateway *Rail Transloading Facilities: Development, Promotion and Operation*, B. Allen Brown, Railmark Holdings	**Passenger Breakout 2** **Rail and Transit Oriented Development** **Moderator: Ron DeCook, DeCook Governmental Policy and Strategies** *The River District: Implementing a New Vision for Portland, Oregon's North Downtown*, Roger Millar, Smart Growth America *Place Based Economic Development: The Case for Transit-Orientated Development*, Laura Aldrete, Parsons Brinckerhoff *Transit Oriented Development and Amtrak Service Expansion*, Tom Carper, Amtrak
3:30 PM - 4:00 PM	**Wrap Up and Next Conference Discussions**	

(6.5) Professional Development Hours (PdH) available for participation including Certificate of Completion. Certificates will be provided when conference evaluation forms are turned in at the end of the conference. Acceptance of this certificate of attendance is at the discretion of each individual licensing, credentialing or certifying body. Some certifying bodies require pre-approval of professional development hours. Documentation requirements also vary. Please note that individuals are responsible for maintaining their own professional development hours documentation.

2013 Annual Michigan Rail Conference Collaborators:

MDOT
Michigan Department of Transport

NURail Center

Rail Transportation Program
Michigan Tech Transportation Institute • Michigan Technological University
Michigan Tech