

TALUS Study Shows Airport Will Not Meet Needs In '80s

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TALUS (Detroit Regional Transportation and Land Use Study) has announced publication of a 300-page inventory of air, rail, trucking, waterway and pipeline facilities in the seven counties of Southeastern Michigan.

The inventory is an essential part of the program to develop a plan for the orderly development of the region through 1980, Irving J. Rubin, TALUS director, said.

TALUS, a special project of the Planning Division of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) is a four-year, \$4.8 million project financed by two Federal agencies, the Michigan Department of State Highways, the City of Detroit, and the Road Commissions and Boards of Supervisors of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties.

WAYNE COUNTY Road Commission staff members headed by Robert A. Larson, planning and negotiating engineer, completed the inventory in terms of a special contract with TALUS. The study is one of the first comprehensive region-wide inventories of such facilities in the nation.

The study shows, Rubin said, how technological developments in transportation have affected and helped maintain economic growth in Southeastern Michigan.

"Each transportation mode has a basic level of goods traffic," Rubin said, "those modes and relationship to other modes is independent of the level of the economy. However, all modes are dependent on the level of new automobile production and a determinant of their total volume."

One of TALUS' conclusions is that even with a six-fold increase in passenger capacity, resulting from planned expansion of facilities and larger planes, Detroit Metropolitan Airport will become inadequate to serve all regional commercial airport needs sometime in the 1980's.

"AT THE CURRENT rate of growth in airline passenger traffic, which has been averaging 15 per cent per year at Metro, an 800 per cent increase will occur in about 15 years," TALUS concludes.

"Thus, it is not too early to begin steps towards selection of a location for a second airline airport to serve the Detroit Metropolitan region. Because the existing Willow Run Airport uses essentially the same air space as Detroit Metropolitan, Willow Run is not suitable for consideration as a second airport."

Air-cargo growth increased 230 per cent between 1955 and 1965 compared with a 124 per cent increase in air passenger growth, the survey shows.

Three factors were credited with the air cargo increase: Greater capacity of jet-powered planes; Increases in jet service and in night flights.

A trend toward extensive air shipments of auto parts and accessories as an alternative to large regional warehouses. Nearly 50 per cent of the air

cargo to and from the region is comprised of auto parts and accessories, TALUS reports.

A RELATIVELY recent advance in rail transport technology has been a major factor in increasing the level of new car production in the TALUS region.

The report states: "Development of the three-level auto-rack car which permits shipments of up to 15 new automobiles in a single flat car came at a time when automobile manufacturers were contemplating the establishment of additional regional assembly plants to reduce the high cost of shipping new automobiles over long distances.

"Introduction of auto-rack car service permitted such drastic reduction in the per vehicle cost of delivering the cars to distant points that the trend towards regional assembly plants was abandoned in favor of increased concentration of automobile manufacturing in Southeastern Michigan."

Another element demonstrating the influence of innovation in transport capability is the "hi-cube" railroad boxcar.

Twice as long and half again as high as the standard boxcar, "hi-cube" units provide triple standard boxcar capacity and are being utilized for shipment to out-of-state final assembly plants of sheet metal stampings such as doors and fenders.

"End-trail" freight cars which convert into trailers for trucks, are also an influence.

AMONG THE OTHER highlights of the report: Intra-state (within Michigan) trucking accounts for 45 per cent of all trucks weighed at stations in SEM. When truck movements to Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Indiana are added, 90 per cent of all truck movements are accounted for, emphasizing the role of heavy trucking as carrier of goods over distances of less than 250 miles.

Coal comprises 25 per cent of the total inbound waterway tonnage (about 94 million tons annually). Diversion of much of this tonnage to rail may occur in the next decade. However, this will not reduce pressures on the region's seven for-hire general cargo

port facilities which do not handle coal and bulk commodities, and trends in water-borne movements will bear watching to determine if, and when, an additional general cargo terminal might be required.

The U.S. Air Force Base at Selfridge Field would make a good location for a second major commercial airport in the 1980's; necessary steps should be taken now to obtain the facility in the event it is abandoned by the USAF.

Pipelines shipping natural gas petroleum into the region are not a major problem in land use because these are underground. Nine firms are operating pipelines in the region. Among the data items: natural gas sales in SEM increased 190 per cent between 1955 and 1964.

Copies of the report entitled "Inventory of Airports, Harbors, Railroads, Pipelines and Truck Terminals" are available at \$7.50 each from TALUS at 1248 Washington Boulevard, Detroit, 48226.

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