Detroit Transit History

Phase Two of a Study by the University of Detroit Mercy’s Transit Research Team
January 15, 2013

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Chapter 1 - Introduction to Transit History of Detroit

Background on Detroit Regional Transit Study
In late June 2012 the University of Detroit Mercy (UDM) launched a project to study the factors that enable and inhibit the development and operation of effective regional transportation systems in Southeast Michigan (Detroit metro area). This project was supported through grants from the US and Michigan Departments of Transportation. The study team includes six UDM faculty and seven students from three UDM schools/colleges, the School of Architecture, the College of Engineering and Science and the School of Law.

This comprehensive study is comprised of five interwoven threads that will, over sixteen months, be examined and presented in five phases:

- Phase 1: Other Cities: experiences in other cities and related lessons regarding the development and operation of effective regional transit systems
- Phase 2: Detroit History: past successes and failures of metropolitan Detroit related to regional transit
- Phase 3: Detroit’s Current State and Opportunities Regarding Transit
- Phase 4: Comparisons of Detroit to Best and Worst Case Urban Models
- Phase 5: Analysis and Recommendations for Detroit Regional Transit

Phase Two Report: Detroit Transit History
This document reports the results from Phase Two. This report focuses primarily on the period from 1967 to 2006/7, although some chapters include events up to 2012. It was decided that the earlier history (pre-1967) was not sufficiently relevant to Detroit’s current options and decisions to warrant in depth analysis. It was also decided that the period after 2006/7 is directly linked to the current developments of Detroit’s transit that it will be examined in the Phase Three – Current Detroit efforts that are now underway. From the Phase Two effort, individuals or subgroups of the team have identified the key events and developments and “lessons learned” in each of seven areas, and have written a chapter for this report (starting with chapter 3) focused on one focal area as it relates to the development and operation of effective regional transit systems.
Transit History of Detroit

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The tone and structure of this report emphasizes stories and examples, rather than a more formal research paper format. This was done in order to convey these insights to a broader array of transit stakeholders in the region. Each focal area received input and review by all team members and by a panel of advisors from the Michigan Department of Transportation, SMART, Transportation Riders United, M1 Rail and the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments. However, each resulting chapter provided in this report reflects the views and judgments of the author(s) listed above.

Next Phase of the Study

Phase One examination of transit in four peer regions, Atlanta, Cleveland, Denver and St. Louis, is also complete, and the Phase One Report, “Transit Lessons for Detroit from Four Peer Regions,” is being released at the same time as this report. In the coming months, the primary focus of the team’s efforts will shift to examining the current status of regional transportation in Detroit, starting from the RTCC’s planning for regional transit and the planning for light rail/streetcar on Woodward. However, the team will also continue to “mine” the history of Detroit transit, especially as they relate to recent developments in SE Michigan. As such, the team’s final report later in 2013 may include additional historic findings and lessons that further guide the transit stakeholders in our region.
On January 5, 1863 Detroit the nation’s 18th largest city made the innovative decision to spend 5,000 dollars to buy a fleet of street cars for transit. On August 1, 1863 the first trip on one of the 16 foot long street cars was made in the city: The journey of Transit in Detroit began. It took close to 150 years, 2012 when Michigan Legislators has passed and signed by the Governor to form a Regional Transit Authority to provide public transportation for the residents of Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Washtenaw counties. Between 1962 and 2012 a number of transit related events took place in and around Detroit. These events are presented in Figures 1, 2, 3 and Table 1.
Figure 2. Detroit Transit History Timeline 1910-1960
Figure 3. Detroit Transit History Timeline 1960-2010
Table 1. Detroit Transit History (1860-2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Construction of first passenger rail system started by a Syracuse, New York based company that formed The Detroit City Railway Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>Horse-drawn trolleys begin service on Jefferson Avenue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880's</td>
<td>Electric streetcar service begins in Windsor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Replacement of horse-drawn railcars by electric street cars after Detroit Citizens Street Railway succeeded Detroit City Railway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Spread of Electric streetcar service to suburbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>A Cleveland syndicate consolidates several independent interurban operations under one entity-Detroit United Railway (DUR).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919-1920</td>
<td>The Detroit Rapid Transit Commission prepares the first regional transportation plan, recommending a multi-modal system. Mayor James Couzens vetoes a bond issue to create a subway system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Rejections of a bond issue to build a subway system by one vote during Mayor James Couzens Approval of Mayor Couzens’ proposal to build and operate municipally owned transit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>February 1st – operation of the Municipal Operation began with 2 lines for 13 miles. By end of the year 52.6 miles of track was built.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Department of Street Railways (DSR) is formed by taking over DUR by City of Detroit for $19,850,000.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Operation of first bus started</td>
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<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Grand Trunk Western Railroad (GTW) announces a system of rapid transit between Detroit and Pontiac</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>GTW achieved trip time of 45 min between Detroit and Pontiac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Detroit voters approve a subway plan but the state advisory board refuses to recommend construction to the federal government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>1,600 street cars was operated by DSR on 19 routes Same year DSR General Manager Fred Nolan began campaign to replace street cars with buses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>The peak year of Detroit transit patronage—492 million rides. Metro Detroiters have their choice of transit that year, with scheduled bus, streetcar and commuter rail service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>A transit strike for nearly 2 months had negative impacts on future ridership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>The Detroit Metropolitan Area Transportation Study called for a balanced system of highways and mass transit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Metro Detroit streetcar service stops after 93 years of service. The last streetcar ran on the Woodward line downtown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>New plan was called for a regional monorail system by the Detroit Rapid Transit Commission</td>
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### Table 1. Detroit Transit History (1860-2012) (continue)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>The Southeast Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) is established to take over service responsibilities of financially-strapped suburban bus providers. SEMTA governance includes the tri-counties and City of Detroit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>The Detroit Regional Transportation and Land Use Study (TALUS) recommends rail rapid transit in eight metro corridors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>SEMTA takes over funding responsibility for the Detroit-Pontiac commuter rail service, sparing Grand Trunk the $250,000 a year financial loss it had been bearing. Downtown employment had been taking a nose-dive, reducing commuter train patronage. Grand Trunk had been held to only two fare increases since the '50's, further reducing needed revenues. The DSR is re-organized as the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>President Gerald Ford offers the southeast Michigan region $600 million to build a rail transit system apart from the People Mover no other development took place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>SEMTA approves a detailed regional transit plan which includes the development of rail lines and a comprehensive bus system. With grants decreasing plan could not be implemented. SEMTA soon begins cutting transit service and laying off employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>SEMTA terminates Detroit-Pontiac commuter train service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Amtrak stops running their Ann Arbor-Detroit commuter train service. Regional leaders approve the Regional Public Transportation Concensus Plan, a refined version of their 1979 plan, with bus and rail. Plan was not implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Amtrak offers matching funds to build a passenger rail station at Joe Louis Arena and restart commuter service between Ann Arbor and Detroit. SEMTA could not fund its share and the idea was dropped.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>The People Mover begins operation and cost was $67 million per mile.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Plans released by SEMCOG and the Metropolitan Transit Development Committee each call for substantial transit improvements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>SEMTA is reorganized without the City of Detroit and renamed Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART). January 12th - Regional Transit Coordinating Council was formed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Unfruitful attempt to merge 5 routes by SMART and DDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Tri-county voters approve a three-year transit tax to boost SMART. Service and equipment quality improved. SMART will successfully renew this tax again in 1998 and 2002 elections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>An attempt by SMART and DDOT to establish a common regional bus pass and announce plans to consolidate services failed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>MDOT recommended restart of commuter rail service connecting Detroit with numerous suburban areas at capital cost of $2 million per mile. This recommendation was considered too expensive and was rejected by regional leaders.</td>
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</table>
Table 1. Detroit Transit History (1860-2012) (continue)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>DDOT stops suburban service, and SMART picks up the stranded ridership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>General Motors removes the commuter rail spur west of Rivard Street to the Renaissance Center to make room for a parking deck. MDOT announces a plan to extend I-375 further toward the river, eliminating future downtown rail access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>The Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce leads legislation to create a Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority. Metropolitan Affairs Coalition releases its final report for a regional Bus Rapid Transit system, named &quot;SpeedLink.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Legislation to create the Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority (DARTA) is vetoed by the governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>May - DARTA was formed through an inter-governmental agreement that includes the City of Detroit, SMART, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland and Wayne Counties. November - the court declares the procedure utilized to transfer powers in creating the agreement is illegal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>SEMCOG took over commuter rail service, connecting Detroit and Ann Arbor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>The Regional Transit Coordinating Council (RTCC) appointed a CEO to develop a regional transit service plan. Detroit business leaders announced plans to build a privately funded light rail link in the downtown section of Woodward Avenue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>The RTCC published its Comprehensive Regional Transit Service Plan, identifying corridors for arterial bus rapid transit, light rail and commuter service. This plan failed to identify governance or funding solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>DDOT started federal environmental impact process for funding and construction of the “Woodward Light Rail” project from the Detroit River to Eight Mile Road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system concept introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>November: The Michigan senate passed bills to Create a regional transit authority for southeast Michigan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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References:

http://www.detroittransit.org/transit_in_the_news.php
Chapter 3 – The History of Transit Governance in the Detroit Region

Lloyd Semple

I. Introduction
The history of Governance of Detroit Regional Mass Transit is sparse. Such is the case because of the failure of the region to come together and implement an effective properly funded regional transit system with appropriate governance. The Detroit system and the system for the region outside of Detroit continue to function separately with poor coordination.

II. Detroit
Rail transit from 1862 until 1920 was operated exclusively by private transit companies. In 1920 Detroit voters approved a proposal to build and operate a municipal owned transit line and that limited system came operational in 1921. Soon thereafter the city purchased the existing Detroit United Railway and the City formed the Department of Street Railways commonly known as the “DSR”. The DSR operated as a department of the City.

When the DSR was first founded it was formed as a city-owned transportation company and operated as a self-supporting agency, almost totally dependent on fare income. It was governed, apparently, by a General Manager who was appointed and responsible to the Mayor rather than a Board of Directors. In 1969, the Detroit voters approved an amendment to the City Charter, known as Proposition A, which granted the Council of the City of Detroit control over the financing of the transit agency. This enabled the City to appropriate general city tax funds to assist the DSR which at the time was financially troubled.

In November 1973, the voters of the City of Detroit adopted the 1974 Home Rule Charter which was the first major revamping of the City’s charter documents since 1918. Article VII, Chapter 14, Section 71401 created the Transportation Department to own and operate a public transportation system within the City and outside the City as permitted by law. At that time, the DSR entity was folded into the City’s organizational structure and the name was changed to the Department of Transportation, to be known as DDOT. The 1974 Charter under Section 7-1402 also abolished the three member board of Street Railway Commission, which had been the policy making and governing authority of the former DSR and Article V, Section 5-103 granted the sole authority to supervise, manage and control the department to the administrative head appointed by the Mayor. The three Street Railway Commissioners were replaced by a new Advisory Commission for Transportation composed of five members also appointed by the Mayor but who, under the Charter, were limited to only making recommendations.
The Home Rule Charter was further revised in 1987 and the Department of Transportation now functions under Section 7-1101 of Chapter 11 of the Charter. This authorization was virtually unchanged from the previous Charter and provides for an advisory commission of seven members appointed by the Mayor, but has only advisory authority. This advisory board has existed over the years but appears to have had little or no influence on the operations of the system. Indeed, while the Advisory Commission held regular monthly meetings for some period of time, it is currently not functioning and is waiting mayoral appointments. In September 2012, the Mayor’s office submitted a request for applications for the Advisory Commission but appointments to date have not been made.

III. SMART

At a time of considerable financial pressure on the privately-owned transit systems in Southeastern Michigan, and the City-operated then Department of Street Railway, in July 1967, the Michigan State Legislature passed the Metropolitan Transportation Authorities Act of 1967 which authorized the creation of numerous metropolitan transportation authorities across the State. Section 124.405 specifically identified the formation the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA). It was formed for the purpose of developing and operating a coordinated public mass transportation system within the seven County Detroit Metropolitan region including Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw and Wayne. SEMTA evolved into SMART pursuant to Public Act 148 of 1988 which amended the 1967 Act to reorganize SEMTA outside the City of Detroit (which had continued to operate DDOT separately) and SEMTA was renamed the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation.

The 1988 Amendment mandated a Board of Directors consisting of the Chief Executive Officer from the counties of Oakland, Macomb and Wayne (or their designated alternates) and an additional appointed member from each of those counties. A seventh representative on the Board of Directors is chosen on a rotating basis from the counties of Livingston, Monroe, St. Clair and Washtenaw. The enabling statute authorizes the Board to adopt By-laws and Rules of Procedures. The statute also sets forth specific obligations of the Board including the requirement for a “annual audit”, the preparation of budgets and appropriations and the preparation and filing of financial plan if the Authority operates in a deficit condition. The Board has the specific statutory authority to employ a General Manager whose duties and obligations are set forth in the statute. The Authority specifically does not have the power to levy taxes.

As required by the statute, SMART has adopted by-laws and rules and procedures. Regular meetings, at least quarterly, are to be held and a specific order of business is prescribed in the by-laws. Other than customary notice and housekeeping matters, the prescribed agenda requires a Chairperson’s report, a General Manager’s report and a financial report. For a quorum (four members), at least one member from each of Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties must be present. The affirmative vote of at least one member of the Board from Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties is required for adoption of any resolution; Board members receive only reimbursement for expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties.
The duties of the Chairman of the Board and Vice-Chairman of the Board are specifically set forth in the by-laws as are the duties of the General Manager consistent with the enabling statute. In addition to an Audit Committee with specific and broad duties, the By-laws provide that a special committee will be established from time to time as necessary with duties prescribed by the Board. The By-laws, as in all peer cities, provide for indemnification of Board members and officers consistent with the General Corporation Statutes of the State of Michigan.


Chapter 4 - Transit Politics and Leadership in Detroit (1862 – 2007)

Leo E. Hanifin and Scott Douglas

The Issue of Politics and Leadership in Regional Transit

It is hard to know where to start when discussing politics and transit. Simply put, transit is all about politics, complex politics. The complexity is in part derived from the fact that any regional transit system is just that, regional . . . crossing boundaries of municipalities and counties that have very different views on what is important to them, how things should be run and funded, what is the right form of development in the city and region, how much can be spent on transit, what mode and alignments should be created, and on, and on.

Getting what you want for yourself is natural human motivation. People are divided into areas with a region because they have” self-sorted” into what they feel are compatible groups, or because of their relative financial resources that allow them access to the area (especially the assets needed to buy a home there). This enhances political, economic, racial and ethnic divides between these locations, sometimes defined by geography and incorporated jurisdictions. As subgroups, people within each area naturally want to act for their own benefit to the relative detriment of other groups, which are often of other political, economic and racial makeup. All of this works against regionalism in all areas, but especially transit.

At the same time, effective regional transit systems have been shown over and over to provide a wide array of benefits to all people of a region, regardless of their race, political party or economic means. Any leader of effective regional transit development needs several key competencies and attributes if they hope to contribute toward development of such regional systems for the benefit all citizens of the region:

1. Politically Astute Consensus Builder
2. Visionary Advocate and Articulate Spokesperson
3. Competent Administrator and Team Builder
4. Knowledgeable and Experienced Transit Leader
5. Innovative Champion of Securing Funding from Varied Sources

(reference: UDM Regional Transit Study, Phase I Report on Lessons Learned from Other Regions)

Finally, traditional thinking regarding political affiliation and transit holds that liberals Democrats are for transit and conservatives and Republicans are against transit. However, there is considerable evidence that this “conventional wisdom” is breaking down (Moving Minds: Conservatives and Public Transportation). Across the nation, coalitions with a broad spectrum of political membership are working together to support regional transit initiatives.
These reflections provide a lens through which to view the history of transit politics and leadership in Detroit.

While Detroit’s transit history began in 1862, this report on transit politics and leadership concentrates on the period from 1967 (the formation of SEMTA) and 2007 (the start of the current era of regional planning and transit initiatives that continue to the present time). None the less, a discussion of history before 1967 is provided for context.

**Detroit Transit Before 1967**

**The Beginnings of Detroit Transit:** The early history of Detroit area transit starts around 1862 and goes through 1890. During the civil war in 1826, Detroit was ranked by the census as the 18th largest city. The completion of the Erie Canal had just granted access to the Great Lakes and Detroit was starting to grow. At this time “Detroit transit” consisted mostly of cobble toll roads with some horse driven cabs and busses. On January 5, 1863, Detroit made the innovative decision to spend 5,000 dollars to buy a fleet of street cars for transit. On August 1, 1863 the first trip on one of the 16 foot long street cars was made in the city. The lines for the horse cars went down Woodward, Gratiot, Jefferson, and Michigan Avenues. In 1886 Detroit opened its first electric streetcar along Dix Avenue, and by 1890 Detroit was on the path to being a transit town.

**Mayor Hazen Pingree:** The second era was from 1890 to 1900. Detroit had risen to become the 14th largest city, and had elected Hazen Pingree as Mayor. Under Mayor Pingree Detroit was emerging as an industrial and manufacturing powerhouse. The city was home to many large rail car manufacturers, but its largest industry at this time was tobacco products. Rail companies were starting to consolidate under the Detroit City Railway with the realization that horse carriages had become outdated. George Hendrie, the owner of Detroit City Railway Company, renamed his company as Detroit Street Railway Company to show this trend and transit workers went on strike. The strikes became violent and erupted into riots, with more citizens becoming sympathetic to the cause as the strike grew. Mayor Pingree arbitrated and granted the recognition of the rail union, which gave the employees “a wage increase, a 10-hour work day, and the granting of one guaranteed day off day off duty each fortnight” (Detroit Transit History). This arbitration was the first step to amending the long running feud. In 1891 the railway company requested a 30-year franchise, which did not include any benefits for the city. The city council approved it, and the Mayor vetoed the proposal. Mayor Pingree was opposed to, and tried to break up, “Natural Monopolies.” (Detroit Transit History).

**Consolidation of Transit Companies:** During this same period Mayor Pingree denied the extension of the railway company’s current franchise deal, and told them the fair they were charging on non-peak hours was too high. The company refused to change the fares, so Mayor Pingree hired a company from Canada to build a competitive railway to run at a cheaper fair than the Detroit City Railway, and Citizens Traction Company agreed to do it. The new company was given a 30-year franchise deal for granting control to the Mayor. Citizens Traction Company grew, and within a year sold to another group. Mayor Pingree went on to become Governor of Michigan, and while in the Governor’s office attempted to gain
city control over the transit system. On March 24, 1899 the State Legislature passed a bill to acquire the streetcar lines. The lines were sold to the City of Detroit for $16,800,000. Shortly after the sale was authorized, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled the sale unconstitutional. After this ruling all the transit companies combined into Detroit United Railway (DUR), which ran for several years.

**Detroit Takes Ownership of Transit:** Hazen Pingree’s dream of a city-owned system was later realized in 1920 by James Couzens when the voters allowed the city to build a municipal system called the M.O. (Municipal Operation). Then in 1922, Mayor James Couzens succeeded in purchasing the DUR for a sum of $19,850,000 making it the largest municipality-owned transit system in the country with over 363 miles of tracks. Once this acquisition took place the entire system was put under the “Department of Street Railways” (DSR).

In 1929 there was actually an attempt to build a subway line to move workers from the core of Detroit to and from Ford’s massive Rouge Complex. However, that met with considerable resistance based on issues of race, economic class and the beginnings of Detroit’s ring suburbs. This was described in an article in Progressive Planning as follows:

> “From the beginning, tensions between the business elite, the middle class and the poor shaped the debate over rapid transit in Detroit. A 1929 automaker backed proposal for a subway serving Ford’s huge River Rouge plant, just outside the city, met fierce opposition from the homeowners’ organizations that also held the line against neighborhood racial integration. The subway would serve the automakers and downtown businesses, they argued, at the expense of the expanding middle class, which inhabited the city’s vast tracts of new single-family homes and no longer relied on Detroit’s extensive but slow streetcar system.

> ‘Statistics of Detroit list three persons of five as owning an automobile,’ one subway opponent wrote the Detroit News. ‘Then why should a minority ram a subway down our necks?’ As historian Donald Davis has documented, the proposal won most support in the city’s older core, particularly in the black ghetto, where workers needed transit to reach outlying factories, but it was overwhelmingly defeated in the city as a whole.

The middle-class exodus from transit continued in the decades that followed, sped in part by racial anxieties. Since segregation prevailed in most of the city’s neighborhoods, stores and factories, overcrowded transit vehicles formed one of the places where the races mingled most frequently, upsetting many whites. Angela Dillard notes that one radio broadcaster deplored “the wholesale mixture of blacks and whites on streetcars and on trains, especially where black men are permitted to sit down and crowd close to white women and vice versa.” By 1956, one Detroiter could write that among whites, public transit had been “almost entirely abandoned to the private car . . . definitely to avoid integration.” (Batterman)
Buses Arrive in Detroit and Early Attempts at Commuter Service: It was not until 1925, three years after the buyout of the rail system, that the first bus came into operation in Detroit. In 1931 Grand Trunk began service to Pontiac with a 45 minute trip. In 1933 the state made an attempt to establish a subway in Detroit, but that proposal was never sent to the Federal Government as it was stalled in the State Advisory Board. It was not until 1934 when the General Manager began to replace all the street cars with buses. Initially, this transition meant that there were buses and street cars working together, and ridership hit its highest mark in Detroit history. In the 1940’s ridership was 490 million rides on the system. In 1951 the transit workers went on another major strike that severely cut ridership numbers. This led to efforts to balance the current dependence on rail-based transit by adding buses on roadways. However, this balance never materialized; as express buses were added the rail/streetcar ridership declined. Rail was entirely replaced by busses by April 8, 1956 (Schramm, Ken). The answer for mass rapid transit at this time was to have express buses that used the freeway system. It should be noted that at this time General Motors produced 90% of the buses in America (Schramm, Ken). Many in Detroit believe that GM exerted political influence over DSR to make the move from rail to buses. Over time these buses proved to be a slower and less convenient to riders, but were being promoted as the emerging suburban dream of owning an automobile. (Detroit Transit History). Later, the use of buses slowly declined to the point that there were only two express routes left in the 1970’s.

This movement to Detroit residents to the suburbs also had great influence on the politics of race and transit, as described in an article in Progressive Planning:

“As car ownership surged after the Second World War, transit drifted off the political agenda. Modern expressways would solve the city’s transportation problems, its leaders believed, in addition to clearing the black ghetto from the edge of downtown, and the city’s most serious rapid transit effort was an abortive attempt to build express bus stops along them. The black neighborhoods whose residents had voted so heavily for public transit two decades earlier were demolished for urban renewal. Their main street was replaced by the Chrysler Expressway, which conveyed commuters to and from the all-white Oakland and Macomb County suburbs burgeoning north of the city limit at Eight Mile Road.” (Batterman).

Efforts to Develop Regional Authority Begin: In 1964, the Department of Street Railway (DSR) had a proposal for a “Rapid Transit Authority” to attempt to combine city and suburban operations. This attempt did not gain public support, and DSR attempted to gain federal funding the city, used money from its general fund to bridge the gap in local match required for federal funding. July 9, 1964 was a momentous occasion for Detroit Transit. On that day, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law an act that would provide $375 million in federal funds for large scale projects in Detroit. This led to a period of political contention over what organization would receive such funds and build and operate a truly regional system. One of the roots of this was the frustration of business owners in Detroit losing their customers as the migration to the suburbs continued. This is described by Batterman, “The freeways, however, did more to seed suburban shopping centers than to prop up struggling downtown stores, and business leaders, agitated by their properties’ increasing isolation in an impoverished ghetto, turned
back to transit as a lifeline. In 1967, the business-led Metropolitan Fund released a study calling for express public transit linking the central business district with suburban capital. It advocated a new regional public transit authority which could develop a new system of rapid transit lines, beginning with one down Woodward Avenue from downtown to the wealthy Oakland County suburbs. A month later, the Detroit . . . exploded in the worst U.S. civil disorder to date that century.” (Batterman)

Detroit Transit Between 1967 and 2007

**SEMTA is born and grows:** Three years later, in July 1967, the Michigan State Legislature passed a bill that created Southeast Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA), a regional entity created to do so. SEMTA included six counties: Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, St. Clair, and Washtenaw Counties. SEMTA was authorized to acquire all private bus operators in the SEMTA region and the public mass transit assets such as City of Detroit’s Department of Streets and Railways (DSR). (Detroit Transit History) SEMTA was designated by Governor Milliken as the recipient of all federal transit operating and capital grants (a federal requirement) for the region. In November 1973, Coleman Young was elected as Detroit’s first African American mayor. Shortly thereafter, in 1974, the DSR was reorganized into the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT). By 1975 SEMTA completed the acquisition of 7 private bus companies, such as Lake Shore Coach Lines and the Port Huron Transit Corporation and consolidated them into a suburban/regional system, with the exception being DDOT. (Salci, 2)

**SEMTA Encounters Funding and Structural Challenges:** SEMTA was not provided the power of taxation, and therefore relied on its fare box revenues and federal formula operating assistance grants to exist. (Schramm, Ken) However, in 1973 Governor Milliken signed a bill that granted SEMTA its share of proceeds from a one-half cent statewide gas tax and created the Urban Public Transit Division (UPTRAN) within the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The SEMTA General Manager, Larry Salci describes how the ensuing fiscal structures led to contention between SEMTA and DDOT, “SEMTA negotiated an annual Purchase of Service Agreement with the Detroit Dot for its share of the regions federal formula operating funds, SEMTA’s share of the state gas tax proceeds and had management oversight for reporting of the region’s operational performance to the US DOT. This created a contentious relationship between SEMTA and Detroit’s DOT. The city had general fund tax revenue . . . , (DDOT’s) fare box revenue and its share of the region’s federal and state operating assistance to support its operations but needed to go through SEMTA for federal and state funds (Salci, Larry 2)

Salci also described the difficulties that this organizational and funding structure created in the pursuit of federal capital funding:

“The problem for capital funding was even more acute given the region’s desired transit plan. The federal government required a 20% match for all federal capital grants. SEMCOG and SEMTA had developed a comprehensive regional multi-modal transit plan (Transit Improvement Plan) approved by the SEMCOG Board of Directors in 1975. The plan called for a merger of the DDOT into the SEMTA system with expanded bus service, three (3) commuter rail corridors (Pontiac to Detroit; Ann Arbor to Detroit, and Port Huron to Detroit), a new fixed guideway rail system on the
Woodward Corridor, and a downtown circulator system (People Mover) to connect all the different modes in downtown Detroit. SEMTA was in a national competition with all major US regional transit agencies competing for scarce federal “New Starts” discretionary funds. A negative for the region was SEMTA had no dedicated local funding (20%) for its capital plan. The State of Michigan had been providing the 20% local share for capital grants up to this point. The Region’s inability to provide federal match requirements for a New Starts Program hindered progress for both SEMTA and DDOT for federal capital as it had to demonstrate it had the local financial capacity to match the 20% requirement and provide operating support for expansion.” (Salci 2)

The Political Environment Also Creates Challenges for SEMTA: SEMTA, like previous efforts to develop regional rapid transit, met with great contention between Detroit and the suburbs. Batterman tells the story as follows:

“Many whites feared that rapid transit would endanger the suburbs by providing access to poor black Detroiter. Whites turned out in the hundreds to Southeast Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) planning meetings, according to the Detroit News, protesting the “undesirables, transit crime and low-income housing” that they believed new transit links would bring to their doorsteps. Others, terming mass transit “child transit,” believed that SEMTA would facilitate school busing for racial desegregation. Most of all, whites resented the redistributionist implications of a Woodward subway serving majority-black Detroit, asking why ‘Coleman Young’s welfare city can have a free ride while Oakland County foots the bill.’

An insurgent suburban growth coalition, helmed by officials in the wealthy northern county, exploited these sentiments to fight the subway and ensure the suburbs profited from Detroit’s continued hemorrhaging, even after President Ford offered the region $600 million in federal transit funds. SEMTA tried to reassure officials that the number of future jobs transit would shift to Detroit from the suburbs was “not great . . . even in the worst case,” but Oakland Road Commissioner John Grubba charged that the agency was simply “a front for Mayor Young.”

Transit advocates charged that the newspaper aimed to “deliberately stir up hate.” Using some language similar to that of 1929 subway foes, but now targeting an entire city with intimations of criminality, the mayor of one suburb charged that ‘Oakland County and Macomb County are being held hostage by the City of Detroit,’ and Detroit politicians were ‘making every possible effort to legally rape the voters of southeastern Michigan by shoving a subway down their throats.’” (Batterman)
SEMTA’s Efforts to Create a Regional Mass Transit System (including the People Mover): In this environment of contention, political divide and racial prejudice, it is not surprising that SEMTA was unable to complete its grand plan for a truly regional mass transit system. The People Mover is a monument to the unfinished plans and goals of SEMTA in Detroit. SMART is the suburban remnant with its Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb bus terminals and bus fleets.

However SEMTA did have considerable success in “moving the rock up this very steep hill.” In 1976 President Ford was running for re-election. The CEO of SEMTA, Larry Salci, and Jim Kellogg, Director of UPTRAN joined Governor Milliken in a meeting with President Ford and US DOT Secretary William Coleman. They presented to the US DOT the SEMTA New Starts Plan which resulted in a unprecedented commitment for $600 Million for broad capital improvements for transit in Metro Detroit (but still subject to federal alternatives analysis/EIS planning studies before grant approval). (Salci, Larry). SEMTA proposed to raise the matching funds from one half cent gas tax for Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb County. The tax was passed in the State Legislature three years later, in 1979-80. However, this tax had a 5 year sunset clause; unless there was a merger/consolidation of the Detroit Transit System (DDOT) into the SEMTA regional system the tax would expire.

During this time period SEMTA was planning a regional system that included service from Detroit to Ann Arbor, up Woodward to Pontiac, and up Gratiot to near Port Huron. During this same time period, the US DOT, Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA now FTA), created competition for a federal demonstration grant program, separate from the New Starts Program, to demonstrate different AGT technologies (rubber tire and steel wheel) for Automated Guideway Transit (AGT) systems in urban areas. The Detroit People Mover was initially brought forward by the Detroit Renaissance Group at the request of the City of Detroit under the US DOT demonstration program. It initially was not administered by SEMTA, although this later changed at request of US DOT for reasons noted below. (Salci, Larry). The People Mover was designed to be a downtown circulator system for the connectivity of the multi-modal, bus, commuter rail, and light rail systems in downtown Detroit and also integrate the new Renaissance Center development with older downtown. Also, Henry Ford II was Chairman of Ford and the Renaissance Board of Directors and Ford was a leading developer of rubber tired People Mover Systems. The original SEMCOG/SEMTA plan had light rail designed to be the downtown circulator mode. Detroit was one of three finalist demonstration cities, along with Miami and LA, for final consideration in 1979. US Dot selected Miami for rubber tire AGT technology and Detroit for steel wheel technology demonstration. However, in 1976 the Detroit DPM was considered by Detroit and Michigan political and business leaders as a separate federal grant in addition to the $600 million commitment. (Salci, Larry). The original people mover contract awarded to UTDC (Canada) in 1980 by SEMTA was for a 1.7 mile steel wheel technology single track system for a fixed price of $114 million. (Salci, Larry). While SEMTA was planning for the construction of the new regional system, they let purchase-of-service contracts to Grand Trunk Railway (GTW) for operation of Detroit-to-Pontiac rail service and to Amtrak for operation of Port Huron-to-Detroit and Detroit-to-Ann Arbor service (Salci, Larry).
The planning, design and construction of elements of the SEMTA Plan progressed well from 1976-1980. SEMTA purchased 600 new buses from General Motors Coach Division manufactured in Pontiac to replace aged buses at SEMTA and DDOT, acquired property and designed and built three new bus facilities in Macomb, Wayne and Oakland Counties, and built a new Central Bus Maintenance Facility for DDOT. It acquired and refurbished four train-sets of coaches and locomotives and initiated commuter rail services from Pontiac to Detroit (operated by GTW) and refurbished the previously closed train stations along the alignment, including those in Birmingham and Royal Oak. It negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding with DDOT for a consolidation of DDOT into SEMTA, a condition for the regional gas tax required by the Michigan Legislature passed in 1979. (Salci, 2)

**Political Discord Derails the Regional System:** As the design of the region system progressed, a rift arose between the leaders of the city and the leaders of the suburbs over the system configuration. Detroit Mayor Young stated a condition of the merger was not only a new fixed guide-way rail system for the Woodward Corridor (which had been planned by SEMTA), but he demanded heavy rail technology, a higher capacity system which requires total grade separation (subsurface or elevated), all of which would dramatically increase the capital infrastructure costs. The SEMTA Plan proposed light rail technology, a medium capacity rail system that can operate either at grade or grade separated... a more cost effective system. The estimated cost of a heavy rail system from downtown to 8 Mile Road was approximately $1 billion. The SEMTA 12-mile light rail system from downtown to Royal Oak estimated cost was approximately $400 million, and, significantly, it connected Detroit with the suburbs. (Salci, 2)

Colman Young was an early political backer of Jimmy Carter who was elected President in 1976. With the election of President Carter, Colman Young believed he had political influence with President Carter and could persuade the US DOT to approve the heavy rail element of the SEMTA Plan based on the Mayor Young’s argument using economic development criteria for Detroit over transit cost/benefit (ridership) criteria. The US DOT mandated SEMTA perform detailed alternatives analysis on the corridor. From 1976-1980 Mayor Young and the Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb political leaders spared publicly (which spilled over to the Michigan Legislature) over the Woodward Corridor technology and cost differences between heavy rail and light rail. In 1980, the US DOT/UMTA (Carter Administration) approved SEMTA’s grant request for light rail technology for Preliminary Engineering and DEIS design for the Woodward Corridor, with approval from the US Congress as a New Start Project. It appeared the regional plan would become a reality. (Salci, 2)

However, later in 1980 Ronald Reagan defeated President Carter, and Mayor Young’s Washington DC political influence diminished. Also, the Reagan DOT New Start investment criteria became more cost/benefit oriented and less economic development oriented. The political discord between the City and suburbs over the lack of a merger became more problematic, the City continued to resist merger, lobbied against suburban commuter rail services that eventually were terminated. It successfully lobbied the SEMTA Board to expand the fixed price contract for the people mover for City economic development reasons, increasing its cost to $250 million by 1984. These increases in length and cost were reluctantly approved by the Reagan administration US DOT, but at the expense of the regional
$600 million commitment. The Reagan Administration and the US Congress were not in favor of construction of a light rail system without a merger of DDOT into SEMTA. Also, members of Congress from other urban areas saw an opportunity to reprogram the balance of the $600 million for their home states projects. The US Congress, at the request of Reagan Administration, terminated the SEMTA $600 million New Starts Authorization commitment. In 1987-88 the Michigan Legislature, out of frustration with poor regional cooperation, dissolved SEMTA and created SMART. The People Mover, which had been owned by SEMTA, was given to Detroit. (Salci, 2)

**SEMTA’s Death is Followed by Failed Attempts to Develop Regional Transit:** Shortly after the people mover was built in 1987 and SEMTA was transformed (in 1988) into the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART). This event was an unceremonious breaking point that seemed to push Detroit into a downward spiral leading to a sequence of failed attempts to provide effective regional transit. From this point SMART had operations outside the city and DDOT had operations inside the city with a few suburban routes remaining. In 1994, there was an attempt to merge five routes to improve coordination, but this effort failed along with the 1996 effort to establish a regional transit pass. This was followed by the 1997 attempt by MDOT to restart commuter rail at a cost of $2 million dollars and this project was voted down on the grounds that it was too expensive. In 1998 DDOT terminated the remaining suburban routes. This was followed in 1999 by General Motors removing old rail spurs by the Renaissance Center to make way for a parking lot, coinciding with MDOT extending I-375 down toward the river to connect with Jefferson Avenue. This removed all rail assets from downtown Detroit (except the People Mover).

In 2001 there was an attempt that made it through the legislature to establish Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority (DARTA) but was vetoed by Governor Engler on his last day in office. DARTA was partially reenacted in 2003, but existed with little authority until it was dissolved by the Michigan Supreme Court in 2006. The story of how political, press and public opinion evolved as DARTA was discussed and altered was told by Claudia Bernasconi as follows:

“A central political theme in the early 2000s consisted in the difficulty of getting support from the state Legislature for transit. An example of this occurred around the beginning of the development of DARTA, the Detroit Area Regional Transit Authority. In 2001, the Detroit Regional Chamber began efforts to create a regional transit authority. The following story emerged from the analysis of three major local newspapers:

While the authority would not merge both systems (DDOT and SMART), it (did attempt) to determine the best possible way for the city and suburban transit systems to move forward. Regional support for the authority was very high - including that of labor groups who had historically been non-supporting of major transit proposals as historically such proposals threatened job protection for transit workers, though the first iteration of DARTA did not. Surprisingly, however, former Governor John Engler, who had previously pledged his support for DARTA, vetoed the bill at the end of his term over political disputes regarding the building of charter schools in Detroit. During
2002 and 2003 supporters pushed to present the bill to Legislature once again but with some alterations. The second iteration of DARTA did not support job protection, which angered labor groups but encouraged support from Republicans. This ultimately led to a lawsuit filed by labor groups who claimed the authority was established illegally. DARTA's second presentation to the state Legislature also lacked support from some Michigan municipalities, particularly Macomb County that argued that it should be allowed to opt out of the authority. This move, however, would render the authority powerless over regional policy.” (from “The Role of Media and Public Opinion Efforts in Detroit,” another section of this report). (Batterman)

The Beginning of Detroit’s Current Transit Initiatives: In 2006 and 2007, two initiatives began that were respectively aimed at developing a regional transit plan for SE Michigan and the introduction of rail-based rapid transit. In 2006, the Regional Transit Coordinating Council (RTCC) appointed John Hertel as its CEO to develop a regional transit service plan. In 2007, with Hertel’s leadership, a group of business leaders commissioned a team from the University of Detroit Mercy (through the Michigan Ohio University Transportation Center) to develop a preliminary plan for what is now called the M-1 Rail project. With the start of these two initiatives, the region was once again moving ahead toward rapid transit and a regional transit system in SE Michigan. These two initiatives and subsequent developments will be studied within the “Current Detroit” phase of this regional transit study.

Observations regarding Transit Leadership and Politics from Detroit’s Transit History

Upon examination of Detroit’s transit history, recounted earlier in this report by Utpal Dutta and summarized above in this section, a number of clear observations regarding leadership and politics stand out as consistent throughout that history, or during significant portions of it:

• No political, business or community leader, or coalition of leaders, has been successful in the creation or operation of a truly regional transit system.

• Political divides, often between city and suburbs, have been consistent and substantial in their inhibiting regional cooperation. These divides have often included significant racial and economic issues components. These rifts were most evident and their impact most terrible in the failure to develop regional transit system acceptable to city and suburbs during the 1980’s leading to the loss of hundreds of millions of federal transit funding. The system that could have been created then would have not only meant an operational regional rapid transit system, but would have greatly impacted the attitudes and actions in the years since then.

• On some occasions the legislative and executive branches also exhibited poor communication and cooperation as well. On two occasions, this led to new legislation being vetoed. First, Detroit Mayor Pingree vetoed a 30-year franchise for Detroit transit providers after it was
passed by city council. More than a century later, Governor Engler vetoed the legislation that created DARTA, a regional transit authority.

- Similarly, the state’s constitution was employed to block Detroit’s purchase of transit systems in Detroit (1899) and the establishment of a modified version of DARTA (2006).

- On a number of occasions, the individuals were selected to lead Detroit’s transit authorities have had little or no experience as transit professionals:
  - Larry Salci – SEMTA
  - Norm White – DDOT
  - John Hertel – RTCC

- The press has played an important role in educating the public about transit issues. At the same time, the use of hyperbole and sensationalism by the press can inflame those with opposing views, and broaden the bases of both opposing camps. According to Claudia Bernasconi, lead investigator for the media and public opinion area of this study, feels that the press is generally positive and balanced, but does highlight disagreements, stating “Articles from all news sources typically implied that people perceive mass transit quite positively and believe that it is a key factor in reviving the City of Detroit and the surrounding region. More commonly, there have been disagreements between groups and communities regarding specific plans or proposals for mass transit. These disagreements have played a role in preventing progress”. (see section on media and public opinion in this report) One example of such “fanning the flames” by the press was The Detroit News’ suggestion in June 6, 2006 editorial to “blow up the Detroit Department of Transportation”, as a recommendation to regional transit planning leader John Hertel.

All of these observations point to four key elements of politics and leadership that have been missing in Detroit’s transit history, but must be present to move forward with effective regional transportation:

1. Effective leadership that understands transit and builds wide support. This needs to include many leaders from different segments of the community, working together across geographic, political, economic and racial differences.

2. Education of the public that leads to understanding of the benefits of regional transit to all citizens, and then to public opinion and political pressure to move forward.

3. Building of a wide and deep coalition of support.

4. Director(s) of transit systems that provide the efficient, affordable, reliable service that diminishes or eliminates the public’s disillusionment and distrust of transit authorities.
Encouraging Developments for Detroit Regional Transit

As Southeastern Michigan moved into the 21st century, a number of developments give hope to the region’s prospects for developing effective regional transit:

- The traditional racial and economic divides are slowly becoming blurred. For example, middle class blacks have moved to the inner ring of suburbs in Oakland and Macomb Counties and Western Wayne County.
- The level of investment in the core of Detroit has risen significantly, leading to considerable gentrification and movement of young professionals into the city.
- The overt racism that typified the region in past decades is no longer legally, politically or socially acceptable.
- The auto industry has rebounded, creating jobs in the suburbs that need workers from the city.
- Considerable local match has been raised by private investors and foundations creating the potential for higher levels of federal funding.
- Many other regions, some with similar political, racial and economic barriers, have developed effective regional transit that clearly demonstrates the impact of such systems on the economic vitality, livability and environment of their regions.

These developments and prospects will be explored further in the next phase of this study, “Current Detroit”.

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Chapter 5 - The Role of Media and Public Opinion Efforts in Detroit

Claudia Bernasconi and K. Bussiere

I. The Detroit Region
This section reports on a study of media external contribution to public opinion on transit form a historical perspective, as a first step to approach and understand the Detroit region. Research has been conducted for years prior to 2007 towards the identification of key transit events in this region, key media initiatives and public opinion/involvement efforts by transit providers for the region, and external contributions (in form of print media) to public opinion on transit.

A. Brief Transit Agencies Historic Overview

The Detroit region is characterized by three transit providers: the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART), the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT), and the Detroit People Mover (DPM). An additional key player in transit issues for this region is the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments Public Participation Plan (SEMCOG), the area’s metropolitan planning organization (MPO).

The Public Act 204 established the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA), which is formed in 1967. In 1989, Public Act 481 amended Public Act 204 reorganizing SEMTA and omitting the city of Detroit. The new authority was named SMART. SMART utilizes the SEMCOG Public Participation Plan.

The city’s bus system is run DDOT, previously structured as the Department of Street Railways (DSR) and providing public transit since the 1920s. In 1956, streetcar service was phased out and 1962 marked the end of trolley coach operation. Downtown trolley service was discontinued in 2003. In 2006, the Detroit Transportation Options for Growth Study (DTOGS) re-evaluated the option of restoring rapid transit on major Detroit corridors such as Woodward. Currently, DDOT is the largest transit carrier in the State of Michigan.

The DPM was established as part of an Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) demonstration project to determine whether an automated system could operate at a lower cost than traditional bus systems while providing effective circulation to revitalize the central business district. The Detroit Transportation Corporation (DTC) assumed full ownership of the DPM and responsibility for its completion. On July 31, 1987, the system began operating revenue service. The system exists as an elevated light rail system, which operates for approximately 118.5 hours a week at 75 cents per ride, collecting passengers from thirteen stations within a quarter-mile of one another. Each station houses
major works of art to make up the Art in the Stations exhibit, which has won multiple national and international awards.

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) was established in 1968. The council was created as a regional planning partnership in Southeast Michigan and receives funding through the federal government and through state grants, contracts and membership dues. Local elected officials represent citizens in the council. The council acts on behalf of all counties, cities, villages, townships, intermediate school districts, community colleges and public universities that are members to analyze and solve issues that affect the region. SEMCOG is currently responsible for the planning of regional transportation as the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization. The council holds Member Outreach Meetings to allow for input and discussion from SEMCOG members.

B. Key Transit Events and Public Opinion Efforts

Key transit events from the institution of SEMTA in 1967 to the year 2007 have been identified. A brief overview of key transit events is provided in Table 11. We choose 2007 as the threshold to “contemporary” transit event and public opinion efforts since in that year a major new transit initiative which is still very much a contemporary issue in 2012 has been launched. The years between 2007 and 2012 will be studied and discussed in a separate report.

Table 11. Key transit events in history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>KEY EVENTS IN TRANSIT HISTORY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>The South-Eastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) is formed to take over the financially strapped private companies operating suburban mass transit services in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>The Detroit Regional Transportation and Land Use Study (TALUS) recommends rail rapid transit in eight major region corridors. There was no follow up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>The DSR is reorganized as the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>President Gerald Ford offers to the Southeast Michigan $600 million to build a rail transit system. Other than the “People Mover”, nothing else was developed due to the lack of local/regional support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>SEMTA approves a Regional Transit Plan but subsidies were cut and the plans were never implemented. SEMTA soon reduced transit service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>SEMTA eliminates commuter rail from Pontiac to Detroit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>SEMTA eliminates commuter rail from Ann Arbor to Detroit. Regional leaders approve the Regional Public Transportation Consensus Plan, a refined version of the 1979 Regional Transit Plan. The plan was never implemented.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>The “PeopleMover” downtown transit line was built at $67 million per mile.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>The Regional Transit coordinating council (RTCC) is formed in an effort to provide efficient public transportation in Southeast Michigan. <strong>SEMTA is reorganized</strong> without the city of Detroit and renamed the <strong>Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART)</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>SMART and DDOT attempt to merge 5 routes but the project was cancelled.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>SMART and DDOT establish a common regional bus pass. Further attempts to merge services fail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) suggests re-establishing commuter rails at $2 million per mile, which was considered to be too expensive by regional leaders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>DDOT terminates its suburban service. SMART picks up the abandoned routes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>General Motors removes the commuter rail spur that is west of the Renaissance Center to make room for a parking deck. MDOT expands I-375 toward the river. The effect of both actions eliminates downtown rail access. $10 million cuts in funding as incentive for SMART and DDOT to combine services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Legislation to form DARTA is vetoed by Governor John Engler. SMART millage is increased from .33 mi to .59 mi and successfully passes in all three countries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>DARTA is formed through an interlocal intergovernment agreement (IGA) with powers, functions, responsibilities and authority essential to providing quality public transportation but it needed the consent of Michigan municipalities. SEMCOG convenes the transit impediments committee of elected officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>SEMCOG announces that they will conduct a study to evaluate the opportunity to develop an Ann Arbor to Detroit commuter line that would include a stop at/by Metropolitan Airport, consolidating two previous studies.</td>
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</table>
| 2006 | The Michigan State Supreme Court decision dissolved DARTA and the IGA. The RTCC hired a CEO (John Hertel) to direct a mass transit program in Southeastern Michigan: the Detroit Regional Mass Transit Project.  
The DDOT initiates the Detroit Transportation Options for Growth Study (DTOGS). |

The research on historic media initiatives and public opinion/involvement efforts of the three key transit operators (SMART, DDOT AND DPM) was conducted primarily through online search of agency providers websites, including the review of all materials available to the public, such as news releases, reports and information included in the website. This period extends for a little over a decade (between the 1991 ISTEA Act and 2007).

Preliminary research on key media and public opinion efforts conducted by the transit providers was conducted. Online research on SMART and DDOT’s initiatives does not provide evidence of strong public participation efforts in years prior to 2007. DPM, however, has emphasized its “Art in the Stations” which consists of a display of major works by contemporary American artists. This public art project has been in place since 1984 and stemmed from collaboration between Irene Walt and the DPM Art Commission. More in depth research on media initiatives and public opinion/involvement efforts will be conducted in conjunction with the study current efforts in the Detroit region and included in a second report.

**II. External Contributions to Public Opinion on Transit**

**A. Methods of Analysis**

A study has been conducted to gather evidence of media coverage on key transit initiatives and issues in the Detroit region for years prior to 2007. Two databases have been consulted: the LexisNexis and the
Newsbank. The LexisNexis archive includes articles from the Detroit Free Press from January 1, 1994 to present and articles from the Detroit News and the Lansing State Journal from January 1, 1999 to present. It is important to note that the Detroit Free Press and the Detroit News collaborate for the Saturday and Sunday edition, however, articles retrieved from archives are supplied according to which publication contributed to the article, so it is unlikely that this collaboration has skewed the number of total transit coverage from each newspaper. The Newsbank database includes articles from the Detroit News from January 1, 1999 to present.

To determine the total number of articles written per year per source, specific keywords were searched within each database. The key word “transit” was used to articles concerning public transportation in both databases. A total of 109 articles have been consulted. The numbers have been plotted by year and by news source for comparison in Table 12.

B. Overall Findings

While total transit coverage remained quite low from the Lansing State Journal, news coverage from both the Detroit News and the Detroit Free Press significantly increased from 2001 to 2006. This increase may have been due to the activity concerning the establishment of DARTA, the Detroit Area Regional Transit Authority, which was first presented to the state Legislature in 2001 and faced a mix of support and criticism until it was dissolved in 2006.

Individual events were studied more closely and coverage was analyzed to detect supportive or opposing orientations towards transit issues and initiatives. Table 13 includes a comparison of positive, negative and neutral articles per media outlet per year. Articles reviewed were taken from 1994 to 2006 with a focus on 1994, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2006 to study major events that have affected the state of public transit in the region.

Articles from all news sources typically implied that people perceive mass transit quite positively and believe that it is a key factor in reviving the city of Detroit and the surrounding region. More commonly, there have been disagreements between groups and communities regarding specific plans or proposals for mass transit. These disagreements have played a role in preventing progress. Summaries all consulted articles, including observations of specific events, may be found in Report 6 Appendix B. Detroit News Articles.

Two case studies will be presented as examples to understand the complexity of media coverage and the nature of the public debate on transit issues for years prior to 2007. Case study one reports on the years 1994 and 1996. These years were selected to illustrate the issue of regional fragmentation with service administered through poorly coordinated transit systems. Year 2003 was selected as second case study, to illustrate media coverage orientations and capture public opinion through media coverage in regard to DARTA.
Table 12. Total Media Coverage per magazine from 1994 to 2006

![Bar graph showing total media coverage per outlet per year for magazines from 1994 to 2006.]

Table 13. Media Orientation towards transit per magazine from 1994 to 2006

![Column chart showing media opinion per outlet per year for magazines from 1994 to 2006.]

C. Case Study 1: 1994 and 1996 – SMART DDOT MERGER

State legislation has often pushed for a merger between the two major transit systems, the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) for the city and suburbs, respectively. There is some overlap in service between the systems and it has been suggested that one cohesive system will bode well for the region's future. The two systems attempted to merge four routes in June of 1994 but in the end were unsuccessful due largely to the lack of support from the suburbs. In 1996 pushes for merging transit systems were again thwarted by a disagreement between DDOT and SMART. Media coverage in 1994 typically suggested that a merger would be beneficial for the region but that disagreements between the two systems would, as before, likely prevent a merger from being formed. In 1996, it was clear that very little progress had been made toward merging the two systems. The agencies had developed a regional transfer pass and uniform fare boxes but little else had been done. Interviews with members of the public often showed disappointment with the service but did not expect any significant change to be made due to disagreements in the past.

The word “transit” and the word “merger” were utilized to search the databases. For the year 1994, nine Detroit Free Press articles were consulted, of which five were positive, one negative and three neutral towards transit issues. For the year 1996, eleven Detroit Free Press articles were consulted, of which four were positive, five were negative and two were neutral towards transit issues.

Overall the analysis of the articles from the Detroit Free Press (1994 and 1996) suggests that, initially, the media reported optimistically on a possible merger. After two years of little progress, the general tones and opinions included in the articles display a grown doubt that a resolution could be made.

In 1996 the city threatened to discontinue honoring transfer passes from SMART. Many residents of Detroit, who depended on public transit to move them from the city to jobs in suburban communities, would have been unable to manage the increase in cost and likely would have lost their positions. The issue arose after the city transit system claimed that SMART owed the city $500,000 for transfer passes that the city had honored in 1994 and 1995. Reporters from Detroit Free Press studied the dispute and covered, through interviews, the largely negative reactions from transit riders whom would be most affected by the measure. An article from the Detroit Free Press (Gerrit 1996) mentioned ten riders who had planned to protest the issue; without a resolution, riders who use both systems would be forced to pay double fare. The outcome of the dispute, however, was positive and left many transit riders relieved. The city and suburban transit systems issued a regional transit pass and agreed to honor transfer passes and tickets from either systems. As many of the articles studied included quotes from affected riders, it became clear that in light of these changes, those who relied on both systems were concerned for their jobs and had grown impatient with the feud.

D. Case Study 2: 2003 DARTA

Central themes in the years 90s and 2000s appear to gravitate around political and social issues. Print media covered issues related to transit that intersected disagreements between racial groups and
political groups in the Detroit region. A central political theme in the early 2000s consisted in the difficulty of getting support from the state Legislature for transit.

An example of this occurred around the beginning of the development of DARTA, the Detroit Area Regional Transit Authority. In 2001, the Detroit Regional Chamber began efforts to create a regional transit authority. The following story emerged from the analysis of three major local newspapers:

While the authority would not merge both systems, it would act to determine the best possible way for the city and suburban transit systems to move forward. Regional support for the authority was very high - including that of labor groups who had historically been non-supporting of major transit proposals as historically such proposals threatened job protection for transit workers, though the first iteration of DARTA did not. Surprisingly, however, former Governor John Engler, who had previously pledged his support for DARTA, vetoed the bill at the end of his term over political disputes regarding the building of charter schools in Detroit. During 2002 and 2003 supporters pushed to present the bill to Legislature once again but with some alterations. The second iteration of DARTA did not support job protection, which angered labor groups but encouraged support from Republicans. This ultimately led to a lawsuit filed by labor groups who claimed the authority was established illegally. DARTA's second presentation to the state Legislature also lacked support from some Michigan municipalities, particularly Macomb County that argued that it should be allowed to opt out of the authority. This move, however, would render the authority powerless over regional policy.

Multiple articles across sources consulted attributed DARTA's ultimate failure to the lack of cohesiveness between groups and local communities. Media was consulted utilizing the keyword “DARTA” and included: ten Detroit News articles, ten Detroit Free Press articles, and two Lansing State Journal. Table 14 includes an overview of media orientation for the year 2003 on DARTA.

Table 6: Media orientation on DARTA, 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Reviewed:</th>
<th>Negative:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Detroit News: 10</td>
<td>The Detroit News: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Detroit Free Press: 10</td>
<td>The Detroit Free Press: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lansing State Journal: 4</td>
<td>Lansing State Journal: 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive:</th>
<th>Neutral:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Detroit News: 2</td>
<td>The Detroit News: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Detroit Free Press: 3</td>
<td>The Detroit Free Press: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lansing State Journal: 2</td>
<td>Lansing State Journal: 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Media Coverage from the Detroit News, the Detroit Free Press and the Lansing State Journal all followed a similar pattern; each newspaper initially portrays optimistic views about the potential for DARTA to be reworked and passed by the Legislature. Although it was acknowledged that DARTA was not the solution for mass transit in the region, it was also acknowledge in several articles that this step would be a significant start. After former Governor John Engler had vetoed the bill, articles signaled betrayal of a plan that was deemed, by many, to have been successful if passed. These implied that there was still support from the public and major players for the DARTA bill (Helms 2003). By the end of the year, however, DARTA was passed by the Legislature and was established as a regional transit authority. Articles that followed were in stark contrast to the initial optimism of those from the beginning of the year. These later articles were often very negative and include statements on DARTA suggesting that the Authority had been doomed from the start (Waldmeir 2003). The Authority was deemed unlawful in that members of government were unable to transfer their municipal powers to DARTA. This, it was believed, would prevent $850,000 in federal funds from reaching DARTA for improvements to regional transit (Gray 2003). If media coverage is an indication of general public opinion, or at the least is one of the factors shaping and influencing public opinion, the articles consulted suggest that the general public initially viewed DARTA’s creation as a necessary step in improving the region’s mass transit but later viewed the authority as unlawful and likely to fail.

E. Case Study 1: 1999 – THE DIVIDE BETWEEN COMMUNITIES and SMART DDOT MERGER 2

Another roadblock has often been determining where to draw funds for proposals. Because divides exist between races, communities, political groups, and the city and the suburbs, many plans have not been able to get off the ground and if they have, they usually have not lasted. Media often portrays opinions referring to the perception of transit plans as benefiting one group versus all or other groups. Perceived inequalities of plan benefits across groups have left entire communities frustrated.

Newspapers report that SMART has argued that the suburban system would not see as many benefits from a merger, because current services are clean, functional and reliable in comparison to those of DDOT. Suburban ridership has typically been low, so it has often been difficult to muster financial support (although property millage historically has been approved by many suburban communities to fund transit) for a system whose majority of ridership comes from city residents. However, some articles implied that SMART and DDOT would both benefit from a merger in that currently, both systems are at risk for going out of business and a merger would likely allow for more even distribution of funds and the elimination of overlap in services.

It is important to note, however, that SMART has argued that an overlap in routes between the systems does not necessarily mean an overlap in services (Gerritt 1998). For example, many suburban routes provide longer trips with fewer stops for those who have a long commute. DDOT buses that travel the same route are usually required to stop more frequently. Media report that leaders of SMART would like to see an investigation that provides a better understanding of all sides of the issue.
Multiple articles interviewed members of the general public, specifically regarding conditions of transit service. These often indicated little satisfaction with the conditions of service and impatience regarding feuds between the city and suburban systems.

The analysis of media sources tells the following story: In 1999, former Governor John Engler and MDOT officials agreed that simply continuing to fund the transit systems was not a long term solution to the region's issues regarding mass transit. They advocated for a merger between the two authorities to provide a more successful transit system for the region. SMART, however, maintained that a merger was not ideal and that combining the city and suburban systems may prove detrimental to SMART's current services. The agency has maintained that further research needs to look into whether or not a merger is the best way for both systems to move forward.

The state threatened to cut $10 million in transit funds as an incentive for SMART and DDOT to resolve the feud. Media coverage of this event made mention of the inability for both systems to come to an agreement after many years of failed attempts, leaving riders impatient. Authors often stated, though, that cutting funding as an incentive poses a risk for both agencies, as they would still face pressure to improve services with even fewer resources.

III. Conclusions

This study focused on news coverage regarding regional transit issues from 1994 to 2006 in the effort of understanding the public debate on transit from an historical perspective. Further research needs to be undertaken to uncover media reaction connected to SEMTA and earlier years not available through the consulted databases.

Though it is extremely difficult to measure reactions of the public to transit events in history, the analysis of media coverage for key events can suggest what the general opinion toward public transit initiatives might have been in the Detroit region in the recent past. The study strived to understand whether or not these articles provided for an outlet for local public opinion and if print media was capable of shaping and guiding public opinion on significant changes in transit history of the region.

Overall certain regional themes in public debates and opinions on transit issues have emerged through the analysis of external contributions. In particular the diversity of positions and interests of a divided region and the political divide that created difficulties in agreements and even more in actual enactment of decisions and plans. Overall the climate and public opinion seems to have been characterized by a sense of disillusion and by public distrusts in positive outcomes or successes of transit initiatives as well as the lack of a regional cohesive vision on transit issues and on what transit means and does for the community at large.

IV. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Alanna Conner, undergraduate research assistant, for her work, and Sandra Wilson for her assistance with database consultation.
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Chapter 6 - Transit Funding Structures and Competing Priorities – Detroit

Scott Anderson

This paper is one of a pair of papers exploring the financial structure of public transit systems in Detroit and four peer cities; this one focuses on Detroit, including its suburbs in the tri-county region of southeast Michigan. In both papers we attempt to answer similar questions; the final question only applies to the peer cities (for the time being):

1. How was transit funded in the immediate postwar period (1940s to 1970s)
2. What new transit funding structures were proposed, if any, from the 1960s to the 1980s, and for what purpose?
3. What stakeholders had an important effect on the implementation (or failure) of new funding structures?
4. What can we learn from public votes on transit funding?
5. What communities in each region contribute more to transit than they receive, or the reverse, and how is this managed?
6. For the peer cities: have incremental taxes to fund transit had measurably positive effects on neighborhoods near transit hubs?

For the case of the Detroit metropolitan area, in the postwar period the City had long operated the municipal transit system, then known as the Department of Street Railways (DSR), as an agency within, but partly independent of, City government.[1] Public transportation in the suburbs was operated by intercity bus and railway companies, such as Greyhound and the New York Central Railroad, for longer-distance travel. For short distance travel, a number of private, regional bus operators (Great Lakes Transit Corp., Lake Shore Coach Lines, Northville Coach Lines and others) provided suburban service.[2] Also, the DSR reached into many suburban communities, as its successor, the Detroit Department of Transportation, does to this day.

By the 1960s, for a variety of well-known reasons, private suburban bus operators were failing not only in suburban Detroit but all over the United States. In 1964, DSR General Manager Lucas Miel proposed merging the DSR into a new tri-county transit authority, with support of Mayor Cavanaugh. But the proposal did not have enough support. In 1967, the Michigan Legislature passed the Metropolitan Transportation Authorities Act (PA 204 of 1967) which, among other things, called for the creation of the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA), to develop and coordinate public transit in the seven-county metropolitan region.[7]

However, the new law did not provide any funding for SEMTA nor the authority to levy taxes; so SEMTA had to depend on federal grants with matching funds provided by the communities served. This was partly ameliorated in 1973 when Governor Milliken signed into laws PA 327 of 1972 which created a state General Transportation Fund, in which ½ cent per gallon of gasoline sold thereafter in the state
would be made available for the provision of transit service. By 1975, SEMTA had purchased and taken over many of the suburban bus systems and was providing service throughout the region, including suburban trips into and out of Detroit, while the DSR continued to provide service inside Detroit and to selected nearby suburbs.

In the 1970s the region had an opportunity on two fronts: regionalism and the chance to build an upgraded transit system, largely with federal money. It passed on both.

Transportation planning for metropolitan Detroit is handled at several levels. The Michigan Department of Transportation is responsible for the state highways, bridges, freight railways and other things. Local roads are maintained locally, by counties and cities, but the planning is partly centralized, albeit in a voluntary manner. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) is a voluntary Metropolitan Planning Organization; no community is compelled to belong, though most do. It is a planning agency and not a funding or operating agency.

In 1975, State Rep. William Ryan proposed the “Area Unity Bill” (HB 5527) which would have replaced SEMCOG with the Southeast Michigan Planning and Development Agency, which would have coordinated economic, housing and transportation development. It did not reach the Governor’s desk; “the bill generated widespread political opposition, however, and did not pass.” [5]

In the same era, the fairly new Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA, predecessor to the FTA of modern times) was interested in funding new and modern transit systems. The Detroit region was given the opportunity to create a hub-and-spoke system of rapid transit, with an automated circulating hub in downtown Detroit, and rapid transit lines out toward the suburbs. The spokes crashed upon the rocks of local politics over an important technical question: would the first spoke to be built, running northwest from Detroit into Oakland County along Woodward Avenue, be on the surface or below grade? Detroit, worried about interfering with heavy traffic crossing Woodward, favored a subway. Oakland County, realizing that the cost of a subway would limit almost the entire system to within Detroit city limits, preferred a surface line that could reach well into the suburbs. No agreement was reached.

At the same time, it is impossible to ignore the racial politics of that time, not too many years after the shattering riots of the late 1960s. Many Oakland County residents did not want a system that would make their communities accessible to African Americans from the city, and were not shy about saying so. “The Oakland Press published a special anti-subway supplement that included a collection of racist letters, boldly signed by their authors. One suggested that the subway ‘would be an open invitation for murders and muggings. Who wants any part of black Detroit?’” [5]

The only part agreed upon was the downtown circulator, then under the management of SEMTA. Originally the plan called for a bidirectional circulating above-ground automated railway, with the counterclockwise tracks above the clockwise tracks. But the only manufacturer who had the ability to build that configuration exited the business, so the “People Mover”, as it became known, was only able to operate in a single direction.
Many writers have decried the People Mover as a failure, as its ridership has always been a tiny fraction of what was originally promised. However, the People Mover has very heavy ridership when downtown is particularly busy: after the end of a hockey game, or during the Auto Show, for example. Its lack of use as a commuter system can partly be ascribed to one of the long-held requirements of transit users all over the world: the idea of through-ticketing. Beginning with the passenger railroads in the middle of the 19th Century, a passenger could pay a single fare and get to his destination, no matter how many trains (or railroad companies) carried him; it was up to the accountants to work out the split.

The same holds true for bus transit users, in Detroit and elsewhere. In most cities, a system of transfers or stored-value cards makes it possible to travel from point to point over multiple vehicles or operators, paying a single fare for the entire trip. In fact, in metro Detroit, this is true on either bus system; and when DDOT and SMART are charging the same base fare, it works between systems. However, the People Mover’s fare collection equipment cannot be configured to accept bus transfers, so a bus rider coming into one end of downtown on a bus, needing to reach the other, has the choice of paying 75c extra for the People Mover or transferring to another bus for free.

Detroit has by far the lowest per-capita transit funding of the regions studied. The 2011 National Transit Database reports total funding for all sources for each transit operator in a census bureau UZA (urbanized area). For the Detroit UZA, with a population of 3.734 million, the total transit expenditures for 2011 were $301.9 million, which is $80.85 per capita. The next lowest of the four peer groups (this information is given in detail in the related paper) is Cleveland where the per capita transit expenditures were $133.02, nearly 65% more than in Detroit. The average of the peer regions, $206.57 per capita, is 155% more than Detroit.[8] Put differently, for every dollar our peer cities are spending on transit, we are spending less than $0.40. (It is important to note that it is not just their own money the other regions are spending – it is also ours. Federal money for transit, which comes from sources into which everybody pays, is distributed roughly proportionally to local expenditures, so we are paying in much more than we are getting back.)

The metropolitan area has never had a cohesive anti-transit coalition. By and large the political leadership accepts that there are a lot of people who need a bus to get around. The arguments have always been about what kind of transit and how much to spend.

The history of transit in Detroit has a Loch Ness Monster aspect to it; when interviewing riders and advocates, the author was struck by how many people deeply believe that the auto industry, cynically and purposefully, worked to dismantle transit in the region. The truth is simpler: because of the prevalence of the auto industry in the area, Detroit – City and suburbs – conducted a grand experiment from the 1920s, roughly, to the present day. The experiment was not in any way cynical; rather, it was in joyful support of the industry that had made Detroit by the 1950s an economic powerhouse, so important in the life of the nation that Charlie Erwin (then GM CEO) could publicly say that what was good for General Motors was good for America, without any serious public backlash.

Detroit wanted to prove that you could build a community in which everyone could quickly and easily get around by automobile – without the horrible traffic jams already common in New York and Chicago,
and without worrying too much about transit since you wouldn't need it once everybody had a car (and America certainly seemed to be moving in that direction). So Detroit rolled up its sleeves and made a car-friendly city, and region: the first mile of concrete highway (Woodward Avenue, not far from the University), the first subsurface urban expressway (the Davison, now Michigan highway M-8 and equally close to campus), experiments with center lanes of major roads serving as peak-hour one-way flows (such as Michigan Avenue in the 1980s), express portions of expressways in which only certain exits were available to speed through suburban traffic (Interstate 96 on the west side of Detroit).

The fact was, it worked, in a way. Detroit's rush hours, to the author's own memory (he has lived in Detroit on and off since 1980) have never been nearly as bad as the rush hours of other major cities. If one has a car, getting around Detroit is easy and pleasant. If an accident snarls a freeway, there are other routes nearby that will serve just as well. Parking, nearly everywhere, is convenient and inexpensive. The side effects, bemoaned by modern urban planners and environmentalists – the destruction of neighborhoods for the expressways and parking, the loss of walkability, the rise of the megablock – weren't foreseen, and anyhow not everybody considers them problems. (“I love sprawl,” Oakland County Executive Brooks Patterson has been known to say.)

So as we built more and more roads, and better and better ones, and came up with ingenious traffic devices such as the “Michigan left” (which, astonishingly to the author, remains largely a Michigan gadget), it became easier and easier to drive everywhere – so people did. Transit ridership peaked in the immediate postwar period, and from there declined through the 1980s.[8] One additional factor contributing to the decline of ridership was the outmigration to the suburbs, which happened all over the country, but especially in Detroit where we had built the roads to easily accommodate it. The population of the City, which had possibly reached two million in the early 1950s, dropped below one million shortly after the 1990 census.

The most significant anti-transit stakeholder is the home-rule provision of the Michigan constitution which “makes regional governance impossible”. [5] This appears to be one of the strongest, if not the strongest, such provisions among the 50 states, and is one of the reason Detroit has about 150 suburbs (including over a dozen within a single former township in south Oakland County). It makes regional thinking next-to impossible unless an issue is exceptionally noncontroversial (such as the Metro Parks system).

Various legislators and city governments have taken stances over the years which have been neutral to anti-transit, but this has played an insignificant role overall. The pattern of development and the love affair with the automobile, both of which were absolutely natural in a region with such an overwhelmingly important dependence on that industry for our livelihood, carried the most weight.

The most significant pro-transit stakeholders are the people who use the bus systems, and their friends and relatives. The nonprofit Transportation Riders United (TRU) formed as an agent for advocacy of improvements, and over the years has fought for the big (rapid transit) and the small (missing shelters, buses not showing up on time).
In December 2012, for the first time, the Michigan legislature approved the creation of a Regional Transit Authority for metropolitan Detroit; Governor Snyder strongly supported the legislation and is expected (as of this writing) to sign it in the near future. The legislation (one of whose sponsors, Sen. Tom Casperson of Escanaba, represents a district which is closer to Minneapolis than it is to Detroit) creates a regional transit authority and gives it some way to fund improvements; early opposition to the measure had come largely from out-state Republicans who viewed it as essentially a pro-tax scheme that wouldn't help their own constituents, and who worried that any additional money for metropolitan Detroit will come from the tiny pot of money that has been supporting their own small bus systems.

Suburban voters have been approving transit property taxes to support SMART at least since the author was a City Councilman in Oakland County in the early 1990s.[3,4] The tax has always been approved by a comfortable margin. In the most recent vote, SMART, which cannot lobby or campaign per se, was nonetheless able to put what we might call “interesting facts” on the sides of its buses, the main message being that most (70%) commuters are taking SMART to and from their jobs. TRU echoed that and similar messages, the attempt focusing on the idea that bus riders are ordinary members of the public, similar to the voters themselves, as there is a long-reported perception throughout the region that transit is used mainly by the poor and desperate.

SMART is operated, technically, by a county transportation commission in each of its three counties. In Wayne and Oakland Counties, individual communities can choose whether or not to participate in SMART; that is, pay its property tax in exchange for its service. Many communities choose to participate and many do not, which has led to a very strange transit map that Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff said was “not the map I'd draw if I was starting from scratch”. In particular, Livonia in 2006 decided to no longer participate (which, as in the Oakland County newspaper article described above, led to clearly though thinly-veiled racist comments when the City of Livonia was hearing public comments at its televised Council meetings). This left a big hole in western Wayne County’s bus service, though (somewhat ironically) DDOT finds it necessary to send City buses into Livonia, at great expense, because of the transportation needs of Detroiters who work in that community.

Macomb County, on the other hand, has county-wide transit; every community pays and every community gets service. In the more populated southern part of the County, urban fixed route service provides transportation for the bulk of the riders; in the rural north, locally-operated paratransit service funded by the SMART tax fills the bill.

With regard to the cost-benefit question – what communities pay for more transit than they receive, or less – that's a simple situation in Detroit. Detroit pays for the operation of the City's bus system and subsidizes the People Mover (which is entirely inside Detroit), and gets what it pays for. The inner-ring suburbs in parts of south Oakland and western Wayne Counties get some of this service for free, but only because the City considers it to be in its own best interest (for people to get to jobs, for example, or medical appointments, such as to Providence Hospital in Southfield, a short distance outside the City limits).
In the suburbs, SMART is required to provide service to the suburban counties proportionally to the income received, so whoever pays the most gets the most. For the same reason that DDOT sends buses into the suburbs, SMART sends buses into the City, but for the past year only during rush hour. Livonia, which does not pay for SMART or DDOT, gets bus service from DDOT for free, but only becauseDetroiters need it to be so.

In Macomb County, where the SMART millage is assessed against real property and collected County-wide, the southern tier cities, which are more developed and have larger populations, get more service. The rural northernmost townships and cities have smaller populations and therefore pay less and get less. Communities along state highway M-59, where a great deal of development has taken place since that road was widened into a major sub freeway arterial in the 1990s, have grown in population and valuation and are now paying disproportionately for the little service they receive; however, the configuration of that road and the development around it make transit very tricky to provide.

In the legislative discussions for a regional transit authority, in which the author has taken part, one of the delicate questions is on this very issue: how do we craft a service that provides for people’s real needs, without creating a situation in which some communities feel they are being unfairly taxed for the service provided?

Further Research

Further research can focus on how to apply the lessons of Detroit’s history to Detroit’s current situation and develop strategies for implementing transit improvements in metropolitan Detroit and in other regions underserved by transit.

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Chapter 7 - Detroit History Related to Transit Access, Mobility and Social Equity

Alan S. Hoback

A. Why History

One factor in how well urban and suburban residents and political systems interact is the history between them. If residents see themselves as part of a larger center of economic activity, then they will coordinate their actions more. Likewise, people are more willing to help people who they are connected to. This generally means that suburban residents will only care of equity issues if they feel that it is necessary for the success of the metro region.

The history of equity and economic growth in a region is controlled by what comes before it, and it determines the range of possibilities for what follows it. The fate of the City is a result of how power and resources were previously distributed. (Surgue, 2005) In other words, the equity mentality of the community as a whole is slow to evolve. An example is that if previous economic and political activity have made groups feel unattached to each other, then they will not suddenly come together to make political decisions that support the whole region.

As mentioned above, having significant disparities in income currently is a strong indicator of previous inequity. It is also a measure of current inequity, because if people had equal opportunities then they would have more similar educational backgrounds and more similar incomes. However, working towards social equity is a long term effort to build education, job experience and property ownership. Therefore, there is a tie between history and current social equity at least because inequity is not resolved in the short term.

Resolving inequity is tied directly with changing people’s opinions. The history of inequity that produced this can’t simply be neglected, because the people likely still harbor the some of the opinions that produced the inequity. Without changing how people think, there will be a predisposition to keep in the old ways of thinking. This is an inhibitor for improving equity. People’s opinions determine the range of what is possible, so control future decisions.

One tool for bringing groups together is to promote community economic identity. Community economic identity is the belief in economic theories that metropolitan areas grow as whole, and therefore all people benefit when any one person benefits economically. This is supported by economic theories of the multiplier effect which is when economic activity occurs in a region, it stimulates other economic activity and becomes a reinforcing loop. Specifically related to transit, access to jobs increases a region’s production function. Production is the total effect of use of capital, labor, resources, and
technology: \( Q = (K, L, R, T) \). A city has economic growth only if one of \( K, L, R, \) or \( T \) changes. By providing access to jobs, economic growth is spurred. (Hoback & Anderson, 2010)

Although economic theory is only one means to bring people together, it is the most relevant to public projects. People are more willing to associate themselves with others economically than socially. Over time, identifying with a whole region economically can promote more social integration. The history of region gives the starting point which planners need to work with.

**B. History relevant to Equity, Access & Mobility**

The history of equity in a metropolitan area is the history of interactions between people of various incomes. It is closely tied to transportation because access to opportunities through transportation or otherwise is a primary indicator of equity.

From the 1920s through the 1950s, Detroit amassed great wealth. There was greater upward economic mobility in those decades than any other time or any other city. The upwardly mobile were recent immigrants from Europe who worked in industries related to automotive production.

The attainment of wealth caused unique residential development patterns in Detroit. Ethnic groups centered around parish boundaries and worked for the same auto related companies. African American were almost wholly left out of the upward mobility. (Surgue, 2005)

With respect to transportation, Detroit’s wealth created low density housing that is atypical of other large cities. Residential and transportation histories are very closely related. The low density housing makes Detroit especially difficult to have effective transit as that requires more people. Although Detroit had a history of successful trolley systems and interurban railways, the rapid rise of the middle class in Detroit fueled the adoption of automotive transportation. This impacted planning decisions to make the city look more automotive friendly, than transit friendly.

**Agglomeration Economies**

The auto industry began to soften in Detroit after 1953 and continued to the modern day. One of the many reasons was mechanization that meant fewer workers could produce as much as before. Also, changes in assembly line practices made the multi-level auto factories obsolete. Finally, improved transportation systems brought about by the auto meant that access to the Great Lakes was less important. The factories began to relocate to the suburbs and US southern states in the decades that followed.

Detroit’s major problems after 1953 were partly because automotive production has lower agglomeration economies. Large cities are sustained the economies of agglomeration which means that certain types of trades benefit when they are concentrated. For example, it is well know that business and finance activities are centered in cities. Business and finance represent a larger share of employment in certain regions of the country than in others. See Figure 1.
Figure: Finance employment (US BLS, 2011)

Note the metropolitan Detroit area is among the lowest in percent employment in the area of finance compared to other large metro areas. The highest employment areas appear to be centers of import and export. The industrial cities of the Midwest such as Chicago, St. Louis and Cleveland have lower finance employment like metro Detroit.

Industrial and especially automotive manufacturing do not support the high levels of employment in fields requiring agglomeration for efficiency. Instead, auto industries have tended to create their own economies in suburban locations in Southeast Michigan. Being too close to one another could be a detriment to automotive design and production because closeness could promote the loss of trade secrets.

Ford Motor Company’s business and engineering center is located in Dearborn, Michigan. Chrysler’s headquarters and technology center is located in Auburn Hills. General Motors had their headquarters for a long time in the New Center area of Detroit which is in the City, but 3 miles north and west of downtown. Their Technical Center is in Warren, Michigan. Both Ford’s and General Motor’s
engineering centers border Detroit, but Chrysler’s is located in the outer parts of the urbanized area of metro Detroit.

Mechanical engineering is a professional area that is closely linked to the auto industry. The following Figure 2 demonstrates that there is little agglomeration necessity for mechanical engineers.

Notice that the locations of mechanical engineers do not generally follow populous metropolitan areas. Instead, they are located in pockets of industry throughout the country, especially in the Midwest. For example, Cape Canaveral is among the largest employers of mechanical engineers in Florida by rate of employment. Also, notice the lightest color area in Michigan is Wayne County which includes Detroit.

Therefore, industrial employment, especially the automotive industry, doesn’t necessarily promote strong core cities. Industrial cities such as Chicago have strong downtowns when they adopt other industries such as retail.

That dynamic changed with as a result of the successes of the automotive and trucking industries. Before the widespread implementation of the highway and freeway systems, agglomeration was a much stronger force than afterwards.

Several factors pushed automotive jobs out of the City of Detroit. Certainly one factor was that there was no need to bear the higher expense of operating in the city. Higher expenses are the push that is
outweighed by the pull of agglomeration economies which creates cities. To some degree this story is repeated in each of metro areas in the US.

The West Side Industrial area is an example that Detroit city planners did not understand agglomeration economies. The West Side Industrial area borders on the central business district of Detroit on the southwest side and is between Corktown and the Detroit River. It was cleared (circa 1960s) so that new industry could locate near the city center. However, the efforts are largely considered a failure. (Surgue, 2005) Concentrating on newer industries may have been more fruitful. In the last few years, examples of job growth downtown are Compuware, and Dan Gilbert’s enterprises such as Quicken Loans. It appears to be related to information technology is concentrating downtown, although General Motor’s headquarters in now in the Renaissance Center.

A lack of need for agglomeration has impacted mobility in Detroit. The strong push of jobs to the suburbs because of the very weak pull of agglomeration is one reason for Detroit’s poor transit systems and its vast need for improvements in social equity. Southeastern Michigan has at times had the highest disparity in incomes in the country and is now still among the highest. (ACS, 2011)

Social equity is more likely to exist when people in a region care about the core city. If their personal economies are weakly tied to the core city, then they have lower personal motivation to care. If they don’t care, then the people who live there don’t matter to them as much, and the transportation infrastructure there doesn’t matter either.

The history of economic and social relations sets the pattern for how groups interact with one another, and their identity as part of the larger City. In order to change, there has to be an image of the core city as being economically important to the whole metropolitan area, and there has to be a valid economic justification for it.

As the opinions about the core city changes, political decisions will start to sway in favor of policies that support core city infrastructure. This will in turn impact the social equity of city residents by providing more transportation and economic opportunities. The history of a metropolitan area impacts decisions related to equity.

References:


Chapter 8 - Transit Oriented Development

By Utpal Dutta

Transit in Metropolitan Detroit, Michigan:
The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) designated for the southeast Michigan region encompassing seven counties: St. Clair, Macomb, Wayne, Oakland, Livingston, Washtenaw, and Monroe (Figure 20) [2,17]. The current population of the southeast Michigan area of more than four million, places it among the top five regions in the country. Long-term predictions conducted in the early 2000s indicate significant growth in population, households, and employment during the upcoming two decades.

Approximately 192,000 households in the SEMCOG region have been identified as households without access to a private automobile. Despite this figure, the modal split for transit in the region is very low: only 2.5 percent of people commuting to their place of employment do so using public transit (mostly captive risers). In contrast, 94 percent of commuters travel to work by car, van, or light truck. Thus, the Detroit metropolitan area cannot be designated as a transit-oriented community.
Regions with similar population bases in North America (e.g., Washington, D.C., San Francisco, CA; Boston, MA; and Toronto, Canada) have successfully created and maintained a transit base by attracting choice riders, thereby significantly reducing congestion levels, environmental pollution, and dependence on fossil fuels. The common ingredient among these cities is some type of rail-based travel mode, either LRT or RRT. Choice riders are those commuters who choose to travel by way of public transit, despite the fact that they own at least one private automobile. Very little emphasis, if any, has been placed by policy makers in this region to attract these riders. This is evident from the fact that, while the region ranks fifth in population in the country, it ranks 23rd both in the number of miles and hours of transit services provided [16]. Furthermore, the region ranks 21st in the amount of local dollars spent on transit.

**Historical Perspective**

As stated in the SEMCOG report, many regions in the United States spend more than three times as much, per capita, for transit services than in the Detroit metropolitan area (Detroit: $59.00, Cleveland: $124.00, San Francisco: $255.00) [2,18]. Other factors that have limited the availability of transit activities in the region include: the lack of consensus among the city of Detroit and adjoining counties/townships about the structure, governance and funding of a regional transit system, and lack of support among the public at large for a viable transit base.

![U.S. METROPOLITAN REGIONS: TRANSIT SPENDING PER CAPITA](image)

**FIGURE 21: United States Metropolitan Regions: Transit Spending Per Capita**

This phenomenon is exemplified by a number of missed opportunities experienced in obtaining transit resources. For instance, the bulk of a $600 million commitment made by the Federal government in
1974 was “lost” because of a general lack of consensus on the programming and planning aspects for a transit system. Similarly, the first regional transit agency in the Detroit metropolitan area, Southeast Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA), was created in the early 1970’s without a dedicated local transit support base (unlike other metropolitan regions in the country), thereby limiting the region’s ability to compete for federal grants. Lastly, no transit allocations were made out of increased gasoline tax revenues in the state, resulting from 1997 legislation, despite the fact that up to ten percent of these funds could have been dedicated for transit. Transit services are currently provided by three major agencies in the Detroit metropolitan area:

1. Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT): service within the city limits of Detroit, Hamtramck, and Highland Park.

2. Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART): service for the Detroit metropolitan area, with limited service within the Detroit city limits (including the cities Hamtramck and Highland Park).

3. Detroit Transportation Corporation (DTC): Service for the people mover system.

DDOT and SMART provide bus route service for over 100,000 transit miles per operating day, generating a daily ridership of over 170,000. A number of other transit services are available in the SEMCOG area for their respective local communities:

4. Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA): service for the city of Ann Arbor

5. Blue Water Area Transportation Commission (BWATC): service for the city of Port Huron

6. Lake Erie Transit (LET): service for the city of Monroe and Monroe County

**TOD in Detroit:**

There are a number of TOD presence in Detroit along the Woodward Avenue. Some of the existing TODs are presented in Figures 22 and 23 [19]. Woodward Avenue Action Association (WA3) is a very active TOD advocacy group within the State of Michigan [19]. The objective of economic and community based organization is to shape the future of the 27 mile along Woodward Avenue from downtown Detroit to Pontiac by promoting TOD. The Master plan of all the cities along Woodward corridor staring from Ferndale to Birmingham has TOD elements. A list of WA3 partners are included in Table 13 WA3 developed a number of tools for communities along the Woodward Avenue to facilitate their TOD activities. Steps to be taken in order to implement TOD are presented in Figure 24 [19]. They also design renderings of different sections of Woodward Avenue before and after the implementation of TOD. Two such efforts are presented in Figure 25 and 26 [20]. It is to be noted that Michigan will have more growth of older population in the future (Figure 27), thus plans should be undertaken to create a livable community for them. TOD can play a significant role in this context.
TABLE 13. WA3 Partner cities and Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipal Partners:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Berkley</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Ferndale</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Huntington Woods</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Royal Oak</td>
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<tr>
<th>Private Partners:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beaumont Health System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detroit Zoological Society</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Partners:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Suburbs Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Department of Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Michigan Council of Governments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is mixed-use development?

A building or district which hosts multiple integrated land uses, such as residential, office and retail.

Campus Martius Park Area
Downtown Detroit, MI

FIGURE 22: TOD in Detroit (without true Transit)
Mixed Use Development creates Vibrant “24 Hour” Places
- where people can Live, Work, Shop, and Play

Royal Oak

Royal Oak is one of the hottest spot for professionals in metro Detroit to live, work, shop, and play!

FIGURE 23: TOD in Detroit (without Real Transit)
FIGURE 24: Steps to Implement TOD along the Woodward Corridors
FIGURE 25: Woodward Avenue at 12 mile without TOD
Findings of TOD Studies:

- Denver RTD is very successful in planning, design and implementing developments along their transit routes.
- Denver RTD effort of building TOD around a bus stop (US36) is noteworthy.
- RTD are extremely effective in Public Private Partnership (P3) funding while implementing their TOD
- RTD was also able to obtain low interest loan from the Fed.
- RTD’s “Land Banking” effort is remarkable and significant
- FASTracks provides long term funding for TOD activities
- RTD’s long range plan of investment (they bought land from various stakeholders at cheaper price) is noteworthy
- St. Louis Metro as well as MARTA have a wealth of information on demographic, employment, land use Walk Score, FAR etc within half a mile radius of a number of selected stations. This information is very useful development potential.
• Cleveland RTA was even successful in getting “Homeland Security” grant to install camera in their BRT station.
• Cleveland RTA’s TOD related activities are predominantly focused on Health line corridor.
• St. Louis Metro received several funding from the HUD as a part of livable community grant.
• MARTA also received a number of Livable community grant from the USDOT.
• TOD is moving to Transit Oriented Community (TOC)
• Even, Detroit does not have any RTA yet, but there are a number of developments along the Woodward Avenue corridor that has attributes close to TOD (other than Transit station next to development).
• Master Plan of all cities along the Woodward corridor from Ferndale to Birmingham contain TOD elements
• Woodward Avenue Action Association (WA3) and Golden Spike are formidable entities within the State of Michigan working to move forward TOD theme along the Woodward corridor and other transit corridor.
• They developed a number of tools to assist Cities along the Woodward corridor and elected official to work on TOD initiatives.

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Chapter 9 - Transit and Its Impact on Health and Environment

By Utpal Dutta, Alan Hoback

Background:
Before the widespread use of the automobile, people in the US commuted mainly through walking and mass transit. During that era people walked more and were much less overweight. Looking at 15 case studies Trowell and Burkitt (1981) concluded that obesity was the first "disease of civilization." Reduced walking was not the sole cause of weight gain in early modern societies. Industrialization that produced autos also mechanized farming and production of surplus food that allowed for excess weight gain. In post-modern or post-industrial societies additional lifestyle changes have become interwoven in the fabric of society. (Crossley 2004) The National Audit Office (2001) cited an estimate that the average individual would have to run one marathon of 26 miles per week to make up for the drop in energy expenditure in since 1951.

Car use shaped the process of urban development resulting in that social life revolved around the car. "Much of what many people now think of a social life could not be undertaken without the flexibilities of the car and its availability 24 h a day." (Sheller and Urry 2000) The car is an extension of the body or "corporeal schema" in that it extends the opportunities that a person has, and is thought of as appendage of the self. (Merleau-Ponty 1962)

Post-modern society is dependent upon technology such as the car. However, the societal level change goes beyond car use. Post-modern society has different forms of leisure and entertainment than previously. All are interrelated in a network of practices that constitute what is current society and social process. (Elias 1978) For example, technology allows for more leisure time to watch television, and television has become a primary form of gathering news.

Many of the habits of post-modern society encourage sedentary life. Crossley (2004) argues that because of these changes in society, the habits of sedentary life have lowered a person’s threshold for what is reasonable daily energy expenditure. People have become more averse to activity because it is no longer a routine part of their life.

Individual behavior change is necessary to produce healthier lifestyles. However, it is difficult to change individual behaviors because each person is locked into others through a continuous fabric of modern society. (Crossley 2004)

Things can be done to get people to walk. Mehta (2008) showed that perceptions about walking could be positively influence through making the environment pleasurable. If walking has some functionality, people are more likely to do it. (Mehta 2008, Darker et. al. 2007)
People walk as a means of transportation, or as means to get to transit. Encouraging transit use has the potential to provide for improved public health. It will be shown that walking to transit can bring someone to the threshold of minimum physical activity for healthy living. Health care needs would be reduced if more people walked to transit instead of driving. An uninsured person would save on health care. However, the uninsured often avoid health care.

It is easier to predict what happens to an insured person. The US government provides Medicare health insurance to segments of the population. The government would save money if people with Medicare walked to transit.

Employers who provide health insurance and sick leave have the biggest expense for when their employees are physically inactive. In that case the employer pays a larger share of the health costs than the employee. Employers lose again when someone is unable to work since they also have to pay for sick days. There is evidence that using transit has a positive influence on health. Brown and Werner (2009) surveyed residents near light rail transit stops. After adjusting for income and employment, they found that the people who use transit have much lower obesity that those who don’t.

Additionally, residents of US Cities with extensive transit systems are healthier than other residents. This is substantiated by looking at transit spending versus obesity statistics. The average number of overweight people in regions that spend at least $200 a year on transit is 53.2% of the total population, while in regions that spend less than $200 a year people on average are 58.0% overweight as shown in Figure 1 (FTA 2002; CDC 2002).

![Figure 1. Overweight incidence versus public transit spending](image)

Environmental pollution linked to the Greenhouse gas (GHG) emission is the most significant public health treat during the 21st century [Maizlish, et. al. 201]. In California, the transportation sector contributes 38 percent of CHG emission, outpacing all other sectors. In this context, passenger cars
account for 79 percent of total transportation related CHG emission. It was suggested that by 2030 London (England) could experience a 60 percent reduction in 1990 levels of GHG emission, if low carbon emitting motor vehicles were largely adapted and residents increased significant transit mode share of distance to 19 percent from a baseline of 4 percent. This report documents health benefit of transit in a typical North American city as well as metro Detroit. Also, the impacts of transit on air pollution and travel time in Denver are also presented.

**Health Benefits of Transit in a typical North American City [Litman, 2010 ]**

In order to quantify the health benefit of transit in a typical North American City, Litman has conducted an in-depth study. Summary of this study is presented below:

- High quality public transit along with Transit oriented Community (TOD or TOC) reduce traffic crashes and environmental pollution, increase physical fitness and improve access to medical care and healthy food.
- Improve access in turn provides increase affordability, thus reduce financial stress to low-income households
- In a typical North American City, when compare with the regional average, residents of areas with high quality public transit service drive about 3,100 fewer annual miles
- In a typical North American Transit oriented community total health benefits per year per person is $541
- People who live in transit oriented communities tend to have fewer auto-ownership (0.93 vs 1.93), reduce amount of daily travel (9.80 daily VMT Vs 21.79 daily VMT)
- 43 percent of People who live in TOC walk daily at least 22 minutes compared with 27 percent of less walkable area residents.
- Average medical expenditure of physically active person is around $1,019 per year compared to $1,349/year for less active person
- Health benefit of a particular transportation policy or project can be computed by means of “Transit Health Benefits Calculator Spreadsheet ([www.vtpi.org/thbc.xls](http://www.vtpi.org/thbc.xls))”

**Michigan Experience and Analysis**

Hoback et. al. [Hoback, et. al., 2011] has conducted research to find the health benefit for anyone who walks to transit.

**WALKING DISTANCE TO TRANSIT**

The National Household Transportation Survey (NHTS) has lists of how people travel each day (U.S. DOT 2001). From this it was found that transit users walk 19 minutes per round trip (Besser and Dannenberg 2005). This equates to 0.95 miles (1.6 km) of walking (Considering walk speed is 3 miles per hour).

Transit users in Detroit Michigan walk 0.8 miles (1.3 km) per round trip, or 16 minutes walking at three mph. (Hoback et al. 2008) The GIS analysis measured the true walking distance from a home to a bus stop by conducting a network analysis of walking paths that followed the streets. The distance was
measured from the front of the property, where a car would have been otherwise parked, so that the net distance beyond walking to a car would be found. The walking distances to homes and possible destinations were combined with a statistical analysis of bus rider behaviors to find the average total round trip walking distance. Additionally, the analysis accounted for the rider’s preferred direction of travel. Bus riders will not walk to the closest bus stop if the stop is for the North bound bus when they want to go East. Instead they will walk to the East bound route if it will save them time even though the walk is longer.

There are many possible reasons for this difference between the NHTS and GIS results. Some reasons are: the respondents may have overestimated their walking time, they may have actually walked longer than the optimal route determined in GIS, or because the GIS numbers are for only Detroit but the NHTS numbers are for the whole country. The numbers would agree if the transit riders walked at 2.52 mph instead of the 3 mph assumed. Considering these comparisons, it is conservative to use the GIS prediction of 0.8 miles (1.3 km) in Detroit as the US walking distance. It is not practical to do a GIS analysis of every transit system in every metropolitan region to find a national average walking distance. Although, there is some reason to believe that walking distances might vary across the country. Willingness to walk could be effected by several factors such as weather conditions.

**PROJECTED OBESITY OF TRANSIT USERS**

Obesity rates can be projected for when transit is used. Michigan Obesity rates are 26.5%, 36.6%, and 36.9%, for obese, overweight, or neither (MDCH 2005). National data divides the population into more BMI subgroups. The National rates were used to subdivide the Michigan BMI categories as shown in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. Obesity incidence in Michigan in 2005.](image)

Next, obesity rates are projected for a profile of people who then begin using transit. If those riders don’t change their caloric consumption when they walk more, over five years they could lose significant
weight. Calculation of calories burned is a function of metabolic equivalents and weight, so BMI numbers need to be converted to body weight. The average male is 177 cm (5 foot 9.5 inches), and the average female is 164 cm (5 foot 4 inches). Therefore, considering distances walked to transit discussed above, it is determined that average transit users burn 68.6 calories per day. Those calories are then converted to pounds of fat and ultimately to BMI. The Michigan numbers for those using transit for five years improve to: 12.4%, 20%, and 67.6% for obese, overweight, or neither as shown in Figure 3. Much fewer people are overweight. Using five years is consistent with the findings of Brown and Werner (2009) which showed that new riders become less obese, but over a longer time continue to lose weight.

![Figure 3](image.png)

**Figure 3. Expected obesity in transit using subpopulation after five years.**

An obesity index is created to project health care costs. This is not just a measure of the number of people that are obese, but also of the severity of the obesity. The obesity index is defined here as the area of the incidence curve that is obese in percent times a factor for how obese they are in BMI. Currently, the Michigan obesity index is 16.01.

For those who begin riding transit, after five years their index would be 5.66. The new index has a 65% improvement in obesity based on severity, not just count of obese individuals. This assumes that other physical activity is not being replaced by walking to transit. This is a safe assumption because the people who are of most interest in this study are the inactive people. It is they who are causing the health expense due to physical inactivity and obesity.

**PROJECTED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OF TRANSIT USERS**

Of Michigan’s 7.6 million adults, 50.5% (3.84 million) are physically inactive, of those 22.6% have no activity (MDCH 2005). Although it is not true that some people do absolutely no activity, some do not do enough of incidental walking, carrying or lifting in order to raise the heart and breathing rates. A
physical activity incidence plot is shown in Figure 4. This assuming that there is an even distribution of physically inactive people in the range from no activity to just below being active.

![Figure 4. Incidence of physical activity before transit](image)

Transit riders walk on average of at least 0.8 miles (1.27 km) per day, or 16 minutes as discussed above. A person carrying a load would have a more rigorous workout. For example, considering net Metabolic rates a person carrying a ten pound (4.54 kg) load would get 40% more workout. Considering an assumed average weight carried of 3.1 lbs (1.4 kg), the equivalent workout is 18 minutes. That 18 minutes of exercise makes one third of inactive people become active as shown in Figure 5. The actual physical activity in Figure 4 is shifted to the right by 18 minutes to get the projected physical activity in Figure 5.

![Figure 5. Incidence of physical activity after transit](image)
Next a Physical Inactivity Index is defined, much like the Obesity Index above. It is the percent of the population inactive times the magnitude of their inactivity in minutes. The Inactivity Index reduces 70% from 10.97 to 3.38 for people walking to transit. Therefore, the count of inactive people reduces, but also the severity of inactivity lessens.

**HEALTH COST SAVINGS**

There are no studies that relate an exact amount of activity to a reduction in health care cost. However, it is reasonable to assume that there is a linear relationship between the level of physically activity and the amount of the health cost related to inactivity. Therefore according the index created above, physical inactivity related health costs would be reduced by 70% for new transit users. Likewise, obesity related health costs would reduce by 65%.

A physically inactive employee loses 0.079 of their productivity due to the inactivity (Chenoweth 2004). Additionally, $54 per year is spent on worker’s compensation for accidents that would not happen with physically active people. For obesity the numbers are 0.126 and $26, respectively.

The mean wage in Michigan is $22.68 per hour (U.S. Division of Labor 2004). Wages are 82.8% of total compensation (EBRI 2004). Therefore, the mean total yearly compensation is $57778, not including overtime.

Each physically inactive employee causes productivity loses at their employer of 0.079 x ($57778) = $4564 per year. Including workers compensation of $54 the total is $4618 per inactive employee. Each obese employee causes a productivity loss of 0.126 x ($57778) = $7280. Including workers compensation of $26 the total is $7306 per obese employee. The costs are additive for inactivity and obesity if the employee meets both criteria.

From the section above, we found that walking to transit should be 65% effective at reducing obesity after 5 years. Therefore, each employee that uses transit would save the employer $3002. A 70% reduction in inactivity results in a savings of $5114.

Estimated insurance savings are on the order of $3000 per employee. However, this is subject to some assumptions. The group rate negotiated by the insurance carrier is dependent upon the utilization or number of diagnoses in the group. Employers with physically inactive employees have higher rates because of higher utilization. Over time as the number of diagnoses goes down, it is assumed that the insurer would provide a better group rate.

Employers who provide health insurance and sick leave will have a cost savings of $11,116 for each employee that becomes physically active reduces obesity through walking to transit. This is for an average Michigan employer. Achieving savings depends upon several characteristics of the employer compensation package and employee health profiles.
Since employers are one of the biggest winners when someone becomes physically active, and people can become physically active through how they commute to work, a connection between the two can be made. A number of employer initiatives could be considered to encourage transit use. Many employers already encourage other forms of physical activity.

One possible employer initiative is to encourage a ride-a-bus day or week. That might encourage employees to try transit. Another possible initiative is to sponsor bus passes. An employer would likely see enough gains in productivity to offset the costs of sponsoring the program. A final suggestion is to offer to reduce the employee share of health insurance or co-pays for employees who ride the bus. An insurance company might be willing to partner with the employer for this.

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Appendix A - Detroit News Articles

The following Appendix provides an overview of all articles consulted, including a brief schematic summary of content and the overall orientation of articles (negative or positive towards transit. Articles have been retrieved from the LexisNexis database: <http://www.lexisnexis.com/lawschool/research/>

I. SMART DDOT MERGER, 1994

SMART and DDOT try merging 4 routes (June 20, 1994). The program was cancelled the following year when talks fell through.

**KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, MERGER**

**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE**

**SUMMARY:**

- SMART hopes that by merging routes, SMART and DDOT can seek funding from state officials.

**KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, MERGER**

**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE**

**SUMMARY:**

- consolidation of routes so successful that Michael Duggan, interim general manager of SMART is “ready to proceed to the next step [of] a full-fledged merger”.
- SMART reports that the number of complaints has dropped off significantly after 2 1/2 weeks of merged routes.
- There seems to be complaints about DDOT from passengers (buses arriving late) and several drivers (“not satisfied with the service”).

**KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, MERGER**
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE
SUMMARY:

- many riders frustrated in the first week of merged routes
- most complain about DDOT service: “Many riders Monday expressed a preference for SMART buses because they are cleaner and more reliable and have friendlier drivers than DDOT buses.”
- transfers increase in price, buses crowded, more stops for riders used to express rides to and from suburbs
- money saved by eliminating duplicate routes


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, MERGER

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

- merger would mean extension of hours on effected routes and the addition of Sunday service.
- cut costs by removing redundancies
- allow for Detroiter to pursue suburban employment
- some riders fear crowded DDOT buses
- talk of possible merging of maintenance facilities


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, MERGER

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL
SUMMARY:

- discussion of a loan that SMART is requesting from DDOT so that they can save their services
- If SMART can be saved, a merger could potentially benefit both systems. If SMART cannot be saved by this loan, then there is nothing for either system to work forward to.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, MERGER

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL
SUMMARY:

• “but the merger, if there is one... has to have some vision about how the new entity will function more efficiently and effectively than the two do now.”
• SMART in need of money – may call for an increase in taxes.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, MERGER

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE

SUMMARY:

• Experts: “a merger would improve service and cut costs”
• idea lacks suburban support because of much-needed taxes.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, MERGER

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE

SUMMARY:

• DDOT is advocating a merger with SMART but there is little support form suburban voters and politicians who fear the tax that will be necessary.
• “Many people, including Aho, want SMART and the Detroit system to merge. But they wonder where the money will be found to operate a regional system. Detroit's taxpayers put about $27 million into their bus system last year. Suburban taxpayers, however, don't provide SMART with similar subsidies. Both systems get substantial aid from federal and state taxpayers.”


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, MERGER

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL

SUMMARY:

• Pros: allow Detroiter to pursue suburban employment and prevent cutbacks in routes
• Cons: merger will be difficult to sell to suburban neighborhoods (where ridership is low) because of a potential increase in taxes.
II. COMMON REGIONAL PASS, 1996

SMART and DDOT establish a common regional bus pass. Further attempts to merge services along Woodward and five other routes fail.


**KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, BUS PASS**

**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE**

**SUMMARY:**

- Attempts to merge Detroit and suburban systems have failed in the past.
- DDOT and SMART begin selling regional bus passes for $49.50 each and combine seven routes. The bus passes are accepted by both systems.
- “The changes would allow SMART buses, for the first time, to pick up and drop off passengers in Detroit -- something city ordinance now prohibits. Detroit buses might be able to extend service into the suburbs on the seven routes.”


**KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DDOT**

**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE**

**SUMMARY:**

- DDOT and SMART “have been deadlocked for months over consolidating service on Woodward. So in a new turn, SMART and DDOT are competing instead of cooperating.”
- Both systems have expanded service into each other’s territories but have been unable to come to an agreement.


**KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, BUS PASS**
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE

SUMMARY:

- DDOT and SMART had planned to consolidate services but it's unclear when this will be achieved.
- SMART buses are prohibited from picking up or dropping off in the city.
- Consolidating services will likely improve DDOT services by reducing frequency of busing down Woodward from eight minutes to five minutes. SMART officials, however, fear that by consolidating services, express routes from the suburbs to the city may gain as many as fifteen minutes.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DDOT

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE

SUMMARY:

- Because of a dispute over $500,000 (DDOT claims that SMART owes this amount to City of Detroit because of SMART passes that DDOT had previously honored. DDOT and SMART will no longer be honoring each other's bus transfers, which means that passengers will have to pay full fare for each.
- DDOT expands services into the suburbs and in response, SMART General Manager Richard Kaufman said “If the city is willing to run as clean and efficient buses, with as courteous drivers, as SMART does, I'll be happy to let them serve those routes and allow me take my needed resources to other places in the suburbs.”


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, BUS PASS

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL

SUMMARY:

- “The polls also found that 59 percent of Detroiters supported merging the city and suburban bus systems, but less than 40 percent of suburbanites favored a merger.”


KEYWORD: DETROIT, TRANSIT, BUS PASS
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL
SUMMARY:

- DDOT and SMART both expand service by offering 24-hour service on the most traveled routes.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, BUS PASS

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

- A new regional pass will be accepted by both DDOT and SMART – this as a resolution to the previous disagreement between both transit systems regarding bus transfers between systems.
- “Lanita Robinson, 26, who lives in northwest Detroit, said the new agreement would allow her to keep her job at Wendy’s in Farmington Hills. Robinson would have paid about $50 a month more to go to and from work because of double fares.”
- This also means DDOT's plan for expanded suburban routes will not be implemented. The agreement seems to be a step toward consolidating services between the two systems.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, BUS

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE
SUMMARY:

- DDOT initiated a change to end the 29-year practice of honoring transfers between DDOT and SMART over a dispute regarding $500,000 that DDOT manager Albert Martin claims SMART owes the Detroit bus system.
- “The dispute was prompted by Martin's request that SMART pay Detroit $500,000 for honoring SMART passes since June 1994 when Detroit and SMART consolidated six routes. SMART does not charge riders for transfers. Detroit does.”


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, BUS
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE

SUMMARY:

- Residents of West Bloomfield Township vote on raising taxes by one-third of a mill to join and support SMART.
- SMART officials hope to convince this and other neighborhoods to join or re-join SMART so that the system can expand services.
- Service will likely increase compared to the service that West Bloomfield Township had received before it opted out of SMART.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, BUS

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE

SUMMARY:

- “… no one can ride a public bus to a terminal at Detroit's main airport. That's because Wayne County officials in 1986 gave Commuter Transportation Co. of Detroit exclusive rights to transport bus passengers to and from Metro Airport. As a result, SMART, the suburban transit system, must drop riders at a kiosk in a remote corner of the airport, where they catch a free shuttle to the terminals a mile away. The contract is up for renewal in June and some county commissioners are demanding that it be changed to allow SMART buses to travel directly to the terminals -- as routinely happens at major airports around the country.”


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, BUS

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE

SUMMARY:

- “Kaufman said his first efficiency goal is to merge six routes where SMART and Detroit buses operate: West Jefferson, Michigan, Woodward, Van Dyke, Gratiot and East Jefferson. On those routes, SMART buses entering Detroit drop off but don’t pick up riders. Outgoing buses pick up riders but don't drop any off inside the city. Kaufman thinks it makes sense for SMART to operate the routes to free city buses for other routes. He hopes to work out an agreement with Detroit this year as a step toward an eventual merger of the city and suburban systems.”
- In the past, discussions of a merger between the two systems always brought up one issue: who will control the system?
• Merging routes will likely improve efficiency of both systems.

III. DDOT TERMINATES SERVICE, 1998

DDOT terminates its suburban service. SMART picks up the abandoned routes.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DDOT

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE

SUMMARY:

• “The Wayne County Commission's Ways and Means Committee has scheduled a public hearing... on whether to withhold funding for the suburban bus system if it doesn't agree to take steps to consolidate routes with Detroit.”
• “Detroiters commuting to suburban jobs make up about half of SMART's daily ridership of 32,000”. Ken Rogers, a SMART board member, claims half of Michigan's jobs are created in Oakland so it is imperative to get workers to their jobs.
• DDOT and SMART have created a regional bus pass but future merging of the two systems is still unclear. The systems both do fairly well on their own but once movement of people crosses from city into suburbs, problems arise.
• The two systems often disagree and have been unable to resolve issues or consolidate routes after three years of negotiations. SMART argues that overlapping routes are not necessarily duplicated routes because SMART often provides routes for those with longer commutes who need fewer stops in between.
• DDOT has reduced routes in some suburban areas but the system's director, Albert Martin, says that this decision may be reversed if the two systems can agree to create “short-, intermediate- and long-hop service on city-suburban routes”. Although much bickering remains between DDOT and SMART, some argue that service on overlapping routes has improved with both systems through competition.

For now, many workers risk losing their jobs if they can't rely on current systems.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DDOT

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL
SUMMARY:

- Wayne County threatens to cut funding to suburban bus system, SMART. Some hope that this will encourage DDOT and SMART to join. This comes after three years of disputes between both systems.
- Wayne County Commissioner Bernard Park: "I'd rather see SMART go out of business and let DDOT take over the whole system than to continue to have two services."
- Many Detroit residents travel to the suburbs for work but are unable to get to them without reliable transit service. So, cuts to SMART that threaten the system's existence will heavily impact employees from Detroit, the service's main users.
- Ron Ristau, SMART: "Our riders are using both systems," Ristau said. "People ask, 'Why aren't you coordinated?' But from a passenger's point-of-view, we already are."


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DDOT

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE

SUMMARY:

- Simultaneously, Wayne County commissioners and a state House subcommittee are both considering withholding funding from SMART and DDOT unless steps are taken to merge or consolidate services.
- Cutting funding in Wayne County would greatly affect employees from Detroit and would likely put an end to SMART, according to SMART General Manager Richard Kaufman.
- "SMART gets $35 million a year in state funding -- more than half of its $60-million budget. DDOT, with an annual budget of $150 million, gets $65 million."
- DDOT manager, Albert Martin understands what brought the state to these measures but warns that it will hurt passengers the most.
- The two systems have already been “working together to develop a regional bus pass... uniform fare boxes... [and] compatible radio and scheduling systems.”


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DDOT

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE
SUMMARY:

- Many from Detroit go to the suburbs for work. DDOT's cutting of 20 suburban routes will have major impacts on those who depend on the transit service to keep their jobs.

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**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE**

SUMMARY:

- “Responding to cuts by the Detroit Department of Transportation, suburban bus system SMART plans to expand service throughout the metro area this spring” because of increased ridership from Detroit.
- “expanded service, starting as early as March, will include a new route on 7 Mile serving Livonia Mall from Grand River and pickups every half-hour instead of hourly in peak hours on Plymouth Road in Livonia from Grand River to Wonderland.”

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**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE**

SUMMARY:

- When employers are looking to fill jobs and there are plenty of people looking for work, a reliable transit system is especially imperative yet DDOT and SMART have been unable to reach an agreement to merge systems. Until then, both systems “continue to madden riders with tedious, patchwork service and force employers to think twice about hiring people who don't have their own transportation.”

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**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE**
SUMMARY:

- Proposal for a regional managing agent between systems – currently much of the bickering between the two systems comes down to politics and the lack of authority.
- “Unlike metro Detroit, most urban systems with more than one transportation agency have strong governing bodies to coordinate service.”
- This after DDOT and SMART fail to consolidate service on major corridors such as Woodward.
- “Lack of coordinated routes wasn't the big problem. A larger problem... was coordinating schedules -- or "time points" -- to reduce waits between buses... that problem would lessen when a joint software package starts operating, late this year, giving DDOT and SMART schedulers up-to-the-minute reports on each other's schedule changes.”

Gerritt, Jeff. "SMART to add routes cut by city most Detroit, suburb links to be preserved." Detroit Free Press, January 13, Tuesday Metro Final (1998): 4B. Print.

KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DDOT

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE

SUMMARY:

- After city cancels suburban routes, SMART expands bus service to make up for cuts.
- “SMART also will study ridership over the next 30 days to determine whether to expand further. SMART serves nearly 200,000 riders a week -- most of them Detroiters traveling to suburban jobs or suburbanites traveling to Detroit jobs.”
- Novi did not take part in the millage in 1995 so SMART will not be replacing service to Twelve Oaks Mall.
- “Overall, the canceled routes should be troublesome for only a small number of the about 1,500 riders affected, Ristau said.”


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DDOT

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL

SUMMARY:

- Letter: Richard C Kaufman, General Manager SMART
- Minimizes disputes between DDOT and SMART to the city's demand for funds from Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties.
- SMART service has greatly improved services and recently expanded service with ten new routes.
Livonia, which contributes $1.2 million per year to SMART, had been considering discontinuing this funding but Livonia Mayor Jack Kirksey would like to reverse this recommendation after meeting with SMART officials.

This in light of recent cuts by DDOT for suburban routes that serve Livonia. SMART has expanded service to Livonia, including one new route on 7 mile to Livonia Mall.

“DDOT cuts have nearly doubled ridership on SMART.”

IV. FUNDING CUTS, 1999

- $10 million cuts in transit as incentive for SMART and DDOT to resolve feud and combine services.
- Fears that current pressure to improve services will be made increasingly difficult with cuts in funding.
- New funding plan presented November 24, 1999


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, FUNDING, CUTS

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE

SUMMARY:

- cuts to the service unless SMART and DDOT show dramatic improvements to current service as an incentive.
- SMART and DDOT feel that cuts will make a terrible situation even worse. They also believe the criteria to be too difficult to quantify.
- Regular bus rider: “The problem is we lack money. If we could afford more buses, they could run more often and provide better service.”


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, FUNDING, CUTS
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE

SUMMARY:

• “1. For the past three years, lawmakers have threatened to hold back or cut subsidies to the Metro Detroit bus systems if they didn’t do better job of combining services. 2. A unified bus network is expected to provide better service for riders.”

$10 million reduction


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, FUNDING, CUTS

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE

SUMMARY:

• Letter to the Editor from the Executive Director of the Community Transportation Association of America, Washington, DC, Dale J. Marsico
• Agree with The Detroit News' view that lack of funding is the real issue.
• SMART “has achieved an enviable record of service innovation and success” despite the difficult environment.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, FUNDING, CUTS

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE

SUMMARY:

• Letter to the Editor from the General Manager of SMART, Dan G. Dirks.
• Questions the need for further funding from counties but disagrees with transit cuts from the state (Michigan) in light of a push for transit to “get unemployed citizens to work to job growth areas.”
• “In 1995, SMART made three promises to voters. It would eliminate its deficit, redesign the service and develop partnerships for small bus community based programs. We are honoring those commitments.”

Gov. John Engler vows to “withhold millions in transportation money and impose a coordinated regional plan on feuding Metro Detroit bus systems” unless SMART and DDOT resolve feud.

Funding will be cut to 1997 levels if there is not sufficient coordination by fall.

“Bus system leaders are criticizing a state plan to give more money to some transit agencies deemed more efficient -- and less money to others.”

November 24, 1999 – MDOT releases a transit funding plan to aid in funding based on following criteria:

• ridership
• efficiency measures such as cost per mile
• local contributions

“Simply spending more money on the current system will not lead to adequate improvements in service” - Greg Rosine, MDOT’s chief administrative officer.

Some fear cuts will make current service conditions even more difficult.

MOSES group rallying for funding

SMART believes that state funding at the 10-percent level will allow for necessary improvements to transit.
KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, FUNDING, CUTS
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

- Letter to clear up misconceptions about past and current state funding for Detroit transit.
- “we don't agree that simply putting additional funds into the current system is appropriate.” - Gary G. Naeyaert, Director of Communications, MDOT


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, FUNDING, CUTS
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE
SUMMARY:

- State threatens $10 million reduction in funding for Detroit transit if SMART and DDOT don’t make progress in coordination of routes.
- A merging of services would require agreement between the three counties (Wayne, Oakland and Macomb) – suburban transit leaders are sceptical of a merger because they believe it might lead to an increase in cost and render the services less efficient.
- Withholding aid punishes current systems and those it serves.

V. FIRST ITERATION OF DARTA, 2001

Legislation to form DARTA is vetoed by Governor John Engler. SMART millage is increased from .33 mi to .59 mi and successfully passes in all three countries.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE
SUMMARY:

- Lansing's latest proposal for a “regional transit authority is still like a new bus without a road map: state-of-the-art, expensive and lost.”
- Money will likely need to come from millage, taxing communities to raise funds for the nearly $2 million bill.
Detroit's People Mover: “expensive system with few passengers, not only eats scarce resources, closing other service options, but loses public support.” New regional transit authority needs to face the challenge of a lack of density in Detroit.

Heinlein, Gary. "Veto is key to brokering transit deal; Backers hope it will end bickering over control, money." Detroit News, December 14, Friday Two dot. (2001): 1D. Print.

**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** POSITIVE
**SUMMARY:**
- Mayor Kilpatrick believes that creating a regional transit authority (with equal veto power given to each board member) will remove Detroit’s political stalemate and bring federal funds for transit into Detroit.
- Improving mass transit will also play a huge role in creating equal opportunities for those who rely on public transit to get to work.


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** NEGATIVE
**SUMMARY:**
- The author takes up issue with instituting much higher millage on suburban communities than on those in Detroit to fund the newly proposed regional transit authority without giving these communities more say in how the money will be spent.
- A regional transit authority is a waste of time for southeast Michigan because DDOT and SMART are just too different.


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** NEUTRAL
**SUMMARY:**
- “It is shameful that people who need jobs can’t rely on public transportation to get to employers who need workers. That’s a drag on the region's economy. So a regional transportation authority is a welcome development.”
It will be difficult to combine services of DDOT and SMART but the two will receive federal and state funds through the authority, though this will mean redundancies and therefore wasted money. The main goal will be to make both systems more efficient in their resources. “The St. Louis lesson: Just because you build a new system doesn't mean people will use it.”


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE
SUMMARY:

“most urgent need in Southeast Michigan: getting Detroit residents to jobs within the city and the suburbs in an efficient and economical manner.”
“But the plan does not call for the poorly performing Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) to be folded into a regional transit authority. DDOT would remain a separate entity while the authority runs only SpeedLink.” - SpeedLink was eventually abandoned.
A study by KPMG, “accounting firm for the Detroit auditor general's office...compared DDOT to systems in Denver, Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Milwaukee. The audit's conclusion was that DDOT ran more buses for fewer people than other cities, resulting in a higher cost per passenger.”
“Funding for...any transit plan has yet to be settled.”


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

Metro Detroit officials approved a $2-billion plan, SpeedLink, to build a regional transit system that would include rapid-transit buses for dedicated lanes on roads.
“The regional transit authority would run [this] system.... [while DDOT and SMART] would continue to operate as separate entities.”

KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

• DARTA would ideally merge all of the existing bus systems and possibly pave way for light rail or more reliable buses in the future.
• The author describes southeast Michigan's as unique in its traffic patterns and heavy reliance on solo commuting.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

• Mayor Kilpatrick pushes for the passing of a regional transit authority but unions fear that the authority will utilize private services that will not include union transit workers.
• The bill passed in state House Thursday, December 13th.
• The mayor recognizes the role of unions in a city like Detroit but “has enough objectivity to know when things have shifted too far to one side.”


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

• Regional transit authority to coordinate DDOT and SMART bus systems and eventually work toward the creation of rapid transit in the region.
• DARTA would likely replace the Regional Transit Coordinating Council.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE
SUMMARY:

- Officials creating DARTA recognize importance of union groups and go back to the drawing board to rework language of plan.
- They will work quickly before Legislature adjourns but many think it important to write plan correctly, rather than quickly.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE

SUMMARY:

- Oakland officials are not on board with plan for regional transit authority because it implies expansion of protections for unions representing DDOT and SMART transit workers.
- Officials also worry that there is little chance for success with DARTA because there just isn't adequate funding for an estimated $1 million to run the system annually.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE

SUMMARY:

- Two main issues arise in wake of DARTA creation:
  - Who is in charge?
  - Who will pay?
  - Expanding labor protections will prevent support from Oakland officials and Republican-controlled Legislature.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE

SUMMARY:

- Improvements to regional transit to play a significant role in fighting with urban sprawl and allow for equal-opportunity transportation.

**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** NEGATIVE  
**SUMMARY:**
- Suburban support for a property tax to raise funds to improve transit is gaining.
- “In June [of 2001], the elected leaders of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties and Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer pledged to support a regional transit authority.”
- The difficulty will be convincing a public that is set in their ways to begin utilizing public transit.


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** POSITIVE  
**SUMMARY:**
- “'The missing link in public transportation is that we can't get workers to jobs quickly,' said David Sanders, vice president of the Metropolitan Affairs Coalition.”


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** POSITIVE  
**SUMMARY:**
Letter from Tom Barwin, City Manager, Ferndale:
- “While many people... appreciate the businesses and political leaders, including [Oakland County Executive L. Brooks] Patterson, involved in making the regional transit authority breakthrough, any dictates about what a regional mass transit system must or must not include are premature and risk blowing up the entire effort before we can even get to the starting line, yet again.”
- General sentiment: don't let this opportunity to improve mass transit in the southeast Michigan region slip away like before.
VI. DARTA VETOED, 2002

Legislation to form DARTA is vetoed by Governor John Engler. SMART millage is increased from .33 mi to .59 mi and successfully passes in all three countries.


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA  
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** POSITIVE  
**SUMMARY:**

- DARTA bill passes both state House and Senate after 18 months of negotiations.  
- DARTA isn’t a “sure fix to what ails regional mass transit... but “it’s a start”.
- The article recommends that the authority should first focus on fixing issues that affect service and then turn to greater solutions for public transit in Detroit.  
- “Metro Detroit got a much-needed boost toward unified mass transit” with passing of DARTA bill.


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA  
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** NEUTRAL  
**SUMMARY:**

- DARTA “only establishes the political bureaucracy for future improvements.”
- Battles ahead for DARTA:
- bill sent ahead for Gov. John Engler's signature
- the measure does not mean that money is set aside for the authority
- reports must be compiled to determine needed improvements to public transit requires staff and offices
- resolve conflict and work toward regional cooperation between DDOT and SMART.
- appeal to voters who will ultimately have to help fund the initiative


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA  
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** NEGATIVE
SUMMARY:

- There is a divide between DDOT and SMART systems that needs to be resolved in order for regional transit to move forward.
- “Outlying residents also are discouraged from using public transportation to get to offices in downtown Detroit”
- Public opinion of mass transit is tainted because of past and current misfortunes.
- If the legislation does not pass immediately, $500,000 to $1 million in federal start-up money for the new authority will be gone.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE

SUMMARY:

- Disabled persons groups and MOSES are advocating for the establishment of DARTA. They are trying to create urgency among Detroit residents because they believe that establishing mass transit will be helpful for seniors and disabled persons.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE

SUMMARY:

- Detroit area largely sceptical of transit but politicians pushing for law to be created.
- General sentiment seems to be that the establishment of DARTA is a start, but that “letters...and laws” are not concrete solutions.


KEYWORD: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE

SUMMARY:

- Fate of DARTA still uncertain
“Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick and business leaders consider that crucial to the area's economic future. Critics say it's a costly and useless attempt to convert area motorists into bus and train riders.”

“Even if the transit bill is passed, improvements are several years away. There's an 18-month timetable for drawing up a comprehensive plan. The fight over how to pay for it, likely to involve new taxes, could take months or years more. Improvements might include commuter trains and special buses running in dedicated traffic lanes.”


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA

**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** NEGATIVE

**SUMMARY:**

- A public transportation renewal means an increase in millage because pro-transit forces are coupling voters' decline of the new tax with a removal of services. This will likely cause voters to cave into the request for fear of losing public transit systems.

- The difficulty is that with a “if you build it, they will come” mentality, the systems haven't been able to generate enough revenue because of few customers.


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA

**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** NEGATIVE

**SUMMARY:**

- “Local elected officials will have a hard time finding appointees for the governing body of the new Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority because no one will want to be stuck on a DARTA board.”


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA

**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** NEUTRAL

**SUMMARY:**

- In favour of DARTA:
- A start to “subtle, immediate” improvements in transit services.
• The transit authority will put Detroit transit in a better position to receive federal and state funds.
• “will give the region a unified voice” - Dan Dirks, General Manager of SMART.
• Limited authority:
  • Significant changes will not be immediate, due to lack of funds for projects that include adding new routes, starting up rail lines or increasing the frequency of buses on existing routes.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL
SUMMARY:
• “Before the session broke off, Kilpatrick won final approval of legislation to create a regional bus system for metro Detroit. The Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority (DARTA) would encompass up to five counties surrounding Detroit, cross county lines, and would be run by an eight-member board appointed by officials in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties and the city of Detroit. Washtenaw and Livingston counties would each have an appointee on the board if their residents voted to join the authority.”


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL
SUMMARY:
• Senate Republicans wanted to trade support for the DARTA bill for Democratic approval of laws that would raise the number of charter schools allowed in the state and extend the tenure of the appointed Detroit schools board.
• This eventually led to the veto of the DARTA bill by Gov. John Engler.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:
• The DARTA bill, which creates the regional transit authority, will be presented to the Legislature. If passed, elected officials from each county will appoint two members each to the board.


KEYWORD: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

• Mass transit enabling those with disabilities.
• If not approved, the state will lose more than $1.2 million in federal funds delegated toward the authority.
• Opposition from labor unions who believe job protection is at risk for transit workers with the new authority.
• Republicans fear it would create a big government bureaucracy.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

• Metropolitan Organizing Strategy for Enabling Strength (MOSES) rallies for legislature to approve DARTA bill.
• Labor unions and Republicans oppose the bill (See previous article – Helms)
• DARTA would create plans for improvements to public transportation in Detroit.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL
SUMMARY:

• The DARTA bill gets caught up in politics as it is not taken up by the Michigan House Representatives. It is believed by members of the Republican caucus that this is due to there not being an endorsement in the governor’s race by the Detroit Regional Chamber.
• Regional leaders are expected to rework the plan.
• The House Representatives are not expected to return to Lansing until after the November 5th elections.

**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA  
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** NEUTRAL  
**SUMMARY:**
- In light of the election of a new governor, the DARTA bill has been put on hold.
- Several members of the Republican House say this is due to the Detroit Regional Chamber not yet endorsing Lt. Gov. Dick Posthumus for governor.


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA  
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** POSITIVE  
**SUMMARY:**
- A compromise has been made in the proposal for DARTA which will make it more difficult for individual counties to opt out of the authority. This “angers some Republicans... but it appeases some Democrats, who voted against the bill in June because it offered few protections for organized labor.
- The decision, overall, was unanimous, which lead many to believe that it would be easily passed when the Legislature meets again on September 17th.


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA  
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** POSITIVE  
**SUMMARY:**
- DARTA faces some opposition from suburban communities who have much lower ridership.
- 0.6 property tax mill passed in all three counties to help fund services. Had this failed in any of the counties, service would have been discontinued.

KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

• “Because metro Detroit voters passed a tax millage for suburban bus service by a comfortable margin, transit planners hope that means there is broader support for an even better public regional system."


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

• “It took hours of negotiations Wednesday, but a regional transportation authority bill made it through the state Senate on a partisan vote.”
• Many Republican members were happy to see labor protections taken out of the bill, and opt-out options allowed.
• All Democrats voted against the bill.
• “DARTA would oversee public transportation in southeast Michigan, contracting with SMART and DDOT, the agencies that provide bus service in the suburbs and Detroit, and planning for improvements to mass transit.”
• The passing of the bill at the state level brings hope to those who see DARTA as a start to improvements with current transit service.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

• Plenty of excitement surrounding DARTA bill, however, labor and economic issues still need to be figured out.
• Labor: DDOT and SMART labor groups want it so that workers cannot be laid off. The chamber and Oakland County argue that this would “cripple the transportation systems during uncertain economic times”.
• The bill will be considered by the Senate before it can be passed in June.

**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA

**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** POSITIVE

**SUMMARY:**

- Allegedly, some party legislators' votes on the DARTA issue are related to whether or not they receive an invitation to a chamber event.

**VII. DARTA FORMED, 2003**

DARTA is formed through an interlocal intergovernment agreement (IGA) with powers, functions, responsibilities and authority essential to providing quality public transportation but it needed the consent of Michigan municipalities. SEMCOG convenes the transit impediments committee of elected officials. This iteration of the bill differs from the previous iteration that was passed by the Legislature but eventually vetoed by former Gov. John Engler in 2002.

WALDMEIR, PETE. "Transit plan was noble try, but its creation appears doomed." Detroit News, November 26, Front (2003): 1B. Print.

**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA

**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** NEGATIVE

**SUMMARY:**

- Very negative view of DARTA, claiming it to have been doomed from the start.
- Although articles from earlier in the year acknowledged that the authority had limits, any controversy surrounding the issue was portrayed as merely an obstacle in the way of a very important cause. This tone of this article is quite different from those in earlier months of 2003.
- “the Big Four could not transfer their authority to the 11-member DARTA board they had created. Consequently, DARTA has no power to do anything regarding the two bus systems they are supposed to oversee except maybe ride on them.”


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA

**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

• Letter to the Editor

“National experience demonstrates that a regional transit authority that brokers and coordinates the services of two or more local transit service providers presents the best model for progress in areas with the diversity of our region. Undoubtedly, that is the reason why there are only a handful of regions today that provide transit service using a single service provider.”

• “We agree with the Dec. 17 Detroit News editorial that recognizes that no bill is perfect and admits that, for a region that sorely lacks an effective regional transit system, DARTA provides a meaningful ‘place to start.’”


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL

SUMMARY:

• Negative response to DARTA from Lansing

• Blind citizen relies entirely on transportation from others. He says that he cannot depend on Detroit’s transit system. He and others are pushing for the creation of DARTA.

• Opt-out creates gaps in the authority – many argue this would defeat the purpose of DARTA.

• Victoria Kovari of MOSES (faith-based organization dedicated to revitalizing Detroit) attributes the opposition to DARTA to racism, claiming that the suburban neighborhoods do not want to meld their transit services with Detroit's.

Detroit News. "Attitude Adjustment Needed To Make Transit Work; Regional agency shows progress, but more must be done to give area effective mass transit." June 2, Monday No dot. (2003): 10A. Print.

KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE

SUMMARY:

• DARTA is a start, but not the solution for fixing mass transit. The author's concern is that it will take a change in attitude toward the city's transit (known for poor service and late or absent buses) and stronger cooperation between counties to make a regional transit system successful.

The original plan for DARTA was much more cohesive and appeared promising for mass transit in Detroit (this plan was vetoed in 2002 by former Governor John Engler).

“That original scheme would have given Metro Detroit stronger central planning for its two public bus systems -- the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART). The agency would not have directly operated DDOT or SMART. But it would have been enormously influential in setting regional transit priorities and distributing public transportation dollars.” - this references the devastation of losing $850,000 in federal funds promised to DARTA.

This year, labor groups are filing a lawsuit that questions the legality of DARTA’s creation and Macomb County has opted out of the authority.


Frustration about DARTA getting caught up in politics (Former Governor John Engler’s veto of the DARTA bill likely over the state Senate’s “failure to support more charter schools for Detroit”).

Supporters will work to revise and represent the bill. The author maintains that the veto of DARTA is detrimental to southeast Michigan’s future.


“Mass transit is a solution that hasn't been tried with any seriousness since the days when Detroit was a great and vibrant city.”

Successful communities... are built with the ability to serve the entire diversity of their population. With more than a million residents dependent on transit -- the young, the very old, some with disabilities, some impoverished, some environmentally concerned -- southeast Michigan absolutely needs a viable alternative to the all-powerful automobile.”
KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE
SUMMARY:

Letter 2:

- “... in my opinion [DARTA] will simply be a larger Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation and will continue to be a drain on the taxpayers of Southeast Michigan through continued millage requests.”

*Detroit News*. "Don't Let Communities Secede from Mass Transit Pact; A bus system that skips whole towns is of marginal value to passengers." February 09, Sunday No dot. (2003): 16A. Print.

KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL
SUMMARY:

- Allowing whole towns or counties to opt out of DARTA will render it unsuccessful in achieving regional mass transit.

*Detroit News*. "Mass Transit Won't Work without Macomb County; State lawmakers should try again to create a transportation authority with teeth." August 23, Saturday No dot. (2003): 8D. Print.

KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE
SUMMARY:

- In the author’s opinion, the veto of the DARTA bill by former Governor John Engler weakened the plan. When it was revived, counties argued that they should be able to opt out of the agreement and the plan was attacked with a lawsuit from labor groups that questioned its legality.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE
SUMMARY:

- A ruling states that government members of DARTA are not able to transfer their municipal powers to DARTA.
- The lawsuit will make it so that $850,000 of Federal money will no longer be available for DARTA.
• Board Members blame unions for blocking changes to bus service in Metro Detroit but the unions (some believed that new service plans would contract out for work in order to save money).


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA  
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** NEGATIVE  
**SUMMARY:**

• Chairwoman of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners, Nancy White, signed an agreement to create DARTA.
• This caused upset with residents of Macomb County who feared that they would be bound to DARTA and the expansion of regional mass transit.
• State Attorney General Mike Cox said that White was able to vote on the creation of the authority but that her signature does not bind Macomb County.


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA  
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** NEGATIVE  
**SUMMARY:**

• $850,000 of federal money promised to DARTA will be withheld pending a lawsuit filed by a union representing DDOT workers. The lawsuit claims DARTA was formed illegally.
• “The deal was signed in May by the mayor of Detroit, county executives in Wayne and Oakland counties and the heads of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners, Detroit City Council and SMART, which provides bus service in the suburbs.”
• Organized labor is upset with not being included in the negotiations to create DARTA.


**KEYWORDS:** DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA  
**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT:** NEUTRAL  
**SUMMARY:**

• “The legal arguments against DARTA are flimsy. State statute gives leaders, acting as the old Regional Transit Coordinating Council, the authority to develop a transportation plan and coordinate service. It also allows them to transfer that power and, if necessary, the money.”
Governor Jennifer Granholm has invested a lot into the creation of DARTA. When it was not approved by legislators, she pushed for its creation without the approval of the legislature. She must work, now, to ensure that federal money from DARTA is not entirely lost (the money is lost entirely).


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:
- Advocates for DARTA blame politics for former Governor John Engler's veto.
- "supporters said Thursday they'll move quickly to get state lawmakers to approve a new attempt”
- House Speaker Rick Johnson, R-LeRoy, believes that it is essential to southeast Michigan to have a regional transit authority.
- Federal money is at stake if the bill is not reintroduced and passed immediately.


KEYWORD: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL
SUMMARY:
- Supporters of DARTA continue to work toward the creation of the authority, fearing that $850,000 of federal money will be lost.
- Republicans have battled Governor Jennifer Granholm on issues of “budget and other matters”.
- Previous attempts to pass DARTA failed partly due to disagreements about allowing individual counties to leave the authority – many believed this would defeat the purpose of a regional transit authority.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE
SUMMARY:

• State Rep. Leon Drolet, R-Clinton Township paid to rerun an ad run by supporters of DARTA because it made a case against the authority – suburban taxpayers' money will largely fund the project with Detroiter reaping most of the benefits.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE

SUMMARY:

• “Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson promised to appoint people to the Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority who would agree with him on the best way to get people to jobs, doctor's appointments and entertainment facilities in Detroit.”
• Patterson views light rail and SpeedLink proposals as lofty, expensive ideas. He believes that the only way to improve mass transit in the Detroit area is to improve the efficiency of DDOT and SMART services.
• Ferndale City Manager, Tom Barwin, sees this as a way to stop any progress with DARTA and mass transit in general.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL

SUMMARY:

• The difficulty of improving mass transit is that it won't be easy to meet the needs of different communities.
• Improving efficiency is key.
• DARTA also faces opposition from labor groups (who have filed a lawsuit against the authority) and there is tension in Macomb County after Nancy White, chairwoman of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners, and her signing of the DARTA agreement.

ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE

SUMMARY:

- “Progress depends on a favorable decision. Thousands of low-income workers rely on unreliable buses to get to jobs. The region's public transit system has become a national embarrassment and a roadblock to economic growth. Even so, two AFSCME locals, representing maintenance and clerical workers at the Detroit Department of Transportation, have filed suit against the new Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority. They argue that leaders in the tri-county region did not have the legislative authority to create it.”
- “At bottom, the union locals are concerned about jobs, pay and working conditions. That's unwarranted. The new authority aims to expand mass transit, and that means more jobs for transit workers. DARTA will receive federal money and must comply with federal labor protections. The DARTA agreement itself honors existing labor contracts and protects wages and benefits.”


ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE

SUMMARY:

Letter:

- “The board will consist of eight appointees, usually called party hacks, instead of the existing four-person SMART board composed of elected officials.”
- "Somewhere down the road, if DARTA comes up with a taxation proposal to be approved by the Legislature, a local election can be held. The option here, of course, is to specify a tax or taxes and permit the election in the spring of 2003."
- "Coordination, that old undefinable term, is extremely weak. A proposal to detail coordination has been ignored, thus permitting the continuation of the Detroit Department of Transportation, instead of its abolition after a tax approval.”


ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL

SUMMARY:

- The DARTA bill that has been approved by the state House committee is different from the DARTA bill that had been approved by the Legislature but later vetoed.
- This iteration will make it easier for communities to opt out of the agreement.
- Its main goal is to coordinate the Detroit and suburban transit systems.
VIII. DARTA DISSOLVED, 2006

The Michigan State Supreme Court decision dissolved DARTA and the IGA. The RTCC hired a CEO (John Hertel) to direct a mass transit program in Southeastern Michigan: the Detroit Regional Mass Transit Project.

*Detroit News.* "Rapid transit may pull into Detroit; Grant will help city plan for new system, which could include bus service, street cars or a rail line.." November 3, (2006): 1B. Print.

**KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA**

**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE**

**SUMMARY:**

- Money for public transit is hard to come by so the city has hired an engineering firm from San Francisco to study which plans are feasible.
- Many favor rapid transit because it is typically the preferred method of young professionals.


**KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA**

**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE**

**SUMMARY:**

Letter from L. Brooks Patterson:

- DARTA was vetoed by John Engler and when the office fought to resurrect the authority, it was struck down by the state courts.
- Argues that Oakland largely supports Detroit and the southeast Michigan region through efforts with DARTA and otherwise.


**KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

**ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEGATIVE**

**SUMMARY:**

- “Ideally, [DDOT and SMART] should be dissolved in favor of one regional operation.”
- “The suburbs are always put off by talk of an actual merger between the two systems because they don't want to assume DDOT's high retirement and operating costs.”
KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

• John Hertel takes over analysis to determine how to improve mass transit in southeast Michigan. He was appointed CEO of the Regional Transit Coordinating Council which oversees the city and suburban transit system.
• It was ruled by the state Supreme Court that DARTA was illegally created.
• “Hertel knows southeast Michigan will continue to lag behind other regions without a viable public transportation system”
• Hertel’s leadership will help retain nearly $1 in federal funding.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

• Hertel’s job: to “forge a consensus in metro Detroit, Lansing and Washington on public transportation.” and consolidate DDOT and SMART services.


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL
SUMMARY:

• Kirk Steudle, director of Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) on whether or not a new transit authority will be created after DARTA's failure: “The chances of getting a regional transportation authority through legislation in Lansing are slim to none. I don't think that's going to happen - not this year, for sure. But we intend to facilitate the discussion here and figure out how we can best coordinate transit service and make it efficient and effective.”

KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

• After DARTA was declared “illegally established”, progress with mass transit in southeast Michigan is at a stand still.
• Still unknown whether or not the region is still eligible for $1 million in federal funding.
• The only chance for a successful new regional transit authority to take DARTA’s place is for state lawmakers to “approve a bill that would enable southeast Michigan to form a DARTA under state law.”


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

• DARTA was ruled illegal and local officials do not expect that DARTA will be able to make it through Legislature in time to keep federal funds.
• The only hope for regional transit is for DDOT and SMART to forge an agreement and move forward with improvements.


KEYWORD: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: NEUTRAL
SUMMARY:

• “The region should unite now and tell the Legislature either to get on board or get out of the way. Metro Detroit needs a single transportation authority to plan and coordinate service for the entire region, including a proposed rapid transit line between downtown Detroit and Ann Arbor. The best way to do that is through state legislation. But the Legislature, caught up in petty, partisan politics, has refused to act.”


KEYWORDS: DETROIT, TRANSIT, DARTA
ORIENTATION TOWARDS TRANSIT: POSITIVE
SUMMARY:

• “DARTA cruises into law”
Appendix B – Biographic Sketches of Key Investigators

The University of Detroit Mercy (UDM) transit research team includes six faculty investigators, four graduate students and three undergraduate students from three of UDM’s schools and colleges: the School of Architecture, the College of Engineering and Science, and the School of Law. Their expertise and experience ranges from deep knowledge of transit systems to legal, economic and community development, political, technical and media issues.

**Dr. Leo Hanifin, Principle Investigator:** Dr. Hanifin, Professor, Mechanical Engineering, was previously the Director of the Michigan Ohio University Transportation Center for seven years and Principle Investigator for the “Woodward Transit Catalyst Plan Project” that brought together faculty from UDM’s engineering and architecture with consultants from Deloitte to create a plan that has led to public-private partnership to reintroduce rail-based transit in Detroit. Dr. Hanifin served as Dean of the College of Engineering and Science for twenty one years until he stepped down last August to pursue his research and teaching interests in regional transit and innovation in corporations.

**Lloyd A. Semple, JD** is Dean of the University of Detroit Mercy’s School of Law. Prior to joining the School he practiced general corporate law from 1964 to 2004 with the Detroit-based law firm of Dykema Gossett. During his legal career, Dean Semple was involved in many activities involving transportation, including as a member of the Board of Directors of Metropolitan Affairs Coalition from 2000-2008 which, as an affiliate of SEMCOG, had an extensive involvement in Southeast Michigan transportation issues. Dean Semple also served for eight years as Councilman and Mayor Pro Tem of the City of Grosse Pointe Farms where he was actively involved in transportation issues.

**Dr. Utpal Dutta, P.E.** is a Professor of the Department of Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering at the University of Detroit Mercy. Dr. Dutta has over twenty years of teaching and research experience in transportation. In recent years, he has worked in the areas of optimization, traffic operation, transit modeling / operations/maintenance, safety, and transit oriented development (TOD).

**Claudia Bernasconi** is a registered architect in the European Union and an Assistant Professor of Architecture at University of Detroit Mercy. Her research focuses on preferences, attitudes and behaviors of riders/non riders toward transportation systems. She has worked on several transit-related funded projects. Recent studies focused on public perception of transportation corridors and pedestrian transportation, on walkability, and on design and perception of automated transportation systems.

**Dr. Alan S. Hoback, PE,** is chair of Civil, Architectural & Environmental Engineering at the University of Detroit Mercy. Dr. Hoback has a diverse set of research interests related to transportation. His
transit research has ties to the areas of psychology, energy use, planning and cost, economic impact, community development, social justice, geographic information systems, health and safety.

**Scott Anderson** was an investigator for the “Woodward Transit Catalyst Plan Project”, working with a multidisciplinary team within the University and outside consultants to create a light rail plan for the Detroit corridor. He has studied transit for many years including the health benefits of transit. He is also the lead author of the “Rolling Rapid Transit” proposal that was integrated into the state bill to create a Regional Transit Authority. Scott is an adjunct professor of Mathematics and was previously City Councilman and Mayor Pro Tempore of Berkley.

**Scott Douglas**, Graduate Assistant, is transportation professional on an educational leave from the Michigan Department of Transportation. Scott holds a bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Detroit Mercy and is studying in UDM’s Masters in Community Development Program.

**Mariarosaria Di Palo**, Graduate Assistant, holds bachelors and masters degrees in architecture from the University of Roma Tre in Rome, Italy and practiced architecture for six years, including community and transportation development. She is also studying in UDM’s Masters in Community Development Program.

**Nishita Patel**, Graduate Assistant, holds a Bachelor of Civil Engineering from Visveswaraiah Technological University, India. Nishita has worked as a project coordinator, as a design coordinator, as well as a billing (estimating) engineer. She is studying in UDM’s Masters of Engineering Management program.