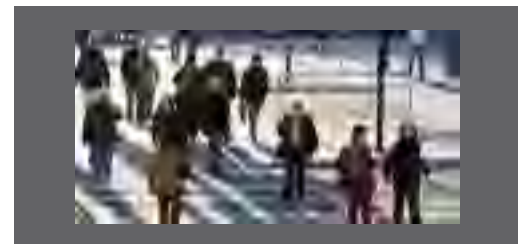**A Study of Factors that Inhibit and Enable Development of Sustainable Regional Transit Systems in Southeastern Michigan**

Detroit Regional Transit Study: A Study of Factors that Enable and Inhibit Effective Regional Transit

One of seven final reports resulting from this project.

MNTRC Report 12-22

MNTRC
MINETA NATIONAL TRANSIT
RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MERCY

MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
LEAD UNIVERSITY OF MNTRC

The Norman Y. Mineta International Institute for Surface Transportation Policy Studies was established by Congress in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). The Institute's Board of Trustees revised the name to Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) in 1996. Reauthorized in 1998, MTI was selected by the U.S. Department of Transportation through a competitive process in 2002 as a national "Center of Excellence." The Institute is funded by Congress through the United States Department of Transportation's Research and Innovative Technology Administration, the California Legislature through the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and by private grants and donations.

The Institute receives oversight from an internationally respected Board of Trustees whose members represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI's focus on policy and management resulted from a Board assessment of the industry's unmet needs and led directly to the choice of the San José State University College of Business as the Institute's home. The Board provides policy direction, assists with needs assessment, and connects the Institute and its programs with the international transportation community.

MTI's transportation policy work is centered on three primary responsibilities:

Research

MTI works to provide policy-oriented research for all levels of government and the private sector to foster the development of optimum surface transportation systems. Research areas include: transportation security; planning and policy development; interrelationships among transportation, land use, and the environment; transportation finance; and collaborative labor-management relations. Certified Research Associates conduct the research. Certification requires an advanced degree, generally a Ph.D., a record of academic publications, and professional references. Research projects culminate in a peer-reviewed publication, available both in hardcopy and on TransWeb, the MTI website (http://transweb.sjsu.edu).

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MTI promotes the availability of completed research to professional organizations and journals and works to integrate the research findings into the graduate education program. In addition to publishing the studies, the Institute also sponsors symposia to disseminate research results to transportation professionals and encourages Research Associates to present their findings at conferences. The World in Motion, MTI's quarterly newsletter, covers innovation in the Institute's research and education programs. MTI's extensive collection of transportation-related publications is integrated into San José State University's world-class Martin Luther King, Jr. Library.

REPORT 12-22

A Study of Factors that Inhibit and Enable Development of Sustainable
Regional Transit Systems in Southeastern Michigan

DETROIT REGIONAL TRANSIT STUDY:
A STUDY OF FACTORS THAT ENABLE AND INHIBIT
EFFECTIVE REGIONAL TRANSIT

One of seven final reports resulting from this project.

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16. Abstract

An interdisciplinary team of six faculty members and six students at the University of Detroit Mercy (UDM) conducted a comprehensive study of the factors enabling or inhibiting development of effective regional transit. Focusing on Metro Detroit and four peer regions—Atlanta, Cleveland, Denver, and St. Louis—investigators examined six key variables in transit success: 1) leadership and politics, 2) governance and law, 3) finance, 4) transit-oriented development (TOD), 5) equity and access, and 6) media and public opinion. These elements were studied in the context of Detroit transit history with respect to lessons learned, recent developments in Metro Detroit, and comparisons and recommendations.

The team employed a nontraditional research methodology driven not by numbers but by the narrative of firsthand experience. They conducted in-depth interviews with more than 60 leaders in transit advocacy, development, and operation from five regions across the country, seeking the type of insight acquired almost exclusively through personal experience.

- The interviewees included:
- Current or previous CEOs of four regional transit authorities (RTAs) and more than 25 key staff members of RTAs
- Six RTA board members, including three board presidents
- Five MPO leaders of transit development in their regions
- A wide variety of stakeholders/advocates, including leading figures in business, education, labor, campaign consulting, and media
- Government leaders, including legislators, mayors and mayors' staff

The team then undertook the task of curating, organizing and assembling this accumulation of wisdom into cogent analyses that form the foundation of this report. This document provides and overview and summaries of key findings in all six areas of focus. Six separate reports explore each area in greater depth.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This entire report is, in effect, an executive summary of the project, *A Study of the Factors that Enable and Inhibit Effective Regional Transit in Southeast Michigan*. The findings of this study have resulted in four major, previously published reports (described at the end of this overview). The six topical reports introduced with this overview focus the findings for all periods and peer regions on the following topics:

1. Transit leadership and politics

2. Transit law and governance

3. Transit equity and access

4. Transit-oriented development

5. Transit finance

6. Transit public opinion and media

This document provides an overview and the key recommendations of those six reports, thereby summarizing the most significant results of the entire study.

I. BACKGROUND: THIS STUDY

For 15 months, in 2012 and 2013, an interdisciplinary team of six faculty members and six students at the University of Detroit Mercy (UDM) studied the factors that enable and inhibit the development of effective regional transit, focusing on Metro Detroit and four peer regions, Atlanta, Cleveland, Denver and St. Louis. By "effective regional transit," the authors mean transit that is reliable, efficient, affordable and safe – transit that includes a variety of modes and services, including local bus service, circulators, paratransit and rapid transit, that operate in a cohesive and coordinated way across the region.

RESEARCH FOCUS

The overall study, *Factors that Inhibit and Enable Effective Regional Transit in Southeastern Michigan*, was undertaken by 12 researchers from the University of Detroit Mercy, and was funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation (through the Mineta National Transit Research Consortium) and the Michigan Department of Transportation.[1] The "factors" were divided into six areas:

1. Transit leadership and politics

2. Transit law and governance

3. Transit equity and access

4. Transit-oriented development

5. Transit finance

6. Transit public opinion and media

This paper summarizes the results of those six parallel studies over the 15-month period.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The first two phases of the study were the review of extensive literature and media, and many interviews on the history of Detroit transit, and similar research and visits to four comparable regions, Atlanta, Cleveland, Denver and St. Louis.

The following process was employed to select these four peer regions. The study team first identified 16 candidate regions based on their personal knowledge and public data. Then, local and national leaders were consulted, including the study advisory team comprising transit leaders from Michigan Department of Transportation, Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART), M-1 Rail, the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) and Transportation Riders United. The following criteria were used for the selection of regions: size and distribution of population and jobs, existing uncoordinated transit systems, downtown characteristics, ethnic diversity and issues of segregation, socioeconomic gap in community, type of governance, growth of area,

transformation in governance, and political issues/contention. Each of the selected regions differs from the Detroit region in several aspects, but at the same time provides for a significant level of comparability in certain issues.

By investigating transit in these four different regions, the researchers were able to coalesce observations into insights that apply to the current situation in Metro Detroit. The lessons learned are not exclusive to the Detroit region and are presented in case study form to allow future researchers to select those aspects that apply to their region.[2]

These first two phases led to the release of the first two major reports in 2013 by the UDM Transit Research Team: *Detroit Transit History* (January 2013) and *Transit Lessons for Detroit from Four Peer Regions* (July 2013). Each report included a chapter on each of the six focal areas.[3]

The third phase of the study examined transit-related developments since 2007 through the study of literature and media and in depth interviews of 17 leaders from transit, business and government. This resulted in a third report in June 2013*, Current Detroit Transit*.

Finally, the study compared Detroit with the same four regions and made recommendations related to the issues of leadership and politics in the report, *Metro Detroit Transit - Recommendations and Comparisons*.[4] These four full reports on Detroit transit history, current developments, transit in peer regions and recommendations total 679 pages and are at the University of Detroit Mercy Transportation website.[5]

The research method employed in this study, was ethnographic in nature, especially the examination of leadership and politics, relying on in-depth interviews of over 60 leaders in five regions, ranging from transit providers and transit board members to business, labor, education and government leaders, transit advocates, and transit reporters. Nearly all interviews were taped and transcribed, providing a rich array of perspectives and narrative stories. These, combined with a broad review of media, yield a mosaic of findings that are presented in this report and the reports on the other six focal areas (legal/law, finance, transit-oriented development, equity/access and media/public opinion).

NEED FOR THIS RESEARCH

For many years, efforts to develop effective regional mass transit in Metro Detroit have been thwarted by a wide variety of factors. (For the purposes of this study, "Metro Detroit" is the four-county region defined by enabling legislation for the Regional Transit Authority: Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw and Wayne Counties.) These factors include conflicting interests of various governmental agencies and individuals, legal barriers, funding issues, labor/jobs issues, perceptions of competing objectives of transit-oriented development and commuter service, public opinion regarding transit and spending priorities, rider concerns (and perceptions) regarding safety, and even ethnic prejudice.[6] For decades, efforts to integrate regional bus services have failed, leaving Metro Detroit with three transit agencies (Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART), Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) and Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA)), that serve three areas of the region, and the People Mover in downtown Detroit, with poor interfaces

between them. SMART and DDOT systems are struggling financially and have within the last year cut service and considered raising fares.

Initiatives to restore rail-based transit have suffered a similar fate, as a privately funded initiative (M-1 Rail) and a publicly funded study (*Detroit Transit Options for Growth Study* [DTOGS][7]) have failed to develop a joint project, despite the honest efforts of many well intentioned people from the public and private sectors, including leaders from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and advisors from across the nation. This study sought to learn from Detroit's history and the successes and failures of other regions in order to better understand the factors that enable or inhibit successful regional transit, and allow our region to move forward to build such systems.

II. FINDINGS IN SIX FOCAL AREAS

Throughout the course of this comprehensive study, subgroups of the team concentrated their research on each of six focal areas identified as critical to the development and operation of effective regional transit systems in Detroit and in the four peer regions.

1. Transit leadership and politics

2. Transit law and governance

3. Transit equity and access

4. Transit-oriented development

5. Transit finance

Transit public opinion and media

A final report was created and submitted in each of the six focal areas. Those reports are listed and summarized below:

- Regional Transit Stew: Consensus Building and Transit Building in Metro Detroit

- Detroit Regional Transit Legal Structures and Governance

- Social Equity, Mobility, and Access

- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in Metro Detroit

- Funding Structures and Competing Priorities for Regional Transit in Metro Detroit

- The Role of Media and Public Opinion Efforts in the Transit Field: The Detroit Region Case Study

TRANSIT LEADERSHIP AND POLITICS

Download: Regional Transit Stew: Consensus Building and Transit Building in Metro Detroit

The study of transit leadership and politics concentrated on the successful planning and funding of regional transit. The study led to 35 recommendations to transit providers and leaders from across the community. These were provided in the chapter on politics and leadership in the report *Detroit Transit Comparisons and Recommendations*.[8] Based on the successes and failures in other regions,[9] a model process emerged that employs a metaphor of "transit stew" emphasizing the broad variety of values and opinions (ingredients and flavors) that always exist in any major metropolitan area.[10] This diversity needs to be blended in ways that are responsive to each stakeholder group, allowing each group to remain faithful to their values and priorities (retain their flavor), but also willing to compromise to accommodate the values and priorities of other stakeholders (absorb and

share other valuable flavors). Such a process will create a plan that provides value to all, but may not be perfect for any. In fact, a guiding principle for the entire process is "*don't let perfect be the enemy of progress*."

A "transit stew" process has three phases, starting with Phase 1, sharing and recognition of all stakeholders' perspectives on what they want and need from regional transit (see Figure 1). This leads to the creation of a consensus vision of regional transit in terms of characteristics, but not a system design.

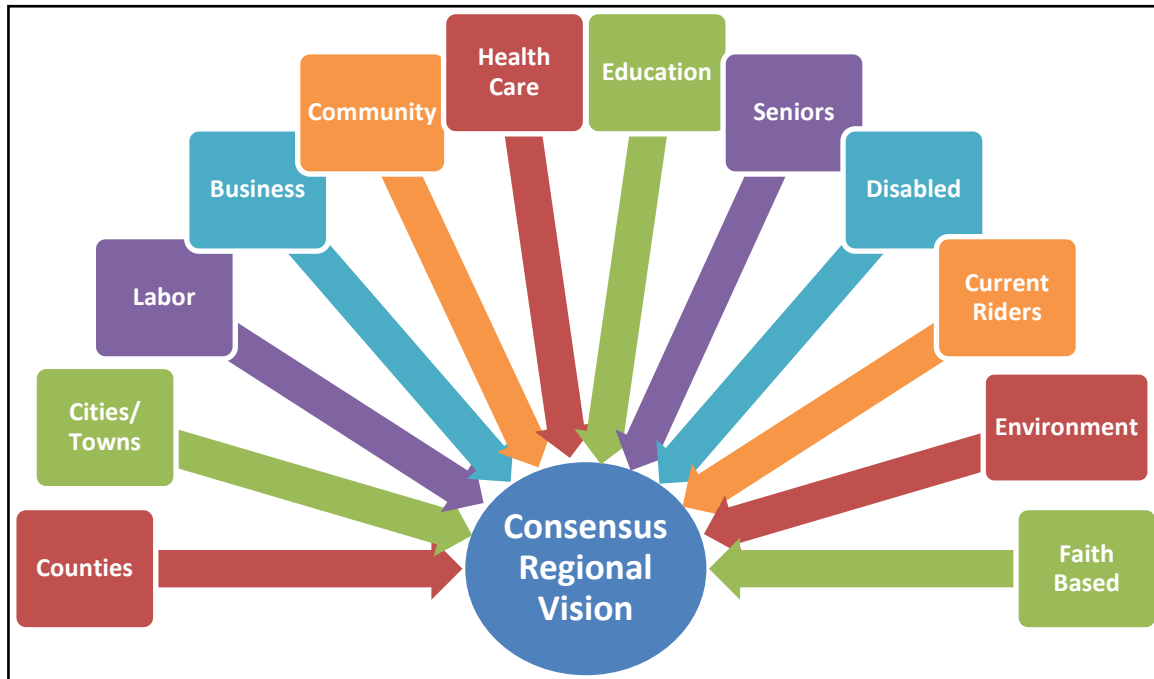**Figure 1.   Transit Stew Phase 1: Coming Together to Develop a Consensus Vision for Regional Transit (defining a truly exceptional dish)**

Phase 2 (see Figure 2), translation of that vision into a specific transit system design and plans to develop it, must be done by transit professionals, always keeping the leaders of stakeholder groups aware and engaged, providing feedback on options being considered.
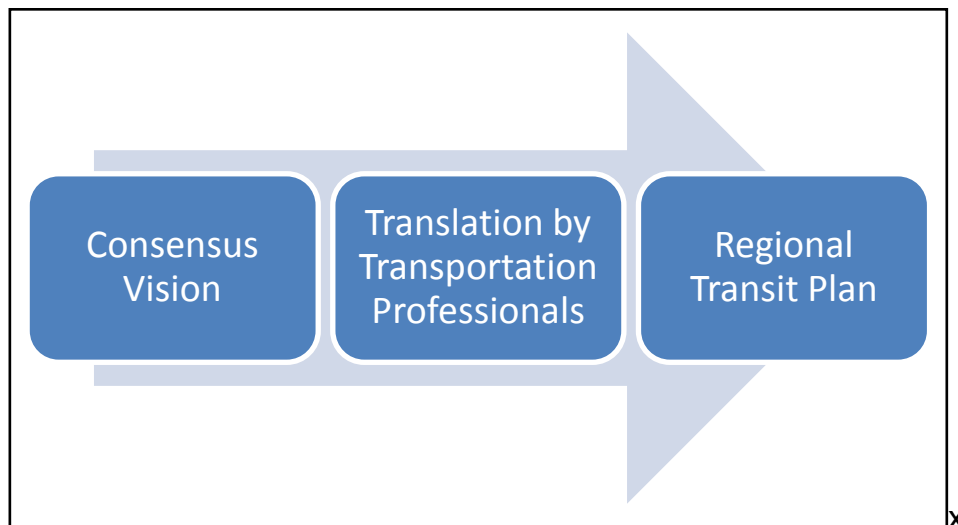
Figure 2.   Transit Stew Phase 2: Translating the Vision into a Regional Transit Plan

Once an acceptable plan emerges, phase 3 (see Figure 3) involves the stakeholder leaders advocating for the plan and its funding through *segmented advocacy*, which emphasizes the specific values and impacts of the system that are most important to the specific segment of the population. Once each segment of the population sees that the system will support their values and objectives, funding and building of the system becomes far more likely.

Figure 3.   Transit Stew Phase 3: Advocacy of Regional Transit Plan by Leaders to Stakeholder Groups (Serving: presentation of the dish is important)

There is a need for the creation of a very diverse and active coalition in Metro Detroit. During the study and the related Metro Detroit Regional Transit Workshop,[11] clear examples were identified of successful coalitions that secured public support and the requisite funding to advance transit in other regions, including St. Louis (Citizens for Modern Transit) and Los Angeles (MoveLA), as well as areas that failed to come together in their regional transit stew (Atlanta).

Finally, there are important collective roles of stakeholder leaders, and special roles of leaders in government, business and education. All leaders must actively engage the diverse coalition without attempting to dominate it. Government leaders have special levels of access and influence over the press and the public. Business is one of a very few sources of funding for transit funding campaigns. Academic leaders can provide in depth, unbiased studies that guide public policy and system design, and can also mobilize large numbers of students in the "ground game" of transit advocacy. This team's final report on transit leadership and politics discusses and amplifies role models for such leadership from other regions, including Atlanta, Cleveland, Denver and St. Louis.[12]

The study of leadership and politics issues was completed by Dr. Leo E. Hanifin and Scott Douglas. Their findings are reported in the Leadership and Politics chapters of the four reports by UDM discussed at the end of this report, and include 36 specific recommendations related to the following areas:

- Regionalism, regional transit planning and coalition building (8)

- Transit funding (3)

- The specific roles of leaders from government, business, community groups, education and regional transit (17)

- The value proposition for regional transit (3)

- Transit providers' leadership and operations (5)

A few of the most important recommendations are provided below:

1. Transit advocates and leaders must raise the volume and bandwidth of communication and action for regional thinking in Southeast Detroit.

2. Organize a broad coalition that effectively advocates for transit planning, support, ridership and development (TOD) in the Metro Detroit region. All leaders from various stakeholder segments should share in the leadership of this coalition, providing a voice for the needs and values of their segment and conveying the value proposition of transit back to their segment.

3. Businesses should provide most of the funds needed for the upcoming advocacy campaign for local support for the Regional Transit Authority's plans to build and operate more and better regional transit in southeastern Michigan.

4. Academic leaders should mobilize students from across Metro Detroit to provide the workers for transit education and advocacy campaigns.

5. Regional leaders, stakeholders and advocates of transit need to first understand the public opinions of their region, not just as a whole but as a collection of opinions by various affinity groups (stakeholder segments) with values and objectives that are, to a significant degree, correlated to their locale, ethnicity, political party, age, pastimes, etc.

6. Do not allow perfect to be the obstacle to progress. (No transit plan will be viewed as perfect by any one stakeholder segment or individual, but no progress in improving transit in Metro Detroit is the worst option.)

TRANSIT LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Download: Detroit Regional Transit Legal Structures and Governance

Effective governance of transit systems is created through a qualified, representative, informed, diverse and committed board of directors, which is ultimately accountable for the financial performance and quality of the service of the transit system in the designated region. The recent enactment and effectiveness of Act 387, Public Acts 2012,[13] creating the Regional Transit Authority for Southeastern Michigan (the RTA) included many of the most important elements of successful governance. However, the RTA will not, initially, own and operate the existing systems in the Southeast Michigan region. So long as the existing authorities or city departments operate transit systems in the region, they should also strive to achieve optimum governance structures.

In addition, active and engaged citizens advising boards are not only essential pre-conditions for certain federal grants but they also provide valuable input relating to the quality and efficiency of services.

A brief summary is provided below of the best governance practices utilized by the independent transit authorities in the four peer regions as they relate to the Metro Detroit region. For further detail regarding legal and governance issues related to transit, readers are referred to the chapters on *Legal Structures and Governance for the Detroit Metro Regional Transit*[14] on the UDM website.[15]

For many years, efforts to develop effective regional mass transit in Metropolitan Detroit have been thwarted by a wide variety of factors. These have included conflicting interests of various governmental authorities and individuals, legal barriers, funding issues, labor/jobs issues, perceptions of competing objectives of transit-oriented development and commuter service, public opinion regarding transit, and even spending priorities, rider concerns (and perceptions) regarding safety as well as, to a certain degree, ethnic prejudice. For decades, efforts to integrate regional bus service have failed leaving Southeastern Michigan (the Metropolitan Detroit region) with three transit agencies (SMART, DDOT and AATA), which serve three distinct areas of the region, with poor coordination among them. While SMART functions as an authority with an accountable board of directors, consisting of representatives of municipalities within its service area, DDOT functions as

a department of the City of Detroit. During the course of this project, the region made significant progress towards appropriate governance as a result of the enactment and effectiveness of Act 387, Public Acts of 2012, creating a Regional Transit Authority for Southeastern Michigan (RTA).[16] The RTA legislation includes enlightened provisions for the effective transit governance by creating a qualified and representative board of an appropriate size (10 persons), with clear responsibilities and accountability for service within the region.

A study of the governance structures of the four peer regions (Atlanta, Cleveland, Denver and St. Louis) clearly indicates that successful regional transit systems are (a) owned and operated by statutorily created independent transit authorities and (b) depend on oversight from a fiduciary board with accountability for the quality, efficiency, financial performance and success of the system. This governance structure, which takes its form from the governance structure in corporate America, is working well in the four peer regions. The specific characteristics and responsibilities of the ideal board are described in Semple's report on transit governance and law.[17] Semple also prescribes four principles of effective structure and process for these boards:[18] The Board size should be between 10 and 18 members.

7. Regular meetings of the Board, not less than quarterly, with committee meetings at the time of or in between board meetings.

8. The Board should review and approve a detailed organizational chart, but it should refrain from active involvement in the day-to-day operation of the transit system. Management responsibility should be left to the professional managers hired by the system.

9. All of the activities of the Board should be totally transparent, with extensive documentation regarding the Board and its activities readily available at the Board's website, and open meetings held at convenient times and places for public attendance.

Citizens Advisory Board

The tension between (a) creating an efficient Board limited in size and (b) the necessity of having representation from the region served by the transit system, can be alleviated by creating diverse non-fiduciary advisory boards. These boards are designed to provide citizen comments on the performance of the system, on a systematic basis. Advisory boards, in addition to providing a sounding board for better service in the community, can also be used to increase the profile of the transit system as it strives to accomplish ridership goals and obtain financial support.

Conclusions

Analysis of the best elements of successful governance in the four peer regions observed concludes that the governance provisions contained in the RTA enabling legislation go a long way to achieving an effective governance structure. Act 387, which includes provisions for qualifications, regional representation, appropriate size and clear delineation of

responsibilities, achieves its purpose. While the RTA does not, at this time, actually operate any systems, it should provide a model for the systems operating under its jurisdiction.

DDOT would benefit greatly from oversight from a diverse and qualified fiduciary board representative of the Detroit community, with special skill sets to contribute to the governance process. This can only be accomplished, of course, if DDOT is transferred to an independent authority. The Detroit Transportation Corporation (DTC), which owns and operates the Detroit People Mover, should either join with DDOT in its transfer to an authority, or, in the alternative, should amend its Articles of Incorporation to diversify its board which now is composed of five City of Detroit employees and one SMART designee. The goal for the DTC (People Mover) would be to provide, either indirectly or through a reorganized DDOT, or through its own Board of Directors, unaffiliated persons with business, financial and leadership skills and backgrounds in oversight positions. With regard to the other transit authorities under the umbrella of the RTA in the region, it is not recommended that their structure be revised or their board representation be materially modified. Nevertheless, those agencies should strive to achieve representation on their own boards with the qualifications and skills as outlined in the RTA enabling legislation.

TRANSIT EQUITY AND ACCESS

Download: **Social Equity, Mobility, and Access**

Social equity is a term that is used to describe whether benefits and/or detriments of a public project are applied equally to groups of people, regardless of social or economic standing. In transportation, benefits might include where money is spent to expand roads, repave roads, or improve a transit system. The detriments might include how much each person is taxed to pay for the benefits, or it could include impacts, such as worsened air pollution, or reduction of other viable transportation methods for the benefit of another.

Impacts are commonly compared between groups of different races or ethnic backgrounds, income levels, and locations. Attempts to analyze social equity can be done for a wide range of purposes. A common interpretation of social equity is that it can be a means to ensure that benefits or detriments of public projects are fairly distributed. For example, some might argue that a fair distribution of impacts is that whoever benefits directly or indirectly from a public project should be the ones who pay for it.

Taxes are most commonly used as the measure of detriments of a project, but there are other measures. According to the ideal of direct benefits, those paying the taxes should be the ones who benefit. However, projects often have external negative impacts. For example, projects that promote more automotive commuting cause more pollution, which impacts all people, but it especially impacts those with fewer health resources. Social equity requires that both the detriments and benefits be spread equally across all people. Understanding how one person's actions impact the whole community is more difficult in cultures, such as the American culture, that highly values individualism. Developing a strong regional community identity is one necessary step in developing regional consensus about plans. It makes people more willing to agree to projects that address the common good. Therefore, ideas of regionalism are closely tied to equity.

Social equity should be measured when looking at transportation plans. However, no one simple measure directly captures the full extent of social equity in a region. For example, income data in a region does not predict inequitable pollution.

As part of this research, access to jobs was studied as one measure of equity. It is an equity issue because people who are "transit captive" (those with no other means of transportation) have very limited choices in work locations that can be reached in a reasonable amount of time. Limits on transportation similarly impact other aspects of their lives, including access to health care or education and their ability to participate in other aspects of society.

Several patterns were found in this study comparing Southeast Michigan with its peer metropolitan areas of Atlanta, Cleveland, Denver, and St. Louis. All cities have similar problems to different degrees. The same factors are at play in Detroit and throughout the country that cause sprawl, low density developments, and lack of opportunities for minority residents. However, those factors are worse in Detroit, partly because the predominant industries and types of employment apply weak pressures to cluster in or near downtown areas. This has produced an economic and transportation system with great inequity. Therefore, the lessons learned can be shared among regions to some extent.

One pattern identified as common among the cities was that bus riders originating in the core cities can usually find commuter transit available to them to travel to some jobs. However, the share of jobs is usually small compared to what an automobile commuter could reach. Across the five cities, the average ratio of jobs reached via transit compared to auto was 13.2 percent. Denver fared better with 18.3 percent, but Detroit fared worse with 6 percent.

Transit captive residents living in the suburbs, even living in high-density residential areas, often have difficulty reaching transit within a reasonable walking distance. However, transit captive individuals may locate in areas that have better transit.

Either way, transit captive people have very limited choices for where they can work and live. This certainly does not represent equal opportunity between people with cars and those without, or those who have disabilities. It is unlikely that improvements in transit will be able to make opportunities completely equal, but significant effort should be taken to make it more equitable.

Scenarios were considered to enhance transit in Southeast Michigan. Improving the reliability of basic bus service may improve reach to jobs by about 66 percent. Adding a new spoke-based bus rapid transit (BRT) may improve job access by 10 percent to 20 percent, but more research is needed to further quantify this. These results depend upon many variables, such as how well BRT connects to collectors, and the proximity of BRT lines to places with many jobs.

As to funding, numerous mechanisms are available. Most funding mechanisms in use are not highly redistributive. For example, regressive sales taxes are preferred for funding bus systems that serve lower income people. Income taxes are used to fund systems serving

higher income people, such as the case with the Long Island Railroad (LIRR). Detroit is an exception in that a progressive property tax is used to fund both the SMART and DDOT systems. Although progressive taxes meet the goals of equity focused on remediation, the lack of a sales tax may be limiting the political viability for additional transit services. The legislation that created the Detroit Regional Transit Authority suggests two possible funding mechanisms, a vehicle registration fee or a property tax.

The most significant recommendations for this work on transit equity and access are:

1. Regional authorities should place an emphasis on reliable basic bus service.

2. New commuter systems should be funded with new resources that reflect the locales from which the new riders originate.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Download: Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in Metro Detroit

The term transit-oriented development (TOD) is being used increasingly in transit literature, particularly in studies related to planning and design of urban rail-transit. TOD relates to the integration of diverse (but desirable) land uses with transit, both temporally and spatially, and is designed to increase transit ridership and to promote desirable land uses surrounding the station areas. The major benefits commonly attributed to TOD can be summarized as follows:

- Reduced traffic congestion, traffic hazards, and environmental pollution.

- Increased transit ridership resulting from denser development near the station areas.

- Potential for significant economic development in proximity to TOD.

- Reduced household spending on transportation, with a focus on lower-income households.

- Reduced dependence on non-renewable energy.

- Promoting of walkable communities and desirable land uses.

- Potential to reduce urban sprawl.

- Vibrant station centers, conducive to pedestrian travel.

- More racially and socio-economically diverse neighborhoods near transit than other neighborhoods.

- Significant growth in the numbers of households within transit zone in the ensuing 20 years.

- Increased housing value near TOD.

Compared to other types of developments, environmental- and community-related benefits can include:

- Preservation of land.

- Reduction of air pollution and improvement of air quality.

- Less driving time potentially allowing more free time for other priorities.

- Improved accessibility.

- Health-improving benefits.

- Increased walking and bicycling.

- Improved pedestrian safety.

- More "eyes on the street" leading to decreased crime.

The primary objective of this project was to examine the TOD characteristics of selected cities along with the Metro Detroit area, and then to recommend a number of measures for successful TOD in Metro Detroit. The project team visited Atlanta, Denver, Cleveland and St. Louis to gain first-hand knowledge of their transit systems and TOD activities. The TOD/transit-related activities of the peer cities and Detroit are summarized below:

- More than $4 billion has been invested along the Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority's (MARTA) corridor as a part of TOD. It is notable that MARTA contributes $476 million per year to Atlanta's gross regional product.

- A major highlight of the Cleveland RTA system is the development along the HealthLine, a BRT line. By 2010, more than $4.3 billion had been invested along the HealthLine corridor. However, TOD along other corridors, namely along rail and local bus lines, was not significant.

- Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) is very active in locating stations and park & ride lots to support TOD. Even a private development group invited the RTD to move a station onto their property to facilitate TOD. RTD's Land Bank is a very successful venture. They sold five parcels of land next to Union Station for $30 million and are planning to invest in TOD. FasTracks provides long-term funding for TOD related activities, which is very unique.

- St. Louis Metro/Bi-State provides both bus and LRT services along with some para-transit. Since its inception more than $2 billion has been invested as a part of TOD. They have developed the most comprehensive database for 37 existing Metrolink light rail stations. This information can be used to determine the potential for TOD around each of the 37 LRT stations.

- Based on 2010 census population density, Detroit's population density is similar to Cleveland, Pittsburg and St. Louis, but much higher than Atlanta, Denver and Charlotte. Thus, Detroit, as a city, has great potential for TOD.

- 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.

- Detroit already has a number of TOD facilities, especially along Woodward Avenue, even without existing substantial transit system support. The Woodward Avenue Action Association (WA3) is a very active TOD advocacy group within the state of Michigan.

- The Master plans for all cities along the Woodward corridor, from Ferndale to Birmingham, have TOD-favorable features.

- WA3 developed a number of tools for communities along Woodward Avenue to facilitate their TOD activities, as well as well-defined steps to be taken in order to implement TOD (Figure 4).

- Michigan's Golden Spike, which is another TOD initiative focused on Southeast Michigan's key transportation corridors, has published a document *Using Transit-Oriented Development to Create Economic Vibrancy in Neighborhoods: A Guide for Elected and Appointed Officials in Michigan* to assist communities in implementing TOD.[19]

- Similar to Denver RTD, the Michigan Land Bank is also very active in developing public-private partnerships. The Michigan Land Bank is in the process of signing an agreement with Magic Plus LLC to develop the former Michigan state fairground. As a part of their development plan, a transit station is included.

Based on the review of TOD-related activities of various cities, the project team developed a set of measures to integrate TOD with the planning and design of transportation facilities in the Detroit area, to maximize the economic growth potential and improve the quality of life of the residents of the local communities and the users of the transit facilities. Some of them are presented below. This study also identified planning, economic, and institutional mechanisms for the effective design and implementation of TOD.

- Aggressive efforts should be taken to develop public-private partnership (P3) funding while implementing TOD/and walkable streets using the Complete Streets[20] concepts.

- With the assistance of the Urban Land Institute, the RTA should work closely with the Michigan Land Bank. It is to be noted that the mission of the Michigan Land Bank is to "promote economic growth in this state through the acquisition, assembly and disposal of public property, including tax reverted property, in a coordinated manner to foster the development of that property, and to promote and support land bank operations at the county and local levels."[21] In this context Denver RTD's approach should be followed.

- The Michigan Land Bank is in the process of signing an agreement with Magic Plus LLC to develop the former state fairground. As a part of their development plan, a transit station is included. The RTA should work closely with mega-developers (namely, Magic Plus), so that the fairground, as well as other future developments (such as the planned Masonic Temple surrounding development), will include transit friendliness as one of their attributes.

- As TOD moves toward generating a transit-oriented community (TOC), a variety of "Livable Community" grants are available from HUD and the US DOT to support community development. The RTA should pursue these funding sources. It is to be noted that St. Louis Metro and MARTA were very effective in getting livable community funding.

- RTA should recognize places of historical significance and use historical credits to aid development in partnership with developers.

- Similar to St. Louis Metro and MARTA, information on demographics, employment, land use, walk scores, etc., within 0.5- to 1.0-mile radius should be readily available to encourage potential TOD developers. GIS-based layer maps should be available for each station, highlighting various attributes.
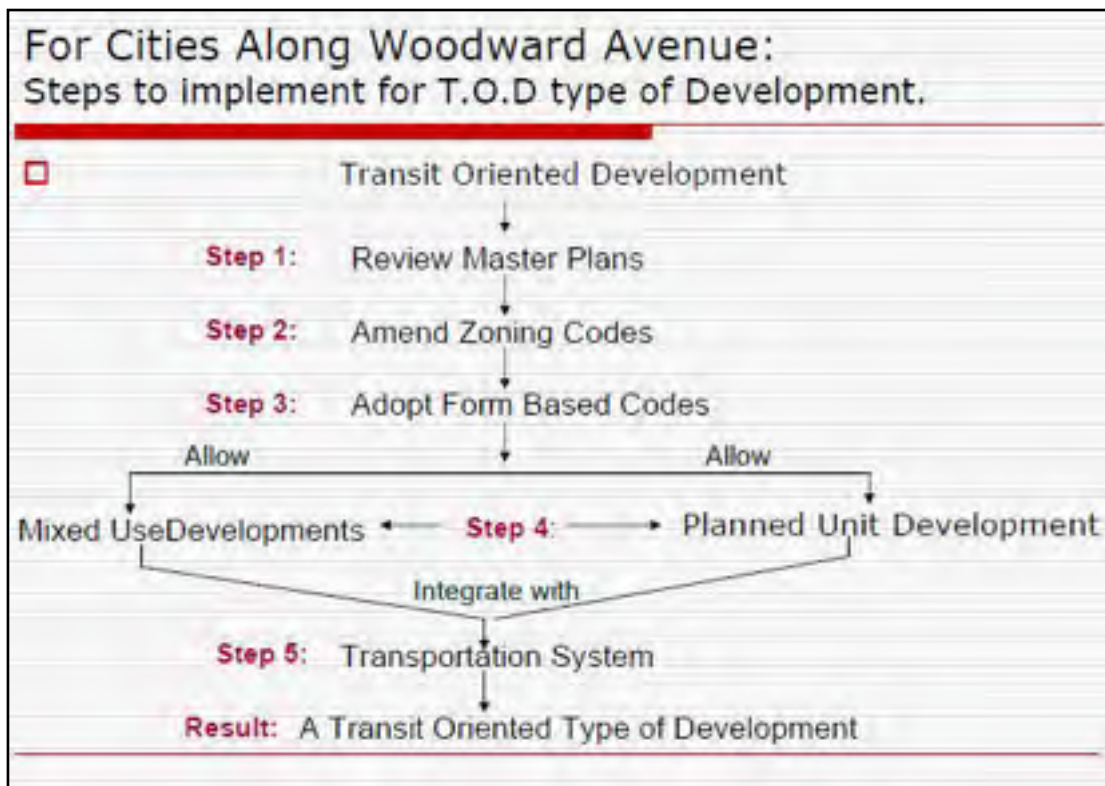

Figure 4.   Steps to Implement TOD in Michigan's Cities

Source: Woodward Avenue Action Association (WA3), *Planning for Growth in the Cities along Woodward Avenue: The Benefits of Mixed-Use and Transit Oriented Development in Your Community* [Presentation] (November 9, 2007), http://www.woodwardavenue.org/uploaded_pics/pdf/pdf-20091019163626.pdf (accessed December 23, 2013).

Dr. Utpal Dutta led a team of students in this study of TOD. His team provided chapters on TOD for each of the following major reports released during the overall study of regional transit:

- *Detroit Transit History* (January 2013)

- *Transit Lessons for Detroit from Four Peer Regions* (July 2013)

- *Current Detroit Transit* (July 2013)

- *Detroit Regional Transit – Recommendations and Comparisons* (September 2013)

All of these reports are available on line at the UDM Transportation Center's website.[22] In addition, Dr. Dutta has written a final report that provides interested readers with more detail on this study: *Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in Detroit and Selected Cities*.[23]

TRANSIT FINANCE

Download: **Funding Structures and Competing Priorities for Regional Transit in Metro Detroit**

A summary of the findings and recommendations of this study related to transit finance is provided below. For further detail regarding finance issues related to transit, readers are referred to *Funding Structures and Competing Priorities for Regional Transit in Metro Detroit*[24] and to the chapters on finance in the four "phase" reports listed above. These are described at the end of this overview and posted at the UDM website.[25]

The Detroit region provides less locally-raised funding for transit than other American and Canadian urban areas, and therefore, has a less adequate transit system than other regions. This is exacerbated by the fact that Federal funds for capital projects can only be used in conjunction with locally sourced matching funds, so Detroit receives less than would be considered its fair share of Federal money (based on population, geographic area, or similar metrics).

It has not always been so; Detroit's transit system fell into disuse during a time when it was experimenting with building automobile-centric communities (natural for the home of automobile production to try). Past efforts to improve transit floundered for political and other reasons, but recent developments such as M-1 Rail and the State's enactment of laws creating a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) represent a positive trend.

The RTA must create mechanisms to raise funding to provide for an adequate regional transit system. Funding for transit comes from five sources, generally speaking: Federal, state, local, farebox, and miscellaneous (sale of advertising, for example).[26] The miscellaneous category is insignificant and Federal funding is tightly coupled to the remaining local sources.

Nationally, the most common dedicated source of funding is a locally originated sales tax.[27] All of the peer cities use this mechanism, but in Michigan it is prohibited by the State, so this can only be considered a long-term option.

In the City of Detroit there is no dedicated, local source of transit funding. The city's bus service is operated by a municipal department, the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT), which relies on an appropriation from the city's general-fund budget for its operations.[28] As the city's finances have struggled, this appropriation has diminished to the point that Detroit, with about 40 percent of its peak population, operates less than 2 percent of the bus service at its peak. In the suburban communities surrounding Detroit (Oakland, Macomb and suburban Wayne Counties) the regional bus operator, SMART, relies on a property tax from all communities that "opt in" to SMART service.

Like DDOT, SMART lost funding in the recent recession, highlighting the risk of this single-source method. As jobs were lost and the need for transit grew, property values – and, hence, taxes – plummeted (as much as 36 percent in Oakland County between 2007 and 2011).[29] By contrast, sales taxes are collected over a broad range of products and, though susceptible to changes in economic activity over time, would not appear to be subject to such drastic changes as quickly.

The Metro Detroit region spends less $80 per capita on transit, which is far less than all of the peer cities studied (see Figure 5).[30] The three peer cities shown in Figure 5 are typical of major urban areas in the U.S. Denver is not shown because its transit spending is far higher than the national average.
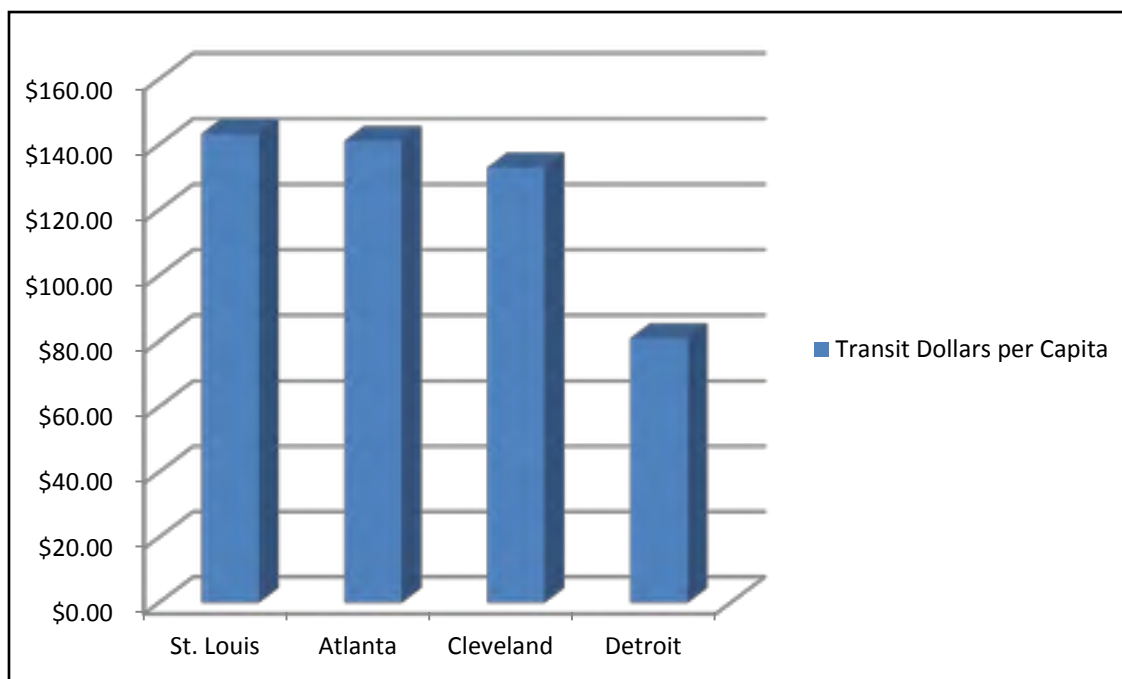

Figure 5.   Transit Dollars per Capita, 5 Year Average (1999 - 2003)

Source: Federal Transit Authority, National Transit Database, *Transit Vision 2008,* 13; http://www. environmentalcouncil.org/mecReports/TransitVision2008.pdf (accessed December 23, 2012).

Note: Denver has been omitted from this chart because it is an "outlier" (over $400 per capita as compared to just over $140 for St. Louis and Atlanta).

The enabling legislation for the RTA suggests two possible sources for local funding. A vehicle registration can be collected if the public in the region approves such a fee. The

second option is a "special assessment" (property tax). In recent years real estate values have been very volatile, especially in the Metro Detroit region. Any transit system that relies on such values will be unstable compared to either a broader source of revenue (such as a sales tax) or one whose volatility is not as severe as real estate (such as vehicle registrations). Also, a vehicle registration is also less of a regressive tax than a general sales tax.

Regardless of the tax mechanism, the RTA legislation also requires that 85 percent of the funds be spent in the "member jurisdiction" (Detroit or the four counties) from which the funds originated.[31] Funding from one of these sources can be brought up for a referendum in 2014. Anderson recommends a near-term strategy of seeking funding to support the "rolling rapid transit" (actually, BRT) system that is described in the Regional Transit Coordinating Council (RTCC) regional plan recently adopted by the RTA (along with the AATA plan).[32] Anderson's mid-range recommendation is to consolidate DDOT and SMART under the RTA for all bus service in Macomb, Oakland and Wayne Counties. Due to political opposition to this consolidation it would be necessary to improve and better coordinate service on both systems before moving forward with combining DDOT and SMART. Anderson's long-range recommendations include the revision of the Michigan Constitution to allow for a regional sales tax to support the RTA in the long-term future.

Recommendations

1. In the near-term, the RTA should propose a vehicle registration fee funding mechanism, sufficient to fund BRT, and improve coordination and improvement of local bus operations across the four-county region.

2. In order to increase efficiency and rider service in the three eastern counties, the RTA should move toward quickly to implement a redesigned route system based on current conditions, to provide service that utilizes more effectively the assets of SMART and DDOT.

3. In the mid-term, the RTA should propose a local funding mechanism sufficient to fund BRT and all local bus and people-mover operations in the eastern three counties, and to fund BRT and supplement local bus operations in Washtenaw County. Within the next decade, the RTA should also take over the operation of M-1 Rail. This higher level of funding would also replace the SMART property tax and create a more stable source of funding for all services.

4. In the long-term, a local-option sales tax should be developed, as this has proven successful in many communities nationwide.

5. To assure that the BRT system creates opportunities for redevelopment of under-used land, the specifics of BRT implementation must be perceived as sufficiently permanent to enable redevelopment and overcome developer's fears that such a system can cheaply and easily be relocated away from their developments.

TRANSIT PUBLIC OPINION AND MEDIA

Download: ***The Role of Media and Public Opinion Efforts in the Transit Field: The Detroit Region Case Study***

Media and public opinion are extremely important in the transportation field, as the support of public transit by users and the general public is critical to its success. Regional transit, with its natural crossing of geographic, political, cultural, economic and racial boundaries, is subject to the inflammation of controversy through the rapid and unfiltered exchange of opinions from diverse perspectives across all of those boundaries. Nonetheless, media and public opinion efforts can increase alignment between transit agencies' plans and priorities, and the public's needs and concerns. Media strategies can promote visibility of transit agencies and their initiatives, foster good levels of communication and interaction with the public, and become the basis for the inclusion of the public's perspective and input in the planning process.

Media and public opinion efforts played important roles in enabling or inhibiting regional transit development in each of the peer regions studied, as well as in Detroit. Effective media strategies and the building of positive public opinion regarding transit will be vital in the Detroit region as the new RTA begins to coordinate, plan, fund, and build an improved regional system for Metro Detroit.

Claudia Bernasconi led a team of students in the assessment of the nature and impact of media and public opinion efforts in the development of support for regional transit, toward the identification of future transit initiatives in Southeast Michigan. Media initiatives by selected transit agencies and advocacy groups in identified regions were analyzed, together with local print and online media coverage and local transit campaigns. The findings and recommendations from Bernasconi and her team are summarized below. They have been reported in detail in the chapters on Media and Public Opinion in the four previously released "phase" reports described at the end of this report.[33] A thorough synopsis of the team's finding can be found in the final report *The Role of Media and Public Opinion Efforts in the Transit Field: The Detroit Region Case Study*.[34] The analysis of key transit events in history and of key media initiatives in the four regions revealed that the Cleveland, St. Louis and Denver transit agencies/authorities have been more proactive in improving communication with the public. Tools employed by these regions include public hearings, community meetings, surveys, and other initiatives geared toward the increase of public awareness of the importance and benefit of public transportation, such as hosting transit conferences, and special events targeting the creation of a strong image of the transit agency/authority and its services. Table 1 includes a brief overview of recent campaigns in comparable regions, and Table 2 includes an overview of key findings per region. Some of these are discussed here.

Local media coverage was also analyzed, and overall findings confirm the visibility of transit agencies/groups/authorities in these regions. Public Involvement was also a priority in several of the comparable regions, in particular in the St. Louis region, where strategies employed by the agency to foster public involvement included numerous public meetings, campaigns (in 2008, 2010), surveys and one-on-one conversations with community leaders. The St. Louis region was particularly effective in communicating to the public a regional vision, and portraying with clarity the plan outcomes to the public. The Atlanta region, on the contrary, failed in the special-purpose local-option sales tax (TSPLOT) vote of 2012.[35]

A "wish list" type of approach to the plan process, where the different counties asked for specific transportation projects and inflated the potential budget to unrealistic levels, hindered communication and cooperation between the transit agency and diverse groups in the region. Issues of racial diversity, urban-suburban interests and even perception of crime connected with transit impacted public opinion before the vote. Finally, the Denver region was particularly proactive in the use of media to portray transit development and to foster a positive dialog with the public, in particular, initiating long-range public opinion efforts after the failed *Guide the Ride* vote.[36] The Denver RTD wisely implemented small projects to build public satisfaction with and confidence in the transit system before pursuing major funding again. This built a reputation that the RTD was a responsible steward of taxpayer funds and effective in delivering on its promises. In 2004 a new vote succeeded and a 0.4 percent tax increase was approved to help fund transit initiatives.

Finally, the Denver Public Education Campaigns in 2011 used a variety of tools such as newspaper ads, bus and light rail ads, banners, social media, and outdoor advertising with quick and simple messages.[37] A two-week campaign informed the public of a sales tax increase vote through community newspaper advertising, social media, a video and an online survey. As a continuous commitment to communication and education of the public, the RTD website includes photo documentation showing the progress of the FasTracks project, a large expansion of the regional system that includes 118 miles of light rail, commuter rail and BRT. The campaign also made extensive use of video education to help educate the public about the progress of the program.[38]

Three overarching themes emerged from the findings of the study of the four regions:

- The centrality of a good transit image.

- The importance of educating the public and media about the benefits of transit.

- The critical nature of appropriate strategies for educational campaigns in view of key transit events (e.g., a vote).

RTD excelled as an agency, ensuring internal and external communication during planning and development phases for the FasTracks program. This region exemplifies the importance of continuous communication with media and the public.

The St. Louis example can be considered a reference with regard to good strategies in communicating to the public, including the idea of using local champions to make the case for transit in local communities. Through effective and clear communication to the public of a clear regional vision, St. Louis Metro Transit was able to reverse the 2008 Proposition M failed vote and ensure passage of Proposition A in 2010,a half-cent sale tax to restore service cuts and improve transit in the region.[39]

Finally, the Cleveland region has excelled in the effort of rebranding and upselling transit services, rebuilding a positive image about its transit system, in particular through the recent Euclid corridor design. This region exemplifies the effectiveness of working on perceptions of the public about the quality of transit and its positive contribution to quality of life and urban life.

Table 1. Recent Campaigns in the St. Louis, Atlanta and Denver Regions

Region	Vote and Year	Campaign Characteristics
St. Louis	Proposition M (2008) Ballots: 562,965 48.45% YES votes	• Metro Transit engages in community meetings and outreach outlining potential cuts if funding is not approved. • Citizens for Modern Transit (CMT) forms Greater St. Louis Transit Alliance (also working on other campaigns). • African American community is not well represented by Transit Alliance, nor reached by CBT. • Considerable voter drop-off, as 48,849 do not vote on the last ballot proposition. • Many do not believe cuts would really happen.
	Proposition A (2010) Ballots: 151,613 62.9% YES votes	• County Executive Dooley supports tax initiative (2009). • John Nations, the Republican Mayor of Chesterfield, agrees to run Advance St. Louis, the Vote YES campaign. • CMT sponsors an educational campaign before the Vote YES on A campaign starts. • Proposition is on the ballot in an off-year election. • Get-out-the-vote strategy used.
Denver	Guide the Ride (1997) Failed ballot initiative Voters reject: 58%–42%	• Public perception is of an "expert-derived" plan with no connection to local needs. • Confused plan due to several add-ons. • Perceived vagueness and inflated size (determining high costs).
	Proposition 4A (2004) 57% YES votes	• Effective use of public involvement programs in ensuring visibility and support for transit. • Importance demonstrated of communicating to the public via internet and with social media. • Effective use of grassroots processes (e.g., petition approach before the vote) to promote awareness of transit initiatives and their benefits. • Effective use of educational strategy that targets media as well as the public.
Atlanta	TSPLOST 1% Tax Measure (2012) 9 out of 12 regional districts vote NO	• Metro Atlanta invests $8M on education and advocacy. • The campaign is perceived as top-down and fails to attract key groups/organizations. • The vote reflects a split between Atlanta and suburbs (59% of voters in Atlanta city vote in favor of tax, but 63% of NO votes are from the Atlanta district). • Lack of clarity in future vision/plan is captured by media and amplified, giving voice to frustration and criticism. • The campaign does not concentrate on positive future visions that resonate with diverse groups, and does not seem to adequately address needs of African American suburban communities (e.g., south DeKalb community). • Democratic-leaning majority-black counties vote against. • Politically narrow (conservative businessmen) head of funding campaign fails to appeal to entire range of stakeholders.

Source for voting data: Center for Transportation Excellence, "Transportation Ballot Measures," http://www.cfte.org/elections/past (accessed December 23, 2013).

Table 2. Summarized Findings by Region

Region	Key Findings
Cleveland	• Importance of a branding approach to transit that is captured and amplified by media. • Visibility of a key project/corridor and its effect in improving the entire agency's image. • Strengths of public-private partnerships in promoting increased awareness of transit benefits to the public. • Importance of the ability of transit leaders to communicate with media. • Payoff and importance of good public engagement efforts and engagement with social media and internet.
St. Louis	• Importance of educating media and educating the public. • Effectiveness of a good on-the-ground educational and public participation work that targets diverse groups. • Importance of clarity in communicating plans to community members. • Importance of transit advocacy groups alignment (and consistency when conducting a campaign with the agency). • Importance of support by local media.
Atlanta	• Openness of media outlets to diverse positions and interests groups can be critical. • Importance of interacting with diverse stakeholder groups to build transit support (low level of interaction contributed to the failure of the 2012 campaign). • Lack of clarity in future vision and plan is captured by media and amplified, giving voice to frustration and criticism. • The campaign should concentrate on positive future visions that resonate with diverse groups.
Denver	• Effectiveness of public involvement programs in ensuring visibility and support for transit. • Importance of communicating to the public via internet and with social media. • Effectiveness of grassroots processes (e.g., petition approach before vote) in promoting awareness of transit initiatives and their benefits. • Effectiveness of an educational strategy that targets media as well as the public.

In depth research was also conducted on the Detroit region, from a historical perspective and in current times. From the study of efforts by transit providers, the following themes emerged:

- The variability of outreach efforts conducted by the transit providers.

- The general low level of visibility of the outreach efforts.

- The inadequate use of online and social media tools.

- The availability of a great amount of data from surveys to capture satisfaction levels and specific needs of the ridership.

- The inward focused quality of communications (e.g., through e-newsletters emailed to rider lists and not available online), which reduces the capability of the system to speak to larger populations and interests groups.

Overall, local advocacy groups seem strong, complementary to each other in their target groups and specific focus, and well inclined to collaboration. Their efforts have been limited due to resources and capability of each organization, but seem to have been well organized and effective. Press review indicated a low level visibility of collaboration efforts among advocacy groups.

Several overarching themes emerged from the interviews with local reporters and advocacy groups. Summarizing, the themes include:

- The importance of media in shaping the discourse about regional transit.

- The interrelatedness of print media and social media/blogs.

- The politicization of the discourse about transit in the media.

- The disconnect between experts and the public.

- The positive image of transit as an abstract element, and the negative image of local transit in the media.

- The importance of visible and cohesive advocacy groups.

- The importance of flexibility in messaging and involvement strategies.

Recommendations for Media and Public Opinion

Comparing the results between the comparable regions and Detroit, a set of recommendations for successful future media initiatives, and public opinion and involvement efforts for the Detroit region were identified. These recommendations, organized in four areas, were identified as key for the success of transit initiatives and transit systems' improvement: 1) Educating: tools for the public and media; 2) Branding: the building of a transit image; 3) Involving: Public involvement approaches; 4) Messaging: the bridging of regional divides.

Each theme is discussed and explained in relation to findings in *The Role of Media and Public Opinion Efforts in the Transit Field: The Detroit Region Case Study*.[40]

1. Educating: Tools for the Public and Media

1a. Utilize Online Tools and Social Media

It is crucial that all transit agencies and advocacy groups recognize the role and importance of online information (web sites/blogs/social media) as it cycles back and feeds into more traditional and authoritative communication channels.

1b. Open Communication with the Media World

In order to make an impact on media, all transit agencies/advocacy groups should understand the priority of ensuring that transit managers/designated personnel become readily available and "desirable" to local media when media representatives seek information on current transit issues.

1c. Educate the Media

Local transit agencies/providers and local transit-related advocacy groups should strive to educate media about their efforts.

1d. Educate the Public about Regional Complexity

Local transit agencies/providers and local transit-related advocacy groups should strive to educate the public about the interrelated benefits of regional transit for different stakeholder groups and about the complexity of policy/political mechanisms that impact transit planning and implementation.

2. Branding: The Building of a Transit Image

2a. Use Imagery and Design

It is crucial to recognize the role and importance of imagery and design (captured and distributed by media) in shaping the collective image of transit in the region. This can be accomplished through a variety of ways, including the design of pilot corridors, the new branding of the agency, buses, and bus stops, and the dispersion of new images via internet and print media.

2b. Use Highly Visible Outreach Methods

Transit agencies should increase visibility of their efforts in order to strengthen public support and increase communication channels with media and the public.

3. Involving: Public Involvement Approaches

3a. Strategize to Ensure Coordinated Public Involvement

The strategizing and establishment of a coordinated public involvement approach is a priority in the Detroit region. The involvement of the public should be an early step in the planning process, assuring the development of public ownership of the plan and substantial participation in each phase of the process.

3b. Use Varied and Appropriate Public Involvement Tools

The public should be engaged at different scales: the community level through outreach or grassroots efforts, and the county, and regional levels, through mass communication tools.

3c. Foster Visibility and Coordination of Advocacy Groups

Local citizens and transit-related advocacy groups should better communicate to the public their coordination/collaboration, as well as increase in size, and reach through "coalitions."

4. Messaging: The Bridging of Regional Divides

"Why is this important for me?"

4a. Communicate to Bridge Regional Perspectives and Personal Priorities

Educational messages and campaigns should strive to bridge the disconnection between personal priorities and perceptions about the importance of transit and "regional perspectives" and priorities. In particular, transit developments or enhancements should not be portrayed as a remedy to negative issues or problems, but as a positive element in itself.

4b. Strategize for Effective Presentation of Plans

Local transit agencies/providers and local transit-related advocacy groups should strategize an effective new "presentation" of a "transit vision" for the region, distinct from previous anticipations to media or guess predictions by media. The message should be based on a coherent shared vision that encompasses both the regional-commuter system and the local bus system and their complementarities to one another.

4c. Analyze Campaign Outcomes

The analysis of factors that determine positive or negative campaign outcomes is critical. A key strategy should include a clear message segmentation in order to speak to diverse groups and explain why the plan would be valuable to them.

Media and Public Opinion Summary

The examination of successes and failures from five regions (Detroit, Cleveland, Atlanta, Denver and Saint Louis) allowed us to identify key trends and important issues connected to media and public opinion efforts. This in turn allowed us to define a set of 12 factors/ recommendations in reference to the following key themes for building a positive public opinion regarding transit: 1) Educating: tools for the public and media; 2) Branding: the building of a transit image; 3) Involving: Public Involvement approaches; 4) Messaging: the bridging of regional divides.

The study uncovered specific core themes/issues in media and public opinion, such as the necessity of key transit leaders to become desirable news sources for media; the value of communicating with the media community about transit on a regular bases; the interconnectedness of print media and social media (which cannot be considered in separate "either/or" categories), and the polarization of information; as well as the political nature of information about transit, the consequences of poor clarity in communicating about transit (see Table 1) and the role of media and public involvement strategies in building support for transit (see the Denver and St. Louis case studies).[41] The worth of ensuring increased visibility of transit-related initiatives and of collaborative efforts in a region (in particular), and of branding and promoting a positive transit image (see the Cleveland case study),[42] and finally, the importance of recognizing the role of journalists, activists and bloggers as mediators between the public and transit agencies have also been identified.

As the Detroit region moves forward with plans and visions of regional transit, the strategizing and establishment of a coordinated public involvement approach constitute a priority. A continued involvement that begins in early stages of planning is necessary. This will ensure the development of public ownership of the plan and the increased awareness by the public of decision making processes and political mechanism that will promote trust in transit agencies and governmental bodies involved. The employment of a variety of media communication tools, including social media, by transit agencies, governmental bodies and transit advocates is suggested toward continuous communication with the public and media people. Open communication will be helpful in the education of the public and media, and the development of support for transit. The promotion of a positive image of transit (physical and digital), and a clear messaging capable of framing positively the contribution of transit to the region's economy and quality of life is key. Finally, the coordinated work of transit agencies and advocacy groups, and the increased visibility of their efforts in the region, will be important to build momentum for transit in the region.

This study strove to analyze highly varied and complex relationships between media, public opinion and support for transit in five regions (Cleveland, St. Louis, Atlanta, Denver, Detroit). Details and summaries of newspaper and online articles consulted can be found in appendixes to the various media chapters in the original reports.[43] Further research is advocated for the in depth understanding of resonances between media initiatives and specific transit-related events.

III. REGIONAL TRANSIT STATUS AND THE TASK AT HAND

In the foreword to the recently published book *The Metropolitan Revolution*, Judith Rodin (President of the Rockefeller Foundation) clearly defines the current reality of the region-to-city relationship:[44]

> Often when we refer to cities we are actually referring to the broader economic, environmental, and infrastructure networks of the entire metropolitan region of which the city is a part. In this sense, it is difficult to separate the city from its larger metro region – or to separate the metro from the city. In today's world, the two are inextricably linked.

The authors accept this definition of city as the inseparable core of the region. However, we also believe that the broader community of Metro Detroit also needs to understand, accept and embrace it, if the region and the city are to thrive in the future.

Southeast Michigan has (or can secure) all of the technical tools needed to successfully implement effective regional public transit. However, these resources need to be organized and managed in ways that bring about substantive improvements to the operation of current transit assets and the development and funding of transit expansion.

A good deal of transit planning work has already been accomplished, including the *RTCC Public Transit Plan* completed in 2008 and AATA strategic plan, and these plans have been accepted by the new Regional Transit Authority (RTA) as a first step in moving transit ahead in the Metro Detroit region.[45] In addition, transit development has received far more attention and planned investment in the *SEMCOG Regional Transportation Plan, Direction 2035*,[46] than it received in previous plans. These documents provide a sound planning foundation for moving ahead in regional transit development in Metro Detroit.

What is needed most is a *unified will* to move forward with a truly regional transit system, and an effective effort to direct that will to plan, fund, build and operate more effective *regional* transit systems. The significant element that is missing is the development of a unified working relationship between public and private leadership toward the common goal of the development of a public transit system for Southeast Michigan that substantively improves the lives of our citizens and helps to strengthen our economy.

Many strong transit advocates must come together from diverse stakeholder segments of the community. However, as each represents their particular group or locale, with its values and priorities, there is a danger of being too inflexible, thereby impeding the attainment of consensus and making agreement difficult if not impossible to reach. Our region does not have a good record of regionalism that brings citizens and leaders from across our region together to support broad, regional goals that would benefit the entire area. However, in recent years, a seed of regionalism has germinated, and sprouts of regional thinking and action have emerged. These include decisions by government agencies and voting citizens to support and sustain regional assets such as COBO Hall, the Detroit Zoo and the Detroit Institute of Arts. While these are encouraging, they reflect a desire to retain and enhance existing assets that were already valued and highly regarded.

Of course, the largest and most relevant movements toward regionalism have focused on transit: the approval of the RTCC's regional transit plan and the creation of the RTA by the State of Michigan. A recent survey indicated that the majority of respondent's value transit in general, but do not have a high regard for the existing transit services in Metro Detroit, nor a high degree of confidence in the current transit providers in the region.[47] This lack of respect and confidence may work against the advancement of transit and fuel divisive forces whose priorities and politics are focused locally, not regionally. However, the new transit authority has the opportunity to establish a new reputation for effective, efficient operations. Also, the combination of valuing transit in general and being dissatisfied with current service may be a powerful motivator for support for emerging transit plans.

It is also important to note that divisive forces are not unique to Metro Detroit. Other regions have faced and overcome the barriers that they presented; and Metro Detroit can do so, too. While a sense of regionalism is valuable to advancing regional transit, transit leaders from all segments of the community must realize that it is not necessary to completely "solve" the barriers to regionalism to move forward with regional transit. In fact, regional transit can lead to a greater sense of and support of regionalism, if done well.

IV. CONCLUSION

This research presents strong testimony that a diverse coalition of leaders from many stakeholder groups can overcome the myriad barriers to regional cooperation, and yield dramatic advances in effective regional transit that support the region's overall vitality and health. Evidence from many regions across the nation have supported the adage "a rising tide floats all boats," as regions have realized that the wellbeing of core cities and their suburban neighbors are inextricably linked.[48] In fact, given the state of the economy and the inability and unwillingness of the federal government to advance programs to develop our nation's urban regions (home to two-thirds of our people and producer of three-fourths of our GDP), it is up to such coalitions to define and deliver on the actions needed for regional vitality. Katz and Bradley refer to such coalitions as a "pragmatic caucus," and describe their potential:[49]

> Members of this pragmatic caucus share common traits. They are impatient. The do not tolerate ideological nonsense or political bromides. They are frustrated with grid-lock and inaction. They bristle at conventional pessimism and focus on constructive optimism. They are risk takers. They do not have partisan allegiance; they have a political attitude.

In Metro Detroit, such coalitions are beginning to emerge around transit as a regional need and a powerful engine for regional and economic development. If these leaders work well together as "pragmatic caucuses," the resulting transit systems will fulfill the promise of efficient, reliable service to riders, and improved vitality and livability of our region to the benefit of all citizens of Metro Detroit.

The authors fervently hope that the findings and recommendations of our study will inform and guide our leaders and citizens from across our region to that end.

For those who seek even deeper analysis and detail, four previously published reports resulting from the findings of this study may be downloaded from the UDM Transportation Center website. They offer nearly 700 pages of findings, stories, discussion and analysis— including a history of Detroit-area transit, examinations of transit in Detroit and in four peer regions, and comparisons and recommendations.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AATA	Ann Arbor Transportation Authority
BI-State	St. Louis Metro
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
CBT	Citizens for Better Transportation
CMT	Citizens for Modern Transit
DDOT	Detroit Department of Transportation
DTC	Detroit Transportation Corporation
DTOGS	Detroit Transit Options for Growth Study
FasTracks	FasTracks Program (a multi-billion dollar comprehensive transit expansion plan in the Denver, Co area)
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information System
HealthLine	Bus Rapid Transit System in Cleveland
HUD	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
LIRR	Long Island Rail Road
LLC	Limited Liability Company
LRT	Light Rail Transportation
M-1 Rail	Woodward Avenue Streetcar, Detroit, Michigan
MARTA	Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation
MetroLink	St. Louis Region's Light Rail System
MoveLA	Los Angeles transit advocate group
P3	Public-Private Partnership
RRT	Rolling Rapid Transit
RTA	Regional Transit Authority
RTCC	Regional Transit Coordinating Council
RTD	Regional Transportation District
SEMCOG	Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments
SMART	Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation
SPLOST	Special-Purpose Local-Option Sales Tax
TOC	Transit-Oriented Community
TOD	Transit-Oriented Development
UDM	University of Detroit, Michigan
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
WA3	Woodward Avenue Action Association

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PEER REVIEW

San José State University, of the California State University system, and the MTI Board of Trustees have agreed upon a peer review process required for all research published by MNTRC. The purpose of the review process is to ensure that the results presented are based upon a professionally acceptable research protocol.

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