



Dear Friends:

The Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA) is committed to Building Equitable Sustainable Transit (BEST) with better connections between and around Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Washtenaw counties.

Over the last six months we've taken the first steps toward that goal by thoroughly documenting the current state of our regional transit. Why spend so much time affirming what we've all heard –and experienced – for decades? Because while it is accepted wisdom that transit in the region needs improvement, a successful effort has to begin with detailing the current situation with hard data and solid evidence.

Make no mistake though, we've also carefully documented, analyzed and included what we heard from the public. What you've told us about your experiences with local transit and transit in other cities -- and about your concerns, hopes and ideas for Southeast Michigan's transit future – have directly and strongly influenced our work.

Our team has compiled what they learned in a State of the System Report (posted at [www.rtamichigan.org](http://www.rtamichigan.org)), which pinpoints our systemic needs and gaps. It also identifies eight modes of transit, or building blocks, to address these areas of need.

Later this fall we will be presenting specific transit scenarios – ideas with options for how we can actually create the system using these building blocks. By early winter, we will finalize the draft master plan which will serve as the guide for transit improvement and expansion in Southeast Michigan for the next two decades.

For this round of public engagement we're asking for your response to the following:

The most important priority for transit in Southeast Michigan is ...

**A: Mobility**      **B: Job Access**      **C: Travel Time**      **D: Reliability**      **E: Livability**

You can respond in-person and talk directly to our project team by attending one of the public meetings scheduled between October 19 and 24. There you will learn more about what each of these priorities mean and how they help create a successful transit system. Can't come to a meeting? Then text the letter of your choice to 1-313-329-6498, or visit our website at [www.rtamichigan.org/input](http://www.rtamichigan.org/input) for more ways to engage. You can also connect with us at [facebook.com/rtamichigan](https://facebook.com/rtamichigan) or Twitter at @rtamichigan.

Your answer to this question, and your ongoing input, are a valued and vital part of helping us reach our shared goal of creating a customer-focused public transportation system that takes us all where we need and want to go.



Michael Ford, CEO  
Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan

## BEST: Regional Master Plan Meeting Schedule

- **Monday, October 19**  
4 - 8 p.m.  
Wayne County Community College District, Downriver Campus  
21000 Northline Road  
Taylor, MI 48180
- **Tuesday, October 20**  
4 - 8 p.m.  
Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority  
150 South 5th Avenue, #301  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
- **Wednesday, October 21**  
4 - 8 p.m.  
Velocity Center, Oakland University Incubator  
6633 18 Mile Road  
Sterling Heights, MI 48314
- **Thursday, October 22**  
4 - 8 p.m.  
Detroit Zoo, 8450 West 10 Mile Road  
Royal Oak, MI 48067
- **Saturday, October 24**  
9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
Michigan State University Detroit Center  
3408 Woodward Avenue  
Detroit, MI 48201

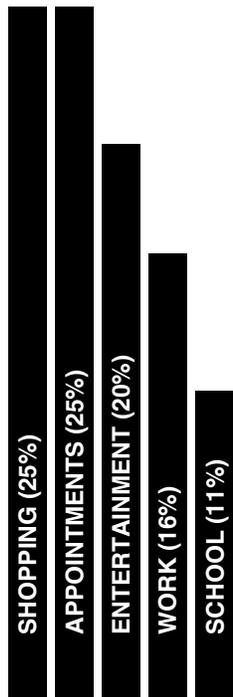
For more information, special needs, or an accessible format version of this invitation, call 313-402-1020.



# We are Listening to You!

Here's what we heard you want and need in regional transit.

You would use transit for:

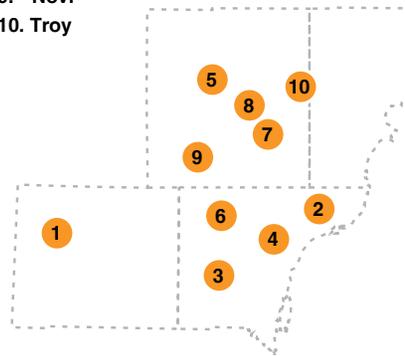


Top three factors when deciding whether to use transit or not:

- 1 LOCATION**  
Will transit get me to my destination?
- 2 SPEED**  
How fast can transit get me where I want to go?
- 3 FREQUENCY**  
How long I have to wait for a bus? Will service be available on nights, weekends, or the midday?

Most popular destinations you want regional transit to take you to:

1. Ann Arbor & Ypsilanti
2. Downtown Detroit
3. The Airport
4. Dearborn
5. Pontiac
6. Livonia
7. Birmingham
8. Bloomfield Hills
9. Novi
10. Troy



Regional transit is important to you because:

- ...It means more people with limited transportation abilities have opportunities to improve their lives.
- ...Everyone should have equitable access to jobs, health care, school, and other destinations.
- ...All my Millennial friends moved away because we don't have transit.
- ...I want to see Detroit come back!
- ...It promotes social equality, connects people to their communities, and grows our economy. And it is good for the environment.



# What Makes a Successful Regional Transit System?

And what are the challenges facing our current transit system?

## A Successful Regional Transit System

Qualities of Successful Transit

### Transit is CONVENIENT for most people.

- Most people in the region can **easily access transit** services by walking, riding a bike, or driving very short distances.
- People who cannot drive or easily get to a transit stop can request service that **comes to them** as needed. These services are known as paratransit and demand response.
- Convenient transit enhances **regional mobility**, allowing people to move through the region as they wish.

#### Paratransit & Demand Response

Paratransit is a special transportation service offered to people with disabilities. Paratransit services are required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Demand response is a flexible kind of transportation sometimes provided for people who cannot use traditional transit for some reason. Services sometimes include flexible bus routes and dial-a-ride services to help people get where they need to go.

### Transit connects PEOPLE TO JOBS and places.

- Transit services are coordinated so **people are connected** to places they want to go.
- Better connectivity means **fewer transfers** and **reduced travel time**.
- Services are frequent enough to be useful and get people **where they want** to go **when they want** to be there.
- Transit **connects people** to jobs, shopping, doctor appointments, and cultural activities—the kinds of places you told us you want transit to take you.



## Southeast Michigan's Current System

Our Needs and Gaps

### Transit is INCONVENIENT.

- Our current network has **limited coordination** which makes it difficult to get around the region.
- In Southeast Michigan it is not uncommon for riders to have to transfer from one transit provider to another, even if both buses run **on the same street**, to get to their destination.
- Transit service hours are limited and transit is **not frequent enough** during off-peak hours. This makes it more difficult to use transit outside of rush hour.

#### Transfers

A transfer is where a rider must change buses to complete their trip.

Transfers can also occur between different modes, such as getting off a bus and boarding a train to complete your trip.

#### Transit Frequency

Frequency tells how often a bus comes and how long a rider will have to wait for a bus. A frequency of 15 minutes means a rider will never wait more than 15 minutes for a bus. Higher frequencies—buses coming more often—are more convenient and useful to riders than low frequencies.

#### Peak vs Off-Peak

Peak refers to the morning and afternoon rush hours when most people are traveling to and from work. Off-peak refers to times outside of this, such as nights, weekends, and the middle of the day.

### Transit does not serve enough JOBS.

- Many jobs and employment centers are **not served** by our current transit system.



# What Makes a Successful Regional Transit System?

And what are the challenges facing our current transit system?

## A Successful Regional Transit System

Qualities of Successful Transit

### Transit is RELIABLE and SAFE.

- Riders feel **safe** when using transit.
- Transit vehicles arrive **on time** and go where they say they will.

### Transit helps make places more LIVABLE.

- Transit **links people to jobs** and services.
- Communities linked by transit become more attractive for living, working, and playing, which **increases property values**.
- The region attracts better wage jobs and is a **more exciting place to be!**
- Transit allows you to drive less and **reduce your environmental impact**.
- Most importantly, you can **save money** by not having to rely on an automobile to get around.



## Southeast Michigan's Current System

Our Needs and Gaps

### Transit is UNRELIABLE and perceived to be UNSAFE.

- Too many buses are not running on time, skip riders waiting at stops because they are too full, and sometimes simply **don't show up** at all.
- Many of you **feel unsafe** at transit stops or on buses.

### The region's LIVABILITY is affected by the lack of good regional transit service.

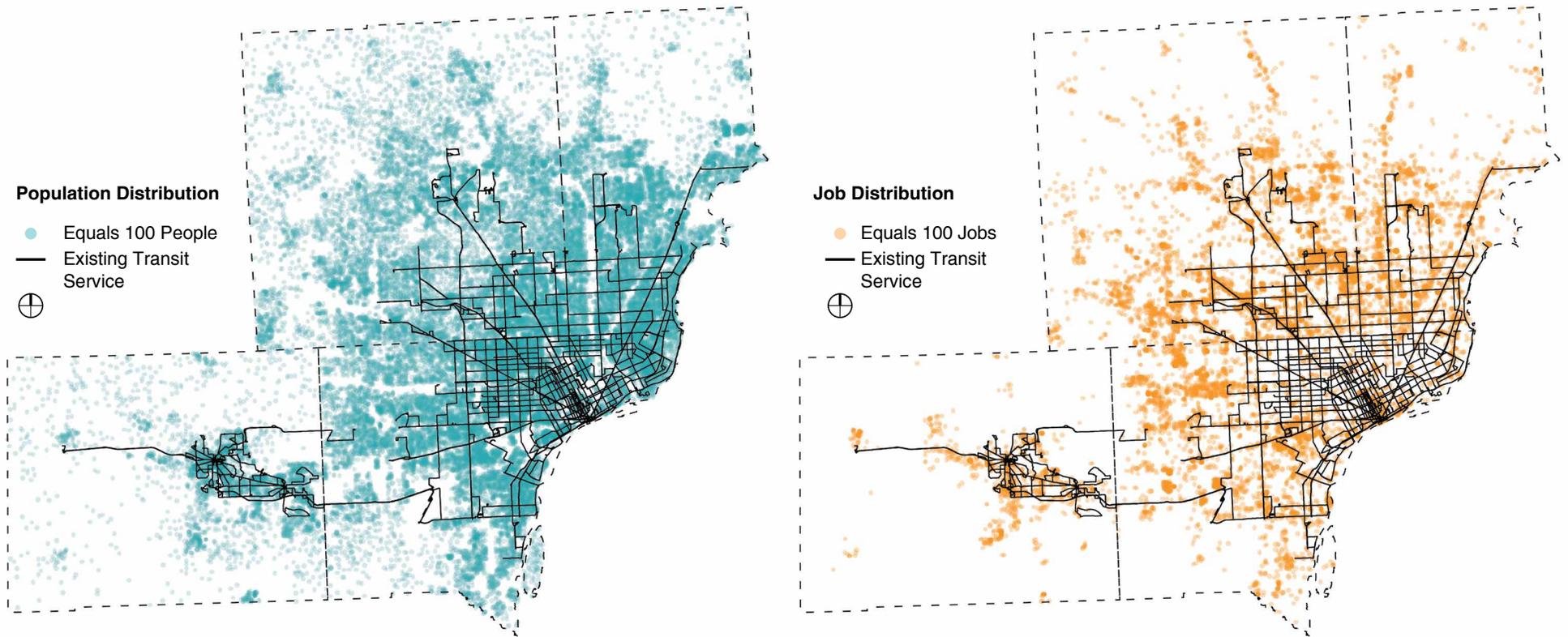
- Too many communities and jobs are **inaccessible by transit**. Jobs are concentrated in urban cores that are scattered throughout the region.
- Talented employees and retirees are **leaving for other metro areas** that have better transit systems.
- **More service is needed** to support the area's size and transit demand.



# Gaps in Our Transit System

The challenges facing our current transit system.

## Population and Job Distribution





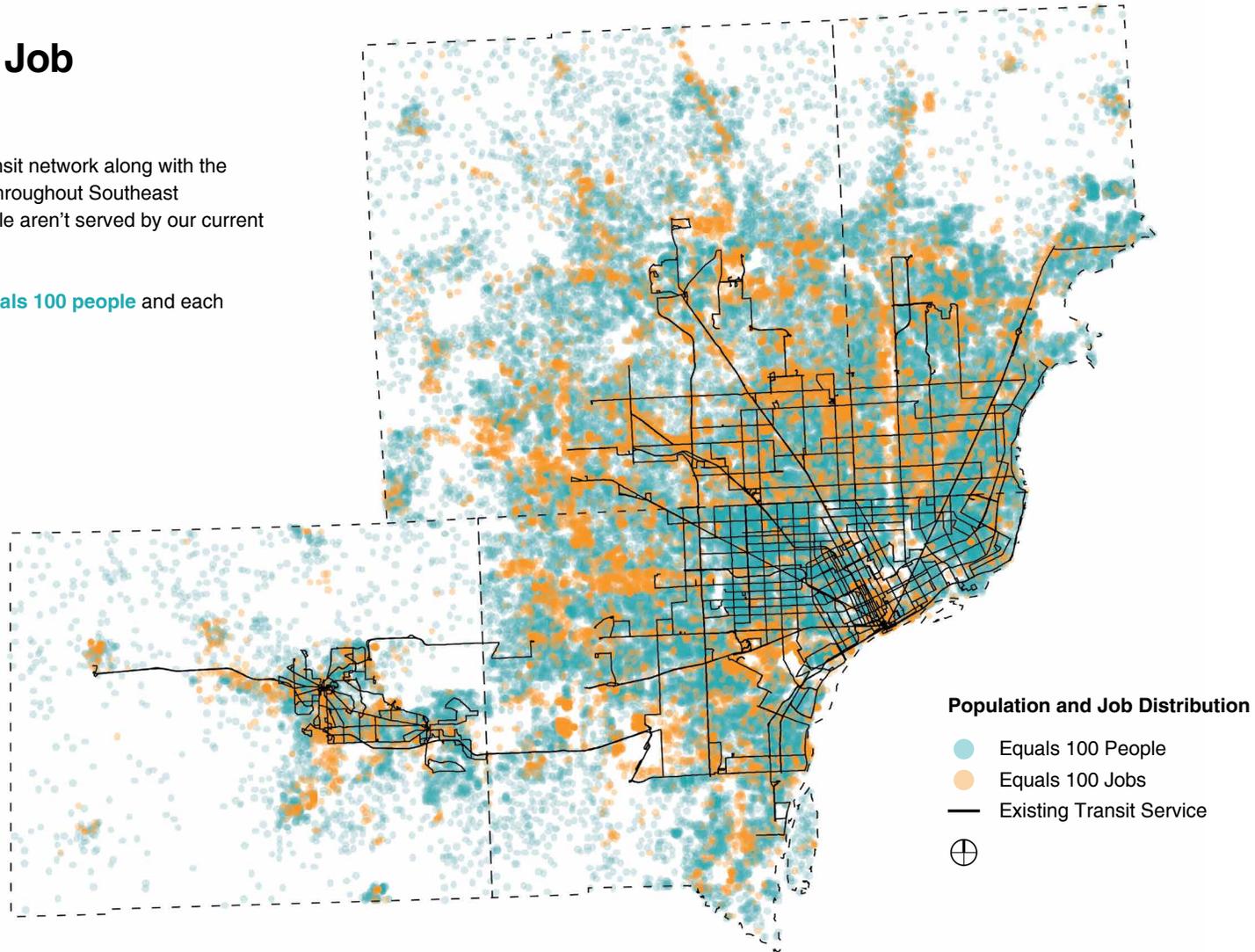
# Gaps in Our Transit System

The challenges facing our current transit system.

## Population and Job Distribution

This map shows our current transit network along with the distribution of people and jobs throughout Southeast Michigan. Lots of jobs and people aren't served by our current transit system.

On the map, each **blue dot equals 100 people** and each **orange dot equals 100 jobs**.



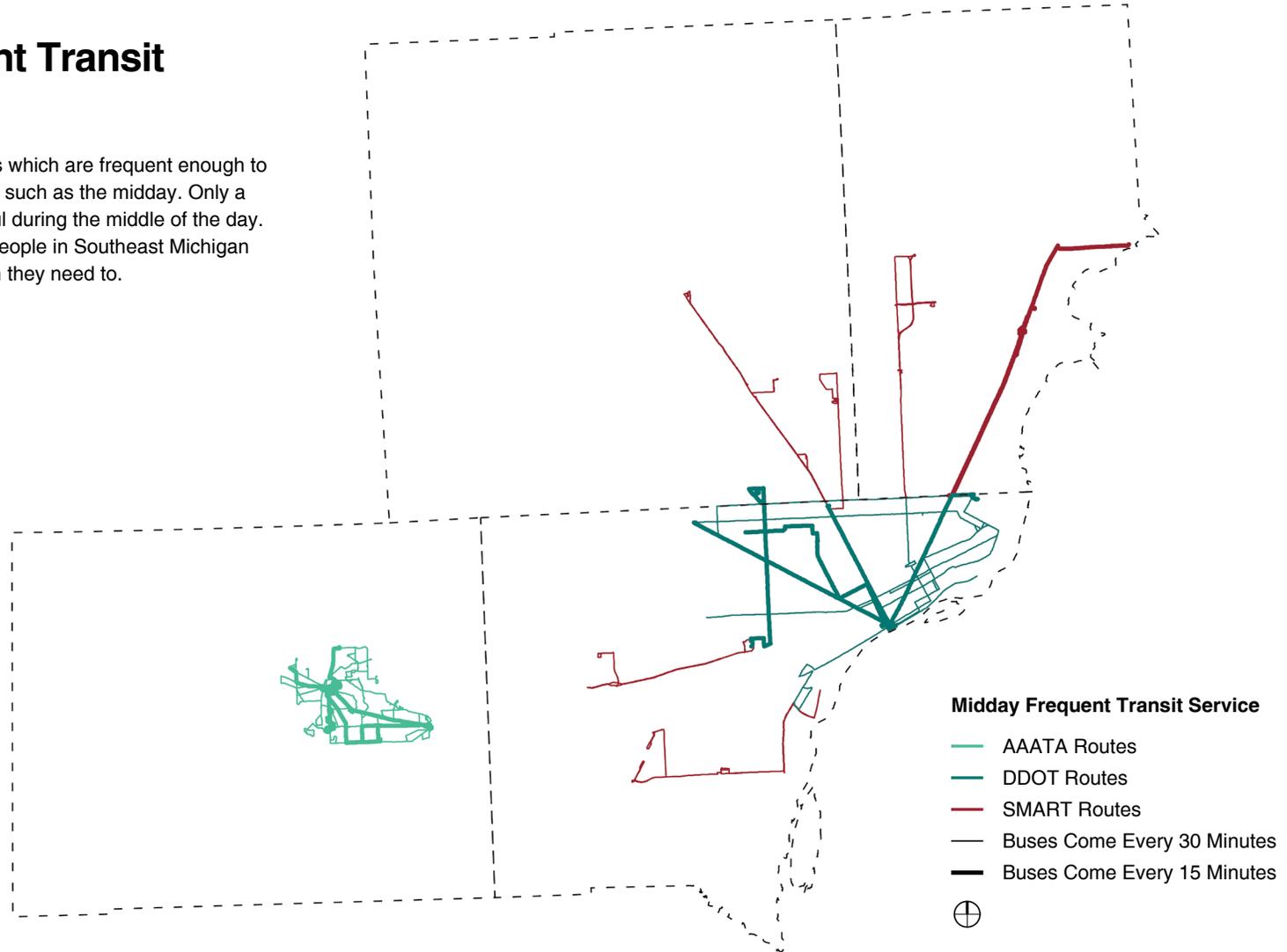


# An Inconvenient Regional Transit System

The challenges facing our current transit system.

## Midday Frequent Transit Service

This map shows the transit lines which are frequent enough to be useful during off-peak hours, such as the midday. Only a handful of transit lines are useful during the middle of the day. This makes it difficult for most people in Southeast Michigan to move across the region when they need to.





# A Transit Network with Limited Coordination

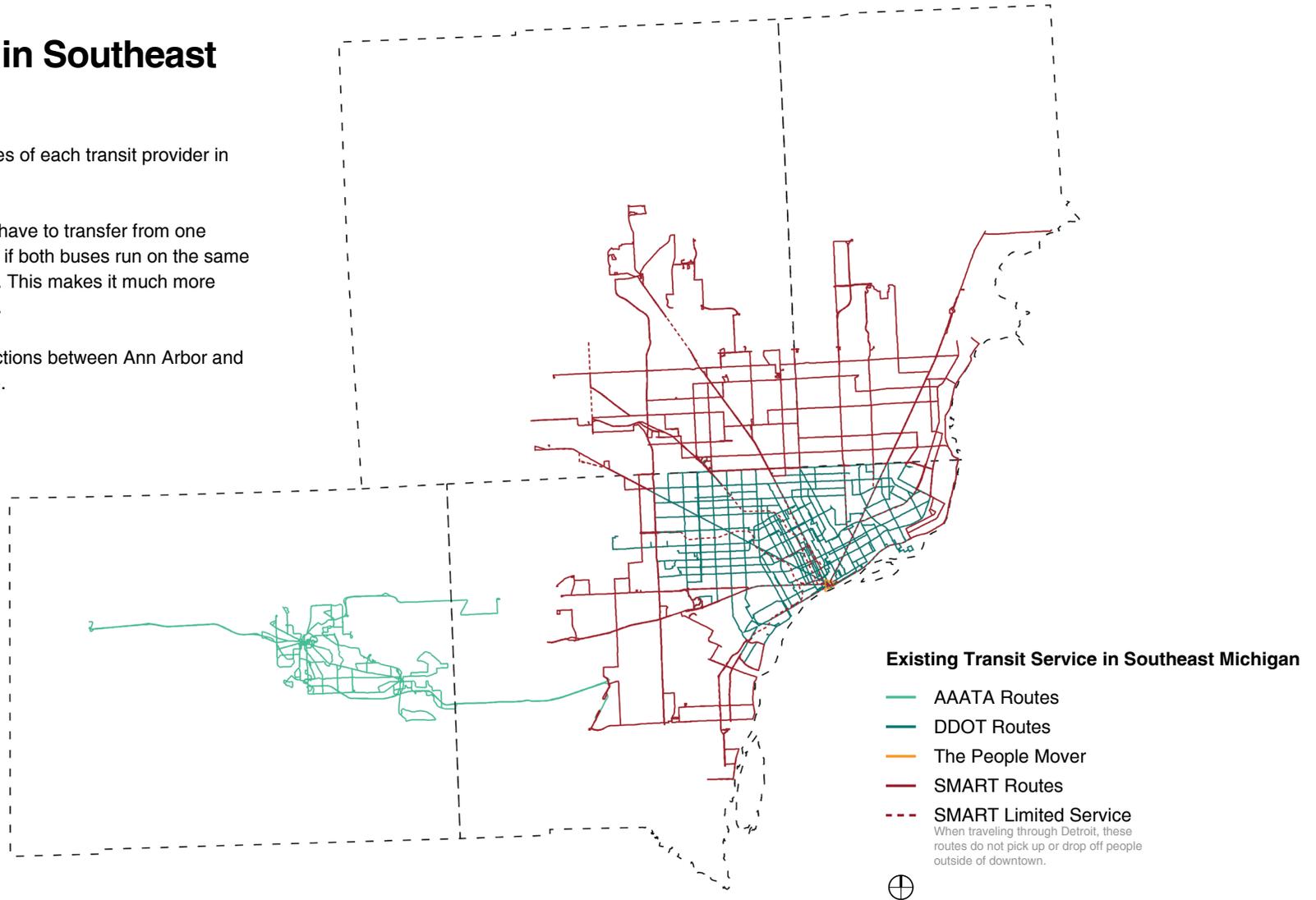
The challenges facing our current transit system.

## Transit Service in Southeast Michigan

This map shows the transit routes of each transit provider in Southeast Michigan.

It is not uncommon for riders to have to transfer from one transit provider to another, even if both buses run on the same street, to get to their destination. This makes it much more difficult to get around the region.

There are also no transit connections between Ann Arbor and Detroit (or the rest of the region).





# Building Blocks for Better Transit

Here are some elements that can improve our regional transit system.

We've identified the building blocks needed to create a better regional transit system for Southeast Michigan. Each one is useful for solving different kinds of problems in our region.

Learn more about the building blocks, where they would be appropriate, and how each one performs based on the characteristics of a successful transit system.

## Airport Express



Frederick Dennstedt flickr.com/photos/fredcamino/

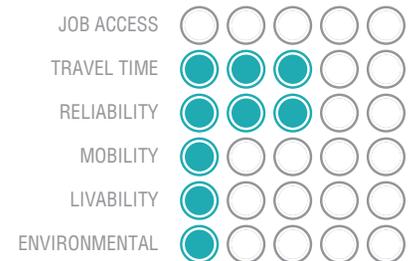
### What is it?

Limited stop express bus service from regional centers to Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Buses would travel hourly to and from the airport each day. Fares for this premium service would be higher than that of a normal bus ride.

### Where is it appropriate?

Each airport express route would pick up passengers at designated locations within Oakland, Macomb, Wayne and Washtenaw counties.

### How does it perform?

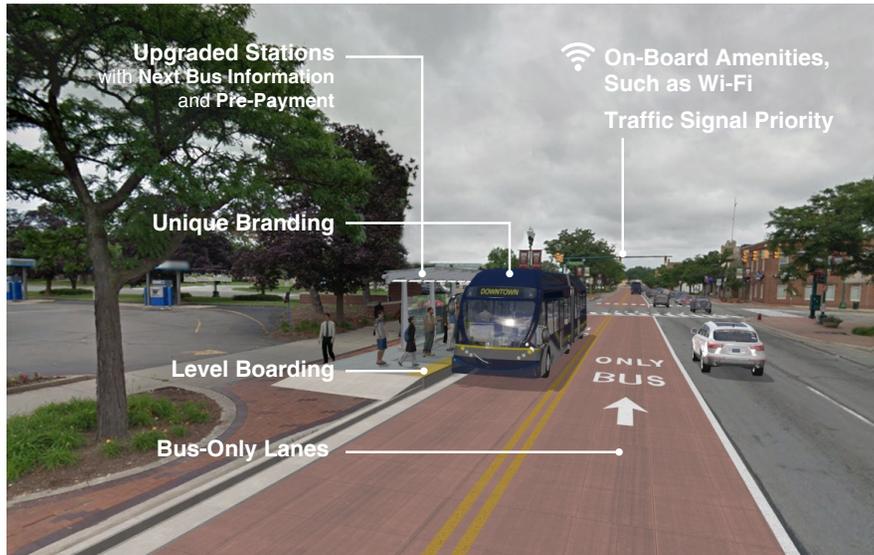




# Building Blocks for Better Transit

Here are some elements that can improve our regional transit system.

## Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)



Rendering courtesy of the Michigan Avenue corridor team

### What is it?

Express bus service characterized by rail-like amenities at premium stations. Stations are typically one-mile apart for faster trips. BRT provides some of the same benefits as light rail or streetcar service at a lower cost.

### Where is it appropriate?

BRT is being studied along Woodward, Gratiot, and Michigan avenues where it would provide easy access to downtown Detroit. BRT works best in high ridership corridors.

### How does it perform?



## Rapid Bus



### What is it?

Rapid Bus offers express service with some premium features. Unlike BRT, Rapid Bus does travel in mixed traffic. While Rapid Bus stops more often than BRT, it is faster and more frequent than local bus.

### Where is it appropriate?

Rapid Bus would be found along major regional corridors, such as Grand River, Seven Mile, or Van Dyke. Rapid Bus is supported by higher-density areas.

### How does it perform?





# Building Blocks for Better Transit

Here are some elements that can improve our regional transit system.

## Local Bus



### What is it?

Local Bus is the bus service we currently have in Southeast Michigan. Buses stop frequently to deliver people closer to their destinations. Local Bus connects users to other transit modes and helps fill in gaps in the existing system.

### Where is it appropriate?

New Local Bus service would be appropriate in areas where transit is not currently provided.

### How does it perform?



## Paratransit & Demand Response



### What is it?

Transit service with trips initiated by calls from passengers in need of special service and transportation to their destinations. Demand response trips are not fixed route and operate door-to-door. Passengers must qualify to use the service.

### Where is it appropriate?

Demand response services would be available throughout Southeast Michigan for those eligible.

### How does it perform?





# Building Blocks for Better Transit

Here are some elements that can improve our regional transit system.

## Commuter Rail



### What is it?

Train travel connecting suburban areas with dense employment centers. Commuter Rail travels on track shared with freight, usually during peak hours. Stations are typically five miles apart and routes range between 20 and 50 miles.

### Where is it appropriate?

Commuter Rail would provide service between Ann Arbor and Detroit.

### How does it perform?



## Commuter Bus



Photo by George Lumbieras  
George Lumbieras flickr.com/photos/luxian400/

### What is it?

Commuter-oriented bus service providing weekday rush-hour service to commuters traveling to and from employment centers. Routes are fitted for longer distances with fewer stops.

### Where is it appropriate?

Along major corridors, such as M-59, which connect key employment centers in Southeast Michigan.

### How does it perform?





# How Do We Stack Up?

Here's how we compare to some of our peer regions.

## Southeast Michigan

### What is transit spending per capita?

Transit spending per capita is the average amount of money spent in a region per person to provide transit.

### Where did these numbers come from?

This data comes from the National Transit Database, a national database for annual transit agency statistics, and the U.S. Census.

**Streetcar**  
Soon, M-1 RAIL will offer a new kind of transit service in Southeast Michigan

**AirRide**  
AAATA offers express service to the airport from Ann Arbor, but the rest of Southeast Michigan does not have this kind of service available to them.

### Transit Spending per Capita



**POPULATION** 4,040,112  
in urbanized areas

**AREA (SQ MI)** 2,699  
of urbanized areas

**PEOPLE / SQ MI** 1,497  
in urbanized areas



Jess Lundgren flickr.com/photos/lundgrenphotography

## Cleveland Region

### Why Cleveland?

Cleveland shares an industrial heritage with Detroit and faces many of the same challenges we do. It has similar land use patterns and is also located next to a major body of water.

Cleveland's transit system is an example of a lower level of transit investment among our peer regions.

**Airport Service**  
One of Cleveland's light rail lines also serves the airport.

### What are these blue areas?

The blue areas represent the urbanized areas of each region. The size of the area is one indication of how large and spread out the region is. As you can see, Southeast Michigan is the largest of these four regions.

### Transit Spending per Capita



**POPULATION** 1,780,673  
in urbanized areas

**AREA (SQ MI)** 772  
of urbanized areas

**PEOPLE / SQ MI** 2,307  
in urbanized areas



Tim Evanson flickr.com/photos/23165290@N00

# How Do We Stack Up?

Here's how we compare to some of our peer regions.

## Pittsburgh Region



**Why Pittsburgh?**  
Pittsburgh shares an industrial heritage with Detroit.  
Pittsburgh's transit system is an example of the average level of transit investment among our peer regions.



### Transit Spending per Capita



**POPULATION** 1,733,853

in urbanized areas

**AREA (SQ MI)** 905

of urbanized areas

**PEOPLE / SQ MI** 1,916

in urbanized areas



Flickr user jpellgen flickr.com/photos/jpellgen

## Seattle Region

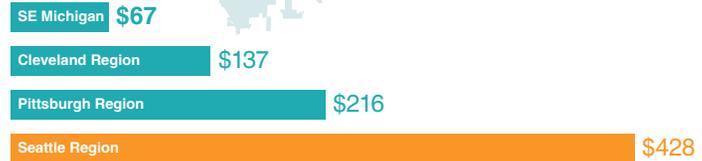


**Why Seattle?**  
Like Southeast Michigan, Seattle has many different transit providers as well as a regional agency, Sound Transit. Sound Transit functions much like the RTA will, coordinating the many transit providers while also offering regional transit services.  
Seattle's transit system is an example of a very high level of transit investment among our peer regions.

**Airport Service**  
One of Seattle's light rail lines also serves the airport.



### Transit Spending per Capita



**POPULATION** 3,059,393

in urbanized areas

**AREA (SQ MI)** 1,010

of urbanized areas

**PEOPLE / SQ MI** 3,028

in urbanized areas



Jonathan Miske flickr.com/photos/jmiske



# What Are Your Priorities?

Help us prioritize the challenges we address first. What you tell us will help us determine the right building blocks that will make up our future transit system.

The  
**MOST IMPORTANT  
PRIORITY**



for transit in  
**Southeast  
Michigan**  
is:

**313-329-6498**

- A** Mobility
- B** Job Access
- C** Travel Time
- D** Reliability
- E** Livability
- F** Environment

**Connect  
with the  
RTA**

**WEB:** [www.rtamichigan.org](http://www.rtamichigan.org)

**ADDRESS:** 1001 Woodward Ave, Suite 1400, Detroit, MI 48226

**PHONE:** 313-402-1020

**EMAIL:** [info@rtamichigan.org](mailto:info@rtamichigan.org)

**FACEBOOK:** [facebook.com/rtamichigan](https://facebook.com/rtamichigan)

**TWITTER:** @rtamichigan

# Thank You!

RTA

Our goal is to create a Regional Master Transit Plan which will lead to a **customer-focused system** – a plan for Southeast Michigan, by Southeast Michigan.

Your input ensures we create a system that meets our needs and will help shape the transit options we present to you later this year.

