

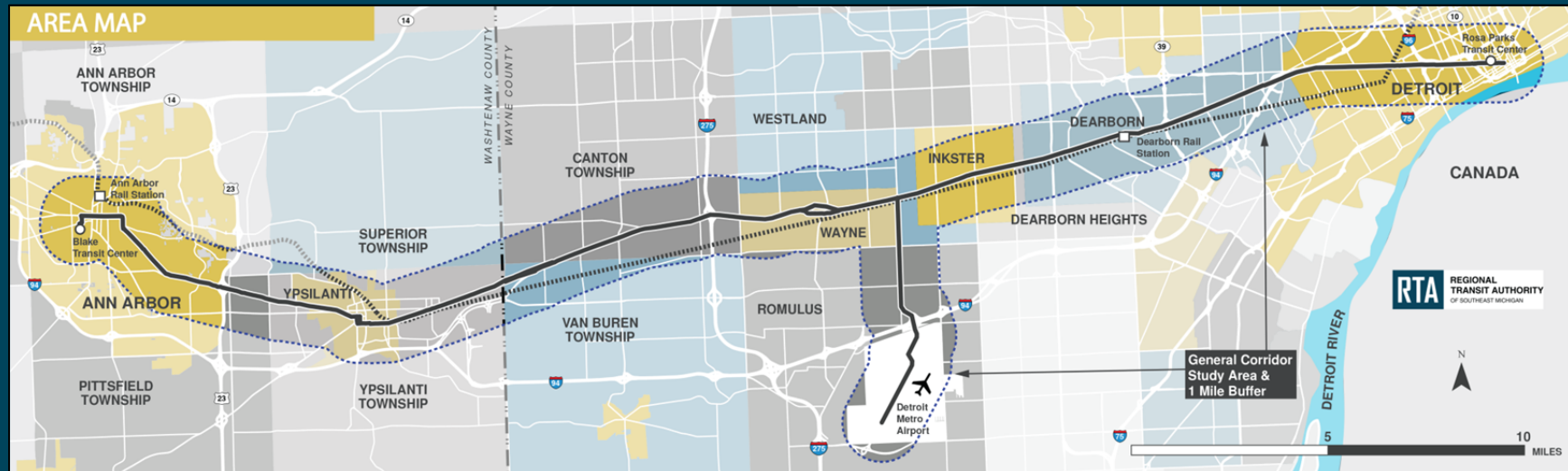
Tech Memo 1

Planning Studies for the BEST: Michigan Avenue Corridor

From: AECOM Consultant Team
To: BEST Project Team
August 10, 2015

This memorandum provides a brief overview of transportation and land use studies relevant to the Building Equitable Sustainable Transit: Michigan Avenue (BEST: Michigan Avenue) study corridor. The relevant content of these plans will create a knowledge framework that informs the development of the Existing Conditions summary report and the Purpose and Need document, both of which will be produced concurrently with the initial round of public engagement. Separate memoranda document existing transportation and land use conditions.

Map 1: BEST: Michigan Ave Corridor



Source: AECOM

1.0 Transportation Studies and Plans

1.1 Transit Plans

Transit plans in this section are listed in chronological order (oldest to most recent). Ongoing initiatives, such as the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) Five-Year Service Development Plan and associated service quality enhancements, are not yet public and thus are not included. The Project Team will monitor ongoing initiatives and consider these in an exploration of regional transit opportunities between Detroit and Ann Arbor.

Improving Transit in Southeast Michigan: A Framework for Action (SEMCOG 2001)

This plan presented the first comprehensive argument for a regional transit system in recent decades. The plan proposed a four-tiered system of transit improvements, including:

- Tier 1: a “Rapid Transit” network comprised of semi-rapid transit services, such as arterial Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). This conceptual network was comprised of 12 arterial corridors radiating from downtown Detroit with ring corridors at the city limit and towards the edge of the urbanized region. Two Rapid Transit networks were conceived to reach Metro Airport: one from Michigan Avenue, and the other from Fort Street and Downriver communities.
- Tier 2: Fixed-Route Bus, including enhancements to and extensions of the existing network.
- Tier 3: Community Transit, demand response or fixed-route services in lower density areas. SMART currently operates this type of demand response service through local partnerships and under the name “Community Transit.”
- Tier 4: Regional Links, extending from the Rapid Transit network to nearby metro areas, including Ann Arbor, Lansing, Flint, Port Huron and Toledo. These inter-metro area connections were

assumed to consist of commuter rail and/or over-the-road motorcoach services. The study offers support for an Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (TheRide) initiative to connect Ann Arbor to Metro Airport with express bus service. It also references an ongoing study to extend commuter rail from downtown Detroit to Metro Airport.

The plan was provided as an illustrative supplement to the 2025 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). While not financially constrained, the plan recommended securing funding to implement the full four-tiered system. The estimated system costs when Bus Rapid Transit is used for the Rapid Transit network is \$2 billion over 25 years, plus \$200 million annually for operations.¹

Lansing to Detroit Commuter Rail Study (2000)

The Lansing to Detroit Passenger Rail Study was undertaken in response to the announcement that General Motors was moving its Oldsmobile headquarters from Lansing to Detroit. The study recommended commuter rail service in the Lansing-Howell-Ann Arbor-Detroit corridor and was decided that initially the focus should be on the Ann Arbor-Detroit segment of the corridor as a minimum operating segment.

Downtown Detroit to Metro Airport Rail Study (2001)

This report, which was designed to identify and evaluate rail transit connections between downtown Detroit and the Metro Airport, is divided into three phases:

Phase 1

The report includes a peer review of similar airport rail lines; a total of 11 properties were reviewed. Of the 11, seven were currently operating rail services to and from an airport, while four were in the planning stages. The conclusion of this analysis states that “a key to ensure productive

¹ SEMCOG (2001). *Improving Transit in Southeast Michigan: A Framework for Action*, page xv.

airport to downtown rail transit service is tailoring such service to the market being served. Frequent, all-day or nearly all-day service is best suited to capture the full ridership potential of round-the-clock airport operations...”

The third section of this report focuses on institutional issues. These are defined as issues related to the roles, duties and responsibility of the various public agencies, private concerns and community interests necessary to the eventual implementation of rail transit service between downtown Detroit and Metro Airport. The recommendation to effectively organize a rail transit project was to create a new Regional Transit Authority (RTA) or expand the charter of the existing Regional Transit Coordinating Council.

Phase 2

This section of the report identifies the alternatives (alignments and modes) developed to serve the corridor’s key destinations, leverage existing rail and major roadway transportation corridors, and provide access to local communities.

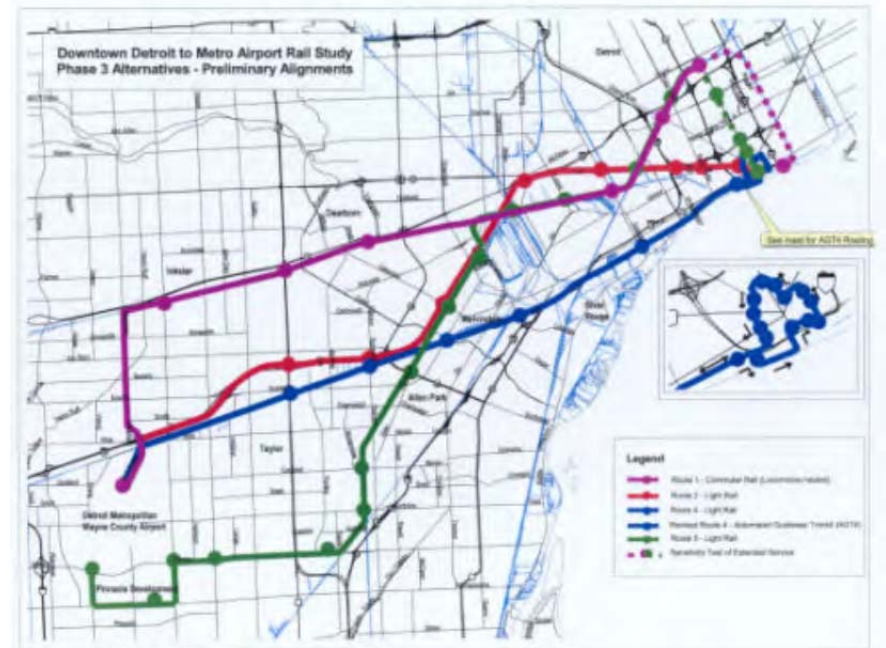
The results found that project travel demand would be greater for Light Rail Transit (LRT) / Automated Guideway Transit (AGT) alternatives than for commuter rail alternatives. The estimated capital costs associated with the two modes would be higher for LRT than for commuter rail. The commuter rail alternatives (using railroads bordering the airport, rather than the Amtrak corridor) would result in significant impacts to existing and projected freight railroad services. The LRT alternatives proved more cost-effective at this level of analysis than did the commuter rail alternatives.

Phase 3

This section of the report describes refinements made to the alternatives evaluated during Phase 3 of the study. These refinements fall into three general categories, 1) modifications to Phase 2 alignment and station locations, 2) the utilization of revised demographic data for one alternative and 3) the application of modified Sketch Planning ridership

estimating methodologies. In addition, refinements to the Phase 2 capital and operating and maintenance (O&M) cost estimates were applied to all of the surviving alternatives. Capital cost estimates (2001 value) ranged from approximately \$275 million for a Commuter Rail alternative to \$775 million for a Light Rail Transit alternative and \$1.2 billion for Automated Guideway Transit. Because the AGT alternative would require full grade separation, its capital cost estimate was expected to be considerably higher than the LRT variation. All of the ridership projections appear low for 2015 conditions; refined modeling reflecting 2015 development trends and the attractiveness of high-quality transit would likely produce higher ridership estimates. The rail alternatives are depicted in Figure 2 (only low resolution image is available).

Figure 2: Detroit to Metro Airport Rail Study (2001) Alternatives



Source: SEMCOG (2001), page 1-4

Commuter rail alternatives show lower ridership projections than LRT and AGT alternatives. This is because commuter rail would operate less frequently and will a shorter span of service than other alternatives (does not run as late into the night). The rail alternatives and their associated ridership estimates are as follows:

- Alternative 1: Commuter Rail with new rail right-of-way parallel to Merriman Road. This line would follow the existing Amtrak alignment from Detroit/New Center to Wayne, and then follow a new rail right-of-way to the airport. Projected ridership: 3,600 riders/day;
- Alternative 2: Light Rail Transit via Michigan Avenue and I-94. This alternative would operate in the median of Michigan Avenue from downtown Detroit to the Dearborn line. It would then use the I-94 right-of-way to reach the airport. Projected ridership: 8,200 riders/day;
- Alternative 3: Commuter Rail from downtown Detroit to New Center and the Airport. This alternative used the Dequindre Cut to travel from the Renaissance Center vicinity to New Center, where it joined the Amtrak alignment. It left the Amtrak alignment near the Ford Rouge complex in Dearborn and followed freight railroads to the airport. A new railroad right-of-way would connect directly to the airport terminals. Projected ridership: 2,100 riders/day.
- Alternative 4: Light Rail Transit or Automated Guideway Transit parallel to the Norfolk Southern railroad between the airport and the Detroit riverfront. Near Rosa Parks Boulevard, the alignment would transition to Jefferson to enter downtown. The AGT variation would extend the People Mover from the Joe Louis Arena vicinity to the Airport. Projected ridership: 7,200 riders/day (Phase 3 evaluation).
- Alternative 5: Light Rail Transit along Woodward between downtown Detroit and New Center, and then to the Taylor by travelling parallel to railroads. This line would serve southwest Detroit (with a station near Michigan Avenue at approximately Scotten Avenue), East Dearborn, Melvindale, Allen Park, and Taylor. At Eureka Road, the line would extend to the Airport, approaching the terminals from the south. This alignment projected the highest ridership of all alternatives, presumably because it serves concentrated employment and residences in Midtown Detroit and communities west of Detroit. Projected ridership: 11,100 riders/day (Phase 3 evaluation).
- Alternative 6: A hybrid Light Rail Transit alternative blending alternatives 2 and 4. The Detroit segments would match Alternative 2 (Michigan Avenue) and the western segments would match Alternative 4 (Norfolk Southern railroad right-of-way). Projected ridership: 6,900 riders/day (provided on page 6-2).

Study Recommendations

- Advance LRT Alternatives 2, 4 and 5 into Alternatives Analysis together with the most promising Bus/TSM alternatives arising out of other current transit studies;
- Focus the Alternative Analysis on the development and evaluation of additional Bus/TSM and No Build alternatives, supportive land use/TOD and the development of a Financial Plan;
- Prioritize the resolution of the institutional issues identified and discussed in Section 3 of the Phase 1 report;
- Locate a passenger station at the northern periphery of the airport property as part of evolving plans for passenger rail service between Lansing and Detroit as a means of maximizing the potential for commuter rail service between downtown Detroit and Metro Airport; and

- The State of Michigan’s Congressional delegation should continue to lay the groundwork for the next federal transportation authorization following expiration of the TEA-21 in 2003.

SpeedLink—A Rapid Transit Option for Greater Detroit. Metropolitan Affairs Council (MAC) 2001

This plan was prepared by a public/private coalition (MAC). It advocated introducing a specific technology in Southeast Michigan: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). A proposed “SpeedLink” network generally patterned the Rapid Transit network in SEMCOG 2001. This plan was used as the primary input to a SEMCOG regional transit planning effort and is reflected in the *Comprehensive Regional Transit Service Plan (2008)*. Michigan Avenue between downtown Detroit and Metro Airport (via Merriman Road) was identified as a secondary priority corridor after three other radial Detroit corridors. The suggested operator was DDOT and/or SMART.

Ann Arbor-Downtown Detroit Alternatives Analysis / Draft Environmental Impact Statement Transit Study (SEMCOG 2007)

This study presents a screening of alternatives for providing transit services between Detroit and Ann Arbor. SEMCOG began an Alternatives Analysis between Detroit Metro Airport and downtown Detroit in 2002. Concurrently, the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA) began an Alternatives Analysis between Ann Arbor and downtown Detroit. The two projects were merged to form the Ann Arbor-Detroit Alternatives Analysis.² An east-west transit spine was proposed, offering direct service between the terminal cities and Metro Airport. SEMCOG decided to commence a three to five year demonstration project to show that demand is sufficient compared to the cost thereby qualifying the corridor for FTA New Starts funding. The intent was to minimize cost by taking advantage of existing stations and

² SEMCOG (2015). Timeline on the Ann Arbor-Detroit Regional Rail Project dated February provided by SEMCOG in July 2015.

rail infrastructure wherever possible. A large set of alternatives was screened to the following modes:

- Arterial BRT
- Freeway BRT
- Arterial LRT
- Commuter Rail Transit (CRT): 2 alignments described below

Specific alternatives and their projected ridership volumes are:

- A Transportation Systems Management (TSM) alternative with 4 different premium bus route options: 6,193 daily riders;
- BRT 5 (Michigan Avenue): 5,834 daily riders;
- BRT 6 (I-94 / Michigan Avenue): 3,185 daily riders;
- CRT 1 (using the existing Amtrak line): 2,131 daily riders;
- CRT 2 (I-94 / Norfolk Southern Detroit Division Railroad): 611 daily riders; and
- LRT 5 (Michigan Avenue): 3,405 daily riders.

Commuter Rail using the existing Amtrak line was ultimately selected as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The study concluded that the LPA would not be competitive for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts funding when compared with competing corridors elsewhere in the United States. This conclusion was based on regional transportation model result, with the following conclusion:

“...as the travel demand model used to forecast ridership for each alternative was calibrated using information on existing patterns of transit usage, it is possible that a premium transit service providing a substantial travel time savings could become a more competitive New Starts project.”³

³ SEMCOG (2007). *Ann Arbor-Downtown Detroit Alternatives Analysis / Draft Environmental Impact Statement Transit Study: Detailed Screening of Alternatives*. Prepared by Parsons Brinkerhoff, HNTB and TMD, Final Draft, July 18, 2007, Page 34.

The region suspended the federal process and initiated a state and locally-funded project to demonstrate that costs and ridership would be in a range to better qualify the project for federal funds. This was an approach other regions used as a first step toward commuter rail service. SEMCOG's intent was to minimize cost by using existing stations and rail infrastructure wherever possible. Should the demonstration project prove attractive to riders, the regional travel demand model would then be calibrated based on the results.⁴ SEMCOG concluded it would coordinate with MDOT, Amtrak and the railroad owner (then Norfolk Southern) to initiate the demonstration project.

Ann Arbor - Detroit Commuter Rail⁵

Co-sponsored by MDOT and SEMCOG, this proposed 38-mile commuter rail service would operate on the Wolverine intercity passenger rail corridor between Ann Arbor and Detroit. As part of the efforts of the Southeast Michigan Commuter Rail Service (MITRAIN), 23 cars (seven cabs and 16 coaches) were refurbished to be used for this service as well as the WALLY commuter rail service from Howell to Ann Arbor. SEMCOG has proposed using existing and planned Amtrak stations in addition to two new commuter rail stops in Ypsilanti and north of Metro Airport.

The Project Team and RTA participated in a recent conversation with SEMCOG regarding commuter rail. A capacity analysis for the railroad was recently performed by an MDOT consultant. This analysis is expected to reveal capital improvements that are required before a commuter rail demonstration project can be operated in the corridor. The demonstration project would provide between at least five commuter rail round trips between Ann Arbor and Detroit.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵<http://www.semco.org/AADD.aspx>

Projects currently underway as part of the Chicago – Detroit/Pontiac Passenger Rail Corridor Program benefit commuter rail planning. These include:

- The West Detroit Connection Track Project, to be completed by the end of 2015. This project will shorten the travel time between the Dearborn Amtrak station and Detroit's New Center Station by approximately 12 minutes.
- Installation of a second track and upgrade of existing trackage between the new Dearborn Amtrak Station and Wayne Junction, as well as other Double Track Project elements, to be completed in 2015.
- Capacity analysis of the Canadian National (CN) ownership between West Detroit Junction and Pontiac, to be completed by fall 2015. A decision regarding Beaubien Interlocking and Milwaukee Junction may be impacted by the results of this capacity analysis

Comprehensive Regional Transit Service Plan (2008)

This plan proposed the establishment of a “regional transit organization” to “fund, plan, build, implement and operate” regional transit.⁶

Communities that currently opt out of SMART funding would be incorporated into Recommended Service Enhancements:

- Enhancements to Existing Services:
 - Improved service frequency and additional routes;
 - Additional “Community Transit” (demand response) and paratransit service, with recommendations for regionally integrated paratransit services;
 - Improved bus stop environments;
 - Integrated fares for all transit services, including the Detroit Transportation Corporation (DTC) People Mover; and

⁶ Regional Transit Coordinating Council (RTCC 2008). *Comprehensive Regional Transit Service Plan Final Report*. Executive Summary, P. 2, November 21, 2008.

- “Job Connectors” shuttle service linking outlying employments centers, including areas of concentrated service employment (primarily shopping malls).
- New “Rapid Transit” services:
 - “Arterial Rapid Transit” (ART) services as regional trunk lines. The proposed transit mode for these lines was limited stop bus service with transit priority treatments but not a dedicated travelway or lane. An industry name for this type of service is “BRT Light.” The plan proposed near-term implementation of radial lines from downtown Detroit, including a line on Michigan Avenue to Inkster and Metro Airport. Other proposed corridors included M-59 between Pontiac and Mt. Clemens, and Telegraph Road between Pontiac and Dearborn. Additional lines and extensions were proposed for phased implementation;
 - Where ridership demands and funding structures allow, the study proposed further enhancing ART lines as BRT (with a semi-exclusive travelway and stations) or LRT. By 2020, the Michigan Avenue and Airport corridor was proposed for an upgrade to BRT or LRT;
 - Privately-funded LRT on Woodward Avenue, with an initial operating segment between downtown Detroit and New Center. Subsequent extensions of this line were proposed to Royal Oak and, potentially, Pontiac;
 - An integrated regional transit network or system for Wayne, Macomb and Oakland Counties;
- Commuter Rail Transit:
 - Advance the recommendation in SEMCOG 2007 to implement CRT between Detroit and Ann Arbor by 2012, with SEMCOG as the lead agency;
 - Extend commuter rail from Detroit/New Center to Pontiac by 2015;

- Plan for additional CRT between Detroit and Oakland, Macomb and St. Clair counties, as was recommended in SEMCOG 2001.

Detroit Transit Options for Growth Study (DTOGS) (2009)

This study was conducted by the City of Detroit along with its planning partners to advance the implementation of regional and local rapid transit improvements to serve current and future population and employment centers and destinations. The study identified and evaluated options to improve access and mobility and to foster economic development within the study area. This study built upon previous transportation plans for the Detroit Metropolitan area, each of which called for the implementation of rapid transit in the Detroit area, and identified several corridors whose suitability were examined for rapid transit implementation.

After analyzing several corridors, the LPA was the light rail transit service on Woodward Avenue from downtown Detroit to the State Fairground near Eight Mile Road. The proposed station spacing and transit-priority treatments reflected a service designed for cross-town trips and regional connectivity. The proposed service was designed for future expandability to support trips between suburbs and the central city.

M-1 Rail

The M-1 Rail project is a 3.3-mile, fixed-rail, at-grade streetcar system located entirely within the right-of-way of Woodward Avenue in the City of Detroit. Currently in construction, this line will operate in mixed traffic between Larned Street in downtown Detroit and New Center. The project is envisioned to be a single system within a program of larger and interconnected transit investments. The Project supports possible future system extensions at both the northern and southern terminus to provide additional connections to key land use and transportation destinations within Detroit.

Washtenaw County Transit Master Plan: A Transit Vision for Washtenaw County (2011)

TheRide's 2011 Master Plan presents an aspirational 30-year vision for countywide transit. The plan goes beyond nuts and bolts transit discussions to support broader county priorities, such as walkable, equitable communities and retaining youth. The plan's conceptual vision for regional transit is shown in Figure 3.

Among the plan's key strategies are the introduction of two high-capacity transit corridors and two commuter rail services. Planning for each of these services is currently underway. These services are:

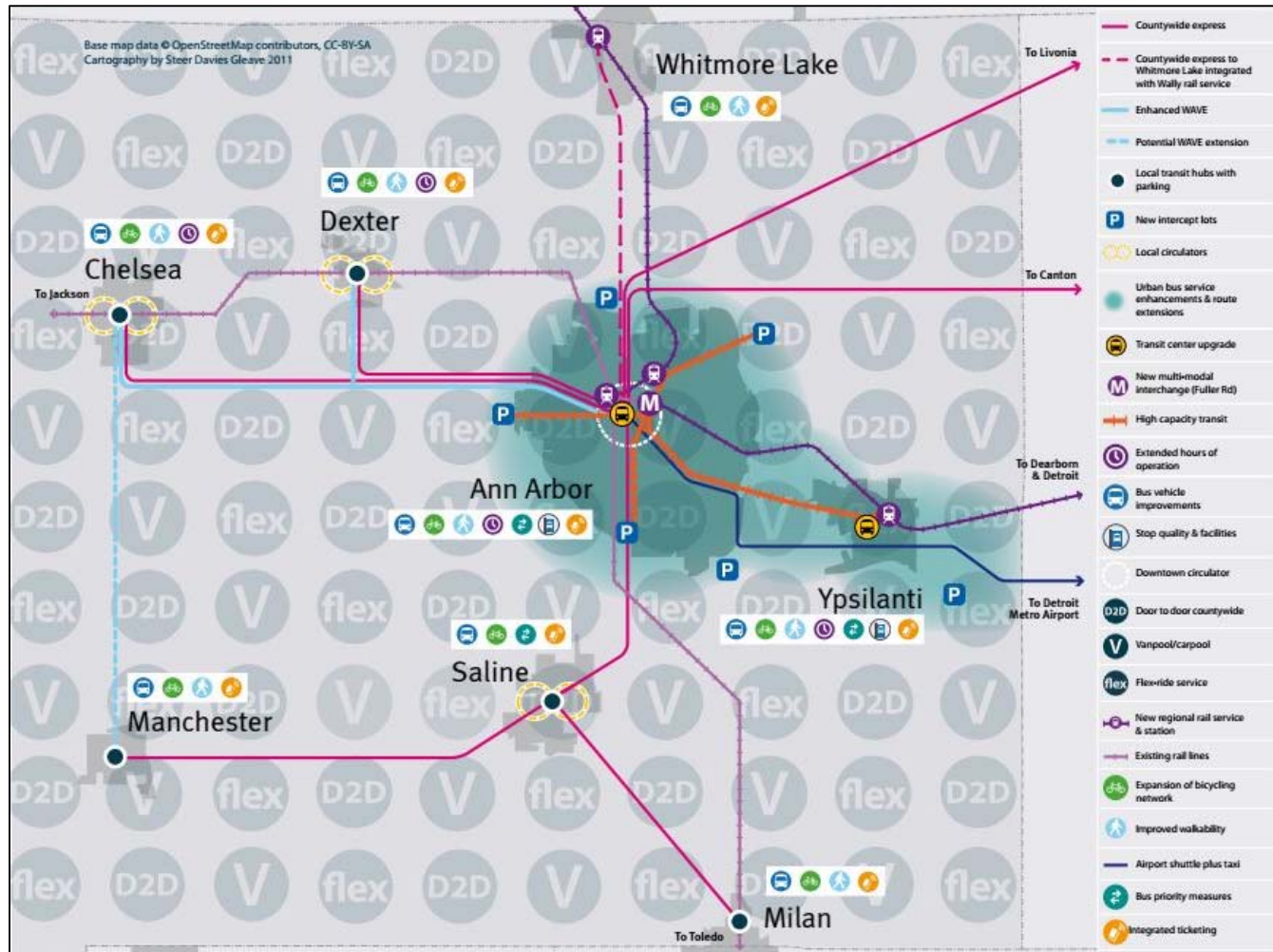
- High-Capacity Transit:

North-South Ann Arbor, which has emerged as the Connector concept: light rail, high-capacity streetcar or BRT between downtown Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan (U-M) Central, Medical and North Campuses, and northeastern Ann Arbor.

- Ann Arbor to Ypsilanti, which the ReImagined Washtenaw complete streets vision provides accommodations for with enhanced bus stops and transit-priority treatments.
- Regional Commuter Rail:
 - North-South service between Ann Arbor and Livingston County. TheRide is currently leading a study of commuter rail between downtown Ann Arbor and Howell, and an additional study that potentially incorporates this rail line with cross-state intercity rail.
 - SEMCOG's proposed Ann Arbor to Detroit commuter rail is identified as a TheRide priority in the plan. Additional service is proposed to communities west of Ann Arbor, with a terminus at the Jackson Amtrak station.

A third vision, express shuttles to Metro Airport, has since been implemented as the public-private AirRide motorcoach service.

Figure 3: TheRide Transit Vision Map (2011)



Source: TheRide (2011), page 38.

**Woodward Avenue Light Rail Transit and Streetcar Projects
(Federal Transit Administration Amended Record of Decision
2013)**

This federal document reveals a major transition from the DTOGS 2009 LPA. It details environmental approvals for a downtown streetcar alignment along Woodward Avenue, between the Detroit River and

New Center. In contrast to the DTOGS Woodward Light Rail alternative, the streetcar is designed primarily for local circulation trips in the central city. The route configuration is optimized for supporting urban infill development. This streetcar service is currently under construction as M1 Rail.

ReImagine Washtenaw Corridor Improvement Study (2014)

ReImagine Washtenaw is a comprehensive complete streets and sidewalk-oriented land use study for Washtenaw Avenue in Washtenaw County. Led by the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development, the study focuses on the wide, auto-oriented segment of the avenue between Eastern Michigan University (in Ypsilanti) and the junction with Stadium Boulevard (in Ann Arbor). Washtenaw Avenue is the alignment for the TheRide's Route 4, which is the busiest route in the system. The study sets goals for enhanced transit service along the corridor, including accommodations for transit-priority treatments supporting Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Light Rail Transit (LRT), or streetcar.

Study goals include:

- Expand multi-modal transportation choices and increase user safety.
- Improve the streetscape environment and non-motorized infrastructure.
- Improve pedestrian safety at signalized intersections and proposed mid-block crossings.
- Provide the potential for improved transit service and enhanced user experience.
- Identify the extent of additional property required to implement the recommended improvements.⁷

Specific objectives include:

- An upgraded pedestrian zone along the road with wider sidewalks, landscape buffers between the walk and the road, landscape, lighting and street furnishings. Wider sidewalks in higher density nodes, such as at the intersection of Washtenaw Avenue and Golfside Road, will accommodate greater pedestrian volumes and encourage increased economic activity.
- A continuous buffered bike lane on both sides of the road along the entire corridor.
- Crossing the street will be made safer and more convenient with improvements to existing pedestrian crossings at signalized intersections as well as the addition of six midblock crossings in locations that currently have the greatest need.
- Enhanced transit service by implementing transit signal priority, queue jumps and eight new Super Stops that add larger shelters, more seating, lighting, signage and other amenities for transit riders.⁸

TheRide Your Way: Five-Year Transit Improvement Plan (2014)

This plan extends fixed-route service later into the evening and adds weekend service hours. In all, a 44% increase in service is proposed. This plan will be implemented in phases following a successful funding ballot measure in (2014). The plan adds service hours to Ypsilanti Township along Michigan Avenue, to a point seven miles west of the SMART service area.

WALLY (named after the counties, Washtenaw and Livingston, it would pass through) Downtown Ann Arbor Station Location Study (2014)

The WALLY Commuter Rail Line, also known as North-South Commuter Rail, is a proposed 27-mile long commuter rail service that would connect Ann Arbor and Howell, with several intermediate stops.

⁷ ReImagine Washtenaw Executive Summary, page 2.

⁸ *Ibid*, page 3.

The line is identified in the Washtenaw County Transit Master Plan (2011) as North-South regional commuter rail. WALLY is being investigated as a way to provide a transit option for travel between Howell and Ann Arbor, to ease traffic congestion in the corridor along US Highway 23, and to promote sound economic development and job creation in the region. This effort is being undertaken as part of TheRide’s research and development program, in cooperation with MDOT. It has the support of a number of government and business leaders, area residents and other community groups that have worked for several years to facilitate the on-going investigation into, and development of, this project.

TheRide completed the “*N-S Commuter Rail Downtown Station Location Study*” in June of 2014. The preferred location for a station is between Washington and Liberty Streets on the east side of the Ann Arbor Railroad tracks. The Ann Arbor Connector study has incorporated the study findings for the purposes of establishing a route alignment connecting the North-South commuter rail service to other transit services.

Ann Arbor Connector Study (Ongoing)

TheRide received a 2012 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant to study alternatives for the North-South high-capacity transit corridor (identified in TheRide’s 2011 Transit Master Plan). Branded the Connector, the ongoing study is evaluating fixed-guideway alternatives for the corridor, which extends northeast from Downtown Ann Arbor, through the University of Michigan (U-M) Central Campus and near the U-M Medical and North Campuses. It ends at the intersection of Plymouth Rd. and US-23. A preferred alignment (specific streets and travelways) is expected to be announced soon.

Woodward Avenue Rapid Transit Alternatives Analysis Locally Preferred Alternative (SEMCOG 2014)

This document defines the LPA for regional transit in the 27-mile Woodward Avenue corridor between downtown Detroit and Pontiac.

Proposed regional transit services in this corridor are now branded by RTA as Building Equitable Sustainable Transit: Woodward Avenue (BEST: Woodward Avenue).

The identified LPA is Bus Rapid Transit with dedicated travel lanes from Detroit’s Rosa Parks Transit Center to Birmingham and stops generally spaced one mile apart. Some trips would divert from Woodward Avenue to serve downtown Royal Oak and the Royal Oak Transit Center/Amtrak Station. The corridor segment between Birmingham and downtown Pontiac would not feature dedicated BRT lanes, but would include service enhancements such as platform stations and signal priority. SEMCOG has transferred responsibilities for environmental clearance, funding, implementation and operation to the RTA. The Woodward Avenue LPA establishes a standard for planned BRT services in Southeastern Michigan. It also sets a benchmark for the ongoing RTA Building Equitable Sustainable Transit (BEST) studies: the Regional Master Transit Plan, Woodward Avenue, Gratiot Avenue, and Michigan Avenue.

SEMCOG 2015-2016 Draft Work Program for Southeast Michigan (2015)

The SEMCOG Work Plan functions as a de facto plan for the three primary transit providers in metropolitan Detroit: the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT), the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART), and the Detroit Transportation Corporation (DTC, operator of the People Mover). Some planning activities identified in the Work Program include:

- DDOT
 - Provisions to plan for service expansions
 - Three strategic service expansion priorities: “Safety Management Program, Transportation to Work/Job Access Development, and Elderly and Disabled Service Planning Development”⁹

⁹ SEMCOG Work Program (2015), page 47.

- Coordination with FTA, the State of Michigan, and other City of Detroit departments to identify opportunities to collaborate on transportation policy issues and priorities
- SMART
 - "...develop various strategies to make SMART Fixed Route services more productive, through the evaluation and development of appropriate service modifications and the refinement of a data base for monitoring SMART Fixed Route performance."¹⁰
 - Develop a 20-year program for capital improvements and service expansion.
- DTC
 - 10 Year Plan of Action: "provide a planning guide document for internal and external use that assist policy makers ,operations decision makers, and the general public in understanding the vision and direction of DTC over the next ten years"¹¹

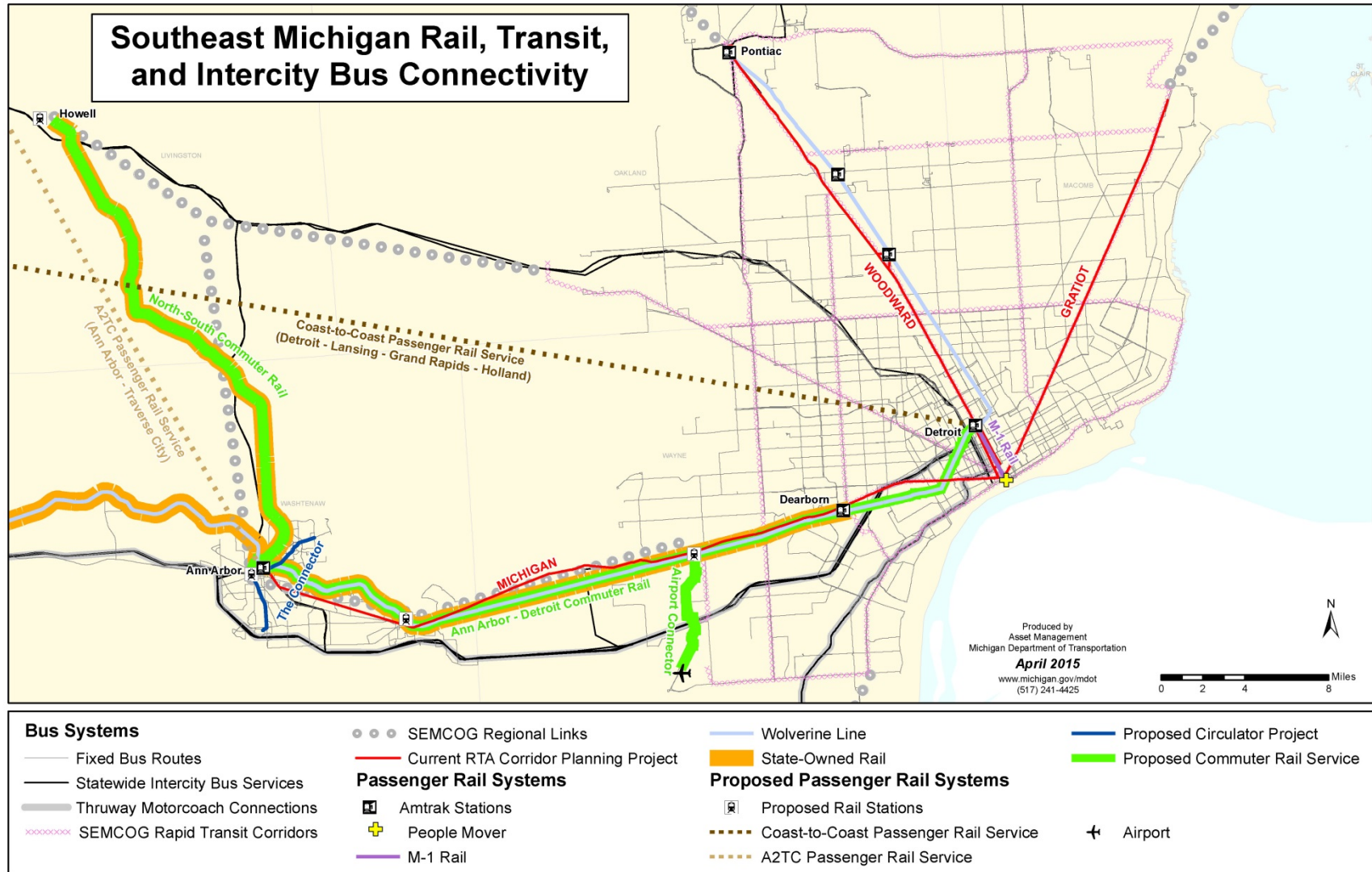
Southeast Michigan Rail, Transit and Intercity Bus Connectivity map (2015)

In April 2015, MDOT created a series of transit and passenger transportation connectivity maps. These maps are not currently visible on MDOT's website. One of these maps shows current SEMCOG planning for regional transit corridors in context with existing and proposed intercity services. This map is provided as Figure 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, page 74.

¹¹ *Ibid*, page 54.

Figure 4: Southeast Michigan Rail, Transit and Intercity Bus Connectivity (2015)



Source: MDOT

2.0 Non-Transit Transportation Planning

The plans described in this section cover a range of intercity, interstate and international passenger transportation services.

2.1 Airports

Wayne County Airport Authority, *DTW Master Plan (2012)*

The *DTW Master Plan* is a comprehensive plan for the Detroit airport and offers guidance and technical justification for capital development. The goals of this master plan are:

1. Maintain a safe and secure operating environment.
2. Efficiently accommodate regional, national and global demand for air service.
3. Expand the role of the airport as an international gateway to and from the region.
4. Provide a seamless transportation system for moving users and good through the region and across the world.
5. Be a generator of jobs, air service and economic development by enabling the airlines and other tenants to effectively offer their products.
6. Be a willing and active partner in aviation-related development in and around the airport that stimulates economic and commercial development to benefit the region and enhance non-airline revenue.

In the existing conditions section of this plan, current public transportation options are described. Two SMART bus routes are identified as connecting to the airport – Route 125 (Fort Street) travels between the McNamara Terminal (only), communities east of the airport, and downtown Detroit at 30-minute peak headways. Route 285 (Middlebelt Road) operates between the North Terminal (only) and Garden City with peak 60-minute headways. Amtrak has train stations located about 12 miles away in Dearborn and 32 miles away in Ann Arbor. The nearest Greyhound bus station is located

seven miles away in Wayne. Access to Amtrak and Greyhound station is provided by SMART buses and require a transfer between bus routes.

Since the plan's publishing, TheRide has introduced express motorcoach service between both airport terminals, Ann Arbor and East Lansing. Marketed as AirRide, this service offers 13 daily round trips between the airport and Ann Arbor. It is operated in a public-private partnership by a private operator.

The plan also notes that SEMCOG maintains a 25 year long-range vision for transportation in the region and a component of this vision is the Ann Arbor-Detroit Regional Rail project. This plan describes the rail project as using existing infrastructure whenever possible. The current concept is to provide commuter rail service in the Detroit-Ann Arbor corridor with stops in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Detroit Metropolitan Airport (five miles north of the airport at Michigan Avenue), Dearborn and Detroit.

The Master Plan provides the following figures regarding access to the airport:

- Approximately 89 percent passengers whose trips originate at the Airport live in the 10-county Detroit metro region; and
- The airport ranked 17th nationally in 2013 for passenger activity, with over 15.5 million boardings.

Economic Impact of Willow Run Airport (2014)

Willow Run Airport, located in Van Buren Township just south of the study area, is used primarily for air freight. This study, performed by the University of Michigan-Dearborn College of Business, assesses the airport's impact on the regional economy. The study indicates that the airport's annual regional impact is approximately \$123 million and generates 950 regional jobs.¹²

¹²Wayne County Airport Authority Board (2014). *Economic Impact of Willow Run Airport*.

The study identifies a near term capital program totaling \$130 million to support air freight expansion and private jet accommodations. A separate 2005 Wayne County Airport Authority Master Plan presentation indicates that land around the airport will be marketed for industrial expansion, thus creating some potentially transit-supportive jobs near the Wayne-Washtenaw County border.¹³ The nearby Willow Run Bomber Plant, a World War II landmark, was recently acquired for an aviation history museum.¹⁴

2.2 Inter-City Passenger Rail

Service NEPA Environmental Assessment for CHI – DET/PONTIAC Corridor Improvements (2009)

The track improvements and additions identified in the service development Environmental Assessment (EA) would allow for faster trains on Amtrak’s Wolverine corridor of up to 79 mph from Pontiac to Ann Arbor, and up to 110 mph from Ann Arbor to Porter, Indiana. Other additions include train traffic control and signalization that will help alleviate freight and passenger train traffic conflicts and improve on-time performance of the train service.

Michigan State Rail Plan (2011)

The State Rail Plan includes the following objectives for enhanced passenger rail service, which includes the Wolverine line in the Michigan Avenue study area:

- a. Provide new and enhanced passenger rail service to Michigan communities and travelers as an efficient and cost-effective mobility alternative.
- b. Reduce travel times through increased speeds and reduced delays.
- c. Increase service frequencies.

http://www.wcaa.us/Portals/WCAACorp/YIP_Economic_Impact_2014_Complete.pdf, page 4.

¹³http://www.wcaa.us/Portals/WCAACorp/WCAA%20Documents/PDFs/WillowRunAirport_MasterPlan.pdf

¹⁴<http://www.crainsdetroit.com/article/20141030/NEWS01/14103999>

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- d. Improve reliability and performance.
- e. Improve traveler efficiency and comfort by providing amenities such as food service, internet connectivity, 110-volt power for electronic devices, and video information displays onboard and at stations.
- f. Increase passenger rail accessibility to low-income, elderly and special needs groups that have limited access to auto and other modes.

The plan also includes the following objectives for connectivity between intercity passenger rail and other transportation services (objective a. referred to freight rail):

- b. Support the connectivity of Michigan passenger rail service to other corridors regionally, nationally, and internationally, to maximize network benefits in terms of increased ridership, revenues and passenger mobility.
- c. Support intermodal connectivity between intercity passenger rail and other passenger modes including air, local transit, auto, intercity bus, and non-motorized transportation. Focus on intermodal investments that have the most potential to increase the efficiency of rail and provide greater accessibility to travelers, including those with special needs and limited access to automobile transportation.¹⁵

The Plan describes the 1910 Detroit River Tunnel, which connects railroads in Detroit and Windsor near Corktown and Mexicantown. Canadian Pacific Railroad passes through the tunnel and adjacent to the historic Michigan Central Station building. The vacant 18-story station building sits one-block south of Michigan Avenue in Corktown. A public-private partnership (the Continental Rail

¹⁵ MDOT (2010). *Michigan State Rail Plan*, page 10.

Gateway) has been created to build a parallel rail tunnel designed with clearances for contemporary double-stacked container trains.¹⁶

The State Rail Plan recommends feasibility studies for three potential new service corridors serving the Michigan Avenue study area:

- Conventional passenger rail:
 - Grand Rapids to Detroit via Lansing and Ann Arbor (study commencing currently);
 - Detroit to Toledo; and
- Next-generation high-speed rail (with 220 mph capability):
 - Between Chicago, Detroit and Toronto.¹⁷ This conceptual service would likely cross under the river near or using the Detroit River Tunnel.

The Plan also recommends state funding for new passenger rail stations in Ann Arbor and Detroit and the conventional rail feasibility studies.¹⁸

Service NEPA Environmental Assessment for Kalamazoo to Dearborn Corridor Improvements (2011)

The improvements include track rehabilitation, replacement of track ties, turnouts, ballast, curve modifications and installation of Incremental Train Control System (ITCS)¹⁹ and Active Warning Systems at all crossings. These improvements would allow for faster trains on Amtrak’s Wolverine corridor of up to 79 mph from Pontiac to Ann Arbor, and up to 110 mph from Ann Arbor to Porter, Indiana. Other additions include train traffic control and signalization that will

¹⁶http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/MDOT_MI_SRP_public_review_draft_2011-05-23_600dpi_353776_7.pdf, page 21.

¹⁷*Ibid*, page 117.

¹⁸*Ibid*, page 81 and subsequently described improvement programs.

¹⁹Incremental Train Control System is a communication-based signaling system overlaid on an existing signal system. This is one class of Positive Train Control that was designed to prevent train collisions and overspeed derailments.

help alleviate freight and passenger train traffic conflicts and improve on-time performance of the train service.

Chicago – Detroit/Pontiac Passenger Rail Corridor Program Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS, 2014)

The Michigan, Illinois and Indiana Departments of Transportation, in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) prepared a Tier 1 EIS for the Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac (C-D/P) Passenger Rail Corridor from Chicago, Illinois to Pontiac, Michigan. The goal of this study is to identify a preferred alignment and necessary improvements to allow higher speed passenger rail service in the corridor. These improvements are anticipated to reduce end-to-end travel times from 6 hours 40 minutes to 5 hours 16 minutes. The improvements would also dramatically enhance service reliability. In Michigan, the identified alignment follows the railroad along which Amtrak operates its Wolverine service, which includes two stations in the Michigan Avenue study area: Ann Arbor and Dearborn. A third station, Detroit/New Center, is just outside the study area and would connect to the study area via M1 Rail and bus services. Amtrak currently offers three daily round trips in the corridor; the EIS proposes increasing service to 10 daily round trips by 2035. In addition, SEMCOG and MDOT have proposed introducing commuter rail service along the corridor between Ann Arbor and Detroit. This service would use existing Amtrak stations and add stations at Ypsilanti and a location five miles north of Metro Airport at Michigan Avenue. The limits of the C-D/P corridor are shown in Figure 5.

Michigan DOT has purchased the associated railroad alignment in Michigan between Dearborn and Kalamazoo and has increased travel speeds to 110 mph along portions of the corridor. This study includes:

- An evaluation of potential route and service alternatives for the corridor;
- A Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) reviewing the impacts and benefits of the rail service; and

- A Service Development Plan (SDP) describing how the rail service will be implemented.²⁰

An ongoing Tier II analysis will identify a preferred alignment across Indiana and into Chicago. In 2011, over 503,290 passenger trips were made between Chicago and Detroit using Amtrak’s Wolverine line.²¹ Under the Full Build scenario, ridership is anticipated to increase to 2.83 million trips by 2035.²²

New stations for the Wolverine line were recently added in Dearborn and Troy/Birmingham. An alternatives analysis and environmental review for a new Ann Arbor station including intermodal facilities is nearing completion. Ann Arbor is the busiest Amtrak Wolverine stop east of Chicago and the highest-ridership train station in Michigan. The total number of passengers boarding or alighting at the station (ons and offs) was 155,421 in 2013.²³ This represents an increase of almost 70% over the past decade (91,619 total boardings and alightings in 2003).²⁴ Under the Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Full Build scenario, intercity station activity at Ann Arbor is anticipated to increase to 969,000 ons and offs by 2035.

Figure 5: Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Passenger Rail Corridor



Source: MDOT (2014)

²⁰ <http://greatlakesrail.org/~grtlakes>

²¹ Ridership based on 3 roundtrips daily, taken from the Notice of Intent for the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement for the Chicago, IL, to Detroit-Pontiac, MI. (<http://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/Details/L04635>)

²² Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Tier 1 EIS, Appendix E, page E-36.

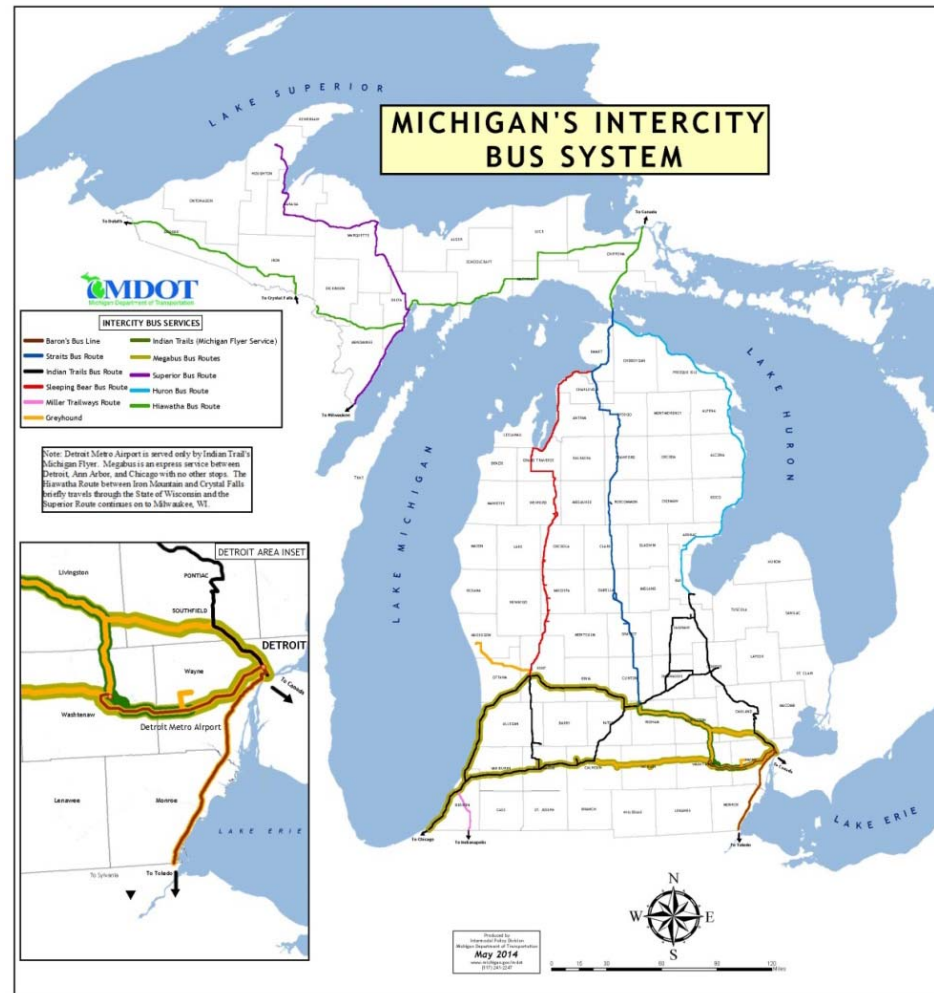
²³ MDOT’s Transportation Management System: Intermodal Management System

²⁴ MDOT Rail Statistics (<http://mdotcf.state.mi.us/public/railstats/>)

2.3 Intercity Bus

Several private motorcoach lines connect to bus terminals in the region, including the Detroit Greyhound terminal and Blake Transit Center in Ann Arbor. Others include Megabus express services linking the Rosa Parks station vicinity to Midtown Detroit, Ann Arbor and Chicago. Figure 6 displays and lists intercity bus services in Michigan. Not shown are international routes between Michigan, Ontario and other Canadian provinces.

Figure 6: Michigan’s Intercity Bus System (2015)



Source: MDOT website at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MDOT-PTD-intercitymap_78377_7.pdf

In addition to the routes indicated in Figure 6 and Canadian services, Thruway bus service links Amtrak stations in the corridor with Toledo. This service connects Michigan’s passenger rail network with national Amtrak passenger rail routes that do not travel through the state.

MDOT, Intercity Bus and Passenger Rail Study (2009)

This study, prepared by the University of Michigan, observes surface passenger transportation behavior in Michigan. It documents a variety of private and publicly-contracted intercity bus services in Michigan. These services connect to the Michigan Avenue study area in Detroit, Dearborn and Ann Arbor. Each of the current connection stations are at or near existing Michigan Avenue/Washtenaw Avenue transit service. As part of MDOT’s intercity rail planning and SEMCOG’s commuter rail planning, an intermodal passenger rail station is proposed in Detroit’s New Center district. This station would potentially include facilities for intercity bus and relocate Detroit’s primary intercity bus terminal. The current Detroit intercity bus terminal is operated by Greyhound at 1001 Howard Street, west of downtown Detroit and four blocks south of Michigan Avenue.

3.0 Regional Transportation Planning

SEMCOG, Creating Success with Our Transportation Assets, 2040 Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan (2013)

This plan serves as a guide for developing a transportation system that is accessible, safe, and reliable and contributes to a higher quality of life for the region’s citizens. This plan describes how over \$50 billion in revenue will be invested to support out transportation system, including the \$36 billion directed by this plan.

- The goals of the plan are to contribute to:
 - Economic prosperity
 - Desirable communities
 - Fiscally sustainable public services

- Reliable, quality infrastructure
- Healthy, attractive environmental assets
- Access to services, jobs, markets and amenities
- Public perception highlights from the report:
 - Most residents rate the current transit system as fair/poor and nearly half expect the transit system condition to stay the same
 - The vast majority of residents (80%) believe “we must reinvest in the region’s infrastructure so we prosper economically”

One of the guiding principles of this plan is that transit service in the region must be significantly improved in order to attract the same levels of ridership that exists in thriving metropolitan areas across the county. Currently, southeast Michigan’s transit service ranks below Pittsburgh, St. Louis and Cleveland in both the amount of service and funding it provides, as well as the amount of ridership it attracts. The plan states that in order to position southeast Michigan for greater success a quality transit system that is competitive with other major metropolitan areas must include core bus service as well as rapid transit corridors that are supported by integrated feeder bus service.

- Other positive developments in the area of public transit include:
 - Commuter rail service between downtown Detroit and Ann Arbor will begin with event service, scheduled to start in 2013.
 - Results of SEMCOG’s recently complete public opinion survey showed significant support for transit and a strong conviction by residents that the quality of the region’s transit service impacts each one of us.
 - The advancement of the M-1 Streetcar project.
 - A transit alternatives analysis is currently underway to review higher-level transit options for the 27-mile

- Woodward Avenue corridor from the Detroit River to the City of Pontiac. The analysis will be complete in 2014.
- o A federal government commitment to the RTA for an additional \$6.5 million to study transit development in other high-priority transit corridors, including express bus, rail and bus rapid transit.
- o Funding has been received to continue developing station for commuter rail service between Ann Arbor and Howell, which will begin in 2013.

Creating Success with Our Transportation Assets, 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (SEMCOG 2013)

The FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for southeast Michigan was prepared by SEMCOG. It contains a list of capital and operational improvements to the transportation system in southeast Michigan. The TIP is a four-year schedule of projects that are the highest priorities for transportation agencies and local governments in the region. The intent of the TIP is to forward the following qualities in Southeast Michigan, as provided in the TIP document:

1. Economic Prosperity
2. Desirable Communities
3. Fiscally Sustainable Public Services
4. Reliable, Quality Infrastructure
5. Healthy, Attractive Environmental Assets
6. Access to Services, Jobs, Markets, and Amenities²⁵

The TIP does not show clear performance criteria for projects, and this is acknowledged by the authors in the following comment:

“It’s expected that in the future, increasing emphasis would be placed on setting targets for performance measures to guide

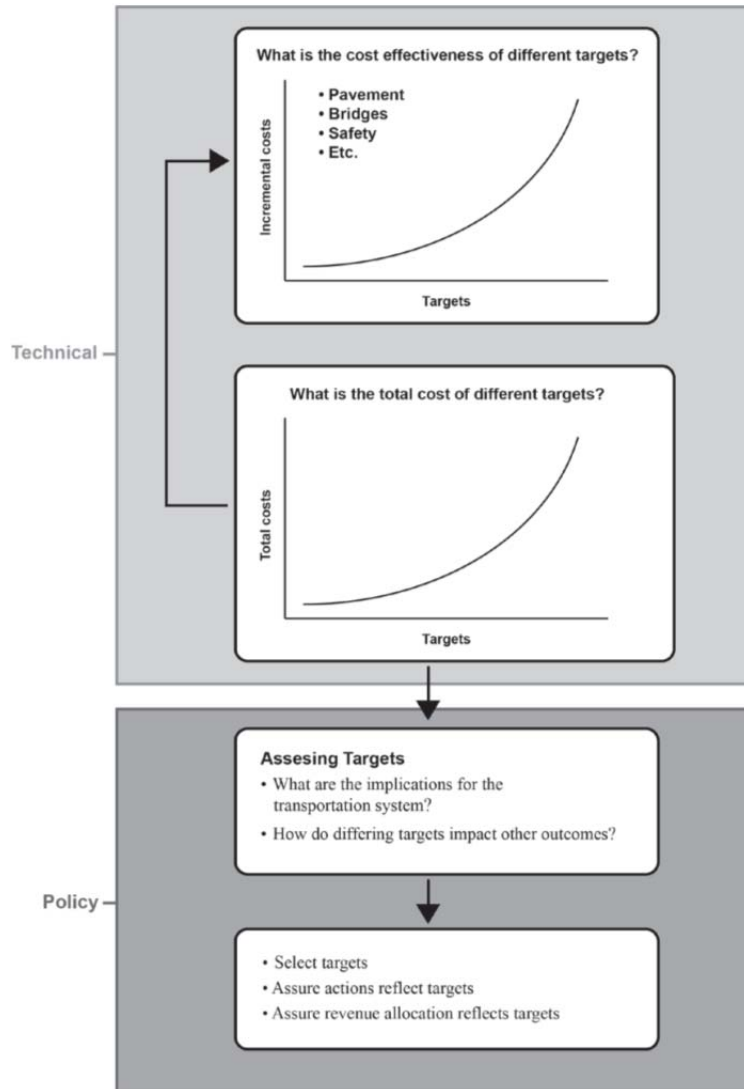
investment and distribution of transportation funding. SEMCOG continues to recognize the need for a process where decisions on distribution of funds would be increasingly weighted by their rate of return on investment and value in moving the region toward achieving the adopted targets.”²⁶

SEMCOG’s framework for future TIP project performance targets is displayed as Figure 7.

²⁵ SEMCOG 2013, page 2.

²⁶ *Ibid*, page 4.

Figure 7: SEMCOG Framework for Future TIP Project Performance (2013)



Source: SEMCOG (2013), page 5.

4.0 County Transportation Planning

Washtenaw Area Transportation Study, 2040 Long Range Plan for Washtenaw County (June 2013)

The Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) Long Range Plan is a component of the SEMCOG’s Regional 2040 Plan.

- One metric in the plan is Access and Mobility; this metric measured by:
 - Supporting transit improvements in the urban core
 - Ensuring that transportation facilities are constructed so that they can be used by people of all abilities
- Transportation Awareness and Education
 - Educational resources are key to raising awareness of transportation options.
 - Access to quality transportation is essential for employment, mobility and independence of individuals.
- Transit in Washtenaw County
 - Transit is a significant factor in Washtenaw County’s continual efforts to become a more livable and sustainable community.
 - Cost savings
 - Transportation options
 - Economic development
 - Improves air quality
 - Reduce congestion

In 2012, the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority developed the Transit Master Plan for Washtenaw County as a response to the Authority’s adopted vision statement “... to be the preferred mode of travel in Washtenaw County”.

- Signature and Commuter Transit Improvements
 - The reinstatement of commuter rail service has been a perennial goal of transit and planning agencies in

- southeast Michigan and to this end, local, regional, private and transit groups have attempted to bring, and/or continue to plan for, investments in commuter and high capacity transit.
- Ann Arbor to Detroit Rail: SEMCOG is the lead agency working to connect downtown Ann Arbor to Detroit. Stops along the line include Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Metro Airport, Dearborn and Detroit.
 - Locomotives and passenger cars were reconditioned for the service and a three to five year demonstration period with special even services was being considered.
 - MDOT has also finalized purchase of the railroad line and line improvements are planned within the next three years.

5.0 Municipal Planning

5.1 City of Ann Arbor

Ann Arbor Land Use Plan (2009)

The 2009 Land Use Plan mirrors many of the goals of the downtown plan, especially in the Central Planning Area; reducing auto dependent development, encouraging higher density residential near transit nodes, creating better non-motorized connections, and boosting multistory development. Along Washtenaw Avenue approaching the downtown core in the Northeastern and South Planning Areas there are many single family residential neighborhoods anchored by commercial centers. The plan outlines these areas as places for neighborhood connections and improved crossings and pathways for connections.

Ann Arbor Downtown Plan (2009)

The City of Ann Arbor's Downtown plan describes the land use and transportation goals for the core of Ann Arbor and the terminus of the transit study. The plan outlines development and infill goals to match current densities and architecture and discourages auto-oriented development. There is great emphasis placed in the Non-motorized components of the plan, calling for concentration on pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Sidewalks and streetscapes are an integral part of the connectivity.

The City of Ann Arbor Transportation Master Plan Update (2009)

This plan serves as a guide for improvements to the City’s system of roads, sidewalks, paths, bike lanes and public transit for the next twenty years. Ann Arbor does not desire to tie up scarce and valuable land resources in streets and surface parking in the key activity areas. One sentiment reflected in the plan is that the automobile is not the most preferred option to accommodate future demand. The overall vision of this plan is “an integrated multi-modal system that will build upon the unique qualities of each part of the city.”

The Ann Arbor Transportation Plan supports the recommendations of the Non-Motorized Plan and the Land Use Plan for the Washtenaw corridor. It emphasizes the need for signature and express services along the corridor with the possibility of bus rapid transit or streetcars. It also supports the creation of commuter rail services to and from the City Center. Some specific recommendations for transit updates include:

- Near-term transit investment
 - Study relocation of Amtrak Station from Depot Street to Fuller Road and a new train station at the football stadium. (The ongoing Ann Arbor Station Environmental review has identified two alternative locations for a new station, including the existing Amtrak station site and a location near Fuller Road.)
 - Coordinate and construct stations for WALLY and Ann Arbor to Detroit commuter rail projects
 - Support an expanded scope for Ann Arbor to Detroit commuter rail service to include communities west of Ann Arbor (Dexter, Chelsea and Jackson)
- Medium-term (5-10 years) transit investment

- The study assumes that permanent stations will be necessary for WALLY, Amtrak and the Ann Arbor to Detroit commuter rail services. It recommends construction of two stations during this time period, one on the west side of downtown to serve WALLY commuters and another near the Fuller/Maiden intersection to serve Amtrak and the Ann Arbor to Detroit commuters.

- Long-term transit investment

- The study assumes that the proposed Ann Arbor to Detroit commuter rail service would evolve from a demonstration project to a permanent service. It encourages the City and TheRide to support the efforts to develop commuter rail, as well as multi-modal connections ensuring that commuters arriving in Ann Arbor are able to reach their final destination.

Ann Arbor Non-Motorized Plan Update (2013)

In this plan Washtenaw Avenue, outside of the downtown core, rates “low” on the accessibility scale, meaning it is not friendly to non-motorized users. The length of this road does not have bike lanes, crossings are sparse, sidewalk gaps exist and pedestrian activity is low. The plan proposes travel lane narrowing, the addition of bike lanes and the addition of sidewalks where there are current gaps to help aid in non-motorized travel along the corridor.

5.2 City of Dearborn

Dearborn 2030 Master Plan (September 2014)

Through the Dearborn 2030 - Master Plan, the City of Dearborn and its residents express high levels of interest in the portion of the Michigan Avenue Corridor that transects the City. There are many goals and aspirations outlined in the document. Many of these revolve specifically around economic development, transportation, and building commerce and density. Michigan Avenue is classified as a Regional Mobility Thoroughfare and Major Mixed-Use Street. It is also conceptualized as a regional connector non-motorized route. Through the Community Participation Process, the public identified an overarching goal for the area to be creating more walkable, bikeable connections. Showing dedicated attention to the Michigan Avenue Corridor, among the plan recommendations is the need for specific Michigan Avenue Sub Area Plans and a Transportation Plan. Below are specific extractions from the Dearborn 2030 Plan in reference to Michigan Avenue:

- Bridge the gap between two downtowns on Michigan Avenue
- Expand transit
- Improve access for all users: transit, biking, pedestrian and vehicular
- Add residential land uses and density to the downtown areas
- Create a sense of place
- Slow traffic
- Increase mixed-use land uses
- Promote Transit Oriented Design
- Adopt a Complete Streets Plan

In the Transit section of this plan, it is stated that “For Dearborn to remain sustainable, broader transportation alternatives and the creation of interesting, walkable places must be provided to improve our quality of life and attractiveness to residents and visitors”.

The plan identifies the new intermodal passenger rail station at Elm Street and Michigan Avenue, which replaced a station further to the east. FRA provided 100 percent of station construction funding, and Amtrak is the main tenant. The plan assumes this station will also be served by the proposed commuter rail line between Ann Arbor and Detroit. This station is well connected to several important aspects of the community, including Greenfield Village and the Henry Ford Museum. The station is within walking distance of the West Dearborn business district and is close to the Rouge River Greenway Trail. The University of Michigan-Dearborn and Henry Ford college campuses are located within two miles of the station. The station includes intermodal bus facilities to facilitate local transit connections.

A discussion of the commuter rail between Ann Arbor and Detroit states that commuter trains have been purchased and refurbished by MDOT and are being planned to run for special events in 2015. The plan assumes four daily round trip trains in the near term. The plan anticipates as many as 15 daily commuter rail round trips at the station, in addition to MDOT’s planned 10 daily Amtrak round trips.

5.3 City of Detroit

Detroit Future City (2012)

The Detroit Future City plan, though not officially adopted by Detroit City Council, is a framework plan that offers insight into the planned and forecasted land uses of the City. This document outlines the Michigan Avenue corridor as a thriving industry center. The area just south of Michigan Avenue is labeled as one of the City’s major employment centers in global trade and industrial ventures with corresponding land uses. The Michigan Avenue corridor is home to some of Detroit’s lowest vacancy areas in the Corktown, Hubbard Farms and Southwest Detroit neighborhoods; though it is also home to some of the highest vacancy neighborhoods just north of Michigan Avenue and east of the I-96 interchange. In the report, the corridor is

slated as a tier one transit corridor to include a Bus Rapid Transit line and major transit node at Michigan Avenue and Livernois.

This aspirational public-private vision plan for the City of Detroit introduces some general transportation visions. Aspects of the plan have been embraced by public planning structures within the city and are scheduled for implementation.

The plan's Detroit Strategic Framework establishes a set of policy directions and actions designed to achieve a more desirable and sustainable Detroit in the near term and for future generations. The Strategic Framework is organized into Five Planning Elements and a civic engagement chapter. The five elements include:

- The Economic Growth Element: The Equitable City
- The Land Use Element: The Image of the City
- The City Systems and Environmental Element: The Sustainable City
 - One strategy described is to reshape transportation to establish Detroit within a regional multimodal network that better serves commercial and personal transportation needs, especially in terms of connecting neighborhoods and employment districts, as well as better serving Detroit's freight industry.
 - Another strategy is to reconfigure transportation. One way this would be accomplished by:
 - Enhancing transit service and increased ridership by realigning Detroit's current transit system to provide an integrated network based on fast connections between regional employment centers, supported by feeder services from residential areas
- The Neighborhoods Element: The City of Distinct and Regional Competitive Neighborhoods
- The Land and Buildings Assets Element: A Strategic Approach to Public Land

Article: Detroit's Non-Motorized Plan Due for an Update (Mode Shift: Move Together, Feb. 2014)

This article describes the vibrant cycling culture that has emerged in recent years, marked by the rise of Wheelhouse Detroit, Back Alley Bikes and organized rides. The city has constructed 16 miles of bike lanes and more are planned. City officials want to update the non-motorized plan, last updated in 2008. The update would be part of the city's Master Plan of Policies, including the Recreation Master Plan.

The City of Detroit is currently in the process of updating its non-motorized plan and the project team will monitor related developments.

Detroit Greenways Coalition, Inner Circle Greenway

The Inner Circle Greenway is a proposed 26-mile non-motorized pathway encircling the city of Detroit and through the cities of Hamtramck and Highland Park with a connection to Dearborn. The Greenway makes use of other existing and planned paths, including the Detroit RiverWalk, Dequindre Cut and Southwest Detroit Greenlink.

Approximately half of the Greenway will be completed by summer 2015. The largest gap in the Greenway is the 8.3-mile abandoned Conrail railroad property. The Detroit Greenways Coalition with the city of Detroit and other partners are working to acquire the missing segment. Future funding will complete its conversion from rail to trail.

5.4 City of Inkster

City of Inkster, Comprehensive Master Plan 2025 (2009)

As part of the public involvement effort in creating this plan, the public was asked to rank their priorities for the City of Inkster; the second highest priority as ranked by the public was “Attract Train Station.” On the “Inkster Wish List” is “Construct Rail station adjacent to new City Hall.”

One of the goals of this master plan is economic development and one of the objectives to achieve this goal is to “Obtain a railway station in the City.” The strategies for this objective are to gain support of local representatives, support a rail station with a plan for transit-oriented development with future mixed-use commercial in close proximity, and acquire the area adjacent to City Hall in preparation of the City getting a new rail station.

Another economic development objective is to “Emphasize Michigan Avenue Development”. The strategies to achieve this include: creating a design manual and new overlay district that focuses on design to establish an architectural theme or brand for the city, continue the Downtown Development Authority’s façade program, and continue to work with MDOT to ways to reduce the travel lanes and speed limits along Michigan Avenue to increase business exposure.

The plan mentions the need for non-motorized connections to the Michigan Avenue corridor and the rest of the community. . Plan participants call-out wanting to see mixed-use transit oriented design with residential and commercial uses. The need for development, façade improvement, and business diversification are recurring themes regarding Michigan Avenue throughout the document, as is the need for public transit. Through the MDOT M-12 Conceptual Corridor Study referenced in the Master Plan it is outlined for there to be a lane reduction, on-street parking, bike lanes, and enhanced pedestrian crossings. This study was adopted as part of the master

plan as a sub area plan. Below is specific language taken from the Comprehensive Master Plan:

- Improve public transit
- Improve and Install non-motorized pathways
- Attract Train Station
- Create a downtown with vibrant commercial core
- Acquire lot adjacent to City Hall for future train station
- Mixed-use TOD to support station
- Economic Development in the DDA
- Pathway connections to Commercial district from Lower Rouge Parkway
- Emphasize Michigan Avenue Development through an area plan

5.5 City of Romulus

City of Romulus Master Plan (2009)

This master plan discusses the rail transit plan between Ann Arbor and Detroit. This plan says that “a stop in Wayne is expected to include frequent express bus service to Romulus and the airport”.

5.6 City of Wayne

Wayne Downtown Plan, 20 Year Plan for Redevelopment in Downtown Wayne (2009)

The purpose of this plan is to help guide growth in and development in the downtown in order to take advantage of growth in the region and position itself as a quality community for business to locate and people to live. One of the goals of this plan is to “position areas closest to the railroad to maximize walkability, transit-oriented density, and urban character to support to future commuter rail stop in Downtown Wayne”.

This plan describes the importance of connectivity with existing sidewalks, pathway and recreational amenities as an asset to the

downtown area, especially if a commuter rail station is added. This plan also states that a number of assets are already in place within a five-minute walk of the potential rail station; which will promote investment in wider sidewalks, wayfinding signage and streetscape amenities that will support a vibrant station.

There are multiple references to the commuter rail line and train station. Planned development patterns are geared towards Transit Oriented Development: mixed-use, well connected, and multi-modal friendly. There is emphasis on narrowing roads, especially the one-way Michigan Avenue pair and promoting non-motorized access and transit services. The plan outlines the following goals:

- Create a downtown urban environment
- Provide clear and efficient transportation
- Support development of commuter rail station
- Increase TOD for walkability and transit

5.7 City of Ypsilanti

City of Ypsilanti, Shape Ypsilanti, Master Plan for a Safe, Diverse, Sustainable City (2013)

This master plan is meant to recognize both the good and the bad, set realistic goals and emphasize policy as well as land use. One of the ten values highlighted in the plan includes “Anyone can easily walk, bike, drive or take transit from anywhere in Ypsilanti to anywhere else in Ypsilanti and beyond”.

The Shape Ypsilanti plan highlights transit and multi-modal transportation goals as a priority for the community and the Michigan Avenue corridor. Specifically the plan outlines non-motorized transit improvements, increasing The Ride service, and a desire for transit-oriented development around an anticipated commuter train station. The plan calls out the high population of young people as choice transit riders and mentions the City’s desire to lead the way to better regional transit. The City is currently serviced by The Ride and an

Eastern Michigan shuttle service and hopes to expand these offerings. The plan foresees the need of additional higher density residential offerings around transit development in the commercial centers. It also expresses the public wanting to build upon its viable business centers as economic development opportunities. The Plan summarizes goals including the following:

- Increasing public transit options
- Improving bike and pedestrian options, especially on-road facilities
- Continue to support Detroit to Ann Arbor commuter rail
- Increase development activity in commercial centers
- Continue to add street aesthetics to encourage active streets

5.8 Township Plans

Canton Township Comprehensive Master Plan (2012)

Canton Township describes Michigan Avenue as one of their main commercial corridors. It is seen as a viable commercial district and a main access road to the community. It also houses the bulk of the industrial activity and is expected to take on the majority of future industrial development. Michigan Avenue is also home to the Canton Sports Center, a multi-field and sports complex facility that the plan calls for future growth and development as a community asset. Along with the industrial land use base along the corridor, the plan highlights Michigan Avenue as a future mixed-use area supporting office, light industrial, and regional commercial uses.

Ypsilanti Township Master Plan (2014)

The Ypsilanti Township Master Plan lists Transportation Improvement as its first community goal. Ensuring that the street and sidewalk framework can accommodate all users is a key element of the plan. The plan adopts the Reimagine Washtenaw goals as the goals of the community along the corridor. These include making the corridor a multi-modal transit hub, encouraging mixed-use development and transit-oriented development, and working on

better public access to the road. Potentially converting travel lanes to transit only lanes is a part of the plan to support the commercial and office development that dominates the Washtenaw Corridor, while alleviating some of the traffic constraints. The corridor is to remain predominately commercial, adding some higher density residential with the mixed-use infill. New development should have shallower setbacks, rear parking and help to create a sense of place along Washtenaw Avenue. Some of the plans concepts for Corridor-wide change include:

- 10' sidewalks, streetscaping, and transit facilities for public use
- Transit super stops for "nodal identity"
- Transit Oriented Development
- Access Management

6.0 Non-Motorized Plans

- Evaluate the system

Huron River Greenway Border-to-Border Trail

The Border-to-Border trail is a multi-agency, collaborative project to construct a multi-use trail traversing Washtenaw County, from Livingston County to Wayne County, along the Huron River. When completed, the 35-mile trail will permit non-motorized travel through the Huron River corridor. The current trail travels along the Huron River to the U-M Medical Campus, Ann Arbor parklands, Washtenaw Community College, St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti neighborhoods and downtown, and eventually Ford Lake. This trail provides pedestrian and bicycle transportation within the Michigan Avenue study area and to potential multi-modal transit connections. Proposed amenities at a new Ann Arbor Station may include a signature bike access facility with secure, high-capacity bicycle parking, shower facilities, and other amenities to serve station customers using the Border-to-Border trail.

Developing Regional Solutions, SEMCOG, Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel Plan for Southeast Michigan: A Plan for SEMCOG and MDOT's Southeast Michigan Regions (Presentation Oct. 2014)

- The current inventory of bike routes includes: existing = 2,642 miles, planned = 1,492 miles
- An analysis of bicycling and pedestrian supportive land uses was conducted
- A corridor map shows the plan to utilize county projects, link supportive areas, and encourage inter-regional connectivity
- There are several regional strategies listed, including:
 - Reduce pedestrian/bicycle crashes
 - Provide better accommodations
 - Create safe intermodal connectivity
 - Provide better way-finding
 - Fill regional gaps
 - Educate/encourage residents

8.0 Conclusions

A review of the planning documents reveals the following themes regarding transit:

- Michigan Avenue has been identified as a key corridor of significance for transit planning in the region, and has been identified in multiple previous plans as a potential location for high-capacity transit service (See 2008 Comprehensive Regional Transit Service Plan, Detroit Transit Options for Growth Study 2009, and other);
- The plans suggest near-term limited stop transit and ultimately a high-capacity transit service between Detroit and the Airport serving Michigan Avenue and along Merriman Road;
- Transit planning for the Detroit-to-Ann Arbor corridor has typically highlighted a defined regional need for improved transit connections to Detroit Metro Airport;
- Each city expresses a desire for a commuter rail stop, with Romulus identifying a planned station in Wayne to support Airport and Romulus trips. Commuter Rail between Ann Arbor and Detroit is often stated as preferred; ongoing intercity rail improvements may support the implementation of this type of service; and
- Planning for high-capacity transit connecting the downtowns and campuses of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti is ongoing, and includes specific concepts for complementary streetscaping and land uses along Washtenaw Avenue.

Land use planning in the corridor is generally supportive of transit operations. Several communities express an interest in walkable districts and transit-oriented development. Land use planning is most

supportive of arterial transit enhancements in Detroit, Dearborn, Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor.