



2025 Regional Transit Master Plan: Executive Summary

rta

Regional Transit Authority
Of Southeast Michigan

DECEMBER 2025 | DRAFT 11252025

ABOUT THE RTA

The Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA) has spearheaded and led regional transit planning efforts in the Detroit and Ann Arbor metropolitan area since the authority was created in 2012. Part of RTA's ongoing planning work includes annual updates to the Regional Transit Master Plan (RTMP), a long-range planning document that summarizes transit trends, regional accomplishments, and regional opportunities for the growth and expansion of public transit in Southeast Michigan. The RTMP outlines RTA's top ten regional transit priorities that serve as a path forward for RTA and regional partners to advance and improve upon various aspects of public transit in Metro Detroit. These priorities have been informed by public engagement conducted by RTA as part of prior and ongoing planning studies, and they are also closely coordinated with the region's transit providers.

A robust regional transit system is critical for growing both the region and the state's population and economy. The plans, programs, and projects that are led and coordinated by RTA – including the RTMP – define a path forward for critical public transit infrastructure and service enhancements. This prepares the region for future rapid transit - and other major capital and operational transit projects – which will result in enhanced regional access and connections between cities and communities in Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties.



We are **Transit Subject Matter Experts**

We're deeply experienced, data-driven, dig into the nuts and bolts, and lead all regional planning.



We are **Drivers and Doers**

We come up with new ideas, implement them, test them and assess the results.



We are **Community Connectors**

We bring together citizens, governments and businesses to solve problems and create opportunities.

MISSION

Creating new and better ways to move and connect people.

VISION

A Southeast Michigan where advances in transit create greater prosperity for all.

VALUES

Creativity: *Bringing innovative thinking to enhance the transit experience.*

Empathy: *Understanding how we can help improve lives across the region.*

Opportunity: *Leading the way to the future of transit in Southeast Michigan.*

RTA's Role

RTA plans, funds, coordinates, and provides regional transit services, projects, and programs in Southeast Michigan, which comprises all of Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties, including the City of Detroit. Within these roles, RTA is responsible for leading regional transit planning, developing and implementing new services, allocating federal and state funding to transit service operators, and securing new regional funding sources for public transit.

Since it was established in 2012, RTA has led the development of plans, studies, and discretionary grant applications, supported regional coordination initiatives, and developed and launched pilot services and technologies. RTA led the RefleX service pilot, which was the precursor of FAST, the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation's (SMART) limited-stop bus service, the Michigan Ride Paratransit app, Detroit to Ann Arbor Express Bus Service (D2A2), the Transit app collaboration booking pilot,

development of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Roadmap, launching Detroit Air Xpress (DAX) service from Downtown Detroit to DTW, and bringing the QLINE streetcar on board.

RTA is responsible for annually allocating transit funding provided by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to Southeast Michigan's transit agencies and community transportation services. In 2024 RTA allocated over \$95 million from these sources to support transit service in the region.

Subject to Board of Directors' and voter approval, RTA has the authority to levy a property tax and/or a motor vehicle registration fee to fund investments in transit service and infrastructure. Though RTA does not currently raise revenue through either of these mechanisms, additional funding is key to improving transit in Southeast Michigan.



Source: Courtesy of QLINE (photo by Jack Stryker, Operations Supervisor), 2025

The RTMP

Part of RTA's ongoing planning work includes annual updates to the Regional Transit Master Plan (RTMP). The RTMP and RTA's IDEA Roadmap, and the Providers' Advisory Committee Coordination Priorities are three guiding documents which help the RTA achieve its vision of a Southeast Michigan region where advances in transit create greater prosperity for all. The RTMP is used by RTA and its partners - including transit agencies, community transit providers, nonprofit organizations, and government entities - toward achieving this vision.

For example, the RTMP's goals are included within [SEMCOG's Vision 2050 RTP](#), with the RTMP serving as a guiding document for SEMCOG regarding transit priorities, projects and investments across Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne Counties.

The previous 2024 RTMP update included a categorization of RTA's top ten priorities into three priority focus areas:



Move People

- Increase Frequency, Reliability, and Hours on Fixed-Route Services
- Build On and Coordinate Demand-Response Services
- Grow Mobility Access to Local Communities and Regional Destinations



Strengthen Access

- Invest in and Implement a Rapid Transit Network
- Advance Accessibility, Comfort, and Well-Being at Transit Stops
- Upgrade Multimodal Connections To and Between Services
- Regionalize Trip Planning and Fare Payment Systems



Enhance Experience

- Enhance Ride Quality and Promote On-Board Safety
- Modernize and Maintain Infrastructure in a State of Good Repair
- Recruit, Develop, and Retain a Thriving Workforce

CONNECTING DETROIT & ANN ARBOR



Source: Courtesy of WSP, 2025

RTA adapts the RTMP annually to provide updates on recent regional transit accomplishments, to identify trends in the national transit industry, and to summarize recent public feedback received on the strengths, areas for growth, and opportunities for public transit in the region.



NATIONAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS IN TRANSIT

In 2024, transit agencies are continuing to navigate a "new normal" shaped by changing ridership patterns since the COVID-19 pandemic.² As ridership continues to rebound, transit agencies are implementing innovations to enhance mobility while addressing new operational challenges. The transit industry is reconsidering how to best serve riders and communities given new travel patterns, identifying solutions and strategies to overcome labor shortages, and working to address current and future funding deficits.

Successful approaches to meet these challenges include embracing new technologies, focusing on travel needs beyond the nine-to-five commute, and investing in bus rapid transit (BRT) and transit-oriented development (TOD). Through the annual RTMP update, RTA considers how these industry trends, as well as recent regional progress and accomplishments, impact Southeast Michigan's future priorities and allocation of resources.

The Post-Pandemic Transit Landscape

Both nationally and locally, transit ridership has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, though it is gradually recovering. COVID-19 had a huge impact on transit service with ridership declining as travel patterns changed and many office workers shifted to hybrid or full-time remote work. As of September 2024, national transit ridership was at 79 percent of pre-pandemic levels.³ Beginning in 2022, Southeast Michigan transit ridership has been trending upward from pandemic lows in 2021, when annual ridership in the region declined to 14.1 million trips. In 2023, people rode transit over 22.8 million times, 54 percent of pre-pandemic ridership (see Figure 10).⁴

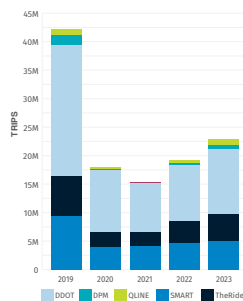


Figure 10. In 2020, people took over 47 million trips on public transit in Southeast Michigan. Ridership declined as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and changing workplace policies, but has increased in the last two years. Source: National Transit Database.

The 2024 RTMP update revised previously identified Implementation Activities, while also adding additional support activities that help to set a clear path for each Implementation Activity.

This 2025 RTMP update is focused around laying out the latest "baseline" of public transit services in the Southeast Michigan region and sets the stage for scenario planning with the upcoming RTMP update in 2026, pending the RTA Strategic Organizational Plan's Board direction..

Chapter 2 (Southeast Michigan's Regional Transit Network) has been updated to include current transit services and several key regional indicator metrics that help to define the baseline regional transit network.

In addition, the RTA has implemented a new financial modeling tool - summarized in Chapter 3 - that could support future scenario planning by estimating the operational and capital costs associated with various transit scenarios, and by evaluating the potential funding outcomes of different regional financing strategies.

The RTMP is a future-focused strategy document, and it is not tied to a budget. A critical next step in advancing regional transit is to identify sustainable regional funding sources and develop an expenditure plan that identifies specific prioritization of projects to be funded over a long-term period.



Source: Courtesy of DDOT (via social media), 2025

Figure 1. Snapshots from the 2024 RTMP document

Southeast Michigan's Transit Network

Southeast Michigan has a wide-reaching public transit network that provides service to the four-county region of Wayne, Macomb, Oakland, and Washtenaw counties, with service operated by multiple fixed-route, on-demand, and community transit providers.

Available transit and mobility services include:

- **Fixed local route bus:**
SMART, DDOT, TheRide
- **Express bus:**
DAX, D2A2, FAST, Jefferson, Washtenaw Express
- **Rail:**
QLINE, People Mover
- **Demand-response shuttles:**
paratransit, dial-a-ride, on-demand, and microtransit
- **Micromobility:**
bikeshare and e-scooter share
- **VanRide and MichiVan**

These are offered through public transit agencies, community-sponsored transportation services, institutional- and employer-sponsored transportation, for-profit companies, and other providers.

While transit service is available in most communities within the region, there are some gaps where transit service is not available, not operating at all hours, or where access to services is reserved to certain populations, such as seniors or people with disabilities.



QLINE is a 3.3-mile streetcar operated by RTA that provides service between 12 station intersections along Woodward Avenue in Downtown Detroit, Midtown, and New Center. Since October 2024, QLINE is operated by the RTA. The RTA also contracts operation of Detroit-to-Ann Arbor (D2A2) and Detroit Air Xpress (DAX) express bus services.



SMART provides fixed-route, ADA paratransit, demand-response, and microtransit services in all of Macomb County and portions of Oakland and Wayne Counties.



TheRide provides fixed-route, ADA paratransit, demand-response, and microtransit services in the Greater Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area.



The Detroit People Mover is a fully automated rail system that runs on an elevated single track loop around Downtown Detroit.



DDOT provides fixed-route bus service and ADA paratransit service throughout Detroit and in portions of neighboring communities, including Dearborn, Hamtramck, Highland Park, Livonia, and Southfield.



Oakland Transit coordinates services amongst different transit providers in Oakland County, including SMART, Older Person's Commission (OPC), North Oakland Transportation Authority (NOTA), Western Oakland Transportation Authority (WOTA), and People's Express (PEX).

Some of these options are available to the general public, and others are geared toward specific populations, such as people aged 65 and over, people with disabilities, students, or veterans.

RTA is the umbrella organization that connects the five public transit agencies operating fixed-route bus or rail service in the region:

1. **the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA):** also known as TheRide
2. **Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT)**
3. **Detroit Transportation Corporation (DTC):** operating as the Detroit People Mover (DPM)
4. **Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART)**
5. **the QLINE:** now operated by RTA following acquisition of the service from M-1 RAIL in 2024.

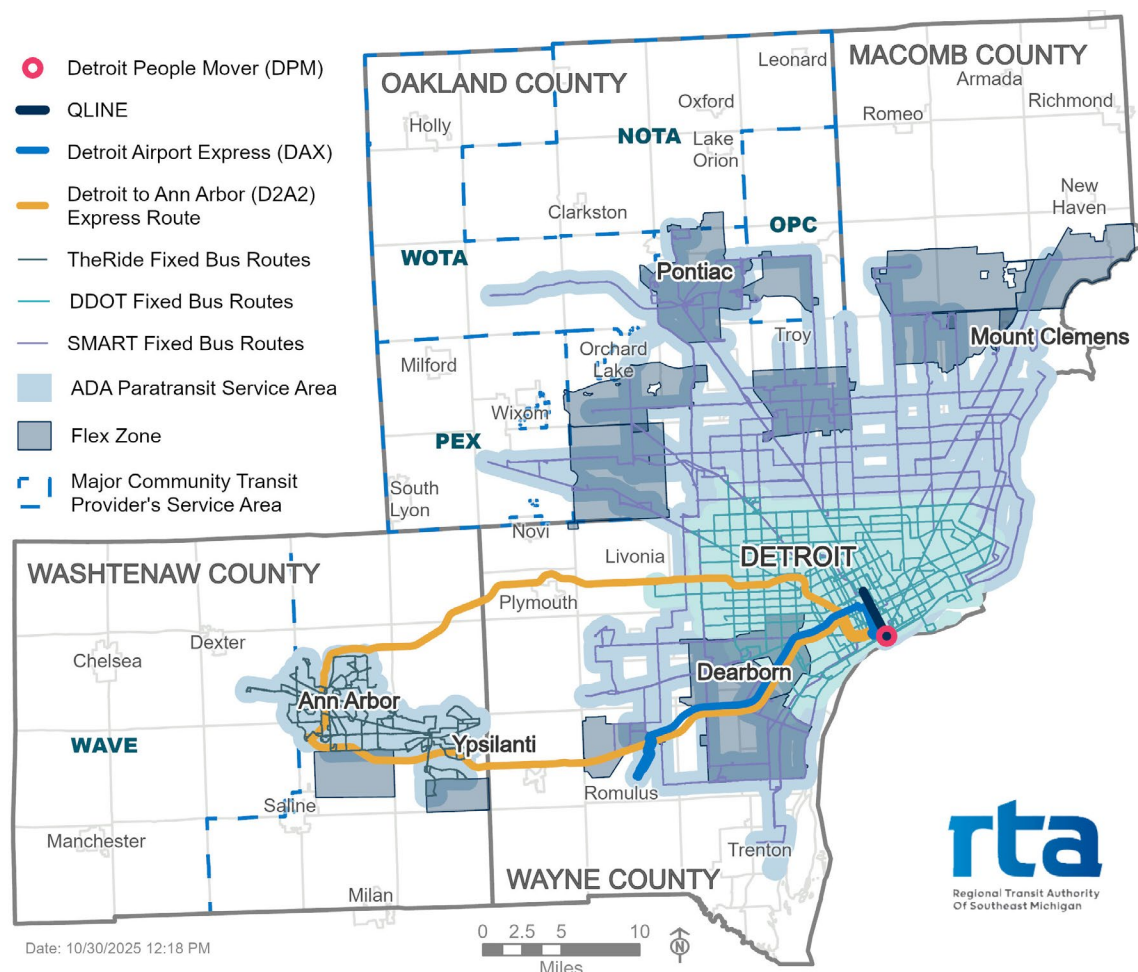
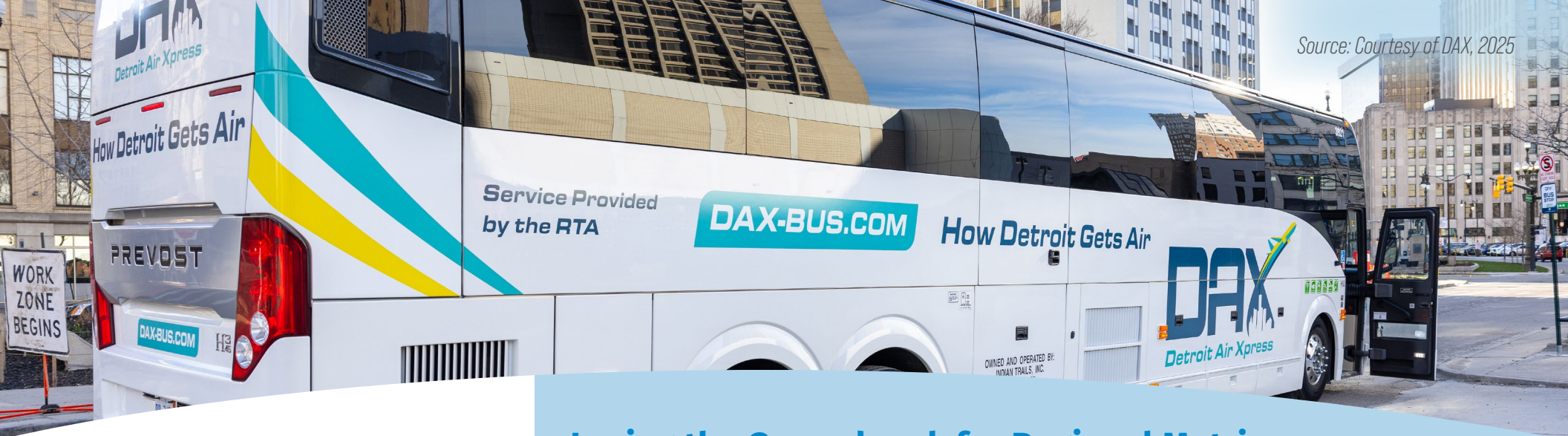


Figure 3. Transit services operated in Southeast Michigan, excluding community-sponsored transit providers (5310 providers)

Providers from other regions also offer connections to and from Southeast Michigan, including Amtrak, Flint's Mass Transit Authority (MTA), Port Huron's Blue Water Area Transit, Livingston County's Livingston Essential Transportation Service (LETS), the Tunnel Bus, and various charter bus services.

RTA assists over 80 community-based transit providers across the region, with a portion of these organizations receiving Section 5310. In addition, there are several organizations and companies that provide transportation and mobility services, including taxi companies, transportation network companies like Uber and Lyft, private services operated by assisted living and nursing facilities and adult day care providers, mobility management agencies (like AgeWays), and social service organizations (like Programs to Educate All Cyclists, or PEAC).



KEY REGIONAL INDICATORS

In order to build support for transit expansion in Southeast Michigan, the RTA needs to identify ways to quantify and measure successes and progress over time. This section highlights a number of key regional indicators for each of the RTA's top-ten regional transit priorities. These key regional indicators also help to establish a starting point to evaluate the impact of proposed changes or future investments to Southeast Michigan's regional transit system. The listed indicators in this 2025 RTMP document could help inform future comparisons between the current transit network and potential regional scenarios, which may be explored in the 2026 RTMP update.

Laying the Groundwork for Regional Metrics

The following indicators represent the starting point for tracking how the region moves forward on shared transit priorities. While consistent data is not yet available for every metric, this framework sets the stage for building uniform, coordinated measurement across providers. These KPIs will help shape future planning, funding, and performance evaluation

Baseline Measures Per Priority Area



Move People

- Average wait times
- Service hours per day
- Coverage of on-demand transit
- Access to key destinations



Strengthen Access

- Number of rapid/frequent transit corridors
- ADA compliance at stops
- integrated fare system use



Enhance Experience

- Rider satisfaction
- Percent of fleet in good repair
- Operator retention

Move People

Key Regional Indicators per Priority



1 For Priority 1: Increase Frequency, Reliability, and Hours on Fixed-Route Services



Number of routes operating at 20-minute frequencies or better:

20

frequent routes

9

routes operating 24 hours a day

32

routes operating 18 to 20 hours per day



Regional population within a half-mile of frequent transit routes:

18%

of the population lives within a half-mile of a frequent transit corridor

20%

of jobs are within a half-mile of a frequent transit corridor



To measure Priority 1, additional key regional indicators may include:

- Percentage of on-time service (on-time performance)
- Number of missed trips by transit provider (annually)

2 For Priority 2: Build on and Coordinate Demand Response Services



Geographic area covered by demand-response (Flex) transit service (in square miles):

305

square miles of on-demand Flex coverage

1,262

square miles of on-demand Community Transit coverage

3 For Priority 3: Grow Mobility Access to Local Communities and Regional Destinations



Regional population within a half-mile of fixed route transit:

57

or 2,439,452 people of the four-county region population live within a half mile of fixed route transit



Transit travel time maps:

33%

of the regional population within a half-mile of a frequent transit corridor have an income under the federal poverty level

25%

of the regional households within a half-mile of a frequent transit corridor spend greater than 30% of income on housing

Strengthen Access

Key Regional Indicators



1 For Priority 1: Invest in and Implement a Rapid Transit Network



**7 Rapid transit routes
(10-20 min or better):**



DDOT (Jefferson)



DTC (People Mover)



RTA (QLINE)



SMART (FAST)



TheRide (104)



**Number of new or expanded rapid
transit projects ready to be designed
and constructed:**



Gratiot, Michigan, Washtenaw, and
Woodward Avenues

2 For Priority 2: Advance Accessibility, Comfort, and Well-Being at Transit Stops



To measure Priority 2, key regional indicators may include:

- Percentage of bus stops accessible via a sidewalk
- Total number of shelters or benches at bus stops across the region
- Total number of transit stations and transit centers

3 For Priority 3: Regionalize Trip Planning and Fare Payment Systems



To measure Priority 3, key regional indicators may include:

- The number of mobile payment apps used by fixed route transit providers, with a long term goal of consolidating to one regional mobile payment app
- The percentage of fare payments using a regional mobile payment app

4 Priority 4: Upgrade Multimodal Connections To and Between Services



**Number of bicycles and
bikeshare stations:**



in the City of Detroit



in Oakland County



To measure Priority 4, additional key regional indicators may include:

- Linear miles of bike lanes and greenways within one-mile of fixed route transit corridors
- Number of scootershare rides (annually)

Enhance Experience

Key Regional Indicators



1 For Priority 1: Enhance Ride Quality and Promote On- Board Safety



Average number of major safety and security events over the last five years:

1

event per passenger trip using direct operated fixed route services

3

events per passenger trip using on-demand services



To measure Priority 1, additional key regional indicators may include:

- The number of passenger complaints per 100,000 passenger trips*

**More data is needed from transit providers to create a benchmark key regional indicator for future tracking.*

2 For Priority 2: Modernize and Maintain Infrastructure in a State of Good Repair



To measure Priority 2, key regional indicators may include:

- Percentage of vehicles beyond useful life (by transit provider)
- Average backlog (in dollars) of unfunded capital projects

3 For Priority 3: Recruit, Develop, and Retain a Thriving Workforce



To measure Priority 3, key regional indicators may include:

- Number of full-time fixed route operators (by transit provider)
- Number of full-time mechanics (by transit provider)
- Number of unfilled fixed route operator positions
- Number of unfilled mechanic positions
- Number of recruitment events held or attended by transit providers annually
- Average hourly pay rate for transit operators and mechanics
- Transit employee career satisfaction rate (via employee surveying)

SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS

Understanding key socioeconomic metrics related to transit access is also important to be able to analyze how future transit scenarios may improve access to destinations for different groups of people or populations. The infographics below summarize some of these key indicators of the existing fixed route transit network, consisting of DDOT, People Mover, RTA, SMART, and TheRide transit services.

Compared to the four-county region, fixed route transit is accessible within a quarter-mile for:



41%
of the population



56%
of jobs



40%
of all K-12 schools



70%
of grocery stores



68%
of hospitals and urgent
care facilities



38%
of the population who are
age 65+



61%
of the households who are
living under the poverty level



64%
of the households who have
zero or one car available



54%
of the adults who have
limited English proficiency



46%
of the households who have
one resident with a disability



Source: Courtesy of SMART (photo by Quincy Jones), 2025

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

At the RTA, community input is pivotal and directly shapes development of all of the agency's plans and programs. The goal of engaging the community is to understand and respond to Southeast Michigan residents' regional transit priorities and needs. To help gauge the general public's priorities and perception of transit, the RTA conducted a community survey in 2025. This survey was administered to 1,400 residents across the four-county region about their current use of transit, potential use of transit, transit benefits, and transit priorities. The survey shows that while 35 percent of respondents have used transit within the past year, 87 percent of respondents think that improved transit would provide a significant or very major benefit to the region as a whole. Additionally, there was 63 percent support for a truly major expansion of all types of bus and rail services to all parts of the four-county region. These survey results show that there is a strong desire for regional transit expansion in Southeast Michigan.

In addition to community engagement efforts completed by RTA, each of the fixed route transit providers and other regional partners have conducted outreach to communities about short- and long-term plans for local transit service and capital improvements. RTA also continues to coordinate with the region's public transportation and shared mobility providers to align transit providers' goals and initiatives.



Source: Courtesy of TheRide, 2025

Examples of Public Engagement:



Participation in community events throughout the region



Online engagement via RTA website, email, and online surveys



Phone engagement with the option of web-to-text surveys



Ride-along engagement



Coordination meetings with community leaders, transit providers and their local engagement efforts

RTA's engagement has document a 10% increase in support for regional transit. To further strengthen its engagement strategy, the RTA is currently developing a comprehensive Community Engagement Plan for fiscal year (FY) 2026. This plan will outline community engagement standards, best practices, and detailed regional guidelines to foster greater impactful interactions with the public. This crucial plan will equip the RTA with the essential tools and processes to foster meaningful community engagement, ensuring stakeholders' voices play a valued role in driving engagement progress.

TRENDS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Transit Operations

- Both nationally and regionally, transit ridership has not yet returned fully to pre-pandemic levels, though it is gradually recovering. National ridership stands at 79 percent of pre-pandemic levels. In calendar year 2024, regional fixed route ridership surpassed 29 million trips, up by over 3 million trips (about a 13% increase) compared to 2023. The region experienced a 36.2% reduction in ridership on the regional fixed route transit network from 2019 to 2024 according to the National Transit Database.
- Transit agencies in Southeast Michigan and across the country continue to face hiring and retention challenges. In 2024, DDOT and SMART, now fully staffed, both increased wages for union transit employees to help with recruitment and retention.



Improved & Expanded Transit Services

- In 2024, QLINE and DPM both continued fare-free services, which led to a surge in ridership to over 1 million trips each for both providers. The People Mover also expanded service hours, improved scheduling for large scale events, enhanced station safety, installed real-time service displays and kiosks, and improved the on-board/platform public announcements system.
- DAX and D2A2 pilot express services continued to grow, with over 5,000 and 10,000 respectively riders monthly as of September 2025.
- Local providers all continued to roll out expanded fixed-route services, including new routes, extended service spans, and increased frequency through DDOT Reimagined, SMARTer Mobility, and TheRide 2045 plans.



Accessible & Shared Mobility

- RTA's Access to Transit Program (ATP) kicked off with an initial planning study to help identify a framework for RTA to use in partnering with local municipalities and townships to improve the accessibility of transit services through a regular call for projects process.
- DDOT continued to invest in bus stop accessibility and amenity improvements and SMART released a new Bus Stop Design Standards Manual in January 2025.
- MoGo continued to prepare for a future system expansion and saw ridership grow to nearly 100,000 annual bikeshare rides.



Fleet & Facility Investment

- In 2024, DDOT and TheRide secured \$30 million and \$25 million, respectively, to expand their fixed route fleets with low- and no-emission buses. SMART began developing its zero-emission plan in 2025 scheduled to wrap up by 2026.
- DDOT opened the new Jason Hargrove Transit Center in 2024 and continues work on the Coolidge Terminal that will be completed in 2026 and will have capacity to store up to 250 buses.
- TheRide continued public outreach to inform the final designs for the Ypsilanti Transit Center and continued design for improvements at the Blake Transit Center. The improved facilities are expected to be completed by 2028.



Technology and Mobile Applications

- RTA collaborated to launch the Transit app in 2025, continued the Mobility Wallet pilot, and completed a new Strategic Technology Plan, all part of RTA's continued work to leverage technology in order to create a more integrated, modern, efficient, and user-friendly regional transportation network.



Transit Planning

- Studies of key regional corridors continued, including Woodward, Michigan, Gratiot, and Washtenaw avenues. MDOT has a study underway for Woodward and completed new Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) studies of Gratiot and Washtenaw in 2024. The RTA is leading a Thriving Communities program for all four corridors through 2027.
- RTA drafted a Corridors Framework to continue planning efforts and lay out a pathway for a regional rapid transit network with infrastructure, technology, safety, and accessibility improvements.
- TheRide and DDOT continued efforts to implement their respective long-range plans, TheRide 2045 and DDOT Reimagined. SMART has continued the SMARTer Mobility Plan, a short-range plan used to study and design a renewed SMART fixed route bus network, with the final plan adoption expected in Fall 2025.
- RTA finalized the Mobility 4 All plan, the region's Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan in 2025. Extensive public outreach informed the plan.
- DPM launched two new planning efforts to better understand ridership trends and travel patterns, as well as to study the potential for People Mover system expansion.
- Oakland County kicked off its first Community Transit Plan which will identify ways to improve coordination among the county's various community transit providers in order to improve the customer experience.

Regional Transit Priorities

In the 2023 RTMP update, RTA reviewed the strategies and actions in previous versions and consolidated them into 10 regional transit priorities for investment based on public input, transit industry trends, recent accomplishments, and ongoing projects in Southeast Michigan. RTA's goals guided the development of these regional transit priorities. Each priority supports aspects of RTA's overarching regional goals and serves as a crucial step toward achieving them.

The 2024 update of the RTMP included a categorization of those top ten priorities into three focus areas: Move People, Strengthen Access, and Enhance Experience. Additionally, the 2024 update revised some of the previously identified Implementation Activities, while also adding additional supporting actions that outline a clear path for each identified Activity. RTA's goals are to fund transformative mobility, improve existing services, expand transit coverage, innovate resilient projects, and sustain future programs. These goals guided the development of the regional transit priorities. Each priority supports aspects of RTA's goals and serves as a crucial step toward achieving them.



Through a comprehensive community survey conducted in 2024 and early 2025, RTA heard from residents across all four counties. Thousands of people weighed in on what matters most:



Frequent and reliable service



Better weekend and evening access



Faster regional connections, safer stops



Simpler ways to pay and plan trips

Over 87% of the region supports transit!



MOVE PEOPLE

Increase Frequency, Reliability, and Hours on Fixed-Route Services

Develop a core network of transit routes with frequencies of at least every 15 to 30 minutes for 18 hours every day of the week and increase the number of 24-hour bus and rail routes. Implement improvements that increase reliability and on-time performance, such as dedicated lanes, traffic queue jumps, streamlined boarding, and transit signal priority (TSP).

Build On and Coordinate Demand-Response Services

Improve mobility for people who rely on demand-response transit services by offering same-day services, increasing hours of operation, expanding eligibility to more people, and streamlining transfers between services.

Grow Mobility Access to Local Communities & Regional Destinations

Ensure transit service that is tailored to local needs is available in every community in Southeast Michigan. This can include demand-response and microtransit services in lower-density areas, new or extended fixed-route services in higher-density areas, and express services that serve major regional destinations and provide access to other regions.

Image Credit: Courtesy of TheRide, 2025





STRENGTHEN ACCESS

Invest In and Implement a Rapid Transit Network:

Plan, design, fund, and operationalize rapid transit services along regionally significant corridors that support Transit Oriented Development (TOD), and work with local communities to develop mobility-oriented development (MOD) plans that encourage equitable economic growth.

Advance Accessibility, Comfort, and Well-being at Transit Stops:

Ensure transit stops meet ADA standards and have amenities and security features to help all riders feel healthy and comfortable waiting for their vehicle. This can include improving sidewalks and curb ramps and providing seating, shelters, lighting, real-time signage, and greenscaping.

Upgrade Multimodal Connections To and Between Services:

Increase access to and from public transit by improving pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure at and near transit stops, promoting complete street designs, enhancing park-and-ride services, and increasing the availability of microtransit and micromobility options.

Regionalize Trip Planning and Fare Payment Services:

Implement a regional multimodal fare collection system that simplifies payment and transfers between services and modes, and streamlines fare policies across providers, creating a seamless navigation experience. Deploy a trip planning platform that helps riders plan and schedule trips, and that is integrated with the regional fare system.

Image Credit: Courtesy of DDOT (via social media), 2025



ENHANCE EXPERIENCE

Modernize and Maintain Infrastructure in a State of Good Repair:

Maintain transit infrastructure, including buses and trains, passenger and maintenance facilities, and service vehicles, in a state of good repair to ensure continuous and safe operations. When replacing infrastructure, integrate innovative technologies and best practices that improve operational efficacy and environmental impacts.

Enhance Ride Quality and Promote On-Board Safety:

Enhance the rider experience by addressing real and perceived safety and cleanliness concerns through marketing campaigns, staff training upgraded onboard technologies, and a transit ambassadors' program that is focused on customer service, community outreach, rider support, and a sense of security.

Recruit, Develop, and Retain a Thriving Workforce:

Engage, support, and sustain a diverse and talented workforce to continue reliable operations of current service and the ability to expand services in the future. Ensuring competitive compensation and benefits packages, providing training on new technologies and career advancement, and updating recruitment practices will attract new employees while helping current employees grow and thrive.

Image Credit: Courtesy of SMART (photo by Quincy Jones), 2025



The Path Forward

Together, RTA and its partners can carry out implementation activities and supporting actions outlined in this plan to improve, expand, innovate, and sustain transit services in Southeast Michigan. While RTA will continue to pursue and execute new programs and projects that are funded through short term funding and grants, a stable regional funding source is required to sustainably invest in the region's long-term transit priorities in order to further transform mobility in the region.

RTA is authorized to collect a property tax millage and a vehicle registration tax in Southeast Michigan, subject to Board of Directors' and voter approval. If or when RTA proposes a ballot initiative, it would develop an expenditure plan that proposes a multi-year program of projects that can be carried out with projected revenues. The planning process involves considering different project scenarios (for example, which routes to increase frequency on or where to construct rapid transit corridors). Through public engagement, the RTA would determine which scenario to pursue and then draft potential referendum language for a property tax and/or vehicle registration fee to support the preferred approach pending public approval by vote. In the interim, RTA will work with state and local stakeholders to pursue competitive grants and develop alternative funding options for priority projects.



a 1.0 mill property
tax could generate
approximately

\$164 million



a \$1.2 vehicle registration
fee could generate
approximately

\$117 million

Figure 2. Subject to Board of Directors' and voter approval, RTA is authorized to collect a property tax and a vehicle registration fee.

Stay Engaged!

RTA cannot achieve this regional vision alone. The priorities outlined in the 2025 Regional Transit Master Plan will require engagement, coordination, support, leadership, and action from RTA's partners, including transit agencies and providers, municipalities, counties, the state, businesses, nonprofits, elected officials, community leaders, advocates, and riders. You can support RTA and its vision by signing up for newsletters, following RTA on social media, attending public meetings, and - most importantly - taking public transit and talking to your friends, families, and colleagues about how important transit is to you and for the region.



Get on board with transit and RTA feedback opportunities! It is never too late to ride and provide input.

Reach out to RTA, whether by email, social media, or in-person to let us know how public transit can better service your needs. Typically, the RTA's Board of Directors meets on the third Thursday monthly at 1:00 p.m., the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) meets bimonthly on the first Monday at 6:00 p.m., and the Providers Advisory Committee (PAC) meets quarterly on the second Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. Meeting calendars are available on RTA's website. You can also apply to join RTA's CAC. Applications are available at rtamichigan.org.

For more information, questions, or comments, please contact us by email at info@rtamichigan.org or call (313) 402-1020.





2025

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Of Southeast Michigan**