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From: mailinglistbouncer@dreamhost.com on behalf of Megan Owens, TRU [transitinfo@detroittransit.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 09, 2008 1:26 PM
To: ctallman@ferndale-mi.com
Subject: [TRU e-newsletter] Commuter train updates, public meetings on transportation investments, and more

Hello again!

I hope you had a nice holiday weekend, whether rocking out at CityFest, BBQing at home, camping up north, or however you spent the holiday. This week I've got for you some SEMCOG public meetings, a couple of commuter train updates and some surveys to get your opinion on transit funding, this e-newsletter, and more:



- [Public meetings on SEMCOG's transportation investments](#) (July 21-23)
- Commuter train updates
 - [New report about Wally](#)
 - [New video about AA-Detroit](#)
- [TRU surveys](#) - public perception survey, e-newsletter survey
- [Did you know](#) – New Minneapolis light rail a major transit and TOD success

Upcoming public meetings on SEMCOG's transportation investments



As previously reported, SEMCOG is developing a **long range transportation plan** for the 7-county southeast Michigan region, which will **direct transportation funding for the next 30 years**. If you haven't yet [completed their survey](#), providing your thoughts on transportation investment priorities, make sure to do so soon.

SEMCOG is providing an additional opportunity to share your opinion, with a series of public meetings:

“They want to hear from the public about how the transportation system is performing and how citizens would prioritize future transportation investments. SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, announces the following public meetings where citizens can express their opinions on the region's transportation system:

- **Monday, July 21, 2008, SEMCOG offices**
 - 535 Griswold, Suite 300, Detroit;

- 4-7 p.m. (formal presentations begin at 4:10 p.m. and 5:40 p.m.)
- **Tuesday, July 22, 2008, Southfield Public Library**
 - 26300 Evergreen Rd, Southfield;
 - 4-7 p.m. (formal presentations begin at 4:10 p.m. and 5:40 p.m.)
- **Wednesday, July 23, 2008, Washtenaw Community College**
 - Morris Lawrence Building, Ann Arbor;
 - **9 a.m.-12 noon** (formal presentations begin at 9:10 a.m. and 10:40 a.m.)

At these meetings, the public can complete SEMCOG's public opinion survey, browse information stations to learn how the transportation system works, spend \$100 in "SEMbucks" on various transportation improvements, and provide verbal or written comments.

The results will be presented to SEMCOG's elected officials before they adopt an official investment direction that will guide the submission of projects for funding by state and local road and transit agencies. Direction2035 will be adopted in March 2010."

For more information about Direction2035, visit www.semco.org/Long-RangeTransportationPlan.aspx.

Commuter train updates - New report finds Wally train viable

As recently reported in the news, [a new report about the proposed Washtenaw-Livingston \(Wally\) Commuter train](#) was just released. An independent consultant was hired to review the Wally plans, budget and proposals to date. They just announced that they found **the project to be very viable and likely to be successful**, once it's up and running (which should take 16 months).

The consultants provided a number of recommendations for the project coalition, including making the trip time competitive with driving. Original plans had the train running at 40 mph, but the consultants recommended running at 60 mph instead, which will require additional track and rail crossing improvements. With those improvements, it will cost \$32 million to get started and about \$7 million a year to operate.

Learn more, including a [summary presentation](#) and the [full technical report](#) at eWashtenaw.org/Wally.

Commuter train updates - SEMCOG video on AA-Detroit



Plans to develop a [commuter train from Detroit to Metro Airport and Ann Arbor](#) continue. There isn't a lot of new news, but there is **an interesting new video summarizing the project** on [SEMCOG's website](#) (and on [YouTube](#)). Check it out!

TRU survey: Public perception of transit

TRU also wants to know what you think about our current transit system and what improvements and investments are needed. This summer, we've got a U of M student researcher working with us to **better understand public perception about transit throughout the region**. We've got a lot of anecdote

evidence, but she has developed a survey and is gathering 1,000 responses from people throughout the region to get hard data. Most of the surveys are gathered randomly from people on the street. But you can also share your input on the survey. [Take TRU's Transit Perception Survey online](#). It should take 5-10 minutes to complete.

Amanda is also seeking help gathering these surveys. If you know of a good public place with lots of people around who might be willing to take a survey, [please let Amanda know](#). And even better, come help for an hour or two gathering surveys with Amanda! You can help ensure TRU understands public perception of transit and how willing people are to pay for transit improvements, which will be critical as we develop public education messages for a transit funding campaign in the near future. Thanks!

TRU e-newsletter survey

One more quick survey for you - I want to know what you think of this e-newsletter! Does it provide useful information? What more should I be writing about? Does it come frequent enough, or too often? [Take this quick 5 minute survey](#) to **help me improve this e-newsletter** for you and all my readers. Thanks!!

Did you know – New Minneapolis light rail a major transit and TOD success

“If you build it, will they come? After decades of debate, the (Minneapolis) region in 2001 began building its first light-rail transit (LRT) line, along Hiawatha Avenue. The project required a huge investment of time, labor and money -- \$715.3 million from federal, state, regional and county sources.

Public investments for the Hiawatha line were approved, in part, because planners predicted significant investments in nearby business and residential development. Has the project lived up to the dream? . . . **After just one year of full operation, the answer is a solid “yes.” LRT is more than fulfilling its promise to attract both riders and development.**

- This year, about **12,400 new housing units** near the line will be occupied or under construction.
- **Ridership** in Hiawatha's full year of full operation **exceeded pre-construction estimates by 58.2 percent.**
- “Major public investments like the Hiawatha...increase property values and help curb sprawl.”
 - Matt Mullins, Maxfield Research



[Read more from the Metropolitan Council of Minneapolis](#) (which, according to their website, provides cost-effective transit and wastewater services, coordinates orderly and economic development, and assists communities as they plan for anticipated growth in the seven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul region).

(Although this report is two years old, it provides great data on their first year of service. We've got a summer researcher gathering more data like this about the real impact that rapid transit investment's

have had in other cities. More great data to come!)

It's always exciting to see successful transit projects in other similar cities, showing that if we make the proper investments and move our rapid transit projects forward, we too can see enormous transit ridership and economic development in greater Detroit. It can work! (It must work!!)

Enjoy another beautiful summer weekend.

Megan Owens
TRU Director
www.DetroitTransit.org

PS - Remember, you can always join or unsubscribe from TRU's email list at www.DetroitTransit.org/lists.php and you can support TRU financially at www.DetroitTransit.org/registration.php.

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