



**IN YOUR TRANSPORTATION FUTURE?** — Composite photo shows off the sleek lines of the UMTA light rail transit vehicle as it might appear on Detroit's Leaned street, completing its distribution of commuters and shoppers around Detroit's central business district before heading back outbound — in this case, to Pontiac. Such vehicles would be primary means of connecting Detroit and the suburbs, under a plan announced by the Wayne and Oakland Road Commissions for providing transit services to the tri-county area.

## The SEMTA Plan Moves Closer To Reality

It is impossible to say today just what the SEMTA plan is for regional mass transit. SEMTA has revised its "plan" several times since announcing in late 1976 that it would propose a heavy rail subway system.

The latest "preferred" plan abandons heavy rail, but retains a costly subway in Detroit. SEMTA spokesmen say even this approach is likely to be modified, said William M. Richards, Vice Chairman of the Board of Oakland County Road Commissioners.

Indeed, as part of the federal Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) requirements for \$600 million promised in federal aid, SEMTA must study several alternatives.

"We believe our efforts have been successful thus far. We have tried to

convince SEMTA that whatever they come up with must be affordable for the entire region, and must include equitable services to the suburbs," said John R. Gnau, Jr., chairman of the Oakland County Road Commission.

"We have seen evidence that SEMTA is recognizing belatedly that its plans were developed with outdated and erroneous population and origin-destination data, because ridership projections being talked about by SEMTA for those plans now are scaled down. However, we believe the basic plans might look considerably different if the correct data had been used from the beginning," he said.

It is obvious the systems themselves are over-designed and thus unnecessarily expensive, said Gnau.

## Light Rail On Surface Is Affordable, Best

The Tri-County Alternate regional transit plan developed for Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties could be completed and fully operational as early as 1981 at a construction cost that can be met by funds now committed or pledged.

Total cost to construct and equip the system has been estimated at \$824.7 million. It can provide nearly 4,000 construction jobs and an estimated 4,200 permanent career jobs in operations and maintenance, all of which would help reduce high unemployment and contribute to revitalization of the metropolitan area.

"This plan will substantially meet the presently identified transit requirements of Detroit and the tri-counties," said John R. Gnau, Jr., chairman of the Board of Oakland County Road Commissioners.

A major feature of the new concept, as outlined by Russell Thielman, president of Transportation Planning Associates, is the use of light rail transit instead of the more expensive conventional heavy rail mode used in subways. The report minimizes construction costs by proposing that light rail lines be laid alongside railroad tracks in existing rights-of-way.

A special light rail vehicle, designed to specifications of the federal Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), would speed commuters and shoppers to their destinations in luxurious comfort, said Thielman, whose company was transportation consultant to the Road Commissions in the plan's development.

Complementing 55.2 miles of light rail transit lines would be 187.3 miles of bus transit routes that would both feed the rail system and operate independently of it. The plan also calls for 105.6 miles of park-and-ride express bus routes connecting major activity centers in the tri-county area, such as shopping malls and shopping centers.

The next level of transportation would be jitney buses running along 139.8 miles of routes. The jitanies could be hailed at any point on their routes to take passengers to an activity center of a line-haul transit station.

All low-density areas in the tri-counties would be served by a rural subscription service. Available particularly for transit-dependent people—the elderly, the poor, the handicapped—this service need only be ordered once to provide its regular pick-up and delivery of passengers. They would operate in 16 rural zones covering a total of 1,588 square miles with a combined population of 1.37 million.

Nineteen "demand-responsive" transportation systems would operate from outlying activity centers to serve 1.1 million residents of areas totaling 388 square miles with virtually door-to-door service.

Provision for security of transit passengers is included in the \$98 million estimated annual cost of operating and maintaining the new transit system. Up to half of operating costs, based on national experience,

may be expected to come from fare box collections. The balance would come from federal, state and local operating subsidies.

Light rail lines are planned for Michigan Avenue, Woodward and Gratiot corridors, as recommended in the 1990 regional transportation plan of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

The Woodward corridor route would run alongside the Grand Trunk Western tracks, from the depot on Huron street in Pontiac to Renaissance Center, a distance of 25.1 miles, in 39 minutes, including stops at 20 enroute stations.

The Michigan Avenue corridor route would be along the Penn Central right-of-way from an auto plant in Wayne to Cass Avenue. The distance, 18.6 miles, would be covered in a running time of 30 minutes, including stops at 14 enroute stations.

The Gratiot corridor light rail route would start at Twelve Mile Road and Groesbeck Highway, in Macomb County, and run alongside the Grand Trunk tracks to join the Woodward corridor line near Grand Boulevard and continue south to Ren-

naissance Center—a distance of 13.5 miles. Running time, including 10 station stops, would be 20 minutes.

Using single cars, capacity of each of the three light rail lines is 4,000 passengers an hour, with cars running every three minutes, as they are scheduled to do in morning and evening rush hours. Two cars can be "trained" or coupled together—to double this capacity as demand develops. During off-peak daytime hours, light rail vehicles will run every 10 minutes, with the interval increased to 20 minutes during the night.

All three light rail lines tie into a central business district loop in downtown Detroit to distribute and collect passengers at eight conveniently located stops during the 11-minute circuit of the central business district. Since this downtown Detroit loop is nearly identical to the route proposed by SEMTA for a people mover, commuters could enjoy the same convenience without having to transfer from their commuter vehicle. Light rail vehicles, unlike the elevated people mover, would traverse the central business district loop on curbside tracks at street level. The cars would provide service around the loop at three-minute intervals during business hours.

Thielman said the light rail central business district loop could be constructed for \$3.97 million, compared to an estimated cost of \$53 to \$60 million to construct and equip a people mover system to give the same service.

"Our planned system integrates services with the Detroit Department of Transportation bus system," said Gnau, "but neither replaces nor acquires it. Should the two systems merge sometime in the future, however, we can foresee no operational difficulties.

**How The Road Commissions' Transit Plan Would Distribute Investment And Services**

Transit Mode	Total Vehicles	Total Mileage	% in Detroit	Route Miles		
				% in Wayne County (Incl. Detroit)	% in Oakland	Macomb
Light-Rail Transit	82	55.2	46%	64%	28%	8%
Bus Rapid Transit	318	187.3	38%	51%	28%	21%
Park-and-Ride Bus Express	63	105.6	42%	74%	17%	9%
Jitney*	84	139.8		29%	58%	13%
Demand-Responsive Bus*	29	590.0		20%	53%	27%

\*Jitney and demand-responsive bus service are para-transit services designed to connect individual transit users in less-densely populated areas of the tri-counties — as well as the elderly and the handicapped — with the higher-level services of other modes within the system, such as light rail or bus rapid transit. In many cases, however, the para-transit system will operate on a door-to-door basis, taking passengers from their own doorstep to the door of their destination.