SCANDI To Monitor Freeway Conditions

An example of Transportation System Management is the use of a freeway traffic monitoring system known as SCANDI – short for Surveillance, Control and Driver Information System.

Such a system will be installed around the Detroit area over the next five years, according to a November announcement by the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation.

What is SCANDI? It is a computerized data and information system designed to improve safety, traffic flow, and response to stranded motorists. Currently there are 24 similar systems in operation around the United States.

An integral part of the system will be motorist-aid call boxes, providing direct communication between the motorist and a State Police dispatcher in Detroit. Also part of the SCANDI system will be traffic bulletins broadcasted on commercial radio stations, dispatch of fire and wrecker service, and eventual freeway ramp signals which will help motorists enter smoothly into freeway traffic.

The first phase of the project calls for installation of SCANDI equipment on 32.5 miles, or half, of Detroit freeways. All of the John C. Lodge (US-10) and portions of Interstate 75 and 375 freeways will be included in the first phase of construction.

After the first phase of SCANDI is completed and operational by the summer of 1979, a one-year testing and evaluation will take place before SCANDI is expanded to the second half of the freeway system.

Implementable Transportation Projects

Prior to 1975, the Council's focus was on long-range transportation planning, culminating in the adoption of the 1990 Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan.

After the adoption of that plan in June, 1975, the region's transportation focus shifted, to give short-range transportation planning equal emphasis. With this in mind, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was created (See Map, p.4).

The TIP is a five-year agenda of improvements for highways, transit, airports and bikeways. It is a priority listing of projects that can be implemented in the near future.

Items to be considered for TIP are submitted to the Council by the agencies which are close to transportation needs: county road commissions, the City of Detroit, the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Urban Area Transportation Study, the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation, and the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority.

These agencies submit to the Council proposed projects that require federal assistance to complete. Because the amount of federal funds available is difficult to predict, the Council in 1977 began a fiscal analysis of transportation. This fiscal analysis examines what is available to pay for the various transportation improvements we need, what they will cost, and whether the cost is justified.

While the fiscal analysis has just begun, it will in the future aid the region in formulating transportation programs that are financially realistic.

Cleaning Up Our Air

Transportation agencies in the region have the responsibility to make plans which are consistent with a state implementation plan for air quality standards.

Heavy automobile usage continues as a serious contributor to Southeast Michigan's air quality problem.

Hence, the Council in 1977 undertook a detailed analysis of emissions of the gases carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide and hydrocarbons from one of our biggest contributors to air pollution – the automobile.

The first step in this analysis required finding out how many automobiles now use each portion of Southeast Michigan's highway network, and how many will use our highways in 1990. This data came from an actual traffic monitoring conducted in 1975, and from projected traffic counts for the year 1990.

Once actual and projected traffic counts were known, computer techniques helped the Council determine the current level of air pollution, and what level could be expected for 1990.

One result of this study showed that if the Council's 1990 Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan were implemented, with its improved public transit system, there would be less air pollution from transportation in 1990 than there is today.

$600 Million Pledged for Transit

In late 1976, the region was filled with excitement over the federal government's pledge of $600 million to develop a transit system proposed by the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA).

Through 1977, the Council of Governments assisted SEMTA in examining what kind of transit system would best suit this region. The results of this analysis will be a transit system which, pending federal approval, will be implemented with the federal funds as they incrementally are received.

The analysis of transit alternatives has dealt with transit systems containing expanded bus and commuter rail service, plus light rail transit service on Woodward. Light rail is an improved, modern version of the streetcar, completely separated from the automobile traffic stream.

A technical report, **Design Guidelines for Intermediate Level Transit Service**, was prepared by the Council to aid in the examination of priority bus service, called intermediate transit service. Copies of this report are available from the Council.

The Bluebird plain-clothes police force is making Detroit buses more secure for riders.

Transit Crime Study Results In Security for City Bus Riders

A study of crime on public transit released by the Council of Governments in 1976 prompted the Detroit Department of Transportation (D-DOT) to implement a plain-clothes security force on buses, known as "Bluebirds."

In 1977, the city saw the benefits of this program when it realized a 25 percent drop in crimes on D-DOT buses.

From October 1976 through July 1977 the region received nearly $1 million in state funds for the program. Since then, grants totaling $650,000, together with $350,000 in local match money, have been allocated for the continued operation of the program.

That money pays for the operation of 12 teams of four plainclothes policemen, who ride D-DOT's 650 coaches, mostly on a small number of bus lines which experience the bulk of the problems.

Region's Airports Getting Busier

In an era when speed is becoming a consideration for moving people and goods, it is not surprising that the region's 64 airports are getting busier. In 1977 they provided 2.3 million annual takeoffs and landings to the 3000 aircraft based here, and to the countless aircraft that fly in and out of Southeast Michigan.

A detailed long range plan is necessary to direct growth of such traffic in an orderly manner.

In 1974, the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation completed the Michigan State Airport System Plan. This plan provided guidelines for development of aviation facilities throughout Michigan.

In the SEMCOG region, where the bulk of the state's aviation activity occurs, this plan did not offer sufficient detail for continuing, comprehensive and cooperative airport master planning. Therefore, in 1977 SEMCOG developed a Design Study for a Regional Airport System Plan for Southeast Michigan, with the hope that the federal government would fund planning for the region's aviation needs. However, the Federal Aviation Administration to date has not approved the Council's request for aviation funding.

Other aviation developments during 1977 included the opening of a new airport called Smith's Creek Airport in St. Clair County, and the addition of a new runway at Metropolitan Airport. Both were part of the Transportation Improvement Program.

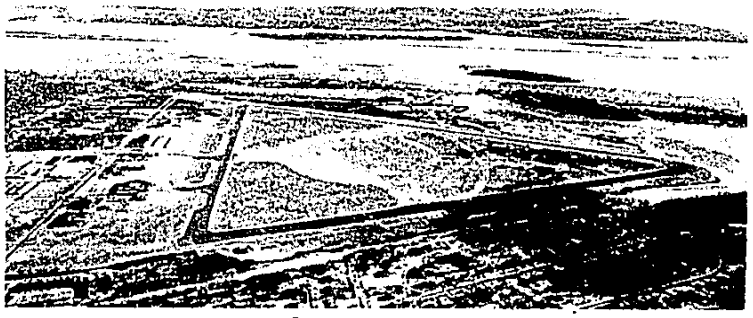

Photo by Horace G. Sneed and Cathy Bonadeo Harris.

Smaller airports like Grosse Ile Municipal carry a large load of the aviation traffic in the region. Grosse Ile is home base for 152 airplanes and last year recorded an excess of 39,000 takeoffs and landings.

Like To Know More?

The following transportation publications are available by calling or writing to the Information Services Office at the Council of Governments, 800 Book Bldg., Detroit, Mi. 48226 (313) 961-4266. Direct your requests to Janice Thomas.

- 1976 Transit Ridership Survey
- Ridesharing: Carpools and Vanpools
- Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Urban Transportation Study Committee – 1976-77 Annual Report
- Calibration and Evaluation of the Transportation Integrated Modeling System Package for Southeast Michigan
- Design Guidelines for Intermediate Level Transit Service
- Documentation of Zone, District and Superdistrict Boundaries for Southeast Michigan
- Pollutant Burden Analysis of the 1990 Transportation Plan