

SEMOG director rails on rails

Another blast has been leveled at a light-rail public transportation idea being promoted in slide shows by the Oakland County Road Commission. This time the executive director of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMOG) says the road commission proposal "cannot be considered as a viable transit system alternative."

Michael M. Glusac, chief staff member of SEMOG, branded the road commission program "a public relations proposal."

Glusac also charged the road commission plan "demonstrates both inadequate technical knowledge... and an unwillingness to use the knowledge which is currently available."

GLUSAC'S REPORT was contained in a memo to members of SEMOG's executive committee, which is scheduled to meet in public session at 1:30 p.m. Friday in the Michigan Inn, Southfield.

His two pages of comments were made at the request of Conrad Mal-

lett, SEMOG chairman and a member of the Wayne County Board of Commissioners.

It was the second time in a week that the road commission proposal drew fire. Board members of the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) criticized several points in the Oakland County Road Commission's slide show and talks to civic groups.

SEMOG does much of SEMTA's basic planning and appoints two-thirds of the SEMTA board. Thus, there is close coordination in their policies and points of view.

"There was no immediate response from a spokesman for the road commission. He promised a reply when the three-man road agency has had a chance to look at Glusac's report."

OFFICIALS of the Oakland and Wayne County road commissions jointly prepared their proposal for light rail (streetcar-like) rapid transit as a substitute for a costlier heavy

rail package SEMTA and Detroit forces favor.

But since the road commissions' package was unveiled last Dec. 21, only the Oakland County Road Commission has actively promoted it to local governments and civic groups. Township supervisors from Oakland County, for example, were scheduled to see the slide show at noon today.

Among the faults Glusac and the SEMOG staff found with the road commission plan were these:

- The plan "assumes that the transit planning process has no effect on land use and thus any potential redevelopment benefits are totally negated."
- The light rail transit mode in its alignment does not directly serve

major traffic generators—New Center, Detroit Medical Center.

- "The Wayne and Oakland road commissions have used their objection to our (SEMOG's) population and growth projections as the basis for the development" of their transit package. "Yet at no time while participating in the... technical committee work did they voice an objection to these projections."
- While SEMOG-SEMTA planning was an "open process," with input from citizen members, elected officials and technicians, the road commission work "has been conducted within a closed process involving only a consultant and road commission staff."

Rigid pollution control may be next, DNR says

Mandatory car pools, restricted parking in cities and tougher controls for certain large factories may be commonplace in Michigan by July 1978 to curb hydrocarbon emissions, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, are causing too much air pollution.

Much depends on how the EPA views proposed Michigan Department of Natural Resources' amendments to Michigan's SIP (state implementation plan) for control of auto emission-related pollutants, principally ozone, says DNR Air Quality Division Chief Lee Jager.

"Last summer, EPA identified Michigan as one of a number of states whose oxidant control programs need strengthening," he says. "Since then, we've been studying the need for a SIP amendment, trying to identify Michigan areas where stiffer controls might be necessary."

"EPA has given us until Feb. 1 to advise them if we think SIP amendments are required and, if so, those areas in Michigan that might be affected," Jager said. "If they're not satisfied with our recommendations, they have the option of imposing whatever regulations they see fit."

The EPA also has directed Michigan to submit by this July specific recommendations on tightening controls in industrial pollution. The federal

agency made it clear Michigan could be required to develop transportation plans or other auto-related control measures by July 1978.

In other states, according to Jager, the EPA has approved mandatory car pools, restricted metropolitan area parking, special "bus-only" lanes on highways and annual vehicle inspection-maintenance programs, all aimed at reducing hydrocarbon emissions.

"Although the air quality division is not recommending any of those steps right now, we do think tighter controls on large stationary sources, such as auto manufacturing plants, might be advisable," he says.

Paint solvents used in automobile manufacturing can result in elevated hydrocarbon emissions from auto plants.

Ozone is formed in the atmosphere when the rising hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides interact with sunlight. Respiratory difficulties, eye irritation and vegetation damage all have been attributed to high levels of ozone.

Last year, air quality division personnel initiated their ozone monitoring in an attempt to learn more about this pervasive pollutant. Previously, monitors in several lower Michigan counties had recorded numerous high ozone readings.

Public access to information becomes law

Gov. William G. Milliken has signed HB 6085 (I.E.), to make public records kept by state and local government agencies more accessible. Known as the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, its concept has twice been endorsed by the Governor in the State of the State messages.

The measure requires that all government records be open for public inspection and copying unless one of 15 specific exemptions prevent the disclosure. Examples of exemptions from disclosure include personal information, investigative records (under some circumstances), police information that could endanger informants or families of police officers and competitive bids for government contracts.

Agencies are required to respond to citizen's requests for information within five working days. The agency may charge for duplicating, mailing and some labor costs.

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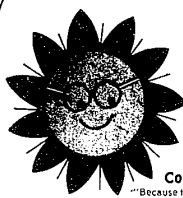
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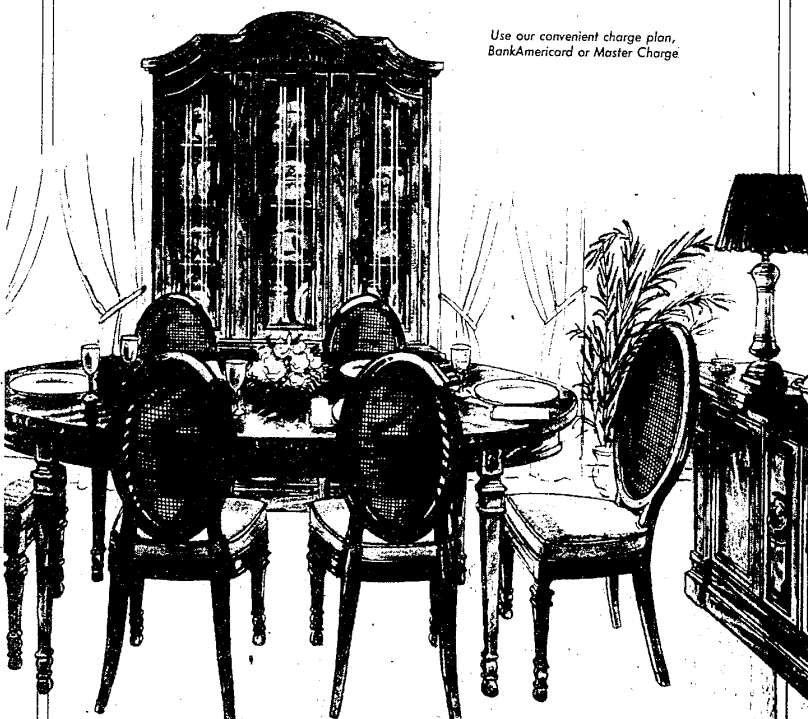


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