

Transit stumping gets under way

A series of meetings and public hearings leading to a Dec. 18 decision day on a regional mass transportation system have been scheduled by the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA).

Earlier this year the SEMTA Board of Directors gave its initial approval to a combined subway, elevated and surface rail system in the Woodward corridor to Eight Mile Road. The light rail system would be the biggest element of a regional plan that would increase both large and small bus service in the suburbs.

SEMTA's preferred plan, however, will be one of several to be reviewed at the five informational meetings and nine public hearings to be held in outer Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties as well as Detroit.

All of the meetings and public hearings, except one in Detroit, will begin at 7:30 p.m.

THE FIRST informational meeting will be Nov. 13 in Livonia City Hall,

33000 Civic Center Drive, southeast of Five Mile and Farmington roads.

The Oakland County informational meeting will be Nov. 15 in the Ferndale Community Center (Room 22), 400 E. Nine Mile Road.

The Detroit meeting will be Nov. 19 in the City-County Building Auditorium downtown.

Other meetings are Nov. 14 in Warren and Nov. 20 in Highland Park.

THE PUBLIC hearings will begin Nov. 26 in Livonia City Hall and end Dec. 6 in Highland Park.

The Oakland County public hearing will be Dec. 4 in the Board of Commissioners Auditorium, 1200 N. Telegraph Road, Pontiac.

An additional Oakland County hearing will be held Dec. 3 in the Ferndale Community Center, rooms 1 and 2.

Two hearings will be in Detroit Dec. 5 at noon and 7:30 p.m. in the City-County Building 13th floor auditorium.

Hearings in Allen Park Nov. 28, Warren, Nov. 27 and Mt. Clemens, Nov. 29

complete the schedule.

THE SEMTA board has tentatively scheduled a meeting Dec. 18 to make a final decision on the regional plan.

The pros and cons of the Detroit subway, which would run from downtown to the W. Grand Boulevard-New Center area in the preferred plan, will likely be the hearings' main topic.

Detroit Mayor Coleman Young has been adamant that a regional plan include a subway. Young softened his stand earlier this year, however, in a compromise with some suburban officials led by SEMTA Board Chairman Edward McVamara, mayor of Livonia.

Young had wanted subway from downtown to McNichols (Six Mile Road).

Many Oakland County officials oppose the subway, saying county resi-

dents will pay a disproportionate share of new regionwide taxes to operate it.

While Oakland officials have said the county will remain part of SEMTA, an intra-county transit plan is also being developed in conjunction with the Oakland County Road Commission.

THE SEMTA public hearings are designed only to receive audience comments. The meetings will allow area residents to discuss the various transportation proposals in detail and question them.

The hearings are required by federal law before SEMTA requests initial federal money for the regional system.

The U.S. Urban Mass Transportation Administration has recently completed a review of the environmental impact of the seven mass transit systems.

SEMTA plan open for view

The 600-page environmental impact statement of SEMTA's regional rapid transportation plan is available for review at a number of libraries in the metropolitan area.

The document can be read during the next three weeks at the Birmingham Public Library; the University of Michigan - Dearborn Library, 4901 Evergreen; or contact SEMTA, 256-8765.

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