Oakland snubs subway but stays in SEMTA

Strong opposition to a SEMTA subway in Detroit apparently won't lead to an Oakland County withcrawal from the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA). Recent interviews with 11 county commissioners and two top county officials revealed little support for SEMTA's planned subway along Woodward from downtown Detroit to McNichols (Six Mile) Road and extension of the rail line at ground level to 10 Mile in Royal Cak.

Royal Oak.
With the exceptions of Commissioner
Henry Hoot, R-Bloomfield, and Road
Commission Managing Director John
Grubba, those polled said they aren't
about to suggest Oakland operate its
own transportation system.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE Daniel T. Murphy is "absolutely opposed" to the Woodward corridor subway, the main cog of SEMTA's proposed 1990 trans-portation plan. But he is equally ada-mant that the county remain in the 12r-old regional transportation au-

hority. "I have not been in favor of with-drawal," Murphy said last week, "and I've not seen enough to convince me to-day that withdrawal would serve a use-ful purpose. "We have to be at the negotiating

"We have to be at the negotiating table, and they (SEMTA) have to recognize that we think it (the subway) is a pork barrel."
The county is not studying withdrawal possibilities "right now," Murphy

said.

Last April, the Republican county executive vetoed a county board resolution that Oakland leave SEMTA. The board action followed SEMTA's initial decision to build a subway from down-town to Grand Boulevard.

SEMTA'S DECISION to extend the subway to McNichols was "a political move, not a move on its merits," Mur-



JOHN PETERSON

phy said. He predicted metropolitan area voters would reject a required op-erating tax for public transit. SEMTA officials have said they! seek voter approval of a transit tax during or before 1982 to help cover ex-pected operating costs. The system's anunal deficit could reach \$55 million

A larger share of the estimated \$1.5 billion in federal and state funds needed for the transportation system should be spent in the suburbs, Murphy said, "if they (SEMTA) ever expect the people to approve anything by a vote." More than half (\$805 million) of the

More than nair (\$800 minion) of the system's capital investment is earmarked for the modern light rail trolley line. About \$75 million will be spent to extend the line into southern Oakland County.

THE RAIL extension has been touted as a compromise between Detroit and Oakland County representatives on the SEMTA board. Detroit has five of the 15 SEMTA board seats, while Oakland

But the road commission's John Grubba, long a subway opponent, re-

'I for one am no longer a John Peterson

'All we do is sit back in the hinterlands and bemoan the fact we'll pay for a subway that benefits

Alexander Perinoff



fers to the compromise as "a cave-in."
"I hope Oakland County will continue
with the possibility that if the subway
is approved (by state and federal officials), they will withdraw," Grubba
said.

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"The chances now of federal approval are good," Grubba continued. "The

only way it can be derailed is if the suburban leadership forgets the idea now that -they can compromise, because there is no compromise. "

WALLACE GABLER, R-Royal Oak, chairman of the Board of Commissioners, proposed the rail line be extended of the said."

board appointee (Hogan)," Peterson said. "We should decide quickly whether we will stand up to SEMTA. ..."

Peterson referred to Republican differences over leaving SEMTA as "an 'I' of ron eam no longer a follower," if for one am no longer a follower," he said.

into Oakland County after county Sent-TA representative Henry Hogan as-sured him there were 10 required SEM-TA board votes for the subway, even if the three Oakland representatives op-

the three Oakland representatives opposed it.

It's Gabler's hope that the rail extension will strengthen south Oakland
commissioners' support for SEMTA
and thus forstall any county boardmove to push for withdrawal.
Gabler's stance was criticized by six
of his Republican colleagues, including
Commissioner John Peterson of Rochester, at last week's county Republican caucus meeting.

In a prepared statement, Peterson
said Gabler's support of the extension
and Hogan's vote for the subway and
extension, highlighted the Republican
leadership's failure "to effectively
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"The rest of you may wish to consider these remarks carefully before you allow impotence on our combined part to cause a Republican defeat next November."

COUNTY DEMOCRATS aren'

county Department of the subway and rail extension, even though they have never supported leaving SEMTA. "Who's fault is 'no fair share?" asked Commissioner Alexander Perinoff of Southfield. "It's our own fault. "We've done nothing. All we do is sit back in the hinterlands and bemoan the fact mell may for a subway that hence the life of the submay that the new of the submay in the submay that the new of the submay that the new of the submay that the new of the submay is the submay that the new of the submay that the new of the submay is the submay that the new of the submay is the submay that the new of the submay is the submay is the submay in the submay and rail extension to the submay and rail ex fact we'll pay for a subway that bene-fits Detroit.

fits Detroit.

"If we withdraw, our money will still be used and we're going to sit out here with nothing." Perinoff said he was "not tremendously happy" with the trolley line extension.

New Democratic Caucus Chairman Hubert Price Jr. of Pontiac said Democrats are developing a plan for SEMTA "which contains Oakland County's needs as opposed to hell no, no sub-way."

needs as opposed to neir no, no sur-way."
"It certainly does not begin to ad-dress needs of the residents of Ponti-ac," Price said of SEMTA's plan.
"We can't wait till 2010. The energy crisis is now."

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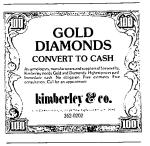
DURING DECEMBER, 132 people were killed on state roads, down 25 from 157 in 1978. The states' traffic death toll for the Christmas weekend was 19, or 12 fewer than in 1978. During the four-day New Year's weekend, 22 were killed in highway accidents, 15 more than a year earlier.

The state's all-time high traffic death toll was 2,487 in 1969.

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The less he spoke, the more he heard: Why can't we all be like that bird?

-E. H. Richards



traffic death rate falls

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For the fifth time since 1974, Michigan's traffic death toll last year hovered below 2,000.

According to the Michigan State Police, incomplete figures show 1,810 epople lost their lives on state roads and highways during 1979.

That's 266 fewer, or about 13 percent lower, than the toll of 2,076 in 1978. The 1979 toll will probably increase slightly when records are finalized. State Police traffic officers attributed the decreased death toll to the lower speed limit and a slower economy in some sectors, particularly tourism in northern Michigan.

Uncertainty over the availibility of gasoline during May and June, as well as bad weather, caused more people in populous southeast Michigan to stay closer to home.

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