

# WOT-SEMTA merger stalled by Young's non-action

By TOM LONERGAN

The required merger of the city of Detroit's bus system with the Michigan Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) is hung up at the desk of Mayor Coleman Young.

If an agreement isn't reached by Saturday, collection of the three-county

mass transportation tax which provides SEMTA with \$13.4 million of operating revenue will be suspended. The tax is an extra \$2.50 on license plate registrations for Wayne, Oakland and Macomb County residents and an extra \$5 on title transfers in the three counties.

A Friday meeting of the SEMTA

Board of Directors will be crucial because the Michigan Legislature has imposed a Nov. 15 deadline for a more specific merger agreement between the two parties. The previous deadline was April 15. The state created SEMTA in 1987 with the intention of having a single, unified public transportation in the region.

Pending a meeting with Young, the SEMTA board Tuesday delayed any further action on the merger until 1:30 p.m. Friday.

Tuesday's three-hour SEMTA board discussion of the merger, which included two hours closed to the public, ended in a stalemate.

"We can't negotiate an agreement between the city and SEMTA here," said William Cilluffo, Mayor Young's administrative aide and a Detroit representative to the SEMTA board.

"We're not empowered to reach an agreement binding the city," Cilluffo said. "That has to be done between the board and the mayor."

Key to the merger of SEMTA and the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) is state assumption of DDOT's unfunded \$81 million pension liability and guaranteed bus service for Detroit residents.

THERE HAS apparently been little discussion of merger details between Young and SEMTA officials since November 1979. At that time, Young, Livonia Mayor Edward McNamara, then-SEMTA board chairman, and Gov. William Milliken signed a memorandum

of agreement that the two systems would merge.

Tuesday, SEMTA board members considered two merger proposals — one "for the purpose of making progress toward merger," the other "for the purpose of accomplishing merger."

The latter proposal, which was drafted Oct. 22, included such crucial items as reapportionment of the 15-member SEMTA board, fare structure and guarantees of service levels.

The less-specific proposal included a proviso that the details would be worked out by Jan. 20. But a number of SEMTA board members said the proposal was too weak to meet the state's mandate.

THE SEMTA board voted 8-5 to delay any merger action until Friday.

Opponents of that move included Oakland County Commissioner Paul Kasper, one of his county's three SEM-

TA representatives.

"I don't think there has been good faith shown on the part of the mayor," Kasper said. When the detailed merger agreement was first proposed, Detroit representatives insisted it not be considered until a meeting was arranged with Young.

Because of Young's key role in President Jimmy Carter's re-election campaign, the mayor wasn't available to meet.

Kasper contended there had been ample time for Young to meet regardless.

Nansi Rowe, a Young SEMTA board appointee, responded: "One week after the election may seem a long period of time for those people that have nothing to do."

Once agreement is reached, the merger process is expected to take about three years to complete.

## Mich. dairy cows a productive lot

Although you can't see butter, milk and cheese growing in the fields and being harvested, these products are also among the good things growing in Michigan.

About 400,000 dairy cows on 8,000 Michigan dairy farms supplied consumers with almost five billion pounds of milk in 1979 (about 563 million gallons), according to the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Output per cow was a record 12,168 pounds last year. That's enough milk to furnish eight families with a half gallon of milk each day for a year.

About one-third of the milk production was used in making 32 million pounds of butter, 46 million gallons of ice cream, ice milk and sherbet, and 80 million pounds of cheese.

Milk is the largest single item sold from Michigan farms, accounting for about a quarter of farmers' cash receipts, or \$582,498,000 last year. With processing, packaging, transportation and marketing costs added, this represents \$2.9 billion to the state's economy.

Michigan consumers are assured quality milk and manufactured dairy products. Trained MDA in-

spectors routinely check parlors where cows are milked and milk-house equipment of farms for sanitation. Only farms issued a state permit with sanitation approval may supply Grade A milk to dairies.

Michigan was the first in the nation to adopt Grade A fluid-milk laws, in 1905, which require all fluid milk bottled here to meet strict Grade A standards.

Dairy plants processing milk and manufacturing butter and cheese-processing plants are also routinely inspected by MDA for sanitation and quality.

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