uon Autority (SEMTA).

"We don't have an agreement," Commissioner Lillian Mofflit, R-Bloomiseld, said repeatedly last week as the county beards planning and building committee decided to delay action on the so-called "transit service agreement."

ment."

Mofflit got the committee to delay action until Thursday, Aug. 11, so that she could try to draft a new agreement.

ane could try to draft a new agreement.

THE DISAGREEMENT between the Oakland County and SEMTA boards could undermine the fate of SEMTA's 1990 transit plan, with its light rail corridor on Woodward, and the regional operating tax increase needed to run it.

The Oakland board on March 31 demanded the SEMTA board agree to a election prior to Aug. 1, 1984, before acquiring any right of way for the light rail line. The Oakland board also demanded an effective veto power over the project, saying the light rail plan shouldn't even be started if Oakland voters failed to approve the operating tax increase.

tax increase.

In a second resolution, the Oakland board gave the SEMTA board until July 12 to agree to those terms.

BUT THE SEMTA board, thinking it was agreeing to Oakland's terms, passed a modified resolution which disappointed Mofifit. The SEMTA resolution, introduced by Johan Soronen of Farmington Hills, said:

In the event the referendum does not pass in Oakland County, right-of-way acquisition or construction of the Light rail shall not begin in Oakland County, nor shall operating monies from Oakland County be used to op-

erate light rail in the other three ju-risdictions" (Italica added). John Peterson, former Oakland com-missioner who now sits on the SEMTA board, told the county committie, "Mrs. Scronen thought what she did was what you endorsed." And be added, "It may or may not be what you want-ed."

"THE SEMTA board did not sign our transit agreement, so we don't have an agreement, "Modifit said." I would like to see the language clarified."

Modifit's unhapitase is crucial. In their attitude to represent missioners are split into three camps.

A pro-regional, pro-SEMTA element, consisting largely of Democratic members. Typical is Commissioner James Doyo, D-Madison Heights, who thought the SEMTA resolution satisfied Oakland's demands and voted against delaying action on it.

A vehemently and SEMTA element, consisting largely of northern Republican members who would just as soon withdraw from SEMTA. Said Commissioner Roy Rewold, R.Rochester, whose district includes the northeastern townships: "The more I see this, the more I think we shouldn't get into it."

Middle-of-the-roaders, such as Mofiliti, who favor public transportation but are within Oakland's tax base may be drawf to be benefit Detroit. The group blook in be benefit Detroit. The group blook in be benefit of the property of the benefit of the property of the benefit o

MEANWHILE, House and Senate conferees in Congress were expected to

Lillian Moffitt

Lillian Moffitt is among the middle-of-the-road commissioners who hold the balance of power over whether Oakland County supports or undermines SEMTA's 1990 transit plan and operating tax.

approve \$45 million for SEMTA capital plans.

approve \$45 million for SEMTA capital plans.
This would be sufficient for SEMTA'S downtown Detroit people mover, according to Marvin Melizer, SEMTA'S laison with local governments, "but not enough to start the light rail."
Melizer said he understood Oak-land's position to be that it didn't want to reach "a point of no return" — that is, it doesn't want to see alght rail line begun intil an operating tax is approximately offer the provided of the provided of

LEGISLATORS are gun-shy about even putting a tax increase to a public vote because of efforts to recall Gov. James J. Blanchard, several senators

James J. Bianchard, soveral senators and representatives.

In Macomb County recall efforts, Meltzer said in an interview, certain legislators were targeted not only for voting for Bianchard's personal income tax increase but for voting to allow

outstate transit districts to hold elec-tions on tax increases.

Such a bill barely passed the House and is languishing in the Senate Finance Committee. Chairman Gary Corbin, D-Cito, is favorable to SEMTA's cause, Meltzer said, but is re-luctant to report out the bill for fear of giving pro-recall people more political ammunition. giving pro-recall people more polit ammunition.

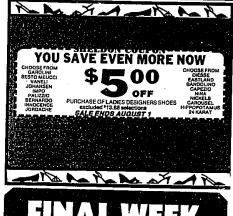
IN A REPORT to Oakland commis-sioners, Debbie Schutt of the county planning staff said SEMTA could be in trouble with its operating budget later

trouble with its operating budget later this year.

"The operating budget has a \$15.7-million deficit," she said. She quoted Tom Lewand, former Oakland County comissioner who is now Blanchard's chief of staff, as saying there would be "no state ball-out" for SEMTA and that the political situation "didn't look farnorable to a tax increase."

A third possibility — in theory — is for someone to collect 270,000 petition signatures asking for a tax referendum to provide STATA more operating money, But no one sees this as a realistic possibility.

The bottom line is service cuta," Schuit said.



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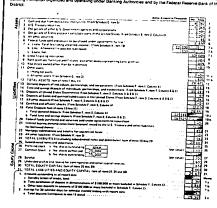


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