

# Cut SEMTA board to 7 members — Murphy

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By Tim Richard  
staff writer

SEMTA, the seven-county public transportation authority, should be reorganized with a smaller and more responsive board, Oakland County Executive Daniel T. Murphy said.

Murphy is among the "Big 4" leaders of southeastern Michigan who are discussing what to do with the 15-member SEMTA board, currently in the middle of several controversies.

"The consensus is that there should be a smaller board," Murphy said he was unable to speak for the group on details.

MURPHY DROPPED the remark about SEMTA reorganization during an

address to the SEMCOG General Assembly last week and again before an Oakland County Republican Party membership meeting.

At SEMCOG, ironically, Republican Murphy was pincushioning for Gov. James J. Blanchard, a Democrat whom Murphy is openly talking about challenging in 1984.

Of SEMTA's controversial Detroit People Mover elevated line, which is half finished and 50 percent over budget, Murphy said, "In my opinion, the People Mover is going to be finished. Nobody's going to take a defeatist attitude. It's taking all our attention — it shouldn't, but it is."

SEMTA needs its own source of money for operations instead of being dependent on state and federal handouts, he said.

"I believe we first have to ask the people of southeastern Michigan if they are willing to fund transportation service and if it's voted down by the people, then the area leaders will have to

search for other funding methods," he said in his speech to the Republican gathering.

IN AN INTERVIEW, he elaborated on his remarks about SEMTA reorganization.

"Control of the SEMTA board should be with the people who see where transportation is needed. I'm sitting there with no representatives. Oakland is always being out-manipulated."

Asked if he favored trimming the

SEMTA region to the three most populous counties of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb, Murphy said no. "I don't want to break up the region. Other agencies like SEMCOG are organized on seven-county lines."

SEMTA was organized by the Michigan Legislature in 1967 to consolidate all private and public transit agencies under a single board. To date, SEMTA has absorbed everything except the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT).

FOR NINE years, SEMTA board members were chosen by the SEMCOG General Assembly (six) and the governor (three).

At the insistence of Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, the SEMTA board was expanded in 1976 to 15 members chosen by an elaborate formula. Currently, four are picked by Young, four from suburban Wayne County, three from Oakland County, two from Macomb and two by other procedures.

By statute, Wayne's members are

picked by suburban members of the Wayne County Commission. But County Executive William Lucas this year vetoed those choices and substituted his own, which were ratified largely by county commissioners from Detroit.

One Oakland member is chosen by the County Board of Commissioners and two by SEMCOG from persons nominated by local governments in Oakland County. Murphy would like a direct appointment with county board ratification.

## SEMCOG: Freeze federal spending

Local government officials, about to lose billions in federal aid if Congress adopts President Reagan's 1985 budget, would prefer to freeze federal spending program by program at current levels.

That's what 48 percent answered in a survey taken at the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments' General Assembly meeting last week. Only 28 percent supported a statement endorsing the Reagan philosophy.

Facing a deficit projected at more than \$200 billion, Reagan has proposed \$30 billion in cuts that would eliminate

general revenue sharing, urban development action grants (UDAG) and public transit operating subsidies. The president also has proposed cuts in community development block grants and sewerage treatment plant construction grants.

SEMCOG Executive Director John Amberger and staff prepared four alternate statements of opinion and placed them before 78 delegates at the General Assembly meeting in Southfield. About half of SEMCOG's membership was represented.

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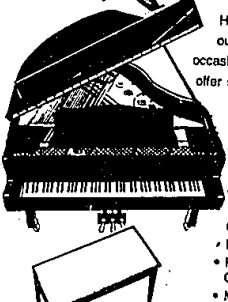
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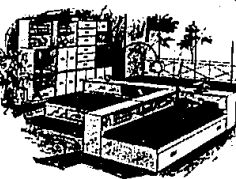
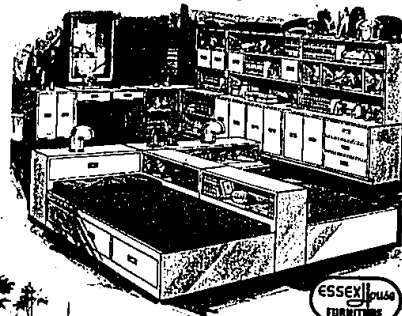


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