

SEMTA seeks people's choice

For months, transportation planners and lately road commissioners have been arguing whether a regional transit system should be heavy rail, light rail or bus.

Next month, the public will have a chance to sound off on "the people's choice" of transit rolling stock.

The Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority will conduct four public hearings, two of them in the western Wayne and Oakland counties suburbs.

"THIS IS SOMETHING for the public to sink its teeth into," a SEMTA spokesman said.

Previous public meetings had been "informational" in nature, the information flowing out to the public. "This one will be a full-fledged formal hearing with a court reporter. The information coming back to us is more important," said the SEMTA spokesman.

Hearings are scheduled for 7:30-10 p.m.:

- Feb. 7 in the City-County Building, Detroit.
- Feb. 8 in the Center Line City Hall.
- Feb. 9 in Westland City Hall, 36900 Ford Road east of Newburgh.
- Feb. 10 in the Oakland County Board of Commissioners auditorium, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac.

THEY WILL OPEN with a half-hour talk, either by Acting General Manager Larry Salsi or George Swede, director of engineering and planning, illustrated by maps and graphic aids.

Under study are these types of equipment (in many possible combinations):

Heavy rail, with its own right of way; light rail, a streetcar-type system with only a few cars; commuter rail, on existing railroad tracks; buses; and shortroute "people movers."

The hearings are part of what SEMTA officials call an "alternative analysis"—their jargon for determining what is the most cost-effective mode for public transportation. The alternatives analysis was required by the federal government, which a year ago had the effect of sending SEMTA back to the drawing boards as far as its future rolling stock is concerned.

RECENTLY, THE WAYNE and Oakland Counties road commissions stepped into the act with their own counter-proposal for a light rail rapid transit system.

The road commissions argued that their streetcar-type idea would cost only two-thirds as much as SEMTA's "preliminary proposal" for a \$1.2 billion heavy rail system. The road commissions also argued their system would provide three times as much track mileage.

The Oakland County Road Commission is offering civic groups a slide presentation on its light rail alternative. Groups may arrange a showing and question-and-answer session by calling Eileen West at the OCR, 645-2000, during business hours.

SEMTA's plan has been given a \$50 million commitment from U.S. Transportation Secretary William Coleman (of the \$900 million in federal funds it sought) prior to the Nov. 2 presidential election.

While SEMTA officials are confident they have a firm commitment, The Detroit News has fired off a barrage of articles contending that money from the federal urban mass transit program is all committed and that nothing's left for SEMTA.

TO NO ONE'S surprise, a veteran U.S. senator last week introduced a bill to give \$1.1 billion additional federal aid to mass transportation over the next five years.

The bill came from Sen. Harrison A. Williams Jr. (D-N.J.), a co-author of the first urban-mass transit assistance program passed by Congress.

Williams' bill would provide \$1.9 billion in fiscal 1978 to \$2.8 billion in fiscal 1982 for capital grants. The federal government has put up 80 per cent of the construction cost of rapid transit systems.

Meanwhile, in Lansing, Gov. William G. Milliken promised a comprehensive state transportation program in the near future. It is expected to propose increased taxes for expanded transportation systems. Milliken's state of the state message was vague, however, about what kind of tax increases he will ask.

Consumer bill signed

The Unfair and Deceptive Trade Practices Act, which lists various business practices which would be banned as unfair or deceptive, has been signed into law by Gov. William Milliken. It bans misleading advertising, the misrepresentation of goods and their warranties and gross discrepancies between the oral promises of a seller and the written agreement.

It also prohibits "bait-and-switch" practices, and advertising that tends to mislead the consumer. "Bait-and-switch" is the practice of advertising a low-priced item which, once the consumer enters the store, turns out to be unavailable or undesirable, giving the salesperson the chance to sell a different, higher-priced item.

The bill also gives consumers the power to file individual or class-action lawsuits against a retailer who violates the law.

The act has an effective date of April 1.

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Center sets dance course

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission will sponsor a variety of dance classes beginning Jan. 17 at the Waterford-Oaks Activities Center/2800 Watkins Lake Road, Waterford Township.

Ballroom dance for beginners starts Monday, Jan. 17 at 7 p.m. for 10 weeks. Class fee is \$25 per couple. For practice, ballroom dances to a live band will be held

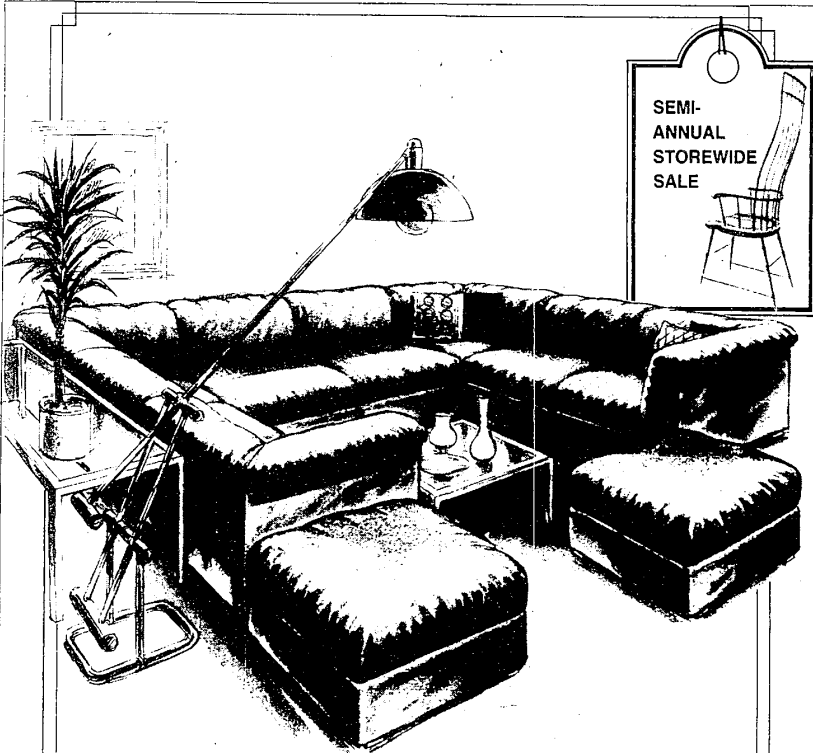
the second and last Friday of each month from 8 to 11 p.m. Fee per person is \$1.50, payable at the door.

A square dance workshop will begin Jan. 17 at 9:30 p.m. at \$2 per couple payable at the door. Square dances will be held the first and third Friday of each month from 8 to 11 p.m. at \$3.50 per couple.

Disco dance for beginners will start Wednes-

day, Jan. 19 at 9 p.m. for eight weeks. Class fee is \$16 per person. Belly dancing for beginners starts Thursday, Jan. 20 at 6 p.m. The eight week class is \$16 per person.

Ballet for children ages four to six will begin Saturday, Jan. 22 at 12 p.m. The eight week course is \$16 per person. A second ballet class for children six to eight years of age will be held at 1 p.m.



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