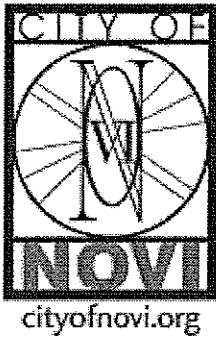


# MEMORANDUM



TO: MASTER PLAN & ZONING COMMITTEE

FROM: MARK SPENCER, AICP, PLANNER



SUBJECT: REGIONAL RAPID TRANSIT

DATE: AUGUST 12, 2009

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Rapid transit is one of the amenities that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce is looking for when they decide to locate to a new community. Throughout the country, rapid transit hubs have been the catalyst for new economic growth. At this time, metropolitan Detroit area is the largest metropolitan area in the country without a high capacity rapid transit system in place or in development. Fortunately, several different rapid transit projects are in various planning stages including the following projects:

- Detroit-Metro Airport-Ann Arbor Commuter Train;
- Woodward Light Rail;
- M-1 Rail;
- Wally: the Washtenaw – Livingston Commuter Train; and
- The Regional Transit Coordinating Council's (RTCC) Comprehensive Regional Transit Service Plan (see attached excerpts). The RTCC plan includes two links to Novi, both end at Haggerty Road.

In addition, the Detroit Region Aerotropolis Plan also discusses having a rapid transit line paralleling I-275 (which passes through a small portion of Novi) that would link Flint to Detroit Metro Airport. Also, over the last dozen years or so, discussions have been held in the region on the possibility of using existing rail facilities (including the use of the CSX tracks in Novi) to link the Detroit area with other nearby urban areas.

Since some of these plans discuss bringing rapid transit to the edge of the City, it may be possible to change the plans slightly to bring rapid transit further into the City. Linking Novi's retail and job centers to a future rapid transit hub could stimulate increased economic development in the City. Including language in the City's Master Plan that encourages the placement of a regional rapid transit hub in the City could be a starting point to develop plans to bring a future rapid transit hub to the City.

An objective and implementation strategy could be added to the Master Plan's Economic/Fiscal Goal, "Ensure that Novi continues to be a desirable place to do business" to encourage rapid transit connectivity. The Master Plan & Zoning Committee may want to consider proposing the following objective and implementation strategies.

**Objective:** Support the development of a regional rapid transit hub in Novi as a desirable amenity to help attract additional residents and development to the City.

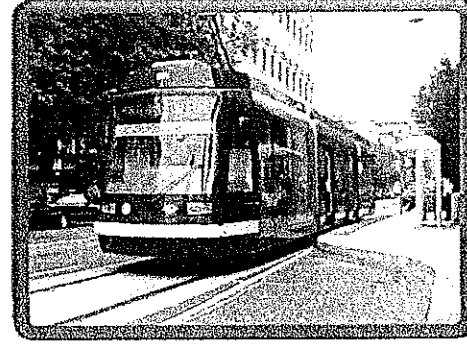
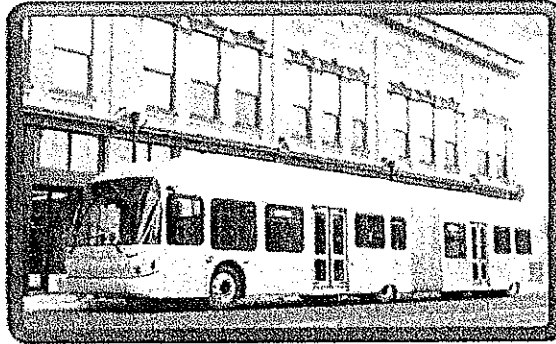
**Implementation Strategy:** Work with regional governments and entities to develop regional transportation plans that include a rapid transit hub in Novi.

**Implementation Strategy:** Partner with local businesses to develop strategies to maximize the potential benefits of a regional rapid transit hub.

# COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL TRANSIT SERVICE PLAN

*Mass Transit*

**ran** Systems



Regional Transit Coordinating Council (RTCC)  
November 21, 2008

strategies

strategies

## 1.0 Executive Summary

In August 2007, the Regional Transit Coordinating Council unveiled a Vision Plan for transit in Southeast Michigan. The next step was the preparation of the Comprehensive Regional Transit Service Plan which began in January of 2008. The intent was to provide a more detailed analysis of the existing transit services in the region, recommend enhancements and to develop a recommended transit network for Southeast Michigan (including Wayne, Macomb and Oakland Counties) and to include commuter rail (CRT) service to/from Washtenaw, Monroe and St. Clair counties.

The Comprehensive Regional Transit Service Plan recommends the phased implementation of transit services, resulting in a 2035 network, shown in Figure 1 below.

Key features of the recommended network include:

- Enhancements to Existing Services:
  - Improved service frequency, additional routes, increases in Community Transit and paratransit services, improved waiting environments at bus stops
- Introduction of Rapid Transit Corridors throughout the region:
  - Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) services are the backbone & catalyst of the system
  - Services can become Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or Light Rail (LRT) "if and only if" ridership and cost characteristics warrant
  - Light rail on Woodward Phase 1 will be a privately funded project
  - Commuter rail from Detroit to Ann Arbor, a SEMCOG project

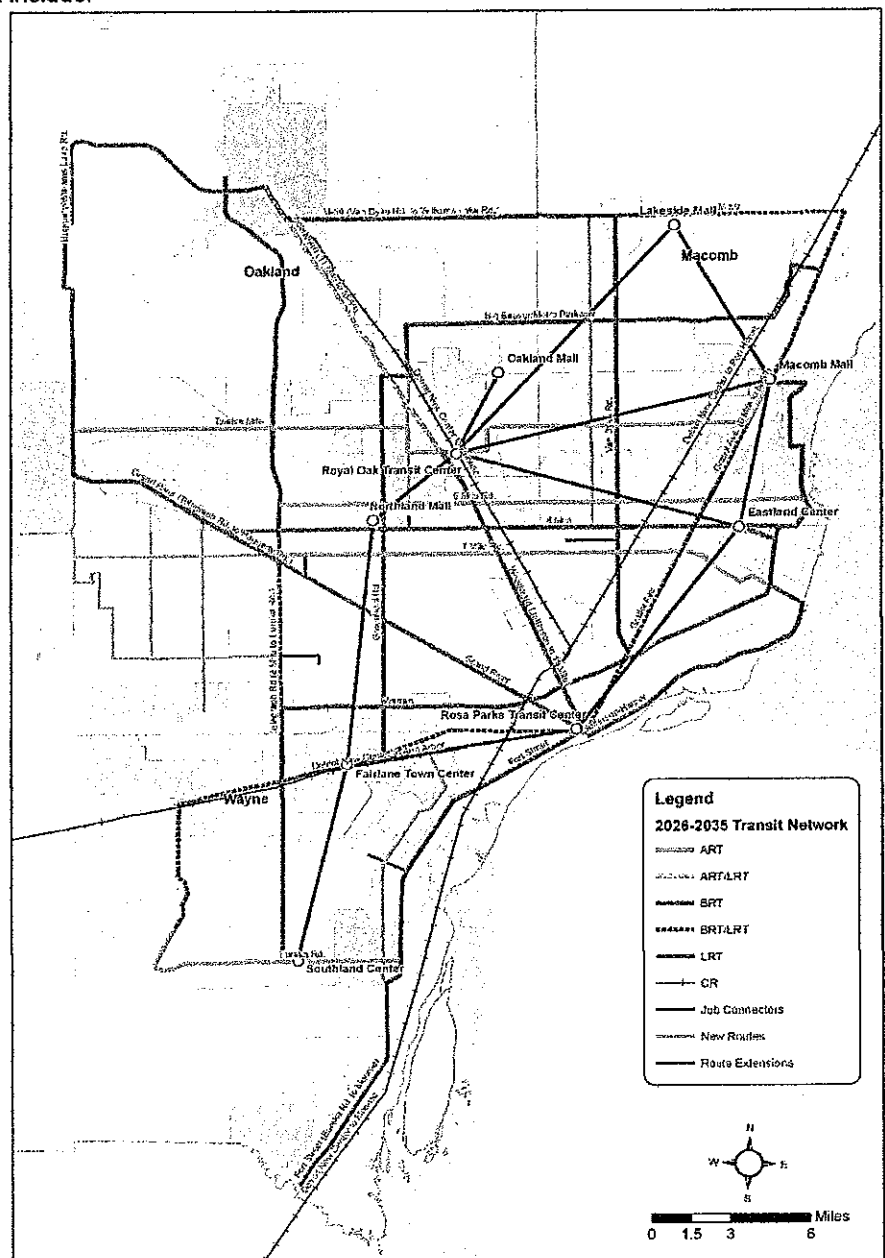


Figure 1 Proposed Regional Transit Network 2035

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The recommended network provides many benefits to the Southeast Michigan region.

- Transit travel time decreases nearly 20% by 2015 and over 30% with the 2035 network in place. Additionally, many trips that cannot be made by transit today will be possible and realistic choices to residents of Southeast Michigan.
- Connections to other parts of the regional transportation network such as park and ride lots, bicycle networks, greenways will improve mobility in the region for all.
- For every dollar spent on transit, the region will gain between \$4 and \$8<sup>1</sup>. Economic benefits come from jobs and housing that are attracted to corridors with transit. When transit is a part of aggressive economic development plans, the results can move from 'good' to 'great'. Strong fiscal benefits to local communities and the State as a result of this development.

To implement the Comprehensive Regional Transit Service Plan, a regional transit organization must be established. This organization should have the powers to fund, plan, build, implement and operate transit services throughout the region. Three to six counties of the Southeast Michigan region should be a part of this region.

A regional dedicated source of funding is needed to implement this plan. The regional funds are needed to match Federal capital dollars or to bond capital projects. It is also needed to provide on-going operating funds.

The timing of all proposed implementation plans is based on the initial parts of the network being funded before 2013.

This report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 Goals and Objectives
- Section 3 Status of Current Services
- Section 4 Enhancement of Existing Services
- Section 5 Description of High Capacity Transit Modes
- Section 6 Regional Agency Organizational Recommendations
- Section 7 Introducing Rapid Transit Corridors – Phased Implementation
- Section 8 Mobility Benefits of the Regional Transit Network
- Section 9 Economic Benefits of Transit Investment
- Section 10 Network Costs
- Section 11 Funding the Regional Transit Network
- Section 12 Next Steps for the RTCC

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<sup>1</sup> Street Smart: Streetcars and Cities in the Twenty First Century. Shelley Poticha and Gloria Ohland. 2006, Pages 3-4  
The Benefits of Public Transportation, Essential Support for a Strong Economy. APTA  
Public Transportation and the Nation's Economy: A Quantitative Analysis of Public Transportation's Economic Impact. Cambridge Systematics, Inc. 1999  
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