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**LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT ON WOODWARD AVENUE
MOVES FORWARD IN FEDERAL FUNDING PROCESS TO BUILD
THE STARTER LINE IN A REGIONAL RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM**

*Woodward LRT meets all criteria
to apply to the Federal Transit Administration New Starts Program*

DETROIT—An intensive 18-month technical review that is following guidelines established by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts Program concludes a light rail line along eight miles on Woodward Avenue from Downtown to the Michigan State Fairgrounds near Eight Mile Road is the best alternative to build the starter line for a regional rapid transit system in the Detroit area.

The Alternatives Analysis study—known as the Detroit Transit Options for Growth Study (DTOGS) project—is the first step in the Federal funding process to build a rapid transit system in the Detroit area. The project will now transition into the preliminary engineering phase.

Light rail on Woodward Avenue was selected after a process that started by evaluating several transit modes and the 14 rapid transit corridors that were selected based on the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) 2004 regional transit plan and City of Detroit Master Plan.

“We all know the history of false starts and the transit studies that have ended on the shelf, but this time we’re getting it right,” said City of Detroit Chief Financial Officer and DTOGS Project Director Norman L. White. “We are on the cusp of building a new Detroit, and this movement starts with building light rail on Woodward Avenue.”

Detailed analysis conducted as a part of the DTOGS project estimate an eight-mile light rail transit (LRT) line on Woodward Avenue would cost \$371 million in 2007 dollars. Federal funds would pay for 50% to 60% of construction costs, with the remaining funds coming from a variety of other Federal, state and local funding sources.

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"Metropolitan Detroit is experiencing unprecedented growth and development. To continue this revitalization, Detroit and the region must provide efficient transportation alternatives," said Congresswoman Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick (13th District, Michigan), who has been at the forefront of efforts to bring rail transportation from Detroit to Ann Arbor and was instrumental in securing the funds to conduct the DTOGS project. "Rail transportation along Woodward is a good first step. I look forward to continuing to work with area transportation organizations, local leaders, and the community to secure the regional cooperation and funding needed to make rail transportation a reality for Michigan."

The DTOGS project has been following the guidelines set by the FTA to apply to the New Starts Program. The study concludes that light rail on Woodward Avenue is a strong candidate to receive new starts money, which pays up to 60% of the design and construction of rapid transit systems throughout the United States.

The FTA New Starts process includes the following:

- Alternatives Analysis
- Preliminary Engineering/Environmental Impact Statement
- Final Design
- Full Funding Grant Agreement
- Construction
- Revenue Operation

The DTOGS project completes the first phase of the process with selection of light rail on Woodward Avenue. The project is now transitioning into the preliminary engineering phase to begin design for light rail on Woodward Avenue.

"Light rail on Woodward Avenue is a major step in moving Detroit and the region forward," said Detroit Mayor Kwame M. Kilpatrick. "Detroit is the last major city in the nation that does not have a rapid transit system, but that is going to change with this plan. I am looking forward to see the economic landscape of the Woodward corridor transform as new development sparks investment in Detroit."

The Woodward LRT line was chosen based on a comprehensive set of criteria that includes current and potential ridership on the Woodward route, potential development opportunities, capital costs, and community support.

White said public involvement has been a major component in the Federal process. A total of 14 public meetings were held over the past year to gauge public opinion on which mode of transit and which alignment to select. Light rail on Woodward was ranked top pick at every public meeting.

"There is no question we have the support of the people in this region to run a light rail line on Woodward between downtown and Eight Mile Road," White said. "Now with the

support of the community combined with the Federal government, we are moving forward with this plan.”

The Woodward LRT line will follow an eight-mile stretch running from the Foxtown/Comerica Park area on the south to the Michigan State Fairgrounds near Eight Mile Road on the north, with stops at 13 to 15 stations, depending on the final downtown alignment. The DTOGS project will continue to evaluate three alternative downtown alignments that could either stop at the future Rosa Parks Transit Center at Cass Avenue and Michigan Avenue; make a full circular loop downtown; or include two-way operations on Washington Boulevard and Jefferson Avenue, with the final destination at the Renaissance Center.

The DTOGS project is led by the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT), which enlisted the expertise of URS Corporation, an international consulting firm with success in helping cities and transit authorities navigate the extensive Federal review process. URS, whose Michigan offices are located in Detroit, Farmington Hills, Grand Rapids and Traverse City, has been successful in assisting major cities across the United States including Minneapolis, Dallas, Denver and Portland, with building rapid transit systems using Federal funds.

Guidance for the DTOGS project is provided by a technical committee comprised of representatives from a cross-section of government, civic and transit agencies. They include Wayne County; the cities of Detroit, Dearborn, Hamtramck and Highland Park; the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT); Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG); the Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC); and the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC).

Construction on Woodward Avenue could begin as soon as 2011 and is dependent on unified local support, Federal approvals and securing matching funds. Construction is expected to take 24 to 30 months.

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