



NEWS RELEASE

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DETROIT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION RECEIVES APPROVAL OF WOODWARD AVENUE LIGHT RAIL INITIATIVE

The metropolitan Detroit region achieved another major step in bringing light rail to the city of Detroit. The Southeast Michigan Council of Government (SEMCOG) General Assembly, which includes members from six other counties besides Wayne, approved the Detroit Department of Transportation plan to construct and operate light rail service on Woodward Avenue between downtown and Eight Mile Road.

“This is an important step toward the establishment of a reliable rail transportation system that will assist Detroiters in getting to and from their destinations,” said Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick. “This approval of DDOT’s rail project will also multiply economical opportunities for business growth.”

SEMCOG amended the long-range 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Southeast Michigan in June.

“I am pleased that DDOT is moving in the right direction on the Woodward Avenue Light Rail Transit (LRT) initiative by putting the customer first, as gas prices continue to soar,” said Interim DDOT Director Lovevett Williams. “We are focused on meeting all federal, state and local requirements to successfully complete Detroit’s first rail alignment along Woodward Avenue. People are ready for rail, and DDOT’s 2007 public meeting results established Woodward as the overwhelming alignment of choice.”

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The 2030 RTP was originally adopted by SEMCOG's General Assembly in November 2004 and updated in March 2007. It includes rapid transit on 12 heavily-traveled corridors in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. The Woodward line would be the first step in a regional plan that includes rapid transit lines in the three counties. The plan serves as a guide for developing a transportation system that is accessible, safe, and reliable. The 2030 RTP enables federal funding to be used in southeast Michigan to improve roads, bridges, and non-motorized systems and to maintain transit services.

“As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I am committed to securing resources for transportation initiatives that improve mobility, accessibility, and efficiency,” said Congresswoman Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick (D-MI). “The Woodward Avenue LRT project will stimulate community and economic development in southeast Michigan. It will also generate new rail technologies and transit investment for the region.”

The first phase of this major project, Detroit Transit Options for Growth Study (DTOGS) was successfully completed. The 18-month study began in September 2006 and is known as the Alternatives Analysis (AA) phase, which is the required first step in the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formal process. The AA phase concluded in April 2008 and followed stringent guidelines established by FTA's New Starts program. Progression and timelines follow:

March 2008: Selection of Locally Preferred Alternative (*complete*)

June 2008: Begin Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) – (*current phase*)

Fall 2009: Submit Application to FTA New Starts Program

2009-2010: Preliminary Engineering and Final Design

2011-2013: Construction and Revenue Operation

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The LRT line would follow an eight-mile stretch of Woodward Avenue from the Michigan State Fairgrounds near Eight Mile Road to downtown Detroit with stops at 13-15 stations depending on the final downtown alignment. The proposed line was chosen based on projected ridership, potential economic development opportunities, projected operating and capital costs and community support. The proposed Woodward line was selected after evaluating several transit modes and 14 corridors within the cities of Detroit, Dearborn, Hamtramck and Highland Park. The cost to build is \$371 million (2007 funds), with 50-60% of the funding provided by the federal government for construction costs. The remaining dollars will be rendered from a variety of state, local and other funding sources. The system is estimated to carry 22,200 daily riders.

The Woodward LRT line will serve as a distributor and feeder to the Ann Arbor-to-Detroit commuter rail line, which is being studied by SEMCOG and expected to open in 2010.

For more information on the Woodward Avenue LRT project, contact Tim Roseboom at (313) 833-1196, Rovella Phillips at (313) 833-7025 or visit the project's Web site at www.dtogs.com. The Web site also provides a video simulation of the proposed alignment, and background information and materials.

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