

The History of Transportation in Metropolitan Detroit

1700s

**Early settlers walked and rode horses.
They also rode in carts and carriages.**

1816

**A road was built to link Detroit and Pontiac. Parts of the
road later became Woodward Avenue.**

1820s – 1830s

**Many more roads were built between Detroit and other
places in the interior of the state.**

1838

**The Detroit and Pontiac Railroad began to operate a train
between Detroit and Birmingham. Horses pulled the train
until a locomotive arrived in August of 1839.**

1847

**A horse-drawn bus route ran along East Jefferson Avenue in
Detroit.**

1848

Plank toll roads were built from Detroit to Pontiac, Saline, Erin, Howell and Grosse Pointe.

1863

The Detroit City Railway Company was established. Horses pulled buses along rails.

1892

Electric Streetcar or trolley service began in the city.

1922

The Detroit Department of Street Railways began operating all city street railways. This was the largest city-owned transit system in the country at the time.

1925

The first buses started operating in the city.

1931

Commuter rail service began between Detroit and Pontiac.

1945

This was the peak year for public transportation in Detroit. People could choose between bus, trolley, and commuter train service.

1956

Trolley service ended.

1983

Commuter train service between Detroit and Pontiac ended.

1987

The People Mover, a short light rail system that runs in downtown, began operating. It cost \$67 million per mile to build and has struggled with breakdowns.

2001

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SMCOG) and the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce recommend major new regional transit system plans.