

Woodward Avenue Streetcar Supplemental Environmental Assessment Public Hearing Summary

The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) conducted a public hearing on February 28, 2013, to receive comments on the Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Woodward Avenue Streetcar Project in Detroit. The hearing took place continuously from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Detroit Public Library Main Branch, 5201 Woodward Ave., Detroit. A formal presentation at 5 p.m. was followed by an open microphone session that allowed participants to speak and be heard by those present. A total of 88 people signed in for the hearing, of which 27 spoke publically and four spoke privately to the court reporter. Six written comments were deposited at the hearing and 28 comments were e-mailed during the 30-day comment period from February 12 through March 14. Written comments also were received from the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office and the U. S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration.

The following is a listing of unique remarks excerpted from the public hearing transcript and written comments:

1. Service times need to extend beyond 10 p.m. due to public events.
2. What effect will relocating the Red Wings to the service area have on ridership projections?
3. Train needs to run entirely in the center lane because: bikes should run along curbs, cars park on the side of the road, it will tie in better with rail expansion to the north, and current streetcar configuration is slower than light rail.
4. Applaud the streetcar project.
5. Will force bicyclists from the curb to the middle of the street, incredibly dangerous.
6. DDOT and SMART buses will interfere with and delay the streetcar.
7. Plan to use it to get to work, but will reconsider if frequent delays.
8. Need to get it right; don't need another version of the People Mover.
9. Do they really think it will beat bus running curbside along with traffic?
10. Needs to include fewer stops, center running and run faster than bus.
11. People will park curbside no matter what.
12. Detroit has let the automobile become the only reliable choice.
13. Detroit needs rebuilding; what a fine time to do this 3.3-mile project. Detroit needs a 21st century transit system.
14. Portland, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Cleveland, Chicago, Toronto, Vancouver all have transit.
15. Transit helps for better air, less cars, less air pollution.
16. Favor 2:30 a.m. operations on weekends. Want to buy a house soon and would like to be able to drink downtown without driving home now and then.
17. If it's meant to attract young people, why shut down operations at 10:00 p.m.?
18. The curb-running design is not keeping with national and international best practices for transit.
19. Detroit suffers from a dearth of quality transit options that projects like this should address.
20. Transit and mobility concerns must be prioritized over private development needs.
21. Needs to be greater equity in transit spending.
22. Implication that a certain demographic needs its own transit system to separate it from other transit riders.

23. Needs to be integrated into a larger transit plan and not be a stand-alone project that provides redundant services to a small area.
24. Usefulness of M-1, due to lack of connectivity to the larger system, is difficult for current system users to comprehend.
25. Our church fronts Woodward and proximity to streetcar could create noise problem. Hearse, funeral cars and wedding party vehicles park along the curb. Prohibiting this could cause substantial problems.
26. Side running is twice as expensive as center running.
27. M-1 will just be a local circulator.
28. Changes have occurred from the EIS: 1) degrades equity considerations; 2) doesn't connect people to Rosa Parks transit center; 3) doesn't provide a rapid transit alternative; 4) will not connect to the larger system.
29. It's a bad idea to have a trolley car system run with bus rapid transit; it's a bad investment that will only make our current system more dysfunctional. And clog up downtown with construction at a time when it is bouncing back.
30. Michigan Vehicle Code requires bicyclists to ride as far to the right as practical the rail flanges pose a serious safety hazard for bicyclists.
31. Removal of John R bridge over I-94 affects viability of John R as viable alternate route.
32. Urge MDOT to modify the EA and make it compatible with the state Complete Streets policy.
33. Planners in the U.S. and abroad report that center running or left running streetcars are strongly preferred for bicycle safety.
34. Many recent transit projects in the country have dedicated bike and transit lanes.
35. US DOT's policy statement says transportation agencies should give the same priority to walking and biking as to other transportation mode.
36. Mitigation of alternative bike routes is undefined in the document.
37. Support the project; the rail line will have a positive impact on quality of life for businesses and their employees in Greater Downtown.
38. M-1 has already been a critical sales element for attracting new business to the area, and will continue to do so in the future.
39. Better connecting people to the attractions, retail, businesses and neighborhoods will result in positive economic impact and improve the urban experience for residents and visitors alike.
40. Excited with the promise this project embodies to enhance the revitalization of midtown neighborhood and redevelopment along Woodward Avenue.
41. Slow travel times will deter use of the streetcar; extremely prompt towing of vehicles blocking the travel lane will be critical.
42. Pedestrian refuge islands should be used to enhance crossing safety.
43. There need to be dedicated lanes for bicyclists and streetcars along Woodward.
44. Four-block distance between streetcar station and Rosa Parks station is unreasonable connectivity.
45. Care needs to be taken that Detroit doesn't end up with a two-tier transit system.
46. Locate the maintenance facility to best support community and economic development goals, and minimize visual impacts to surrounding neighborhoods.
47. Utility relocation issues not adequately addressed in EA.
48. Care needed that stations don't block passenger views of buildings and storefronts.
49. Project met with a great deal of excitement and anticipation among business leaders throughout the city.

50. Envision workers, residents and visitors linking from the 3.3 mile transit line to 5.5 miles of river walk, parks, pavilions and green space along the Detroit River.
51. Enthusiastically support this exciting economic boost for Detroit's "main street."
52. Effective regional transit is crucial to the wellbeing of suburban communities.
53. EA needs to more effectively define the streetcar's role in the regional system.
54. Show likely function of circulator complementing rapid transit and connecting to DDOT, SMART and proposed Ann Arbor-Detroit commuter rail service and intercity high-speed rail service.
55. Needs to coordinate with People Mover to connect to Rosa Parks Station for mobility-impaired individuals.
56. Reference land use policy, including Live Downtown and Live Midtown initiatives that maintain affordable housing opportunities for all parts of the community.
57. Not sure you will get the ridership (5,500 per day) when the buses are only carrying 11,000 per day.
58. Needs to connect to the North End community.
59. M-1 will support the continuous growth of the Midtown, New Center and Downtown districts by leveraging additional economic development opportunities and creating a better sense of place and safety.
60. M-1 will enhance the city's potential for attracting new residents and retaining young talent, key economic divers for Detroit's future.
61. Provide for passes to transfer between DDOT/SMART and the streetcar.
62. Eliminate stops to reduce travel times, use buses for multiple stops.
63. Mitigate effects of construction on businesses; fewer stations will do this.
64. Link stations to affordable housing.
65. Provide measures to protect the safety of blind and handicapped persons.
66. This will provide alternate transportation for bus route 53, which is overcrowded.
67. Will provide a welcomed alternate to biking to work (GM), especially in the winter.
68. There should be a subway instead, from downtown to Fisher Building then to Ford Hospital and up to 8-Mile Road with underground stations at Ford Hospital, Wayne State University and Fisher Building.
69. Hopeful that Detroit-based disadvantaged businesses will be targeted for this project.
70. Don't want this train, being built for Mr. Ilitch with taxpayer money.
71. Thank you, Detroit, and all involved for making this light rail possible.
72. Explore including Grand to Delaware, or as far north as possible to provide easier access to New Center and 3,000 residents.
73. It needs to go all the way to the fairgrounds; it's unfair to limit it.
74. Hope light rail will increase impromptu visits to the (art) museum and alleviate some of the parking issues that visitors experience all too frequently.
75. A signature project in the area that will transform the way we interact.
76. Unsure how fares will mesh with DDOT.
77. There are proposals to work with corporations/institutions to purchase "passes." and eliminate shuttles to save money. How many jobs will be eliminated?
78. Will there be similar programs for Wayne State students (ride free on U of M buses)? DDOT recently suspended free passes for low-income high school students.
79. Who will sponsor free or reduced fares for transit-dependent riders?
80. Transit-dependent students are frequently late for school.

81. If free or reduced for college students should be for high school students too.
82. How will transfers be handled? Where is the plan?
83. What percentage of Wayne State students commute, what percent could be expected to use the streetcar and live in the Woodward corridor?
84. Need to consider impact of construction on smaller Woodward businesses.
85. Are we starving bus system for rail?
86. How will regional transit authority interact with this project in terms of support, endorsement, funding?
87. Concerned that those north of the Boulevard have not been involved in this project. Outreach should have been stronger.
88. When can we expect this to go from Detroit to the Capital (Lansing)? If it is not in the plan how do we get it in there?
89. Frequency (running every eight to 12 minutes) and reliability are very important.
90. Prepaid level boarding also important.
91. The shared lane concept provides a lot of potential barriers.
92. The EA did not adequately address how the streetcar will impact other forms of transit that use Woodward and extend beyond the limits of the streetcar.
93. Was very excited with the center running streetcar concept. This is a circulator route that can directly connect or be expanded outward.
94. What will be the socioeconomic makeup of the riders of this system versus what it would have been with the light rail system?
95. Extending the eleventh stop from Grand Avenue north three to four blocks would make the system accessible to 3,000 more people who live in the New Center area.
96. What traffic studies have been done to address potential traffic problems related to the maintenance facility?
97. I walked next to the Portland Streetcar and walked faster than the streetcar.
98. Concerned that the Regional Transit Authority, which will eventually take over this streetcar, is creating a new level of government without taxpayers' approval.
99. The Headlee Amendment says you cannot increase taxes without a vote of the people.
100. Concerned that the money that is being invested privately actually came from a state grant during the Granholm Administration to spend on economic development. No disclosure on where the private money is coming from.
101. Why do Lansing and Washington want to spend money on transit when the city is struggling financially and buses already serve the corridor and run empty?
102. This is not the streetcar system of the 50s and 60s.
103. This is only being done to help some wealthy people.
104. Money would be better spent on current infrastructure unless system is center running and gets people where they need to go faster.
105. Support a transit system that is fair and just for all residents in southeastern Michigan.
106. Unfair that this system will benefit Mr. Ilitch, Fox Town, DMC and downtown businesses, while I have to ride a broken down transit system. Money would be better invested in current DDOT system so we can all improve our quality of life and have the jobs we need to be able to go to a Tiger game.
107. We don't want to create a transportation system like Baltimore where they have five different modes but they don't communicate.

108. It's unrealistic to send bicyclists to alternate routes where the lights don't work at night and it's unsafe.
109. The EA purpose and need should be different from the original EIS because it is not the same project. It is now just a local circulator for relatively slow, short-term travel.
110. The streetcar's benefits are primarily economic development and stimulating new growth along the alignment rather than enhancing overall city wide transit capacity or region transit equity.
111. Consider additional measures to enhance pedestrian safety along the corridor in coordination with the project.
112. Change the statement that curb-running alignment "could" to "would" adversely affect bicyclists.
113. Bypassing Rosa Parks, a \$23 million investment of state and federal money, sends the message that we are still not serious about developing a complete and integrated transit system.
114. Since new transit developments increase property values, under Environmental Justice we need to make sure those values don't displace the people who need transit the most (gentrification).
115. Note that in transit-oriented development, transit comes before development.
116. Clearly John R is not an alternate route for bicyclists if it's going to be removed over I-94.
117. Need to see how public comments are incorporated into the decisions; it is the public's money and it's for the public.
118. Affordable housing needs to be addressed in the document. Can't wait until people are priced out of their homes.
119. Suggest there be more innovative public outreach to get more people to hearings.
120. People of Detroit need transportation east to west; Woodward Avenue is the best served right now.
121. It currently takes me 1.5 hours to go from New Center to Southfield by bus, that's three hours a day, the time it takes to get to Chicago from here.
122. The true cost of light rail is \$10 per ride. If you are charging \$1.50, who is going to pay the \$8.50 the taxpayers, just to benefit the Ilitches and others who are investing in it to make money.
123. The potential for crime has not been fully addressed. It is a problem with systems in Portland and Phoenix.
124. Don't want to see Woodward turned into a freeway, needs to remain beautiful.
125. There is a study that shows that there is a 300 percent increase in crashes when bicyclists and streetcars are involved.
126. There are only two bike racks on the light rail. Need to be more. Bike racks are often full on the buses.
127. The people in the pictures in the document are not kids, riding bikes or using mobility-assistive devices; rather the pictures show something different than what you see using Woodward Avenue today.
128. Who will pay for the liability from knowingly putting ruts in the pavement?
129. We are developing a system that flies in the face of Complete Streets, that's both obsolete and suboptimal using our money.
130. There needs to be some supplemental shuttle to help people get to their jobs during the Woodward Avenue construction. There also should be some grants or low-interest loans to help small businesses ride out the expected lull.
131. Ask if the new system is giving people a reason to stay or a reason to leave.
132. The citizens of Highland Park are waiting for a system that ultimately serves them.

133. Don't see a plan for accommodating blind persons or others with mobility issues. Crossing the street to get to a station will be unsafe. This needs to be something that benefits everyone, not just a few.
134. Employers aren't going to put up with someone being late because of problems with their transportation, especially if you live in the city and work in the suburbs.
135. For the plan but would like to see it go from Woodward to Hoover line, to 8-Mile and then after that to the Gratiot line and then after that the Jefferson line, after that, the Michigan or run east to west across town to 7 Mile and 6 Mile.
136. I travel by bus and I also ride my bike. Sometimes I beat the Woodward Avenue bus from New Center to downtown in less than 15 minutes with my bike.
137. The best alternative is an expanded people mover running down Cass and John R serving all the institutions along the way, Wayne State, museums, tech town.
138. Businesses should put up the money to build the stations that serve them.
139. How long will the doors on the cars stay open to get on and off?
140. The vehicle maintenance facility is not adequate in size to handle an expansion of service. Essentially the project will be stuck the way it is permanently.