

Woodward Avenue Streetcar Project



Background

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as the lead Federal agency, together with Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), is assessing a proposed 3.3 mile streetcar along Woodward Avenue between Downtown (Congress Street) and Grand Boulevard in Detroit. FTA will prepare a supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Woodward Avenue Streetcar Project. This assessment will supplement the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) completed in 2011 for the Woodward Avenue Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project.

The streetcar project, which includes 12 stations, is proposed to run on both sides of the street in the curb lane, and will transition to center-running at the north end of the project. The proposed alignment is similar, albeit shorter, than Alternative B3 analyzed in the Woodward Avenue LRT Project Final EIS released in June 2011. FTA, MDOT, and SEMCOG will begin a review of the Woodward Avenue Streetcar Project and intend to prepare a supplemental EA for the proposed shorter project.

M-1 RAIL — a consortium of businesses, institutions, and foundations — has proposed to build and operate the streetcar system for a period of up to 10 years after construction. The group expects to fund the \$137 million construction cost with a combination of corporate, institutional, and philanthropic donations, and Federal assistance. The major capital funding sources consist of over \$90 million of committed private funds, requested federal funding, and anticipated New Market Tax Credits. M-1 RAIL intends to pay for operations with passenger fares, advertising, sponsorships, philanthropic support, and sales of naming rights.

How will this Environmental Study Differ from the Previous One?

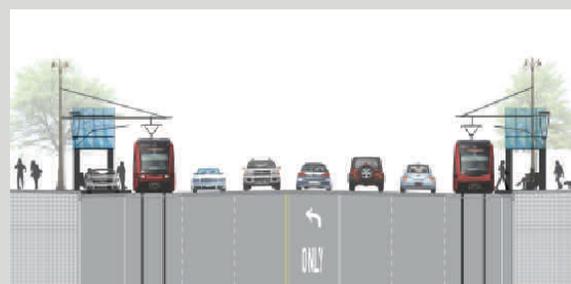
The previously completed Woodward Avenue LRT EIS evaluated a number of alternatives and design options for LRT service along Woodward Avenue and assessed potential impacts on the human and natural environment that may have resulted from the proposed project. The supplemental EA will have a substantially smaller scope. The study will focus on Alternative B3, which was considered in the EIS, and assess the impacts of proposed changes to this alternative rather than examine multiple alternatives previously considered in the EIS.

How are Streetcars Different than LRT?

Depending upon the design, which is not yet final for the Woodward Avenue Streetcar Project, modern streetcars and light rail vehicles are typically very similar. However, most streetcar systems operate mostly or wholly in mixed traffic, stopping frequently at modest passenger facilities integrated into the existing or planned streetscape. LRT systems typically operate at higher speeds in a dedicated right of way, with fewer stops; because of this, stations tend to be larger to accommodate heavier passenger loads. Typically, streetcar systems tend to serve a local circulation market, while light rail systems serve a regional travel market.

What is the Timeline for the Project?

The project is currently entering the EA phase, which is anticipated to be completed by winter of 2012/2013. Following the issuance of an amended Record of Decision, which provides the necessary environmental approvals, M-1 RAIL expects to begin construction of the system in 2013 to coincide with MDOT's planned reconstruction of Woodward Avenue. M-1 RAIL plans to complete the entire system and begin operations in late 2015.



Side-running Streetcar