Capstone 2022

PUBLIC TRANSIT + COMMUNITY WELLNESS

AMANDA HERCULA + HALEY SCHULTHEIS

University of Detroit Mercy

SOURCE: METROTIMES

SOURCE: MICHIGANDAILY

SOURCE: ALAMY

Capstone 2022

PUBLIC TRANSIT + COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Keywords: Public Transit, Community Wellness, Mobility, Accessibility, Connectivity, Engagement

Capstone Project Submitted in Fulfillment of the Master in Community Development, University of Detroit Mercy, School of Architecture and Community Development

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ON BEHALF OF THE CAPSTONE TEAM:

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To everyone who participated in our online surveys, in person engagement sessions, and story-telling conversations, your insights were critical in creating a holistic picture of public transit use in Detroit. Thank you.

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To the reader of this report for being interested in education, research, and transit access in the city. Thank you.

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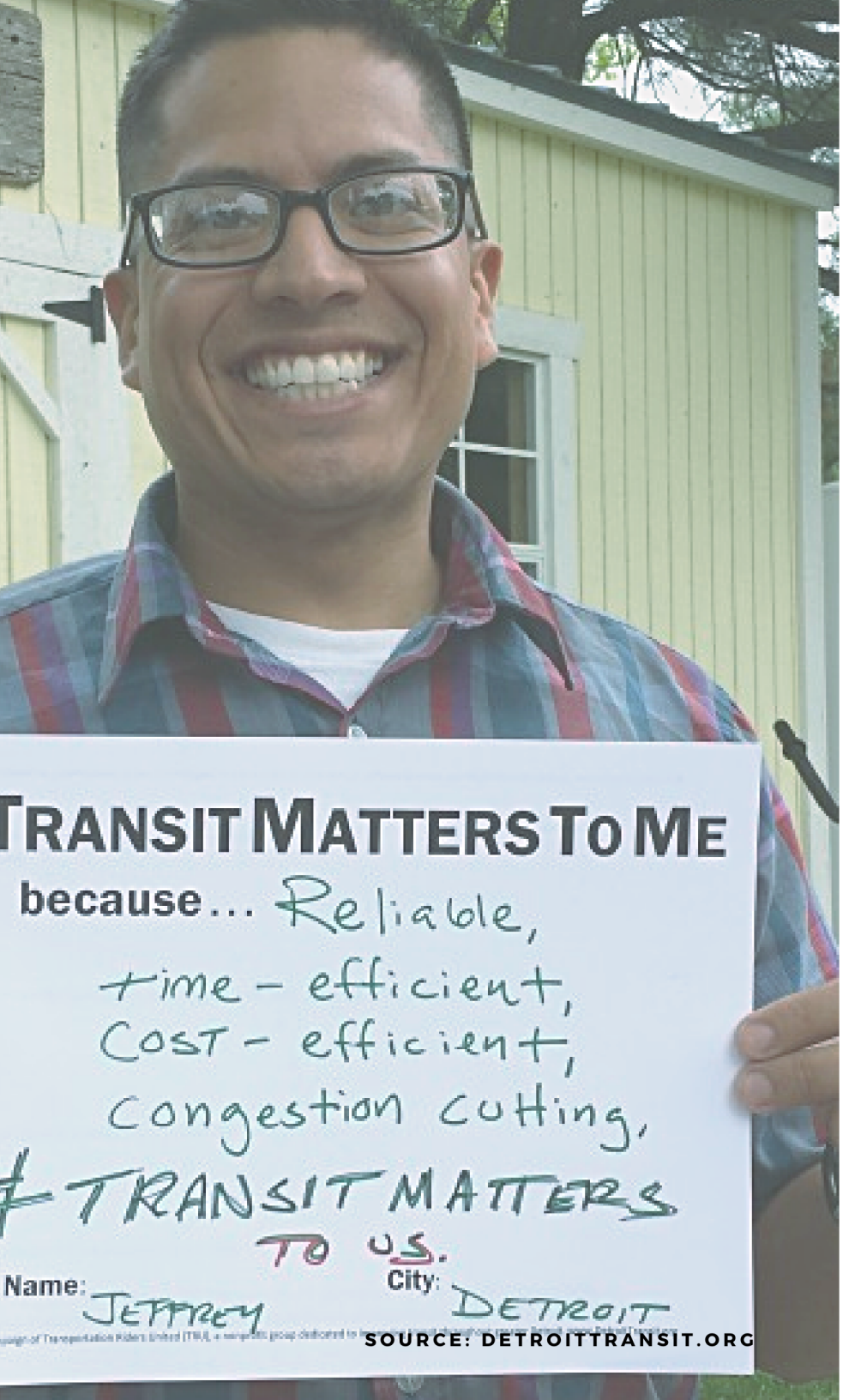
SOURCE: DETROITTRANSIT.ORG



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PUBLIC TRANSIT + COMMUNITY WELLNESS

SOURCE: LIVENGOOD

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PUBLIC TRANSIT + COMMUNITY WELLNESS

UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MERCY
MASTER OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CAPSTONE: FINAL SUBMISSION

AMANDA HERCULA + HALEY SCHULTHEIS

ABSTRACT

TRANSIT:
A CONNECTOR OF PEOPLE TO PEOPLE + PEOPLE TO PLACES.

Transit plays a critical role in communities and cities at large. It serves as a connector of people to people and people to places. In Detroit, transit needs are great. A storied history of transit systems has left gaps in service and reliability in public transit. Recent efforts to improve these systems in Detroit have left us wondering: **how might we more meaningfully connect people to people and people to places?**

This book serves as the conclusion to our research focusing on public transit and community wellness on Detroit's east side. Within this report, you will find contextual information surrounding both the Detroit public transit system and the Eastside community. Existing conditions are explored through historical analysis, asset mapping, and needs assessments. Case studies and community engagement are also an essential part of setting context for the proposed interventions included at the end of this report.

This Capstone project is meant to be educational and exploratory—the last chapter in our Master of Community Development journey. Through this project and the Master's program as a whole, we have come to recognize that healthy and sustainable community development cannot exist without centering on the voice of the community. We hope that is a theme continually uplifted in this report, and all community development work.

CAPSTONE COMMITTEE

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RTA

REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

THE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY'S (RTA) MISSION IS TO:

"MANAGE AND SECURE TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES THAT SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE MOBILITY OPTIONS, TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE RESIDENTS AND TO INCREASE ECONOMIC VIABILITY FOR THE REGION."

SOURCE: RTAMICHIGAN.ORG

PROJECT PARTNER

THEIR ROLE IN OUR RESEARCH

One component of the Capstone project is to establish a relationship with a community partner in Detroit. This chosen partnership should be reciprocal with the partner project providing insights and resources to help the overall function of the project, with the Capstone project culminating in proposed recommendations for the project partner. Once the initial relationship is established, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is formed that creates clarity around the function of the partnership.

The MOU outlines the partner's responsibility in providing:

- resources
- introductions
- guidance
- evaluation

Although the project focus is predominately on the Eastside of Detroit, transit itself is not limited to one community or area of the city. Partnership with the Regional Transit Authority was helpful in understanding the over-reaching function of public transit in the Metro-Detroit region. Khalil and Ben from the RTA were most helpful in creating space for conversation, helping us understand the basics of public transit, and offering valuable tech resources that contributed to our project. **The RTA has made great strides in connecting public transit services in Southeast Michigan. Their mission, listed on the previous page, is directly in line with the goal of this project—increasing mobility in a sustainable and intentional way.**

FRAMING THE RESEARCH

PUBLIC TRANSIT + COMMUNITY WELLNESS

FRAMEWORK

The research team for this project consists of two students in the **University of Detroit Mercy's Master of Community Development** (MCD) program.

This research is meant to be interpreted as an analysis produced by students for academic purposes.

The MCD program is a unique masters program that was designed by an interdisciplinary faculty to create a holistic approach to the theory and practice of community development with a foundation rooted in service, social justice, and sustainability. The program integrates human, organizational, physical and economic (HOPE) aspects of community development for a comprehensive approach to the renewal of communities. The HOPE model and 3 S's are further defined on the following pages, with a visual diagram found in figure 1.

SOURCE: UDMERCY.EDU

the HOPE model

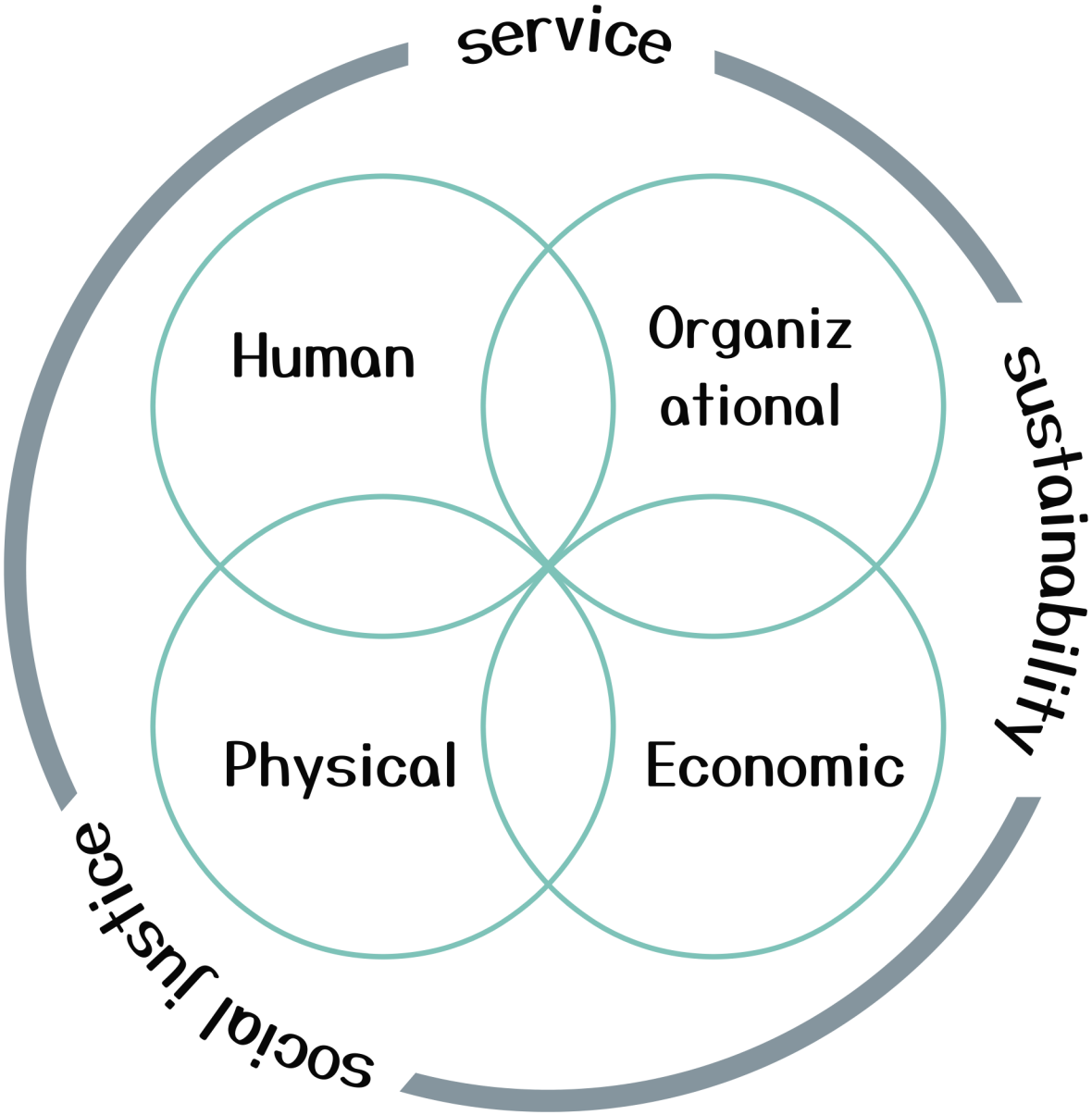


Figure 1. HOPE Model Diagram. Source: Capstone Team

the HOPE model

HUMAN:
examines the relationship between people and their social and physical environment

ORGANIZATIONAL:
considers how organizations work in partnership with communities

PHYSICAL:
focuses on the physical elements that create a space and a community

ECONOMIC:
highlights the complex role of economics in community work

the 3 S's

SERVICE:
recognizing the reciprocal relationships in community work, where all parties bring expertise and value

SOCIAL JUSTICE:
creating communities where institutions allow community members to fully participate on an individual and civic level

SUSTAINABILITY:
living in alignment with Earth's capacities—considering future and present needs

PROJECT GOALS

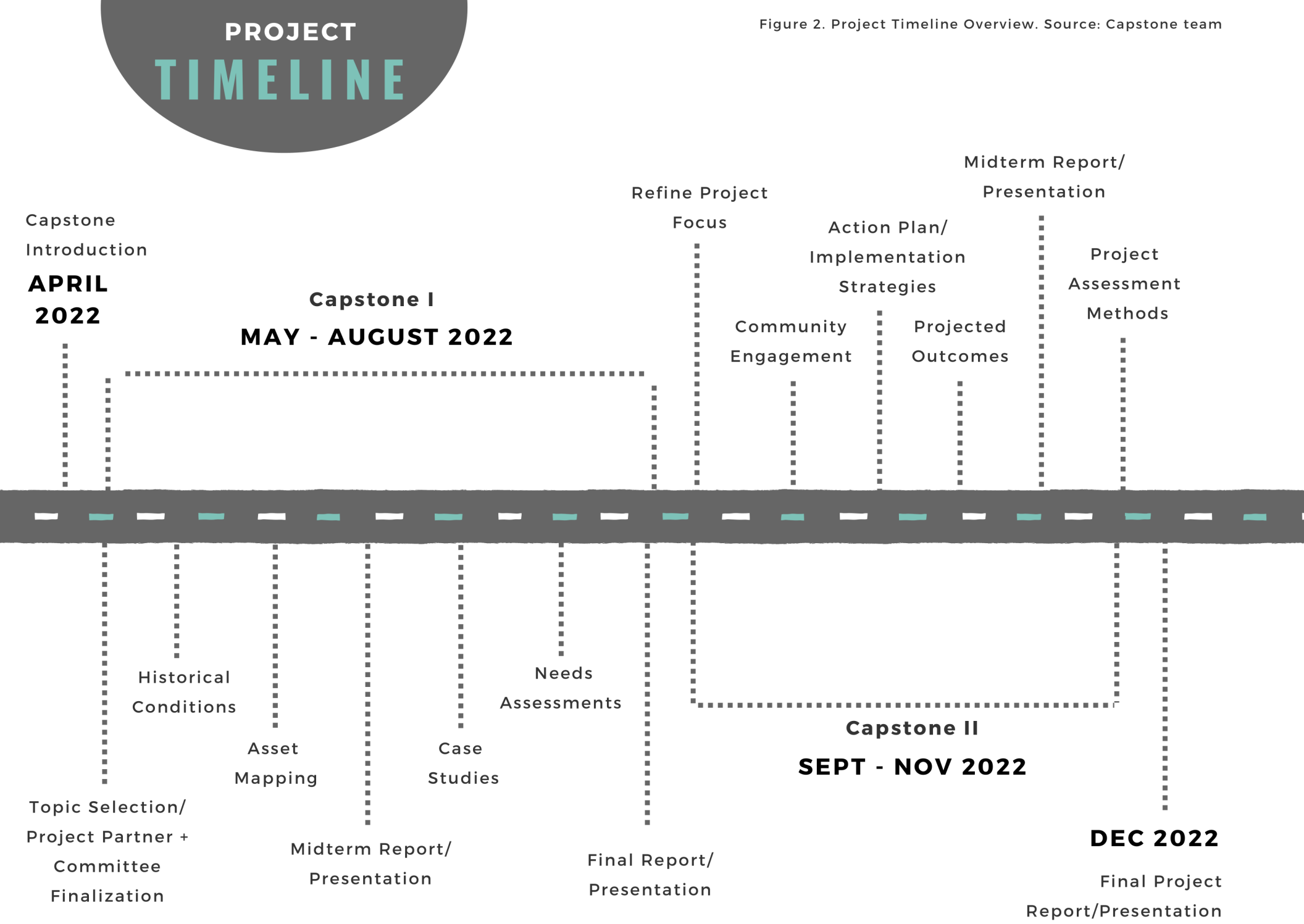
OVERVIEW:

Completion of the capstone project occurs in two separate courses: **Capstone I + Capstone II.** Both courses are a semester long, with deadlines for submission throughout each term. Further details about the timeline of the project can be found in figure 2 on page 18. An overview of the focus areas for each semester can be found below.

CAPSTONE I guided research in:
-contemplating a topic of interest
-identifying and securing a Primary Faculty Advisor, members of the Advisory Committee, and Project Partner
-reviewing research methods, community assessment methods, and project expectations
-identifying and reviewing case studies
-conducting and contextualizing asset identification and needs assessments
-thinking critically about topic area relevancy moving forward

while, **CAPSTONE II** focused on:
-creating space for topic revision
-uplifting and engaging user voice and feedback through direct community engagement
-proposing implementation strategies for partner agencies
-reviewing potential outcomes for the proposed interventions
-finalizing a comprehensive report and presentation

Figure 2. Project Timeline Overview. Source: Capstone team



Research Methods

This study is framed within the principles of **project-based applied research**, where academic research becomes an integral part of a social change project meant to create difference in real people's lives. Furthermore, research for this project was conducted using participatory design principles, including community engagement activities and surveying. This approach combines **the academic expertise gained through contextual research and the experiential knowledge of the community** (Reddy).

A key part of our ideology for this project is to **uplift the community voice**. As researchers, we began this process based on the hope to learn not only through our academic research, but also through the various conversations we had with transit users and stakeholders.

The academic knowledge and context that helps frame this analysis was gathered through a variety of methods including primary and secondary historical and contemporary sources and review of previous studies on transportation and community wellness. Further research was gathered though conversation with the Capstone committee, community residents, community organizations and advocates, and transit organizations and advocates,

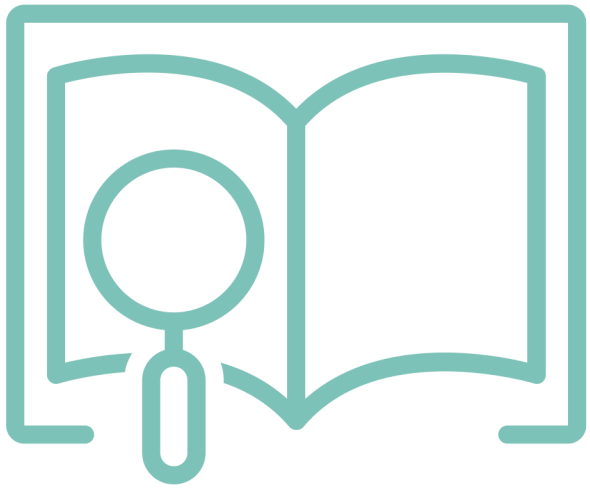
SOURCE: CAPSTONE TEAM

CONTEXT

PUBLIC TRANSIT + COMMUNITY WELLNESS

KEY TERMINOLOGY

This research relies on a basic understanding of some important terminology and concepts that are essential to grasping the topic area. The following pages define some key terms used throughout the report. Some of these terms can have multiple meanings and connotations in various situations, so the intention behind these definitions is that all readers may fully understand **our intended meaning.** We begin by outlining our definition of community wellness, a key concept throughout this entire report, and follow by highlighting a few key terms particularly relevant to this research.



Defining
COMMUNITY WELLNESS

An important component of this research around **community wellness** is creating a unified understanding of what that term means to this research.

Community wellness utilizes aspects of traditional ideas of health and wellness. However, community wellness looks beyond the ideas of bodily health, and lack of disease, to center upon the lived experience of a given community and the people who live there (Hightower).

FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH, WE WILL DEFINE COMMUNITY WELLNESS AS:

AN INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY LED ACTIVE PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND CULTURAL CONDITIONS THAT SUPPORT A HEALTHY AND THRIVING LIFE

Community wellness incorporates the concepts of:

HOLISTIC LIVING:

a lifestyle that nourishes the mind, body, and soul

PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT:

acknowledging community residents have the knowledge and means to make informed decisions regarding their personal and environmental wellbeing

AWARENESS:

the concept of knowledge and opportunity acting as a tool of empowerment

KEY TERMINOLOGY CONT'D

ACCESSIBILITY: the quality of being able to be used by everyone, especially those people with different abilities/resources

CONNECTIVITY: how physical spaces are organized so people can easily navigate in and through them

INFRASTRUCTURE: underlying structure of an area or system and the fixed installations that it needs in order to function

MOBILITY HUB: places in a community that bring together various forms of transit & other amenities for people to comfortably get where they want, without the use of a private vehicle

MULTI-MODAL TRANSIT: the movement of people and goods on roadways, including but not limited to motorists, transit riders, bicyclists, pedestrians

PUBLIC TRANSIT: forms of transportation, coordinated by a group or entity, that charge set fares and are available to the public

SUSTAINABILITY: the ability to be maintained at a certain level for extended time periods

CONTEMPORARY CONDITIONS

DEMOGRAPHICS | IMPORTANCE | CONSIDERATIONS

SOURCE: NYTIMES

RIDER DEMOGRAPHICS OVERVIEW

THE AVERAGE DETROIT TRANSIT RIDER IS:

MALE

18-34 YEARS OLD

BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN

FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT

LOW INCOME

ZERO HOUSEHOLD VEHICLES

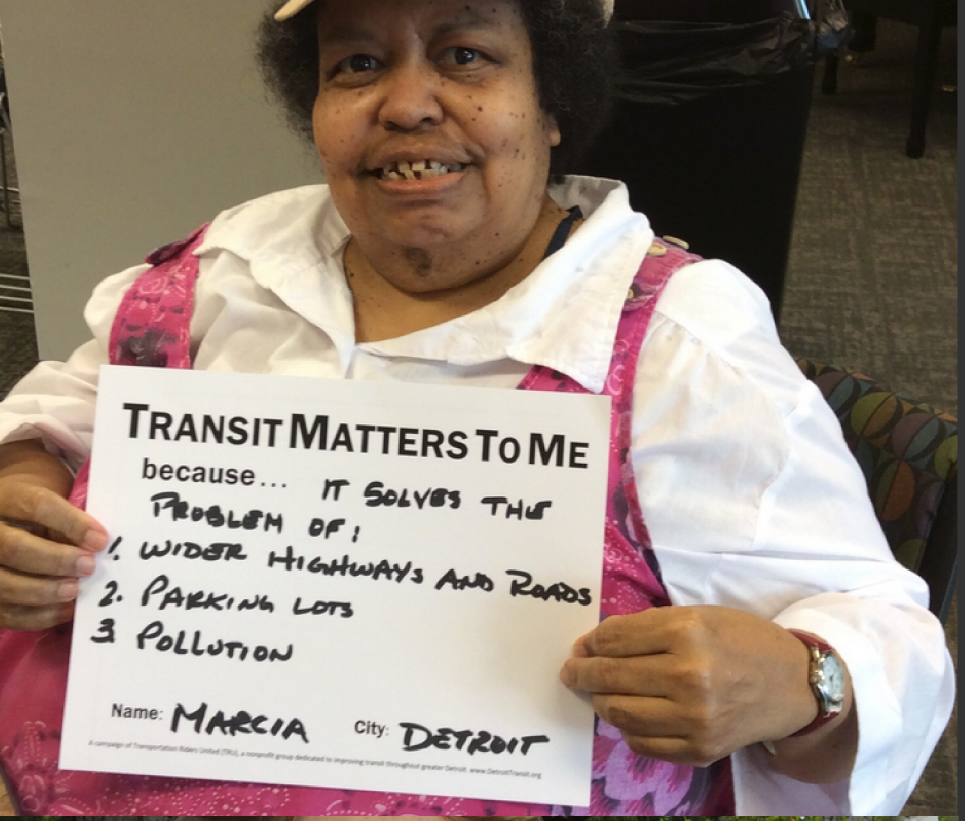
(REPORT OF FINDINGS)

SOURCE: CAPSTONE TEAM

SOURCE: DETROITTRANSIT.ORG

The average transit rider can vary across transit systems and cities. The average DDOT or SMART (bus) rider who utilizes a regional system is likely to be very different from the average QLINE (light rail) or People Mover (tram) rider who use localized systems. In Detroit, the average rider is a 18-34 year old Black male who uses transit primarily to get to and from their full-time job. They also generally fall within the low income bracket and do not own any household vehicles, so they heavily rely on transit as one of their main sources of mobility. In addition, the most used public transit system in Detroit is DDOT, followed closely by SMART (Report of Findings).

It is also important to note that rider demographics, like data on ridership, can be difficult to obtain. Most transit data relies on voluntary surveying and self-reporting. This data was gathered through a 2021 survey conducted by MoGo and Wayne State University to support a grant project aimed at better understanding the connection between bike share and bus transit (Report of Findings). Additional supporting data was pulled from a 2019 Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) onboard survey that was disseminated through a RTA study of equity in transportation (Detroit Workforce Mobility).



SOURCE: DETROITTRANSIT.ORG

TRANSIT: WHY IT MATTERS

ACCESS TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

SAFETY AND REDUCED ROAD CONGESTION

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

COMMUNITY WELLNESS BENEFITS

To further contextualize our research, it's important to understand why public transit is essential to communities. **Public transit benefits everyone, whether or not they are a regular rider.** Transit provides increased access to social and economic opportunity which directly combats poverty levels. Transit also has obvious environmental impacts by lessening the numbers on cars on the road. Public transit reduces 224,000 cars worth of emissions per year (Transit Plan).

Along that same principle, transit increases pedestrian safety by reducing road congestion and lessening the number of car crashes. Figure 3 on the right shows the amount of space saved when traveling via bus or bike, compared to traveling via a car. In fact, **public transit has been found to be five times safer per mile than cars** (Transit Plan).

Transit also creates a financial impact through significant cost savings for users, particularly low income households. There is an average of $4,000 annual household savings with improved transit systems (Transit Plan).

And finally, **there are numerous community wellness benefits associated with transit**, like personal freedom and empowerment to go where you want, when you want. Transit also improves air quality and provides opportunities for social gathering, which both impact community wellness.

Figure 3. Space Required to Transport 48 People.
Source: Cycling Promotion Fund

TRANSIT: THINGS TO CONSIDER

VARIETY OF FACTORS THAT IMPACT TRANSIT

RACIAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC BOUNDARIES/BARRIERS

UNEQUAL ACCESS

PERCEPTION SHIFTS

"THE BIG 3"

SOURCE: KRESGE.ORG

There are some major themes to consider when looking at public transit in Detroit. Establishing these themes can help us better understand the lens at which we are examining the transit system, both historically and currently.

Transit can be **considered very political and should be considered as such in order to fully understand its growth and evolution in the city of Detroit**. Racial, social, and economic boundaries—both formal and informal—across the city and metro-region have impacted where and how public transit has been made accessible and to whom it has been most accessible.

The complexity of public transit derives primarily from the fact that it is a r**egional system that crosses the boundaries of cities and municipalities with different views regarding their priorities** - how the system should be run, where money should be spent, and so on. In a city like Detroit, where conflicting recollections of history have impacted the story told, it is important to keep in mind that public transit was and has been designed to serve specific populations of people at different times throughout its history. Economic, social, and physical resources within the city of Detroit have impacted transit function and growth within communities, primarily communities of color, which have not always been afforded equal, uninhibited access to this public system. Additionally, when analyzing the history of transit in Detroit, we must consider the ways perceptions of transit have impacted ridership. At times throughout its history, Detroit public transit systems have been viewed and accessed as a respectable method of transit. As demographics of ridership have shifted, perceptions of who rides public transit and their reasons for riding have impacted the ways people interact with and view the public transit system.

Another important influence to consider when examining the evolution of public transit in Detroit is the **influence of car manufacturing.** Ford Motor Company, General Motors, and Fiat Chrysler (now Stellantis) (known as and henceforth "the Big 3") are all companies with historical and proud, deep roots within the city of Detroit. Many city and public transit officials have been, and currently are, heavily involved in both the car manufacturing business and the development of transit in Detroit, including its transition to being so heavily car-based. Many decisions regarding transit have been impacted greatly by the Big 3's concentration in and influence on Detroit proper and the metro-Detroit region.

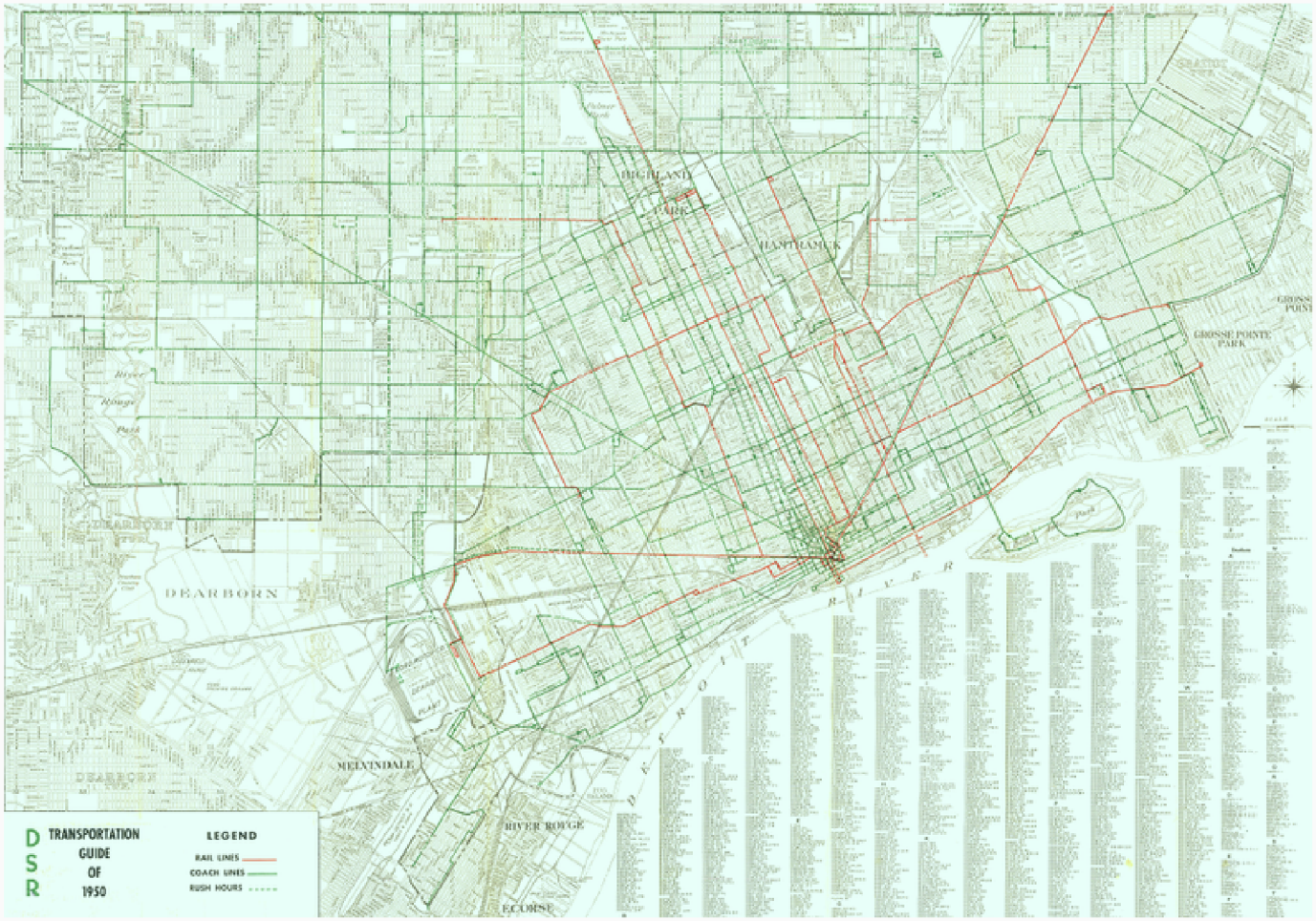
We, the readers and writers of this analysis, must consider the light in which we view public transit in Detroit and the racial and socioeconomic factors that impact that view. We must also take into account that, historically, it has been difficult to represent and articulate perceptions of ridership, especially in this account of Detroit transit, which primarily focuses on authoritative and policy shift/implementation.

And with these things in mind, lets get into the analysis.

SOURCE: ISTOCK PHOTOS

HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

TRANSIT | COMMUNITY



SOURCE: DETROIT TRANSIT HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

The following historical conditions section provides an overview of Detroit's history with transit and the study area's community history. This exploration of history focuses on the human, organizational, physical, and economic factors that have shaped the existing conditions surrounding transit on Detroit's eastside. **With particular emphasis on how transit systems have historically been designed to exclude specific populations through racist, classist, and inequitable practices, this analysis aims to highlight key developments and events that have impacted the status of transit and the Eastside community today.** The information that grounds this analysis was gathered through primary and secondary historical sources and conversations with our community partner, community stakeholders, the Capstone committee, and community activists and organizations.

TRANSIT

TIMELINE

HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

TRANSIT TIMELINE
1815 - 1951

Figure 4. Transit Timeline (1815-1951). Source: Capstone team

1815
Detroit is incorporated as a city

1837
Michigan gains official statehood

1860
First public transit implementation - horse drawn trolleys

1892
First electric powered streetcar service is implemented by Detroit's Citizens Street Railway

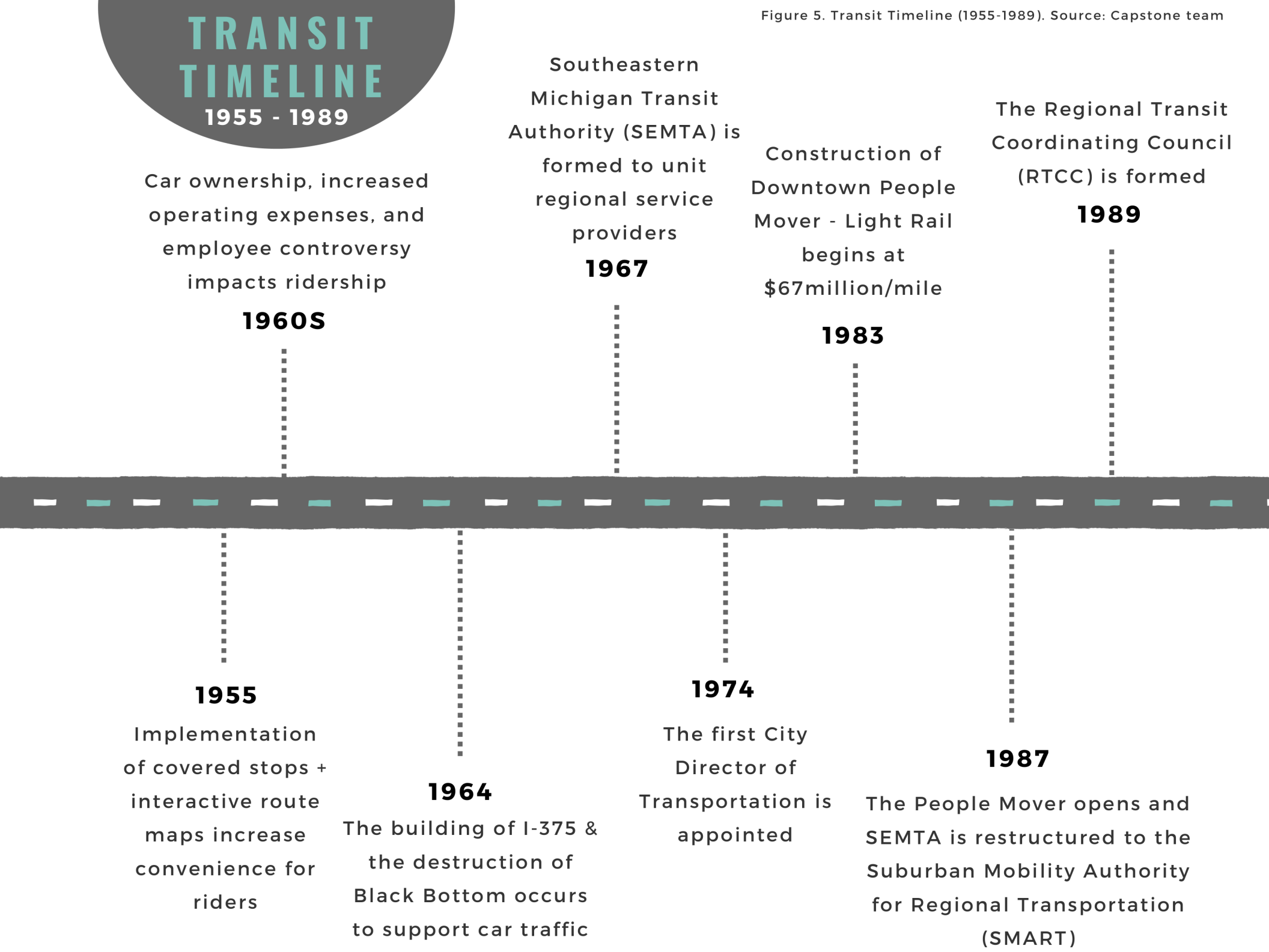
1920
First Regional Transportation Plan comisssioned

1922
City of Detroit purchases Detroit United Railway: becoming the largest municipality owned public transit service

1940
Annual ridership peaking at about 400 million riders/year

1951
2-month worker strike severely impacts ridership

Figure 5. Transit Timeline (1955-1989). Source: Capstone team



TRANSIT TIMELINE
2001 - 2021

Figure 6. Transit Timeline (2001-2021). Source: Capstone team

2001
Transportation Riders United (TRU) is created to promote functional, accessible transit systems

2008
A Regional Transit Plan is published by the RTCC

2012
The Regional Transit Authority (RTA) is formed

2016
Voters vote down a regional millage to support public transit

2018
MOGO bike sharing is launched in Detroit

2019
SMART + DDOT implement a unified payment system/app called DART

2020
Corona Virus causes shutdowns and impacts ridership

2021
The RTA publishes a 20-year Master Plan for regional transit coordination

HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

Innovations in transportation have had significant impacts on the overall development of the society we live in. In Detroit, a storied history of transit access and development has impacted residents in many ways. An historical analysis of public transit in Detroit can help us better understand these impacts and the other factors that have created existing conditions for both the transit system and the city today.

Since its inception, the public transit system in Detroit has primarily operated along the major corridors that run a spoke-like circle north from the city center - shown in figure 1. Concentration of transit lines along Jefferson, Michigan, Grand River, Woodward, and Gratiot Avenues, have provided residents with access to major business corridors, city resources, public spaces, and beyond. These major corridors have served Detroiters for many years. However, residents living in the other parts of the city, who have not always been provided the same level of public transit service, have often struggled to maintain the same access to these resources. When we consider the history of transit in the city, and its changing differential access over time, we can set the groundwork to advocate for a comprehensive system that services residents - regardless of their resources or proximity to the major city avenues.

Figure 7. Map of Major Avenues in Detroit. Source: Capstone team

Prior to the implementation of public transit, residents of Detroit primarily traveled by foot. Detroit was much smaller when it was first incorporated in 1815, especially when compared to its large land area today. After the building of the Erie Canal in 1825, settlers came in large numbers from the Northeastern United States and Europe, hoping to utilize the increased water access as a way to make profits in various industries. Some of these residents and businesspeople did service private horse-drawn carriages as a method of transit. But because this strategy was not known to make major access points in Detroit—such as the railroad depots and boat docks—more accessible, it was not widely utilized.

After Michigan officially gained statehood in 1837, the city's population almost doubled every ten years from then on (Woodford). And as more people began to establish lives in the city, it became apparent that some social and public systems were needed to support the growing population. In as early as **1860, Detroit's first passenger transit system began with a horse-drawn trolley service.** The city of Detroit spanned just over 12 miles, so transit was becoming more of a necessity as people sought to access new developments in the area.

Backed by the city to provide this public service to residents, Detroit City Railway company was granted a thirty-year franchise to support public transit by horse trolley. The service first began on Jefferson Avenue as a way to provide multi-modal transit services in conjunction with the popular Michigan Central Train Depot (lovingly being redeveloped today!). The horse-trolley system successfully served the around 50,000 people who

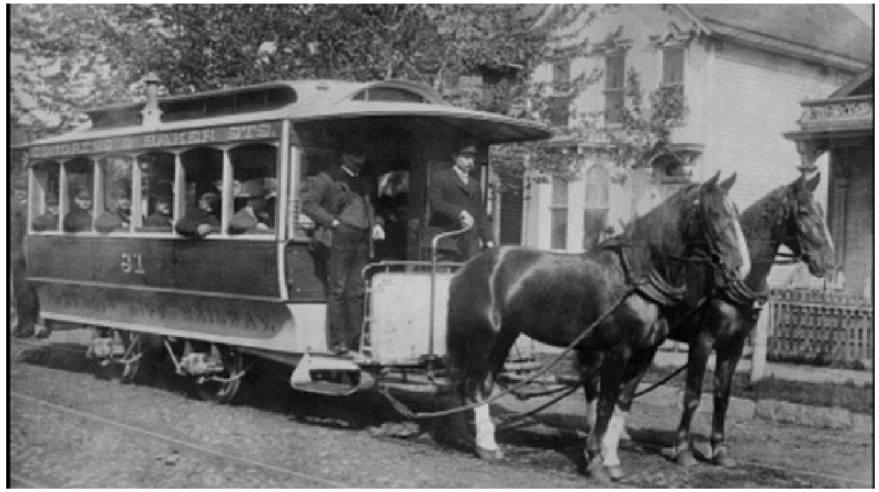


Figure 8. Horse Trolley 1863. Source: Craig

who were living in the city at this time. As the horse-trolley system expanded, Detroiters were forced to contend with the advantages and disadvantages of horse-drawn travel, seen in figure 8. These included faster travel times and the ability to travel farther distances as well as horse droppings in the streets and sickly horses.

Five years post-implementation, the Detroit City Railway (DCR) would forgo its allocated franchise to allow expansion of the public transit system along main roads. DCR recognized that additional companies were needed to support this operation. With this expansion, and others, the horse-drawn trolley system remained popular and served residents for the better half of the next 30 years (Craig, "The Early History").

As longer routes became more expensive to maintain within a growing city, alternative modes of transit were considered - especially with growing access to electricity. Also, tensions within the transit world were growing as workers began advocating for shorter hours and operating companies navigated franchise and city support. But despite these tensions, in 1892, the first electric-powered street car service was implemented by Detroit Citizens' Street Railway, pictured in figure 9 (Craig, "The Streetcar Companies").

With the switch over to rail-system service, there were four major companies who operated services in Detroit: Detroit Citizens' Street Railway; the Detroit, Fort Wayne, and Belle Isle Railway; the Detroit Electric Railway; and the Detroit Suburban Railway. Considerable debate was had between the four companies and the city to understand the best way to serve residents. These debates ultimately

Figure 9. Powered Streetcar 1893. Source: Craig

resulted in consolidation of services and the Detroit United Railway (DUR) was formed. The DUR operated along all major previously established corridors, shown in figure 7. Additionally, they provided services along growing main thoroughfares such as Fort and Chene Streets, which ultimately resulted in better connectivity throughout the city (Craig, "The Early History").

As the 1900s continued on, Detroit's population and land area both grew rapidly. By 1910, the official boundaries of the city expanded to just under 40 square miles. The regional and city populations (1.5 million to 1 million people, respectively) continued to access public transit services as their primary form of transportation. Many of the street cars available to residents were becoming overcrowded with riders, shown in figure 10.

While this was mostly positive for transit at the time, as it indicated a welcomed presence of and access to this public service, it was evident that changes were needed in order to better support this growing ridership.

Figure 10. Overcrowded Streetcar 1910. Source: Craig

Conflicts between the DUR and the city arose as a result of these needed changes. In 1919, Mayor John Couzens, partner and investor at Ford Motor Company, vetoed a bond issue to build a subway system in the city. Instead he proposed that the city build and operate a municipality-owned public transit operation. His proposal was ultimately accepted, and in 1922, the city of Detroit purchased the DUR on a $19,850,000 bond, becoming the largest municipality-owned transit system in the country ("History of Transit"). Around that same time, in 1920, the Detroit Rapid Transit Commission began preparing the first Regional Transportation Plan - the purpose of which was to identify key needs of riders and better connect the growing greater region with the city of Detroit proper ("History of Transit").

The newly established city-run operation resulted in the creation of the Department of Street Railways, the logo of which can be seen in figure 11. At its peak, the DSR operated over 350 miles of track, 4,000 employees, and 1,500 streetcars. The city was hoping to make financial gain from a functional city-run public transportation effort. These efforts were successful and well received. Operations continued to expand over the next 30 years, offering riders additional modes of transportation via the building and implementation of street cars, buses, and a commuter rail ("History of Transit").

Figure 11. Department of Street Railways Logo 1925. Source: Craig

Annual ridership peaked in the mid-1940s with about 490 million people riding each year (“History of Transit”). Routes served the 1.6 million people in the city spanning 139 square miles. Street cars, buses, and the commuter rail operated along most main roads in Detroit proper and into the suburbs, offering riders a 24-hour service to meet their needs.

Into the 1950s, the DSR faced some controversy as it negotiated the needs of the riders, workers, and the system itself. The DSR worked to promote their mission and provide reputable service through various campaigns and additional travel conveniences that would invest riders in their services.

One of these additional conveniences was the construction of covered stops. The first covered stop, shown in figure 12, was implemented in May 1955 to offer shelter to riders while waiting for the bus. Original stops were simple and functional, but would eventually be upgraded to include shelters with heating after the city received a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1967 (Craig, “The City of Detroit”).

Figure 12. Covered Bus Stop 1955. Source: Craig

Additionally, in 1955, the DSR implemented an interactive map system to allow riders the convenience of locating their preferred route. The interactive map, called the Service Robot Information Machine (SRIM), shown in figure 13, was located in downtown Campus Martius. The SRIM had the ability to show prospective riders where to locate a downtown loading station for DSR coach and car lines with just the push of a button (Craig, "The DSR").

Figure 13. DSR's Service Robot Information Machine 1955. Source: Craig

Despite these efforts to maintain modernity and convenience, the DSR did struggle to maintain ridership numbers with the growing popularity of the automobile through the 1950s and 1960s. Pushes for automobile ownership by the "Big 3" created a greater need for highways and a decreased desire to use public transit. The increase in operating expenses, decrease in fare-box revenues, and employees fighting for better working conditions all caused the DSR to evaluate what shifts were necessary in order to continue to provide reliable public transit options to residents ("SMART Facts & History").

In 1964, The DSR experienced a win when "Proposition G" passed, allowing previously allocated tax dollars to shift to transit support. The passing of Proposition G allowed the DSR to access previously inaccessible federal grant dollars because they were now able to match the required one-third of grants awarded through the re-allocated tax dollars (Craig, "The Launching").

In 1966, the DSR used federal and city tax dollars to purchase a new fleet of General Motors (GM) buses. At this time, the numbering system that is used today on buses was established (Craig, "DSR Routes"). Officials decided it best to include both the route number and name on the bus, as shown in figure 14.

Figure 14. Bus Numbering System 1966. Source: Craig

This new fleet of buses was not always considered the best investment as the population of Detroit declined and car ownership was boomed into the 1960s. There was a significant call in the area for additional highways to be built as the city transit was primarily car-based, that is, for those who could economically support owning their own vehicle. The city and transit officials were rethinking the ways they provided transit access to suburban and city residents.

There was a greater focus on highways and parking lots to support car traffic in the area. As a result, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) announced a plan to extend I-375—a highway on the east side of the city—to the river. The expansion of I-375 is especially significant in Detroit history, as its original construction process uprooted and destroyed a vibrant community of color called Black Bottom. This drastic change can be shown in figure 15.

This particular transit expansion decision speaks heavily to the aforementioned concept of access: for whom are systems established and why certain communities have more access and power over decisions than others.

Figure 15. Aerial View of Black Bottom Before and After Highway Expansion 1959 & 1961. Source: Laurence

Figure 16. Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority Logo 1967. Source: Craig

As transit officials in the area were considering the best ways to maintain transit access through and between the city and metro region, the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) was formed. The logo for which can be seen in figure 16. As an organization, SEMTA's focus was on the creation of long-range coordination of public mass transportation within the seven-county Detroit metro region: Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne, with the addition of Livingston a few years later ("SMART Facts & History").

SEMTA was tasked with not only planning, constructing, maintaining, replacing, improving, extending, and contracting for services between the transit providers in the listed counties but also eventually acquiring and consolidating the 18 bus companies that operated within those counties. And although SEMTA was heavily tasked, they were never awarded the power to levy taxes or provided any continuous sources of funding. SEMTA officials were forced to rely heavily on state grants and private sources of funding, which generally impeded their ability to make any significant impact.

Regional and city transit provisions continued to become increasingly overlapped. In 1969, the Detroit Common Council took budgetary control over the DSR, which permitted the use of general city tax funds to provide any needed assistance to the DSR. This change eventually resulted in a vote to completely restructure the DSR with a focus on the inclusion of various and additional transit methods (Craig, "The Launching").

In 1974, a city transportation department was established to coordinate services. This establishment provided the city with the ability to own, maintain, and operate a public transportation system and operate the system within the city and "to a distance outside they city as permitted by law" (Craig, "The Launching"). These changes consequently resulted in a name change for the city-owned transit system from the Department of Street Railways (DSR) to the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) (Craig, "The Launching").

These changes in governance provided Detroit transit with more capacity to find funding outside of fare-box revenue. In 1974, SEMTA was awarded $9.1 million in federal and state grant dollars towards the purchase of 148 new coaches. And in 1975, an additional $12.5 million federal grant dollars were obtained to support the purchase of an additional 99 coaches and other equipment. A total of 196 new buses, seen in figure 17, were ordered through GM with 148 of them being slated for DDOT (Craig, "D-DOT's First Fleet").

Figure 17. New DDOT Color Scheme 1975. Source: Craig

The purchasing and allocation of these additional buses to Detroit appeared somewhat superfluous. Downtown Detroit employment rates were dropping, reducing the need for commuter transit access. The population in the metro-region was continuing to shift, with more people moving to the suburbs each year. A lack of increase in fare rates also prohibited the transit systems from making significant profit off these additional buses (Hanifin et al.).

Through the 1970s and 1980s, after complications in maintaining a successful/thriving transit system, ridership continued to drop, in line with the dropping population of Detroit. In 1980, there were 1.2 million people living in the city and almost 4 million people living in the tri-county region. Although promises and anticipation of a regionally cooperative transit system were present, nothing came to fruition due to lack of agreement across counties and municipalities. SEMTA and DDOT were forced to close many lines, due to the inability to financially support them. They were also forced to lay off many transit employees. The transit system was suffering, in part, due to its implementation of the Downtown People Mover.

The idea of the Downtown People Mover first came to light in the early 1980s with the idea of providing a convenient, light-rail form of transportation to tourists and business people alike. The intention was to implement a fully automated—and, in-turn, low-cost-to-rider—transit system that could revitalize the Detroit Central Business Districts. In 1983, under the sponsorship of SEMTA, the Downtown People Mover construction began. At

about $67 million/mile, the project ran way over budgeted costs and the region was penalized by the federal government as they needed to borrow funds to recoup losses and complete the project (“SMART Facts & History”).

Despite these challenges, the Downtown People Mover successfully opened in July 1987 (“About the People Mover”). An image of the opening day of the is shown in figure 18.

Figure 18. Opening Day of the Detroit People Mover 1987.
Source: Witsil

The result of this tumultuous construction process was that SEMTA was forced to downsize and shift priorities, reorganizing from a seven-county operation to a three-county operation, excluding Detroit. **This reorganization also prompted a rebranding for SEMTA to become the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) - which exists and operates bus lines throughout Detroit's surrounding counties today** (“SMART Facts & History”).

With the loss of support of SEMTA/SMART and in hopes of supporting the dropping city population and growing regional population, the Regional Transit Coordinating Council was formed in 1989. Regional Council leaders urged transit providers to consider implementing regional transit plans that could support the changing demographics in the area.

Into the 1990s, many efforts were made among the operating transit providers, but a lack of general consensus continued to restrain significant regional cooperation. SMART and DDOT attempted to merge multiple bus lines and establish a common regional bus pass, but these efforts were unsuccessful. In 1998, as an even more significant segment of the population was moving to the metro and suburban areas, DDOT stopped all suburban service creating significant disconnect between the region and city.

By the 2000s, public transit in Detroit was becoming increasingly unreliable. With about 900,000 people living in the city in the year 2000, all city services (including transit) became less accessible and functional. Transit advocates formed an official group in 2001. They called themselves Transportation Riders United (TRU). and had/have a core goal of improving the quality of transit services in Detroit ("History & Accomplishments").

In early 2003, there were efforts to create what was being called the Detroit Regional Transportation Authority (DARTA) between the city of Detroit, SMART, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, and Wayne Counties. However, later that year, the court declared that the process utilized to create DARTA was illegal, and DARTA efforts were terminated. People were unable to access reliable public transit at this time, and residents of the city and suburbs were no longer considering public transit a viable method of moving around the city.

By the end of the 2000s it was evident that major shifts were needed in the transit space. The Regional Transit Coordinating Council appointed a CEO to develop a Regional Transit Plan that would be published in 2008. The transit providers in the area were working with limited resources to provide for the decreasing Detroit population. There were about 700,000 people living in the city by 2010. The city of Detroit was significantly struggling to provide basic city resources as they faced corruption and this decline in population throughout the beginning of the 2010s.

Despite the challenges faced, plans to construct a light rail along Woodward gained momentum. This was the first time that private companies were becoming publicly involved in Detroit transit since the initial implementation of public service. Government entities declared that private funding could be used to match the federal dollars provided, but disagreements over alignment of the rail prevented construction from moving forward until a few years later. Additionally, changes in millages were being discussed to help a, now failing, transportation system.

In 2012, the Michigan State Legislature declared that regional cooperation was a necessity, and the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) was formed. The RTA, logo found in figure 19, was/is intended to

RTA
REGIONAL
TRANSIT AUTHORITY
OF SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

Figure 19. Regional Transit Authority Logo.
Source: Regional Transit Authority

oversee Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties and to develop a plan to create regional transit synchronicity. After its creation, the RTA worked and continues to work to coordinate a more functioning system of transit for Detroit and the surrounding region.

The M1 Woodward Light Rail construction began in 2015, but not without controversy. City residents questioned and are still questioning the function and intention of building a new system on the main corridor - when transit access in other parts of the city are basically inaccessible. In fact, in 2015, TRU launched a #HeyRTA campaign to uplift Detroiters' voices in the debates about transit developments ("History & Accomplishments"). Images from the campaign can be seen throughout this report.

In line with TRU, the media was beginning to take notice of riders experiences. A story published in the Detroit Free Press in 2015 outlined the long commute of Detroiter James Robertson. Robertson, seen in figure 20, reflected on his extreme commute from his Detroit home to his job in adjacent suburb Rochester Hills. The commute took almost four hours each way. The story highlighted the disconnected regional transit and how it impacted Robertson, forcing him to take two buses and walk almost 21 miles each day (Laitner). Stories such as these sparked additional conversation regarding the reasons why transit had been so desperately

Figure 20. James Robertson Walking to Work. Source: ABC News

failing in a place where it once thrived.

In 2016, the RTA put a millage increase on the ballot, which would have allowed for additional tax dollars from Wayne, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Macomb counties to support regional and local transit systems. The millage increase would have allowed for the implementation of the RTA's 20-year regional master plan, which seeks to successfully connect the four counties and provide more transit convenience to riders. In November 2016,

Washtenaw and Wayne counties voted yes to support the regional transit plan, while Macomb and Oakland voted no. The majority vote ultimately led to a failure to pass the millage, which would have cost homeowners only $95/year (Lawrence and Witsil). This is relevant today as it speaks to the regional division that still exists surrounding the importance of public transit.

Despite this setback with the millage, there were some improvements made to the transit system over the next few years. DDOT was able to reinstate some of the previously functioning routes, including some 24-hour routes on major roads. Additionally, the Woodward Light Rail, branded now as the Qline, shown in figure 15, opened in 2017, offering 3.3 miles of transit access along Woodward Avenue ("Detroit's QLINE").

Figure 21. New QLINE Streetcar 2017. Source: Detroit Free Press

Beginning in 2019 and stretching into current day, local and regional transit has shown signs of improvement. DDOT is now able to provide twelve 24-7 routes, running along previously mentioned main corridors, such as Woodward, Gratiot, Michigan, and Jefferson Avenues. Additionally, DDOT runs 30 Local, Crosstown, and Express routes. DDOT has also implemented WiFi on buses to create a more convenient space for riders (Runyan, "DDOT"). SMART and DDOT have also partnered to institute a unified payment system called DART and eliminate transfer fees between systems. A four-hour ride ticket is priced at $2 and a 24-hour pass at $5, or riders are able to purchase longer-term passes—seven-day or 31-day—for both local and regional transit access. An image of this ticketing system is shown in figure 22 (Gifford).

Figure 22. Dart Passes for SMART and DDOT Trips. Source: SMART

In 2020, with the emergence of COVID-19, transit providers in Detroit and the metro-region were forced to make shifts to support the safety of both drivers and riders. In March 2020, all bus services were canceled for one day after a worker strike regarding health safety on buses (Newman, "How Public Transit").

After the short break, Mayor Mike Duggan announced that DDOT would waive all fares for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of concerns for health safety, ridership was and has been greatly impacted. Eight of the 30 Local, Crosstown, and Express lines have been and are still closed. Less frequent weekday and minimal weekend service schedules were also implemented. In a Curbed Detroit article, SMART indicated that their ridership was impacted by almost 80% as a result of COVID (Mondry). DDOT faced an almost $6 million revenue deficit in 2021 for free-fares (Newman, "As DDOT").

Because of the impact of COVID-19 on ridership, RTA and DDOT were both forced to rethink the way people move around cities on public transit. In 2021, the RTA published a revised 20-year Master Plan that considers how the utilization of non-city-run local transit providers can improve services and provide a more inclusive transit space. They worked to incorporate riders' opinions in the master plan, gathering information from almost 4,000 people. The implementation of the new master plan set the stage for the RTA to reintroduce a millage vote on the November 2022 ballot (Batcheller). The millage was, fortunately, voted through!

As we consider the history of transit in Detroit, we can begin to understand some of the social and economic influences, and pressures, that have shaped the city into what it is today. Looking forward, **it's prudent to question whether regional and public transit will continue to exist in the same state. Will non-riders be able to recognize the importance of transit to the wellbeing of the city and its residents? Will current and new riders expect to access public transit in the same ways?** It is important to acknowledge, again, that transit history in Detroit has primarily operated within a small bureaucracy and has not always been inclusive of the changing needs and demographics of the city. As we move through the rest of this project, we look forward to exploring the ways in which we can contribute to a more just transit system that offers services that promotes the wellness of all people.

COMMUNITY

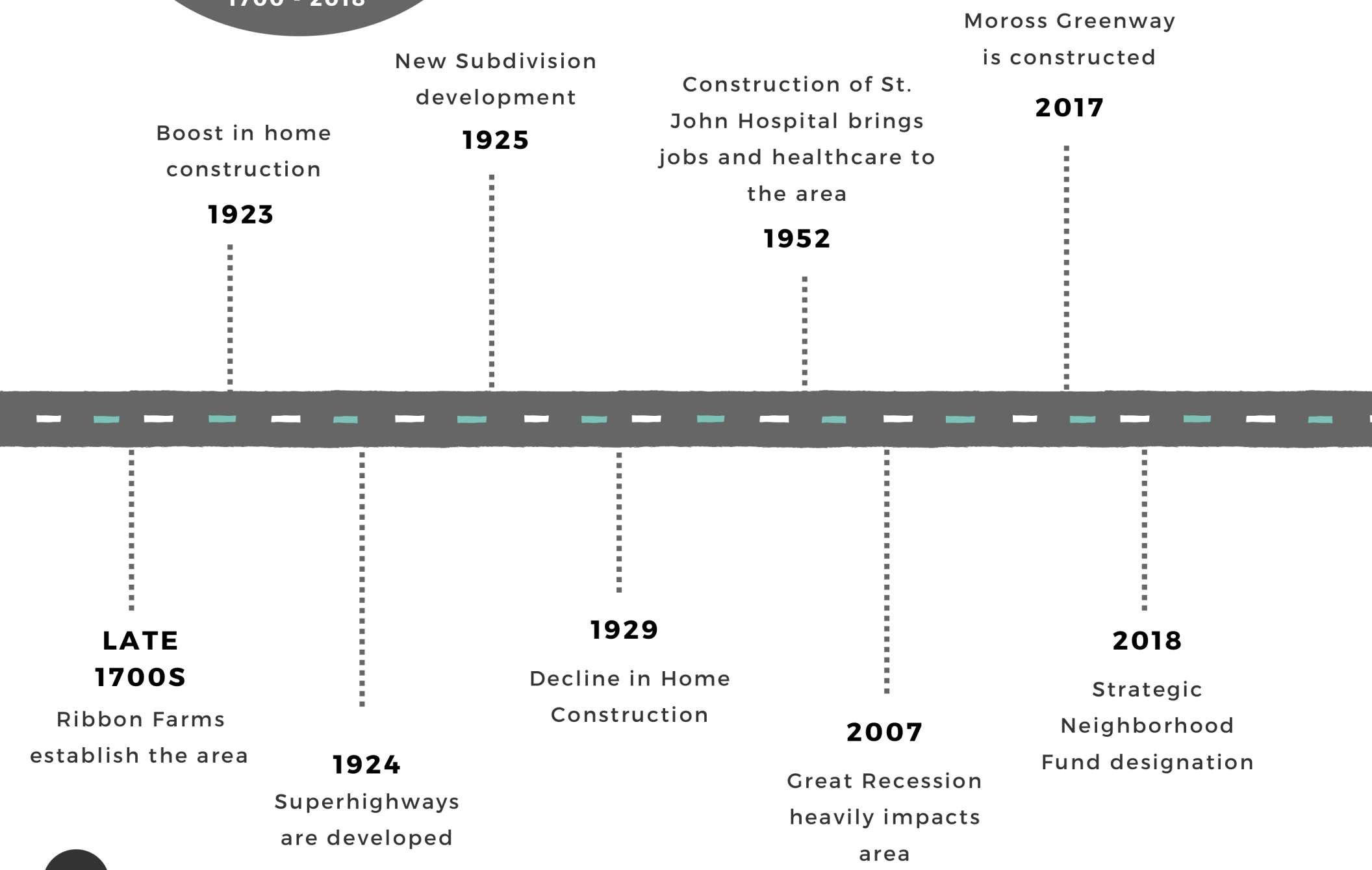
TIMELINE

HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

COMMUNITY TIMELINE

1700 - 2018

Figure 23. Community Timeline. Source: Capstone team



HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

The previous historical section has provided context for Detroit's transit infrastructure and existing conditions. But beyond the history of transportation in Detroit, it is also important to look at the history within the specific community on which this study is centered. The following exploration of the history of the geographic area provides the social and physical context that grounds this study within existing conditions.

The geographic location of study centers on three neighborhoods on the eastside of Detroit: Cornerstone Village, East English Village, and Morningside. This area sits directly on the border between the cities of Detroit, the Grosse Pointes (to the East), and Harper Woods (to the North). The history of the area and the people who have lived there throughout the years helps inform its current conditions. In particular, **a focus on the community's interaction with transit highlights the complexities and shortcomings of transit on the Eastside.**

A map of the three neighborhoods, in which the study is focused, can be seen in figure 24.

Figure 24. Project Study Area. Source: East English Village Association

Like much of Detroit, this area began in the late 18th century as a series of ribbon farms–long, narrow strips of land along the Detroit River and Lake Saint Clair. The farming land attracted a large number of German, Irish, and Polish immigrants (East Side Story). These farms stretched for miles, providing access to water sources for farming, transportation, fishing and game, and drinking water ("Ribbon Farms").

The length, direction, and organization of the ribbon farms influenced the construction of roads, neighbor blocks and boundary lines, and city borders, evident in the boundary lines in figure 25. This is particularly evident in the area marked in blue, which would later become Mack Avenue, and in the area marked in green, which would later be developed into I-94. In addition, the area highlighted in red is almost exactly the current borders of the three Eastside neighborhoods today.

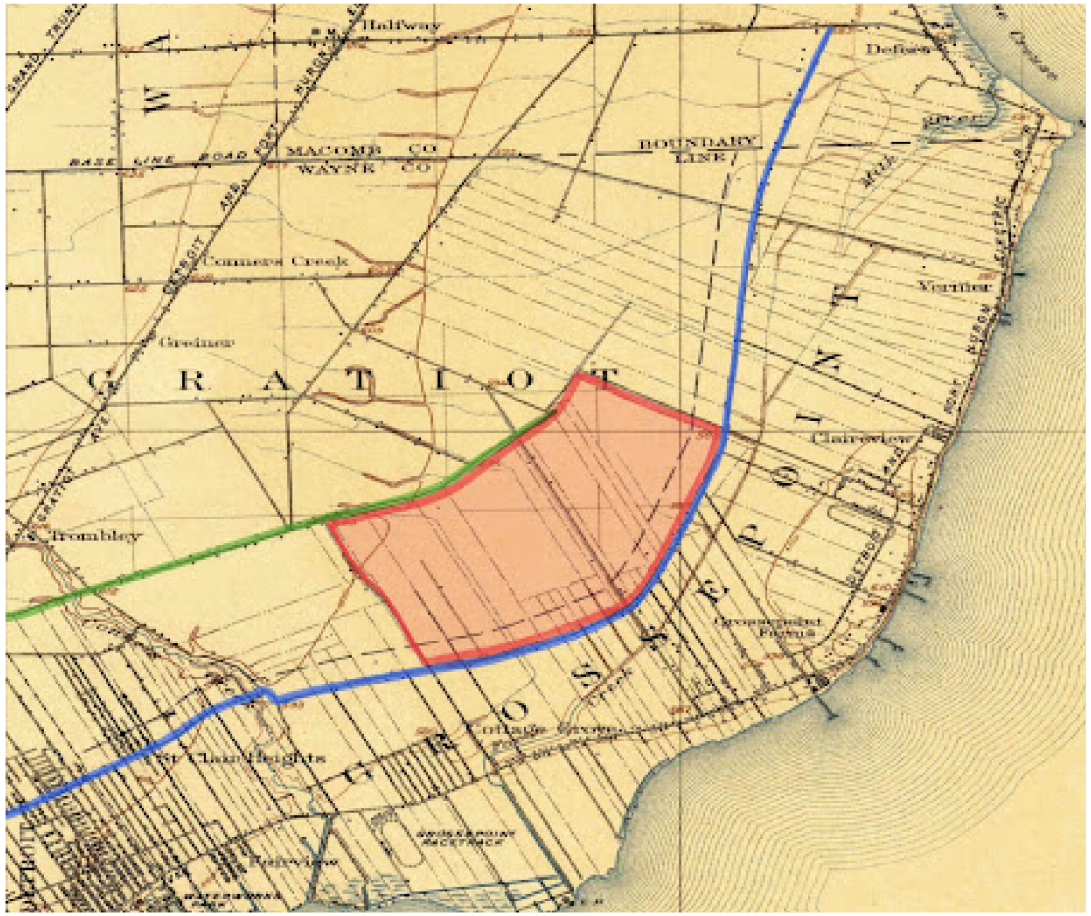


Figure 25. Ribbon Farms and Border Lines. Source: Encyclopedia of Detroit. Annotation: Capstone team.

The early residents of the east side communities were much like they are today. The area attracted immigrant populations, reflecting the area's existing ethnically diverse communities. There is also currently a large aging population within the community, with many houses only changing hands two or three times since being built (East Side Story). **Historically, when people move to or are born within this community, they tend to stay.**

With the rise of manufacturing and the burgeoning automotive industry, middle class mobility was on the rise and jobs were plentiful. **An increase in immigration to the city brought a rapidly growing population to the Eastside, particularly around 1923 when the city reconstructed a massive sewer, believed to be the largest in the world at the time**. With new access to the sewer and other city services like transit, many new homeowners began building in the area. However, there was also a boom in homes built within unincorporated portions of Grosse Pointe Township where those services were unavailable. These homes were built on unpaved roads, with no sidewalks, sewers, or water. There was a rising fear surrounding this area and how to remedy the failing conditions. Many residents looked to Detroit to annex the area and take responsibility for the conditions ("Detroit Borders").

Around the same time in April of 1924, the Detroit Rapid Transit Commission announced a metropolitan transportation plan to expand existing roads into "superhighways" including Mack Avenue and then-Seven Mile Road, now Moross Road, as seem below in figure 26. This expansion was meant to accommodate the rapid growth in automobile ownership and in suburban development in recent years. The original plan for this expansion included widening the road for not only automobile traffic, but also streetcars and rapid transit ("Detroit Borders").

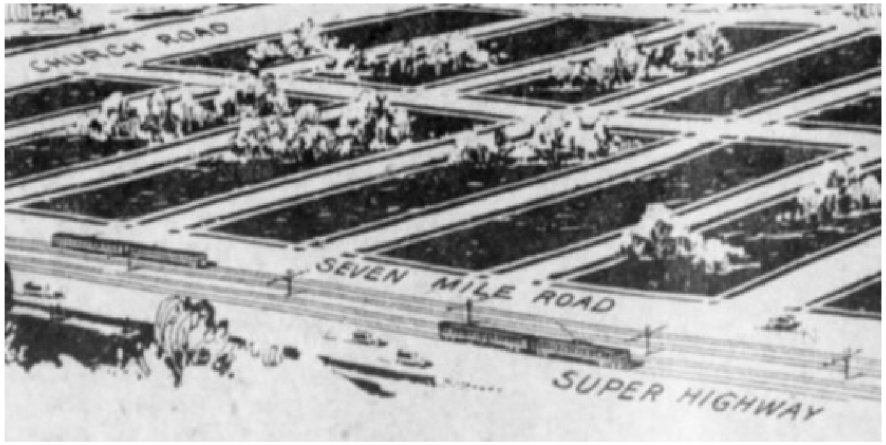


Figure 26. Proposed Super Highway. Source: Detroit Urbanism

The proposed expansion of these two major roads drew great support from surrounding businesses and developments. In fact, the intersection of Mack and Seven Mile (now Moross) was labeled as **"the most important intersection on the east side"** by developers Wormer & Moore who were building and advertising a new subdivision beginning in June of 1925, seen in figure 27.

Advantages to this particular location at the time included proximity to Detroit's new bus system, Seven Mile road's distinction as the longest paved road— at 30 miles— in the city, and restrictions put on who could live in the area. The new subdivision was laden with restrictions in order to control who lived there, under the guise of the promise of high property value. These restrictions included minimum development costs, development of exclusively brick, single-family homes, and racial occupancy. Deed restrictions prohibiting any non-white person from purchasing or living on a particular lot were very common at the time and enforced by the government. **This was one of the most heavily restricted developments on the Eastside** ("Detroit Borders").

Figure 27. Wormer & Moore Advertisement.
Source: Detroit Urbanism

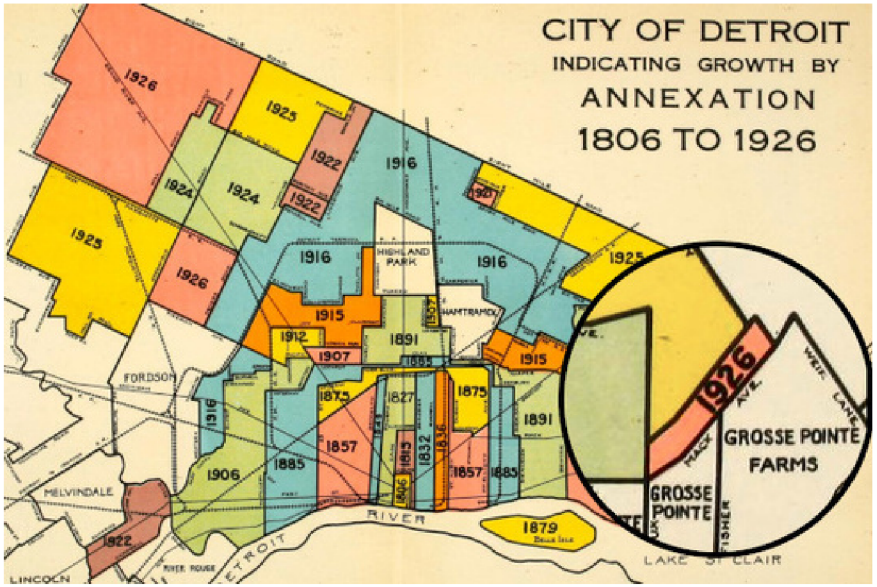


Figure 28. Detroit Annexation Map (1806-1926). Source: Detroit Urbanism

Shortly after, in January 1926, the land that now makes up the majority of Cornerstone Village was annexed from Grosse Pointe, as seen in the map figure 28, making it a part of the city of Detroit. The vote for annexation represented very little of the actual community, with only 0.1% of the voters actually living in the annexation area. In fact, the proposal did not pass within the annexation area during the second round of voting, but passed in both Detroit and then Grosse Pointe Township. The majority of lobbying for the vote was promoted by real estate developers in the area, like Wormer & Moore, to support their own development interests. A press release from Wormer & Moore, highlighted how the annexation of the area increased its desirability and how the subdivision was now the fastest growing community on the Eastside. They attributed this not only to the annexation, but also to the bus lines that ran along Mack Avenue and the rigid racial restrictions placed upon their subdivisions (“Detroit Borders”).

Following the stock market crash in 1929, the Eastside of Detroit saw decline in home building. Many lots and subdivisions were owned by developers and the building activity slowed immensely. Much of the Eastside suffered for long after the rebuild of the market, with some areas not bouncing back until the mid 1960s (East Side Story). This lull in development is still visible today reflected in the variety of housing stock, as seen below in figure 29. Houses built in the early to mid 1920s can be seen directly next to others built in the mid 1960s.

Figure 29. Example of Architectural Variation. Source: Detroit Urbanism

The next major development in the area came with the development of the St. John Hospital and Medical Center, seen in figure 30. The Sisters of St. Joseph opened the hospital in 1952 and absorbed the patient populations from other various medical centers and hospitals from 1997 to 2007 (“Ascension Michigan”). Now called the Ascension St. John Hospital, it is still located on Moross Road, just northwest of Mack Avenue and remains an important community asset.

Figure 30. Original St. John Hospital. Source: Acension St. John

The 2007 Great Recession hit Detroit particularly hard. In fact, one of the top ten hardest hit zip codes across the country was 48224, which encompasses Morningside and East English Village (East Side Story). Although the area had experienced economic hardship before, the recession brought more challenges and had more implications to the area. The lasting effects of the recession can still be seen within the neighborhoods with things like high residential and commercial vacancies, illegal dumping, and neighborhood disinvestment.

In order to combat some effects of the recession on the community, the idea of a greenway was proposed. The Moross Greenway Project focused on the beautification of the declining landscape on the median islands of Moross Road. Ground was broken on the project in 2015, shown in figure 31, and was completed in 2017. The project is still ongoing with future developments in the works including public art and solar powered street lighting. Overall, the Greenway project has an impact on increased property values and beautification (“About Us”). **Moreover, the regeneration and transformation of green spaces in communities have strong impacts on physical, mental, and emotional community wellbeing.**

Figure 31. Moross Greenway Project. Source: Moross Greenway

Around the same time as the identification of the Greenway project, the City of Detroit and Invest Detroit launched the **Strategic Neighborhood Fund (SNF)** initiative in 2014 with three neighborhoods and expanded to seven more in 2018. "The SNF initiative is an effort by the City and its non-profit and private sector partners to stabilize neighborhoods and attract new residents through projects aimed at boosting economic opportunity and improving quality of life," (Detroit Metro Area Communities Study). Each of the identified neighborhoods underwent an extensive development plan, involving city, agency, and community members.

In the second round, the East Warren/Cadieux area was identified as one of these strategic neighborhoods. This encompasses the aforementioned Cornerstone Village, East English Village, and Morningside. Since its identification within the initiative, the neighborhoods have undergone an extensive neighborhood framework plan by the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department in partnership with Invest Detroit. A breakdown of the project can be found in figure 32, below. The plan focuses on commercial and mixed use development, streetscape improvements, parks and open spaces, and neighborhood stabilization (East Warren/Cadiuex).

Figure 32. SNF Development Plan for Eastside Communities. Source: City of Detroit

The existing conditions of the geographic study area have been clearly influenced by its storied history. The three neighborhoods on the Eastside of Detroit have seen **periods of investment and disinvestment** through the years. **One thing that has remained consistent is the spirit of the neighborhood and the people who live there**, evident in the neighborhoods' aging populations. Racially charged development practices and policies, city border lines, economic hardship, and periods of various levels of investment and disinvestment have all influenced the area's existing conditions and characterized how the residents interact and move about their communities. As we move forward through the analysis, it is key to identify and learn how the community has evolved through the years to provide context for development moving forward.

Figure 33. Eastside Community Members on a Group Bike Ride.
Source: East English Village Association

CONCLUSIONS

HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

Understanding historical conditions can provide insight into the function of different systems and the way they have impacted the city over time. Our historical research makes it clear that transit in Detroit exists with a complex system of socioeconomic factors. Detroit's history with transit, as well as the study area's community history, provides a framework for the rest of the analysis moving forward, **specifically by outlining the complexity of cities, communities, and their offered services.** In this analysis, we have sought to effectively portray a comprehensive history that is inclusive of major historical shifts while also faithfully representing the people who live in these communities and their stories. This historical context will serve as the groundwork on which we frame further analysis with specific respect to the lived experiences of those within the community we are studying.

CASE STUDIES

UNDERSTANDING TRANSIT THROUGH EXAMPLE

INTRODUCTION

CASE STUDIES

Case studies are in-depth investigations of people, systems, and/or communities (Mcleod). Conducting case studies provides an opportunity to evaluate a community or system response to a problem and provide a framework for better understanding potential solutions based in reality. Case studies are relevant in project-based applied research because they provide insights into lived aspects of a given research question that might not otherwise be available through a system-level lens. **The case studies chosen for this project provide perspectives on transit and community wellness that speak to successful public transit models that allow for equitable, accessible transit and community connectivity**, focusing specifically on the use of nontraditional forms of public transit. The case studies analyzed in the following section are representative of local, national, and international systems. High-level, overarching insights and ideas can be generalized as a result of this method of paralleled community research; however, it should be understood that each community and transit system are highly influenced by unique social, economic, and physical factors.

CONTEXT

CASE STUDIES

The studies chosen for inclusion in this report come primarily from online sources. The content focuses on understanding public transit's role in community health, mobility hubs, marketing, and connectivity. It is also important to note that successful models of transit exist across the world, and it would be impossible to include case studies of all transit systems. **The studies described here were selected for their particular relevance to the Detroit transit system, connections to ideas about community wellness, and themes around multi-modal transportation and/or mobility hubs.** More case studies on transit systems around the world can be found from various sources. Most relevant to this research are case studies conducted by Regional Transit Authority (RTA) to investigate mobility-oriented development (MOD/TOD). In an effort to bring more depth and context to this analysis, we would like to acknowledge the various case studies already examined by organizations, like the RTA, but instead focus the following section on four case studies that are particularly relevant to our research goals.

FRAMING

The relevance of each of the following case studies is contextualized and evaluated through the lens of the following questions:

1|What is the context of this case study? Who was involved? What problem did the solution address?

2|How does this case study address mobility, community wellness, and public transit?

3|What can we learn from this case study? What does this case study propose as a solution to promote community connection through public transit?

CASE STUDY ONE:
TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY WELLNESS
DETROIT

TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY WELLNESS - DETROIT

WHAT IS THE CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDY?

As previously mentioned, transit has significant implications on community wellness and personal holistic health. A case study conducted by Camille McBride as a part of the Master of Public Health program at the University of Michigan focuses on this fact through the exploration of the health implications of transportation in Detroit. **This study is based on the foundational understanding that transit links people to opportunity and provides the necessary resources for physical, social, and economic mobility** (McBride). McBride acknowledges the complicated and exploitative history of the rise and fall of the automotive industry in Detroit, with particular focus on how Detroit has been deliberately designed to support automotive travel over public transit. The study also addresses how the violent history of racism and white flight has created a deep segregation-based wedge between the city of Detroit and the suburbs, which has directly hindered regional efforts in developing a more robust transit system.

Figure 34. Health Implications of Transportation Study. Source: McBride

Through the exploration of transit history in Detroit and an analysis of its current conditions, McBride argues that **current Detroit transit systems do not support healthy living.** McBride examines how employment and commuting to and from work are affected by public transit as well as how transit affects food security. Both of these components, although just two small aspects of holistic community wellness, are particularly relevant to Detroit, as discussed in further detail on the following page.

TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY WELLNESS - DETROIT

HOW DOES THIS CASE STUDY ADDRESS MOBILITY, COMMUNITY WELLNESS, AND PUBLIC TRANSIT?

McBride's study primarily addresses how public transit systems impact community wellness through indicators of stress among underemployed, undereducated, commuting, and food-insecure populations. Decreased mobility reduces access to jobs and contributes heavily to the concentrations of cyclical poverty in Detroit. This phenomenon, known as the spatial mismatch hypothesis, explains how low mobility prevents people from traveling to areas of opportunity from areas of poverty (McBride 63). McBride highlights the location of well paying jobs in Detroit, compared to those in the suburbs, lifting up the idea that commuting to work, housing discrimination, and inadequate transit are detrimental to economic wellbeing.

Transit uncertainty or unreliable forms of transit can also be major sources of stress and anxiety, negatively impacting wellness. As previously mentioned in this analysis, Detroit has a high population of residents who do not own a car or who experience regular transportation insecurity. The stress caused from these insecurities is harmful to physical, emotional, and mental health. We also know transit is a social determinant of health, meaning it "affects a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks" ("Social Determinants"). McBride's case study precisely highlights how access to transit affects all five of the domains of the social determinants of health: economic stability, education access and quality, health care access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, and social and community context. **Transit access increases economic, education, and health care access.**

A healthy built environment incorporates a robust transit system and increases mobility. It also creates community connectivity and encourages movement throughout one's community while providing opportunities for social connection (Transit Plan).

McBride addresses the obvious impact of transit on physical health. The underdeveloped transit system in Detroit directly impacts access to foods that support healthy living. People's diet choices are often based on what is immediately available to them. Black neighborhoods in Detroit are disproportionately provided with food options that negatively impact residents' health (McBride 65). Beyond the fact that Detroit, in general, experiences food insecurity and lack of access to healthy food options, inadequate transit systems further limit the food choices a Detroiter can make.

TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY WELLNESS - DETROIT

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS CASE STUDY?

McBride's case study is particularly relevant to this analysis because it highlights the racial health inequities that arise because of the lackluster transit system in Detroit. The study focuses mostly on the essential connection between employment and commuting as well as transit and food security, both which are attributes of community wellness. McBride discusses both the direct and indirect health implications of transit in Detroit and offers some recommendations and next steps for the future of transit in Detroit. Ultimately, this study looks to the regional nature of transit as a key resource to creating a more robust transit system and improving the health and wellness of Detroiters through increased access to education, food, healthcare, and social and economic opportunity. One of the key conclusions highlights how some regional transit efforts in the past, like the FAST service, which runs bus lines down major corridors with fewer stops, have made minor improvements to the transit system but ultimately benefit the affluent downtown area over city residents.

The conclusions and recommendations in this study provide us, as researchers, with further data with which to frame our exploration of public transit, mobility, and community wellness. This study's focus on the regional nature of transit and how it impacts health and wellness is particularly relevant to our analysis. Increased mobility increases opportunity for positive community wellness. This case study makes clear that public transit has significant direct and indirect impacts on community wellness, and as such, any transit plans or developments should center on the implications for residents and transit users. **Overall, it is clear that increased investment in transit will provide a greatly needed improvement to the health and wellness of Detroit residents.**

CASE STUDY TWO:
ROSA PARKS TRANSIT CENTER
DETROIT

ROSA PARKS TRANSIT CENTER - DETROIT

Figure 35. Rosa Parks Transit Center. Source: Innovative Surface Works

WHAT IS THE CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDY?

The Rosa Parks Transit Center (RPTC) is an example of a multi-modal transportation mobility hub in Downtown Detroit. Built between 2005 and 2009 as an initiative of the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT), the RPTC serves as the downtown transportation hub for Detroit transit. The transit center features 15 bays and services 31 transit bus routes, integrating service offerings from DDOT, SMART, and Transit Windsor-Canadian bus service ("Detroit Department of Transportation"). Additionally, there are designated spaces within the hub for cab and taxi access. The hub is intended to encourage pedestrian connectivity to the Detroit People Mover and other spaces of Downtown Detroit.

Physical features of the space include an 25,000-square-foot indoor facility and over two acres of exterior space for transit access. RPTC offers additional public features, such as one of the only public restrooms in the downtown area as well as on-site security, information booths, retail space, and automatic ticketing. Features of the RPTC can be seen in figure 35.

The center was developed by Parsons Brickerhoff with design features that are both functional and contemporary. These features are displayed in figure 36, below. Most notably in the physical design of the RPTC are the large canopies that make up the majority of the outside space. The motivation for the canopies was to create a park-like open-air setting for public gathering and to support the ecosystem in funneling rainwater to garden areas nearby (Ross). The design and location selection of the transit center were intentional. The development of the RPTC was seen as a key element to the city's transportation system—serving as both a transfer point for the integration of multiple transportation systems as well as a civic landmark within the city's urban context ("Rosa Parks").

Figure 36. Rosa Parks Transit Center. Source: Archello

ROSA PARKS TRANSIT CENTER - DETROIT

HOW DOES THIS CASE STUDY ADDRESS MOBILITY, COMMUNITY WELLNESS, AND PUBLIC TRANSIT?

Analyzing the case of the Rosa Parks Transit Center reveals that it addresses the above mentioned concepts in a simple yet profound way: it creates space for connectivity. Mobility and public transit are addressed in the connection of bus routes—city, suburban, and international—the light rail, pedestrian travel, and private car transportation. The RPTC is one example of a mobility hub in Detroit, which suggests potential interest in creating similar types of development in the city–although data on usage of the RPTC is scarce, as detailed later. **The space has the potential to promote community wellness by facilitating access to transportation and providing connectivity opportunities for individuals.** The RPTC serves as a landmark within the city and offers users additional conveniences that do not exist within the same context in the Detroit transit space. The physical space also serves a gathering spot amongst community members and public transit users. Construction of the RPTC represents the intentional use of a downtown space, located in an area that is expected to have continual growth over the next few years. Overall, it is a development that incorporates a variety of focus areas within the project including mobility, community wellness, and public transit.

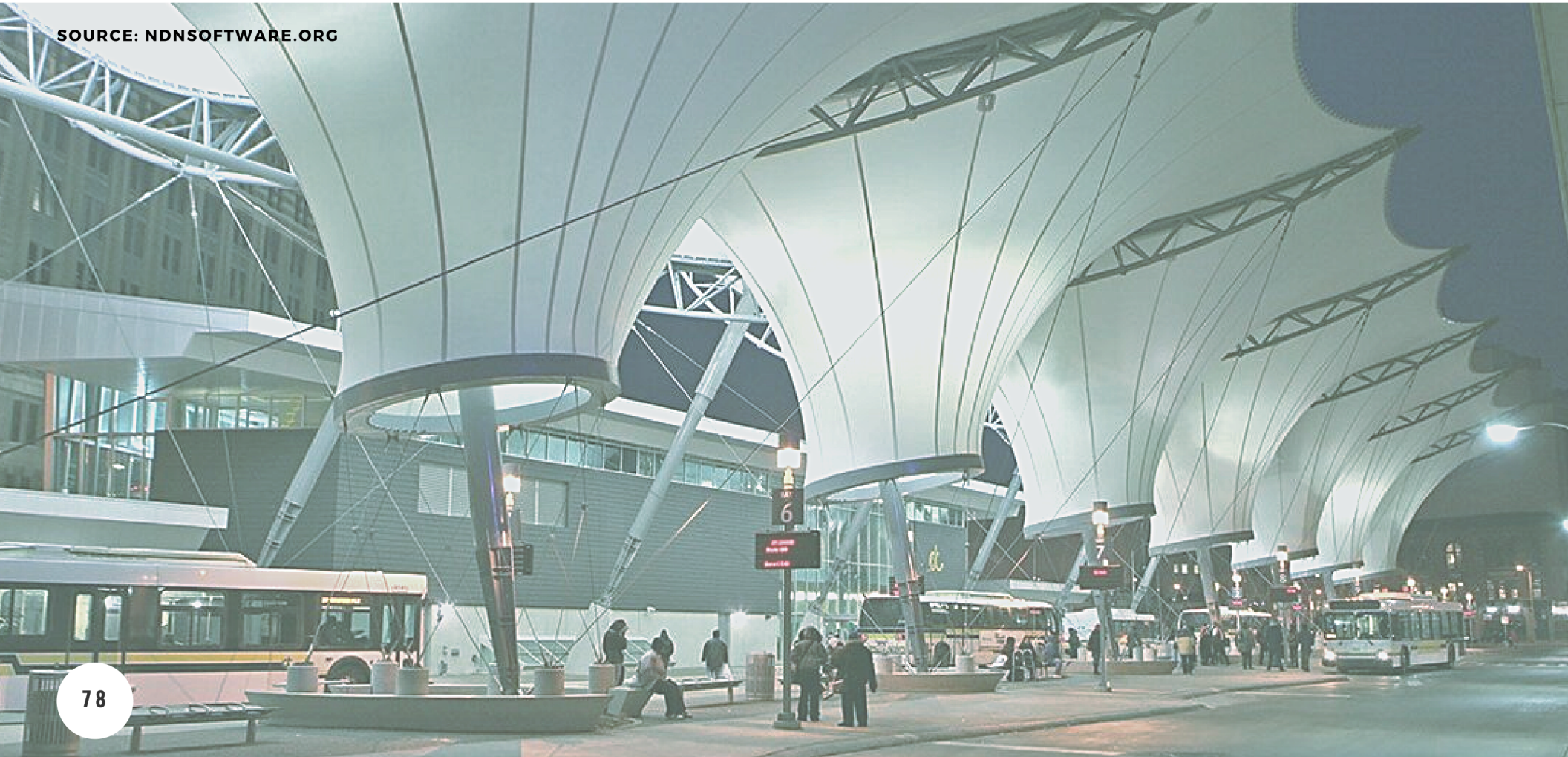
ROSA PARKS TRANSIT CENTER - DETROIT

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS CASE STUDY?

The study of the Rosa Parks Transit Center is relevant to this research because it is one of the only mobility hubs in Detroit currently, though ongoing developments indicate the potential for additional mobility hubs around the city in the future. The development of the RPTC speaks to the interest of creating these types of multi-modal mobility spaces in Detroit. The main takeaways from the study of the RPTC come primarily from firsthand experiences in the space as well as general knowledge surrounding usage and perception of the RPTC. There is little information to be found about the usage of the RPTC, which is one potential area for future research revealed through this study. **We argue for the importance of increased data collection that would track and evaluate how people interact with and use transit developments in the city.** This data would provide a better understanding of the benefits of existing spaces while also helping transit officials and developers to better understand what additional services could be offered at this or future mobility hubs to promote usage and comfortability. Our understanding is that the RPTC is not always accessed to its full potential and has suffered from a further reduction in accessibility due to COVID-19.

The RPTC can inform our understanding of the physical design of a potential mobility hub on the Eastside. We recognize, though, that not all mobility hubs have to be as massive as this one to serve key community needs and functions. Because the RPTC is located in the downtown business district, there was heavy emphasis in its design on creating an impactful physical space. This focus may have lessened the opportunity to center on more practical aspects of the design, such as safety and inclusion, both of which have potential negative impacts on usage.

Generally, we feel that the development and use of the RPTC can inform the way we view community engagement in the development of systems and spaces. **Understanding community needs is critical in making impactful and functional changes.** The Rosa Parks Transit Center is not necessarily located in a place that is convenient for most transit users; it also lacks some amenities that create a safer, more user-friendly space. Community engagement efforts are needed both prior to the development of a space and as the space is used in order to better understand community needs as they shift. The design and implementation of the functions of the RPTC in the public transit system and the physical development of the space may have been and still could be more cohesive and better designed to meet the needs of its users if community engagement strategies were more heavily considered and utilized.



SOURCE: NDNSOFTWARE.ORG

CASE STUDY THREE:
MARKETING STRATEGIES
CLEVELAND RTA

MARKETING STRATEGIES - CLEVELAND RTA

WHAT IS THE CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDY?

Conducting a case study on the Cleveland RTA has been recommended for this project due the similarities between Detroit and Cleveland, in terms of both the cities themselves and their transit systems. In the past few years, the Cleveland transit system has undergone significant upgrades, resulting in increased ridership and connectivity for users. Most significantly, the Cleveland RTA has recently revamped its metro train system to reach further destinations and operate more functionally. The Cleveland Metro has an average annual ridership of about 3.7 million people and operates three major lines: a heavy train, the Red Line, and two light rails, the Green and Blue lines ("Metro of Cleveland"). The Cleveland RTA also operates some bus lines through the city and paratransit services. Across all three RTA coordinated systems—trains, buses, and paratransit—ridership has increased almost 29% in the last year ("Greater Cleveland").

In addition to functional upgrades to the system, the Cleveland RTA has worked to "rebrand" what it means and looks like to be a transit rider in their city. Between 2019 and present, the Cleveland RTA has launched multiple public-interest campaigns to encourage non-riders to access their upgraded transit system. They have also launched in-transit programming, like a holiday campaign, to bring joy to transit use.

An image capture from a holiday campaign video is shown to the right in figure 37. In 2021, The RTA received First Place in the American Public Transportation Associations (APTA) Annual AdWheel Competition for their production of the social media campaign during the holidays (Krecic).

One of the other most successful campaigns launched was a series of “sleek” ads shown on public television and online platforms that depicted the use of the train system as a “luxury experience” for riders. Picture your average luxury car commercial but for public transit! The commercials work to highlight the function, ease in access, luxury, convenience, and reliability of the transit system. All of the ads end with promoting use of the transit system as the “the ride of your life" (Gianatasio). An image capture from one of these videos is shown in figure 38.

Figure 37. Cleveland RTA Holiday Rides Campaign. Source: News 5 Cleveland

Figure 38. “The Ride Of Your Life” Cleveland RTA Marketing Campaign. Source: Muse By CL

MARKETING STRATEGIES - CLEVELAND RTA

HOW DOES THIS CASE STUDY ADDRESS MOBILITY, COMMUNITY WELLNESS, AND PUBLIC TRANSIT?

One recognized barrier to the use of public transit in Detroit is perception of its usage. Aligned with the racial, social, and classist assumptions that frame much of the city's history, public transit usage is often viewed as a means of transportation only for people who have no other way of moving around. **There is judgment toward and stereotypes surrounding public transit users in Detroit specifically based on why, how, and for what purposes public transit systems are used.**

Analyzing the Cleveland RTA's advertising campaigns reveals the appeal they present for people who do not frequently use transit, as the ads suggest viewers "take a test drive today" on public transit (Gianatasio). This rebranding may not be as powerful to people who are already interacting with public transit systems daily, yet it definitely targets new users. New users equal new money. Transit systems can only be properly funded and maintained when they are financially supported through user fare revenue. Increasing ridership on Detroit public transit would not only improve connectivity simply through greater usage but also create room for additional improvements through increase in fare revenue.

MARKETING STRATEGIES - CLEVELAND RTA

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS CASE STUDY?

This case study can inform the way we understand marketing as a tool to promote public transit use. In addition to functionality, the **Detroit transit space needs to work to take control of the narrative surrounding public transit use.** By interacting with and promoting use of public transit amongst different populations of people, transit advocates, researchers, and developers can positively impact the narrative of ridership and increase the use of public transit overall. Although rebranding Detroit public transit as a "luxury ride" might not be the best fit for this system, investigating the features and impact of the Cleveland RTA's campaigns can invite innovation into the way we speak to people about public transit use. This case study also shows the power of tracking data and the impact of marketing efforts. Tangible successes from these marketing efforts can be observed in the increase in ridership and, in turn, the increase in opportunity for fare revenue and transit experience improvements.

CASE STUDY FOUR:
ROBUST TRANSIT SYSTEMS
MADRID

ROBUST TRANSIT SYSTEMS - MADRID

WHAT IS THE CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDY?

Madrid, Spain has a positive reputation as one of the best public transit systems across the world. Every year, the European Metropolitan Transport Authority (EMTA) conducts a review of transit data and public transit authorities and publishes a report—the barometer—on the status of public transit across Europe. Although the barometer contains information from across Europe, it is actually published by the public transport authority in Madrid, Consorcio Regional de Transportes de Madrid (CRTM). The barometer 2022—which utilizes data from 2020 and heavily acknowledges the effects of COVID-19 on transit—focuses on how ridership dropped during the global pandemic but also highlights the resiliency of the European transit systems (barometer 2022). This study's analysis of ridership data is essential to understanding mobility trends as well as who is using public transit and for what reasons. It also provides a look into a robust and successful transit system on an international scale.

The transit system in Madrid incorporates several multi-modal transit options, including buses: a fleet of over 2,000 buses with over 200 different lines. The Madrid Metro is the seventh longest metro network in the world and is the fastest and most efficient way to get around the main city. It also includes three light rail lines that connect to the peripheral areas of the city, further enhancing regional connectivity. Madrid's commuter rail service, Madrid Cercanías, connects various parts of the city, several metro stations within the city limits, the main towns in the surrounding area, and other nearby provinces. Also available to commuters are a robust fleet of inexpensive taxis and a burgeoning wave of rentable electric bikes (Public Transport). Furthermore, the city of Madrid is extremely walkable. The city's inherent walkability and network of taxis and rental bikes promotes first- and last-mile connectivity to the robust network of public transit options, like the bus lines and metro.

ROBUST TRANSIT SYSTEMS - MADRID

HOW DOES THIS CASE STUDY ADDRESS MOBILITY, COMMUNITY WELLNESS, AND PUBLIC TRANSIT?

Madrid itself is designed in ways to heavily support and promote mobility. The public transit system in Madrid connects the city's main interests and tourist points to one another and is comparatively quite affordable, in reference to other European cities. The barometer for the year 2022 highlights changes in mobility patterns, such as increased biking and walking and a shift to remote work, which arose from the COVID-19 pandemic but are likely to remain long after the pandemic wanes. Although this data is specifically focused on Madrid, similar assumptions about mobility trends can be made about other large cities. As the study states, tracking mobility trends is essential to preparing for future transit needs (barometer 2022). For example, the shift to working from home will decrease ridership numbers. A portion of transit funding comes from fare revenue, so a decrease in ridership means a decrease in funding.

The Madrid sections from the barometer 2022 are also highly relevant to this study because of the rate of car ownership in comparison to Detroit. Almost half of Detroit residents do not own a car (Gerber et al.). Comparatively, in Madrid— one of the most populous cities in Europe—only around 43% of residents own cars (barometer 2022). Although the two cities do not have a one-to-one correspondence, the similar rate of car ownership demonstrates how the use of public transit in Madrid fulfills the mobility gaps that coexist with low rates of car ownership.

When considering forms of transit and means of mobility in Madrid, only 32% of mobility exists in the form of private automotive traffic. Otherwise, 35% of mobility is via active forms of transit, and 33% of mobility is via the various public transit sources (barometer 2022). Overall, this study provides an example of excellent public transit infrastructure and a community that has fully embraced the concept of transit and mobility.

Although this particular case study does not directly incorporate elements of community wellness, it does provide a more holistic understanding of the impacts of transit use on communities. These impacts allow us to make connections to our defined ideas of community wellness. For example, Madrid highly benefits from its walkability. As previously mentioned, active modes comprise the largest method of mobility in Madrid, including methods like biking and walking (barometer 2022). Active modes of transportation support healthy living and, thus, contribute to community wellness. As such, while this study does not necessarily focus on wellness, there is still clear support for the positive effects transit options can have on community wellness.

SOURCE: SUSTAINABLE-BUS

ROBUST TRANSIT SYSTEMS - MADRID

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS CASE STUDY?

There are some very strong examples, conclusions, and solutions that can be gleaned from this study of public transit in Madrid. The parallels that can be drawn between Madrid and Detroit demonstrate that public transit systems can be highly effective. These similarities can be referenced in Detroit when planning and developing transit systems in order to ensure their success and relevance. It is clear from this study that **the potential for successful transit exists in Detroit**. It is also clear from this study that successful, affordable, and efficient transit systems will inherently garner support from residents, employees, and tourists. Since transit in Detroit has a negative reputation, the implementation of more successful transit systems designed for the people who use them would likely alter community perceptions and increase ridership. Moreover, a case study on an international level also demonstrates the universal and essential nature of transit across cultures, geographies, and peoples.

SOURCE: MADRID TOURIST GUIDE

CONCLUSIONS

CASE STUDIES

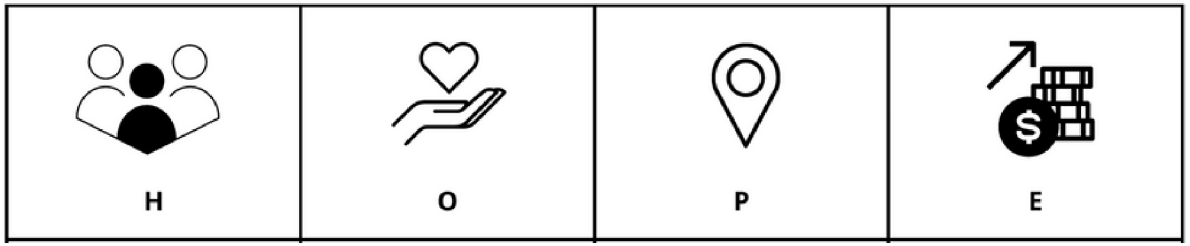
Case studies are an important component of applied research. They provide insights and innovations amongst various systems and people that can be applied to the research question proposed. When conducting case studies, it is important to consider the complex patterns of usage, perceptions, functionality, and resources that impact systems and their accessibility. From the case studies examined in this project, we can infer the importance of better understanding transit-related topics—such as community health, mobility hubs, marketing, and connectivity—all of which play into promoting mobility, community wellness, and public transit usage. Most importantly, each case provides a variety of conclusions, solutions, and examples upon which to base recommendations for transit in Detroit. This research can and should inform the way we think about transit in Detroit and how we might better connect people to people and people to places using techniques implemented by similar efforts in other locations.

MAPPING + ANALYSIS

PUBLIC TRANSIT + COMMUNITY WELLNESS

ASSET MAPPING

TRANSIT | COMMUNITY



INTRODUCTION

ASSET MAPPING

All communities and systems have their own unique assets that inform their existing conditions. Asset mapping is a strengths-based process that identifies these existing resources and strengths and uses a visual representation to identify where those assets exist within a given community. Identified assets can take various forms, such as institutions, parks, and individuals. **Recognition of community assets empowers residents and informs sustainable and authentic community development.**

A variety of asset mapping tools are available to investigate community and system assets and areas of growth. The asset mapping process for our project highlights various human, organizational, physical, and economic assets throughout the study area. Essential to this analysis is not only the inventory of community assets but also the mapping of public transportation and community assets. The transportation analysis takes on a larger, city- and regional-focused lens—as is essential when discussing transportation—while the community assets focus on Detroit's east side communities.

The asset mapping process has also helped to lay the foundation for the needs assessment and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, both to follow in later sections. The identification of assets in the community has been informed by conversation with the RTA, the Capstone committee, and community members as well as primary and secondary research. Most essential to our identification of assets has been engagement with community members and transit riders.

THE HOPE MODEL IN PRACTICE

One method for community and system asset mapping investigates the way that assets exist within four main categories: human, organizational, physical, and economic development (HOPE). The HOPE model can serve as an interdisciplinary framework to understand and organize research about communities. For the purpose of this analysis of assets, the following definitions of each category will be used:

- **Human**: Considering the ways people—individuals and/or communities—can and do impact existing conditions;
- **Organizational**: Considering the way organizations—government, non-government, corporate, nonprofit, community development organizations (CDOs), and DOs, community development corporations (CDCs), DCs, block clubs, etc.—can and do impact existing conditions;
- **Physical**: Considering the way physical spaces—buildings, green space, infrastructure, etc.—can and do impact existing conditions; and
- **Economic**: Considering the way economic factors—development, housing market, economic opportunity, etc.—can and do impact existing conditions.

When we begin to examine the components identified during asset analysis, we often see significant overlap among the four categories of development: H, O, P, and E. In fact, in many cases, assets cannot be separated by category. **Exploration into communities and the systems that serve them remind us of the interconnected nature of community work and development.**

It is equally significant to recognize that, in some cases, assets may not be identifiable by outside research but might still be significant to community members. We may also see that assets that researchers view as being positive in some way may serve the community in a way not identified. The following analyses will work to create an inclusive list of assets for the human, organizational, physical, and economic conditions that currently exist in both practice and theory for public transit systems and neighborhoods on Detroit's Eastside.

TRANSIT

ASSET MAP

ANALYSIS

ASSET MAP

The historical analysis of public transit in Detroit provides a framework for understanding the status of transit services today. Figure 39 shows a list of assets identified by the Capstone team with respect to public transit. Due to the regional nature of transportation, this list incorporates assets from around Detroit, with emphasis on the study area when applicable. The assets listed are not presented in any particular order with relevance to importance within the community or city at large, nor is this list a complete list of all current or possible transit assets.

When evaluating transit assets, or assets of any kind, it is critical to center the perspective of the user. Most transit assets listed in figure 39 exist in Detroit, with some space for improvements, to be discussed in the needs assessment that follows.

SOURCE: CITYOFDETROIT

TRANSIT: ASSET MAP

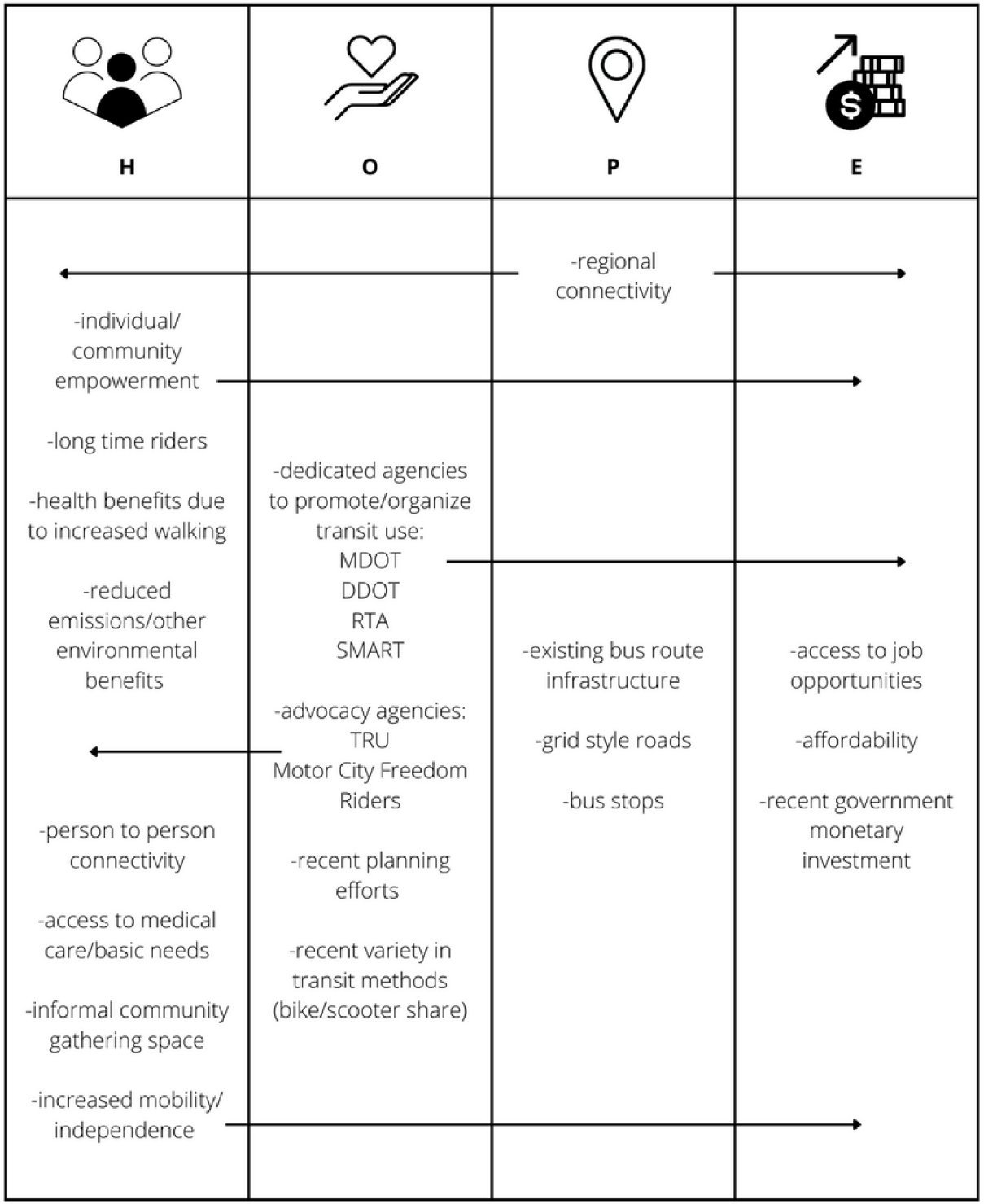


Figure 39. Transit Asset List. Source: Capstone team

ANALYSIS

There are 44.8 million bus users in Southeast Michigan. Detroit itself has a relatively loyal ridership base, many using transit because they do not own a personal vehicle. Twenty-four percent of Detroit households do not have access to a car and therefore rely heavily on transit (Transit Plan). **In many cases, mobility, movement throughout one's community, and access to jobs and social opportunity would not even be possible without public transit.** DDOT rider surveys indicate that 70% of riders would not have been able to make their trip using a household vehicle, and 23% would not have been able to make the trip at all without transit (Detroit Workforce).

Based on this, we see a strong basis for individual and community empowerment through transit across the asset analysis. We see that people, individuals and communities, are primarily impacted through their ability to connect further with their communities and cities as a whole. People may also be positively impacted by the health benefits—personal and environmental—that arise from public transit.

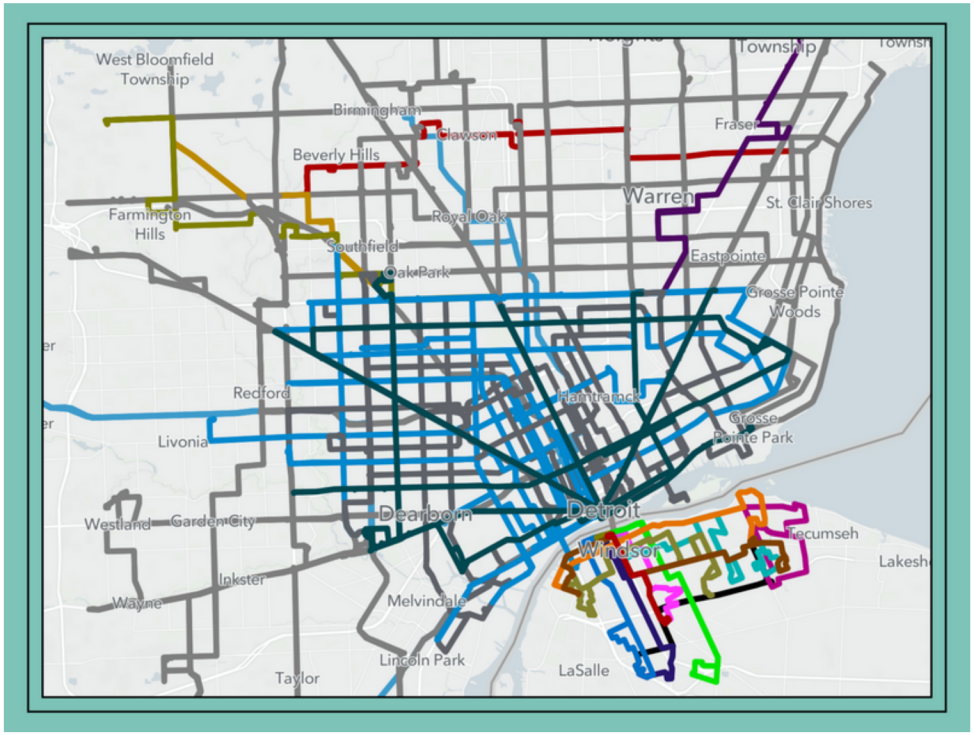


Figure 40. Map of Bus Lines In and Around Detroit. Source: Remix

Figure 40 shows the bus lines throughout Detroit, moving into the suburbs, and across the bridge into Canada. The availability, structure, and placement of these lines demonstrate the organizational, physical, and economic impacts on communities as well as the physical asset of existing transit infrastructure. On an organizational level, we see that public transit in Detroit is a space in which many government and non-government agencies can come together to make a positive impact and plan transit initiatives that support the transit user.

We also see potential for additional asset building in recent efforts to plan and improve the existing transit system. A physical analysis of the transit system reveals a relatively strong existing bus infrastructure through SMART and DDOT. Additionally, we see the potential for/current support of regional connectivity as a main benefit that impacts all four of the chosen analysis criteria.

Transit access in Detroit is relatively affordable and, as mentioned above, recent efforts to centralize the payment system has eased access for users. A direct economic asset brought to individuals via transit is the ability to access job opportunities outside their immediate communities.

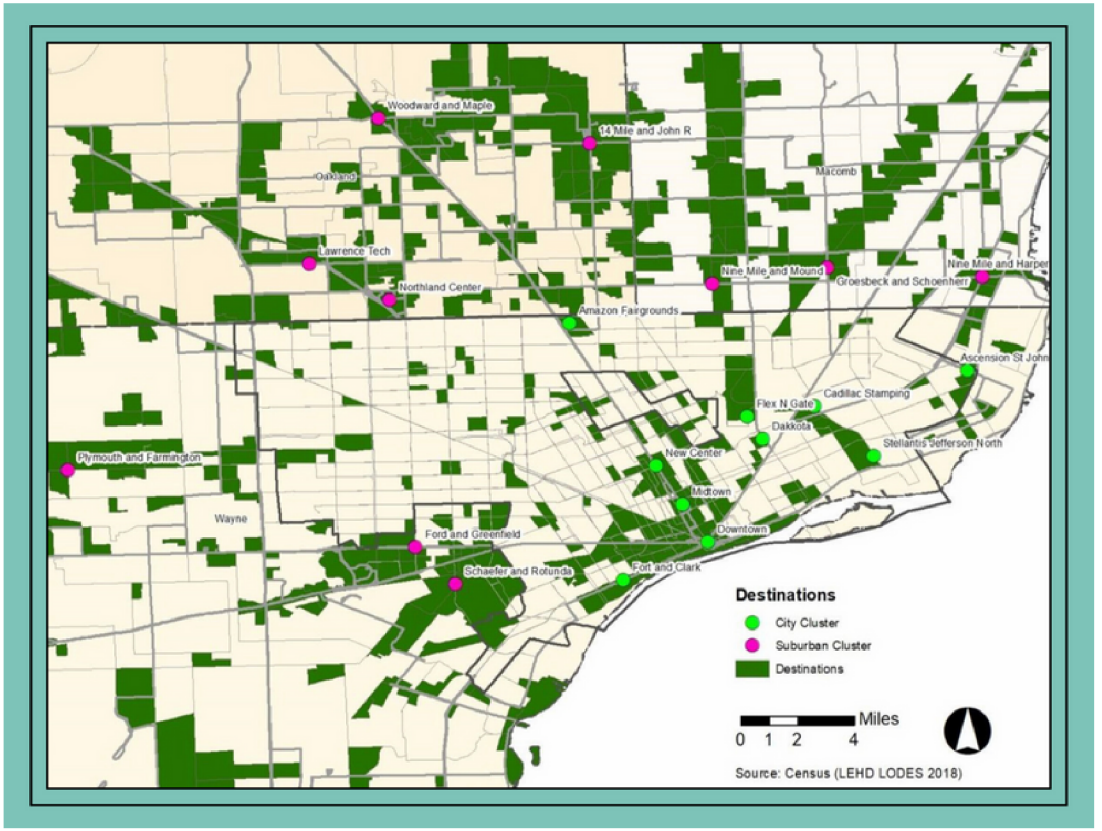


Figure 41. Jobs Available Near Transit Clusters In and Around Detroit.
Source: Regional Transit Authority

Figure 41 shows the number of jobs available that may be currently reached via transportation clusters within Detroit and regionally into the suburbs. We can see the importance of this access highlighted in the poverty levels across the city. Cornerstone Village, East English Village, and Morningside may have lower concentrations of neighbors living in poverty due to their ability to access jobs outside their community via public transit.

The asset list indicated in figure 39 highlights only a few of the visible assets cultivated through public transit. And some of the assets serve certain communities or individuals more successfully than others. **This analysis reveals to us that, while there is room for improvement across the implementation and maintenance of public transit in Detroit, there is also ample opportunity to build on assets that already exist.**

COMMUNITY

PLANNING TO STAY FRAMEWORK

ASSET MAP

GEOGRAPHIC MAPPING

ANALYSIS

PLANNING TO STAY FRAMEWORK

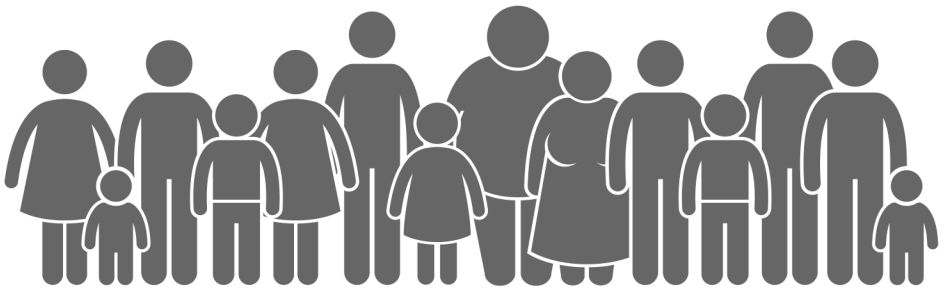
In addition to applying the HOPE model, assets can also be organized through the Planning to Stay model developed by Morrish and Brown. This model evaluates neighborhood "completeness" based on the features within an area centered around a 20-minute walk. It uses organizing themes of scale, mix, time, and movement to analyze each category of physical features, which include homes and personal gardens, community streets, neighborhood niches, anchoring institutions, and public gardens. For this asset mapping analysis, we will utilize the five physical features from the Planning to Stay model within the context of the HOPE model.

The homes and gardens feature incorporates aspects of individual privacy and integrated community. Within the context of this analysis, this feature can also account for specific people in one's neighborhood and can be represented by both physical and immaterial conditions. Community streets are most often thought of with regard to their functionality, but they also play a large part in the creation and navigation of social spaces, identity, and safety. In this particular context, the community streets feature plays a large part in concepts of mobility.

Neighborhood niches provide goods and services to community members as well as opportunities for social interaction and community engagement. These can take many forms, both formally—like a neighborhood grocery store—and informally—like a bus stop. Similarly, anchoring institutions can be both informal and formal, including governmental bodies, religious organizations, major employers, and community-centered spaces, for example. Finally, the public gardens feature incorporates all aspects of natural surroundings from large public parks, to smaller, pocket parks, community gardens, and greenways. This category of analysis emphasizes the importance of natural spaces, and within this analysis, has great implications on walkability, environmentalism, and mobility.

ASSET MAP

Figure 42 lists a variety of community assets identified by the capstone team within the geographic study area. These assets were identified by exploration of the physical community, research of community organization's priorities and foci, and conversations with community members. Assets were identified throughout the three Eastside neighborhoods. This asset list is not ordered with relevance to importance within the community, nor is this list a complete list of all current or potential assets that may be identified by community members. The asset list is organized according to the categories within the HOPE model and the Planning to Stay model, with some assets overlapping between categories. To promote readability and ease in understanding, many of these community assets have been generalized to represent more than one specific asset. An outline of specific assets by name can be found in figure 43 on the following page. Some of these more specific assets can also be seen identified on the map in figure 44.



COMMUNITY: ASSET MAP

Homes & Gardens	Anchoring Institutions	Community Streets	Neighborhood Niches	Public Gardens
H long term residents	**H** -churches -schools -medical Campus	**H** -walkable streets -access to business corridors	**H** commercial corridors with mix of small businesses + big box stores	**H** connectivity through dedicated gathering space(s)
O dedicated community groups →	**O**	**O** safety through community building	**O** variety of neighborhood services	**O** programming at Balduck Park
P general neighborhood upkeep	**P** varied styles/ sizes that can support different business types	**P** mix of throughfares and neighborhood streets	**P** -maintained storefronts -small number of vacancies	**P** variety of well-kept parks/ greenways
E -midrange house prices -home ownership	**E** frameworks for future build out	**E** commercial corridors	**E** frameworks for future buildout	**E** vacant land for future public space development

Figure 42. Community Asset List. Source: Capstone team

DETAILED ASSET MAP: COMMUNITY

Homes & Gardens	Anchoring Institutions	Community Streets	Neighborhood Niches	Public Gardens
-long term residents -majority single family homes -vacant land -Cornerstone Village Association -Eastside Community Network -Jefferson East -East Warren Development Corporation -Morningside Group -East English Village Association -Mack Ave Business Association -MECCA -Matrix Human Services	-St. John's Hospital -Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist -Grace Community Church -Marquette Elementary and Middle School -LA Fitness -East English Village Prep Academy -Crossroads of Michigan	-walkable residential streets -main thoroughfares: • Moross Rd • Mack Ave • Chandler Park Dr • E Warren Ave -ECN Mack Ave (Streetscape) Improvement Plan -E. Warren Streetscape Project	-East Warren Tool Library -Cadieux Cafe -BikeTech -Mr. C's Deli + Liquor Store -Mr. C's carwash -National Coney Island -7-Mack Cleaners -East Warren Farmers Market -Mack and Moross Garage -strong commercial corridors: • Mack Ave • E Warren Ave • Moross Rd	-Moross Greenway -Balduck Park -Three Mile Park -Sasser Park (Harper Woods) -Messmer Park -vacant land within community

Figure 43. Detailed Community Asset List. Source: Capstone team

GEOGRAPHIC MAPPING

Figure 44. Geographic Community Asset Map. Source: Capstone team

In addition to the written list of community assets, figure 44 above is a geographic representation of community and Eastside Detroit assets. The geographic mapping can be a beneficial tool for understanding how community assets work together. The geographic mapping also identifies where physical connections between community assets and transit assets lie. We see strong concentrations of Anchoring Institutions and Neighborhood Niches directly along the major thoroughfares, demonstrating the need for strong, reliable transit along those roads.

ANALYSIS

HUMAN ASSETS

Many of the human assets in the study area are found within the dedicated, long-time residents. As shown in figure 45, the area has concentrated areas of high population density and a relatively high population overall. Many of these people have lived in the area for a long time, creating a strong sense of community identity and engagement (East Side Story). There are neighborhood associations for each of the three eastside neighborhoods, each with many engaged members. Passion for one's neighborhood is a key human asset, not only driving development in one's area but also contributing to the neighborhood spirit and identity. These engaged residents also positively impact community wellness by creating a connected and empowered community.

In addition to the literal human assets in the area, there are also several organizations devoted to human development. The largest employer in the area is Ascension St. John Hospital. First and foremost, it provides medical services and fosters community wellness.

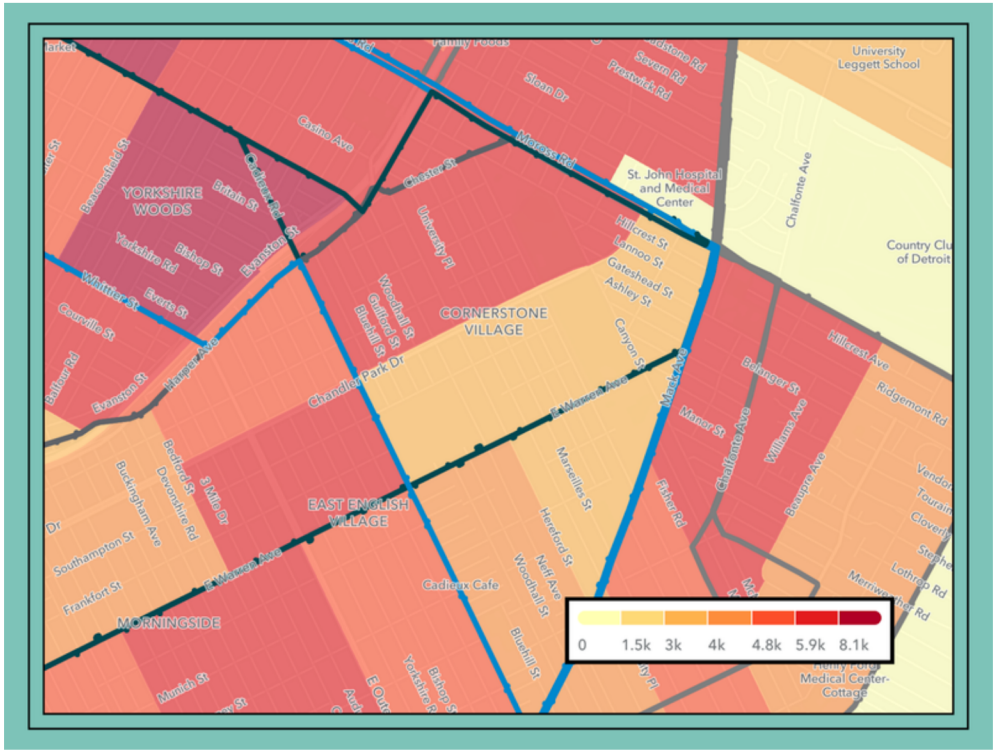


Figure 45. Population Levels of Geographic Area. Source: Remix.com.

Beyond that, it contributes to both the human and the economic development in the area by providing employment. In fact, Ascension St. John was identified as a city cluster of minimal preparedness jobs, meaning that there are many jobs available with an educational requirement of a high school diploma or less and are within certain industry classifications (Detroit Workforce Mobility).

This access point of minimal preparedness jobs also means that the many people who work at Ascension and live outside the community require a mode of transportation to get to work. There are several bus stops around the hospital, as can be seen in figure 46, all of which have an estimated high ridership (Detroit Workforce Mobility).

Figure 46. Ascension St. John Hospital and DDOT Bus.
Source: Capstone Team.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSETS

The Eastside of Detroit is home to many devoted and active community organizations. It would be impossible to list every single community development group, block club, and neighborhood association.

However, there are some key players in the community, including Eastside Community Network (ECN); East English Village Association (EEVA); Morningside, Cornerstone Village Association (CVA); and Morningside, East English Village, Cornerstone Village Community Advocates (MECCA). Each of these organizations focuses on different aspects of their community. For example, ECN is dedicated to "initiatives that promote social cohesion, neighborhood sustainability, community participation, and resident empowerment" ("Mission & History"). ECN recently developed the Stoudamire, "a community hub that provides holistic wellness activities and resources to eastside residents" ("The Stoudamire"). They also provide local transportation services for a small fee.

MECCA's "mission is to empower and engage residents and businesses across" the area "with the knowledge, skills, resources, and support to revitalize our communities in a sustainable way for future generations" ("About MECCA"). Much of MECCA's programming focuses on development without displacement, resident training and empowerment, and beautification. Similarly, EEVA, MorningSide, and CVA are all neighborhood groups that focus heavily on the human development and beautification of their specific neighborhoods.

There are also the Mack Avenue Business Association (MABA) and East Warren Development Co (EWDC).MABA and EWDC focus slightly more on economic or business development, as detailed in the analysis of economic assets section below.

PHYSICAL ASSETS

The physical assets within the community are essential to its character, as can be seen in figure 47. For example, the majority of the neighborhoods are zoned for single family homes, and the housing stock, while varied, as mentioned in the historical conditions section, is in relatively good shape (East Side Story).

Figure 47. Community Streets. Source: Capstone team

The area does also have some vacant land, both commercial and residential lots. Although vacant land is often seen as a detriment to communities, this land can actually a great asset, especially when considered within the concept of mobility and transportation. Vacant land provides opportunity for development, and in this case, development centered on and supporting movement throughout one's community.

Figure 48. Public Gardens. Source: Capstone team

This area is also rich in public green spaces, like nearby Balduck Park, shown in figure 48. There are several other pocket parks—like Three Mile Park and Messmer Park—that are relatively close by as well.

The existence of these parks, as well as the thoroughfare of the Moross Greenway, work to encourage movement throughout the community. In addition, continued green space activation helps promote healthy living and wellness. These factors highlight how various forms of transit in the area—with its associated encouragement of biking, walking, and rolling—would potentially greatly benefit community wellbeing and connectedness.

ECONOMIC ASSETS

The area under study has strong current and potential economic assets. Commercial corridors and one-off businesses exist within and around the community. Examples of these can be seen below in figure 49.

Figure 49. Eastside Businesses. Source: Capstone team

Strong commercial corridors exist along Mack Avenue and East Warren Avenue. Both of these corridors have historically experienced vacancy and blight; however, they have also seen an increase in investment and study in recent years. Spearheaded by organizations like the Mack Avenue Business Association and the East Warren Development Corporation, respectively, recent investments to the area, and the continuation of investment, has proven to be a great economic asset.

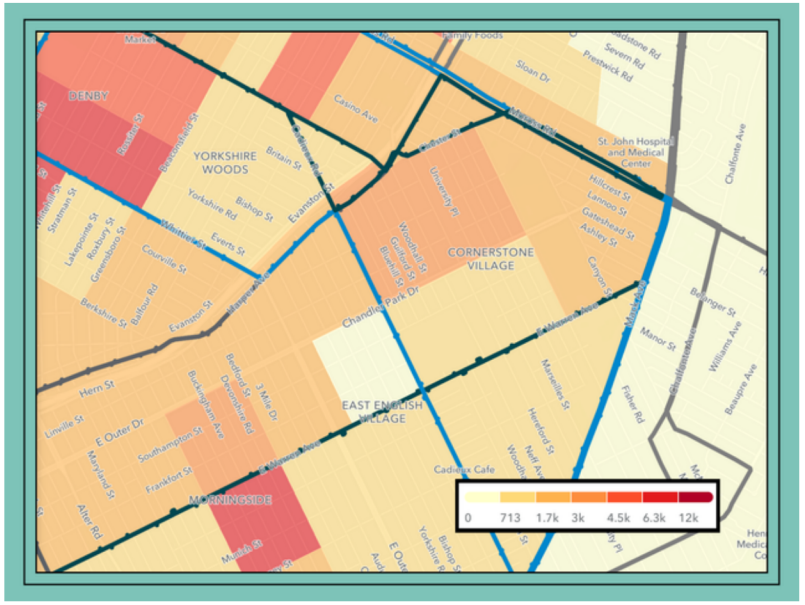


Figure 50. Number of People Who Live Below the Poverty Level. Source: Remix

Figure 50, above, demonstrates the number of people who live below the poverty line—as defined by the United States Census Bureau—within the geographic area and around transit lines ("How the Census Bureau"). This data demonstrates

the economic status of residents and potential or current transit users in the area. Households below the poverty line are far less likely to own a car and, therefore, far more likely to rely on public transportation (Detroit Workforce Mobility). This map in particular showcases the stark differences that exist on the far eastside of Detroit, when crossing into the Grosse Pointe neighborhoods. It is understood that contentions arise between the Detroit and Grosse Pointe communities, often due to issues surrounding race, access, and economic status. It is important to note the extreme decline in number of people living in poverty when crossing Mack Avenue into Grosse Pointe Farms.

The area also greatly benefits from the Strategic Neighborhood Fund and its resulting framework plan for the East Warren/Cadieux area, as discussed in the community history section and seen in figure 51, below. This plan, sponsored by the city of Detroit and Invest Detroit, has brought direction and planned funding to the economic and physical revitalization of the surrounding neighborhoods (East Warren/Cadieux). Although there are some equity issues surrounding the framework plan, it is still a great asset for the area and can be utilized as a starting point for further neighborhood investment.

Figure 51. Strategic Neighborhood Fund Designations in Detroit. Source: UM Poverty Study

CONCLUSIONS

ASSET MAPPING

Asset mapping provides a research framework for investigating and empowering communities and systems to utilize the assets currently available to them. It is a key part of dynamic and meaningful community development work. Assets represented in the above analyses highlight both actual and potential impacts that have or may come as a result of community or system efforts. The categorization of assets through the HOPE model and the Planning to Stay model allows for a more detailed analysis of how assets exist within specific communities. **Across both public transit and the Eastside community, we see a strong basis for impact based on the positive assets that were identified.** Moving forward, the asset mapping section will act as a frame for the SWOT analysis and needs assessment sections to come.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TRANSIT | COMMUNITY

 S	 W	 O	 T

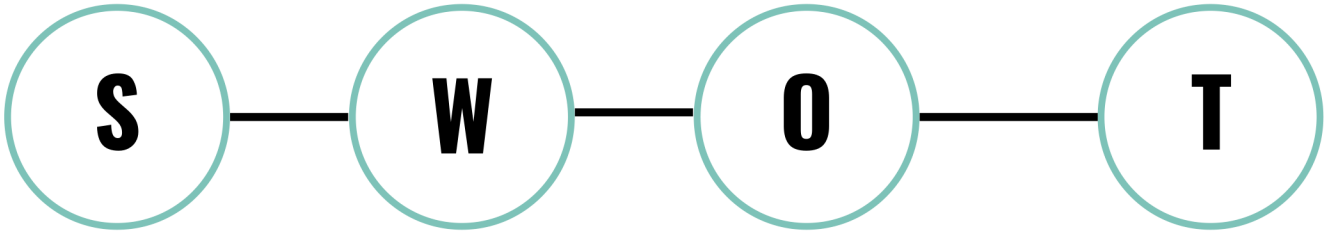
 H	 O	 P	 E

INTRODUCTION

NEEDS ASSESMENT

A needs assessment is a systematic methodological approach used to identify needs, examine their nature and causes, and set priorities for future action (Comprehensive). Needs assessments can be adapted and used in a variety of fields. **In community development, a needs assessment identifies and contextualizes the current social, environmental, political, and economic conditions of a given community.** It provides researchers—as well as community leaders, developers, and residents—the necessary information to make informed and sustainable plans to improve neighborhoods. This type of assessment does highlight strengths that currently exist but centers primarily on diagnosing what unmet needs are present within a community or system. The assessment looks to build upon current conditions and fill gaps in order to achieve more ideal individual and overall neighborhood conditions (Reddy). To do this, Needs Assessments focus on the outcome, not the process. The goal of the assessment is to set priorities, criteria, and solutions that support the positive development of communities (Comprehensive).

SWOT ANALYSIS IN PRACTICE



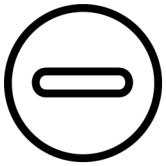
In the analysis that follows, the needs assessment will be synthesized using the SWOT analysis method, which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This type of analysis allows for a more holistic understanding of a situation, community, or system; which supports healthy and sustainable development (Chapter 3). The SWOT analysis incorporates aspects of both asset mapping and a traditional needs assessment. **Each of the aspects of a SWOT analysis integrates the abstract broad knowledge gained through academic expertise with the in-depth experiential knowledge of the community (Reddy)**. Below, two needs assessments will be provided and discussed:. first, a SWOT analysis specific to public transit in Detroit, followed by an analysis of the Eastside Detroit community. For further exploration, these SWOT analyses will also be contextualized via the HOPE model.

The information that constitutes the following needs assessment was gathered through a variety of research methods, including academic research online and in person as well as observational analysis of the Eastside Detroit neighborhoods and transit systems in Detroit. More importantly, information was also gathered through interviews, conversations, and surveys of community members and transit riders. Additional elements for the needs assessment were obtained through the case studies discussed in the previous section of this analysis.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

The use of this type of needs assessment has advantages and disadvantages. A SWOT analysis can be a source of information for strategic planning, setting objectives, and understanding communities and systems at a high level. When gathered consistently over time, this information can be used to establish a timeline of communities and systems and facilitate planning for the future. **However, we must consider the SWOT analysis method as only one tool for better understanding communities. This type of analysis may result in oversimplifying complex systems and communities to "fit" into particular categories.** Even while making significant efforts to be inclusive, when using categorization to understand complex dynamics, it can be difficult to represent all intricacies. Despite its drawbacks, a SWOT analysis is a proven method that allows researchers to think critically about communities and systems and consider methods for best representation.

STRENGTHS



WEAKNESSES

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

TRANSIT

INTRODUCTION

SWOT x HOPE

ANALYSIS

TRANSIT:
INTRODUCTION

This section includes an analysis of the SWOT and HOPE model needs assessment for the public transit climate in Detroit. A variety of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were identified within the various transit systems. The regional nature of transit can make it difficult to detail all potential and existing needs of users; however, a summarized chart of findings is presented in figure 52. Although this chart does not contain every possible element, it highlights the most essential elements of the public transit system in Detroit, with particular respect to community wellness and mobility.

SOURCE: CRAINS DETROIT

	S	W	O	T
H	-long-term/dedicated riders	-safety on buses + at stops -lack of accessibility for populations with different needs -negative perceptions of transit users	-increased mobility -increased person-to-person connectivity -health benefits	-negative perceptions of transit users -worker shortage = bus driver shortage
O	-transit agencies: RTA, SMART, DDOT, MDOT -advocacy agencies: TRU, Motor City Freedom Riders	-conflicting transit goals -misguided expansion attempts	-cooperation between transit + advocacy agencies	-lack of consensus for regional transit/connectivity + funding
P	-grid-style roads -existing bus infrastructure	-bus reliability + efficiency -lack of rapid transit infrastructure -lack of shelter/lighting/seating at bus stops	-environmental benefits -expansion of existing transit services -more readily available alternatives (bike/scooter rental, etc.)	-breakdowns of older buses -prevalence of highways/roads for car transit
E	-government investment dollars -private and government planning efforts	-low ridership = low fare revenue -historic investment in nonessential upgrades	-money saved from car ownership/dependency -Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding	-automotive industry -lack of continued + dedicated funding -decreased ridership post COVID

Figure 52. Transit Needs Assessment. Source: Capstone team

SWOT X HOPE

ANALYSIS

As analyzed in the asset mapping portion of this project, the Detroit Public Transit system does currently have assets that allow residents to connect with one another. Some of these assets are also listed in the strengths portion of this analysis, such as long-time/dedicated riders and the multitude of transit agencies that exist within Detroit. There are also plenty of opportunities that currently exist within the transit system, including the cooperation between multiple transit agencies and more readily available transit alternatives, such as bikes and scooters. All of these strengths and potential opportunities play a positive role in rider experience and create space for continued and improved connectivity.

However, there are also some weaknesses and threats to the public transit system in Detroit that impose on potential function and resident connectivity. **The main weaknesses identified in this research are the lack of or perceived lack of safety on buses and bus stops and bus reliability/efficiency.** According to an article published by Outlier Media, only about 4% of bus stops in Detroit have adequate shelter or lighting. Lack of shelter and lighting at bus stops not only makes riders feel less safe but also contributes to bus wait times feeling longer. These challenges are especially relevant in Detroit, where driver shortages are causing longer wait times—with some buses arriving hours after their scheduled time (Mondry). Some community efforts have been conducted to build safe seating at bus stops (by groups like Sit on Detroit and Detroit Future City), but there have been challenges in coordinating the building and permitting. Both the long wait times and lack of adequate shelters/seating seem to negatively impact rider experience and create barriers to transit access.

The primary threats identified to the public transit system in Detroit are the perceptions around ridership, worker/bus driver shortages, and the lack of continued or dedicated funding to the system. As previously mentioned, challenges around perception are an ongoing struggle for the bus system in Detroit. The impact of COVID-19 has further intensified these perceptions and the driver shortage, as riders and employees question their health and safety while using transit. Regarding funding challenges, an article published by Transportation Riders United (TRU) compares the taxed funding for transit in other metro-cities to that in Detroit, highlighting the limitations in funding for Detroit public transit (“Advocate”).

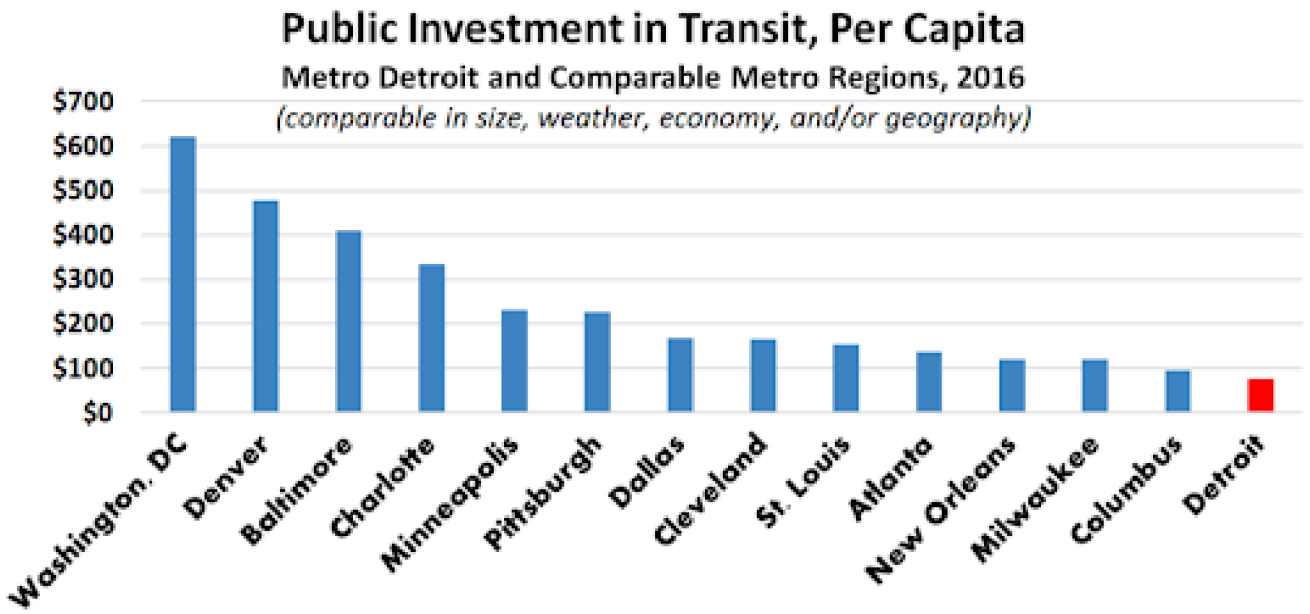


Figure 53. Public Investment in Transit, Per Capita. Source: Detroit Transit

A graph representing these trends is shown in figure 53, above.

In November of 2022, a millage was passed on the ballot that should allow for more dedicated tax-funding dollars; however, it may be difficult to reach consensus about regional transit goals. Although these identified threats are not directly controlled by the transit system itself, they still create significant barriers to system function and ridership.

The combination of the above identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats situates Detroit transit in a precarious situation. While there are current strengths and future opportunities that present positive potential for the transit space in Detroit, there are also a variety of long-existing threats and weaknesses that may impact the system's stability. By being as transparent as possible with all components of the needs assessment, even when it can be difficult, researchers can create potential best practices for realistically moving forward. Ultimately, this SWOT analysis can provide a framework for better understanding the current conditions of Detroit public transit and assist in creating a plan for future developments.

COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

SWOT x HOPE

ANALYSIS

COMMUNITY:
INTRODUCTION

This portion of the analysis includes a SWOT and HOPE model needs assessment for the Eastside Detroit community, summarized in figure 54 on the next page. A variety of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were identified for the area. Inclusion of the surrounding neighborhoods is an important component of this neighborhood analysis due to the close proximity and interconnected nature of the Eastside of Detroit. **As with most neighborhoods and people, it can be difficult to itemize and categorize conditions based on the complexity of their existence**. However, after spending time in this community and talking with various community members and stakeholders, the chart below represents our most comprehensive list of neighborhood components across the four categories of the SWOT analysis.

SOURCE: DETROIT EXPERIENCE FACTORY

	S	W	O	T
H	-long-term residents -strong community identity -community diversity	-community pushback on development	-enhanced neighborhood walkability + mobility -potential community gathering spaces	-COVID disproportionately affects populations of color -gentrification
O	-dedicated resident groups -dedicated development groups	-potential conflicts in goals amongst community groups	-Strategic Neighborhood Fund designation -interorganizational cooperation	-bureaucracy + red tape
P	-public green spaces + parks -several main thoroughfares + corridors	-illegal dumping -commercial and residential vacancies -unprotected + poorly lit bus stops -poor sidewalk quality	-programming of vacant land -improved streetscape -formal + informal gathering space	-poor environmental quality -flooding/infrastructure
E	-Ascension St. John -frameworks for future development -commercial corridors	-history of disinvestment -commercial vacancies	-economic investment -economic leverage of commercial corridors -Strategic Neighborhood Fund designation	-speculators -economy + housing market

Figure 54. Community Needs Assessment. Source: Capstone team

SWOT X HOPE

ANALYSIS

The Eastside of Detroit has many current strengths and future opportunities for growth. Long-time residents, dedicated neighborhood groups, and strong commercial corridors in the area have both sustained the community and sparked recent development. The neighborhoods have several surrounding thoroughfares and residential streets that can promote connectivity within the community and to other parts of the metro-region. Recent efforts, such as the development of the Moross Greenway, have worked to promote mobility and connectivity in these communities. Economic investment is also positively impacting the area and creating opportunities for residents and business owners, especially with regards to the area's designation as a Strategic Neighborhood.

Eastside Detroit communities have many admirable qualities, but like similar Detroit neighborhoods, the community also faces challenges, such as high taxes, poverty, and older infrastructure. One identified struggle within the community is the history of disinvestment, which has been further outlined in the community history section of this research. This disinvestment has impacted community appearance and safety with some residential and commercial blight throughout. Poor sidewalk quality and lack of well lit streets in the community have the potential to negatively impact resident connectivity and access to transit locations. The Cornerstone Village community, on the far eastside—with almost 85% African American residents—has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 ("Cornerstone Village") and may also be disproportionately impacted by recent inflation. Additionally, developments in the area, while primarily positive, may eventually impact the area's affordability, given its average median income of $33,000 ("Cornerstone Village").

The Eastside Detroit communities have held strong through a variety of diverse conditions and involuntary setbacks. Further research has shown us how community member investment—socially, physically, and economically—is significant in this neighborhood and across Detroit's east side. When considering how to improve connectability and transit access and the potential positive benefits thereof, it is important to create a comprehensive picture of the community: one that represents the neighborhood fully, both successes and shortcomings. Ultimately, these identified weaknesses and threats, although heavy at times, do not negate the identified strengths and opportunities and are not a reflection on residents as individuals.

CONCLUSIONS

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The needs assessment as synthesized through the SWOT and HOPE models provides additional information that creates a more holistic picture of the topics relevant to this research. Through this synthesis, it has become clear that both the Eastside Detroit community and the public transit systems in Detroit have some strengths and vast opportunities for continued development. It is also clear that there are some spaces for improvement, identified in this analysis as weaknesses and threats. Further research and development can be guided to where it is most needed through the analysis and implementation of this comprehensive picture of Detroit's Eastside, and the public transit system in Detroit. This needs assessment also aids in highlighting the potential gaps to be filled through the connection of communities through transit as well as that connection's impact on community wellness. **It is apparent that a full picture of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats creates a space for more authentic and community-based development work.**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PUBLIC TRANSIT + COMMUNITY WELLNESS

INTRODUCTION

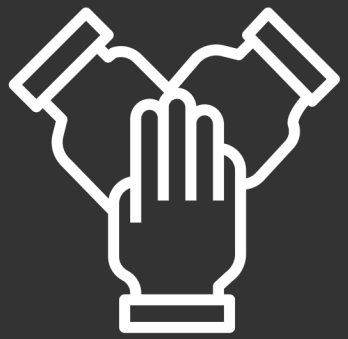
Community engagement is a key component in community development work as a whole and in our belief about intentional, ground up, community-based work. One main component of the project based applied research method, used through this Capstone project, is to engage directly with community members in order to create a holistic picture about the chosen topic area. **Quantitative data, while serving an important component in research, has the potential to negate the real life experience of community members.** The community engagement portion of the project was something we greatly looked forward to as we worked to understand public transit use and create interventions that can genuinely serve the Eastside community. The following portion of this report will outline the variety of methods we used to engage the community and what we heard during the process.

Figure 55. The Capstone Team at the Eastside Community Network Transportation Resource Sharing Event. Source: Capstone team

MAIN PRINCIPLES

During the community engagement process, we engaged with four main principles in order to keep the process fair and purposeful. The first of these is **collaboration and shared purpose.** This principle focuses on working with a community as opposed to working in a community. By centering on collaboration and creating shared vision and purpose, the project is legitimized with the community's experiential knowledge and expertise of its real-life experiences. The second principle is **transparency.** It was extremely important for us to clearly convey the academic nature of our project to all people we engaged with throughout the process. Being open about our intentions and the purpose of our project was essential to conveying the potential for any tangible outcomes. We wanted to be clear that while we hope there will be real world applications of this research, because of its nature as an academic project, we do not have any power to enact any projects ourselves.

The third principle is **learning**, which centers on our own willingness to let our perceptions of transit and community wellness shift. It was important



COLLABORATION + SHARED PURPOSE

TRANSPARENCY

LEARNING

REAL IMPLEMENTATION

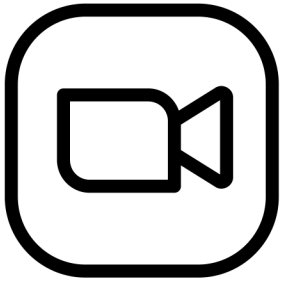
for us to be willing to learn from others and acknowledge our own biases and gaps in knowledge. Additionally, we also hoped to encourage participants to learn more about transit and advocate for increased transit use themselves. And finally, the last guiding principle we used was **intention for action**. While we want to be realistic within our own capabilities–evident in the second principle–we also want to **advocate strongly for our suggested plan and see real implementation.** Throughout this process, it has always been our intention to actually create change. By focusing on this throughout the community engagement process, we were able to have authentic conversations with real agencies and people who have the power to create tangible change.

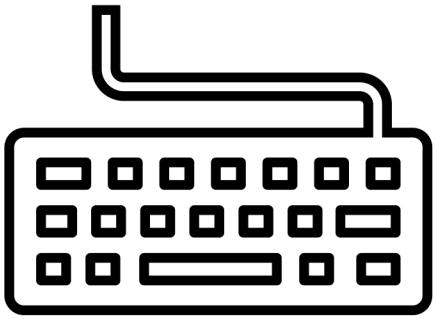
These four principles come together to create a guiding framework we utilized throughout this project as we engaged with various Eastside community members, transit agencies and advocates, and wellness experts. These principles allowed us to focus on authentic engagement and avoid the common perception of exploitation that can be associated with academic research projects. These guiding principles carried through each of the community engagement methods we employed, as discussed in the following section.

ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Our community engagement consisted primarily of three methods: **stakeholder conversations, online surveying and in-person engagement**. A timeline of these conversations can be found in figure 56. Stakeholder conversations were often targeted on specific topics; while the online surveying portion allowed us to reach a wider audience and collect high level data regarding transit use patterns. The in-person events gave us the opportunity to talk with community members directly and allow more in-depth conversation to lead us to new discoveries. All of these methods were valuable to our work in that they allowed us to better understand the actual experience of using public transit in Detroit. The discoveries made through community engagement directly informed our suggested interventions.

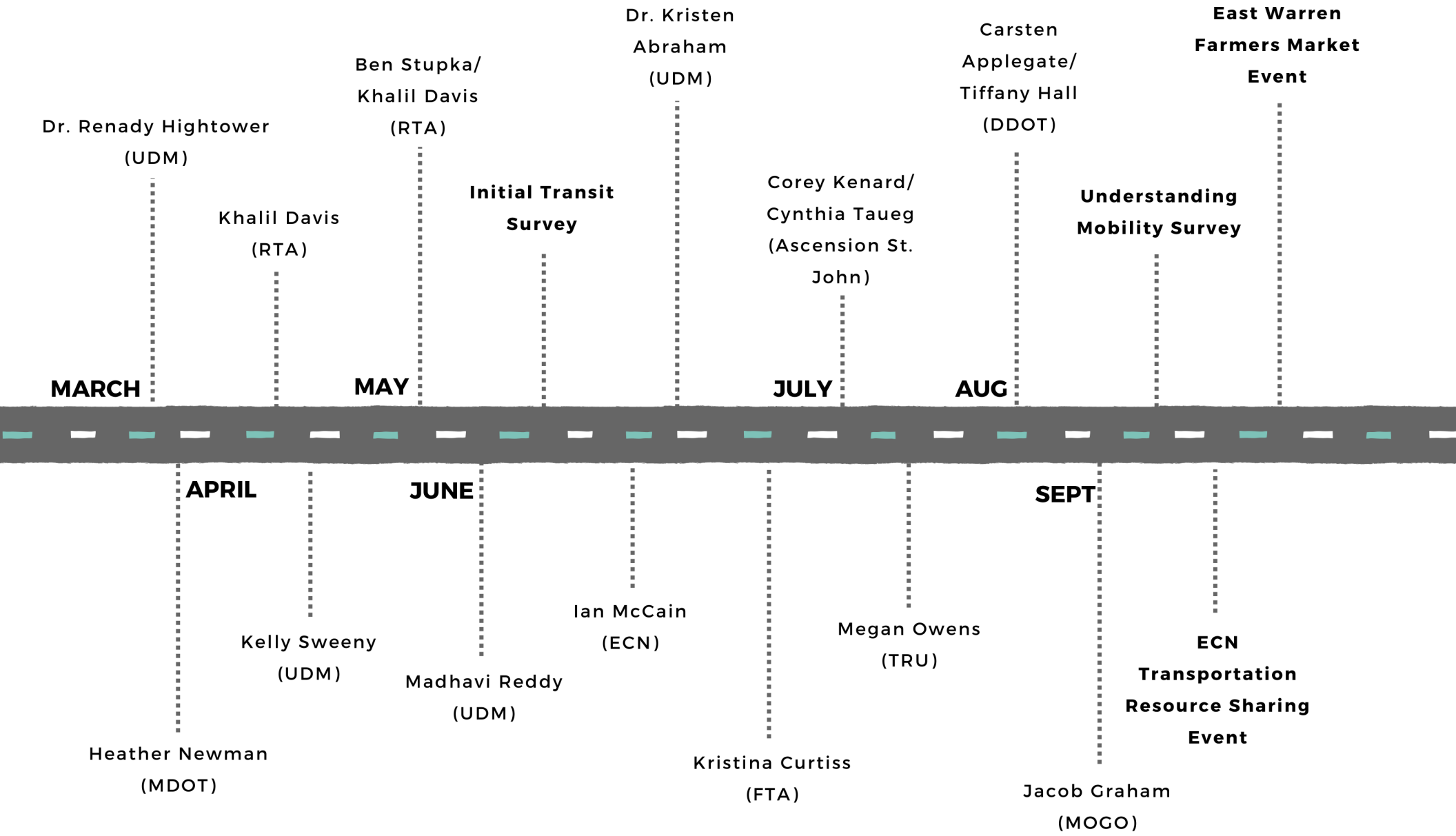
Another chosen method of community engagement for this project was to engage in numerous virtual interviews and conversations with a wide variety of stakeholders. Topics of conversation ranged from thoughts on existing Detroit transit, visions for transit's future, concepts of the importance of community wellness, and much more. These conversations were held with a variety of people like transit industry professionals, transit advocates and users, community wellness experts, members of academia, nonprofit professionals, and Eastside community members. The knowledge and perspectives gained from these conversations were essential to the framing of this research and provided invaluable data utilized throughout this report.





ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

Figure 56. Engagement Timeline. Source: Capstone team



STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATIONS

Zoom calls with stakeholders played a significant part in shaping our research topic and focus area(s). We were able to gain insight into efforts that are currently happening, as well as better understand desires for the future of public transit. We connected with transit employees, transit advocates, nonprofit leaders, and corporate business professionals. Each interview introduced a new perspective and an opportunity to have more in-depth conversations around varying topics.

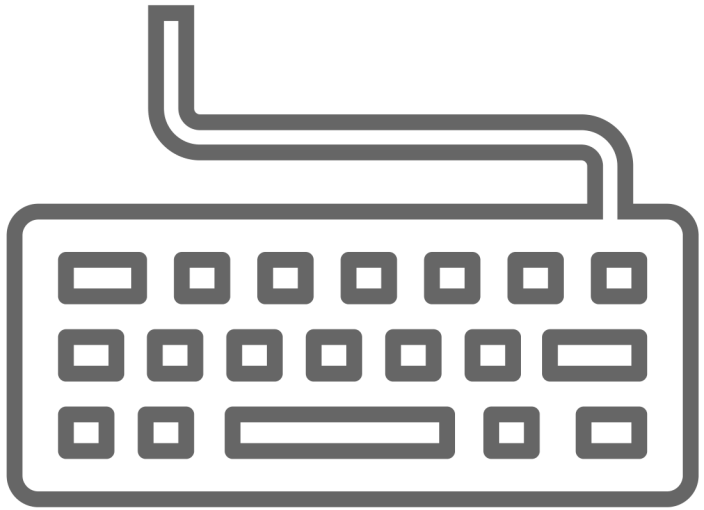
Each conversation had a slightly different focus, but overall, we worked to understand the interviewees relationship to transit and their views on transit's impact on community wellbeing. While our other forms of engagement allowed us to reach a wider audience, these 1-on-1 stakeholder conversations were our best opportunity for long-form conversations. The timeline on the previous page shows an overview of the people we talked to and the organizations they represent.

ONLINE SURVEYS

One of the most major components of our community engagement was the use of online surveys. Online surveys are a great tool to engage larger populations. **This form of engagement can be more accessible to people because it is generally low commitment and low effort.** However, online surveys can also be limiting in the types of questions that can be asked and the depth of responses that can be received. Keeping these things in mind, we developed two online surveys that have been critical in our understanding of the real-life experience of using public transit in Detroit. There was some level of familiarity with Detroit Public Transit systems that we expected from participants. Although these surveys can exist on their own, the combined data from both surveys, as well as the other community engagement strategies we have employed, have provided context and further understanding of transit's existing conditions and the community's wants and needs.

The first of these surveys was an "Initial Transit Survey" that targeted the general population to help gauge general feelings about public transit in Detroit. This survey was disseminated online, through our own personal circles, as well as through connections with various project stakeholders like the project partner and committee. This first survey was disseminated at the start of the Capstone process.

The second survey deployed, "Understanding Mobility in Detroit", was more directly focused towards understanding mobility trends in Detroit and was directly targeted toward transit users. This survey was disseminated online like the first survey, but was also given out through a QR code at the in-person events, further discussed later in this section. This survey was disseminated around halfway through the Capstone process, as seen in the engagement timeline.



INITIAL TRANSIT SURVEY

The "Initial Transit Survey", shown in figure 57, was used as a starting point for understanding transit trends in the city. This Google survey was distributed online and shared via email, Linkedin, and text message. The survey consisted of 6 questions, and can be found in Appendix A. It was targeted at the general population to gauge high-level ideas about transit use and feelings towards Detroit transit.

There were 43 participants in the initial transit survey. There was variety in responses but trends also appeared. The results are shown and analyzed in the figures below. Full responses can be found in Appendix B. The first three questions were multiple choice with preselected responses and/or one empty box for write-ins. The final three questions were long response to give the participant an option to write anything of interest. This portion of the report will outline and analyze survey responses.

Capstone 2022 - Initial Transit Survey

Please consider completing this survey to contribute to our Capstone (thesis) project for the completion of our Master's Program through the University of Detroit Mercy. This survey will be used to inform our initial understanding of the way people interact with public transit systems in Detroit. Your information will remain anonymous. We appreciate your participation!

Figure 57. Initial Transit Survey. Source: Capstone team

INITIAL TRANSIT SURVEY: RESULTS

QUESTION 1:

HOW OFTEN DO YOU ACCESS PUBLIC TRANSIT IN DETROIT?

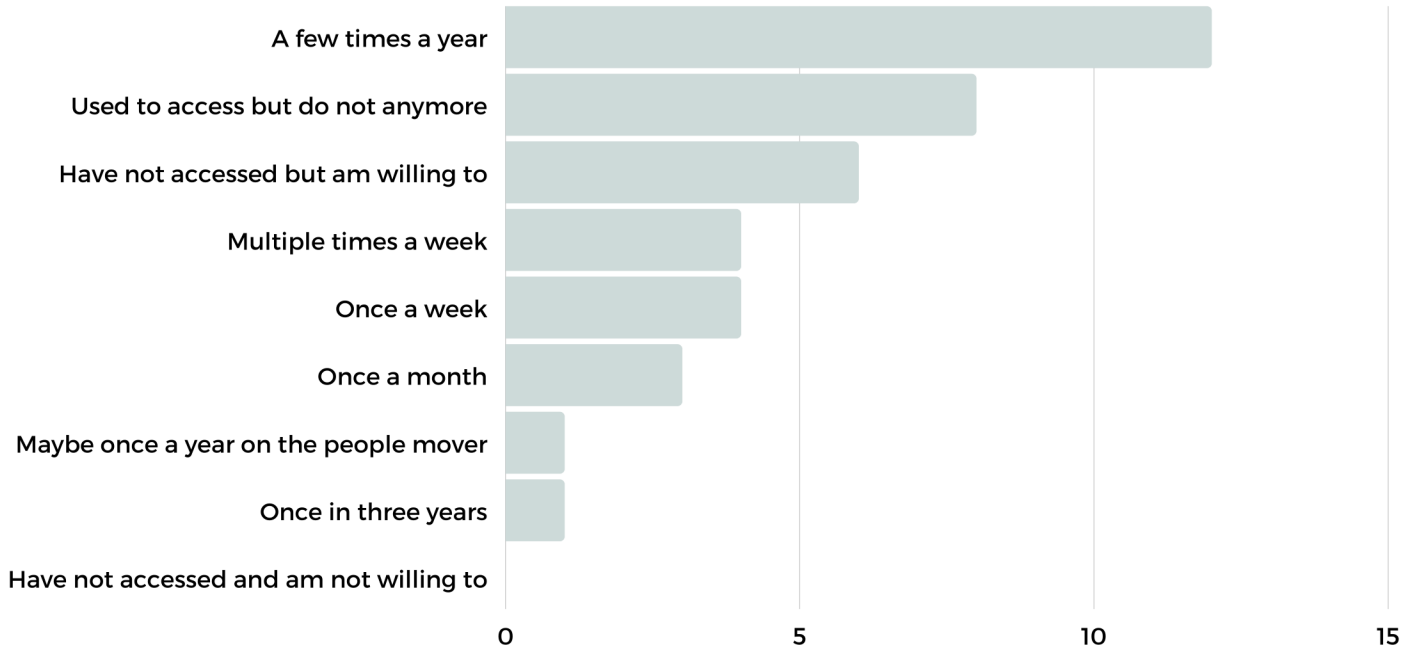
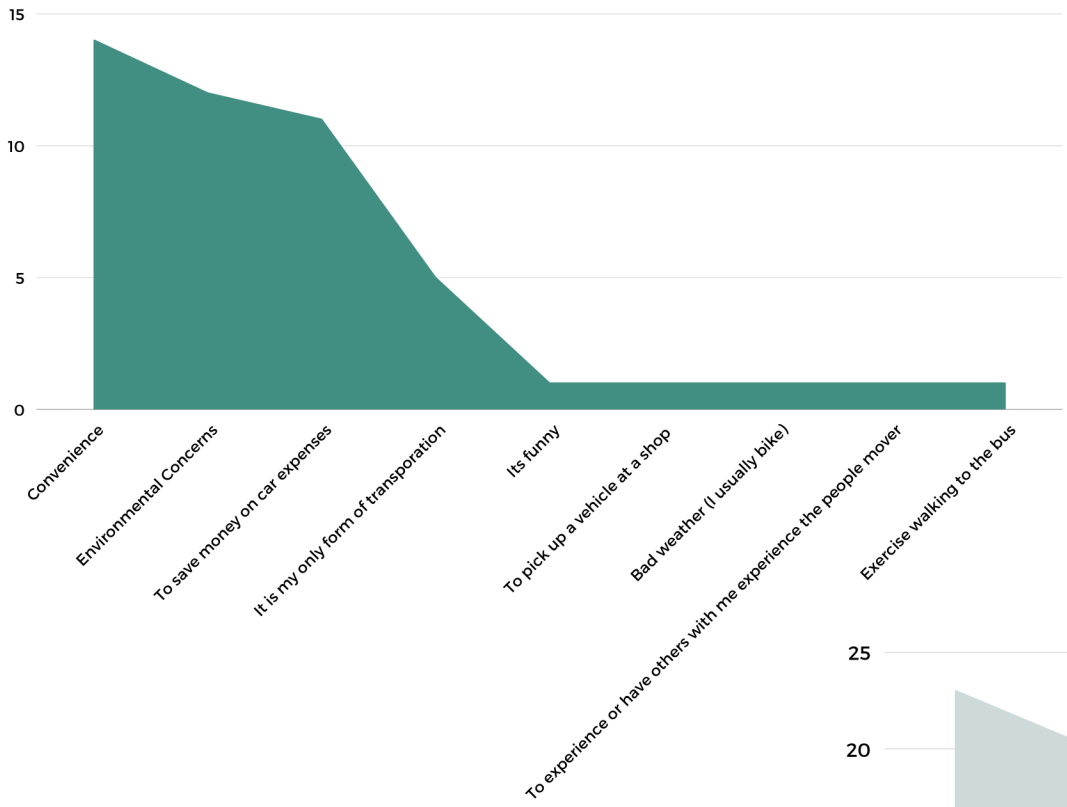


Figure 58. Initial Transit Survey - Question 1. Source: Capstone team

A majority of the survey participants (24) indicated that they use public transit sporadically throughout the year. And many people (8) indicated that they used to access transit services but do not anymore. This could be for a variety of reasons, but does speak to the trend that most people would choose not to use public transit services if they had other resources. All survey participants indicated that they had or would use public transit services, if they had not previously. This is good news for the potential of bringing new riders into the public transit space!

Figure 59. Initial Transit Survey - Question 2.
Source: Capstone team



QUESTION 2:

IF YOU ACCESS PUBLIC TRANSIT IN DETROIT, WHY DO YOU DO SO?

QUESTION 3:

IF YOU DO NOT ACCESS PUBLIC TRANSIT IN DETROIT, WHY DO YOU NOT DO SO?

*The time it takes to get from point A to point B (can drive quicker) and the wait time. Also, public transportation has a bad reputation

**I live in the suburbs and taking the SMART bus to other places takes too long

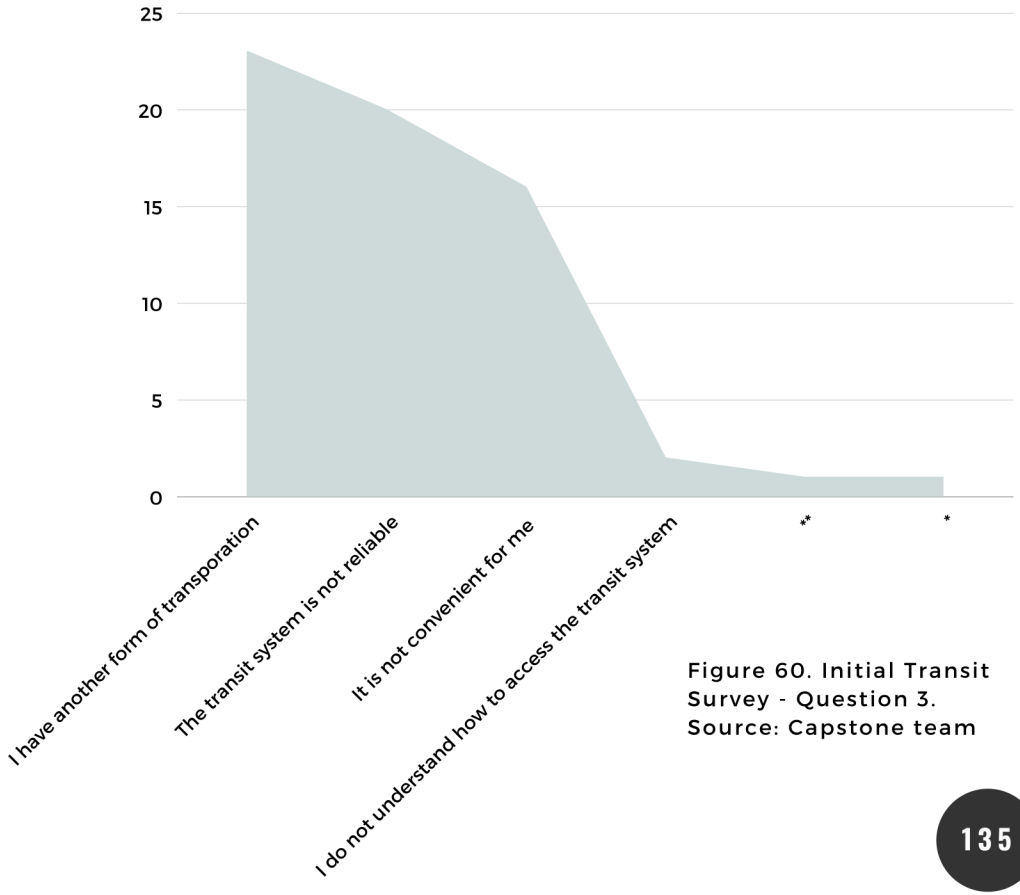


Figure 60. Initial Transit Survey - Question 3.
Source: Capstone team

Questions 2 and 3 of the survey asked participants about their logic for or against using public transit in Detroit. The first few answers for each question were proposed answers, generally with the most selections, but participants also utilized the “other” box with these responses. Convenience (14 participants), environmental concerns (12 participants), and cost saving (11 participants) were the highest selected responses for using public transit. While having another form of transportation (23 participants) and finding the transit system to be unreliable (20 participants) were the highest selected responses against using public transit. These answers can provide insight to both keeping people using public transit, by promoting and increasing the whys, and to potentially create a better ridership experience by combating the why-nots.

Long form answers give participants the opportunity to speak more directly about their thoughts. Questions 4-6 were an open space for individuals to speak on behalf of themselves and their communities. Appendix B shows all Initial Transit Survey results, while some direct quotes have been pulled and will be analyzed for this portion of the report.

QUESTION 4:

TELL US HOW TRANSIT ACCESS (PUBLIC OR OTHERWISE) IMPACTS YOUR WELLBEING.

- “The transit system helps people park in the suburbs and work downtown. [..] have a public transit system is useful for people who do not have a vehicle, or do not have access. [..and] for students the system is useful during the school year”
- **“Access to my own private vehicle is integral to my well being; I am afforded to the opportunity to pursue and interest at any time”**
- “Lack of convenient service means I have to rely on having a car, which is an additional expense - better public transit options would mean less stress for travel/driving and more cost efficient”
- “Saving money on gas, feeling like I make less of an environmental impact, avoiding the stress of parking, a sense of community with other riders”
- **“Transit access, if more reliable and accessible, would dramatically improve my wellbeing and quality of life because I could reduce or eliminate my dependence on a car to get around the region.”**
- “It's critical for me to have reliable transportation to get to work and back home. Having it helps to mitigate daily stress, facilitates a routine, and requires I walk more.“

QUESTION 5:

TELL US HOW TRANSIT ACCESS (PUBLIC OR OTHERWISE) IMPACTS YOUR COMMUNITY'S WELL BEING.

- **“I think Detroit would feel like a more cohesive city if more people rode public transit together. Potentially fewer divisions in the city. “**
- “Accessible transit options gives opportunity to people to be able to work, run errands, and visit areas they wouldn’t have been able to use without it.”
- “Citizens/neighbors without private transportation are still limited in their ability to freely and easily pursue interests, which has a detrimental impact on the well-being of the community”
- “The lack of transit means that many folks in my community are either forced to limit their travel options, buy a car, or spend exorbitant amounts on rideshare systems like Uber. **The lack of transit access is an overall detriment to all of us.”**
- “Increased transit options decreases reliability on cars and allows space to be dedicated more toward people than vehicles. Transit = equity, especially in a city with high insurance rates and lower income residents. People must have options to get from place to place in order to succeed”
- “We live in a community where many people cannot afford cars, so their ability to get to work, doctor appts, etc is reliant on a bus system that is extremely unreliable and hard to plan around.”
- “Transit access impacts everything, I would not live in a city that did not provide it.”

Questions 4 and 5 were very impactful to our overall idea of how people understood public transit’s relationship to community and individual wellness. It was obvious through these responses that the majority of participants did recognize the relationship between the two. Survey participants indicated that their personal wellbeing could be improved if a functional public transit service could replace the expense and upkeep of a personal car. And whether participants used public transit themselves or not, they seemed to understand that public transit is a catalyst for opportunity, connection, and ease in life.

QUESTION 6:

IF YOU COULD MAKE ONE CHANGE TO PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEMS IN DETROIT, WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

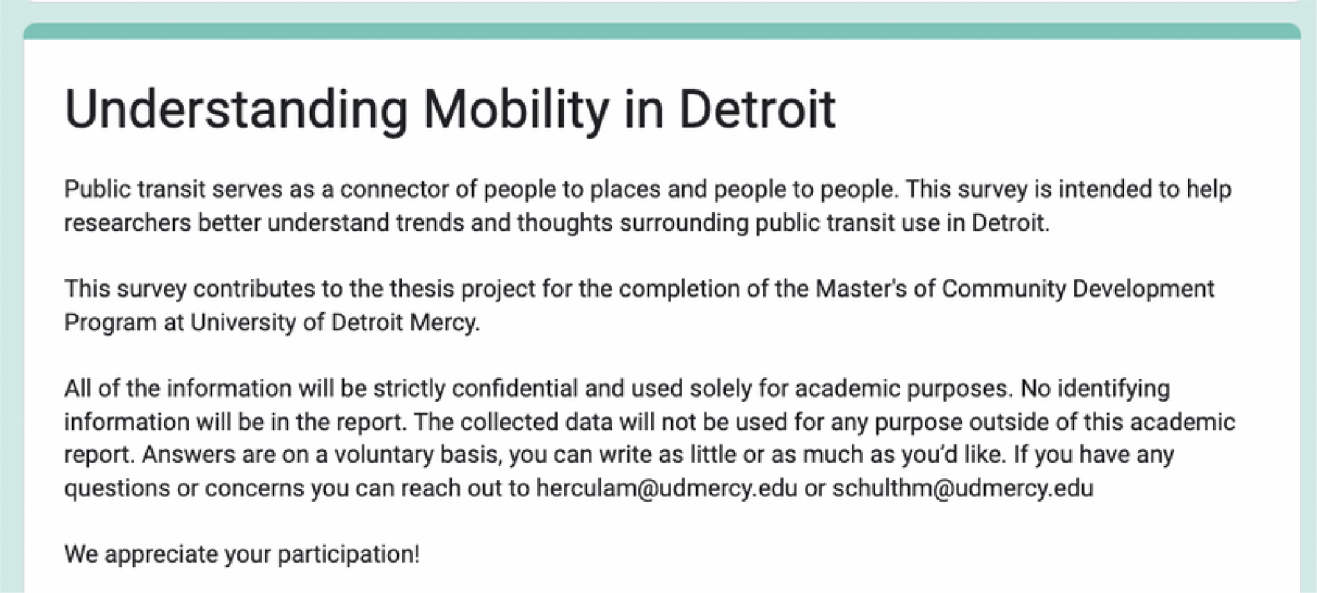
- I would like to see a more expansive transit system to provide opportunity for the city and suburbs to connect more easily.
- I would love a safe, clean, and consistent bus system or train system.
- “I would change the philosophy of the system. It works only as well as the areas it services are accessible. It only works as well as the routes it travels. Having a system that's has more stops or that comes every 30 minutes regularly is great, but it means nothing if the buses aren't stopping at places with sidewalks etc. “
- “..more reliable, better pay for transit workers, conscientious safety protocols for wealth/wellbeing, better education/marketing purposes”
- better communication about how to access it, easy route planning, overall easier to determine the best ways to use it to get around
- “I'd make the routes clearer and more direct.”
- “Require community engagement when a bus stop is re-located from one place to another (to inform riders of why the move is required, and to alert them of how that may impact their use) [..] if riders download the bus tracking app, employ an auto re-routing alert in the app., showing alternative pick-up locations on route.”

The responses for question 6 were our first insight to understanding what interventions may be useful for current or new transit riders. This question was marked as optional on the survey, yet most participants did choose to respond. We believe this speaks to individual interest in transit system improvement. Participants indicated that they would like to see more regional connectivity and more reliability in the bus system. Additionally, many participants (at least 5) indicated that having better educational and/or marketing systems would be helpful to their understanding of how the public transit services operate in Detroit. These responses were very helpful in taking the first steps towards establishing the MOVE intervention plan, to be outlined later in the report.

UNDERSTANDING MOBILITY SURVEY

In addition to the "Initial Transit Survey," we disseminated another online survey more focused on understanding mobility trends. This survey was created after we had the opportunity to conduct a majority of our background research, so it was helpful in shaping the questions we presented and better identifying the information we hoped to gather.

The "Understanding Mobility Survey" was also created using Google forms and consisted of 10 questions. These questions were a mixture of short-answer and multiple choice. This survey was intended to reach transit riders with a more in-depth understanding of the public transit system. The survey was distributed using online sources, such as email, text message, and social media, and given to interested parties at our in-person engagement events. The survey garnered 26 participants. The questions are presented in Appendix C.



Understanding Mobility in Detroit

Public transit serves as a connector of people to places and people to people. This survey is intended to help researchers better understand trends and thoughts surrounding public transit use in Detroit.

This survey contributes to the thesis project for the completion of the Master's of Community Development Program at University of Detroit Mercy.

All of the information will be strictly confidential and used solely for academic purposes. No identifying information will be in the report. The collected data will not be used for any purpose outside of this academic report. Answers are on a voluntary basis, you can write as little or as much as you'd like. If you have any questions or concerns you can reach out to herculam@udmercy.edu or schulthm@udmercy.edu

We appreciate your participation!

Figure 61. Understanding Mobility in Detroit. Source: Capstone team

UNDERSTANDING MOBILITY SURVEY: RESULTS

Similar to the "Initial Transit Survey", the results presented some varied answers as well as some trends. It remained obvious that participants recognized both the actual and idealized value of public transit. A majority of the questions were multiple choice with an option for "other." The other questions were short-answer and provided well needed insight to the direct thoughts of participants.

Although transit is often used as a regional connector, especially in Southeast Michigan where the region is rather connected, the work for this research is primarily focused within Detroit—specifically on the Eastside. Questions 1 and 2 were intended to gather demographic data about the location perspective from which participants were answering. The majority (17) of participants did not live in Detroit—while those that did live in the city lived in a variety of neighborhoods. There were 2 participants from the Eastside area located in Morningside and East English Village.

QUESTION 1:

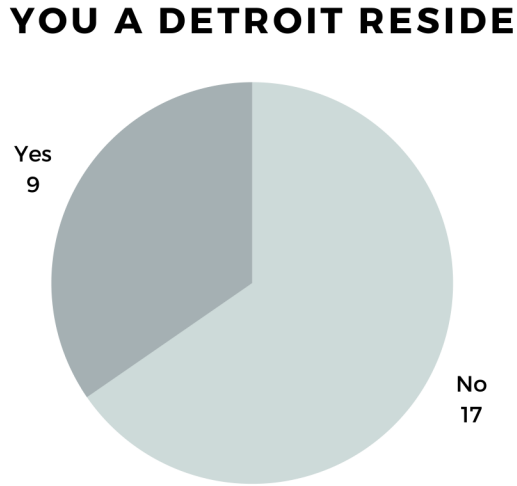


Figure 62. Understanding Mobility Survey - Question 1.
Source: Capstone team

QUESTION 2:

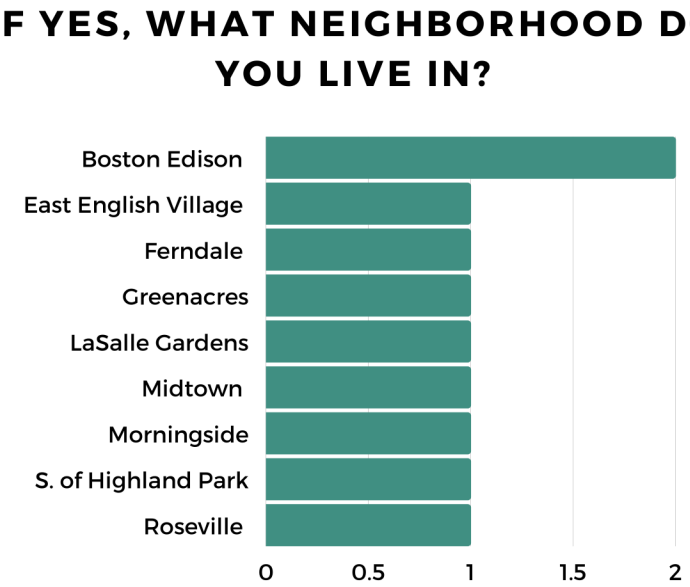


Figure 63. Understanding Mobility Survey - Question 2.
Source: Capstone team

QUESTION 3:

WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED METHOD OF TRANSIT IN DETROIT?

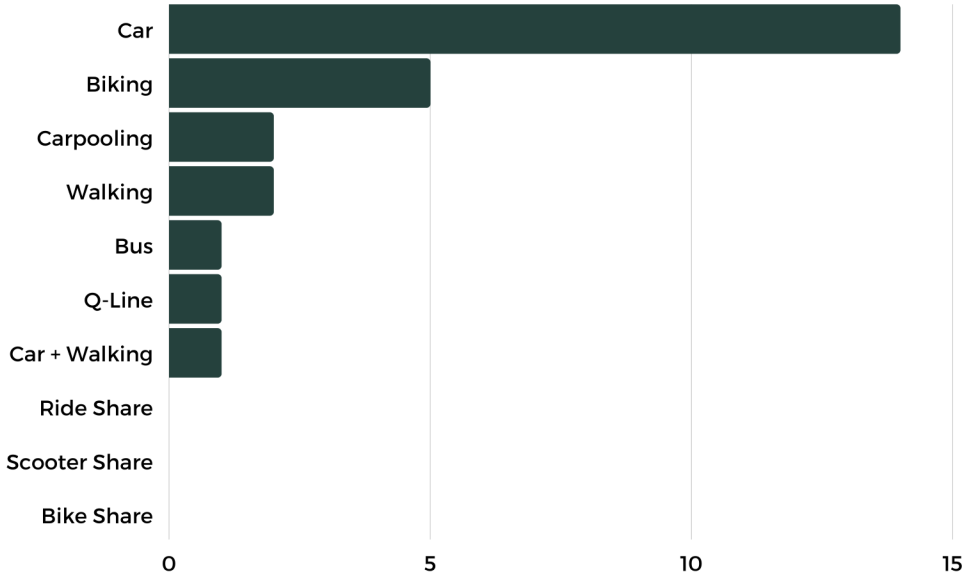


Figure 64. Understanding Mobility Survey - Question 3.
Source: Capstone team

QUESTION 4:

WHY IS THAT YOUR PREFERRED METHOD?

- Car and walking: “Exercise, autonomy, convenience”
- Car: “Be able to quickly move from place to place without arrangement”
- Car: “Lack of rapid transit and trains from the suburbs to downtown Detroit”
- **Car: “Not familiar with bus schedules and found the q line unreliable when I last attempted to use it.”**
- Walking: “I like the pace of walking and the experience of finding things as I walk..”
- **Bus: “I don't need a second family car, I enjoy riding public transit (when it functions!), I can save money and it's better for the environment”**
- Car: “Because there is no alternative and I feel safe”

Questions 3 and 4 focused on understanding the transit method preference of participants. Most participants (14) indicated that they preferred to use their car for convenience and safety–indicated in the responses to question 4. Participants also indicated that they enjoy using a bike, carpooling or walking. . While participants in the first survey indicated that they would be willing to use alternative transit methods, the results from these survey questions indicate that many people do not access alternative transit in practice.

QUESTION 5:

DO TRANSIT SERVICES IN DETROIT FEEL AFFORDABLE TO YOU?

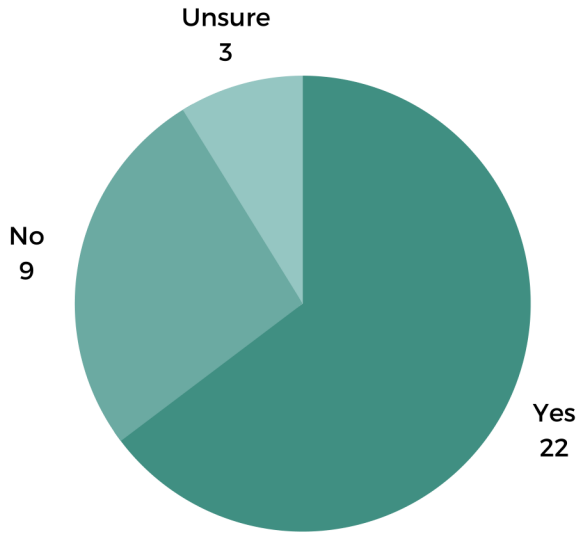


Figure 65. Understanding Mobility Survey - Question 5.
Source: Capstone team

Affordability is often a barrier for access. This question was up for interpretation as “affordable” can mean different things to individual participants. We also chose to not provide clarity in the term “transit services” as participants are likely accessing a variety of services. 22 participants indicated that they find transit services to be affordable. This is a positive for providers that have worked to create comfortable financial access points for users. 3 participants indicated that they were unsure if services were affordable. It is likely that these participants have not interacted often, if at all, with transit services in Detroit.

QUESTION 6:

HOW WOULD YOU RATE DETROIT'S BUS SYSTEM? (OUT OF 5)

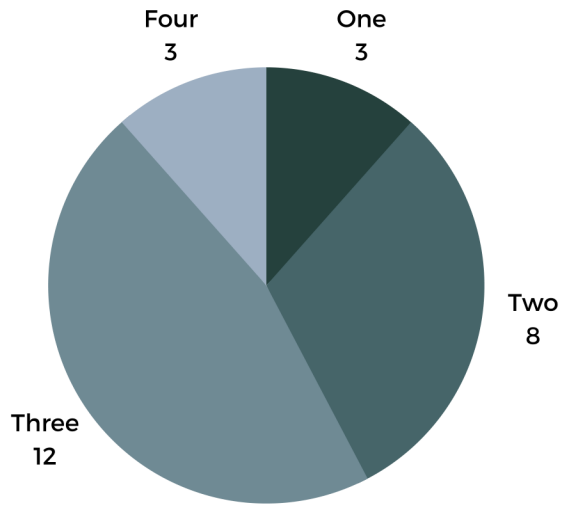


Figure 66. Understanding Mobility Survey - Question 6.
Source: Capstone team

Question 6 also left some interpretation up to participants. There are many factors that might go into an overall “rating” of a system. This question was intended to be high-level and leave space for thinking among participants. Although no one indicated a rating of 5/5, many participants (15) selected average or above average (3 or 4 out of 5). This data shows us that there is faith in the system that currently exists. Eleven participants indicated a score of below average (1 or 2 out of 5), indicating to us that there is still space for improvement.

QUESTION 7:

HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL USING DETROIT PUBLIC TRANSIT? (OUT OF 5)

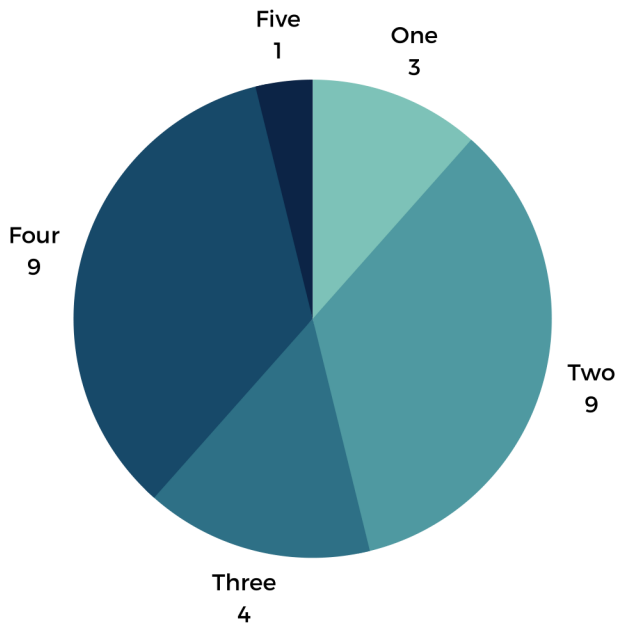


Figure 67. Understanding Mobility Survey - Question 7.
Source: Capstone team

Similar to questions 5 and 6, question 7 remained broad in its definition in asking people if they feel "safe" while using Detroit public transit. From the research conducted, safety has stood out as a large barrier for people's willingness to engage with public transit in Detroit. While these judgments on safety are not without merit, providers and advocates have made big efforts in recent years to improve both actual and perceived safety. Participants in this survey (14) indicated that they feel average or above average (3,4, or 5 out of 5) about safety while using public transit. However, multiple participants (12) indicated that they feel below average safety (indicating a 2 out of 5) or unsafe (indicating 1 out of 5).

QUESTION 8:

WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU MORE WILLING TO TAKE DETROIT PUBLIC TRANSIT?

- "Reliability"
- **"If I felt better educated regarding different transits available and if there was a security guard in some instances"**
- "Safety"
- "I don't think I would feel safe or clean taking the bus system in Detroit."
- "**Being more familiar with schedule and pricing."**
- "Have it be more accessible and timely. Safety for bike lanes."
- "Additional information about routes and timing."
- "..knowledge about the options/routes."
- "Explainer videos showing me every step to use each system. If service was more punctual and if safety was improved."
- "Have a more socially diverse crowd use the service"

Question 8 is not only relevant to our research for this project, but could also be relevant to parties implementing transit interventions. There were a variety of answers to this question however main themes for increasing use of public transit may include: education, safety, accessibility, and familiarity. All of these answers played heavily into the plan for intervention to be later introduced in this paper.

QUESTION 9:

WOULD YOU UTILIZE TRANSIT MORE IF THERE WERE MULTIPLE OPTIONS (LIKE ACCESS TO BIKE SHARE OR SCOOTER SHARE) AT ONE CONVENIENTLY LOCATED PLACE?

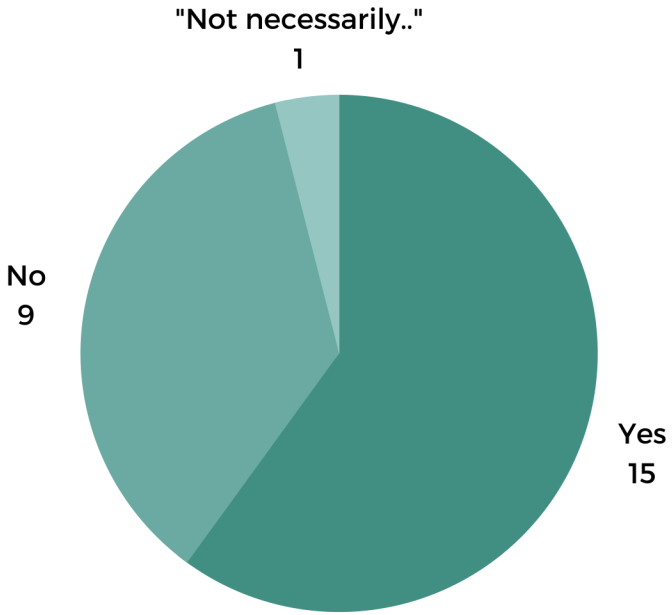


Figure 68. Understanding Mobility Survey - Question 9.
Source: Capstone team

With the current structure of Detroit's bus system, it's likely that a public transit user will have to, or would prefer to, use multiple forms of public transit to reach their destination. A willingness to do this is a key component, for many (but not all), potential routes within Detroit. Conveniently locating multiple transit options in one location may create more accessibility around use. Question 9 inquired about participants willingness to engage with various public transit forms. A majority of participants (15) said they would be willing; while a strong amount (9) said they would not. This may be a good indicator of the need or want for a mobility hub style development within a community.

QUESTION 10:

HOW DOES MOBILITY IMPACT YOUR WELLNESS?

- “Mobility is important for connecting people to essentials businesses and services. My grandma relies on public transportation completely to go to appointments since she no longer drives.”
- “Because I have my own vehicle, mobility access is easiest. “
- “Driving a car around is terrible for my health (significantly reduces physical activity) and terrible for the environment (which again impacts air quality and has health implications). “
- “If a bus doesn’t come, or is late, I’m late for work or getting home after a long work day. It can be stressful when it doesn’t work well. When it does function properly, it’s quite pleasant. “
- “I'd probably drive less and be more physically active”

Community wellness is a cornerstone of this research. Similar to questions asked in the "Initial Transit Survey", question 10 was intended to gauge participants' evaluation of public transit’s role in community and individual wellness. Participants seemed to recognize that having a reliable source of transit, often mentioning a personal car, creates space for opportunity and access (components of wellness). Participants also uplifted the idea that life can become for stressful when they cannot be transported safely and efficiently.

QUESTION 11:

ANY OTHER THOUGHTS ON PUBLIC TRANSIT IN DETROIT?

- **“A major PR campaign for public transportation in Detroit needs to happen, to reverse the negative stigma”**
- “I am glad it is up and coming!”
- “The buses never feel safe to ride on.”
- “We need more buses, more drivers, better frequency, improved shelters, and bus lanes where it makes sense”
- **“I wouldn't know where to go to get the answers to use public transit.”**
- “The bus stops are so trashy. Actual trash. No benches, no garbage cans. No shelter. Just a broken down sign usually. Makes riding even more unattractive.”
- “SMART and DDot need to improve their outreach and increase public awareness of their services.”
- “Lack of cooperation between SMART and DDot. Having to wait to transfer at the city limits is ridiculous and adds to travel time"

Question 11 gave participants a space to say anything else they wished about Detroit public transit. Answers varied in length and topic. Overall, the responses are a good representation of the various perspectives and experiences around using public transit in Detroit. Some major themes from the responses included concerns about safety, usability, and awareness.

CONCLUSIONS

ONLINE SURVEYS

Online surveys allowed us a low-barrier, low-cost way to interact with the community. The use of an online survey was also easily distributable and we were able to garner a total of 69 participants across both surveys. It was valuable to our project that we had the opportunity to put out an Initial Transit Survey, shaping our thoughts in initial research, as well as a more targeted Understanding Mobility Survey, that allowed us to gather more detailed thoughts around transit use in Detroit. The initial engagements through the use of a survey also assisted in shaping our in person engagements, detailed in the section to come.

IN PERSON ENGAGEMENT

In addition to the online surveying and conversations, we also had the opportunity to engage directly in-person with community members regarding their transit experience. We attended two events: one was the Eastside Community Network Transportation Resource Sharing event and the other was at the East Warren Farmers Market. Our main focuses with the in-person community engagement were to have as many conversations as possible, provide resources and education–as well as be educated ourselves–and understand user experience to inform the user-based interventions suggested later in the project. We were able to have many valuable conversations with various Eastside community members. Generally, **we found people were really willing to engage with us, passionate about their community, and open to learning more about transit.**

Figure 69. Haley + Residents at the East Warren Farmers Market. Source: Capstone team

Each event was unique and had a slightly different engagement focus, which will be detailed individually below. At both events, however, attendees were asked to participate in an interactive poster board activity to indicate what form of transit, public or otherwise, they utilized to get to the given event. The poster board and results can be seen below in figures 70 and 71.

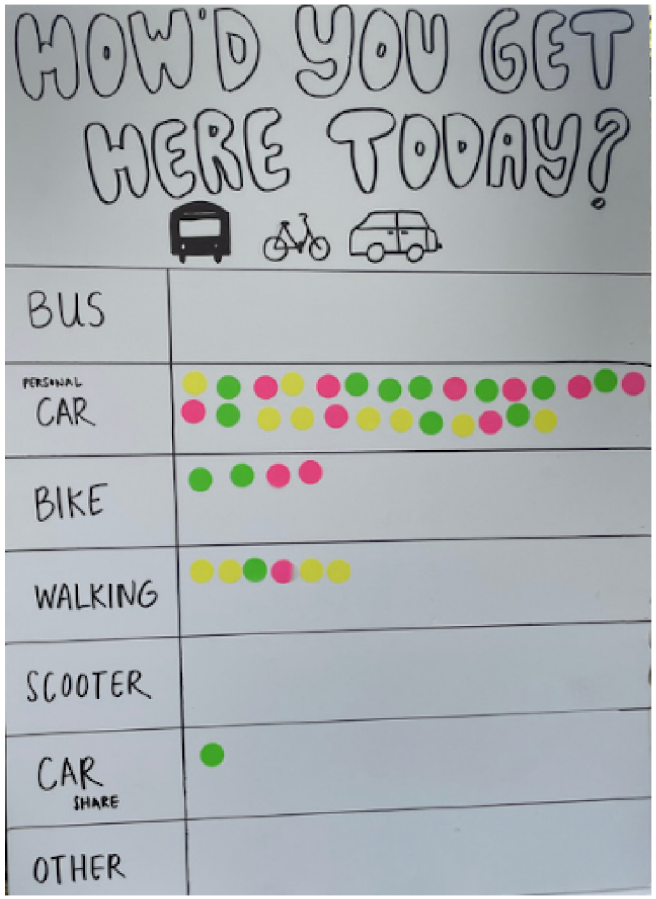


Figure 70. "How'd You Get Here Today?" Interactive Poster.
Source: Capstone team

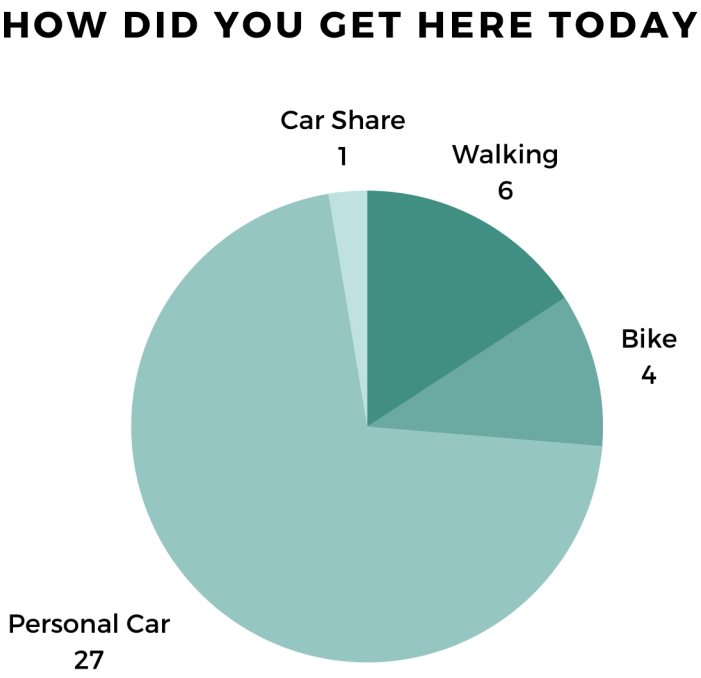


Figure 71. "How'd You Get Here Today?" Interactive Poster Results.
Source: Capstone team

As seen in figure 71, the majority of attendees utilized their personal car to attend either event. This demonstrates Detroit's heavy reliance on personal vehicles as the primary method of transit. This is also reflected in the results from both surveys, as previously discussed.

Figure 72. Flyer for In-Person Engagement Events. Source: Capstone team

We also used both events as an opportunity to hand out flyers with a QR code to our Understanding Mobility Survey, as discussed above, shown in figure 72. Both events provided us ample opportunity to engage face to face with real residents, helping us to better understand what they want out of their transit systems.

EASTSIDE COMMUNITY NETWORK
TRANSPORTATION RESOURCE SHARING EVENT

Figure 73. ECN Transportation Conversation Flyer. Source: ECN

The first in-person engagement event took place on September 6th at Eastside Community Network during their Transportation Resource Sharing Event, seen in figure 73.

Because this was a transit centered event, we expected participants to have some interest in or connection to public transit in Detroit. Our main focuses were introducing people to the concept of a mobility hub, having conversations about people's mobility preferences, and learning about what people want out of Detroit transit systems. To introduce the concept of the mobility hub, we utilized a poster board with an image and description of the hub, including some potential features that could be included. We utilized this board as an educational tool and as a conversation starter with people who approached our table. An image of this board can be seen in figure 74.

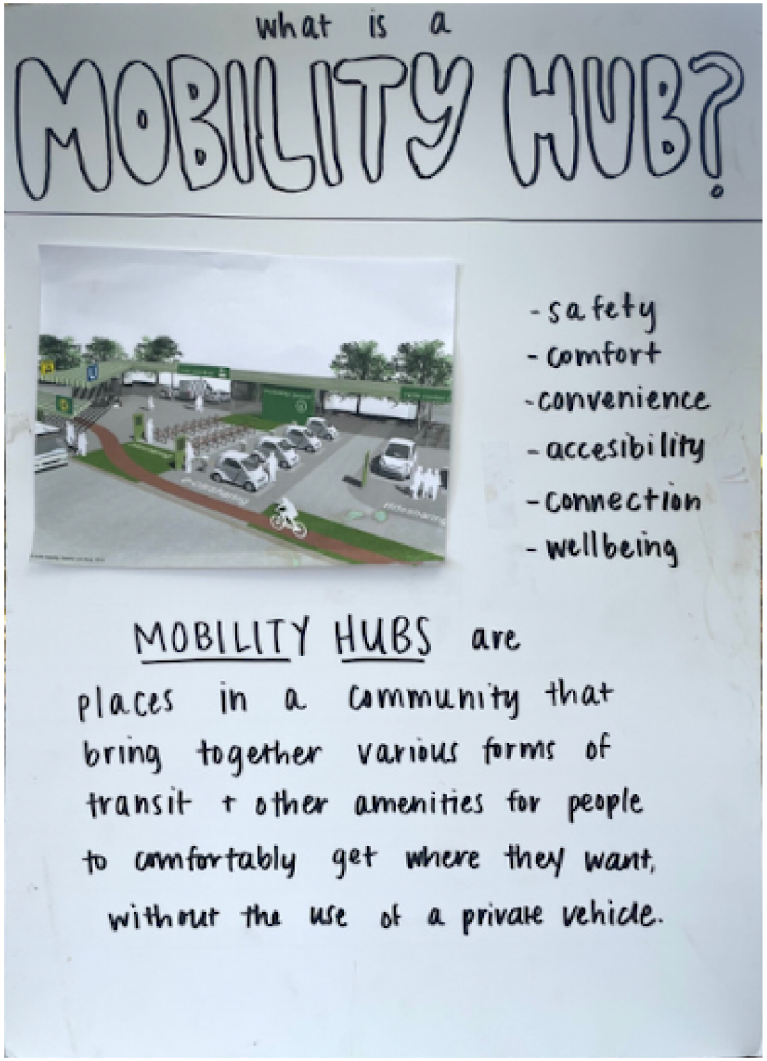


Figure 74. Mobility Hub Poster. Source: Capstone team

PLEASE RANK THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL MOBILITY HUB COMPONENTS BASED ON IMPORTANCE.

A rank of 1 indicates high importance. A rank of 6 indicates low importance.

	Access to scooter share
	Access to bike share
	Charging Outlets
	Safety components (lighting, video recording)
	Seating
	Resource sharing (community fridge, free library, etc)

Figure 75. Ranking Mobility Hub Components Flyer. Source: Capstone team

Using this tool, we explained to participants what a mobility hub was and asked if they would be interested in having a hub in their community. Overall, people were receptive to the idea and seemed to understand how a mobility hub can further support wellness in their community. While engaging with people about the concept, we invited participants to fill out a short survey ranking the potential components of a mobility hub on a scale of 1 to 6 based on importance. Figure 75 and 76 show both the survey document and results.

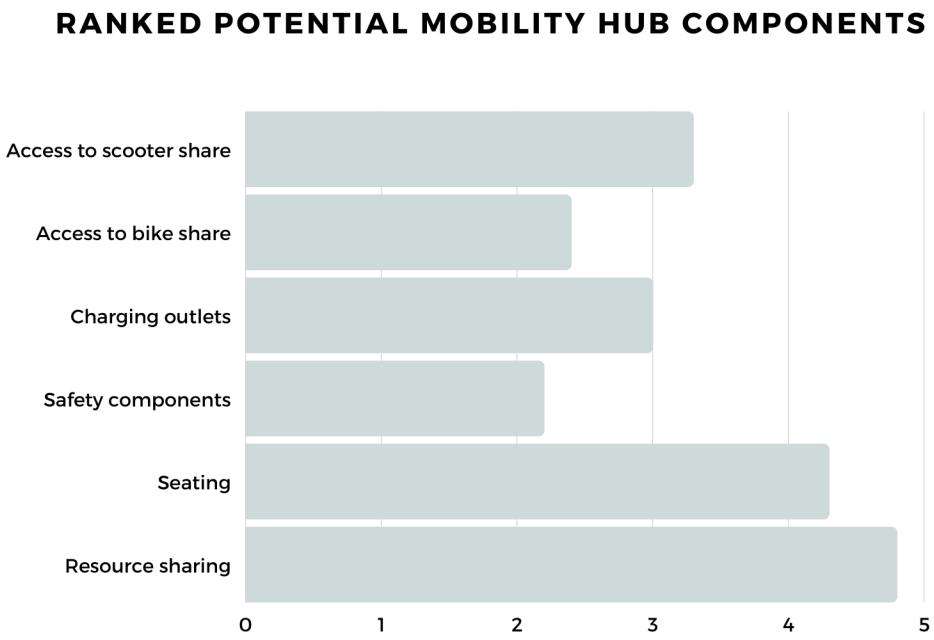


Figure 76. Ranking Mobility Hub Components - Results. Source: Capstone team

Figure 76 shows the average ranking of importance of potential mobility hub components, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important. On average, **most people listed safety components to be the most important potential feature at a mobility hub**. This was closely followed by access to bike share. This supports the common themes throughout the community engagement process that suggest people would access various forms of transit if it was more easily accessible and safe. Participants labeled resource sharing as the least important potential component.

Overall, the ECN event was a great opportunity to engage with people within a transit-oriented space. We appreciated the opportunity to talk with fellow transit lovers and gather some project specific data. The information and data gathered directly informed the implementation strategies suggested later in this report. It also allowed us to refine our engagement process and shift focus for our second engagement event at East Warren Farmers Market.

EAST WARREN FARMERS MARKET

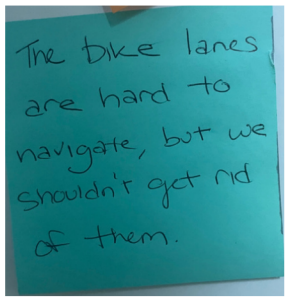
The second in person engagement event took place on September 8th at the East Warren Farmers Market. A flyer for the event can be seen in figure 77.

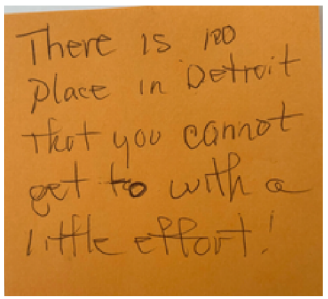
This was not a transit centered event and we were excited at the opportunity to engage with Eastside residents who may or may not be invested in the Detroit transit space. We utilized this opportunity to determine people's interest in transit and what interventions they felt would benefit their community. In general, we found people were very passionate about the Eastside and transit, in both positive and negative ways.

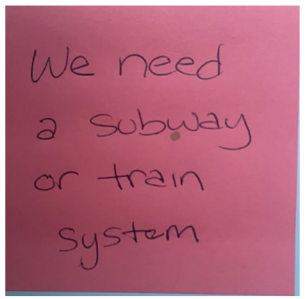
Figure 77. East Warren Farmers Market Flyer. Source: East Warren Development Co

In addition to introducing the "How did you get here today?" poster shown in figure 70, we chose to engage with community members at the East Warren Farmers Market through an interactive thoughts activity, shown in figure 78 and 79. As participants approached our booth, we were able to introduce our project and ask the broad question of "what do you think of public transit on the Eastside?" We asked community members to write down their thoughts on a sticky note and place it on the board. This tool was helpful for us in gathering a comprehensive picture of thoughts on transit. Using the sticky note and board as an introductory tool, we were then able to start candid conversations with community members focused on their experience. We even had a young girl interested in drawing a few pictures for us, as you will see on the board.

Figure 78. Public Transit Input Poster. Source: Capstone team







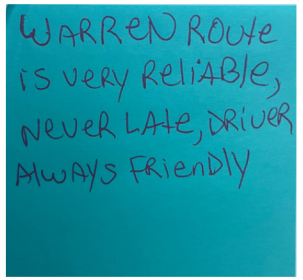


Figure 79. Poster Responses. Source: Capstone team

One of the highlights of our time was a conversation with a regular vendor at the market. She remarked on the opportunities access to transit affords, noting, “There is no place in Detroit that you cannot get to with a little effort!” as seen in figure 79. Her transit story highlighted how essential public transit was to her in her youth and that her children now use public transit to get to and from school. Now that she is older, she finds it is more accessible and feels more safe driving herself around or asking someone else to drive her. This particular transit user story reflects the evolving history of transit and the common perceptions of safety and usability surrounding Detroit transit.

The East Warren Farmers Market event was a great opportunity to do some community engagement within the physical boundaries of our project focus area on the Eastside. This engagement event allowed us to understand a wider variety of perspectives, including people who are more critical of public transit in Detroit. Like the rest of the community engagement methods, the data gathered at this event directly informs our suggested action plan and implementation strategies.

Figure 80. Stills from East Warren Farmers Market.
Source: East Warren Development Co Facebook

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

From all of the various engagement strategies we employed, we have synthesized some major themes and findings that were present in all conversations, surveys, and events. The first of these is that car culture in Detroit is rampant. This is heavily tied to Detroit's identity as the Motor City and how cars have become so integrated into our culture. From this and a general lack of advocacy for transit use, another key takeaway is that a majority of residents don't know how to use transit and find that to be a huge barrier in transit access.

People are also concerned with safety on public transit and at transit stops, which often prevents them from engaging with public transit services. We have also determined that perceptions—or rather misperceptions—of transit users and why they use transit to have created a pervasive stigma against transit use. Finally, we have found that transit development has been historically an exclusionary practice and have not always incorporated community engagement strategies, creating developments that are not fully utilized. **With all the presented barriers, we are hopeful in that our engagement led us to so many people—residents, organizations, providers, and advocates—whom are passionate about the importance of and access to public transit services in Detroit.**

PERVASIVE CAR CULTURE

KNOWLEDGE BARRIERS TO ACCESSIBILITY

SAFETY

(MIS)PERCEPTIONS

PEOPLE ARE PASSIONATE

CONCLUSIONS

IN PERSON ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement methods we employed throughout the entire Capstone shaped our project trajectory and the way we thought about public transit and community wellness. **Listening and engaging residents has proven to be a key part of creating community based interventions.** Most significant to our research was using feedback from community engagement to better understand present needs for both riders and non-riders. We were also able to better understand the current role of public transit in the lives of those we talked with. We are fortunate that so many residents, advocates, community development professionals, and transit providers were willing to contribute to our project in this way. All of the chosen forms of community engagement–1-on-1 conversations, online surveys, and attendance at community events–served a great purpose in informing the recommendations to come.

PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

PUBLIC TRANSIT + COMMUNITY WELLNESS

INTRODUCTION

Project based applied research, the method in which this Capstone Project is being conducted, is based in providing an actual solution to a defined problem. Applied research is a form of investigation that includes solution-oriented inquiries into a field of study (Maskall and Cotterell). As a conclusion to this research, we have proposed an intervention plan that we hope will aid in fostering a reciprocal relationship between transit providers, advocates, and current and future public transit riders. The proposed intervention plan, titled “Multiple Organizations for Viable transit Expansion“ plan (MOVE), focuses on interorganizational cooperation and uplifting the user experience.

As detailed in the following section, MOVE aims to make transit development accessible to various developers, organizations, and individuals who are passionate about public transit, but may not have always had the resources and direction to engage in development projects. MOVE’s focus on capacity and ability aims to empower implementing agencies and create sustainable, and realistic change to transit in Detroit. Improvements to the actual and perceived public transit experience in Detroit benefits all parties. The proposed interventions are intended to be adapted to individual communities, based on needs to be discovered through community engagement. The following section will provide an overview of the MOVE plan before moving into detailed intervention strategies and projected outcomes.

THE MOVE PLAN

OVERVIEW

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES/EXAMPLE RESOURCES

KEY ROLES

FUNDING RESOURCES

MOVE

MULTIPLE ORGANIZATIONS FOR VIABLE TRANSIT EXPANSION

OVERVIEW

Our proposal for action encompasses efforts that are available to various groups involved in transit. The Multiple Organizations for Viable transit Expansion accounts for the capacity of different organizations—block clubs, community development organizations, advocacy groups, city government, and regional transit agencies—and the role they can play in improving mobility and community connectedness. As mentioned throughout the history section, transit development in Detroit has been historically regulated to large scale interventions mostly from government funded and private transit providers. **This plan aims to make transit development accessible to all groups, agencies, and organizations who want to make real impacts on their communities mobility and wellness but have not always had the resources or opportunities to do so.**

The proposal will include three tiers, with tier one being the most accessible in the present and tier three being a longer-term interorganizational planning effort. In conversations with stakeholders throughout this process, we have seen a common theme of a desire to make transit as accessible as possible to riders. Each conversation revealed insight into current efforts, as well as an understanding about capacity for future or more involved efforts. We believe that there are some lower-level interventions available as well as more complex interventions that may progress with proper time and funding. These interventions will all ultimately contribute to creating a more functional public transit system in Detroit.

Creating reliable, safe, and accessible transit services is a complex job and we recognize the importance of effort coordination and coalescence.

The proposed action plan, divided by tier, is shown in figure 81. The MOVE plan is explored first by looking at implementation strategies and project timelines. Strategies are then introduced by tier for further details regarding implementation. The proposal will also include recommendations for what types of organizations we see implementing each tier, but we extend the invitation to any group with capacity to explore any and all tiers of the proposed plan.

Figure 81. The MOVE Intervention Plan Overview. Source; Capstone team

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES + PROJECT TIMELINES

Implementation strategies and project timelines will vary both through and within each tier presented. **The proposed strategies are flexible and should be tailored depending on the needs of the community, the scope of the project, and capacity of the implementing organization(s).**

The overarching theme for implementation will focus on uplifting community voice and rider experience. All potential interventions should start with learning sessions where potential providers can understand community needs and desires regarding public transit access. We believe using some iteration of the design thinking method will be helpful in creating a plan that is flexible and intentionally tailored. "The overall goal [of Design Thinking] is to identify alternative strategies and solutions that are not instantly apparent with [the] initial level of understanding" (Dam, Siang). The design thinking process encompasses five major non-linear steps that are meant to help users think outside the box. These steps, as well as a representation of their non-linear nature, can be seen in figure 82 to the right.

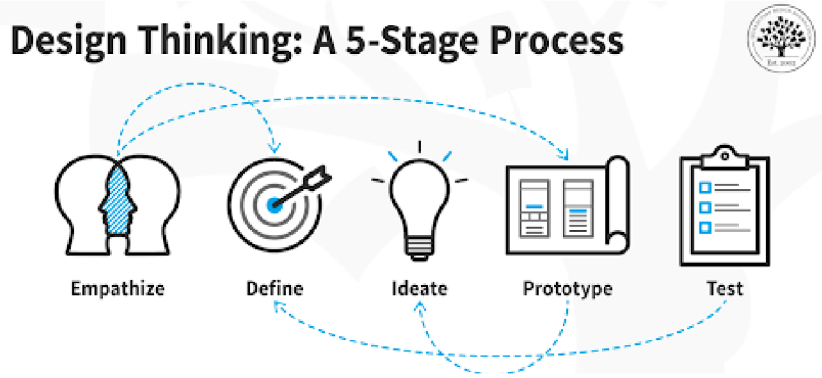


Figure 82. Visual Representation of the Design Thinking Process. Source: Interaction Design

Design Thinking is intended to be a collaborative, interactive process that centers user experience and understanding at the forefront of planning, identified in the empathy stage presented. The potential timelines and implementation strategies presented for each tier represent various aspects of the Design Thinking process into the overall process of project planning.

TIER 1

TIER 2

TIER 3

STRATEGY DETAILS BY TIER

The proposed strategies implemented through the MOVE plan are divided by tier based on the capacity and desire for the implementing organization. Tier 1 interventions are intended to be the most accessible. Tier 2 interventions require a bit more coordination and planning efforts. and Tier 3 is the most involved, with plans for interorganizational planning and implementation efforts.

While large scale interventions will likely have the furthest carrying impact, The MOVE plan is intended to show that even a smaller, more cost-friendly intervention done by an individual can improve transit access in the city.

This portion of the report will provide more detail on each individual tier. We share strategies for intervention as well as propose specific agencies or groups we see would be best fit for implementing these interventions. The overview will be followed by example resources—both created by us and based on transit access improvement practices we see happening in the city today. Finally, a timeline for each tier will be presented.

It is important to remember that the strategies shared are based in our research, while specific interventions should be tailored based on community/audience need.

TIER 1

Tier 1 is intended to be implementable by anyone willing to get involved in transit interventions. Whether the implementing organization is a block club, individual, or smaller CDO—they are invited to use interventions that are lower-cost and lower-stakes. These may include community conversations, educational campaigns, or group rides. We imagine these interventions could primarily be distributed within personal or professional circles to gain traction. These interventions could function as either reoccurring or one-time events. Example resources for these interventions can be found on the following page.

FOCUS:	STRATEGIES:	IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES:
Accessible Interventions	Community Conversations Educational Campaigns Group Rides	Block Clubs Individuals Smaller CDOs

Figure 83. Tier 1 Breakdown. Source: Capstone team

Figure 84. Example Resources for Tier 1. Source: Capstone team

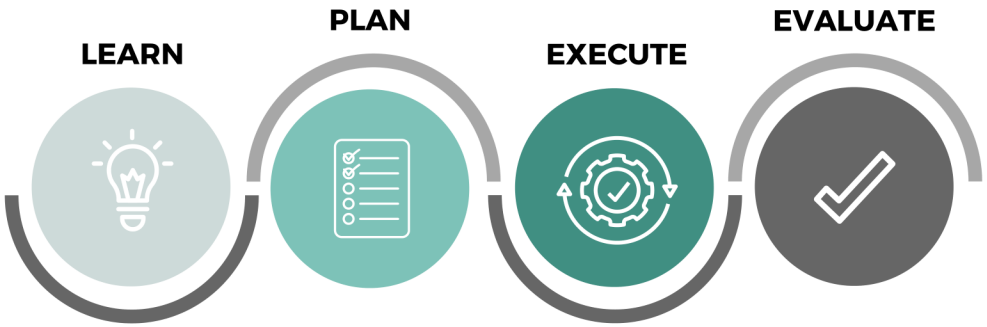
Figure 85. Outlier Media Community Transit Meeting Flyer. Source: Outlier Media

EXAMPLE RESOURCES

TIER 1 : TIMELINE

Tier 1 of the proposed plan includes interventions that are a bit less involved and more accessible, for smaller organizations and individuals with lesser immediate resources. Projects proposed in Tier 1 ideally would take about 6 months and center on flexibility, user experience, education, and safety components. Month 1 will primarily focus on learning. By month 3, planning efforts should begin. And by month 6, execution should be possible. Each timeline also includes a section that focuses on future plan maintenance and data gathering as seen in the 'Evaluate' portion on the right of the timeline.

TIMELINE - AVG TIME: 6 MONTHS



Month 1

- hold a community conversation(s) about transit
- evaluate capacity for campaigns
- begin to understand best methods for educating/further assisting riders

Month 3

- evaluate community feedback
- plan campaigns and group rides
- secure funding sources

Month 6

- implement programming and educational campaigns
- engage with community members as closely as possible to better ensure effectiveness

Future

- be open to flexibility in plans to best meet rider needs
- gain qualitative and quantitative data to understand effectiveness
- follow up with riders and understand how their experience has changed programming implementation

Figure 86. Potential Timeline - Tier 1. Source: Capstone team

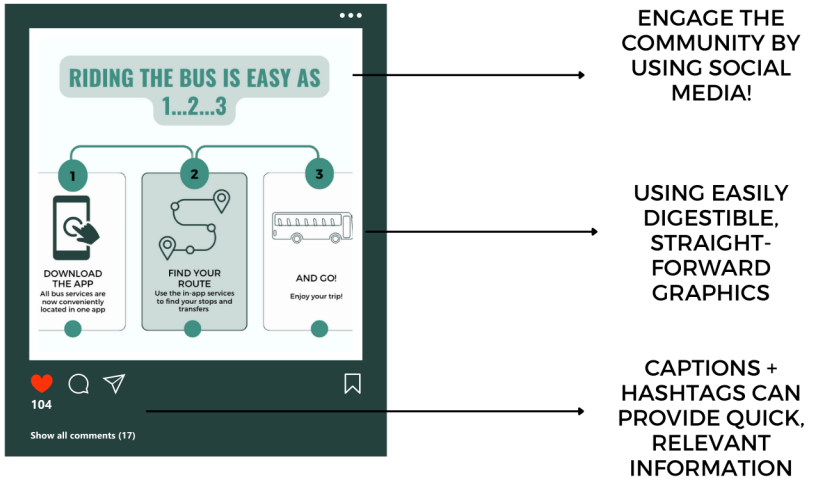
TIER 2

Tier 2 focuses on mid-level single interventions implemented by more established groups or agencies. Strategies for Tier 2 may include marketing campaigns, bus stop upgrades, or infrastructure improvements. These interventions could be focused on a specific community or city-wide. Tier 2 implementing agencies might include larger community development organizations, advocacy groups, or single government agencies. Interventions in Tier 2 are a bit more involved than those in Tier 1, but should still be tailored to match capacity and meet community needs. Example resources for Tier 2 intervention can be found on the following page.

FOCUS:	STRATEGIES:	IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES:
Mid-level Single Interventions	Marketing Campaigns Bus Stop Upgrades Infrastructure Improvements	Larger CDOs Single Government Agencies

Figure 87. Tier 2 Breakdown. Source: Capstone team

EXAMPLE RESOURCES



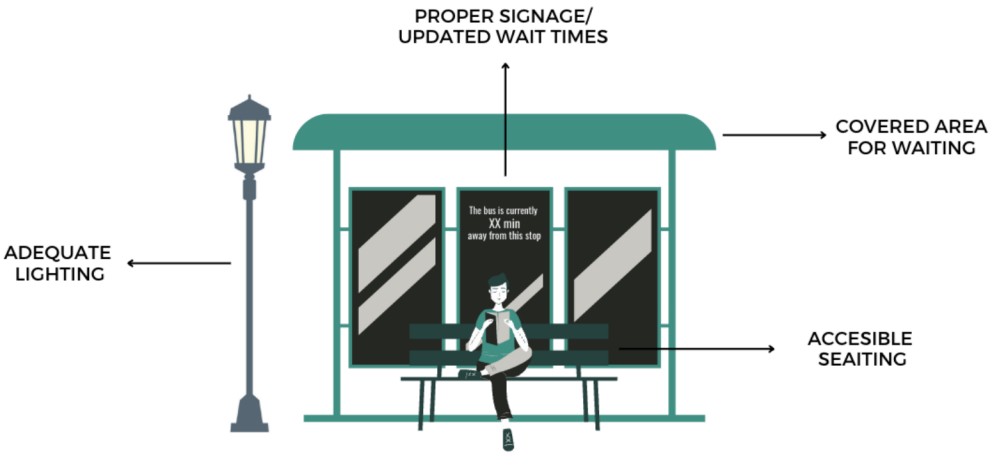


Figure 88. Example Resources for Tier 2. Source: Capstone team

Figure 89. Sit On It Detroit - Bus Stop Upgrades. Source: Sit On It Detroit Instagram

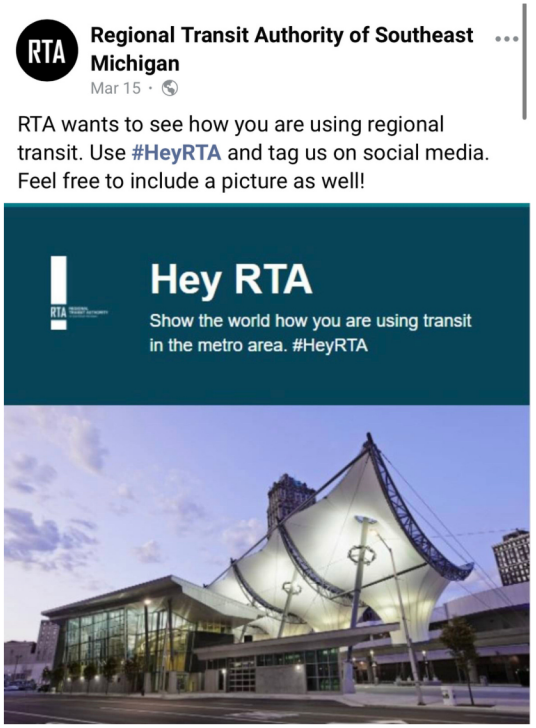
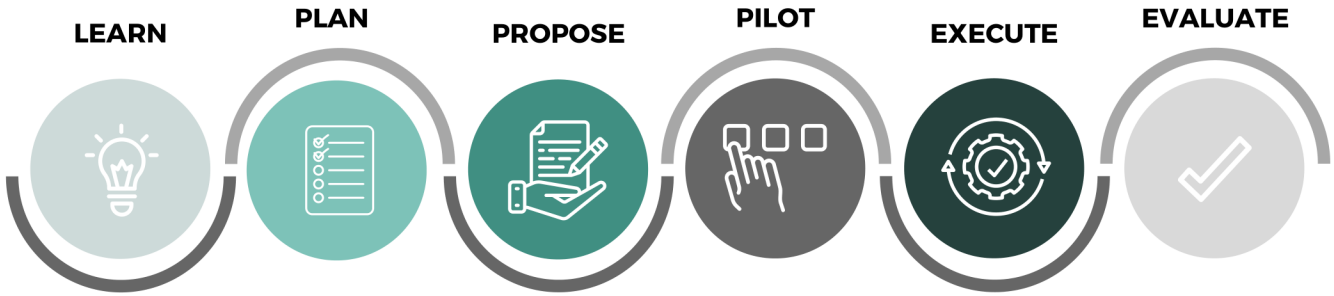


Figure 90. RTA Marketing Campaign. Source: RTA Facebook

TIER 2: TIMELINE

Tier 2 of the proposed MOVE Plan is a bit more involved than Tier 1. We imagine an intervention planned in Tier 2 will take about a year to implement. Moving within 3 month intervals, the implementing organization will focus on learning, planning, proposing, piloting, and executing. More involved steps included in the Tier 2 proposed timeline include the formation of a community-led transit committee and a pilot portion of the timeline that will allow for shifts in planning prior to the plans final administration. Similar to the timeline for Tier 1, this plan includes a section for evaluation post-execution.

TIMELINE - AVG TIME: 12 MONTHS



Month 1

- engage the community about their wants for transit access
- evaluate capacity for campaigns

Month 3

- form a community led transit committee

Month 6

- hold community-wide meetings for engagement - allowing for the community input to lead development
- plan marketing campaigns for engaging riders and showing them where they can go with the various public transit methods
- secure funding sources

Month 9

- pilot one of the new bus stop improvements
- have an informational gathering around the stop
- understand how the community feels about the improvements /campaigns
- make final changes

Month 12

- launch final marketing campaign(s)
- host community transit party to unveil improvements at stops
- assist riders in obtaining/learning about pertinent apps

Future

- gather quantitative and qualitative data on progress with campaigns/stop upgrades
- continue to engage the community
- gauge interest for a mobility hub

Figure 91. Potential Timeline - Tier 2. Source: Capstone team

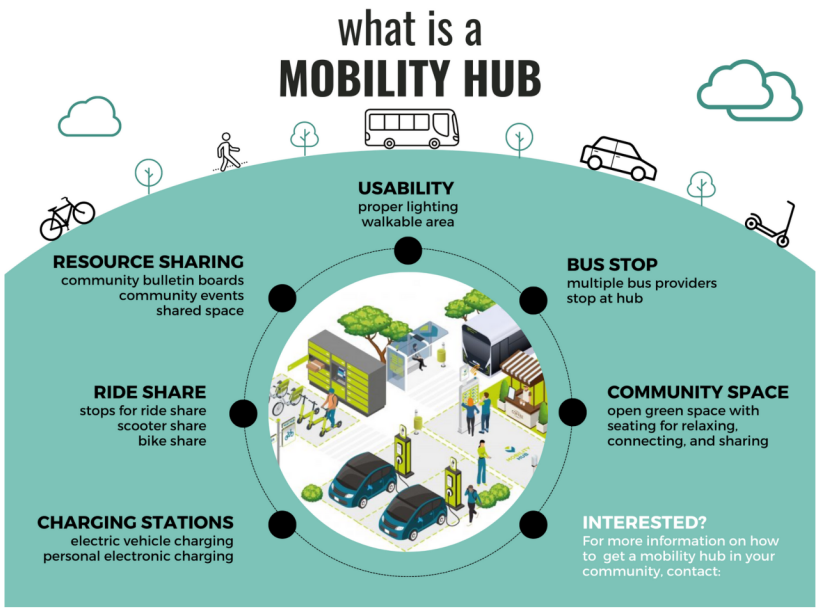
TIER 3

Tier 3 includes the longest-term, most involved interventions within the MOVE plan. These are primarily focused within two strategies—the creation of a mobility hub and the development of a cohesive app between various transit providers. A mobility hub is a physical space within in a community that bring together various forms of transit & other amenities for people to comfortably get where they want, without the use of a private vehicle. Both interventions proposed within Tier 3 require inter-organizational cooperation and a longer timeline that accounts for large-scale, immersive community engagement. Tier 3 projects will require the largest time and financial commitment—and capacity should be heavily considered prior to beginning the intervention.

FOCUS:	STRATEGIES:	IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES:
Large-Scale Cooperative Interventions	Creation of a Mobility Hub Cohesive App Development	Inter-organizational Cooperation

Figure 92. Tier 3 Breakdown. Source: Capstone team

EXAMPLE RESOURCES



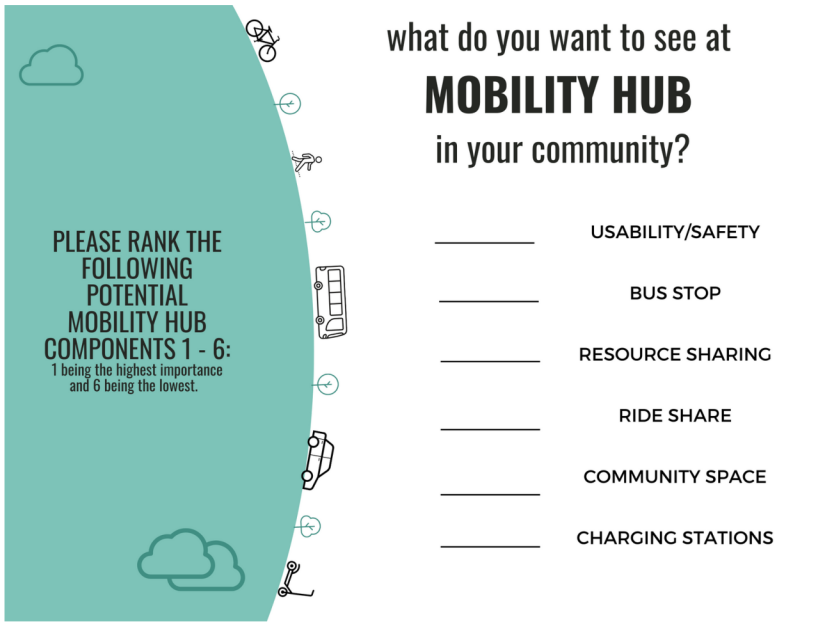


Figure 93. Example Resources for Tier 3. Source: Capstone team

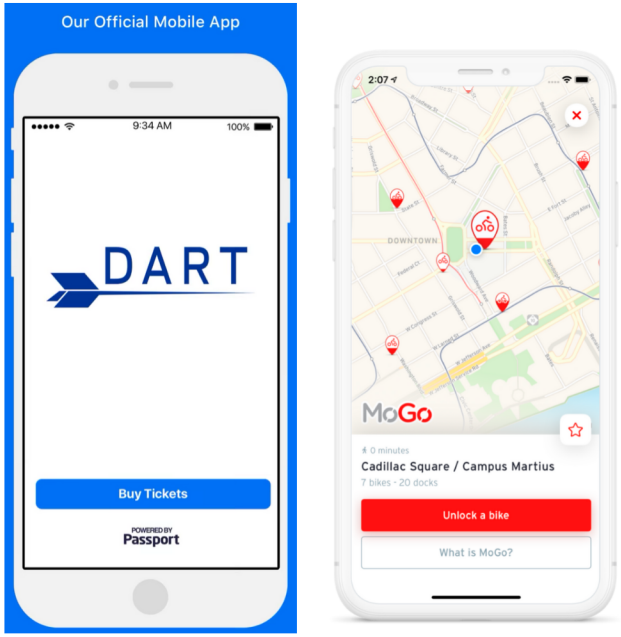


Figure 94. DART (DDOT/SMART) + MOGO Mobile Apps. Source: DDOT/MOGO

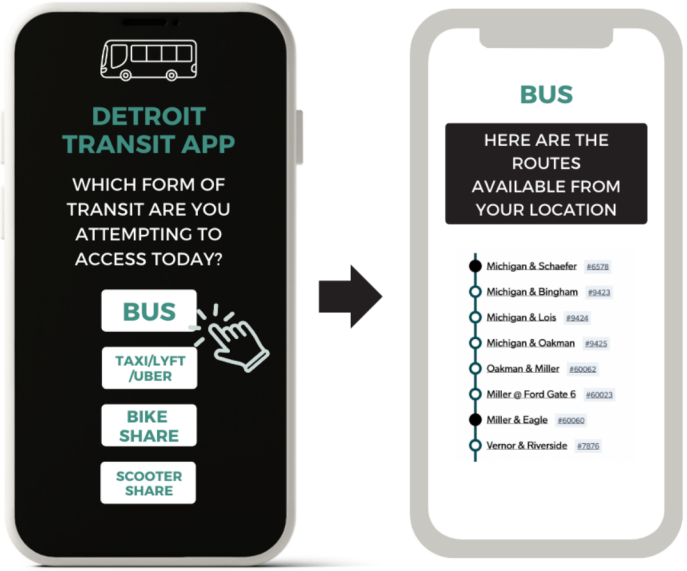


Figure 95. Example Resource for Tier 3. Source: Capstone team

TIER 3: TIMELINE

Tier 3 is the most intensive tier of the proposed plan. This plan involved a timeline that should account for around 18 months, with flexibility to extend based on ability to meet major milestones. Tier 3 focuses on interorganizational cooperation, so the delivery of a timeline is even more significant in keeping the project on track. This plan makes space for the building of a mobility hub or app and education around the built interventions. There is also an important maintenance component in this proposed plan, as this will be a physical structure or app development with some physical and educational upkeep required.

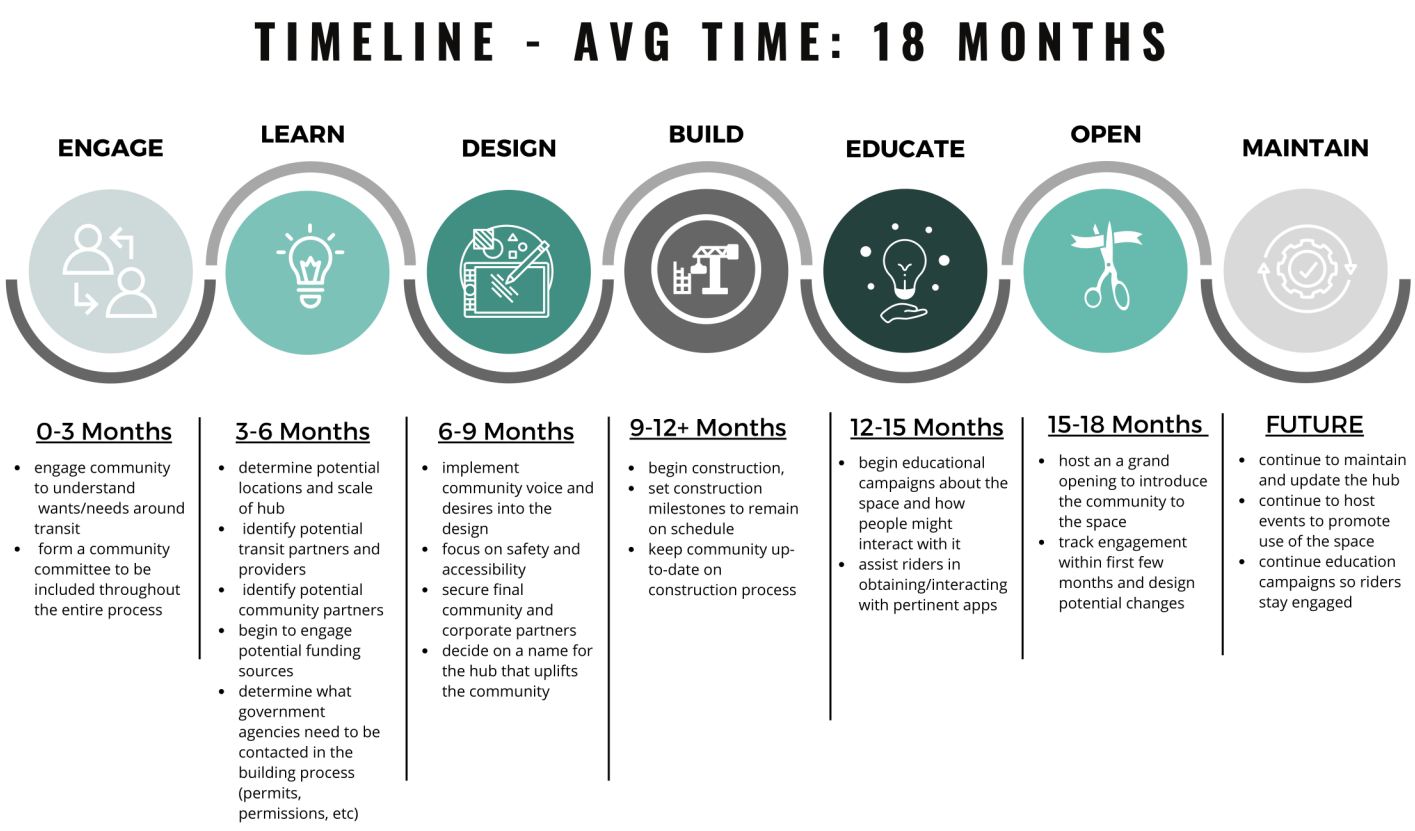
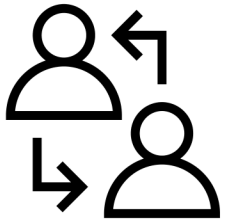


Figure 96. Potential Timeline - Tier 3. Source: Capstone team

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Our key recommendations focus around:



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SAFETY

& EDUCATION

We recognize that all communities will have different needs in order to remove barriers to mobility. All efforts should begin with community engagement sessions to understand how the community currently interacts with public transit, and where they'd like to go, physically and metaphorically. Conversations with stakeholders and community members revealed that one of the biggest barriers for public transit access is a rider's actual and perceived safety. We believe basic improvements at bus stops and bus run time both will be an integral part of improving safety.

Additionally, there seems to be a lack of public transit education that impacts both current and new riders. Without some kind of knowledge sharing effort, current riders may be less likely to seek out new ways of accessing public transit such as bikes and scooters. New riders may also be less likely to engage in public transit services overall if they are not informed on how to use them. Educational and marketing campaigns can be implemented by both smaller and larger agencies, and be scaled to target different audiences.

The education component will best serve intervention participants by being as on the ground and interactive as people feel more safe, understood, and educated when it is done in an authentic, meaningful, and honest way. **Direct human to human engagement is key.**

Finally, the creation of the mobility hub or app would serve both safety and education as its development can be a community-led educational process on transit access and options. The mobility hub may also create a communal space for riders where they can access safety and comfort on their journey.

A more complete idea of what the mobility hub or app development will look like will be led by further community conversation and a potential community led transit committee. We imagine a mobility hub will include 2 or more types of transit—bus, parking, scooter share, car share, bike share—and various components that address safety and comfortability such as charging stations, seating, adequate lighting, and the potential for resource sharing. Location selection for the mobility hub should also consider multiple stakeholder perspectives, while centering the transit user's perspective in the forefront. An app development project might involve coordinating various transit options for riders into one convenient place. The app can offer updates on timing for buses or availability for bike, scooter, or car share. Riders might also benefit from the integration of a shared payment system between transit options—to be developed later or in conjunction with the app.

KEY ROLES

The object of this action plan is to make transit development accessible to all people, organizations, and agencies, regardless of their size. All people in the region are transit stakeholders and as such, all groups should have the opportunity to engage in transit development. Currently, transit development tends to occur on a large scale, making it an exclusionary practice. The MOVE plan addresses this inequity by suggesting implementation strategies on various capacity levels to include all transit stakeholders regardless of size and ability.

Keeping this in mind, there are several key roles integrated into this plan. First and perhaps most importantly, is the key stakeholder of transit riders and community members. Transit systems are made for their users and as such they need to have the strongest voice in the conversation. Since one of the goals of this plan is to encourage authentic transit development that supports community mobility and wellness, the perspectives, wants, and needs of transit users and the surrounding community members is key. The impact of this role can be seen in the implementation strategies above and highlighted in the community engagement components of each tier.

TRANIST RIDERS

TRANSIT PROVIDERS

MOVE PLAN IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

CITY GOVERNMENT

PRIVATE AGENCIES + BUSINESSES

ADVOCATES

MOBILITY-SUPPORTIVE ORGANIZATIONS

Another key role in this plan incorporates transit providers, like DDOT, MDOT, SMART, MoGo, and other potential providers. Their role in this plan is obvious, since they are the direct provider of services. Potential developments, like the mobility hub, can have great impacts on how, where, and when these organizations provide services, so their perspectives and capacities are essential to sustainable developments. Each of these providers can interact with the MOVE plan on their own and/or through cooperation with one another.

While this plan can be directed toward any and all organizations, our project partner, the RTA, can play an important role in helping facilitate and conduct transit development in the region. The RTA's mission identifies and manages transportation resources to support high quality mobility in the region, highlighting their essential role in this plan, especially in Tier 3. As discussed in the funding section to follow, the RTA can play a key role in identifying and securing additional or alternative sources of funding.

Other key roles include support from city government, private agencies and businesses, and mobility-supportive organizations. For example, one feature of a mobility hub can include charging stations for electric vehicles, scooters, bikes, and other personal electronics. KUHMUTE is a newer company who builds universal multi-modal charging stations for micro mobility which supports any electric vehicle smaller than a car, like a bike, scooter, or wheelchair (KUHMUTE).While this is a very specific example, it demonstrates the variety of businesses and stakeholders that could and should be involved in a larger scale development

PROJECT FUNDING

Sources of project funding can vary based on the tier of development. Tier 1 projects could be funded by community sourced or crowdfunded dollars, being integrated into the yearly budget, fundraised dollars, or local block club grants– available through various sources including, but not limited to, community or foundations, community development organizations, and city, state, or federal governments. There are also various opportunities for free or low cost interventions at Tier 1, like hosting a transit centered community conversation. Tier 2 projects can look to similar sources as Tier 1, but may look for more monetary support from grants, tax breaks, and government funding for larger scale projects. Transit providers engaging in Tier 2 developments may also be able to utilize dedicated government or organizational funding on projects like infrastructure and bus stop improvements.

Tier 3 projects require far larger sources of funding. Building a mobility hub or developing an app requires a large budget and multiple sources of funding. Agencies involved in Tier 3 developments can look to city, state, and federal government dollars as a large source of funds. This can specifically include the incoming government investment dedicated specifically to Detroit transit systems through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Michigan Mobility Funding Platform or the Federal Transit Administration (Jennings). Since Tier 3 projects must include transit providers, like DDOT and SMART, these projects can also benefit from the ability to use generated revenue from transit systems. Another possible source of funding can be through taxpayers. In the past, the RTA has sponsored millages and funding referendums on ballots to use taxpayer dollars for transit development in the Metro region.

Both Tier 2 and Tier 3 projects could also benefit financially from the reallocation of revenue generated from municipal parking department operations. At this point, revenue is dedicated to the city general fund. It may be prudent—for the mobility, wellness, and safety of Detroiters—to reallocate a portion of that revenue to support more public transit options in the city. This potential funding source, however, would require large amounts of advocacy, planning, and government cooperation. This could be a long-term goal for transit providers in Detroit.

ATTAINABILITY

A cornerstone of the MOVE plan is that it is intended to be attainable to organizations of all different sizes and capacities. In order to best understand how the MOVE plan could actually be implemented, and the level of attainability for various organizations, we consulted with two Detroit nonprofits: the Eastside Community Network—a partner throughout the project—and the Marygrove Conservancy. Both of these organizations are innovative in their on the ground community work. Both are heavily connected to the communities in which they work. Both are interested in understanding how transit access impacts their communities.

We asked the organizations the following:

1| Can you see your agency implementing any of these interventions? If so, which tier or specific intervention are you thinking?

2| How would the chosen intervention directly impact your community's connectivity?

Here's what we heard:

Bethany Howard
Director of Sustainable Homes

1. "ECN would be a premier organization to implement the MOVE plan [due to previous, current, and future engagements in the transit and wellness space]."
2. "The MOVE plan, along with initiatives that we currently have in place, would build our capacity to serve the residents and solidify our space as a resilience hub."

"Resource sharing would also be optimal, as we are currently disseminating information to our residents and adding mobility education and resources would be a great addition to begin a mobility hub within our resilience hub. "

Josh Hubbard
Manager of External Engagement

1. "I can envision the Marygrove Conservancy becoming a Tier 3 mobility hub in the Livernois/McNichols corridor. As Marygrove is striving to become a public-serving community resource, the ride share and charging station aspects caught my eye."
2. "We're a large central location with direct routes to a university, high schools, highways, and a blossoming food and shopping district. Aside from relatively close bus routes, I believe the area is a bit underserved in terms of connectivity to the rest of the city.

CONCLUSIONS

THE MOVE PLAN: OVERVIEW

Public transit systems are extremely complex. They involve an integration of agencies and modes of transit that cross city and regional borders. Our research has revealed to us that there are many efforts to improve transit access on the eastside of Detroit. These efforts vary based on capacity of the providing entity and interest from the community. **The creation of the MOVE plan builds on the idea that there is space for everyone in the development of transit.** Agencies, depending on capacity, can provide different levels of intervention in their communities. We hope that by providing a space for various sized entities, we can potentially empower even the smallest organization or individual to step up in improving transit access in their community. **Each tier in the plan focuses on the involvement of the community, safety, and education in making public transit accessible and comfortable to support community wellness on the eastside.**

ASSESSMENT METHODS

INTRODUCTION

OVERALL PLAN ASSESSMENT METHODS

ASSESSMENT METHODS BY TIER

INTRODUCTION

Assessment methods are an integral part of recommending interventions for the improvement of public transit and community wellness. Assessment methods can help intervening agencies track the effectiveness of their programming and engage with community members in a meaningful way. In addition to helping set and understand goals of programming, these methods can be used to make shifts in interventions where needed to best meet community needs. Methods for assessment can be used to evaluate both short and long term goals across the three tiers of the MOVE Plan. Within the action plan for each tier, a designated portion of the timeline is dedicated to evaluation of programming. The following section of this report will provide techniques implementing agencies can use and evaluate progress in order to best maintain viable and purposeful community interventions. Figure 97 shows an overview of proposed assessment methods for individual tiers and the overall MOVE plan.

ASSESSMENT METHODS OVERVIEW:

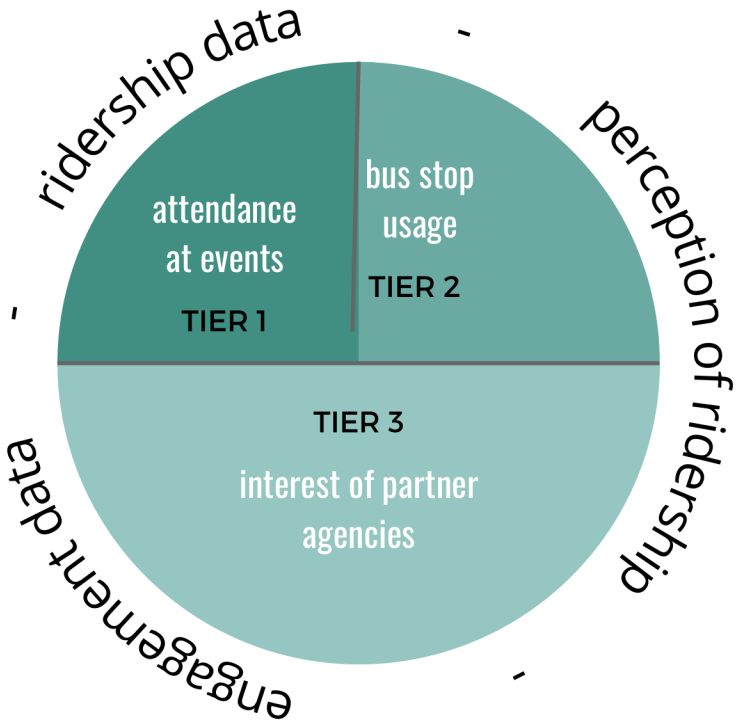


Figure 97. Overview of Proposed Assessment Methods. Source: Capstone team

The MOVE plan inherently offers opportunity for individualization which is reflected in the variety of assessment methods. When undertaking a development within MOVE, organizations should brainstorm 2 or 3 main goals of the intervention prior to implementation. This is within the steps of ethical co-evaluation outlined to the right—which creates a transparent environment in which to assess projects. Establishing main goals before implementation helps guide the planning and implementation process to keep interventions relevant, focused, and sustainable. It also helps determine what assessment methods are best suited for the individual project and its goals. For example, a project goal of increased awareness during an educational campaign might use event attendance numbers or scans on QR codes on marketing materials as possible assessment methods. A goal of increased ridership or bus stop usage might use data on ridership and fare revenue as an assessment method. The following suggests assessment methods for the overall MOVE plan, as well as individual methods best suited for each tier. Organizations may also choose to utilize their own unique assessment methods, if appropriate.

Principles of Ethical Assessment/Co-Evaluation:

1. Responsible Planning

2. Participant Ownership

3. Inclusivity + Responsiveness

4. Flexibility + Reflexivity

5. Openness + Transparency

6. Transformative Perspective

(Metafristis)

OVERALL MOVE PLAN - ASSESSMENT METHODS

The proposed interventions within the MOVE plan all are recommended based on the leading principles of improving transit access and community wellbeing. Within the three tiers, there is a focus on community-led interventions that are accessible to agencies or individuals interested in getting involved. Due to the related circumstances of many of the proposed interventions, there are some assessment methods that are relevant to many, if not all, of all potential programs.

The two assessment methods that we see relevant to the majority of the potential transit interventions involve tracking ridership and tracking perception of ridership. Both of these tracking methods use qualitative and quantitative data to create a holistic picture of the present enter information. Ridership reports may be pulled at various intervals after the intervention is implemented.

Our recommendation is that the implementing agency creates a timeline of realistic data pulls and conversations that align with their specified goals—whether this be biannually, quarterly, or some other specific amount of time. Ridership data is generally produced by the entities that provide transit service—the RTA, DDOT, SMART, scooter share and bike share companies, and/or charging providers—so the information should not be too challenging to collect. An example of a monthly data pull from the Detroit Department of Transportation is shown in figure 98.

An additional recommendation for assessment involves tracking perception of ridership. As outlined throughout the report, one challenge to public transit access in Detroit is the perception of ridership that currently exists. **We feel strongly that in order to improve public transit access and community wellness in Detroit communities, there must be an effort to shift the common understanding of who uses transit and why they use transit**. The MOVE plan addresses this through educational and marketing campaigns as well as through structured improvements to transit systems. Using perception shifts as a method for assessment may be more challenging because it is not an area of evaluation that necessarily produces concrete data. This data is most likely to be collected through establishing trust with communities and engaging individuals about their experiences.

DDOT Performance Dashboard

September 2022

Monthly Ridership: 865,044

On-time Performance Weekday: 62%

Average Weekday Pull Out AM: 93%

Average Weekday Pull Out PM: 87%

August 2022

Monthly Ridership: 848,514

On-time Performance Weekday: 61%

Average Weekday Pull Out AM: 91%

Average Weekday Pull Out PM: 88%

Figure 98. Monthly DDOT Data. Source: Detroit Department of Public Transportation

All of the proposed interventions within the MOVE plan intend to validate user experience and perception. An assessment tool of evaluating perception shifts is based in those same principles. We hope that through the implementation of the proposed interventions, riders will genuinely feel a shift in their experience using Detroit public transit. We hope that this shift in individual experience will create a genuine turning point in perception. Implementing agencies should plan to engage and converse with community members throughout all steps of their transit intervention. If an agency wishes to use perception shift as a tool for assessment, they should consider intervals that are realistic for genuine, well-intentioned data collection conversations.

Being intentional with assessment is a key goal for all tiers within the MOVE plan. Each program implemented within or around the guidelines of the MOVE plan will need to create assessment methods that are tailored specifically to their capacity, goals, and community. A combination of multiple assessment methods may be needed in order to gather all relevant data. Some of the proposed assessment methods within the MOVE plan may work for the majority of interventions, as outlined above. Additionally, we are providing assessment methods that can be tailored more towards each individual tier, to follow.

TIER 1:

Tier 1 of the MOVE plan is intended to be the most accessible and low-stakes for implementing agencies. As mentioned, this tier includes interventions such as group rides, community conversations, and educational campaigns. We imagine that these interventions will be implemented by parties with lesser resources like block clubs, individuals, and smaller community development organizations. **Keeping accessibility in mind, the assessment methods for Tier 1 will include evaluation processes that allow for easier, more apparent data collection.** We see that these methods for assessment could be implemented at the time of the intervention and then potentially again at a 3 and 6 month interval.

One method that can be used for the evaluation of Tier 1 programs is attendance. If the implementing agencies choose to intervene using community conversations or group rides - they could track effectiveness of their intervention based on community attendance at their event. This could be done using an attendance sheet or an online survey through a provided QR code, examples of which can be found in figure 99 and 100.

HI NEIGHBORS!
Thanks so much for attending our group ride today.
Please sign in below

NAME	PRIMARY METHOD OF TRANSPORTATION	WHAT STREET DO YOU LIVE ON?

Figure 99. Attendance Tracking Examples. Source: Capstone team

Figure 100. Attendance Tracking Examples. Source: Capstone team

From the attendance data collected, intervention effectiveness could be gauged in a few ways. First, implementing agencies can simply note the number of attending parties and track how that changes over time. Second, agencies can notate how many attending members they were able to talk to individually and determine impact on an individual level. Finally, agencies have an opportunity to track how community members engage with public transit and the shifts that come as a result of their interventions. It is up to the implementing agency to decide what is most important to their primary goals of the chosen programming.

Using attendance for assessment is a low-cost, low-stakes method that we find fits well with the interventions proposed within Tier 1 of the MOVE plan. Attendance, as a method for assessment, can be easily obtained and easily analyzed. Other methods for assessment of Tier 1 intervention effectiveness may be considered, should the implementing agency have other or additional goals.

TIER 2:

Tier 2 of the MOVE plan focuses on mid-level single interventions that still center on an individual organization's capacity. As previously mentioned, some of these strategies might include marketing campaigns, comfort and safety upgrades to bus stops, and slightly larger infrastructure improvements. We see these interventions being implemented by larger community development organizations or single government and transit agencies with slightly more resources than the agencies suggested in Tier 1. **With emphasis on capacity and impact, the suggested assessment methods for Tier 2 focus on accessible data collection on bus stop or line usage, transit event attendance, and engagement with marketing materials.** We see that these methods for assessment could begin at the initial intervention and then potentially again at 3 month intervals to track progress as the intervention continues, depending on the project type and scale.

One potential assessment method for a marketing campaign would be to track engagement with marketing materials. For example, tracking the number of times a QR code is scanned shows how many people are interacting with that particular marketing material. Comparing this number to the target goal of a given campaign can measure success in outreach and of the campaign overall. In addition, this assessment method can be combined with others, like tracking attendance at transit-centered events, to determine how effective the marketing campaign has been in creating and maintaining interest in and use of public transit. Attendance tracking methods are further outlined in the above section for Tier 1.

Another suggested assessment method for Tier 2 focuses on interventions meant to improve safety and comfort at bus stops. Ideally, a count of usage at the selected stop would be taken before and after the project implementation. This can be extremely difficult data to collect, especially for smaller organizations. However, ridership data over time shows trends of transit usage and can show success of a given project according to the data before and after the intervention.

Figure 101. Ridership Data Trend Example. Source: American Public Transportation Association

Figure 101 shows an example of DDOT ridership data from October of 2021 through October of 2022 compared to the national average, as compiled by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). This shows the monthly trends of ridership and can be broken down further into weekly data on the APTA website.

Observational analysis can also be a useful assessment tool as a representative marker of stop usage. Depending on the scale and goals of the project, setting intervals to observe a given stop at given times would come up with at least a small representation of stop usage. Other markers of project success can include traffic numbers, incidences, and accidents that occur at or around the bus stop.

Surveying can also be a useful tool in assessing bus stop improvements. Surveying prior to the intervention is important to determine what amenities the community may want at a given bus top. Surveying post-intervention can help determine how the community perceives the improvements and if people feel safer and more comfortable at the stop. In addition, ridership numbers for the given bus line could demonstrate if there is an uptick in riders using the stop after the project completion.

TIER 3:

Tier 3 of the MOVE plan focuses on large-scale cooperative interventions particularly through the development of a mobility hub and cohesive transit app development. These interventions require interorganizational cooperation across various transit and government agencies, community development organizations, and community groups. Tier 3 involves the most intensive, long-term proposed interventions. **We find that assessment for Tier 3 should happen both during planning and post-launch.** This should help implementing agencies to maintain interventions that are community-led and functional.

One potential assessment method that can be used during the planning process of Tier 3 would be to hold community meetings throughout the process to gauge community interest and opinion. A simple survey, to be distributed online and in print, could be created at the beginning of the planning process. An example of what this survey might look like can be found in figure 102. The survey can remain rather broad and work to spark conversation and thought amongst community members and organizations. The implementing agency may then choose to redistribute that same survey throughout the planning process, at decided intervals, in order to understand shifts in perception about the project and basic wants/needs of community members.

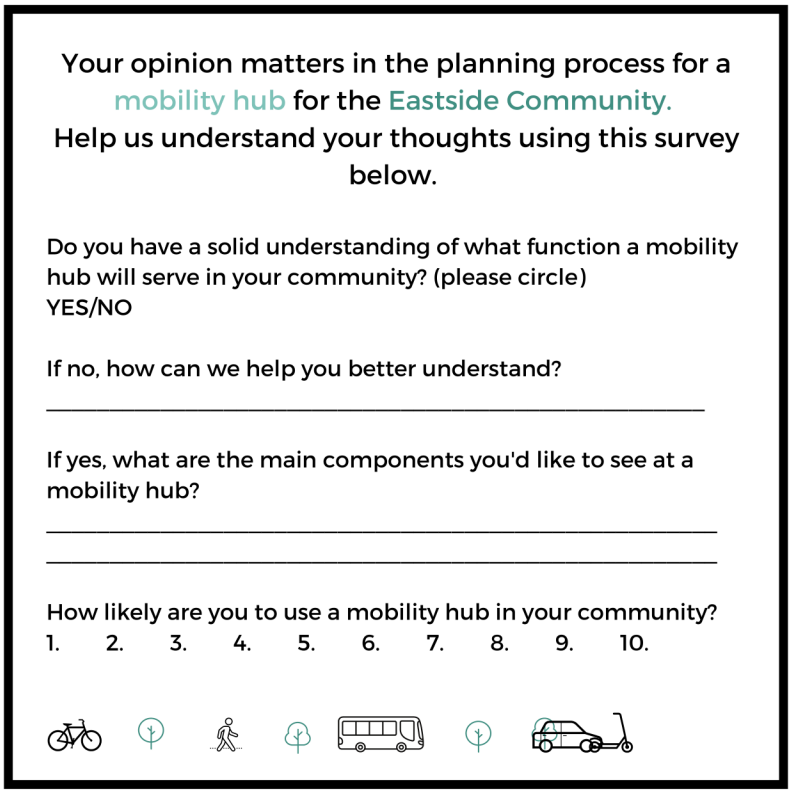


Figure 102. Mock-Up Survey. Source: Capstone team

One tool for assessment that might be used both during the planning process and post-launch might be tracking the number of agencies interested in involvement in the project. Depending on the chosen project for Tier 3, the lead agencies might gauge organizational interest by qualitatively and quantitatively understanding commitment by partner agencies. Because the interventions for Tier 3 require interorganizational cooperation, lead agencies might predict the success of building and maintaining their chosen intervention based on interest and commitment from other agencies.

In addition to potential assessment during the planning process, there are a few methods for post-launch assessment that may be integral to understanding the impact of the intervention. Similar to assessment methods proposed for Tier 1 and 2, Tier 3 interventions may use engagement counts as a tool for assessment. Implementing agencies can use similar methods for tracking regardless of which of the proposed interventions are implemented for Tier 3. If an app is created, agencies can easily use software to track engagements with the app on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Agencies may also include a feedback/reporting section on their app to allow users to share directly about their experience while using the app and interacting with the providers.

If a mobility hub is the chosen intervention, implementing agencies can track usage by looking at access data of buses, scooters, charging stations, and/or bike or car share from the location of the mobility hub. Agencies may also select several dates throughout the year to physically observe the usage of the mobility hub and talk with users about their experience. We recommend that agencies plan to track engagement on a monthly-interval in order to get a holistic picture of usage.

All tiers included in the MOVE Plan have a variety of assessment methods that can potentially serve in evaluation. These methods for assessment will vary based on intended goals and actual procedures used during implementation of programming. Because the MOVE plan was created for flexibility around interventions, proposing a variety of assessment methods is important in making sure that evaluation can be individualized. Implementing agencies are encouraged to pull from each potential assessment method to find a combination that best fits their chosen programming.

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

One standard for the research done throughout this Capstone Project is to create a tool for internal evaluation of the impacts of the project on both public transit use and community wellness. We find that projects implemented in Tier 3 will provide the best opportunity for internal assessment of our goals with this Capstone Project. Because Tier 3 will most heavily involve our project partner, the Regional Transit Authority, it will provide an opportunity for direct check-in on progress and implementation of one project within the MOVE plan—that should directly impact many of our goals within this research. Additionally, because Tier 3 focuses on large-scale, public-focused projects that involve multiple agencies, we have the opportunity to see how our research is being used in real-time, on the ground projects that involve multiple stakeholders.

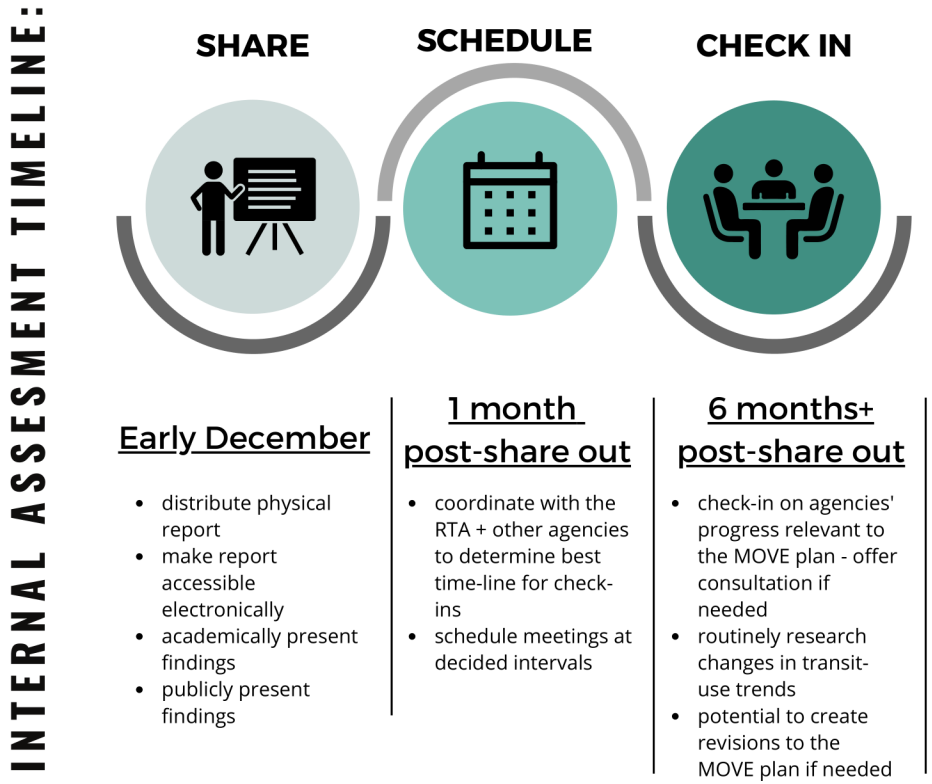


Figure 103. Internal Assessment Timeline. Source: Capstone team

In early December 2022, we will publish our research book and make it available physically and electronically. At this time, we will also conduct two presentations—one academic and one public. Attendees from various organizations, academic circles, and communities will be encouraged to attend. One month post-publication, our research team will convene with the Regional Transit Authority, and other relevant agencies, to determine a realistic timeline for check-in on progress in the public transit and community wellness space. Meetings will be tentatively scheduled at this time. Up to 6 months post-publication and beyond, we will work to maintain a relationship with relevant agencies, including the RTA, based on the timeline set out at the one month mark. We will plan to routinely research trends in transit use, as well as remain connected to agencies working towards transit access and equality. If needed, we will be available for small-consultation projects regarding our research and plan to make any updates to the proposed intervention.

Public transit access and community wellness efforts do not exist individually. We understand that there are likely to be steps forward, as well as steps back, as agencies work to create an environment that promotes safe, accessible transit use and community wellness. This research has been incredibly meaningful to us and it is important for us as researchers, community development advocates, and public transit champions that these proposed interventions be implemented in meaningful, tangible ways—and we intend to be a part of that to the best of our abilities.

CONCLUSIONS

THE MOVE PLAN: ASSESSMENT METHODS

Assessment is an important step in any project. **Assessment in community development assists in setting and understanding goals, determining effectiveness and impact, and engaging with the community.** All of the suggested assessment methods for the MOVE plan are centered on creating successful interventions within public transit and community wellness that serve a genuine purpose within the communities where programs are implemented. Beyond the MOVE plan, laying internal assessment methods ensures we can check in with our suggested interventions as they move forward. All of these methods ideally create a space where community interventions are being implemented in a sustainable, accessible, and achievable way.

PROJECTED OUTCOMES

OVERVIEW

THE HOPE MODEL

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The following details the potential projected outcomes of the MOVE plan if implemented. The MOVE plan aims to empower people and organizations to make real, usable, and desired transit developments. The recommendations detailed in the implementation strategies/action plan section focus on capacity and accessibility in order to create and improve transit systems on the eastside of Detroit. In order to better understand how the proposed strategies will impact various components of community wellbeing, the following section will outline the real-life outcomes we see possible within the implementation of the MOVE plan.

The section begins with a comprehensive assessment of the expected impact and outcomes on human, organizational, physical, and economic (HOPE) development. Then, we proceed to other considerations, including outcomes and criteria related to community wellness, social justice, diversity and multiculturalism, environmental justice and sustainability, regional development, public policy and bureaucracy, and constraints and limitations. Each category considers unique projected implications and outcomes, with some focusing on an individual level and others focusing on systemic levels. Specific assessment methods for quantifying impact can be found in the previous section of this report. However, these projected outcomes can help focus development efforts and identify tangible and sustainable impact on transit use and community wellness. A high-level overview of this impact is charted in figure 104 on the following page.

	Community Wellness	Social Justice	Diversity and Multiculturalism	Enviro Justice + Sustainability	Regional Development	Policy + Bureaucracy
H	-increased community engagement	-social, political, and economic opportunities	-inclusion -representation -accessibility	-safer roads -encouraging active forms of travel	-connection to opportunities throughout the region	-amplification of voices in response to oppressive structures
O	-sustainable, meaningful developments	-inclusion of historically excluded groups	-potential to shape the narrative of transit use	-intentional incorporation of environmental factors	-organizational cooperation/ collaboration	-opportunity to shift policy through collective action/voice
P	-development of physical space for residents to enjoy	-safe transit spaces and options	-physical development that starts on the community-level	-reduced road congestion -reduced emissions	-regional connection →	
E	-empowerment through economic development →			-developments that are realistic, accomplishable, and measurable	-encouraging economic tourism and stimulus	-financial assistance from gov't through collaboration

Figure 104. Projected Outcomes Analysis. Source: Capstone team

PROJECTED OUTCOMES OVERVIEW

HOPE MODEL

As discussed, a centering principle in the Masters of Community Development program is the HOPE model. Further outlined in the Framing the Research section of this paper, the HOPE model examines a holistic approach to development, making considerations for the potential impact of the MOVE plan on humans, organizations, physical spaces, and economics. The following portion of the projected outcomes submission will introduce various impacts relevant to the four categories outlined above.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Human development examines the relationship between people and their social and physical environment. As this project centers on user experience, human development has been an important consideration throughout this study and in the proposed interventions. We are hopeful that the implementation of the MOVE plan will create various positive impacts for humans, focusing most heavily on user empowerment and connectivity.

All tiers proposed for implementation through the MOVE plan account for connectivity as a guiding principle. One main principle of MOVE is increased access and connectivity through education and safety efforts made by the various implementing organizations.

Figure 105. QLINE Riders. Source: QLINE Detroit

The hope is that through the various proposals, users will feel more connected to their community, their city, and their region at large, including connectivity to economic and social opportunities, wellness components—such as healthy food and healthcare)—and other people. People, no matter their socioeconomic status, should be able to comfortably access what they need to feel connected and fulfilled.

With efforts around accessibility, we hope that individuals and communities will feel empowered in their transit experience. While many people use transit to get to where they want or need to go, further education and interaction with the services may empower people to seek out additional or new opportunities to improve their wellbeing. We hope that by providing accessible interventions, riders will also feel empowered to take individual or collective action around their transit services.

We are hopeful that MOVE will work to create an environment where riders can feel safe, comfortable, connected, and empowered. The idea is that these components will then encourage users to take charge of and engage in their individual and community development, on a human level, through the use of public transit.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Organizational development considers how organizations work in partnership with communities. For the purpose of this project, and for the MOVE plan, organizational development will be most significantly relevant by examining capacity, growing focus areas, and cooperation with other organizations.

MOVE intends to engage organizations of various sizes and capacities. The plan uplifts the idea that there is space for everyone in improving public transit function. By examining capacity, interested parties can investigate where they fit into both small- and large-scale efforts. Organizations that do not currently engage in transit work could use the MOVE plan as a starting point to introduce their service provision, while organizations currently providing transit interventions might use the MOVE plan as a way to expand. It is imperative that organizations frequently evaluate the services they provide and their ability to meet community needs.

Tier 3 of the proposed plan provides space for organizational development through interorganizational cooperation. All organizations have areas of success and areas for growth. By coordinating with other groups, organizations

can gain skills in areas where they lack and grow skills in areas where they are becoming proficient. There is significant variation in size and specific focus area within transit-focused organizations, and the opportunity to collaborate would facilitate the creation of cohesion among regional and local transit-related goals.

Organizations often serve as direct service providers or intermediaries between providers and users. Within Detroit's public transit system, there are organizations that range in size and focus area. **Through the implementation of the MOVE plan, we are hopeful that organizations will grow and work to provide the most functional, representative services to communities as possible.**

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Physical development is one of the more straightforward elements of the HOPE model because it considers the development of physical space. It is a much more traditional concept in community development and is most likely what people think about when they hear the term "development." In regards to physical development, it is most important to consider the ways that physical spaces can impact individuals and create (or limit the development of) community.

The most obvious physical development component in the MOVE plan is the potential construction of a mobility hub, proposed in Tier 3. The mobility hub is a physical development itself, intended to serve and grow the community. Plans for the mobility hub will center community voices and, in turn, likely give community members pride in their contribution to the development. It will also potentially serve as a gathering space for community members where they can congregate on their journey in transit. The hope is that the physical space of a mobility hub will serve functions in regards to transit and community connectedness—uplifting safety and comfortability as a top priority.

Other physical improvements to the transit space, such as bus stop upgrades, may result from the implementation of the MOVE plan. Tier 2 encourages organizations to improve safety and comfort at their bus stops through the building of new physical structures or improving existing structures. Additionally, increased fare revenues due to increased ridership—sparked by marketing and educational campaigns—may allow for greater physical transit development. Developments, such as the extension of the Q-line

and the building of new/other MOGO and scooter share stations, may also result from increased use and fare revenue.

Both the actual physical spaces developed by transit, like bus stops and mobility hubs, and the development of physical connectors, like roads, serve in the function of public transit. We are hopeful that physical spaces will be positively impacted through the implementation of the MOVE plan and that these physical developments will, in turn, better serve the community and city as a whole.

Figure 106. Example Mobility Hub. Source: intertraffic.com

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic developmental effects as a result of the proposed interventions have the potential to occur on the individual, community, and organizational levels. Economic development is focused on the complex relationship between economics and community wellbeing. In order to maintain equitability, the development of economics in a community must be achieved in a way that directly supports individuals in that community. As outlined in the demographics section of this paper, the average public transit bus rider comes from a low-income household, with no car, and uses transit services to get to and from work. So it is clear that public transit is a service that provides individuals access to economic development opportunities. It is the hope that with the implementation of MOVE, individuals, communities, and organizations will all have the ability to access and implement economic development opportunities.

Individuals engaging with public transit have the opportunity to gain access to new or more effective economic development opportunities. The MOVE plan encourages implementing agencies to directly engage with riders to help them get to where they need to go. These places may include jobs, places of education, trade school, or other job-development locations.

Individuals also have the opportunity to gain jobs or experience in transit or community organizing through engaging in the implementation of the proposed interventions. If transit is elevated as a greater focus area, transit providers may also add additional staff to join which would open up jobs for individuals. An additional component of economic development lies in the potential for empowerment through the implementation of the MOVE plan. Empowerment gained through access to transit, or community organizing around transit, might empower a person to take further control of their personal economic development.

Communities have the opportunity to develop economically as they become more accessible through transit. Transit-oriented development and development-oriented transit are two ideas that support community economic development through transit (Transit Oriented Development Institute). First, there is the opportunity to connect transit more efficiently through a transit-oriented development plan: a strategy that considers transit development prior to physical or economic development so that streets and economic corridors become accessible through various forms of transit, such as walking, biking, public transit, and so on. This accessibility can then spark additional development within these communities and commercial corridors (Transit Oriented Development Institute).

Agencies may also consider implementing a development-oriented transit plan to make transit more accessible in areas in communities where physical and economic development are already occurring. The development-oriented transit strategy focuses on connecting people to already existing neighborhood or city staples. Instead of focusing so heavily on new developments, there is a stronger focus on creating transit systems that make current developments more accessible (Walker).

We are hopeful that either or both of these strategies will allow communities that are developing—or wishing to develop—the opportunity to do so with the help of transit access. We are also hopeful that by creating more accessibility and greater education about places users can go with public transit, there will be increased interest in these already existing developments, and this interest can, consequently, spark economic engagement for communities.

Finally, there is the opportunity for implementing agencies to develop economically through the enactment of the MOVE plan. Larger implementing entities, such as DDOT, SMART, and the RTA, have the opportunity to grow their financial base through increased ridership and fare revenue. They can also solicit additional

dollars from federal and state funding sources for campaigns or for expansion opportunities as ridership numbers go up. Smaller organizations can partner with larger entities that can potentially serve as fiduciaries for their transit interventions. Smaller organizations may also experience economic development through donations to support their transit campaigns or increased access to or within their communities through public transit development.

Economic development is a key component of the HOPE model in that economics may serve as a spark for development in the other three categories. Acknowledging that public transit is a tool for economic development is critical in understanding how the implementation of the MOVE plan will serve individuals, communities, and organizations.

HOPE CONCLUSIONS

There is a strong interconnectedness among all four components of the HOPE model. For this reason, it can be difficult to explain the distinct ways that each different factor will be impacted by the development and implementation of the MOVE plan. The potential outcomes of the action plan on each component of the HOPE model demonstrate the multifaceted nature of not only transit development but also community development work as a whole. **We are hopeful that implementing agencies will focus most heavily on transit interventions strategies that can directly contribute to the development of wellbeing on the individual and community level –with greater, more far-reaching outcomes resulting from that strong basis of empowerment and connectivity.**

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Beyond the HOPE model, there are several other categories of potential outcomes that are essential to this analysis. These categories consider some project-specific considerations, like community wellness as well as several other aspects of holistic community development. The complex nature of transit is evident through the numerous potential impacts this action plan highlights, as detailed in the following sections.

COMMUNITY WELLNESS

The concept of community wellness has been the main topic area of this analysis. As such, there are several relevant outcomes and implications regarding community wellness. It has already been established that transit can play a significant role in different components of community wellness. **Robust, safe, and reliable transit systems support a healthy, thriving community.**

The MOVE plan integrates these concepts at its very core, focusing heavily on strategies and recommendations that fully support increased positive community wellness. It emphasizes community engagement as a tool to empower community members, one of the key components of community wellness. The plan's focus on capacity also supports community wellness by encouraging healthy, sustainable developments through the examination of actual ability to provide services. This makes transit development more accessible to people and organizations, increasing awareness, ability, and opportunity, all of which contribute to personal and community wellbeing.

Each tier of the MOVE plan uniquely incorporates concepts of community wellness. Tier 1 focuses on education as a tool for empowerment and promotes the ideas of collective action and civic participation. Tier 2 incorporates more physical impacts on community wellness by considering aspects of transit like structural improvements to bus stops to improve safety and usability. The opportunity for community gathering and resource sharing at a mobility hub, as suggested in Tier 3, further empowers community members to fully participate in social, political, and economic opportunities. It also further promotes healthy living by integrating green space and centering on walkability, encouraging people to engage in physical activity in and around their community.

As a foundational concept of this study, community wellness has been a guiding principle throughout the entire Capstone process. We find that there can be no healthy communities without healthy transit systems. As detailed above, the action plan developed through this research has several implications for community wellness. Our hope is that the MOVE plan can serve as a useful and empowering tool to combat existing transit inequities and further highlight the importance of holistic community wellness in community development work.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice demands equitable access to resources to empower community members to fully participate on an individual and civic level (Soken-Huberty). Transit has a direct link to social justice through many concepts like social and political exclusion, classism, racism, empowerment, environmentalism, and so on (Adli). Transit access itself is a basic right, one that has historically been used to control minority groups. Access to transit allows for increased social, political, and economic opportunity. Consequently, transit has been manipulated into a means of control and subjugation (Wellman). Transit development itself has historically been an exclusionary practice, focusing mostly on large, bureaucratic organizations. Because of this, transit development has been rooted within the limiting, racist and classist systems that have become ingrained into American society.

Figure 107. Detroit Bus Drivers Protest Conditions. Source: Bradley

The MOVE plan directly addresses many of these social justice concepts and issues surrounding transit. It seeks to push against the traditional exclusionary barriers of transit development and implement equitable development strategies. By focusing on capacity, the action plan empowers all people and organizations—especially those who have been historically excluded—to engage in tangible and effective transit development. This plan also impacts social justice through its emphasis on

community engagement. The intent behind heavily incorporating community engagement is to create transit systems Detroiters actually want to use.

We are hopeful that social injustices can be combated through the creation of a transit system that actually works—one that is created by and for community members directly. The traditional economic focus of transit development has created many exclusionary practices in the way the transit system operates and for whom it operates. We are hopeful the inclusionary nature of the MOVE plan will work to both offset and remove the restrictions to social justice that currently exist.

DIVERSITY AND MULTICULTURALISM

Diversity and multiculturalism are core pillars of community development work. They should also act as guiding principles within efforts to expand public transit access. It is important to note that diversity and multiculturalism are essential aspects of development—not a tokenistic endeavor—and exist throughout the history of transit ("Diversity, Equity and Inclusion"). Components of diversity and multiculturalism are key themes across this report as well as considered and outlined specifically throughout the Projected Outcomes section.

There are several aspects of diversity and multiculturalism that should be centered within transit developments using the MOVE plan. Organizations should work to be as inclusive as possible and place rider and greater community wellbeing at the forefront of their work. Organizations should understand that all individuals have different needs; thus, implemented transit interventions should be made accessible and individualized whenever possible. Organizations should consider forming committees where rider voices can be heard, uplifted, and included in intervention and development planning. These committees will promote diversity and representation for public transit users.

Organizations that engage in the MOVE plan have the obligation to be intentional about bridging gaps between who currently rides public transit and who does not. **Parties who are interested in implementing MOVE have the potential to shape the narrative of ridership to be as inclusive and representative as possible, creating spaces where diversity and multiculturalism are accepted and uplifted in both the actual implementation and the perception of the work.**

The MOVE plan incorporates principles of diversity, equity, and multiculturalism at its core, using capacity and empowerment to confront inequities and to focus on creating transit systems that are made by and for the community.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental justice incorporates aspects of green living, environmentalism, fair treatment, and empowerment regardless of socioeconomic status ("Learn about Environmental Justice''). The MOVE plan addresses environmental justice by fully integrating community engagement at each tier. The emphasis on the importance of the community voice in development directly combats the exclusion of minority groups and recenters development on the needs and wants of the people.

As mentioned in the Asset Mapping section of this paper, transit use itself can have a significant positive impact on the environment. Increased transit use reduces the number of cars on the road, leading to reduced road congestion and increased mobility of public transit, which leads to faster service times. Reduced road congestion also results in safer streets for both vehicles and pedestrians. In addition, reducing the number of vehicles in operation also reduces emissions. The efforts to modernize and electrify the fleet of buses, which can be incorporated into Tiers 2 and 3 of the MOVE plan, also contributes to this goal of lowering emissions.

Figure 108. Transit Riders Recognizing Transit and the Environment. Source: Transit Riders United

The development of a mobility hub, as suggested in Tier 3 of the MOVE plan, has the opportunity to incorporate even more environmentally sustainable efforts, such as solar panels, rainwater collection, and green development practices. The integration of natural green space also supports environmental justice as well as beautifying and naturalizing the space. Moreover, a mobility hub welcomes more active forms of transit, like bikes and scooters. These forms of transit have become far more popular in recent years, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic (Report of Findings). Like decreasing car travel, increasing active forms of travel supports efforts toward environmental justice.

The MOVE plan's themes of capacity and community engagement allow for sustainable transit developments. By rooting possible developments in capacity and ability, said developments are far more likely to be successful and sustainable in the long run. As reviewed in the History and Needs Assessment sections of this paper, transit developments in Detroit have not always been focused on what transit users actually need and want, which is an unsustainable practice in community development. **Building systems that no one has a desire to use means that they will go unused.** Focusing on community engagement can result in developments that are wanted and needed. Focusing on capacity can result in developments that will be realistic, accomplishable, and measurable. The MOVE plan incorporates both community engagement and capacity, resulting in sustainable transit developments.

Environmental justice and sustainability are essential to all aspects of community development. Transit, as previously stated, has clear connections to the environment and, as such, should be used as a tool to combat environmental injustices, particularly in marginalized communities. It is our hope the MOVE plan can function as a useful tool in creating transit systems that fully support environmental justice and encourage sustainable developments.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The very nature of transit is regional. Improved transit systems will automatically improve regional development, making regional mobility and cooperation more apparent. Throughout Detroit's transit history and continuing into today, there has been marginal regional cooperation. Several service providers do travel in and around Detroit and into the surrounding suburbs. Figure 109 shows the existing service providers and service coverage in

Southeast Michigan, demonstrating the regional nature of transit.

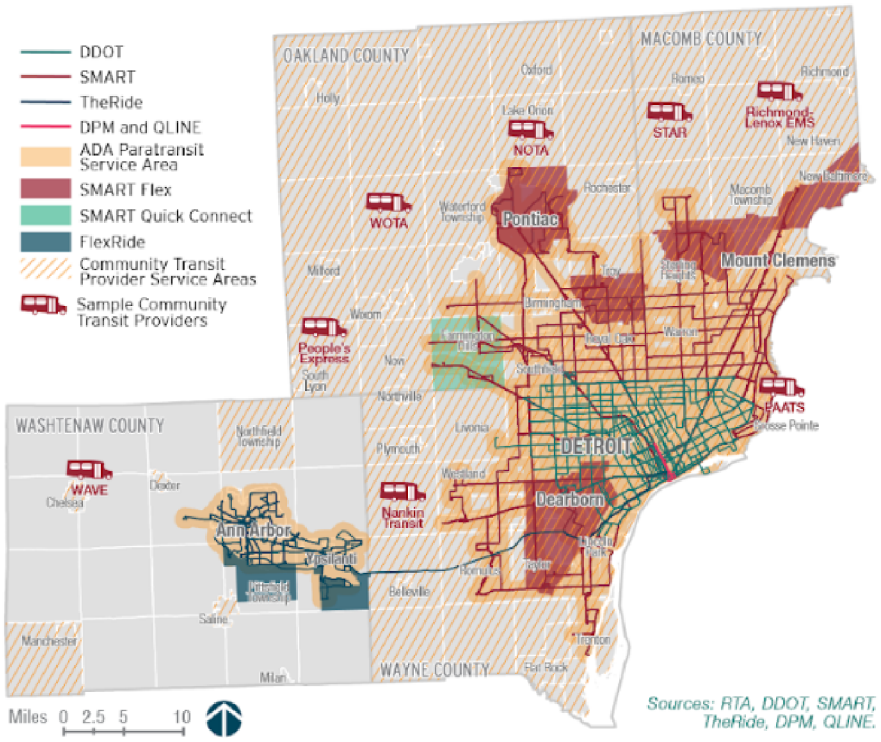


Figure 109. Public Transit Service in Southeast Michigan. Source: Advance 2021

However, not all transit developments have fully embraced the regional potential of transit nor have transit developers always been afforded the opportunity to collaborate. In recent years, there has been increased motivation for cooperative, organized developments through major transit organizations under the guidance of the RTA. The RTA has recently developed a Regional Master Transit Plan with visions, goals, strategies, and actions that support the development of a more robust regional transit system (Advance 2021). The MOVE plan supports this proposal by encouraging cooperative developments, especially in Tier 3, by embracing the inherent regional nature of transit.

The MOVE plan was developed with particular focus on Detroit's Eastside. However, this plan could be adopted by any neighborhood in Detroit and even in places beyond the city's borders. A high-functioning, reliable transit system that moves throughout Southeastern Michigan is an obtainable reality. Not only would such a system increase regional mobility, encouraging local tourism and economic stimulus, but it also has the potential to inform common perceptions and (mis)understandings of the City of Detroit. As discussed in the history section, Detroit has not always had a positive reputation in the suburbs, especially in regards to how transit users are perceived. A robust, safe, and reliable regional transit system that is supported in Detroit proper and continues into the suburbs could make vast positive improvements to the perceptions of transit riders and of Detroit as a whole.

Because transit exists as an inherently regional concept, it highlights the multifaceted nature of transit as well as the importance of engaging in sustainable, regionally focused developments. The balance between incorporating elements of regionalism with the focus on Detroit's Eastside neighborhoods has demonstrated the need for an action plan, like MOVE, that aims to focus developments and create more usable, robust transit systems.

PUBLIC POLICY AND BUREAUCRACY

Public policy and bureaucracy are two factors that heavily affect all forms of community development. The transit world is deeply impacted by these factors, as it requires constant interfacing with multiple government entities. Transit itself is both a public and private sphere, depending on providers and developers. This added complexity only further complicates the relationship between public policy and transit.

As discussed in the History section of this report, transit has been an unfortunate victim of public policy and institutionalized bureaucracy. Transit developers have often faced limitations and constraints to their projects because of factors like excessive permitting, conflicting government goals, and limited funding. However, transit developers have the power to influence policy and break down these traditional barriers through collaboration, initiative, and creative development practices.

The MOVE plan recommends collaborative developments as a tool to combat these barriers. Initiative from various developers, activists, and community members brings connectivity to the transit space and creates collective power. Collective power refers to the creation and amplification of voices, usually in response to marginalization or oppressive structures. The more voices brought to the table, the stronger the collective power ("The 5 Types of Power"). MOVE influences the creation and navigation of collective power, which can be an important tool to influence public policy and enact positive change.

With successful collaboration and collective action, implementations of the MOVE plan could result in public policy shifts. It is likely that the greater the number of agencies that are willing and able to collaborate, the more they will come to have a cohesive understanding of transit challenges and future goals. **Finding and fostering a collective, cohesive voice allows for lobbying to support issues that are important to all parties, including riders.** While the federal government's decisions may be the least likely to be impacted by on-the-ground, grassroots

collective voices, state and local legislation and funding opportunities represent a greater potential for change. As different agencies find their spaces within public transit, the MOVE plan would be helpful in starting conversations or creating understanding for capacity within the policy advocacy space.

The impact of public policy and bureaucracy on transit is evident on the local, state, and federal levels. From regional transit authorities, to departments of transportation, to local city governments, public transportation agencies are expected to abide by designated rules to fund, develop, and employ public transit projects ("How Does Government"). While these regulations may be a limitation in some sense, there is also the opportunity for collective action and voice to change public policies regarding transit that have the potential to remove limitations at the user level. The more agencies are able to focus on the on-the-ground effects of public policy and bureaucracy and uplift user voices in lobbying for change, the more likely the agencies are to create sustainable, impactful change.

CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS

Given the complex nature of transit, there are a few constraints and limitations associated with the MOVE plan. The first regards scale. MOVE was developed as a part of an academic research project. As researchers and practitioners of community development as well as passionate transit advocates, we have attempted to represent transit systems as completely and holistically as possible. **However, given the scale of the project—and our own limited individual capacities—the MOVE plan cannot and does not address every possible concern that may be associated with a given transit development.** For example, there are some basic upgrades to existing Detroit transit systems that can and should be completed in order to make a better overall user experience. The MOVE plan does not necessarily address these concerns directly; however, it does leave room for adjustments. Many of these needed improvements are interconnected with suggestions that are included in the plan, like improving bus stops in Tier 2, which addresses concerns about safety and accessibility.

Another limitation is project funding. There are federal, state, and city dollars available to support such projects in addition to funding from private sources. But, often, the process to secure funding can be extremely difficult and exclusionary. Transit developments can also be very costly because they require quite a bit of

physical development. The cost of developments can be prohibitive and the process to obtain sources of funding is not often designed to support such large-scale requests. The MOVE plan attempts to address the prohibitive costs by recommending low-cost or free interventions as a part of Tier 1. However, developments in Tier 2 and 3 will require much larger sources of funding and, therefore, could be a limitation of the plan.

Policy and bureaucracy interference may be an additional limitation for the implementation of the MOVE plan. There is often a lack of clarity around who makes decisions for public transit and its implementation. Is it the city? The state? The transit authority? The providers? Because transit goes beyond individual city jurisdiction, it is often difficult to discern which policies govern transit interventions and improvements. **Top-down rules may ultimately negatively impact user-focused interventions.** There may also be competition between transit agencies that may limit the effectiveness in improving transit for the overall Detroit public transit system.

The final limitation we see is the overall perception of public transit use that currently exists in the city. In such a car-focused city, there is an overarching attitude that people should or would not take public transit, if given the choice. We are curious if people who do not currently ride public transit would be willing to shift their ideas about what it means to be a transit rider. As we see it, public transit—especially a system that is safe and comfortable for users—can serve as a great resource for city and region residents. We are hopeful that MOVE plan implementing agencies will be intentional about promoting the idea that public transit use is a tool, rather than a detriment.

Figure 110. Autoweek Magazine: Car Culture in Detroit. Source: Autoweek

CONCLUSIONS

PROJECTED OUTCOMES

Transit developments in Detroit have often been implemented via a top-down approach with less focus on what transit users actually need and want for safe, reliable service. **The implementation of the MOVE plan, and its predominant focus on community engagement, will allow organizations and individuals to really consider what they want from transit and in what ways they can play a role in its development.** With the different tiers proposed for intervention, implementing parties have choices about where and how they best fit into the public transit space. It is our hope that organizations and individuals will be straightforward with their capacity and implement inventions that are meaningful and built from the ground up.

With intentional implementation of MOVE, we are hopeful for positive potential effects that have both direct and far-reaching impact. This impact may span the development space across people, organizations, physical spaces, and economics. Community wellness, social justice, diversity and multiculturalism, and sustainability are each an important component of this plan and should experience a shift in a positive direction as a result of this work. Ultimately, even the smallest intervention on the community or individual level has the potential to impact regional development and public policy and bureaucracy. **Creative thinking about how transit does and should work, uplifting user experience, and being forthcoming with capacity are all critical to the development of interventions that are sustainable and effective.**

PROJECT CONCLUSIONS

PUBLIC TRANSIT + COMMUNITY WELLNESS

CONCLUSION

TRANSIT:
A CONNECTOR OF PEOPLE TO PEOPLE + PEOPLE TO PLACES.

The beginning of this report posed the question: **how might we more meaningfully connect people to people and people to places?**

Framing our research within various frameworks, like the HOPE Model, has provided much needed guidance in conducting an academic project in an honest, non-exploitative manner. The various considerations surrounding the transit climate in Detroit combined with the historical contexts of transit and the Eastside community set the scene for understanding their existing conditions. The case studies we analyzed allowed for a clearer understanding of these complex, multifaceted concepts and allowed us to learn through example. The asset mapping and needs assessment set a framework for better understanding current conditions, identifying areas of strengths and spaces for improvement. Community engagement—a big highlight of the project—allowed us to engage directly with community members and create reciprocal learning relationships. Finally, we were able to compile all research to think critically about meaningful interventions to improve transit access and community wellness.

In the following pages, we will wrap up what has been an extremely meaningful project and speak on steps for moving forward.

We want to uplift the following principles that have occurred frequently throughout the report. These principles are necessary components of community work and should be the focus in moving forward for the benefit of Detroit public transit systems and community wellness:

COMMUNITIES ARE COMPLEX

Communities are complex systems and should be treated as such. Any and all possible interventions should aim to understand these systems from a holistic, humanistic, and non-reductive lens.

ENGAGEMENT IS KEY

Community engagement is one of the most essential steps in the development process. All developments should focus on what community members actually want and need. This upholds the real, life lived experiences of users and results in sustainable developments.

FOCUS ON ACCESSIBILITY

Moving forward, accessibility of transit systems and transit development should be prioritized. Developments should focus on creating usable systems through capacity focused developments within The MOVE plan that support community wellness.

IMPLEMENTATION MAY VARY

And finally, we understand that the implementation of our proposed strategies are going to look different based on many factors and that's okay! We just hope to see real life improvements to Detroit's transit systems and wellbeing achieved in healthy, sustainable and honest ways.

MOVING FORWARD

TRANSIT:
A CONNECTOR OF PEOPLE TO PEOPLE + PEOPLE TO PLACES.

We have many hopes for this project. We look forward to the possibility for agencies and developers to implement our suggested strategies. We hope to see increased use of public transit in Detroit. We hope to see a shift in perceptions and ideologies around who uses transit and why they use transit. Most of all, we hope to have played a small role in creating positive change in real community members' lives.

As developments move into actualization, we hope implementation agencies will continue to focus on the above principles and work to always center user perspective.

We will continue to make ourselves available to any agency, organization, or group who want to make an impact on transit in their community. This research has been incredibly meaningful to us and it is important for us as researchers, community development advocates, and public transit champions to see these proposed interventions be implemented in meaningful, tangible ways—and we intend to be a part of that to the best of our abilities.

and with that:

Let's MOVE, Detroit!

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APPENDIX A: INITIAL TRANSIT SURVEY

Capstone 2022 - Initial Transit Survey

Please consider completing this survey to contribute to our Capstone (thesis) project for the completion of our Master's Program through the University of Detroit Mercy. This survey will be used to inform our initial understanding of the way people interact with public transit systems in Detroit. Your information will remain anonymous. We appreciate your participation!

Sign in to Google to save your progress. Learn more

How often do you access public transit systems in Detroit (DDOT bus, SMART bus, Qline, People Mover, etc)?

- ○ Once a week
- ○ Multiple times a week
- ○ Once a month
- ○ A few times a year
- ○ Have not accessed but am willing to
- ○ Have not accessed and am not willing to
- ○ Used to access but do not anymore
- ○ Other:

If you access public transit in Detroit, why do you do so?

- ☐ It is my only form of transportation
- ☐ To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance
- ☐ Convenience
- ☐ Environmental Concerns
- ☐ Other:

If you do not access public transit in Detroit, why do you not do so?

- ☐ I have another form of transportation (bike, car)
- ☐ The transit system is not reliable
- ☐ I do not understand how to access the transit
- ☐ It is not convenient for me
- ☐ Other:

Tell us how transit access (public or otherwise) impacts your wellbeing

Your answer

Tell us how transit access (public or otherwise) impacts your community's wellbeing

Your answer

If you could make one change to public transit systems in Detroit, what would that be?

Your answer

Submit Clear form

APPENDIX B: INITIAL TRANSIT SURVEY RESULTS

QUESTION 1:

How often do you access public transit systems in Detroit (DDOT bus, SMART bus, Qline, People Mover, etc)?
A few times a year
Have not accessed but am willing to
Have not accessed but am willing to
A few times a year
Used to access but do not anymore
Once a week
A few times a year
Have not accessed but am willing to
once in three years
A few times a year
Used to access but do not anymore
Have not accessed but am willing to
Have not accessed but am willing to
Used to access but do not anymore
A few times a year
Once a month
Have not accessed but am willing to
A few times a year
Multiple times a week
A few times a year
A few times a year
Once a month
Once a week
Used to access but do not anymore
Used to access but do not anymore

A few times a year
A few times a year
Used to access but do not anymore
Used to access but do not anymore
Once a week
Once a week
Maybe once a year on the people mover
Once a month
Multiple times a week
A few times a year
Used to access but do not anymore
Multiple times a week
Multiple times a week
A few times a year

QUESTION 2:

If you access public transit in Detroit, why do you do so?
It's funny
Environmental Concerns
Convenience, Environmental Concerns
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Environmental Concerns
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Environmental Concerns
To pick up a vehicle at a shop to drive home.
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience, Environmental Concerns
It is my only form of transportation
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience

To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience
Convenience, Environmental Concerns
Convenience
Convenience
It is my only form of transportation
Environmental Concerns
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience
Convenience
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience, Environmental Concerns
Environmental Concerns, Bad weather (I usually bike)
It is my only form of transportation, To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Environmental Concerns
To experience or have others who never experienced the people mover to do so
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience, Environmental Concerns
It is my only form of transportation
Convenience
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Environmental Concerns, Exercise walking to bus
It is my only form of transportation
Convenience

QUESTION 3:

If you do not access public transit in Detroit, why do you not do so?
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), The transit system is not reliable, It is not convenient for me
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), It is not convenient for me, I live in the suburbs and taking the SMART bus to other places takes too long.
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), The transit system is not reliable, It is not convenient for me
The transit system is not reliable
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), The transit system is not reliable

I have another form of transportation (bike, car), I do not understand how to access the transit
I have another form of transportation (bike, car)
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), The time it takes get from point A to point B (can drive quicker) and the wait time. Also, public transport has a bad reputation.
The transit system is not reliable
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), It is not convenient for me
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), I do not understand how to access the transit, It is not convenient for me
It is not convenient for me
The transit system is not reliable, It is not convenient for me
The transit system is not reliable, It is not convenient for me
The transit system is not reliable, It is not convenient for me
It is not convenient for me
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), The transit system is not reliable
I have another form of transportation (bike, car)
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), The transit system is not reliable, It is not convenient for me
It is not convenient for me
The transit system is not reliable
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), The transit system is not reliable, It is not convenient for me
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), The transit system is not reliable
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), The transit system is not reliable
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), The transit system is not reliable, It is not convenient for me
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), The transit system is not reliable
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), The transit system is not reliable
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), The transit system is not reliable
I have another form of transportation (bike, car), The transit system is not reliable, It is not convenient for me
The transit system is not reliable, It is not convenient for me
I have another form of transportation (bike, car)
I have another form of transportation (bike, car)
I have another form of transportation (bike, car)

QUESTION 4:

Tell us how transit access (public or otherwise) impacts your wellbeing
Allows me to drink and still make it home without driving
If we had a really strong regional public transit option, I would love that. I'd get more walking in, would save money on gas, parking fees and maintenance on my vehicle. Plus I think there is the potential to engage more with the community on public transit.
I would prefer to use public transit but it is not convenient to me based off the frequency and reach of the bus system
I pay for gas and high ass car insurance & would like the option of having reliable public transit so I won't have see to depend on my car alone.
I can read more when I don't have to drive!
The transit system helps people park in the suburbs and work downtown. You have to plan your estimated arrival and departure times in advance, but the system is a sufficient alternative. In general having a public system is useful for people who do not own a vehicle, or do not have access. Also, for students the system is useful during the school year.
Have not used it yet, but any money I can save would help my well being
It doesn't have much of an impact on me personally, as far as I can tell. Would have a greater impact if it was used by more folks (me included).
Less stressful to park and use public transport when going to multiple places
Access to my own private vehicle is integral to my well-being; I am afforded the opportunity to pursue any interest at an time. Without a private vehicle, I feel my well-being would be compromised by having to rely on the public transportation system in metro Detroit.
Transit access allows me to easily visit Detroit tourist staples
Lack of convenient service means I have to rely on having a car, which is an additional expense - better public transit options would mean less stress for travel/driving and more cost efficient
It doesn't, The transportation is so unreliable that I stopped relying on it
Better access to transit for me would mean more walking (to the bus, etc.), less pollution, less road noise, better walkability to places of interest.
Longer trips to work, few stops, many areas not service, and the frequency of the buses are all a problem. Combined with many areas not having accessible sidewalks, it makes for unsafe and labored travel
I would feel lost without my own car. I would have to spend a lot of time scheduling appointments, errands, etc
More reliable public transit would permit me to travel more often at a lower cost, making things like grocery runs or visiting friends and family much more accessible. The fact that DDot and SMART are not accessible nor timely is a detriment to my life.
It helps speed up getting around Detroit when the best other option is walking
As a cyclist I'm able to use transit to increase the options as go where I can travel.
I have a 10-15 commute to work in Detroit. If there was reliable and efficient transit options to the suburbs I would use them for environmental and financial reasons.
Helpful. The QLine is super great!
It can get violent at times and some of the bus drivers have an attitude
I spend more time in my car because my partner does not have access to a car or transit to and from work or shopping areas.
Saving money on gas, feeling like I make less of an environmental impact, avoiding the stress of parking, a sense of community with other riders
Transit access, if more reliable and accessible, would dramatically improve my wellbeing and quality of life because I could reduce or eliminate my dependence on a car to get around the region.
Reliable access to transit saves me money and effort, and lets me get drunk at events without needing a dd or paying for an uber
It use to be my only source of transportation

Allows me to save money and use commuting time to read or relax
For times when I do not want to or I'm not able to bike, is a great relief to have another form of transport, and I like being able to read on the bus (wish I could not do while biking or driving)
I would love if there was more public access to reliable and fast transportation around Detroit and from Detroit to other nearby bustling cities. Since Detroit is so expansive and not really a walking community and due to anxiety about finding parking or for the safety of my vehicle, I would much rather take public transit. It would also make getting around downtown and other parts of the city on game days/festivals/holidays much easier and would draw me to the festivities instead of deter me for fear of not finding parking.
I would love to give up the expense of a car if transit was frequent, reliable, and plentiful!
Getting to and from work on time is key and when the transit is delayed it causes stress and potentially negatively impact my ability to work.
If there were more buses and regional transit I would save SO MUCH on car repairs and gas. The lack of adequate transit options is a negative impact. If I can't drive, I mostly bike. If I can't drive or bike, that's when I take the bus.
There is no impact on my well-being it just fits my needs at that time.
I get I more walking in days I ride the bus
It's critical for me to have reliable transportation to get to work and back home. Having it helps to mitigate daily stress, facilitates a routine, and requires I walk more.
I sometimes find it relaxing to not have to deal with the hassle and expense of driving.

QUESTION 5:

Tell us how transit access (public or otherwise) impacts your community's wellbeing.
Environment
Having safe, reliable transit is so important to the people I work with. A lot of folks don't feel safe at the neighborhood bus stops. At least there is public transit but it could be more robust.
I think Detroit would feel like a more cohesive city if more people rode public transit together. Potentially fewer divisions in the city.
The times to wait on these busses has always been a terrible experience (trash). I see people standing at bus stops for hours.
Need more people to use for system to maximize its viability
Accessible transit options gives opportunity to people to be able to work, run errands, and visit areas they wouldn't have been able to use without it. The system runs during the most common hours and in general has been reliable. When there's large events downtown using public transportation is optimal. And there's eco advantages with ride sharing.
Parking in Detroit is often crowded and expensive, the more cars people can leave at home, the less congested and dangerous I think it would be
I guess that giving folks who otherwise might not have options an option. I think that it would be much better if it were a more attractive option.
Safer for pedestrians and helps cars to not be idling during drivetime
My community's access to transit has improved recently with the addition of MoGo bike stations and bike lane infrastructure. However, citizens/neighbors without private transportation are still limited in their ability to freely and easily pursue interests, which has a detrimental impact on the well-being of the community.
Transit allows my community to do the same, and, for some, gets them to and from work!
Makes it more difficult for people without cars or seniors (and others) unable to drive to get around
If I can't find parking I can't shop at the stores or eat at the restaurants
A lot of the same things as above, but also better opportunities for jobs, savings over car ownership.

The lack of transit means that many folks in my community are either forced to limit their travel options, buy a car, or spend exorbitant amounts on rideshare systems like Uber. The lack of transit access is an overall detriment to all of us.
It allows the entire community to interact with areas that they otherwise would not have.
Increased transit options decreases reliability on cars and allows space to be dedicated more toward people than vehicles. Transit = equity, especially in a city with high insurance rates and lower income residents. People must have options to get from place to place in order to succeed
Not having that transit access cuts of opportunity for so many people. For work, school, health care - whatever it may be. Detroit is a city where 40% of the population does not have access to a car. Reliable transit is so important.
Helps get a lot of people to one area, like a tigers game
It is very unreliable and sometimes it does not even come
It greatly increases my communities dependence on cars, with many streets being congested with cars and unsafe for pedestrians.
Environmental impact
Transit is a critical piece to a healthy society, equitable communities, and sustainable economic development. Gaps in transit access create gaps in other areas, including access to jobs, basic goods and services, and recreational opportunities. Improving transit access and reliability has a net positive impact for frequent riders, occasional riders, and even those that elect to not utilize transit. Some of the inequities that exist in Detroit and the broader region could be reduced through expanded transit options and reliability. Safe, affordable, reliable, regional transit is a quintessential element of a healthy, globally competitive region!
A quarter of Detroit HHs don't own a car
Lowers traffic (noise, pollution, risk of accident), creates opportunities to interact with community members as you commute
It makes the streets less crowded and dangerous, lowers pollution, lets at least some people not have to own a car (which can be expensive), offers an affordable way to get around town
I think increasing access to transit would help the community members with being self reliant. It would make it easier for community members to be able to commute to and from their jobs and would help them access grocery stores since Detroit is a food desert. By bettering public transit access we would be helping the community access the resources that they need to live/survive/flourish.
We live in a community where many people cannot afford cars, so their ability to get to work, doctor appts, etc is reliant on a bus system that is extremely unreliable and hard to plan around.
Community access to transportation is vital. Not only do people deserve the bare minimum or on time, frequent stops for essential purposes of work, school, doctor, etc but also to move about more freely. With the city also having many food deserts its dangerous to also have unreliable transportation.
Again, there needs to be more consistent and regional transit! I know it's very difficult for friends of mine to get where they need to be on time with the bus system in Detroit.
It impacts the community because of the pollution and loudness when working residents are trying to get some sleep.
Gives people w/o cars a way to get around
Transit access impacts everything, I would not live in a city that did not provide it.Environmentally, it makes more sense to have less cars on the road for routine travel, it provides inclusive socioeconomic support, and facilitates independent living.
Our lack of reliable public transit definitely has a negative economic impact. It makes it harder for residents without cars to get to work, school, church, etc. And discourages tourism, conferences, etc. In most other cities I visit, I can rely on public transit to get me to and from the airport, around town, etc.

QUESTION 6:

If you could make one change to public transit systems in Detroit, what would that be?
Make it a practical tool for use that connects the neighborhoods to commercial areas
Be more widely accessible, like public transport in other major cities, like Chicago, Seattle, NYC, Washington DC, and Toronto, with more options for fast, reliable service that goes around the city and out to the suburbs.
More bus reach and frequency
Bring the trolleys back and actually make the Q Line and People Mover make sense.

Publicly owned electric/automated vehicle ride sharing platform
There's a lot to unpack, but probably enhanced routes throughout the city and suburbs would be useful. That requires policy changes, stakeholders to agree, and community support (easier said than done). And if the system was originally underground, that would have been better but it is difficult to go back instead of focusing on improving how the system is now.
I hear that it can be very slow and sometimes isn't worth the ride, not sure how it can be sped up safely but that might encourage more people using it.
Make it free...
Easier understanding of how to use or access them and where the stop at(qline - people mover)
I would like to see a more expansive transit system to provide opportunity for the city and suburbs to connect more easily. Busses are one piece of the puzzle, but light rail would improve access to more employment opportunities (and many other things like grocery stores, medical care, etc.) for Detroiters without private transportation and would bring more entertainment opportunities ($$$) to the city from the suburbs.
I would expand it into metro Detroit area to allow for easier transport from suburbs to downtown
Make it more accessible to everyone
I would love a safe, clean, and consistent bus system or train system. The Q line is basically useless and I don't trust that it will take me back to my car at the end of the evening
Increase frequency/reliability.
I would change the philosophy of the system. It works only as well as the areas it services are accessible. It only works as well as the routes it travels. Having a system that's has more stops or that comes every 30 minutes regularly is great, but it means nothing if the buses aren't stopping at places with sidewalks etc.
Link to the suburbs
Adding an accessible subway system would go a long way, like the one available in New York or Chicago. An improved version of those systems applied across a wider spread of the Metro Detroit area, along with a handful of rails going from Metro Detroit to Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, and other city areas and suburbs around Michigan would make things much easier for communities to meet and engage in commerce.
Shift the focus of public transit from around Woodward and instead have it focus on major locations in Detroit (Corktown, Belle Isle, etc.).
Increase reliability and clarity of bud schedule - bonus for putting in dedicated bus lanes
Making it more reliable, efficient and accessible.
Sometimes they are not on time
Make it more reliable
More routes, more frequent schedules, more reliable, better pay for transit workers, conscientious safety protocols for health/well-being ie Covid, etc, better education / marketing purposes.
Expand funding for major lines like, Woodward, Michigan, Gratiot, and 8-mile to improve infrastructure to the level of other successful Bus Rapid Transit Systems.
better communication about how to access it, easy route planning, overall easier to determine the best ways to use it to get around
Increase funding and access to DDOT and SMART systems.
Improve pull out rates! And then find the RTA
Detroit public transit is not reliable and way behind other urban cities when it comes to public transportation If I could change a few things it would cleanliness, air filtration systems, environmental friendly and newer buses, more routes with faster respond times , more buses, more bus drivers and hire bus attendants as well
More frequent bus service and more FAST lines on arterials; integrated SMART and DDOT routes to minimize transfers (sorry that's two things)
1) all electric buses2) more reliable service3) reduced or eliminated fares
I would ideally love to see a better bus system so that there were more buses, bus stops, and bus drivers so that we could reach other parts of the city and ensure that buses move more efficiently.
Free fares

More frequent stops
TRAINS INSTEAD OF HIGHWAYS or at least in addition to highways.
Quieter engine's and a much cleaner exhaust system to cut down on the pollution.
More frequent buses
Require community engagement when a bus stop is re-located from one place to another (to inform riders of why the move is required, and to alert them of how that may impact their use). Re-routing for holidays can be messy as well, if riders download the bus tracking app, employ an auto re-routing alert in the app., showing alternative pick-up locations on route.
I'd make the routes clearer and more direct. And I'd increase the availability of paratransit.

APPENDIX C: UNDERSTANDING MOBILITY SURVEY

Understanding Mobility in Detroit

Public transit serves as a connector of people to places and people to people. This survey is intended to help researchers better understand trends and thoughts surrounding public transit use in Detroit.

This survey contributes to the thesis project for the completion of the Master's of Community Development Program at University of Detroit Mercy.

All of the information will be strictly confidential and used solely for academic purposes. No identifying information will be in the report. The collected data will not be used for any purpose outside of this academic report. Answers are on a voluntary basis, you can write as little or as much as you'd like. If you have any questions or concerns you can reach out to herculam@udmercy.edu or schulthm@udmercy.edu

We appreciate your participation!

Sign in to Google to save your progress. Learn more

* Required

Are you a Detroit resident? *

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

If yes, what neighborhood do you live in?

Your answer

What is your preferred method of transit in Detroit? *

- ○ Bike Share
- ○ Biking
- ○ Bus
- ○ Car
- ○ Carpooling
- ○ Ride Share
- ○ Scooter
- ○ Walking
- ○ Q - Line
- ○ Other:

Why is that your preferred method?

Your answer

Do transit services in Detroit feel affordable to you? *

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Other:

How would you rate Detroit's bus system? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Extremely Lacking	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely Strong

How safe do you feel using Detroit public transit? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Extremely Unsafe	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely Safe

What would make you more willing to take Detroit public transit?

Your answer

Would you utilize transit more if there were multiple options (like access to bike share or scooter share) at one conveniently located place?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Other:

How does mobility access impact your wellness?

Your answer

Any other thoughts on Public Transit in Detroit?

Your answer

Submit Clear form

APPENDIX D: UNDERSTANDING MOBILITY SURVEY RESULTS

QUESTION 1:

Are you a Detroit resident?
No
No
Yes
No
No
No
Yes
No
Yes
No
No
Yes
No
Yes
No
No
No
No
Yes
No
No

No
Yes
Yes
Yes
No

QUESTION 2:

If you access public transit in Detroit, why do you do so?
It's funny
Environmental Concerns
Convenience, Environmental Concerns
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Environmental Concerns
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Environmental Concerns
To pick up a vehicle at a shop to drive home.
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience, Environmental Concerns
It is my only form of transportation
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience
Convenience, Environmental Concerns
Convenience
Convenience
It is my only form of transportation
Environmental Concerns
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience
Convenience

To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience, Environmental Concerns
Environmental Concerns, Bad weather (I usually bike)
It is my only form of transportation, To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Environmental Concerns
To experience or have others who never experienced the people mover to do so
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Convenience, Environmental Concerns
It is my only form of transportation
Convenience
To save money on parking/gas/car payment/insurance, Environmental Concerns, Exercise walking to bus
It is my only form of transportation
Convenience

QUESTION 3:

What is your preferred method of transit in Detroit?
Carpooling
Q - Line
Biking
Car and walking
Car
Car
Car
Car
Biking
Car
Car
Car
Walking
Biking

Bus
Biking
Car
Carpooling
Car
Car
Walking
Car
Biking
Car
Car
Car

QUESTION 4:

Why is that your preferred method?
Carpool
I don't love the Q-Line itself, but that is my favorite mode of public transportation. I mostly drive in for events so I like parking further away and taking the Q-Line to my destination(s)
Exercise, autonomy, convenience.
Convenient
Be able to quickly move from place to place without arrangement or wait time
Safest
Easiest / not good transit routes nearby
I have a car.
Been biking in detroit for 30 years and you get exercise
Lack of rapid transit and trains from the suburbs to downtown Detroit. Troy transit station needs a commuter train. Has great parking and extra with the shopping center but no train that works for downtown commuting.
Not familiar with bus schedules and found the q line unreliable when I last attempted to use it.

Most convenient and safest way to get around.
I like to walk around once I get there since driving can be confusing and I miss a lot when I drive. I like the pace of walking and the experience of finding things as I walk through downtown Detroit.
it is cheap and reliable (i know exactly how long it takes me to get places)
I don't need a second family car, I enjoy riding public transit (when it functions!), I can save money and It's better for the environment.
Cheap and flexible
Easy to get around
I don't want to drive.
Car
Because I live in the suburbs and my daily commute is 40-45 minutes.
Because I commute into the city for work and buses are not available where I live coming into Detroit.
Zero emissions, good exercise, flexibility
Fastest
Because there is no alternative and I feel safe.
Comprehensive coverage for destination. 24 hr availability,

QUESTION 5:

Do transit services in Detroit feel affordable to you?
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
I wouldn't know.

Yes
Yes
Not sure if pricing so cannot answer.
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
No
Yes
Yes
Yes
I'm not familiar with the prices as adequate bus routes are not available where I live.
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes

QUESTION 6:

How would you rate Detroit's bus system?
1
2
2
3
3
3

1
3
2
4
3
2
3
2
1
2
4
3
3
4
3
3
3
2
2
3

QUESTION 7:

How safe do you feel using Detroit public transit?
3
2
4
2

2
1
2
1
2
4
3
2
4
4
4
3
4
2
3
5
2
4
2
4
1
4

QUESTION 8:

What would make you more willing to take Detroit public transit?
Yes, if electric.

Express routes so travel is faster to major intersections
Reliability
If I felt better educated regarding different transits available and if there was a security guard in some instances
Being in Detroit more often
Safety
I don't think I would feel safe or clean taking the bus system in Detroit.
Rapid bus transport with at level boarding and a move away from airline style seating.
Regional/suburb connections that are efficient
Being more familiar with schedule and pricing.
Have it be more accessible and timely. Safety for bike lanes. Cars are constantly parked in bike lanes, pile ons are broken into bike lanes, there is very little training on giving right of way to bikes so bike riders have to watch for cars.
Additional information about routes and timing.
if the bus came more frequently
If the busses where more reliable and frequent.
More frequent pickups
Friends with me. And knowledge about the options/routes.
A non-stop line straight to Detroit in 30 minutes or less.
More routes connected suburbs
Explainer videos showing me every step to use each system. If service was more punctual and if safety was improved.
More frequent and convenient routes.
Have a more socially diverse crowd use the service
More routes. Increased timing especially the cross town seevice

QUESTION 9:

Would you utilize transit more if there were multiple options (like access to bike share or scooter share) at one conveniently located place?
Yes
Yes
Yes
No
Yes
No
Yes
Yes
No
No
Yes
Yes
Yes
Not necessarily, I've found walking will get me that last bit, it's really the buses being reliable that is important
Yes
No
No
Yes
No
Yes
Yes
Yes

No
Yes
No

QUESTION 10:

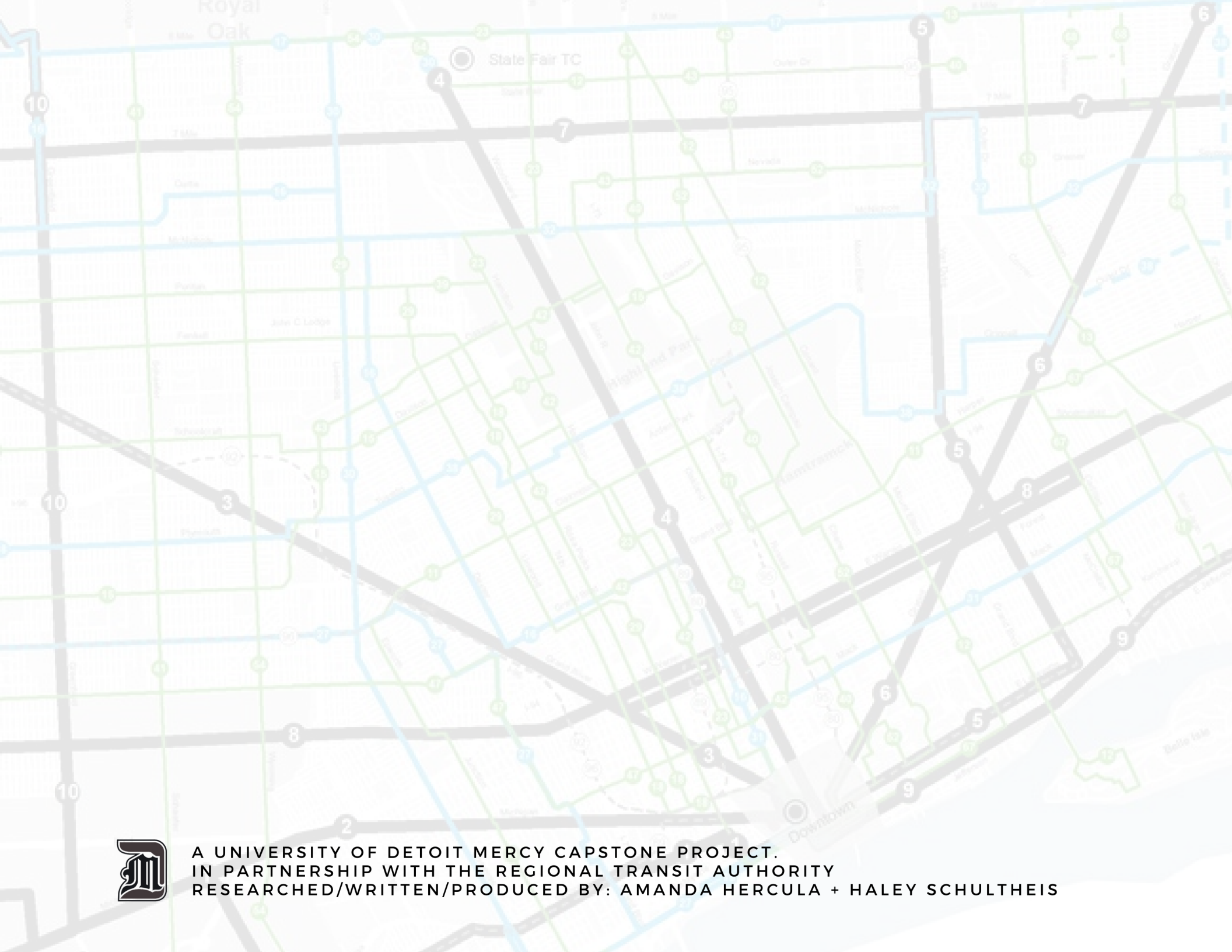
How does mobility access impact your wellness?
No
Mobility is important for connecting people to essentials businesses and services. My grandma relies on public transportation completely to go to appointments since she no longer drives.
Greatly. Mobility gives you the ability to be a more productive/engaging citizen.
It does not
Because I have my own vehicle, mobility access is easiest.
My brother has muscular dystrophy, any small issue can ruin an entire trip
Not sure what you are asking here.
Driving a car around is terrible for my health (significantly reduces physical activity) and terrible for the environment (which again impacts air quality and has health implications).
It makes me enjoy a city more when I have more transportation options.
i would walk more and meet more people living near me if I were on foot instead of bike
If a bus doesn't come, or is late, I'm late for work or getting home after a long work day. It can be stressful when it doesn't work well. When it does function properly, it's quite pleasant.
Key to living
Knowing it is available
None.
It's everything
Greatly. I already have mobility issues.
I walk less because I drive so much. Walking clears my mind and improves my

I'd probably drive less and be more physically active
I take the bus to the majority of my Dr appointments

QUESTION 11:

Any other thoughts on Public Transit in Detroit?
Not at this time
N/A
A major PR campaign for public transportation in Detroit needs to happen, to reverse the negative stigma
I have used the people mover many times. It was not an option here though
I am glad it is up and coming!
No
Clarify if you mean metro Detroit or city limits only for these questions. But regional commuter train would be amazing! Get Troy Transit Center a commuter train!
Needs to be reliable to be used more. Problems with the q line caused us to almost be last to a ticketed event the last time we attempted to use it.
The buses never feel safe to ride on. The Q line access is very limited since it doesn't come to our neighborhood and Woodward is a terrible place to ride your bike. People don't have sufficient knowledge or implications of parking in bike lanes. Biking is very unsafe in the city.
I would like to explore it more.
i wish more politicians cared about it
We need more buses, more drivers, better frequency, improved shelters, and bus lanes where it makes sense
QLine and People Mover are for suburbanites
Useful during the years
I wouldn't know where to go to get the answers to use public transit.
I think it is a great idea for those without other forms of transportation or mobility issues.
The infrequency of stops and buses makes riding it a burden. Also, the bus stops are so trashy. Actual trash. No benches, no garbage cans. No shelter. Just a broken down sign usually. Makes riding even more unattractive.

Totally not appropriate for a city of 600k+ inhabitants. Smaller European cities with ~100K inhabitants have high-speed train connections and much better public transit services.
Arrival times are usually reliable.Transfer times are often more than 20mins.Very impressed with the driving skills.Most driver's are respectful of riders but some have poor customer relation skills. It is so varied it seems the personality applicants is not considered during screening nor is relationsed during training.t is unclear if your survey is specific to transportation in the city of Detroit.I think opinion of SMART service is important because riders often use the two on the same trip.referring to SMART:SMART and DDot need to improve their outreach and increase public awareness of their services.The cooperation between SMART and the city of Roseville is excellent. I use the small community bus.service often.The ability of communities to opt out of SMART results in service gapsBest recent change: 3hour transfer! Including return directionTop concern:Lack of cooperation between SMART and DDot. Having to wait to transfer at the city limits is reiculous and adds to travel timeThe required added transfers between the services two services is confusing and adds cost



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