

Woodward Avenue Streetcar Project Frequently Asked Questions

Who is leading this effort?

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as the lead Federal agency, together with MDOT, is coordinating the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Woodward Avenue Streetcar Project. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) is leading the communications efforts for the project.

Who are the proponents and supporters of this project?

FTA and MDOT are supporting the analysis of environmental impact of the streetcar project proposed by M-1 RAIL. M-1 RAIL is a consortium of businesses, institutions, and foundations interested in implementing and operating a circulator transit system on lower Woodward Avenue as a means of revitalizing this critical regional corridor. M-1 RAIL will operate the streetcar system for a period of up to 10 years after construction.

Business and philanthropic support for the project includes: Kresge Foundation, Downtown Development Authority, Compuware Corporation, Detroit Medical Center, Henry Ford Health Systems, Ilitch Holdings, Quicken Loans, Penske Corporation, Wayne State University, Chevrolet, Ford Foundation, Kellogg Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Hudson Webber Foundation, and New Market Tax Credit Partners.

Community support for the project includes: Michigan Department of Transportation, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, City of Detroit, Wayne County, Oakland County, Macomb County, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, Michigan Congressional Delegation, Detroit Regional Chamber, Midtown Detroit Inc., Woodward Avenue Action Association, Metropolitan Organizing Strategy Enabling Strength (MOSES), Transportation Riders United, Downtown Detroit Partnership, and Michigan Environmental Council.

Why is this study being done?

Although a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision were already issued for the Woodward Avenue LRT Project, the proposed Woodward Avenue Streetcar Project is substantially different enough from the alternatives considered in the FEIS to warrant a supplemental EA. Based on this study, an amended Record of Decision will likely be issued pursuant to this further analysis.

How is this environmental study different from the previous one done?

The previously completed Woodward Avenue LRT FEIS evaluated a number of alternatives and design options for light rail service along Woodward Avenue. That analysis assessed impacts on the human and natural environment that may have resulted from construction and operation of

LRT service. The supplemental EA currently being done will have a substantially smaller scope than the Woodward Avenue LRT FEIS. The study will focus on Alternative B3, which was considered in the FEIS, and assess the impacts of proposed changes to this alternative rather than examine multiple alternatives previously considered in the EIS.

What will the Supplemental Environmental Assessment study?

The supplemental EA will assess the impacts of the changes to Alternative B3 and will provide any new information or circumstances that have come to light since the Woodward Avenue LRT Project FEIS.

How is the Streetcar project different from Alternative B3 considered in the Woodward Avenue LRT Project FEIS?

While the supplemental EA will assess the full impacts of the changes to Alternative B3, the primary changes include:

- A 3.3-mile route, as opposed to a 9.3 mile route
- Use of streetcars rather than LRT vehicles
- Maintenance facility location
- Reduced station size and scope
- Slight adjustments to station locations
- Curb-running operation north of Campus Martius Park to north of I-94 instead of median running

What is the difference between streetcars and the previously considered light rail technology?

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

What is the projected cost to construct and operate the streetcar?

M-1 RAIL has set out to secure \$137 million for construction of the project. They estimate the streetcar system will cost \$5.1 million annually to maintain and operate. M-1 RAIL will operate the streetcar system for a period of 10 years after construction.

How will the streetcar service be funded?

M-1 RAIL expects to fund the construction and operation of the project with a combination of corporate and philanthropic donations, passenger fares, sales of advertising and naming rights,

and state assistance. The major funding sources consist of over \$90 million of committed private funds, \$25 million in requested federal funding, and \$16 million of New Market Tax Credits.

What is the timeline?

The project is currently entering the EA phase, which is anticipated to be completed by winter of 2012/2013. Following the issuance of an amended Record of Decision, which provides the necessary environmental approvals, M-1 RAIL expects to begin construction of the system in 2013 to coincide with MDOT's planned reconstruction of Woodward Avenue. M1-RAIL plans to complete the entire system and begin operations in late 2015.

What is the projected ridership?

Based on the many major activity centers along the Woodward Avenue corridor, strong existing bus ridership, and a heavily transit-dependent population along the corridor, this proposed project is projected to improve public transit service and provide greater mobility options. In addition, it would provide transit connections to existing and planned economic development areas and support future transit-oriented development. The projected ridership information from the Woodward Avenue Light Rail Transit EIS will be updated using revised, proposed project limits.