

TRU Moving Forward

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TRU Honors Jack Schramm

By Francis Grunow

TRU held its first annual Jack Edward Schramm Transit Award benefit on Thursday, July 15th at the International Institute, in Detroit's cultural center. It was a great success, with nearly a hundred transit aficionados who came to honor Jack Schramm and support TRU's mission.

As the first recipient of his namesake's award, Mr. Schramm was recognized for his lifetime of advocacy and scholarship on Detroit's once expansive transit network. Through his stewardship of the City of Detroit's Department of Street Railway collection and his authorship of several books and other publications, Mr. Schramm has educated a new generation about Detroit's rich transit history. Jack Schramm and his son Ken were kind enough to bring selected items from the extensive Schramm archive for view, including DSR badges, schedules, streetcar models, and videos showing Detroit's system in action.

After an hour of hors d'oeuvres, drink and recollections, TRU president Bob Prud'homme officially opened the evening and spoke eloquently about how Mr. Schramm's work should not merely be seen as a record of our past, but rather a blueprint



An apparently delighted Jack Schramm, left, is presented with the first annual Jack Edward Schramm Transit Award by Francis Grunow

for our future. Board member and event coordinator Francis Grunow, citing Mr. Schramm's influence on his understanding of Detroit, introduced the guest of honor and presented him with the award, which featured a piece of rail from the former Belle Isle and Fort Wayne Rail Road, a precursor of the DSR.

Mr. Schramm gracefully accepted his honor and spoke for several minutes about the impetus for his first publications and the involved process in writing them. Ken Schramm spoke

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TRU Transportation Riders United (TRU) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3), organization dedicated to promoting sensible transportation policies through public education and action.

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TRU to Present Woodward Avenue Transit Forum Sept. 20

On Monday, September 20, at McGregor Hall on Wayne State University's campus, TRU will present "Transit on the Woodward Corridor: Our Economic Engine."

This will be the second in a series of forums initiated by the 2030 Vision Project, a collaborative endeavor focusing on envisioning a future

for Greater Detroit that represents where the region wants to go rather than where it is currently heading. The program begins at 9 am and runs through 5 pm.

Efficient transit is often noted as critical to the economic growth of regions like ours

This forum will bring together a diverse group of participants and speakers to discuss how transportation mobility and effective transit planning can be a powerful economic

development tool for the Woodward Corridor. A working session, the long-term goal of this event is to develop a series of comprehensive studies focusing on the impact of

transit on the Corridor. Additionally, the presentations and discussions will strive to make the case for the economic sustainability

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President's Message

It is hard to believe this is already September and I have not had an opportunity to address TRU's membership in our newsletter. It has been a busy year so far for regional transportation and for TRU. It seems like we have either been working to convince reluctant leaders why more transit funding is needed, or battling other leaders who are on a mission to take away what funding we have. We opposed our local Detroit transit provider's attempt to get higher fares for service it can't provide, and supported our suburban transit system's record ridership increases. At the same time, we've been conducting research into how to make the service even better.

Much of TRU's activity is accomplished by volunteer effort, and a relatively small cadre of volunteers at that. This summer we have been blessed with an augmented office staff of three students who have helped Executive Director Susan Titus immensely with the ambitious workload. Jana Cephas, a University of Detroit-Mercy student, is our staffer in charge of the September forum (more on that below). Wayne State student Virginia Lingham has been assisting the Riders' Voice committee and conducting research into SMART's operations. Andrea Perkins, a University of Michigan student, just completed her summer research project evaluating how other major cities approach transit development and how it might apply to greater Detroit. Both Virginia and Andrea worked for TRU under an Americorps grant.

TRU needs the continued volunteer help and involvement of its members to keep our mission moving forward. Right now, the TRU webmaster task and the Communications and Riders' Voice committees need more assistance on current projects and in developing new ones. As announced elsewhere in the newsletter, we have lost the able office leadership of Susan Titus as she expands her activities with Wayne State. I am pleased to say that former Board member, Mike Whims, will be handling operations duties on a part-time basis. He will be happy to take your calls regarding volunteer assistance (or any other matter).

One of TRU's biggest events this year is coming up on Sept 20: "Transit on the Woodward Corridor-Our Economic Engine," will be greater Detroit's most up-to-date look at how transit can be an investment tool for socioeconomic revitalization—as it has been in many of our peer cities. Gone are the days of viewing transit as just another subsidized service. In places like Houston, Atlanta and Washington DC, they see transit as a key ingredient in regional vitality. Why not in Detroit?

It's going to be a great forum, and I look forward to seeing you there! We are also in need of sponsors and contributions for the event—please call Jana Cephas at the office.

Bob Prud'homme



TRU Members Preview New DDOT Transit Center at Spring Member Meeting

By Mike Whims

TRU held its second-quarter member meeting on May 11, 2004 at Hannan House in Detroit. Twenty-four people gathered to enjoy a buffet dinner and conversation before the meeting. President Bob Prud'homme's message to members was one of positive direction for TRU in accomplishing mission-related activities this year, including the "Transit on the Woodward Corridor" forum.

The highlight of the meeting was a presentation by DDOT and the Parsons Brinckerhoff engineering/construction firm on the proposed Downtown Detroit Transit Center. The project has moved forward to completion of schematic drawings and 30% completion of design. Groundbreaking is planned for this fall, with opening of service by the end of 2005. The transit center will be located just west of the Times Square People Mover station and will become DDOT's bus hub to replace the temporary hub at Capital Park. The plan is to incorporate space for DDOT, SMART and Transit Windsor at the facility, with an indoor waiting area and covered outdoor bus shed.

The project is not without controversy, as evidenced by issues brought out by meeting attendees. The air quality from diesel exhaust emissions of multiple buses in the covered bus shed was voiced by TRU as a potential concern deserving further analysis. Lack of a planned connection to the People Mover struck the meeting attendees to be a major oversight for true intermodal connectivity. Of greatest concern to TRU is the possibility that east side and Woodward buses will not be routed through the new transit center, forcing either a shuttle bus connection or a several-block walking trek in order to transfer to and from these routes.

After the meeting adjourned, the project representatives remained to discuss these issues in more detail with several TRU members. TRU thanks Ruby Dixon, DDOT Project Manager; Sharmila Mukherjee, Parsons Brinckerhoff Senior Transportation Planner; and John Roberts, Parsons Brinckerhoff Supervising Architect, for accepting our invitation to speak. Thanks also to the members who attended and voiced their concerns. This is how progress is made.

The next quarterly member meeting will be held as part of the regional forum on Woodward Corridor Transit in September. (See story, page 1 in this issue).

Riders' Voice Update

The Riders' Voice Committee continues to work hard to improve bus service for riders.

RIDE THE BUS WEEK – OCTOBER 24-30

TRU is encouraging all community leaders in greater Detroit as well as the public to ride the bus during the week of October 24-30. Riding the bus is the best education for our leaders about what works and what needs to change. We hope that encouraging our community leaders to ride the bus will cause them to pay more attention to our region's transit needs.

PROPOSED FARE INCREASE FOR RIDERS WITH DISABILITIES DEFEATED

During his April budget address, Mayor Kilpatrick announced that DDOT would start charging riders with disabilities 75 cents. TRU fought this fare increase because DDOT is not complying with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). Many of DDOT's wheelchair lifts do not work, and it does not provide information about bus service in braille, tapes, or other alternative to print media as required by law. TRU members testified at three budget hearings and picketed in front of the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center. After hearing testimony from TRU and other groups, City Council dropped the fare increase from the City's budget. Although Mayor Kilpatrick vetoed much of Council's budget, he did not veto Council's recommendation to allow disabled riders to ride for free. A big thank you to everyone who helped in this effort.

RIDERS ENDURING POOR SERVICE AS DDOT UNDERGOES NUMEROUS CHANGES

Since the beginning of April, DDOT's bus service has been unusually poor. At this time, DDOT stopped allowing its mechanics to work overtime, and Mayor Kilpatrick announced at his budget address that the City would layoff some of its mechanics. City Council voted to eliminate the layoffs, and Mayor Kilpatrick vetoed the Council's recommendations. In the end, Council did not override the veto.

On June 28, Local 312, AFSCME (the union that represents the mechanics and bus cleaners) sought to enjoin the layoffs arguing that DDOT repudiated the collective bargaining agreement when it failed to give 30 days notice of and bargain with Local 312 about the layoffs. Wayne County Circuit Judge Robert J. Colombo, Jr. issued an injunction preventing the layoffs of the mechanics and bus cleaners from taking place. On July 28, Judge Colombo lifted the injunction. However, Judge Colombo directed both parties to submit to him any evidence of illegal subcontracting during the next 60 days. On July 31, the City laid off over 100 mechanics and bus cleaners. In mid-August, Local 312, AFSCME and DDOT reached an agreement providing that 30 bus cleaners would be rehired. Since the agreement between the City and Local 312, bus service has been improving.

DDOT is in the process of improving its mechanical operations to focus on preventive maintenance. We hope that DDOT is successful. However, we need DDOT and its employees to work together and ensure that the riders are not left waiting.

TRANSIT MAP ON THE WAY, SAYS DDOT

DDOT now says that its comprehensive transit map, which will include all DDOT routes, SMART routes up to 14 Mile Road, the Transit Windsor route through downtown Detroit, and the People Mover route, will be available by the end of September 2004. TRU has had input in the map's creation and looks forward to using the new map.

CHANGES TO NEW TRANSIT CENTER

DDOT has indicated that all downtown routes will be serviced by the downtown transit center that is scheduled to open Sept 2005.

*Please join us at our monthly Riders' Voice meetings.
See calendar at right.*

Mark Your Calendar!

All meeting locations are in Detroit unless otherwise indicated.

"Transit on the Woodward Corridor: Our Economic Engine" Forum

Monday, September 20, 9 am-5 pm
McGregor Hall
Wayne State University

Ride the Bus Week

—Community Leaders encouraged to use transit in Greater Detroit during the week of October 24-30

TRU Riders' Voice

Sept 13, October 18, Nov 15,
Dec date TBA, 6 pm
TRU HQ, 1150 Griswold, Suite 2800

TRU Board

October 12, December 14, 7 pm
TRU HQ, 1150 Griswold, Suite 2800

DARTA

September 24, October 22,
December 3, 1:00 pm
Chamber of Commerce,
1 Woodward Ave., 19th Floor

DDOT Local Advisory Council

September 21, November 16, 10 am
DDOT HQ, 1301 East Warren

DDOT Advisory Commission

3rd Wednesday of each month, 10 am
DDOT HQ, 1301 East Warren

DDOT Customer Comment

3rd Thursday of each month, 5 pm
DDOT HQ, 1301 East Warren

SMART Board of Directors

4th Thursday of each month, 2 pm
SMART HQ, 660 Woodward,
9th Floor
Note: Call SMART at 313-962-5515 or check its website at www.smartbus.org in advance, as these meetings are occasionally canceled.

SMART Elderly and Handicapped

September 17, December 17,
10:00 am
SMART HQ, 660 Woodward,
9th Floor

TRU Board Notes

TRU's Board of Directors wants to keep TRU members advised of its activities. The following resolutions were made at the June and August meetings.

- In June, the TRU Board resolved that in future communications, TRU will utilize the term "Greater Detroit," rather than "Southeastern Michigan" when discussing its mission, in order to better define the sense of place that TRU's mission work is performed, and to reflect the potential of greatness that TRU believes is possible for the region.
- TRU will become a founding member in a new statewide transit coalition called "Let's Get Moving" which will educate state leaders on the importance of transit funding. A maximum contribution of \$200 was approved for 2004.
- The TRU Board is supporting a plan initiated by the Michigan Association of Railroad Passenger to connect Amtrak service with VIA rail service by means of a bus connection between Detroit and Windsor to be provided by Transit Windsor. It was agreed that this service would improve transportation access and mobility for metro Detroit.
- Treasurer's report: As of July 31, TRU had year-to-date income of \$39,025.08 and expenses of \$33,465.95. It's balance sheet reports total assets of \$53,358.82 and total liabilities of \$0.00.

If you have an item that you would like placed on the Board's meeting agenda, please get in touch with the TRU office.



Bikes on Board SMART Buses

By Virginia Lingham

After years of planning, SMART began its "Bikes on Board" program in late May, placing bike racks on the front ends of its entire fleet of buses.

Combining bicycles and public transportation is a great alternative to the car commute. A quick bike ride to and from the bus can now replace a long walk to places buses don't go. Cutting down on time spent getting to and from transit routes is an important factor in making public transit more appealing and user-friendly. Traveling around the city by bicycle is not only fun (and good exercise) but it also means being able to get quickly to work, school or play without having to worry about parking, or having to pay for it. And when

Combining bicycles and public transportation is a great alternative to the car commute.

heading out to parks and trails, putting your bike on the bus means no struggling to fit it into the car.

The racks are simple and quick to use.

It takes approximately 15 seconds to secure the bike, which assures minimal delay to SMART service. A video demonstrating how to mount and unmount bikes from the bus can be viewed on SMART's website (www.smartbus.org).

Funding for the "Bikes on Board" program comes from an FTA grant. SMART joins over 400 other transit authorities that have put bike racks on their buses. Greater Detroit has a new transit resource thanks to the "Bikes on Board" program.

TRU Honors Jack Schramm

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about working through later books and publications, and ended with a prophetic statement from Detroit's 1940's Rapid Transit Commission, which foresaw our over reliance on the automobile and how it would negatively affect Detroit's quality of life. Former colleagues of Mr. Schramm, TRU members and other attendees stepped forward to add anecdotes and offer Mr. Schramm praise for his contributions to transit in Detroit, culminating with artist Paul Adams' presentation to Jack of an original painting.

To top the evening off, attendees were treated to a raffle of very special transit related items, including DSR fare-box collection vaults, signed copies of Jack Schramm's When Eastern Michigan

Rode the Rails, DSR buttons, SMART-inspired designer bags, and a copy of 722 Miles, the Building of the NYC Subway. Thanks to Ken Schramm, the Michigan Transit Museum and others who supported the event with donations of these items.

Maybe at a future Jack Schramm Award, TRU will raffle off a book about the building of Detroit's subway. We can only hope!!!

In the meantime, TRU wishes to thank everyone who worked so hard on the inaugural Jack Edward Schramm Award Benefit including Jana Cephas, Susan Titus, Virginia Lingham, Andrea Perkins, as well as our generous sponsors who made the event possible.

TRU Presents Transit Forum Sept. 20

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of transit while stressing the need for effective planning.

Exploring the economic boosts that follow smart growth and the importance of integrating social and ecological concerns within the planning process, efficient transit is often noted as critical to the economic growth of regions like ours that are stagnated by sprawl and inefficient planning. The implementation of light rail and its complements, like transit-oriented development and community centered urban villages, is a key factor in developing Detroit as a “cool city” and bringing economic health and community stability to the entire Greater Detroit region.

June Manning Thomas, Co-Director of the Urban Collaborators Program at Michigan State University, will deliver the morning keynote address on “The Role of Transportation in Detroit Development.” Douglas Kelbaugh, Dean of the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan, will deliver the closing keynote address on “Alternatives to Sprawl: Transit-Oriented Development.”

Morning events include participatory “breakout” sessions on “Planning, Technology and Efficiency,” and “The Triple Bottom Line.” Afternoon events include a panel discussion on “Visions for Woodward: Making the Business Case for Light Rail in Detroit.” Transit videos will be screened at lunchtime.



Could commuting in Greater Detroit someday look like this?

Attendance fees are \$40 for regular admission, \$25 for students, and \$10 for TRU members

See the full program schedule, as well as registration information, directions, maps and more online at www.detroittransit.org

Please join us in this important discussion of our region’s future and how we can make it happen.

TRU needs your involvement – become a member today!

TRU is committed to continuing the hard work necessary to build an on-time, efficient and affordable transportation system in Southeast Michigan. As a non-profit organization, we rely on membership and community support. Much of our work is done by dedicated volunteers who get paid with a slice of pizza. TRU needs you – if you are not a member, please join now! If you are a member, encourage your friends, family and colleagues to join. **Together, we can move our region forward!**

Yes! I want to become a TRU member:

\$20 Standard \$30 Family \$5 Student/Low Income \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

DAYTIME PHONE (_____) _____ EVENING PHONE (_____) _____

FAX (_____) _____ EMAIL _____

AFFILIATION (COMPANY/ORGANIZATION) _____

Yes, I would like to volunteer my time. Please contact me.

Special skill(s) you can contribute _____

Please make your check payable to **TRU** and mail to **1150 Griswold, Suite 2800, Detroit, MI 48226**

TRU is a 501(c)(3), so your membership donation is tax deductible.

Director Changes at TRU

Mike Whims, who has served as TRU's Secretary for the past three and a half years has left that position to become TRU's new part-time Operations Director. He will be carrying out even more of TRU's administrative duties than he has been doing heretofore. In accordance with TRU's bylaws, Mike will be stepping down from the TRU Board. Thanks for your tremendous dedication and contributions to TRU, Mike!

Susan Titus is stepping down as TRU's Interim Executive Director to devote herself full time to her multiple positions at Wayne State's School of Social Work. Susan will remain available on a part-time basis to help out with some the fundraising initiatives that are underway. Thanks for all of your hard work, Susan!



Its growing streetcar system helps make Portland, Oregon one of the nation's most thriving and liveable cities. Greater Detroit can learn from the success stories of cities like Portland that have embraced transit!



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