



# CAP CON 2026

# **What to Do When You're Expecting...New Transportation Revenue**

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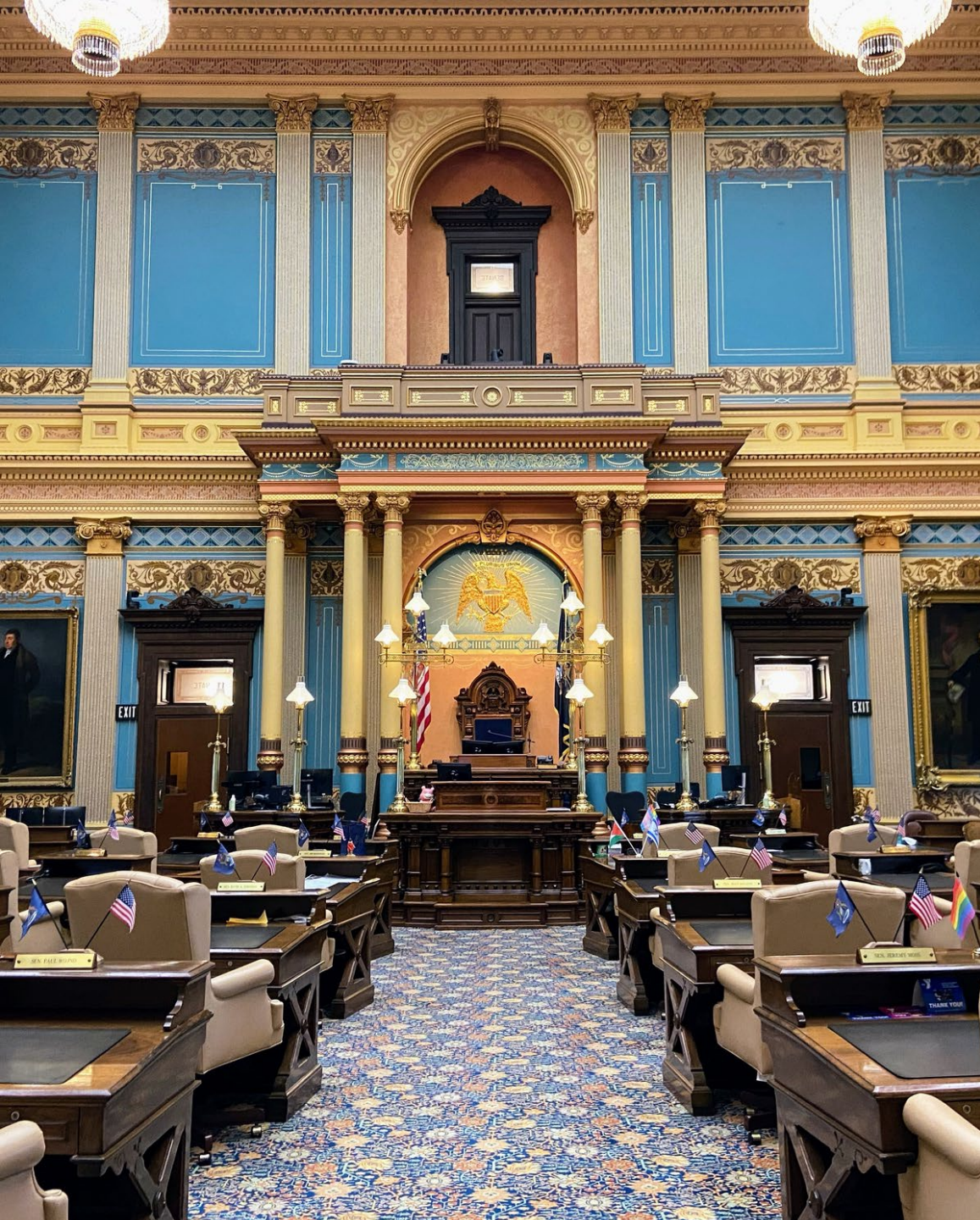
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**Melanie Piana, Program Director, Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan**



## Context: Michigan's 2026 budget

- +\$1.5 B +/- in new transport funding in 2026, increasing in future years
- \$1.1 B to new Neighborhood Roads Fund
- Significantly greater ratio of funding to local agencies than if all funding had gone through standard Act 51 formula



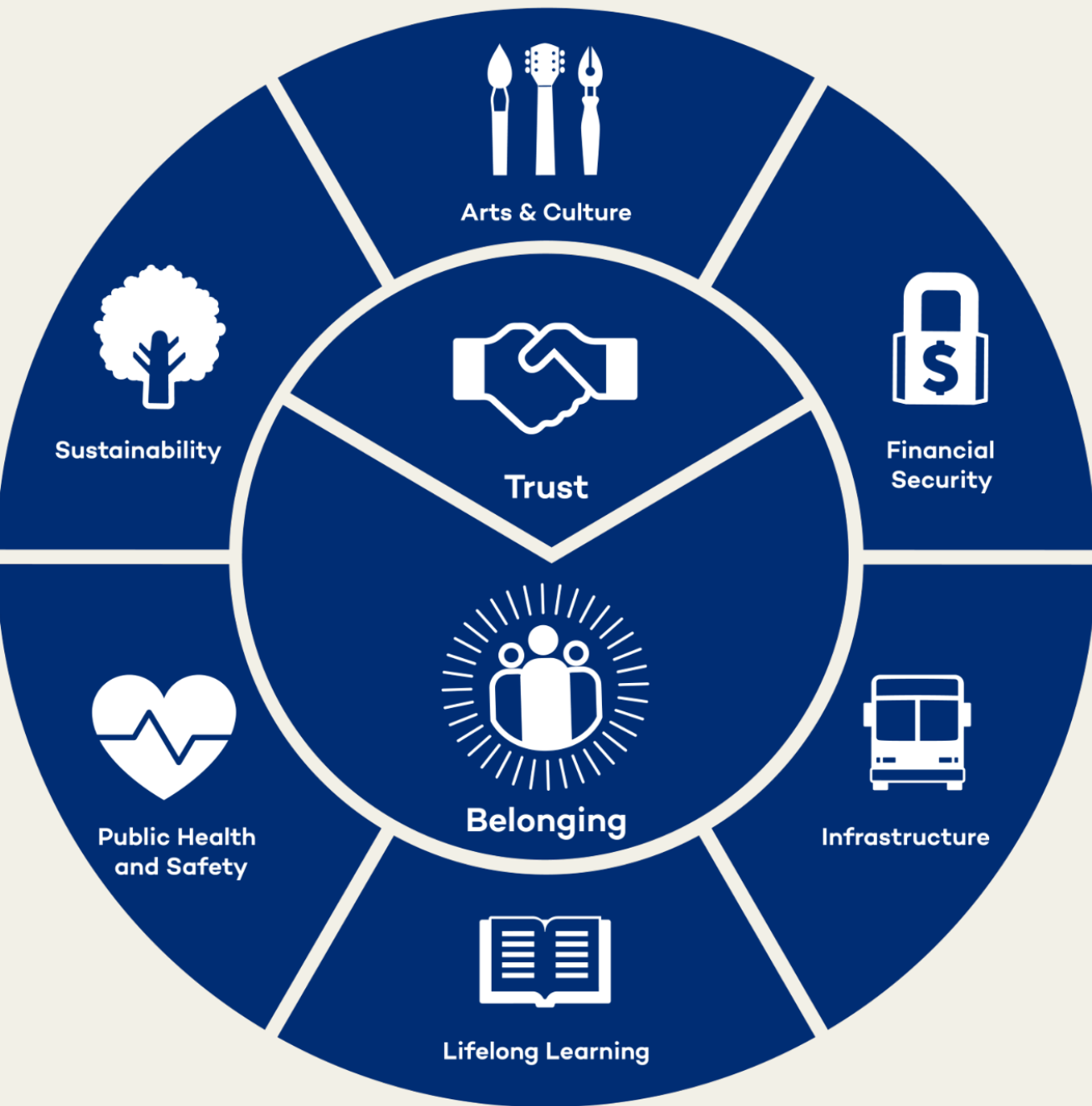
# Neighborhood Roads Fund

- +\$100 m to local bridges
- +\$40 m to rail grade separation
- \$100 m to public transport
  - +\$35 m to CTF
  - \$65 m to new Infrastructure Projects Authority Fund
- Remaining:
  - 20% to STF
  - 65% of 80% to Road Commissions
  - 35% of 80% to City/Village, est. \$266m in 2027.



# Uncertainty?

- How much new funding actually comes in vs estimates? (Add legal challenges for extra uncertainty.)
- Timing - dip in initial 2026 disbursement due to removal of previous tax hitting books before new revenues recorded.
- How does inflation affect both revenue (reduced consumer spending) and buying power (increased construction costs)?



# Get ready by setting goals, gathering partners

(you knew I was going here)

- Fixing the damn roads is more than just pavement condition!
- Our ROWs are the biggest piece of public space in our communities—we need to make the best possible use of them!
- Consider how street projects can serve multiple needs at once, and how we can convene additional partners to advance those goals.

# Streets as...

- *Complete Streets* that provide for the safe transportation needs of all travelers—people driving, walking, biking, riding transit, using wheelchairs, etc.
- Sites for *Green Infrastructure* that can support stormwater management, limit summer heat, add beautification.
- *Places* that support neighborly interactions, community gatherings and festivals, and main street businesses.



Photo: Downtown Midland



Photo: Google Maps



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C. KING & CO. COFFEE

WOOD BAKING

STOP WHEN RED

BUS-12 BUS

Photo: Google Maps



31B-A  
an Ave

EAST  
94 12  
Detroit  
RAMP ONLY

EAST  
94  
12

Photo: Concentrate Media



Photo: Concentrate Media



# What To Do When You Are Expecting: Spending New Transportation Revenue Wisely

March 11, 2026

Brad Strader, AICP, PTP  
Cincar Consulting Group (C2G)

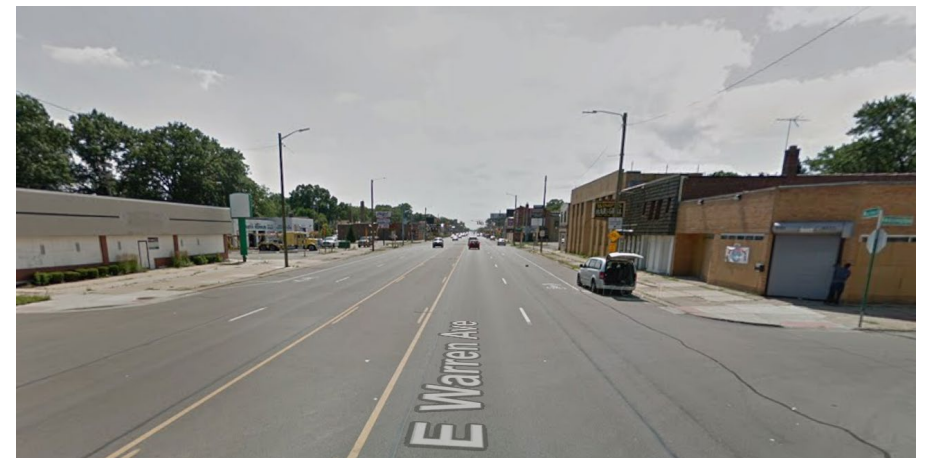
# Why Transportation is Important

- Streets are often 20% of the land in a community
- Streets and ROW design influence the **character and economy**
- One size does not fit every street – flexible standards, be **transformative**
- **Be Visionary** – street redesign only happens once per generation

**NOW** – E Warren Ave (Detroit, MI)

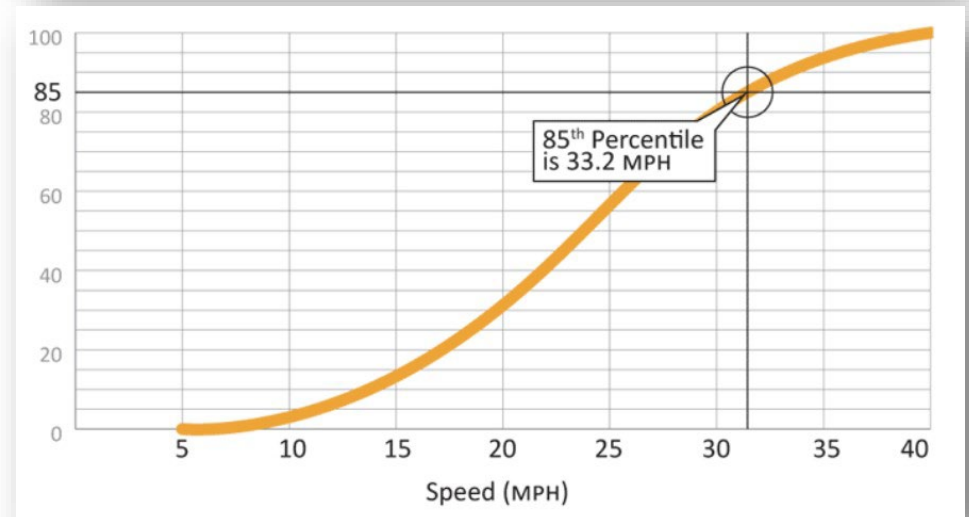
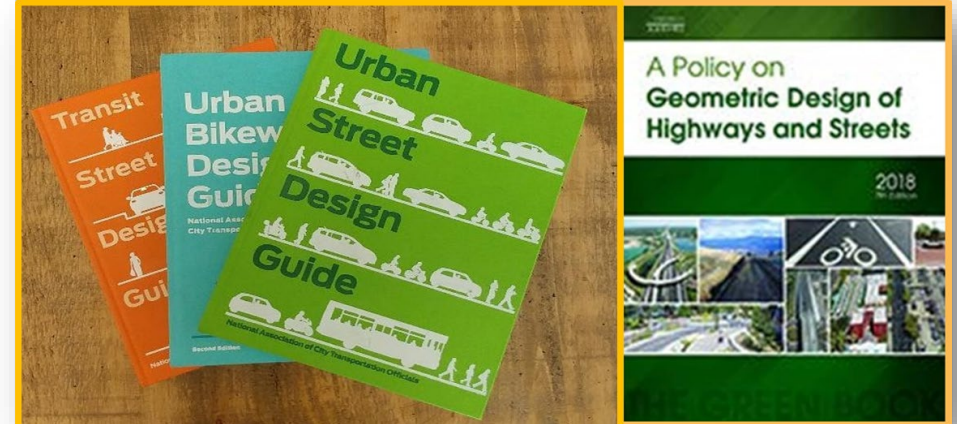


**BEFORE** – E Warren Ave (Detroit, MI)



# Understanding Transportation Language

- **Act 51** – Michigan’s street funding program (major and minor streets)
- Auto **Level of Service** (A-D) vs Multimodal Quality or Comfort
- Computer Models to test alternatives (Synchro, Travel Demand)
- Land Uses and Street Design influence speeds (**85<sup>th</sup>/50<sup>th</sup> percentile**)
- **Street design** is not in the zoning ordinance
- **Complete Streets** is a newer way to look at transportation solutions (City Resolution?)



# Selection of Projects and Priorities

- City Policies/Plans – Master Plans, Downtown, Corridor Plans, Non-Motorized, CIP projects
- MPO's/Regional, transit agency Long Range Transportation Plans
- Crash, Volume, Conditions Data
- Public Input
- "Safe Streets for All", MDOT Road Safety Audits

**How can your transportation projects contribute to Creative Placemaking?**



# Project Design: Street Design Toolkit

- MDOT/SEMCOG Easy-to-Use Web-based Street Design Toolkit



Welcome to the Multimodal Tool! Complete streets are a focal point for Southeast Michigan communities as they strive to develop transportation networks that are safe, convenient, and affordable for people of all ages and abilities. Use this tool to test complete street designs and understand how they serve people walking, biking, driving, riding transit, and moving freight. Take the tour to learn more, or launch the app to get started!

Visit <https://www.semcog.org/mmtool> for more information.

TAKE THE TOUR →

LAUNCH APP →

SETUP PROJECT  
MANUALLY →

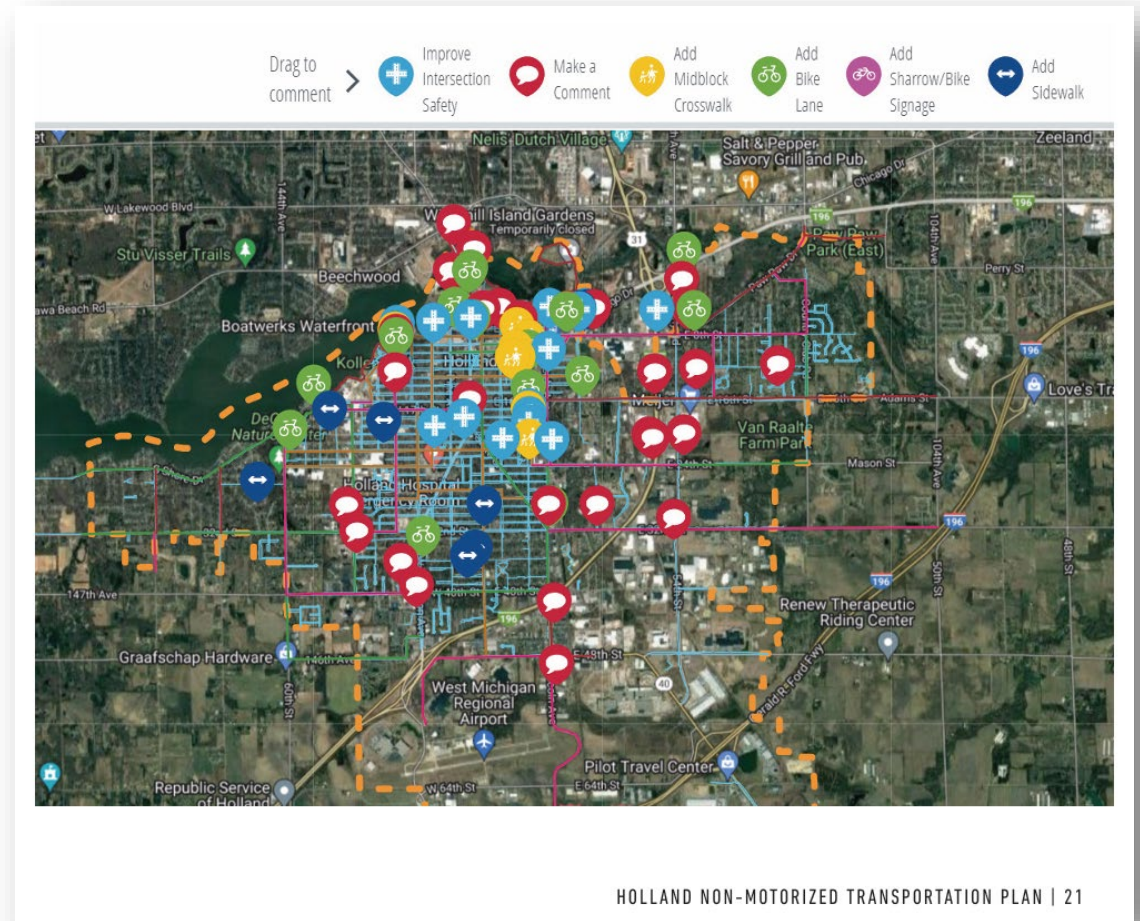
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<https://multimodal.semcog.org/>

# Who to Involve

- Who makes planning and design decisions in your city or village?
  - Who owns the street? (MDOT, County, City, shared)
  - **Funders:** Grants, MPO, MDOT, Federal Funds, Private
  - Consider **Long Term Maintenance**
  - Input from your Planner, Economic Development, Engineer, PDW
- Public and stakeholders



# Engineers and Planners have different perspectives

## Traffic Engineer

1. Auto focused vs “Plangineer”
2. Rely on engineering standards
3. Long outlook, 30 yr traffic forecasts
4. Can be innovative, “Design Exceptions”
5. Focus on Safety

## Planner

1. Less focused on autos
2. Seek consensus
3. Plans tend to change
4. Promote Flexible Standards
5. Focus on Safety



From this....

Vision  
vs  
Reality



...To this

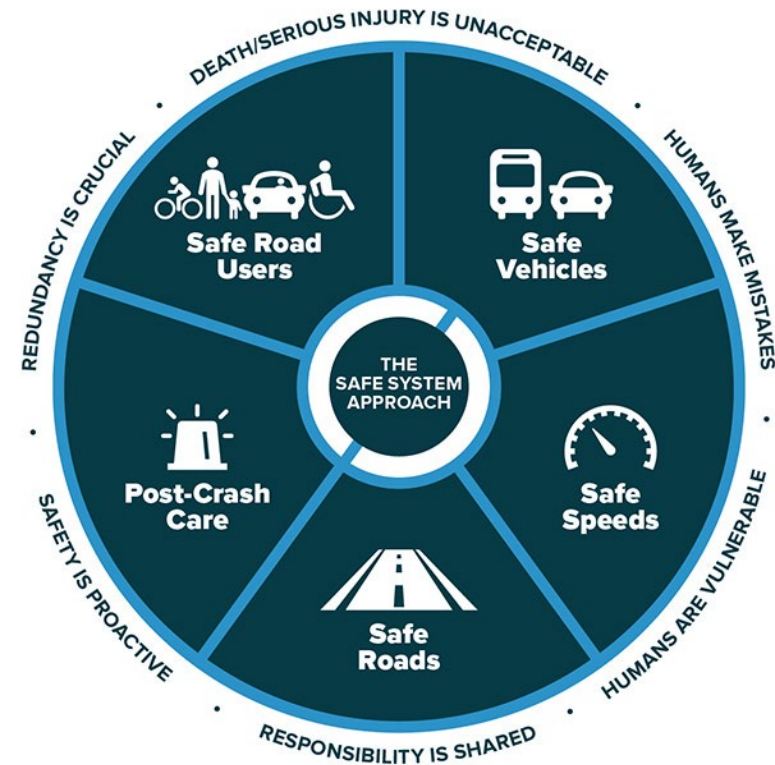
# Transportation Leaders and Innovators



Where do you fit? Where do you want to be?

# TIPS

- Safety is very important
- Consider all types of users
- Understand the engineering metrics
- Improvements can be large or small
- Pilot projects can temporarily test ideas
- Don't say "Road Diet"



Source: FHWA.



# **MML Capital Conference**

## **Delivering Regional Value: RTA's Role**

**Wednesday, March 11, 2026**



**Regional Transit Authority  
Of Southeast Michigan**

# What is the RTA?

## PURPOSE

Improve transit in the four-county SE Michigan region through coordination, funding, and strategic implementation

## MISSION

Create new and better ways to move and connect people

## VISION

A Southeast Michigan where advances in transit create greater prosperity for all



# Southeast Michigan Region

## Macomb, Oakland, Wayne & Washtenaw Counties

Our 4 County footprint includes **4 million people** and over **2 million jobs**. At almost **3,000 square miles**, it spans urban centers, major suburban job centers, rural townships, and a large university community.

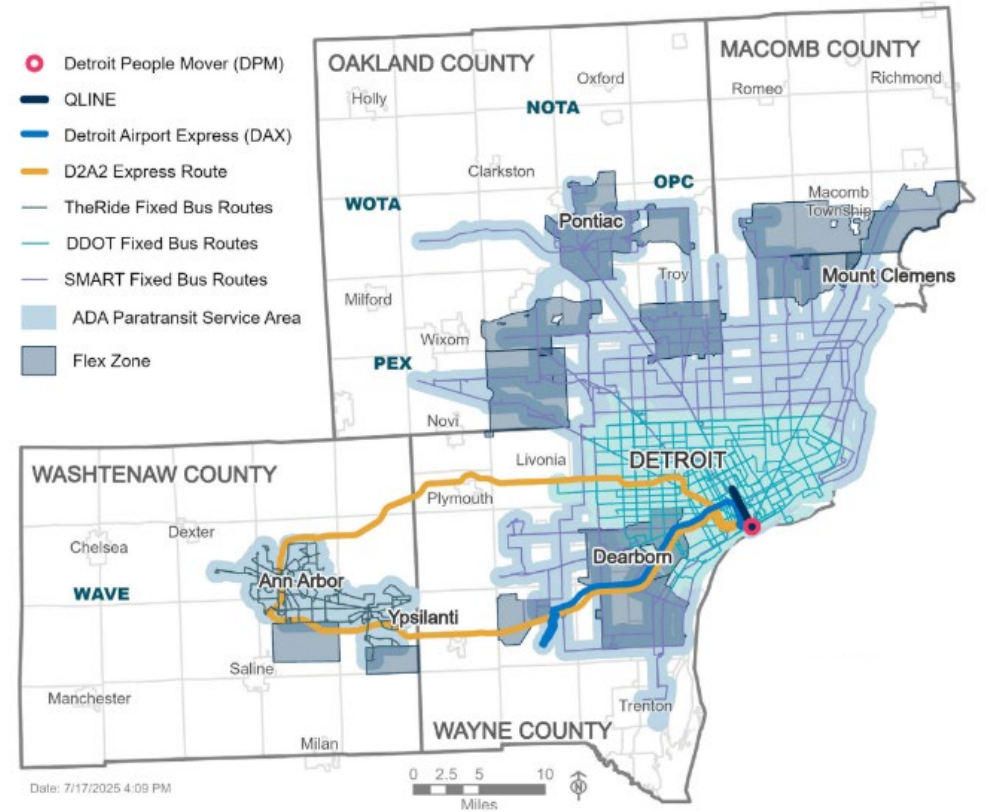
**That scale and complexity make regional alignment essential.**

**29.7 MILLION**

rides provided by the  
**5 largest** transit providers



**97%** SAW THE BENEFIT OF IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSIT



# RTA Operates the QLINE Streetcar in Detroit

## 3.3 Miles on Woodward Avenue

- 12 Stations
- Free to Ride
- Save \$\$ on parking



**1+ MILLION  
RIDERS IN 2025**

**\$10 BILLION**

in **economic development**  
from QLINE investment



# **RTA's Role in the Region**

- 1. Strategic Regional Implementation**
- 2. Regional Coordination**
- 3. Leveraging State and Federal Funding**

# Strategic Regional Implementation

## We lead programs and services with regional benefit

- D2A2 – Detroit to Ann Arbor express bus
- DAX – Detroit to Airport express bus
- QLINE – Streetcar in the heart of the region
- Access to Transit – safety & access improvements at transit stops



**106,000+ RIDERS**

**+15,000 from 2024**



**57,000+ RIDERS**

**+25% from 2024**

# Regional Coordination

Formal and informal coordination has led to success!

- Transit App
- Corridors/SMART FAST bus
- SMART/DDOT Fare Alignment
- Mobility Management

myride2



Leadership from RTA, DDOT, SMART, TheRide and MDOT at the launch event of Transit app Royale, thanks to a grant from the Michigan Department of Transportation.



rta

# Leveraging State and Federal Funding

**We have worked hard to maximize funding opportunities.**

- Federal Formula and Discretionary Funding
- Support for Local Initiatives
- Federal Funding for Services for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

**\$11M distributed to 39 community providers and non-profits.**



*People's Express*



# State Evolves Approach to Transit

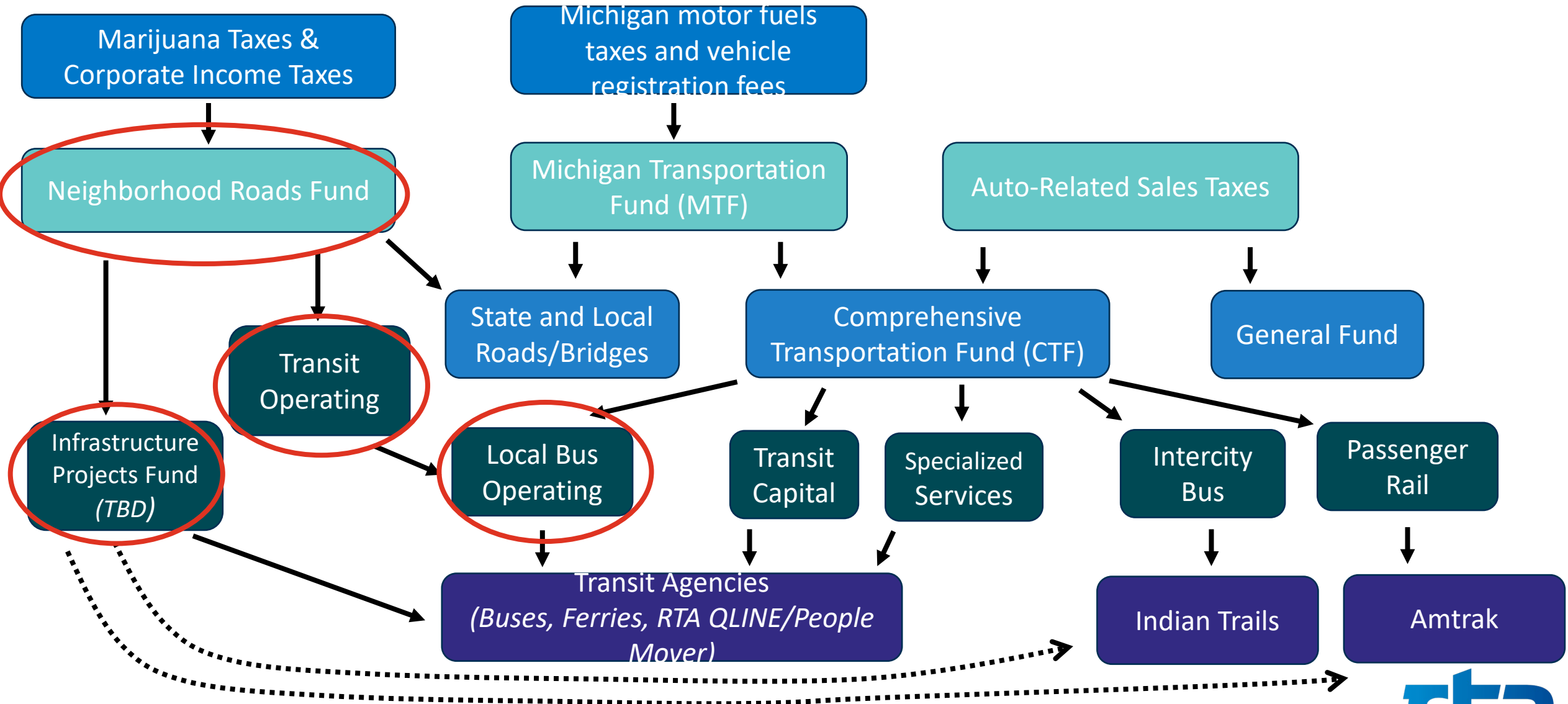
## Transit Caucus

- Bipartisan Approach to Addressing Statewide Transit Needs
- Enabled Wayne County to remove opt-outs

## Statewide Transit Plan

- MDOT inventory of what's available in statewide public mobility services, the gap, how to fill the gap (mobility managers, funding, policies, pilots)
- Cities can engage in giving input to the plan when the time is right

# Transit Funding Is Complex / Confusing



# State Progress on Approach to Transit

## Transformational Transit Projects

Neighborhood Roads Fund

Infrastructure Project Fund (IPF) - **\$100M in Transit Capital**

- Allows MDOT to fund public transit infrastructure
- Prioritizes long-term, sustainable funding to existing transit services and launches new initiatives.
- Prioritized for transit and passenger rail projects

# How To Align Your Community

Land Use Planning **NEEDS** Transportation Planning

New Housing Projects = Increase in Transit Service Demand

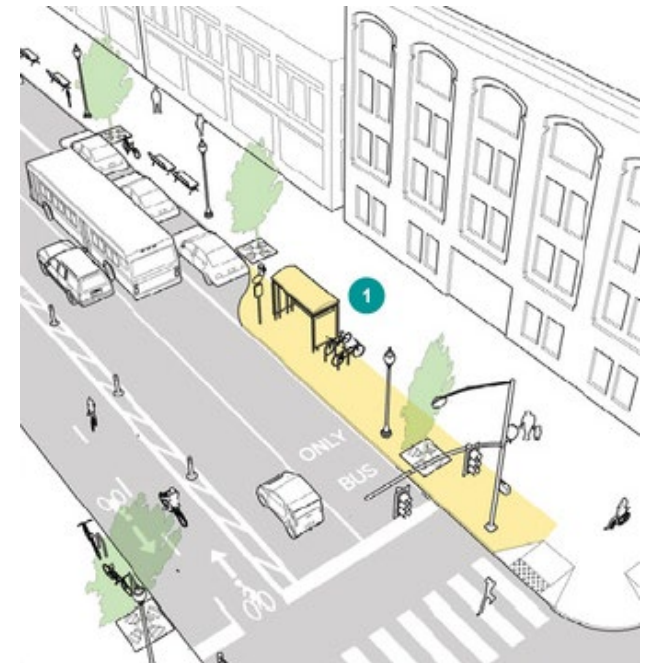
- Rural & Suburban Transit Providers
- Seniors, Veterans & People with Disabilities.

Communities need to plan for human-scale experiences

- Street Design
- Sidewalks, Curbs, Bike Lanes, Bus Stops

Communities Positioning for Competitive Grants

- Cross-Border Collaborations
- Plans & Zoning Aligned
- Complete Street /Transportation Plans
- Early Adopters – being ready



Credit: NACTO



**Let's Connect:**  
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**Regional Transit Authority  
Of Southeast Michigan**