

SEMCOG REGIONAL UPDATE

A BIWEEKLY PUBLICATION OF SEMCOG, THE SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Executive Committee meets September 26

SEMCOG's Executive Committee will meet at 1 p.m. on Friday, September 26, 2008, in SEMCOG's downtown Detroit office. Action items to be considered by the committee are as follows:

- approving amendment of two new road projects (and associated funding transfers) and two coordinated human services transportation plans to the *2030 Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan (RTP)*;
- establishing a guide for spending transportation funds as a part of *Direction2035* — the region's next long-range regional transportation plan; and
- approving the Regional Clearinghouse Review Committee's recommendation to establish a task force to evaluate and recommend revision to SEMCOG's policies related to infrastructure. The purpose is to evaluate and revise policy in light of the region's slower growth and increased emphasis on issues such as asset management.

At the meeting, Susan Mortel, Director of the Bureau of Transportation Planning at the Michigan Department of Transportation, will be the featured speaker, discussing the current state transportation funding situation and the impacts this will have on state and local governments. *Contact: Kathleen Lomako, SEMCOG Deputy Executive Director.*

Three SEMCOG Member Outreach workshops scheduled for October

SEMCOG will hold three Member Outreach Workshops — at three different locations in Southeast Michigan — in October. At the workshops, SEMCOG members will be able to join their fellow local government officials to discuss important issues affecting Southeast Michigan's communities. Members will also have the opportunity to share their ideas. The workshops will be held on the followings days at the following locations. **SEMCOG members: Please note that the white postcard you received has incorrect locations listed. The list here is correct. Watch your mail for a corrected green postcard.**

- Wednesday, October 8, 6-7:30 p.m., Sheraton Detroit Novi, 21111 Haggerty Rd., Novi, MI;
- Tuesday, October 14, 8-9:30 a.m., Flat Rock Community Center/Stone Creek Banquet Hall, One Maguire St., Flat Rock, MI; and

- Wednesday, October 15, 6-7:30 p.m., ConCorde Inn, 44315 Gratiot Ave., Clinton Township, MI.

Unlike previous Outreach workshops, these workshops are not geographically focused. Members are encouraged to choose the time and location that best works for them. For more information and to register, go to the Members page at www.semco.org. *Contact: Raymonia Dale, SEMCOG Executive Assistant.*

SEMCOG's new Legislative Policy Platform Task Force meets on October 8

SEMCOG will convene a Legislative Policy Platform Task Force to develop its 2009-2010 state and federal legislative platform. The first meeting is October 8, 2008, at 11 a.m. at SEMCOG.

The task force is chaired by Dearborn Mayor John O'Reilly, Jr. Task force membership includes the following local leaders: Alan Anderson, Trustee, Wayne County Community College District; Bryan Barnett, Mayor, Rochester Hills; Mary Blackmon, Treasurer, Wayne RESA; Robert Cannon, Supervisor, Clinton Township; Philip Cavanagh, Commissioner, Wayne County; Gretchen Driskell, Mayor, Saline; R. LaMar Frederick, Commissioner, Monroe County; Robert Hison, Mayor, St. Clair Shores; Kathleen LaPointe, Mayor Pro Tem, Gibraltar; Max McCullough, Vice President, Macomb ISD Board of Education; James McDevitt, Supervisor, Frenchtown Township; William Roberts, Mayor, Walled Lake; John Scott, Commissioner, Oakland County; Michael Sedlak, Clerk, Green Oak Township; Stephen Truman, City Manager, Roseville; Pamela Wall, Vice Chairperson, St. Clair County Board of Commissioners; and William Wild, Mayor, Westland. The task force is scheduled to meet two to three times, concluding with Executive Committee approval of this platform on December 12. *Contact: Amy Malmer, SEMCOG Membership Manager.*

Traffic down in Southeast Michigan

From 2002-2007, the seven-county Southeast Michigan region has seen a 4.5-6.5 percent decrease in weekday traffic volume. These results are based on an analysis of about 3,000 locations regionwide, through SEMCOG's traffic count program. Weekend or discretionary travel is down another two percent. Although some areas in the region have seen an increase in traffic, the magnitude of decrease is greater. Factors

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contributing to the decrease in travel include the economy, high gas prices, and changes in travel choice.

Analyses by national agencies (Federal Highway Administration) and state agencies (Michigan Department of Transportation) also show a decrease in travel at both the national and state levels.

On a positive note, less travel results in overall reductions in fuel consumption, reduced traffic congestion and wear-and-tear on roads, and improved air quality. There are, however, other consequences of these travel decreases that directly impact Michigan roads. Decreases in travel mean that less gas is purchased. If less gas is purchased, then there is less state gas tax money going into the Michigan Transportation Fund, which funds road improvements. In addition to the downward traffic trend, other factors such as improved fuel efficiency, alternative fuels, and hybrid vehicles also contribute to lower gas-tax revenues.

SEMCOG has long been a proponent of finding other options to the gas tax to fund Michigan road improvements. In the short term, we must increase the state gas tax and look for new revenues through state-enabled local taxes and fees. In the long-term, we'll need stable sources of revenue that can efficiently raise enough revenue to address our many urgent transportation needs. SEMCOG is advocating with the Michigan state legislature to address these concerns. *Contact: Carmine Palombo, SEMCOG Director of Transportation.*

DWSD meetings begin this month

The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) will hold the first in a series of four meetings with its suburban wholesale customers on the proposed water and sewer rates for Fiscal Year 2009-2010 on Thursday, September 25, 2008, in the Presentation Room of the Guardian Building (500 Griswold, Detroit 48226). The focus of the meeting is to present the Capital Improvement Program for the DWSD Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Systems. The meeting will be held for water customers at 10 a.m.-noon and for

wastewater customers from 12:30-2:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided at noon. Please contact George Ellenwood at 313-964-9460 or by e-mail at ellenwood@dwsd.org at least two days before the meeting to RSVP for lunch.

Structured similar to previous customer meetings, preliminary budget data will be presented as it becomes available throughout the process, culminating with the proposed rates in advance of the formal public meetings. The next three meetings will be held:

- Thursday, October 23, 2008 (Guardian Building, 500 Griswold, Detroit 48226)
- Thursday, November 20, 2008 (SEMCOG offices)
- Thursday, December 18, 2008 (SEMCOG offices)

Please visit DWSD's Web site — www.dwsd.org, "Wholesale Customer Rate Season Schedule FY 2009-2010" — for the final meeting schedule with times, agendas, and background materials. Proposed rates for 2009-2010 will be in place prior to the public hearing, scheduled for early 2009. *Contact: Angela Riess, SEMCOG Environmental Programs.*

SEMCOG is a regional planning partnership of governmental units serving 4.9 million people in the seven-county region of Southeast Michigan striving to enhance the region's quality of life. *Regional Update* is a publication of SEMCOG, financed through funds from state and federal grants and dues from member communities.

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