

| UTC Project Information | |
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| Project Title | Understanding Public Opinion Regarding Transit in Southeast Michigan (Former title: Understanding and Building Public Opinion Regarding Transit in Southeastern Michigan) |
| University | University of Detroit Mercy Mineta National Transit Research Consortium |
| Principal Investigator | Claudia Bernasconi, M.Arch., M.DES. |
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| Funding Source(s) and Amounts Provided (by each agency or organization) | Research and Innovative Technology Administration University Transportation Centers Program (\$116,884) University of Detroit Mercy (\$41,898) Transportation Riders United (\$75,000) |
| Total Project Cost | \$233,782 |
| Agency ID or Contract Number | DTRT12-G-UTC21 |
| Start and End Dates | December 2013 – April 2015 |
| Brief Description of Research Project | This report presents findings from a study on public opinion regarding transit in Southeast Michigan. The overall goals of this study were to assess the nature of public opinion regarding regional transit and to understand its relation to socio-demographic characteristics, political attitudes and orientations, and geographical characteristics of respondents. Results from the study were interpreted toward the identification of key recommendations for building a positive public opinion regarding transit in future transit initiatives in Southeast Michigan. The project consisted of three phases – Phase 1: a pilot mail survey; Phase 2: an educational effort; and Phase 3: a comprehensive phone and email survey. In the last phase, an ad hoc survey was designed based on the review of past public opinion surveys, local media coverage on public opinion about transit, ¹ and previous educational campaigns. A sample of 799 likely-voters in four counties of Southeast Michigan provided opinions for this project. Results provide insight on how public opinion relates to respondents' socio-demographic, political, and geographical characteristics. In addition, a set of recommendations on how to enhance the success of future campaign initiatives and public opinion efforts for the Metro Detroit region and comparable |

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| | <p>regions is also provided. Key elements for such efforts include public education about transit, clarity about transit funds spending, accountability measures, and transparency of transit plans and decision-making processes. Specific recommendations for campaign messaging for Southeast Michigan are also included in this report.</p> |
| <p>Describe Implementation of Research Outcomes (or why not implemented)</p> | <p>Bernasconi, C., Zhong, X., Hanifin, L., Hong Kong, (2013) Understanding and Building Public Opinion Regarding Transit in Southeast Michigan, Conference Proceedings of the 18th International Conference of the Hong Kong Society of Transportation Studies – Behaviour and Society, Hong Kong 14-16, December, 2013.</p> <p>Bernasconi, Claudia. “Understanding and Building Change in Public Opinion Regarding Transit: Socio-demographic, Political, Geographic Correlates of Public Opinion on Transit.” Presentation at the Environment Design Research Association Conference, New Orleans, LA, May 29, 2014.</p> <p>Bernasconi, C., L.E. Hanifin, X. Zhong, L. Slowick, and M. Owens. “Understanding and Building Change in Public Opinion Regarding Transit.” Presentation at the Citizens Advisory Committee of the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA) Meeting, Detroit, MI, June 23, 2014.</p> <p>Bernasconi, C., L.E. Hanifin, X. Zhong, L. Slowick, and M. Owens. “Understanding and Building Change in Public Opinion Regarding Transit.” Presentation at the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA) Meeting, Detroit, MI, June 18, 2014.</p> <p>Bernasconi, C., L.E. Hanifin, X. Zhong, L. Slowick, and M. Owens. “Understanding and Building Change in Public Opinion Regarding Transit.” Presentation at the Environmental Design Research Association Conference, New Orleans, LA, May 28-31, 2014.</p> <p>Hanifin, L. “Understanding Transit in Our Region in the Context of Our Nation’s Transit.” Presentation at the formation meeting of Students for Transit (a student based transit advocacy organization with representatives from twelve universities in Southeast Michigan), at Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, May 20, 2015.</p> <p>Hanifin, L. “Lessons Learned from Recent Transit Research at the University of Detroit Mercy.” Presentation at the organizational meeting of Educators for Transit (a gathering of university presidents and leaders from</p> |

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| | <p>eighteen universities in SE Michigan and the Regional Transit Authority leadership), at the University of Detroit Mercy, Detroit, MI, April 10, 2015. (This meeting was organized by Dr. Hanifin and hosted by UDM President, Dr. Antoine Garibaldi.)</p> <p>Bernasconi, C., Zhong, X., Hanifin, L., Slowik, L.H., and Owens, M. (2015). Understanding public attitudes towards transit in Southeast Michigan. Presentation to the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA), Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting, August 24, 2015, SEMCOG offices, Detroit, MI.</p> <p>Articles/Interviews: Next City, article "What Detroit's New Transit Authority Can Learn From Atlanta", by Rachel Dovey, November 12, 2015 https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/detroit-new-transit-authority-lessons-atlanta</p> |
| Place Any Photos Here | |
| Impacts/Benefits of Implementation (actual, not anticipated) | |
| Web Links <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports • Project Website | Final report (MNTRC Website): http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1236.html |