

# Public Outreach Meetings



This document contains the results of three public meetings held throughout the SEMCOG region on:

July 21, 2008  
4:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
SEMCOG Offices  
Detroit, Michigan

July 22, 2008  
4:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
Southfield Public Library  
Southfield, Michigan

July 23, 2008  
8:00 a.m. – noon  
Washtenaw Community College  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

## Background

Public input is an important aspect of SEMCOG's **Direction2035** — a long-range transportation plan currently being developed to serve the needs of the region's citizens and businesses by promoting a transportation system that is accessible, safe, and reliable. **Direction2035** will be adopted in March 2010.

SEMCOG held three public meetings in the month of July so citizens could express their opinions regarding the future of Southeast Michigan's transportation system.

SEMCOG has compiled the public input from these meetings and will use it to inform local elected officials representing SEMCOG's member governments how citizens would prioritize future transportation investments. The local elected officials will then use this as part of their decision-making process when they set the transportation priorities for **Direction2035**.

## **What happened at the meetings?**

At these meetings, SEMCOG made a short presentation explaining the role of SEMCOG in the transportation planning process and gave background information about the transportation system and current issues relating to the system.

Second, each person was given an electronic key pad he or she used to take part of the 2008 Regional Transportation Opinion Survey conducted in the spring of 2008. You can see the official results [here](#). The results of the questions asked at the public meetings begin on page 3.

Participants were then directed to browse the six information stations set up around the room, each dedicated to a different transportation component: transit, safety, bridge, nonmotorized, congestion, and pavement. There they learned, in more detail, how the transportation system works. You can view that information [here](#). Those in attendance were encouraged to engage with SEMCOG staff and ask any questions they might have.

Once participants felt they had a chance to learn more about the system and get their questions answered, they spent \$100 in “SEMBucks” on various transportation improvements. This exercise was meant to quantify how the public would spend available transportation dollars. Participants indicated strong support for a particular component by giving it a large amount of money, while those they deemed less important received less. The results of that exercise are on page 18.

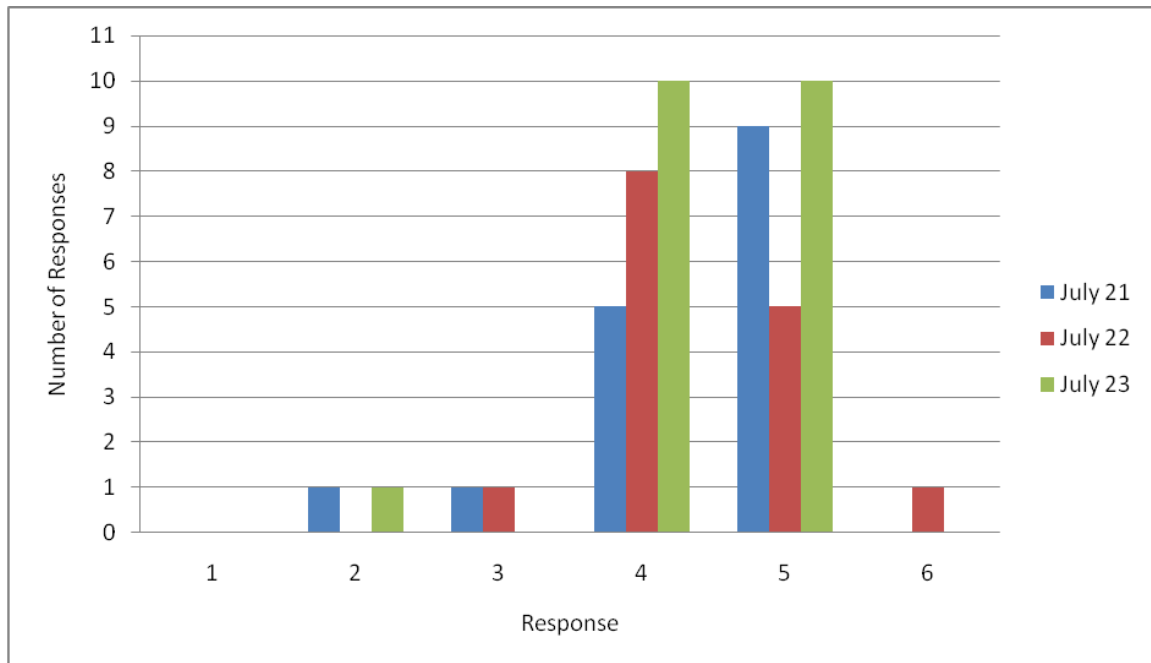
Finally, participants were encouraged to provide verbal or written comments. Page 19 contains both the written and verbal comments SEMCOG received.

## Key Pad Survey Results

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of the region's transportation system in Southeast Michigan (include roads, bridges, public transit, walking, biking, and congestion as part of your rating)?

1. Very Satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Neutral
4. Dissatisfied
5. Very Dissatisfied
6. Don't Know

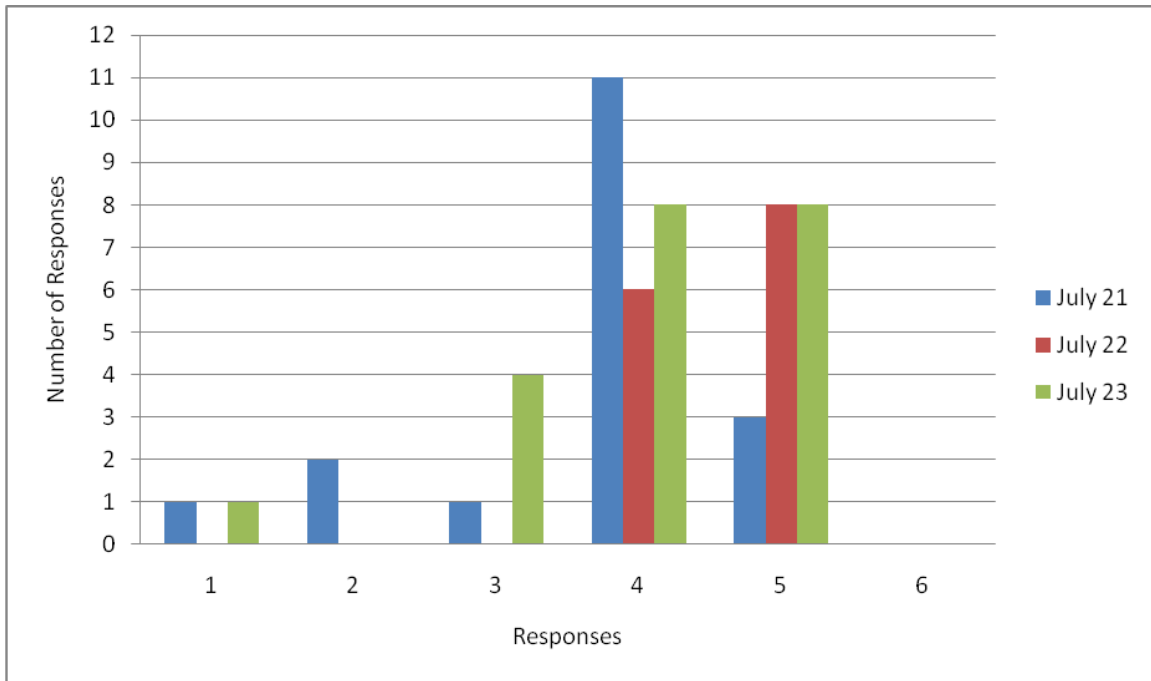
Average Response: 3.4



2. How satisfied are you with the condition of pavement?

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Satisfied
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Dissatisfied
- 5. Very Dissatisfied
- 6. Don't Know

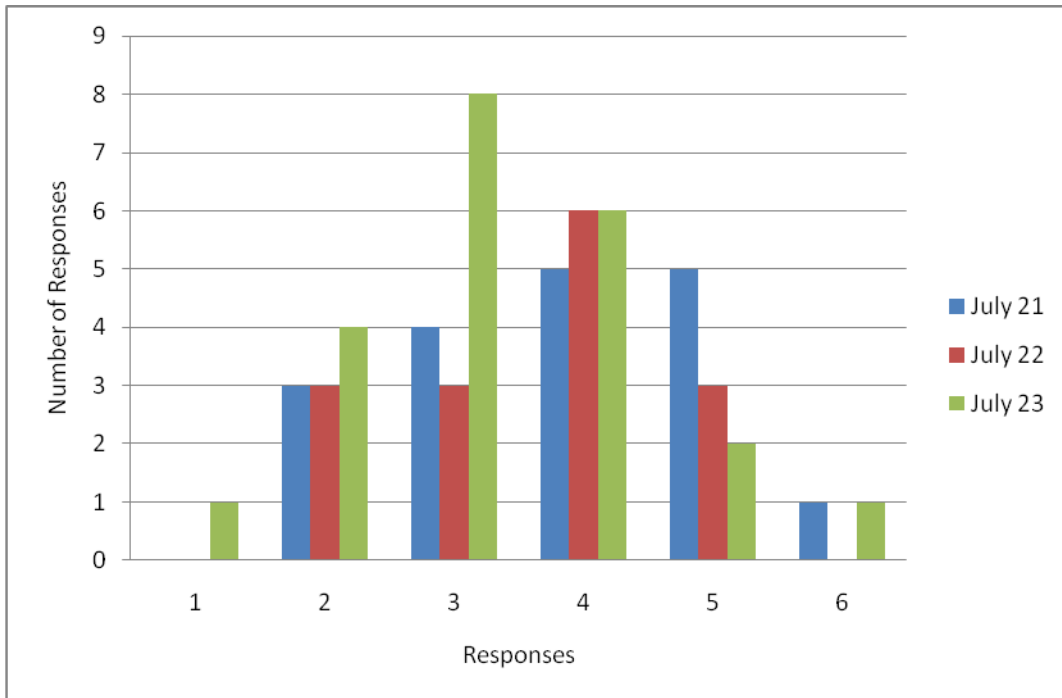
Average Response: 4.8



3. How satisfied are you with efforts to reduce congestion?

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Satisfied
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Dissatisfied
- 5. Very Dissatisfied
- 6. Don't Know

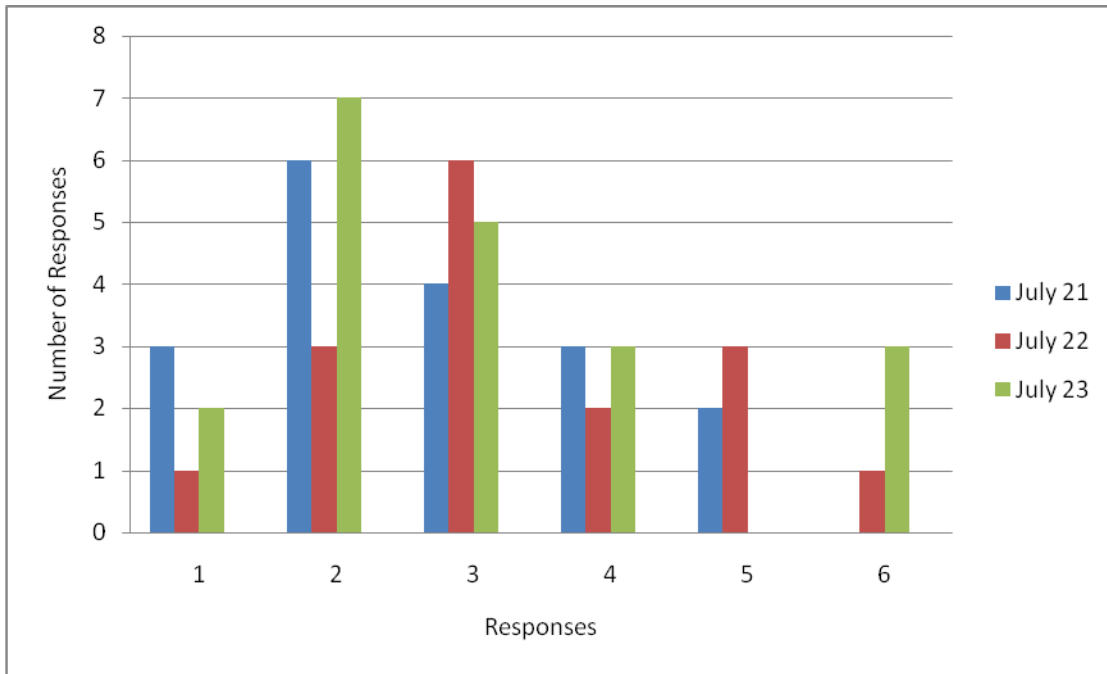
Average Response: 3.5



4. How satisfied are you with efforts to minimize the number of traffic crashes?

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Satisfied
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Dissatisfied
- 5. Very Dissatisfied
- 6. Don't Know

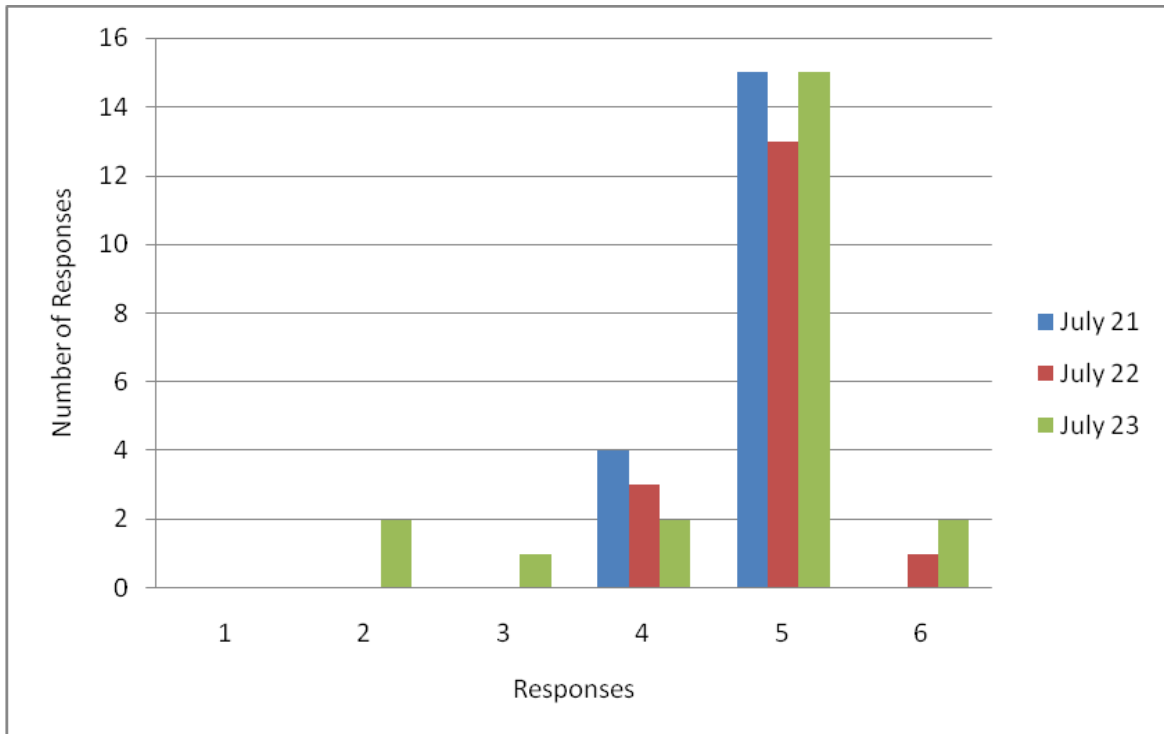
Average Response: 2.8



5. How satisfied are you with how well the region's public transit system meets the needs of citizens?

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Satisfied
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Dissatisfied
- 5. Very Dissatisfied
- 6. Don't Know

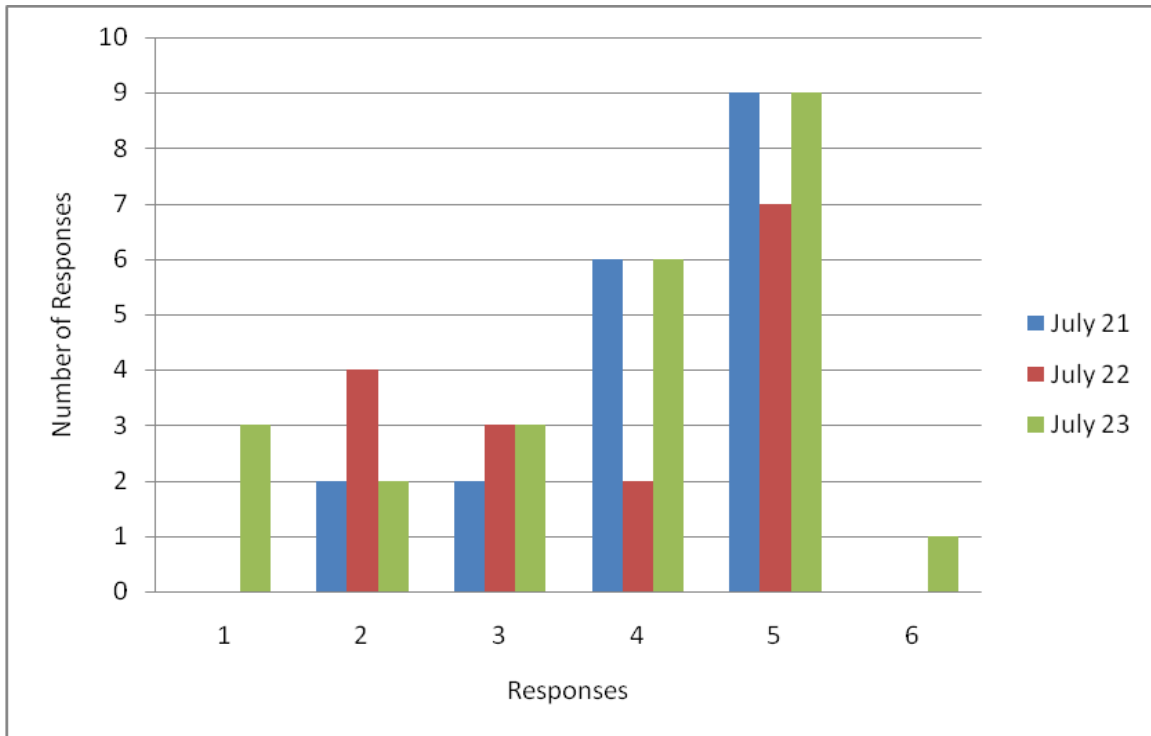
Average Response: 4.7



6. How satisfied are you with the ease of travel by bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Satisfied
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Dissatisfied
- 5. Very Dissatisfied
- 6. Don't Know

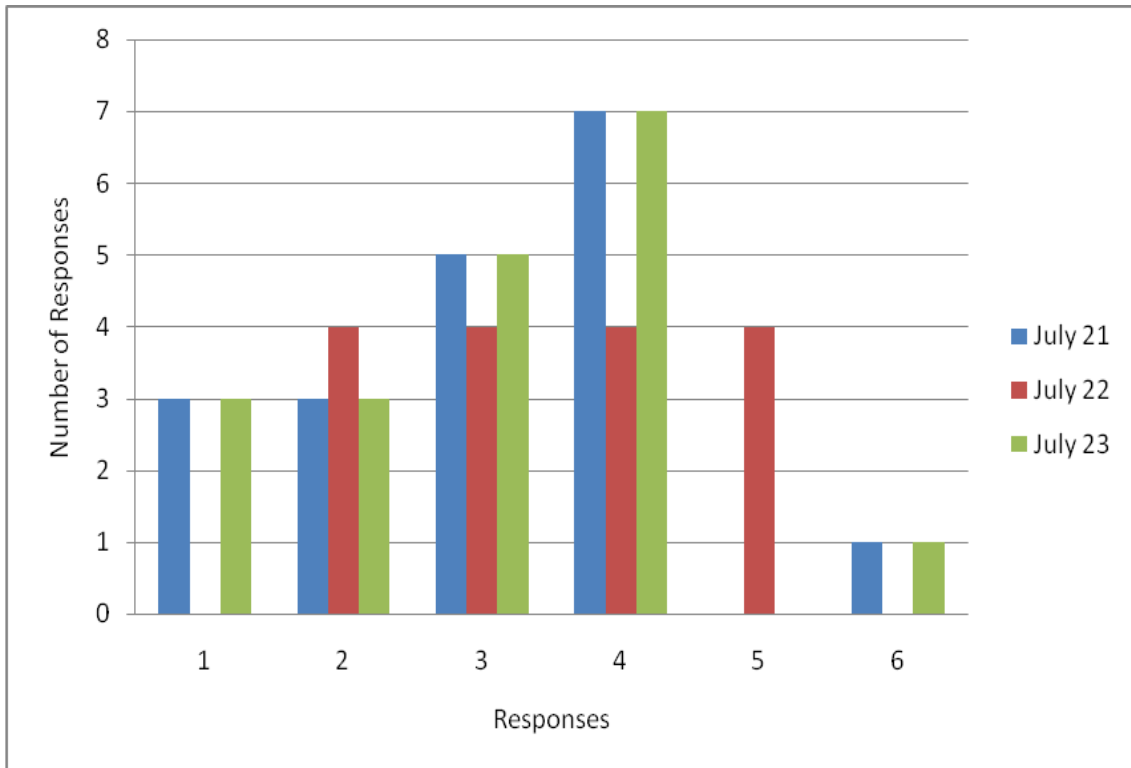
Average Response: 3.9



7. How satisfied are you with the condition of bridges?

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Satisfied
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Dissatisfied
- 5. Very Dissatisfied
- 6. Don't Know

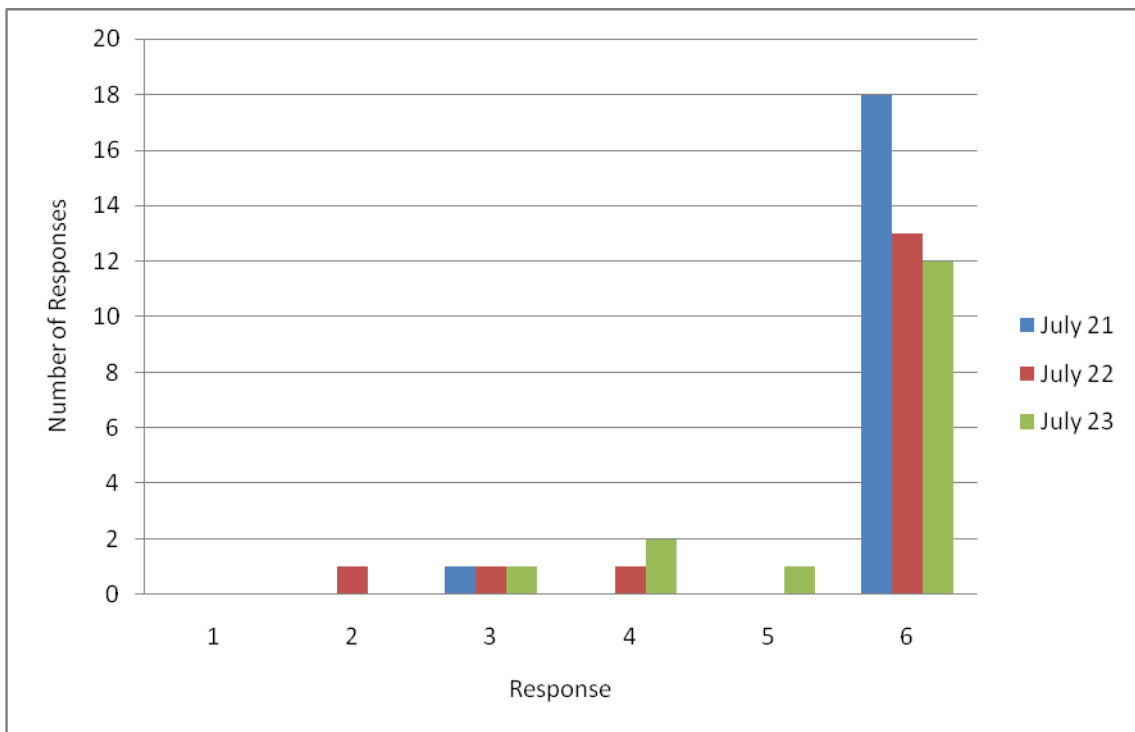
Average Response: 3.1



8. Which transportation component do you think should be the top priority for improvement in Southeast Michigan over the next 5 -10 years?

1. Bridges
2. Congestion Mitigation
3. Nonmotorized
4. Pavement
5. Safety
6. Transit

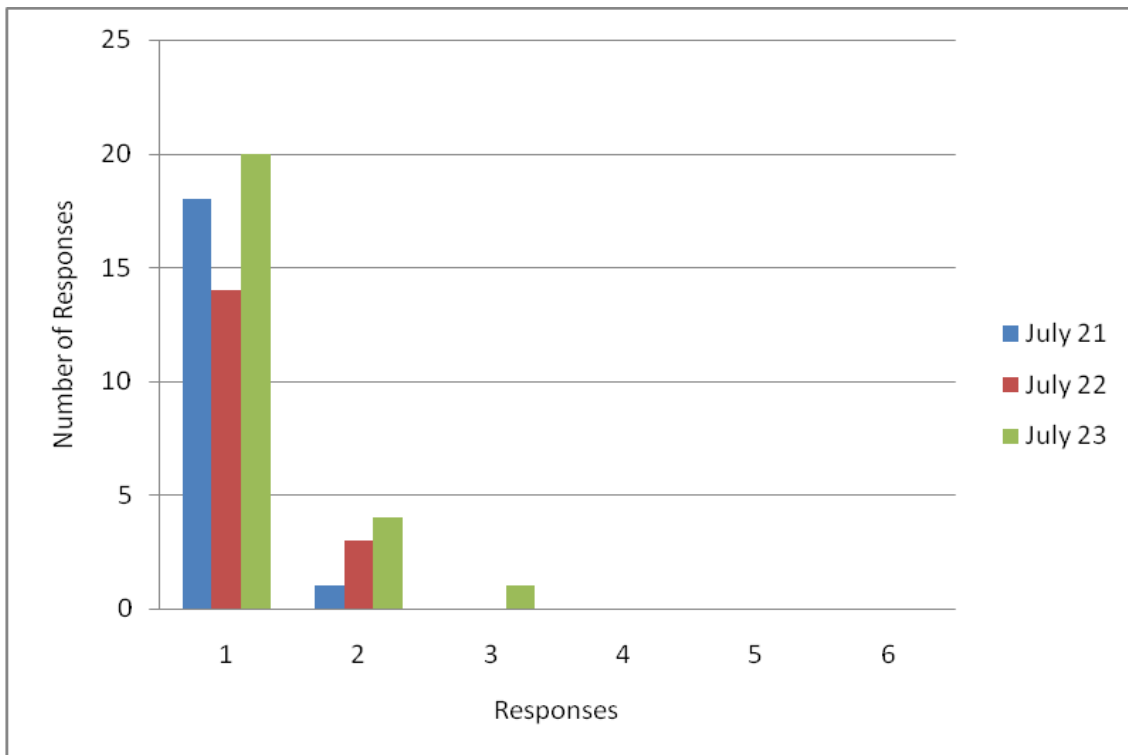
Most Common Response: Transit



9. The region's transportation system has an impact on the region's economy.

- 1. Strongly Agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Disagree
- 5. Strongly Disagree
- 6. Don't Know

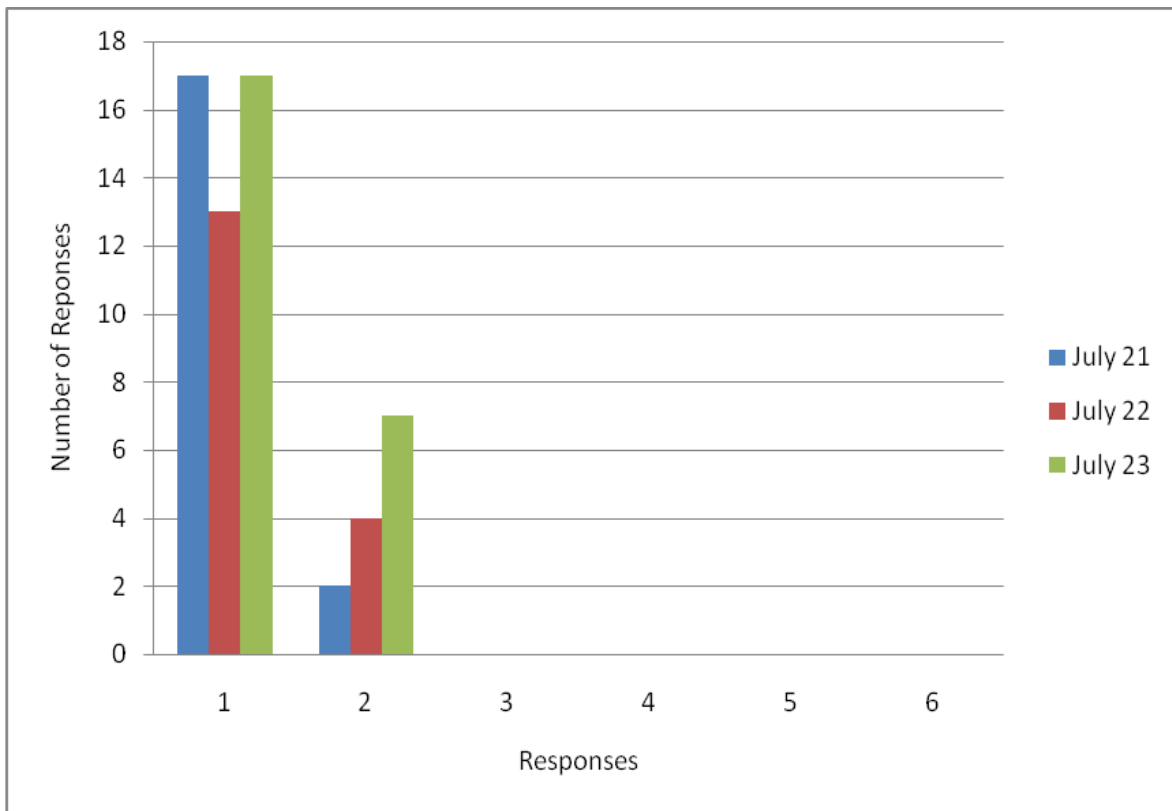
Average Response: 1.2



10. The region's transportation system has an impact on the environment.

- 1. Strongly Agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Disagree
- 5. Strongly Disagree
- 6. Don't Know

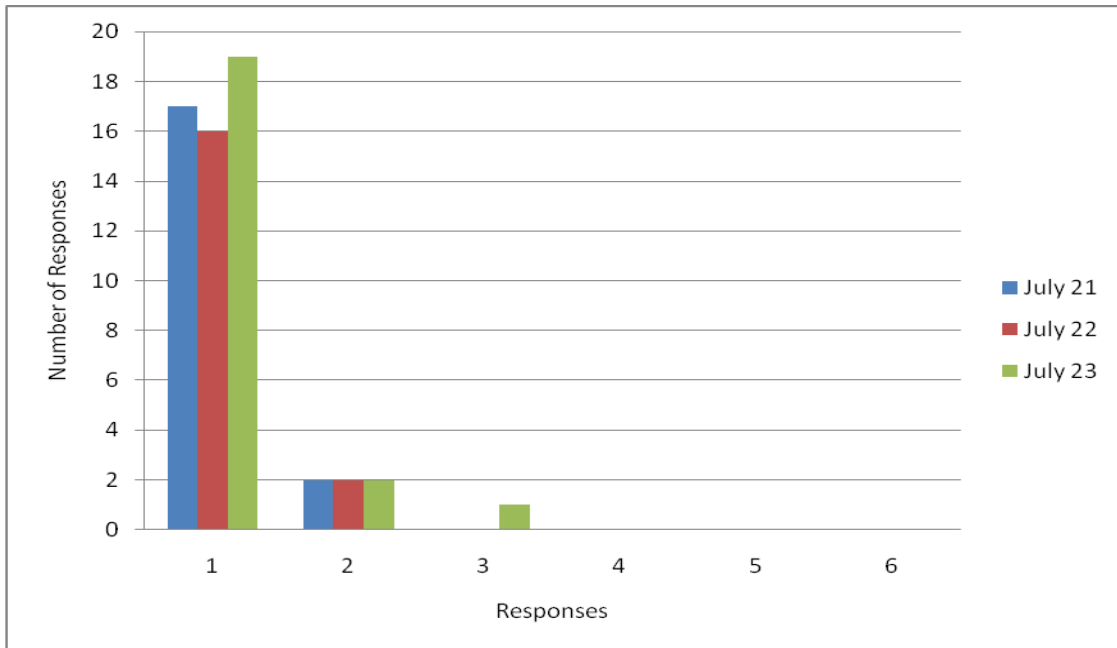
Average Response: 1.2



11. The quality of transportation affects the quality of life in Southeast Michigan.

- 1. Strongly Agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Disagree
- 5. Strongly Disagree
- 6. Don't Know

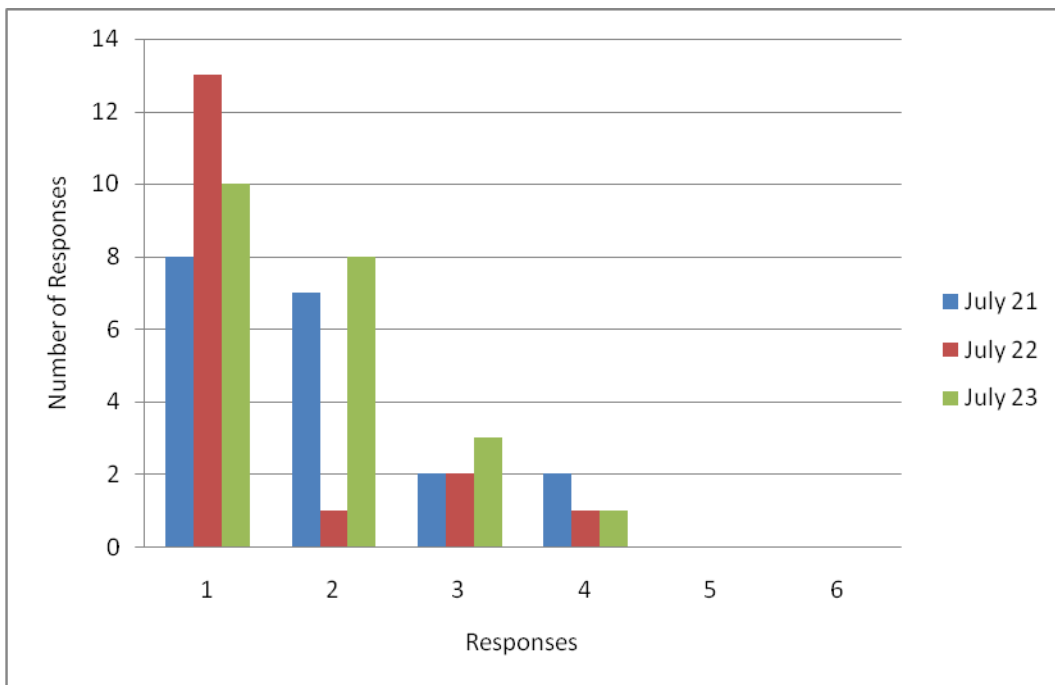
Average Response: 1.1



12. High gas prices have altered my travel behavior (fewer trips, shorter trips, more use of transit or ridesharing, purchase of more fuel efficient vehicle, etc.).

- 1. Strongly Agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Disagree
- 5. Strongly Disagree
- 6. Don't Know

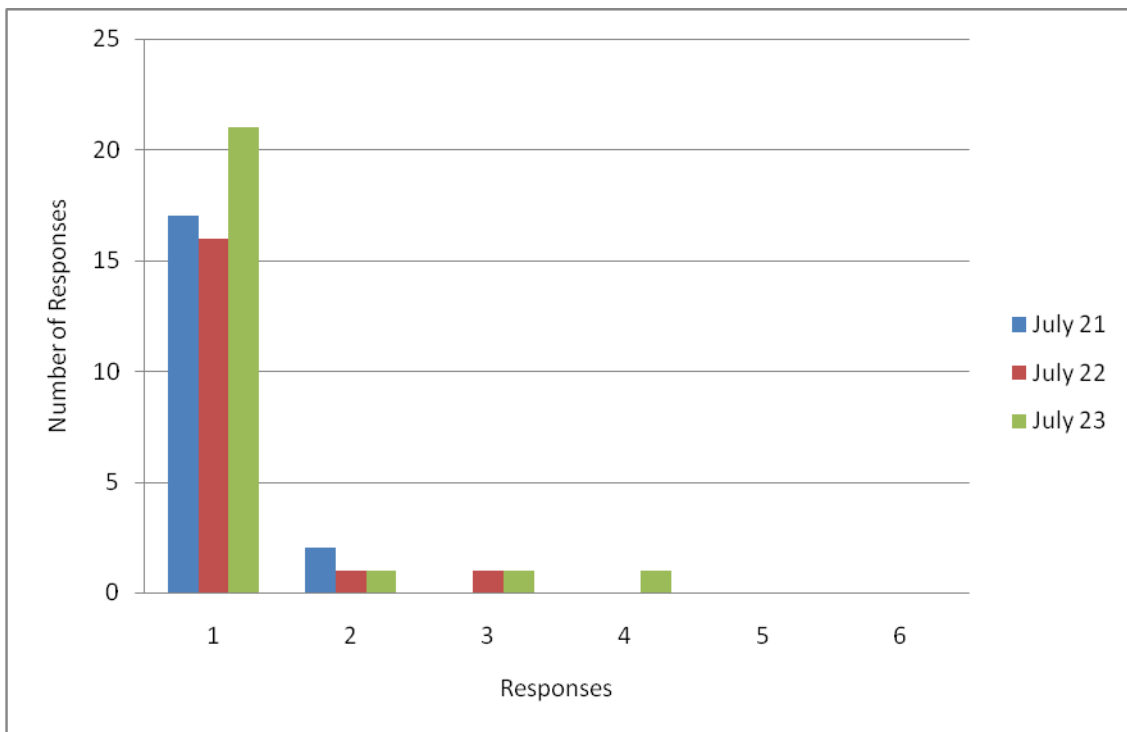
Average Response: 1.7



13. I would be willing to use public transit instead of a car if rapid service (e.g., light rail transit, commuter rail, or bus rapid transit) was available.

- 1. Strongly Agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Disagree
- 5. Strongly Disagree
- 6. Don't Know

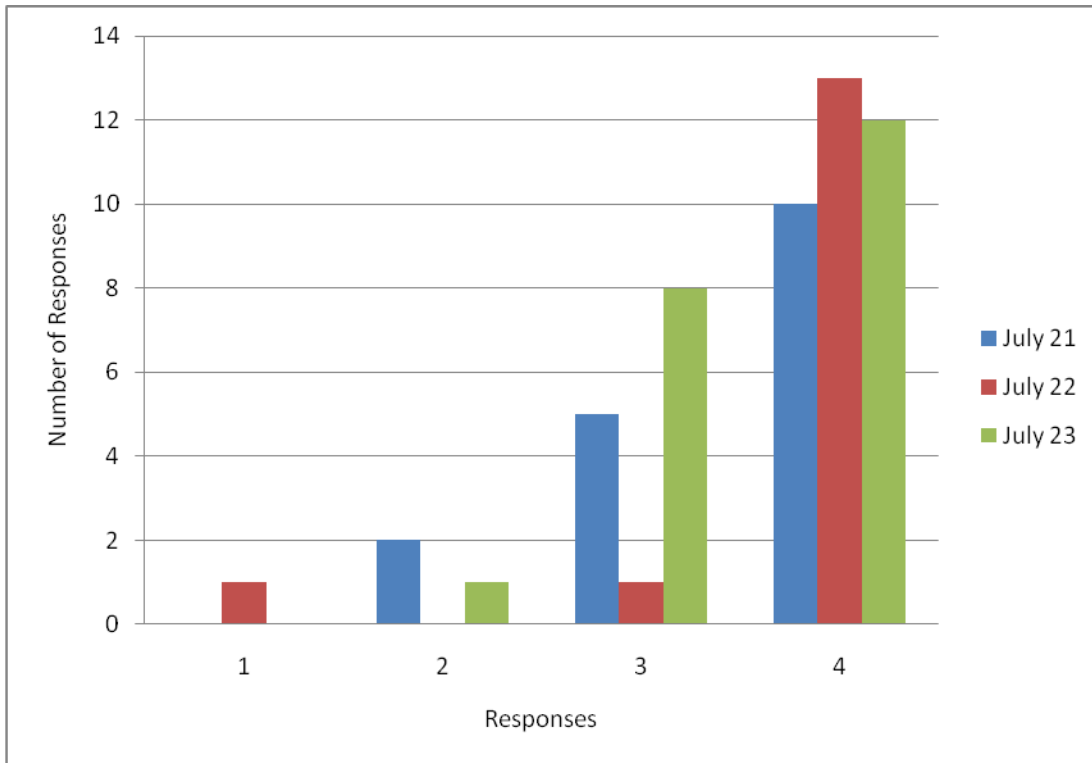
Average Response: 1.2



14. How do you think the current level of funding for transportation improvements in Southeast Michigan should change over the next 5-10 years?

1. Should be reduced
2. Should stay the same
3. Should be somewhat greater than it is now
4. Should be much greater than it is now

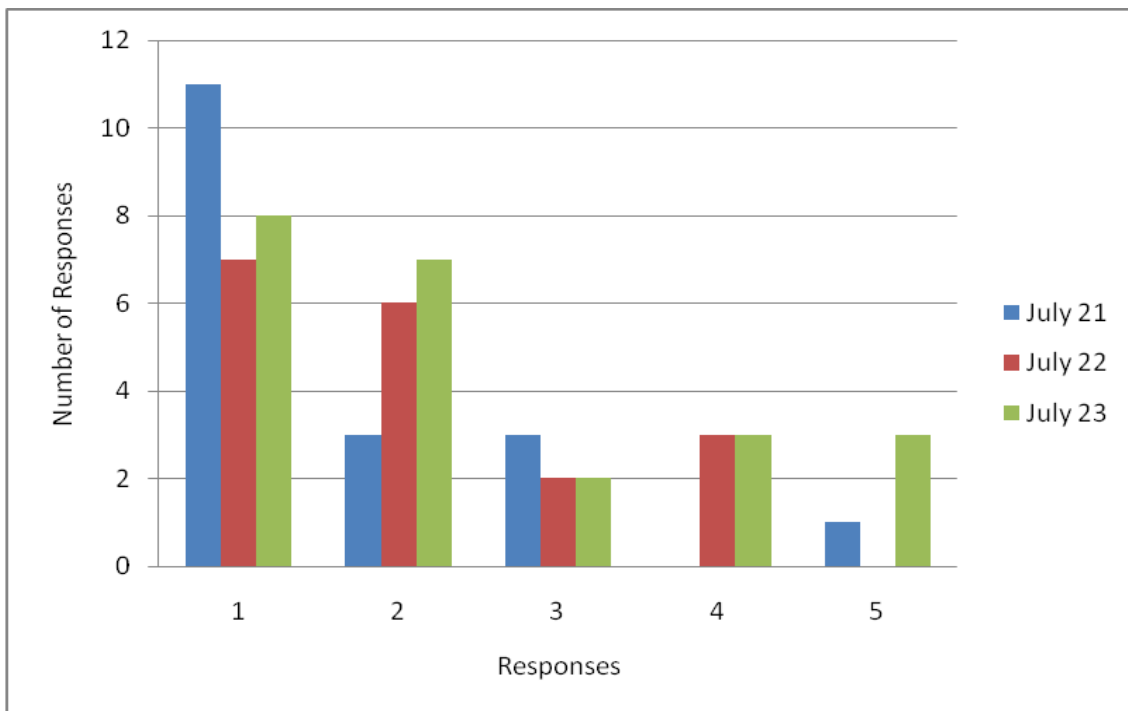
Average Response: 3.6



15. If additional Federal and State transportation funding was not available, how willing would you be to increase local taxes to improve the quality of transportation in your community?

- 1. Very Willing
- 2. Willing
- 3. Not Sure
- 4. Unwilling
- 5. Very Unwilling

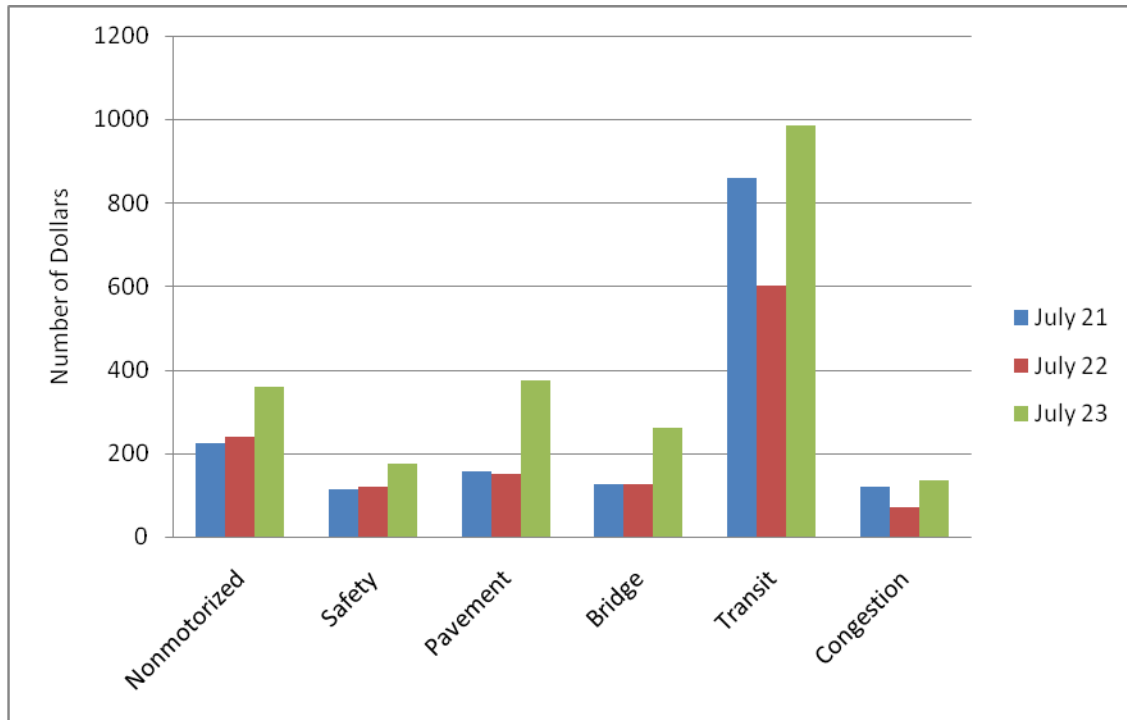
Average Response: 2.1



## Funding Allocation

Each participant was invited to allocate \$100 in SEMbucks (in \$5 denominations) to each of the six transportation components: nonmotorized, safety, pavement, bridge, transit, and congestion.

## Results



	Dollars Allocated	Percent
Nonmotorized	825	15.9%
Safety	410	7.9%
Pavement	680	13.1%
Bridge	510	9.8%
Transit	2,445	47.1%
Congestion	325	6.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,195</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### **Comments received from the Detroit meeting**

Total Attendees: 19

1. It's difficult to rate transportation options as a whole when our current system is so heavily road-oriented, and yet our greatest needs are non-road.
2. I really don't like the information stations. I'd rather have someone present to the whole group and take questions from the group.
3. I will pay more taxes for transit. We need to make that the better transportation alternative.
4. There are overlapping concerns of the 6 categories, e.g., safety is a concern of pavement, transit, bridges, etc. Good pavement is needed on bus routes and so on!
5. Constituents do not elect the representatives on SEMCOG's boards.
6. Detroit is one of only three major metropolitan areas that do not have mass transit; this seems to be connected to our image as the motor city.
7. The transportation plan should address issues of climate change and call for a reduction in our carbon footprint.
8. Not all communities are members of SEMCOG, so they are not influencing decisions.
9. Trolley-based rapid transit has the most influence on economic prosperity in cities (compared to heavy rail).
10. Nonmotorized safety needs to be given more emphasis in SEMCOG's analysis/reporting. Fatality rates for incidents involving pedestrians and bicyclists are usually high.
11. Road agencies refuse to adopt recommended practices for nonmotorized safety/access standards.
12. Riding transit is safer than driving a car. Road funding should be used to operate transit to make the system safer.
13. The gas tax is an antiquated form of transportation funding.
14. We don't have enough biking facilities and it can be dangerous for bicyclists to share lanes with vehicles
15. Roundabouts can be confusing and dangerous for drivers and pedestrians who are not familiar with the design/signage.
16. More attention should be paid to the safety of motorcyclists.

There was additional discussion re: how the survey results will be used, how local elected officials are selected for SEMCOG representation, and local transit funding.

### **Comments received from the Southfield meeting**

Total Attendees: 18

1. Paved shoulders - even one foot is enough. If there is a curb, a pavement marking should be used to keep cars further away from the curb.
2. Need more public education about rules for pedestrians and/or cyclists preparing to enter crosswalks. What is current law? Do drivers have to stop? If drivers have to stop and don't we need to get word out about law. Red signage at crosswalks might be more effective at getting driver's attention than traditional yellow.
3. Encourage construction of bridges using newer materials - such as Bridge St. in

Southfield - for increased durability/longevity (i.e., fiber reinforcement) as opposed to steel rebar.

4. Agree that we need more transit but also have to put priority on fixing what we have and making sure it works like it is supposed to (i.e., buses follow printed schedules).
5. Spend money more efficiently before spending more.
6. Need a definitive law stating in feet or meters how far a car must be in distance from a cyclist or slower traffic when they pass. No statute in Michigan.
7. Pavement should include a shoulder beyond the white line. Wider roads would provide a "commuter avenue" and would be safer for drivers and nonmotorized users. Cost is not the issue.
8. Create 4-way stops, especially where bike lanes or routes are involved. Add stop signs which are not hugely expensive.
9. Education for drivers that they are obligated to (a) pass safely, (b) defer to crossing pedestrians & nonmotorized vehicles at crosswalks or pathway crossings which could save lives. Add related questions on drivers license exams. Update police officials as to laws that pertain to cyclists.
10. Additional share the road signs would enhance the sense of community between cyclists and autos.
11. Enhance the development and implementation of any and all rails to trails pathways, which serve as linear parks and bridge communities together for recreational opportunities.
12. Repair roads with cyclists in mind. Sending patching crews out repairing one hole and skipping smaller holes only feet away is a waste of time/money. This includes repairs of roads where obvious repairs will soon be necessary.
13. It's been a long road for transportation. We need to take action because of gas prices and the economy. We need to make sure we do not get caught up in politics that will derail the process. Elected officials must understand that transportation is a must-have.
14. With the increased transit ridership in the past few months, the service has become less frequent and the drivers are not as friendly. More frequent/regular service would attract more riders.
15. Promoting events throughout the region brings people together, but there is often no viable transportation between these areas.
16. Public transit is a concern.

### **Comments received from the Ann Arbor meeting**

Total Attendees: 24

1. Transit service needs to be more frequent and have extended service days/hours.
2. Please consider truck routes, repair of bridges and roadways. US commerce moves by truck. Goods and services provide jobs for all industries.
3. We need a comprehensive light rail/bus system throughout the SEMCOG region. Regional differences must be put aside to accomplish this.
4. I'd like to hear more about the interconnectivity of all of these categories. In other words it is important to understand that funding transit and nonmotorized transportation will help with many of the other issues - congestion, safety,

maintenance.

5. It would be nice to endorse types of projects within categories (bike lanes vs. trails).
6. Bus service needs to run more frequently.
7. Pavement warranties should be instituted.
8. Residents need to understand the vision of what the region should look like in the future and then decide what transit needs to be to achieve that vision
9. Nonmotorized and transit are important and need to be addressed. Everything else can take care of itself.
10. Forward-looking cities have a focus on transit and that dictates their needs.
11. The planning process should include an analysis of different land use patterns resulting from different transportation investment choices.
12. Transit needs to be connected, efficient, useful, and functional. It is not currently.
13. Public facilities should be connected via transit and safe nonmotorized access.
14. State funding for transit should be at the maximum (10 percent) level.
15. A stronger connection between Ann Arbor and Detroit would encourage more students to visit Detroit and stay in the area.
16. A bus from Ypsilanti to Detroit would allow people to get to work without a car and without paying the car taxes (registration, fuel, parking).
17. Commuter rail from Lansing to Detroit is needed.
18. Hours of transit operation do not allow free choice.
19. We need realistic transit connections to other cities, regions, and states.

#### **Web comments received to date (08-15-08)**

1. Do you partner with organizations like the Michigan Land Use Institute or environmental groups who also recognize the urgency of educating the public and officials about the impact that TOD planning or basic land use reforms can have on our quality of life?
2. NO spending to widen roads, intersections, or bridges.
3. Increase spending to repair or replace existing roads and bridges, but no widening. Not even an inch.
4. Increase money spent on transit.
5. Increase walking and biking infrastructure, but improve biking and walking primarily through police enforcement of bicyclist's rights. Ticket motorists for failing to yield to pedestrians and for passing bicyclists closely.
6. Please do push for increased fuel taxes, but budget for higher costs, less revenue, and fewer projects anyway.
7. Replace the staff responsible for SEMCOG development projections with people who understand the consequences of a collapsing real estate bubble, record high fuel prices, and stagflation.
8. I believe roundabouts provide efficient and safe maneuvering through intersections when designed properly. HOWEVER, as an example, I believe the roundabouts at US-23 and Lee Road in Livingston County are not only inefficient and confusing; they are less safe than the traditional intersections they replaced. Therefore, my strong support of roundabouts is dependent on the good design - i.e., make them big enough or don't bother.