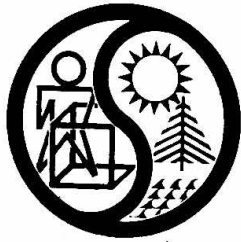


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417 Detroit Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104



Ecology Reports

Editor: Joyce Bader

Volume VII, no. 5

September 1976

Also: HURON VALLEY SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER, EDITOR: Pat Bauer

Speak Out on Transportation

- Paul Schrodt -

On Tuesday, October 5, you can have a voice in deciding Ann Arbor's transportation future. At 7:30 p. m., the Ann Arbor Planning Commission will open a public hearing on a proposed 15-year "circulation plan" for new roads, parking facilities, transit, bicycle and pedestrian ways throughout Ann Arbor. Projects contained in this plan will effect every neighborhood throughout the city.

The proposed plan is the result of three years of information gathering and analysis by planners and traffic engineers. In 1973, a Washington-based consulting firm was hired to study Ann Arbor's future transportation needs (see Ecology Reports, March 1975). Then, the City Planning Department prepared the "circulation" plan from the consultant's findings and information from other local agencies.

Although the plan has some emphasis on public transit and bicycle travel, the primary focus is on road construction and widening. Proposed road projects include

- * Widening Geddes Road (from U. S. 23 west), Fuller, Glen, and Depot to four lanes
- * Widening State Street to four and five lanes from Eisenhower to Dewey
- * Widening Hill Street to four lanes
- * Extending Fifth Avenue south to Hoover
- * Building a new I-94/M-14 interchange

To complement this roadway system, four new downtown parking structures are proposed. Parking facilities outside the downtown area are not addressed in the plan.

The public transit section of the plan projects an expansion of existing Teltran service and a new loop bus downtown. Public transit ridership is projected at up to 20% of all travel in 1990. Bicycle recommendations are completion of the bikeway system developed in 1973 and provision of some bicycle storage

facilities downtown. Finally, the plan includes brief sections on pedestrian travel and commuter rail service although neither is addressed in great detail.

Many community groups, including the Ecology Center, have been involved in reviewing this plan during its three years of development. Most of these groups have expressed strong disagreement with it. Some major criticisms are:

- *** the lack of cost estimates for adequately maintaining our existing street system and new road projects,
- *** the lack of emphasis on policy alternatives to new road building. These would include elements such as "satellite parking" (with bus shuttle), carpooling, preferential parking for high occupancy vehicles, staggered work hours, land use policy changes, etc.
- *** the severe environmental impact on neighborhoods most affected by new roads, especially those neighborhoods adjacent to the central area.

The Ecology Center strongly urges you to learn about the circulation plan and to inform friends and neighbors about it. Our library has a copy of the plan available to you and a staff member will be happy to answer questions. Come to the public hearing and speak out. Let's be sure the plan reflects the needs, values, and ability to pay of the community.