



Detroit Department of Transportation

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To: Council Member Coleman A. Young II, Member At-Large

From: Robert Cramer, Executive Director, Detroit Department of Transportation

Date: March 25, 2025

Re: Responses to 2025-2026 DDOT Budget Questions

Please find below responses to your questions sent on 3/24/2025, regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Budget for the Detroit Department of Transportation.

1. Given the proposed budget, what strategies are in place to improve DDOT's on-time performance and reliability of bus services?

Based on the current proposed budget, DDOT is currently focused on increasing the number of available TEO's (Drivers), GAM's (Mechanics), and increasing the available resources to assist with extending the useful life of our coaches. In addition to this, DDOT has begun training to better utilize our Clever Cad system and the Road Supervisors we have, in an attempt to target the lowest performing routes and operators. The ultimate goal of all of this is to improve reliability for our customers.

2. Are there any planned service expansions or adjustments that will better connect residents to employment centers and essential services?

DDOT's route network is based on Detroit's 1-mile grid with some "half mile" coverage and routes on major diagonal streets that radiate from downtown. It is designed to provide coverage within walking distance to and from all of Detroit destinations, including employment centers or essential services and to connect most places with no more than one transfer. As we continue to improve the service frequency, the average waiting time even for transfers will decrease.

3. What investments are being made in driver training, technology, and safety enhancements to improve passenger experience and efficiency?

- a. **New Training Initiatives** - DDOT made an investment in technology aimed at better training our operators. DDOT purchased Drivers Training Simulators that are being utilized as a way to offer a safe, controlled environment to practice and improve driving skills. The simulators are exposing the operators to various driving scenarios and provide immediate feedback, which ultimately enhances



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- b. decision-making and overall road safety. These simulators are being used for both initial operator training and retraining.
- c. **New Expense Initiatives**
 - i. **DDOT Service Enhancement** - Quarterly increases for bus service utilizing additional funded bus drivers are planned for FY26 to exceed pre-pandemic levels (Bus Pull-out requirement of 200 AM/215+ PM).
 - ii. **Same-Day Paratransit Service** - DDOT will launch Same-Day Paratransit beginning Q4 FY25 in operation from Monday through Saturday from 5am-7pm with an estimated 32,000 annual trips. This service is supported with an RTA grant.

Since DDOT Paratransit assumed administrative functions in January 2023, productivity has improved greatly. The previous contractor's last reported on-time performance rate was 85%. By July 1, 2023, DDOT had achieved a 95% rate, and now currently operates consistently at 99% — one of Paratransit's proudest accomplishments.

Ridership has also exhibited consistent growth since January 2023, with a year-over-year increase of 20%. There are currently over 27,000 registered users for the system. Following a decline in 2021 and 2022, where ridership numbers dropped as low as 245,941, we have recently experienced recovery and growth. Projections estimate at least 350,000 trips, and possibly as many as 385,000 trips, in 2025, building on 2024's total of 322,210 trips. This sustained growth underscores increased public trust and demand for DDOT Paratransit services, so additional funding was required in FY26 to assist with this.

- iii. **Bus Wifi** – In FY26, bus wifi will now be unlimited on all coaches.
- iv. **Alternative Fuel Vehicles / Hybrid Vehicles** - DDOT is in the process of replacing the model year 2012 diesel buses with diesel hybrid buses. These buses are expected to be released in service by the end of the year.
- v. **Electric Vehicles (EV's)** - DDOT was also awarded a FY22 grant for \$8,158,194 to receive four (4) electric buses, two (2) plug in chargers, and one (1) overhead charger.



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- vi. **Future Hybrid & Hydrogen Vehicles** - DDOT received the FY24 Low-or-No Emission federal grant award of \$35,894,267 to purchase 21 hybrid, 4 hydrogen, and a hydrogen fueling station. DDOT is expected to receive the diesel hybrid buses by Q4 2026 and Hydrogen buses by Q3 2027.