

“Can Public Transit Revitalize Detroit? The QLine and the People
Mover”

John B. Sutcliffe, Sarah Cipkar and Geoffrey Alchin
Department of Political Science, University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4

Email: sutclif@uwindsor.ca

Paper prepared for presentation at the Canadian Political Science Association Annual
Conference, Vancouver, BC.
June 2019.

This is a working draft. Please do not cite without permission.

“Can Public Transit Revitalize Detroit? The QLine and the People Mover”

Introduction

On May 12, 2017 a new streetcar – the QLine – began operating in Detroit, running along a 3.3-mile (6.6-mile return) route on Woodward Avenue, one of the central north-south roads in the city. This project is one example of the return to prominence of streetcars in the (re)development of American cities. Having fallen into disuse and abandonment in hundreds of American cities during the early part of the 20th century, this form of public transit has returned in many cities including, for example, Dallas, Cincinnati, Kansas City, and Portland. As streetcar services have returned to prominence, so too has the debate about their utility as a form of public transit, the function they serve in a city, and who they serve (Brown 2013; Culver 2017). These debates are evident in the case of Detroit. Proponents of the QLine – most prominently the individuals and organizations that advocated for its creation and provided the majority of the start-up capital – have praised the streetcar for acting as a spur to development, for being a forward-thinking transit system and for acting as a first step towards a comprehensive regional transit system in Metro Detroit (see M-1 Rail 2018). Critics on the other hand question the cost of the QLine and point to its lower than projected ridership and its limited impact outside of Downtown and Midtown Detroit. In this view, the QLine is primarily useful as a catalyst for development and as a project that is only useful for a predominantly wealthy and white ridership rather than regular transit users who are predominantly poorer and African American (Lowe and Grengs 2018; Kreichauf 2017; Moskowitz 2018). In this critical literature, the QLine is both a result of and spur to gentrification that is dividing Detroit into two parts; a prosperous, gentrified area primarily limited to core areas around Downtown and Midtown, and the remaining poorer parts of the city that continue to suffer from a declining population and a lack of public services, including public transit.

This paper builds on the critical literature, especially the excellent study of the QLine by Lowe and Grengs (2018). The paper locates the origin of the QLine in the wider history of Detroit, particularly the development of public transit in Detroit. The paper then compares the development and operation of the QLine to the earlier elevated rail system called the Detroit People Mover, which began operating in 1987. In both cases, we see the creation of a service that was purported to be part of a wider regional public transit network but ended up being more limited than its proponents initially advocated. Neither the People Mover nor the QLine are currently helpful to the development of a wider regional transit infrastructure and, as a result, neither service helps to promote transit equity in Metro Detroit. Both projects were promoted by business interests and other actors interested in economic development and indeed both were primarily designed as development rather than transit projects. The QLine, in particular, does have the potential to be expanded and is associated with economic development along parts of its route. To some extent, the QLine adds to the process of revitalization that has been occurring within Downtown Detroit. Its first two years of operation, however, do nothing to answer the critics who claim that the streetcar does not serve regular transit users and does not help to promote transit equity. This will become particularly significant when the current funding model for the QLine changes and it moves from being predominantly funded by the private sector and becomes part of Detroit’s publicly-funded regional transit network, possibly by 2027. At this time, the QLine will compete with bus services for limited transit funds.

Background: The Rise, Fall and Rise of Detroit

In order to analyze the QLine, it is necessary to examine where it fits within the wider structure of public transit in Metro Detroit. This in turn requires delving into the rich literature on Detroit's history, including its 'death' and decline into bankruptcy in 2013, as well as the more recent analysis of its revival, or at least the revival of certain parts of the city (Binelli 2012; Bomey 2017; Eisinger 2013; Gallagher 2010; Galster 2012). The rebirth of the streetcar in Detroit must be seen in the context of a metro region that has been shaped by a confluence of economic, social and in many cases overtly racist processes and policies (Sugrue 2005). These forces have hindered the development of a regional public transit system and at the same time hampered the pursuit of transit equity.

Starting with Henry Ford's first factory in 1903, the automotive industry came to dominate the economy of the Detroit metropolitan region, and it structured the labour market, the city's built environment and spatial structure, and race relations in the metro region. At the turn of the 20th century, many African Americans migrated from the South eager to leave the economic and social conditions of the South and secure employment in the booming auto industry in Detroit (Tompkins Bates 2012). The African American population in Detroit increased from around 6,000 in 1910 to 120,000 by 1930. Initially only a few companies in Detroit were prepared to provide jobs to this minority group, and those jobs that were open to African Americans were mostly menial service positions or dangerous jobs in furnace rooms or foundries (Sugrue 2005). Ford was the first major automobile company to hire African Americans, although even here, the jobs were primarily in positions that white workers were reluctant to perform.

Detroit's growing population – between 1910 and 1950, the city's population grew from slightly less than 500,000 to a peak of around 1.86 million – placed pressure on the city's housing stock and resulted in the geographic growth and the physical growth of housing and commercial properties. The inequality evident in employment was replicated at the residential level, as racial discrimination permeated the housing market. The housing shortage, as well as racial prejudice, allowed landlords to drive up rent prices, and African Americans were largely restricted to overcrowded parts of the city (Tompkins Bates 2012). Even as more African Americans entered the workforce, they were systematically shut out of the real estate market as “[b]ankers seldom lent to black home buyers, abetted by federal appraisal practices that ruled black neighborhoods to be dangerous risks for mortgage subsidies and home loans” (Sugrue 2005: 34). In sum, as Sugrue demonstrates, it is not an accident, nor indirect market patterns that generated residential segregation along racial lines in Metro Detroit; rather, it was a direct result of market intervention and government policies combined with the actions of white communities, and white politicians who wanted to preserve racial integrity in their neighbourhoods (Sugrue 2005: 220).

The de facto racial segregation in Detroit continued in the postwar period even as social, political and economic forces changed residential patterns in the larger metro region. As has been well documented, these years were characterized by the movement of people from city centres to the suburbs based in part on personal preference but also supported by highway construction, federal mortgage policies, and the decentralization of industry (see Montgomery 2013; Dreier et al 2014). In Detroit, this took the form of a white flight away from the city to surrounding municipalities. Many of Detroit's neighbourhoods transitioned from white to

African American, while the neighbouring suburbs grew in size and were overwhelmingly white (Reese, Sands and Skidmore 2014).

The white flight to the suburbs did not start with the infamous 1967 race riots but they certainly contributed to it (Bomey 2017). In the African American community, the riots were viewed as a reaction to discrimination and broken political promises. Many within the white community viewed them as a result of criminal anarchy and thus a reason to escape the city (Georgakas and Surkin 1998; Fine 1989). The aftermath of racial mistrust, combined with lack of employment opportunities and declining quality of city services, resulted in a significant population loss for Detroit. From its 1950s peak of 1.86 million, Detroit's population fell to 713,000 at the time of the 2010 census. This population loss was accompanied by a dramatic change in Detroit's racial composition. The white population of Detroit fell from approximately 1.5 million in 1950 (when it constituted approximately 84 percent of the city's population) to 414,000 in 1980 and 76,000 in 2010 (when it constituted around 11 percent of the population). At the same time, the African American population in Detroit grew. At the time of the 2010 census, African Americans constituted 82.7 percent of Detroit's population and whites 10.6 percent, although by this point the African American population was declining in absolute terms as African Americans with the means to do so also abandoned the city for the suburbs.

The demographic, social and economic forces influencing the metro Detroit region helped Detroit slide into bankruptcy. Detroit became the poster child for a failed city due to its economic decline, resulting in a declaration of a state of financial emergency in 2013, the state appointment of an emergency manager, and the subsequent filing for Chapter 9 bankruptcy, the largest American city to do so. This bankruptcy was not caused solely by the subprime mortgage collapse of 2008 or by financial mismanagement by the city council, although both of these were contributing factors (Reese, Sands and Skidmore 2014). Instead, the financial crisis was the culmination of the city's long history of population loss, economic decline and social inequality. The population flight from the city was matched, and prompted by, the decentralization of the automotive sector within metro Detroit and its increasing relocation to other parts of the United States. The result was extensive job losses in Detroit, particularly evident in the manufacturing sector. Approximately 333,000 manufacturing jobs were located in the City of Detroit in 1947. By 2007, this had fallen to 23,000 (Galster 2017). Nor were the city's job losses restricted to the manufacturing sector. As Galster identifies, "today, over three quarters of all the region's jobs in retail and wholesale trade, construction, finance, insurance and real estate, business and repair services, personal services, and professional services – as well as manufacturing – are located beyond the city limits" (Galster 2017:39). The result was a vicious cycle: as jobs and people left the city so its tax base declined, leading to a reduction in the quality of services that the city could provide and the abandonment of properties throughout the city, which in turn encouraged more people to leave (Doucet and Smit 2016). The physical size of Detroit added to this vicious cycle. "At 139 square miles, Detroit is geographically larger than Manhattan, San Francisco and Boston combined" (Bomey 2017: 97). This physical size made it all the more difficult for the city to deliver services to its declining and dispersed population, a problem identified by journalists, scholars and the city's emergency manager (see, for example, LeDuff 2013; Martelle 2012), and one that further encouraged anyone with the resources to leave the city. In this process, Detroit became associated with blight. Abandoned, derelict houses and physical

decaying factories and commercial properties were so common that Detroit became a focal point of a genre of photography and tourism entitled ‘ruin porn’.¹

The Revival of Detroit?

Detroit emerged from bankruptcy in November 2014. Just as the 2008 recession did not cause the economic and social difficulties faced by Detroit – although it did add to these difficulties – neither did this emergence from bankruptcy mark the beginning of revitalization efforts in Detroit. Indeed, efforts to revive Detroit began in the 1970s. One example of this was the 1970s construction of the Renaissance Center by a private non-profit development group led by the Ford Motor Company as part of an effort to revive Downtown Detroit. Another example was the 1980s decision to build the elevated monorail People Mover as part of the downtown’s infrastructure (see below). The efforts and speculation about Detroit’s rebirth picked up pace at the turn of the 21st century and gained momentum and increased national and international attention in the subsequent years (Austen 2014; Eisinger 2015; Gallagher 2010). A key feature of this period was the return to downtown of major businesses evident in the purchase of abandoned skyscrapers and the building of new structures. One of the first signs of this revival was the construction of a new building – One Campus Martius completed in 2003 – and the decision by Compuware to move its headquarters to this downtown location. The building is now owned by Bedrock, which is one of billionaire Dan Gilbert’s companies. Indeed, Dan Gilbert is a central figure in the effort to revive Detroit and has attracted a lot of media and academic attention (Alberta 2014; Doucet and Smit 2016; Gallagher 2018; Eisinger 2013 and 2015; Moskowitz 2018). Gilbert, owner of Rock Ventures and Quicken Loans, has invested, by one estimate, more than \$5 billion USD in Downtown Detroit and owns in the region of 100 buildings in the Downtown, including a number of skyscrapers, which he started buying even before the city declared bankruptcy (Gallagher 2018). Gilbert’s influence on Downtown Detroit extends well beyond his ownership of multiple properties. He has incentivized his employees to move Downtown as well as work there; he and his companies have actively engaged in shaping urban design in Detroit, recruited upscale retailers downtown, and provided services to downtown residents and visitors, most notably security services. In addition, as will be returned to below, he is a central player in the development of the QLine.

There are different, often contested, visions of what a revived Detroit will look like and what it will take to achieve this revival, as well as disagreement about the merits of the revitalization that has taken place thus far. Several key points can be identified within these big questions, all of which are relevant to an examination of public transit in the region. First, revitalization undoubtedly has taken place in Detroit but this is not a city-wide rebirth. The changes are primarily focused on the 7.2 square miles of Greater Downtown Detroit.² This part of Detroit has witnessed a process of gentrification (Moskowitz 2018). Redevelopment here is following the patterns identified by studies of gentrification. Thus, the abandoned properties and cheap rents available in Detroit encouraged urban ‘pioneers’ to move back into the city centre who, through their own efforts, opened small scale manufacturing operations and retail outlets,

¹ Common stops on ruin porn tours of Detroit included the former railway station, the Packard Plant and the Southwest Detroit Hospital.

² 7.2 *SQ MI: A Report on Greater Downtown Detroit*.

http://detroitsevenpointtwo.com/resources/7.2SQ_MI_Book_FINAL_LoRes.pdf

art cooperatives and restaurant start-ups (Eisinger 2015; Foroohar 2014; Davey 2013). These developments were augmented, and to some extent replaced, by a second phase of gentrification that has included significant financial investments by bigger corporations. As noted earlier, there has been significant investment in existing buildings as well as new construction. One element of this is the opening of new retail stores, new restaurants and bars, and new entertainment venues that are attractive to young urban professionals.

A second key point therefore is that there is a central role for the private sector in the redevelopment of Detroit. These private sector actors include Dan Gilbert, the Ilitch family, and private foundations and trusts such as the Kresge Foundation.³ As well as the development role referred to above, this involvement includes the “spinning off [of] pieces of municipal government into a series of private conservancies, public authorities, and non-profit corporations that could deliver services that the city could not” (Gallagher 2017: 187). Examples of this include the downtown park at Campus Martius, which was redeveloped by the private sector and then turned over to the city; the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, which was funded by General Motors and the Kresge Foundation, and has been responsible for redeveloping the river front in Detroit; and the creation of new non-profit entities to run the city’s outdoor Eastern Market and the Detroit Historical Museum.

A third point about the redevelopment of Detroit is the controversy that follows from these two previous points and indeed is associated with gentrification wherever it is occurring. This is the recognition that revitalization is currently limited to a small part of Detroit and that while Downtown, Midtown and a few connected neighbourhoods are seeing significant investments and redevelopment, the overwhelming majority of the city is not. There are in effect two Detroits. One is a newly vibrant core of 7.2 square miles that enjoys excellent amenities, security and public services, sometimes provided by the private sector. The other Detroit is comprised of large parts of the remaining 139 square miles of the city, which continue to suffer from poor services, blight, and high levels of poverty. The arrival of new residents to Downtown seeking to take advantage of the ‘blank slate’ that Detroit offers obscures the reality of the close to 700,000 other residents who are already there, many of whom are low-income and completely disconnected from the newfound employment and cultural hubs (Galster 2017; Pedroni 2011).

There is therefore a racial dimension to revitalization. African Americans are being displaced from the city centre while the ‘pioneers’, young executives and those benefitting from redevelopment are predominantly white. As Moskowitz identifies, “Detroit is 83 percent black but the new Detroit - the one that gets all the attention and press - is overwhelmingly white” (2018: 84). This racial division is evident in the attempts to clear blight within the city and the plans for what to do with the land recovered from blight and with the people remaining in these neighbourhoods. Detroit’s Blight Removal Taskforce and the 2013 Detroit Future City plan⁴ for example, present a vision of declining neighbourhoods being transformed through blight removal and the relocation of residents into parks, forests, urban farms or lakes while other neighbourhoods become the focus of reinvestment (Kreichauf 2017; Akers 2017). The areas most affected by blight and the neighbourhoods to be deprived of services are the areas with a

³ The Ilitch family own major sports teams in Detroit including the NHL Red Wings and the Detroit Tigers among other businesses. Construction of a new hockey stadium began in 2015 and opened in Midtown Detroit in 2017. It is now home to the Red Wings and the NBA Detroit Pistons. The Kresge Foundation is a private foundation established in 1924.

⁴ The 2013 Detroit Future City plan was not a city government document. Instead it was a document developed “by an association of different stakeholders, foundations, planning agencies, and private developers. It nevertheless has become the city’s major guideline for developing Detroit” (Kreichauf 2017: 83; also Eisinger 2015).

predominantly African American population. Moreover, as Akers (2017) identifies, the focus on blight removal does not address the underlying forces – including an underfunded education system, widespread poverty, and poor transit – that cause the blight in the first place.

In sum, the rebirth of Detroit is a real but limited phenomenon. It is also a process that has been shaped by, and in some respect reinforces, the same forces that led to Detroit's economic collapse; particularly the prevalence of racial division within the city and the wider metro region.

Public Transit in Detroit

Metro Detroit's transit system has been shaped by the city and region's economic, social and political development. In the first place, the prevalence and importance of the automobile in the metro region, combined with highway construction, led to a decline in the relevance and quality of public transit in the region. Among U.S. city-regions, Detroit remains unusually dependent on automobiles as compared to public transit. Detroit "ranks 64th among metropolitan areas nationwide in the share of commuters travelling to work by public transit, even though its population ranks as 8th largest" (Grengs 2010: 45; Hyde 2006). It is not by accident that automobiles trumped public transit in the Motor City and its suburbs. As identified by Hyde, the failure to build a mass transit system for metro Detroit "was a result of the growing popularity of the personal automobile, the increasing diffusion of Detroit's population, and the structuring of tax revenues to favour highway funding" (2006: 95).

The low quality of public transit in the Detroit metropolitan region, however, cannot be explained only with reference to the strength of the automobile industry in the region and the construction of roads for these automobiles. In Detroit itself, the quality of public transit – as measured in the number of buses in operation, the frequency of those buses, the condition of bus stops – deteriorated as a consequence of Detroit's declining economic health and the city council's recurring need to reduce expenditures (Felton 2014). A second key weakness of public transit has been, and remains, the division between Detroit's transit system, which is currently primarily the responsibility of the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the bus system, which serves the surrounding suburbs in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties. Since 1989, this has been called the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART). There has been a persistent lack of coordination between Detroit and its surrounding suburbs (see Hall and Jonas 2014; Grabar 2016; Indergaard 2015; Thomas 2013).⁵ As Farley et al. state: "One reason why bus transportation from the central city to suburban jobs remains so difficult is that racial mistrust and tensions have prevented the coordination of Detroit's bus lines with those of the surrounding suburbs" (2000: 253). The resistance of affluent, white suburban communities to revenue sharing with the poor, predominantly black inner-city neighbourhoods, has resulted in decades of failed regional governance, and, by extension, the lack of a functioning regional transit system. L. Brooks Patterson, suburban Oakland County's chief executive, repeatedly denounced cooperation with Detroit in this area and argued against a comprehensive regional master transit plan in 2016 and again in advance of the 2018 elections.

Nelles (2012) argues that regional fragmentation is responsible for the failure of transit planning decisions across the Detroit metropolitan region. She argues that "[c]ontextual and

⁵ It was only on 1 May 2019, for example, that DDOT and SMART introduced a unified payment system to reduce the complexity of transferring between the two systems.

structural divisions have entrenched conflicts between city and suburban actors, preventing the emergence of a strong and coherent horizontal coalition in support of metropolitan transit (Nelles 2012: 222). Her research examines failed transit proposals in 1967 and the 2000s and argues that weak horizontal partnerships across the region resulted in a lack of collective action to make use of federal transit dollars and construct a regional public transit system. In 2008, a Comprehensive Regional Transit Service Plan was introduced to overcome division between the city and the suburbs. However, “both the city and the suburbs objected strenuously to the proposed legislation over the distribution of federal funding, labor regulations, the fear of hidden costs of a merger, and concerns over local autonomy” (Nelles 2012: 232). The failure of this initiative, combined with pressure from the federal government, led the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) to resurrect a Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), and give it the task of creating a regional transit plan to coordinate public transportation between the City of Detroit and the surrounding counties of Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne. Debate on this issue eventually centred on the November 2016 state elections, where a ballot question asked voters in south-east Michigan to decide on the creation of a millage to fund a Regional Master Transit Plan, including bus rapid transit links between the city and the counties (Sutcliffe and Cipkar 2017). This was rejected by a slim majority in 2016 and an attempt to place a new question on regional transit on the 2018 ballot also failed.

The low quality of public transit in metro Detroit is significant. It has been argued, for example, that this was one reason why Detroit was not selected by Amazon as the location for its second headquarters (Williams et al. 2018). As well as potentially hindering the creation of new jobs as in the Amazon case, the poor performance of public transit is a problem with respect to allowing people to access jobs that already exist. This problem is particularly acute for the low income, African American population in Detroit who do not have access to a car. By some estimates, around 25 per cent of households in Detroit do not have access to a car and therefore rely on public transit to secure access to the jobs that, as noted above, are increasingly likely to be located in the suburbs (Reese et al. 2014). Research into the link between poverty, living patterns in American cities, and mobility led to the spatial mismatch hypothesis. This hypothesis provides a framework for explaining how the decentralization of industry combined with suburbanization leaves residents of poor inner city communities – and in the case of Detroit, predominantly African American communities – physically separated from employment opportunities (Martin 2004). Grengs (2010) argues that it is more accurate to talk about a modal mismatch; a situation where the key problem is not distance between individuals and places of employment, but lack of access to transportation that can effectively bridge this distance. In either case, commutes that takes individuals between the inner city to the suburbs are problematic as a result of inadequate public transit or lack of access to an automobile. This is certainly applicable to the situation in metro Detroit where demographic change, economic changes, and racial division have contributed to a situation where African Americans in the inner city lack transportation choices to secure employment opportunities that are increasingly located in the suburbs.

The QLine and the People Mover

The 2017 completion of the QLine streetcar along Woodward Avenue represented the first major addition to the public transportation network in metro Detroit since the construction of the

elevated People Mover in 1980s. In proposing and developing the streetcar, proponents made several major claims for the QLine and the benefits it would bring to the city and the region. Unfortunately, as Lowe and Grengs (2018) reveal, a lot of these claims were not met in the first year of the QLine's operation. The record of the QLine's second year does nothing to challenge these conclusions. The QLine does not address the problems created by metro Detroit's wider economic, social and spatial development. It will not, in itself, promote a regional transit system and further transit equity in metro Detroit. Instead, the creation and operation of the QLine has many parallels with the earlier People Mover, which has widely and rightly been criticized, and indeed ridiculed, by urban planners, transit experts, academics and the general public. Edward Glaeser, for example, labels the People Mover, "perhaps the single most absurd public transit project in the country" (2011: 62). Mark Binelli talks about the "utter uselessness" of the People Mover (2012: 144) and Galster suggests that it should be renamed the "No People Mover" (2012: 10)

The comparison with the People Mover is not entirely fair to the QLine. There are distinct differences, particularly relating to the potential development of the QLine. Nevertheless, there are enough similarities between the two projects to give at least pause for thought when analyzing the impact and potential impact of the QLine on Detroit's public transportation.

Origins

These two transit projects reflected the different thinking and ideas relating to public transit prominent at their time. The push for the People Mover occurred in the 1970s and 1980s when there was some thought that elevated, automated trains could be a transportation mechanism of the future. The impetus for the QLine came at a time when many U.S. cities were in the process of introducing or reintroducing trolley or streetcars in their downtown cores seeing them as a way to promote economic development (see Brown 2013). The People Mover and the QLine were, therefore, products of their particular time. Both transit projects were however similar in terms of the disagreement and controversy they generated at the time of their approval and construction. In addition, business interests and other actors interested in economic development played a major role in pushing for both projects. Both projects were primarily designed as development projects rather than as purely transit solutions. Finally, both projects were shaped by political actors at the state and federal level, and particularly by funding opportunities provided by those governments.

Detroit People Mover

The Detroit People Mover (DPM) is an elevated monorail system that runs automated trains on a 2.9-mile loop that links 13 stations in Downtown Detroit. The stations are connected to key venues in the downtown including the Cobo Convention Centre, Greektown, the Renaissance Centre, and now the QLine via the Grand Circle Park station.

In the 1970s during the Ford administration, the federal government promised the City of Detroit a \$600 million USD grant to develop a revamped regional transit system. The plan for this system included a subway line under Woodward Avenue, which would link with an existing commuter rail line between the City of Pontiac and Detroit; an Amtrak commuter rail line running between the Joe Louis Arena in Downtown Detroit and Ann Arbor; light rail lines linking the suburbs to Detroit; a commuter rail line between Port Huron and Detroit; and the

People Mover (Bliss 2018; Marklew 2018; Risen 1985). The DPM was included as part of the then federal Urban Mass Transportation Administration's (UMTA) program to push for futuristic transit options as possible alternatives to traditional bus lines. In 1976, UMTA created its Downtown People Mover Demonstration Program, which allowed cities to compete for federal funds that would allow them to design and build their own automated transportation systems. This program was also designed to determine if automated transit systems could help revive the downtown cores of major U.S. cities. In the end, the DPM was one of only two such projects constructed – the other was in Miami – and entered service in 1987 following delays and massive cost overruns.

Business interests, including the Central Business District Association, were among the People Movers' main supporters (Barron 1984), along with Detroit's mayor Coleman Young who lobbied for the completion of the system even as it experienced significant cost overruns and the Reagan administration's threats to pull its funding (Wilkerson 1987). By the time it opened, the DPM had cost over \$200 million USD with 80 percent of that funding provided by the federal government and the majority of the rest by the State of Michigan. The Detroit Transit Corporation (DTC) – an agency of the City of Detroit – was established in 1985 to oversee the completion of the People Mover and assume ownership of the system after the completion of construction.⁶ Every year, the City of Detroit provides \$6.5 million USD to the DTC for operational expenses. The DTC also receives \$5.6 million USD from the State of Michigan, as well as funding from the United States Federal Government. These subsidies are very important because at its current fare rate of 75 cents, the DPM cannot sustain itself on fares alone. In 2017, the DPM collected \$1,394,946 in fares but cost the DTC \$18,162,430 to run (Lawrence 2017).⁷ The National Transit Database calculated that each trip taken on the DPM in 2017 cost taxpayers \$10.72.

The QLine

The QLine was by no means the first proposal to construct a streetcar along Woodward Avenue and indeed alternative proposals were advanced even as the QLine proposal was being developed. What was unique about the QLine proposal – initially referred to as M-1 Rail – was the fact that it was developed by key private sector actors and charitable foundations. In 2007, the president of the Kresge Foundation, Rip Rapson, and Roger Penske, the founder of the Penske Corporation, advocated for a streetcar service on Woodward. Rapson and the Kresge Foundation were, as noted above, active in the redevelopment of Downtown Detroit and argued that a streetcar service would be vital to this redevelopment process (see Rapson 2014; Lowe and Grengs 2018; Williams 2017). To advance this proposal, Rapson and Penske formed a nonprofit organization, M-1 RAIL, which soon included Dan Gilbert, several representatives from Gilbert's companies, the Ilitch family and other philanthropic and business interests in metro Detroit, who collectively were committed to raising the money to build and operate a streetcar service.

A competing plan for a – longer – streetcar came from the City of Detroit initially under the leadership of Kwame Kilpatrick and subsequently Dave Bing. In June 2009, the City released

⁶ The DTC is governed by a six-member Board of Directors comprising representatives of the City of Detroit Administration, the President of the Detroit City Council and appointees from the Detroit Department of Transportation, and the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation.

⁷ "Detroit Transportation Corporation (Detroit People Mover)," *National Transit Database*, n.d., <https://www.nationaltransitdatabase.org/michigan/detroit-transportation-corporation/>.

the “Detroit Transit Options for Growth” study. This study outlined the need for the implementation of regional and local rapid transit improvements in order to serve the current and future population, employment centres, and destinations. Four months later, the board of directors at M-1 Rail voted to cooperate with the plan that was called the *Woodward Light Rail Project*. The goal of this project was to allow the City of Detroit to add to the 3.3-mile streetcar line that M-1 Rail proposed to build. The extended line would run from Downtown to the city limits at Eight Mile Road with M-1 Rail paying for its proposed 3.3-miles and the city responsible for raising the money for the six mile extension that would take it to the city limits. This proposal collapsed under the weight of the fiscal problems that were driving Detroit towards bankruptcy.

In 2011 Detroit Mayor, Dave Bing, Governor Rick Snyder, and then U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood, agreed to scrap the *Woodward Light Rail Project* in favour of a regional rapid bus system. This prompted M-1 Rail supporters, which included U.S. Senator Carl Levin, to start discussions on keeping their streetcar project alive. After these discussions, LaHood gave M-1 Rail supporters 90 days to clearly state the advantages of the streetcar line to the U.S. Department of Transportation. The M-1 Rail supporters were successful and the U.S. Department of Transportation gave their environmental approval and a \$25 million USD grant towards construction of the 3.3-mile streetcar line (Hall and Jonas 2014; Lowe and Grings 2018; Montlake 2017).

Preliminary work on the QLine began in 2013, with full construction beginning in 2014 and completed in May 2017. The final cost of the streetcar line was \$144 million USD with the majority of this sum raised through contributions from private donors as well as money secured for naming rights. Dan Gilbert’s Quicken Loans, for example, paid \$5 million over 10 years for the streetcar’s naming rights while other companies and organizations paid for naming rights for the stations. Funding for the QLine, as noted above, did not exclusively come from the private and non-profit sectors. Both the federal and state governments contributed to the construction costs, including through federal funds that had been created to stimulate the U.S. economy in the wake of the 2008 fiscal collapse (Hall and Jonas 2014).

Operation

The Detroit People Mover has been in operation for over 30 years compared to the two years that the QLine has been in service. In both cases, data shows that there have been far fewer riders on each system than initially projected by the systems’ proponents and far fewer than are required for either system to break even. In both cases, the limited ridership raises questions about the utility of the system as a transit project.

Detroit People Mover

Proponents of the People Mover initially projected that the system, which cost over \$200 million USD to build in 1986 dollars, would attract somewhere in the region of 70,000 riders per day (see Stengel and Mitchell 1986). These projections were revised downwards as the project neared completion with proponents estimating 40,000 daily riders and the federal UMTA, which had helped fund the line, predicting no more than 20,000. Both of these projections were below the estimated 55,000 riders needed for the DPM to pay its operating costs (Risen 1985). Even more significantly the actual number of people using the DPM has never approached even the

lower end of these projections. In the past decade somewhere in the region of 2 million people annually have ridden the DPM – just over 2 million riders in 2017 and a little over 1.9 million in 2018, for example – an average of approximately 5,500 daily users.⁸ Even this number is deceptively high as the ridership is considerably higher during special events such as the two weeks of the North American International Auto Show.

The Detroit People Mover is an expensive transit system that has limited utility for the majority of Detroit residents. One Detroit resident called it “a rich folks’ roller coaster” (quoted in Stengel and Mitchell 1986). A 2004 survey by the *Detroit News* found that only 30 percent of DPM riders were city residents. This and the fact that the People Mover has greater ridership on weekends and when events such as the auto show are taking places strengthens the argument that it is a system that primarily serves tourists or non-city residents with money to spend on entertainment. It performs what Eisinger refers to as a “dumping function” whereby non-residents get “dumped off at an event, then leave without having any impact on the community” (Eisinger 2000: 329).

QLine

The number of people using the QLine has also been considerably less than the number projected before and during the project’s construction. Prior to its opening, proponents predicted that the QLine would initially average around 5,000 daily riders increasing to 8,000 as the system matured (Terry and Hicks 2018). During the first few months of the QLine’s operation – from May 12th to Labour Day 2017 – it did have a daily ridership (4,660) that was close to the initial projections. The key explanation for this, however, was its novelty and especially that it was free to use during this period. Once a fare was introduced, ridership dropped substantially (Livengood 2018a; Lawrence 2018) and dropped again in its second year of operation. The *Detroit Metro Times* reports that the QLine had only 2,998 riders a day from September 2017 to February 2019 (Neavling 2019). M-1 Rail’s report on the first year of operation said little about this declining ridership and the failure to meet its projections, and instead focused on the fact that there were fewer riders in the winter months than in spring or summer (M-1 Rail 2018a).

The low ridership numbers mean that the QLine, like the People Mover, does not come close to paying its operating costs through the fares it collects. In its first year of operation, the QLine cost \$5.8 million USD to operate, but collected only \$417,050 USD in fares (considerably less than the \$1.2 million USD M-1 Rail had projected).⁹ The financial situation has deteriorated since as operating costs have increased to \$6.7 million USD even as ridership and therefore income has decreased (Neavling 2019). This presents a long-term financial problem for the QLine. By 2017 M-1 Rail had raised about \$187 million USD to build and fund the QLine with the stated goal of having sufficient resources to operate the streetcar for 10 years before handing it over to a regional transit authority (Shea 2018). The increase in costs and decline in receipts indicates that M-1 Rail will have to raise additional funds to meet this 10 year expectation or hand over control to public authorities much earlier.

It is difficult to secure precise data on who is riding the QLine, but the data that is available indicates that it is primarily used by tourists or residents of metro Detroit attending sporting or cultural events or going to restaurants rather than by commuters travelling to work downtown from the suburbs or to the suburbs from downtown. One indication of this is that by

⁸ Data from National Transit Database, <https://www.nationaltransitdatabase.org/michigan/detroit-transportation-corporation/>.

⁹ The QLine costs \$1.50 for a three hour ticket and \$3 for a 24-hour pass.

May, M-1 Rail had only sold 130 annual passes for 2018 (Livengood 2018b). A second indication is that – as is the case with the People Mover – ridership tends to be higher on the weekends than during the week. In this respect, the ridership of the QLine is typical of the pattern that has been found in studies of streetcars in other U.S. cities (Jeffrey 2013; Culver 2017). A third indication is the seasonal nature of the ridership on the streetcar. As M-1 RAIL noted in the first year review, ridership declined in the winter (M-1 Rail 2018). This suggests that the service is not being used by commuters for their daily ride to work.

The Economic and Transit Consequences of the People Mover and the QLine

Supporters of the QLine generally pointed to three main potential benefits from the streetcar's construction: that it would further economic development along its route; that it would link attractions along its route to the benefit of tourists and residents; and that it would “create the first leg of a regional transportation system” (Rapson 2014; Gee 2017). Similar claims were made at the time of the People Mover's inception and launch. In both cases, economic development was given the highest priority. Indeed, studies of other streetcar systems find that their proponents tend to focus on the potential economic development that will accompany the streetcar. Studies by Ramos-Santiago, Brown and Nixon, for example, found that development and tourism were the primary considerations in decisions to build a streetcar in four of the five cities studied (2015a and 2015b; see also Culver 2017).

Economic Development

At the time of its construction, the People Mover's supporters, including the then mayor Coleman Young, claimed that the project was already encouraging economic development along its route (see Stengel and Williams 1986). In the years since, the DTC that runs the People Mover claims that it has contributed to economic development in Downtown Detroit (Detroit Transportation Corporation 2016). These claims, however, do not square with the history of Downtown Detroit. The People Mover was promoted an effort to revitalize the city centre and was built at a time when Detroit's population was declining. The opening of the DPM did nothing to halt Detroit's demographic and economic slide and the revival of Downtown Detroit that began to gather momentum in the early part of the 21st century – see above – was unconnected to the existence of the People Mover.

Supporters of the QLine also emphasize the economic development that will, and has, followed the construction of the streetcar. Initial estimates that the project would be responsible for approximately \$3 billion USD in development (see Walgrave 2018), were subsequently increased. In 2017, M-1 Rail claimed that “more than \$7 billion in new investment has poured into or is planned for 211 development projects on either side of the streetcar's path since 2013” (M-1 Rail 2017: 1). One of those projects was the Ilitch family's development of District Detroit in Midtown, which is home to the new Little Caesars Arena. The report states that large sections of the area that would become District Detroit were abandoned until the introduction of the QLine. Indeed, the report further argues that the QLine has prompted redevelopment along its entire route and that vacancies in downtown office spaces have decreased by almost 50 percent following the development of the streetcar.

While there is no denying that there has been extensive redevelopment in areas of Detroit that border the QLine, it is a mistake to attribute this development exclusively to the QLine. As

noted earlier, the redevelopment of Downtown and Midtown was already underway by the time the QLine project was first proposed. Many of the supporters of the QLine – including Dan Gilbert – were heavily involved in redevelopment projects long before the QLine proposal got off the ground. In addition, developers in Detroit, as in virtually every other U.S. city, receive municipal and state incentives to promote their projects (see O’Toole 2012). One of the clearest examples of this is the estimated \$324 million USD in municipal subsidies the Ilitch family received for the construction of their new arena, which is home to the Detroit Red Wings and the Detroit Pistons (Guillen 2017).¹⁰ Similarly, Dan Gilbert has received, and continues to receive, substantial subsidies for the properties he is building or renovating in Downtown Detroit (Aguilar 2018). It is therefore important to introduce a note of caution when assessing the economic benefits of the QLine. Although not mentioned in the M-1 report (2017), the development that has followed the QLine has depended heavily on subsidies and other incentives.

It is undeniably the case that the purported economic benefits were central to the case made for the streetcar. This is evident in a content analysis of M-1 Rail’s documentation, which supports the conclusions reached by Culver in his study of 12 streetcar projects (2017; see also Lowe and Grengs 2018). The economic development impact of the streetcar is the primary and most prominent benefit cited by QLine supporters including business groups and development organizations in the metro Detroit region. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation – which administers state-funded programs aimed at supporting business development and the promotion of tourism among other things – is supportive of the QLine. The CEO, Steve Arwood stated that the “QLine allows for efficient and affordable transportation at a historic time when new businesses, residential buildings and entertainment options are unfolding continually in Detroit” (quoted in Provenzano 2017). Roger Penske stated that: “A decade ago...we were boarding up buildings in this area. Today Woodward Avenue is becoming one of the most successful and vibrant corridors in our state and much of that has to do with this [streetcar] project” (quoted in Walgrove 2018). Eric Larson, president of the Downtown Detroit Partnership, also attributed this development to the streetcar: “What the QLine has done is take the entire length of Woodward from the [Detroit River] to Grand Boulevard and provide an attractive reason to develop and redevelop” (quoted in M-1 Rail 2017: 1). And at the same time that supporters have praised the QLine’s economic impact so too have critics challenged the QLine for precisely that reason. This is the view, for example, expressed by Ryan Felton who argues that the QLine will “likely be a boon for corporate leaders situated near the city’s core – particularly Quicken Loans founder Dan Gilbert...” (2017; see also Moskowitz 2018). Underlying this criticism is the view that the project – like other streetcar projects in the U.S.– is designed as a development tool rather than as a transit project that will promote regional transit in the metro Detroit region.

Regional Transit and Transit Equity

At the time it was initially proposed, it was hoped that the People Mover would be one part of a complete regional transportation system. By the time it began operating in 1987, however, the

¹⁰ Public subsidies for private sports arenas have long been criticized (see Eisinger 2000). In the case of Little Caesars Arena, one strand of this criticism has focused on a lack of progress in developing the wider area around the arena. The Ilitch family promised extensive residential and commercial development in what they labelled District Detroit with the arena as the anchor. In April 2019 HBO aired a report that was highly critical of the lack of progress in making District Detroit a reality.

People Mover was a stand-alone system that did nothing to help Detroit residents overcome a spatial or modal mismatch. Regional division and mutual mistrust between the city and the suburbs meant that the DPM was the only part of the proposed regional transit network constructed.

Advocates for the QLine also promised that it would contribute to the establishment of a regional transit system. At the time of the QLine's launch, Matt Cullen, CEO of M-1 Rail, stated, "We've always wanted to be a catalyst for regional transit" (quoted in Gallagher 2017) and that "we remain confident that this could be the first step in a broad, regional transit system" (quoted in Afana 2017). A similar argument was made by Rip Rapson, CEO of the Kresge Foundation and a major early advocate of the QLine. Kresge's investment in the QLine, he said, "is a down payment on a larger regional system. We've hit a couple of roadblocks, but that's not going to stop us. We're going to push forward and make sure this line becomes integral to a larger system" (quoted in Gallagher 2017). M-1 Rail's public documents also emphasize the QLine's place within a proposed regional transit system. The QLine is "an important first step toward bringing efficient mass transit to a region that has repeatedly failed to agree on a plan" (M-1 Rail 2017: 1). The first year report claims that "the QLine has helped to jumpstart a renewed push for a 21st century regional public transit system - as the Motor City evolves into the transportation city of the future" (M-1 Rail 2018: 1).

As well as these public assertions of support for a regional transit system, the streetcar has had at least one direct impact on the possibility of regional transit. One of the conditions the federal Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood placed on M-1 Rail before he released federal funding in support of the streetcar was the creation of a regional transit authority (Lowe and Grengs 2018). The Michigan legislature approved the creation of the RTA in 2012 and M-1 Rail indicates that it will hand over control of the QLine to this body in 2027. As was noted earlier, however, the RTA was unsuccessful in its attempt to fund and develop a more integrated regional transit system when its ballot initiative was defeated in 2016 and discussions about resurrecting this initiative did not make it to the ballot in 2018. While the QLine did not directly contribute to these failures – although one critic did highlight M-1 Rail's limited lobbying efforts at the time of the 2016 initiative (Felton 2017) – it is the case that the QLine has not so far prompted a breakthrough in the campaign for better regional transit. Instead, it is a service that in its current form does little to contribute to mass transit in Detroit and instead appears to be more clearly linked to improving the image of Downtown Detroit and serving the needs of those who patronize restaurants, concerts, shops and sporting events along the Woodward corridor. In this respect, the QLine is closer to the People Mover than it is to being part of a regional transit system that promotes greater transit equity. This is certainly the view of many commentators both in and outside of Detroit (see Bradly 2017; Bliss 2017; Felton 2017; Moskowitz 2018). Bradly, for example, calls the QLine "more of an amusement park ride than actual equitable transit" (2017). More significantly, this is the view of many transit advocates as well as many groups representing poorer communities in Detroit. The Detroit People's Platform – a network of social justice organizations and activists – for example opposed the QLine: "You do not need to be a transit expert to see that the QLine does not represent public transit, nor does it benefit the majority of the bus riders living in Detroit. The QLine project is a prime example of "transit gentrification" and highlights the growing disparity in mobility options in Detroit" (Detroit People's Platform 2017). The Motor City Freedom Riders have also been critical of the QLine and the fact that it does not serve the interests of the majority of poor and African American Detroit residents (Motor City Freedom Riders 2017). A third transit advocacy group – the

Transportation Riders United – has been slightly more favourable of the QLine, but even so, they have argued that it requires better integration into a regional transit system in order to be genuinely useful. Megan Owens, executive director, stated that: “It’s hard for the QLine to be hugely successful ridership-wise without more rapid transit connecting to it. That limits its usefulness” (quoted in Terry and Hicks 2018).

Community activists engaged in public transit who were interviewed as part of this research project did not see the QLine as being a major factor in a regional transit system (see also Lowe and Grengs 2018). There are three main factors that currently prevent the streetcar from being part of an integrated regional transit network. First, it does not extend far enough north to be of use to commuters seeking to get to or from the suburbs, and nor does it extend west to the city’s central bus depot – the Rosa Parks Transit Center. Second, the QLine fare is not integrated with the other bus services in metro Detroit and it was not included when DDOT and SMART introduced an integrated fare in May 2019 (Lawrence 2019). Third, although the quality of the service provided by the QLine has improved over its two years of operation – the streetcars now arrive with greater frequency – there are still complaints that the quality of the service limits its usefulness as a transit mechanism. One of the main problems – common to many streetcars (see Ramos-Santiago, Brown and Nixon 2015b; O’Toole 2012) – is that it does not run on its own dedicated lane. As a result, service is slower and subject to interruptions such as when cars park on the rails. A dedicated centre lane was the preference of many transit activists (see Motor City Freedom Riders 2017) but was rejected by the QLine’s major funders who wanted better access between the streetcar and properties along Woodward Avenue (Lowe and Grengs 2018).

In sum the QLine, as it currently operates, does not make a major contribution to regional transit in metro Detroit. It is a service that is used by relatively few and not primarily as part of their regular trip to work.

Conclusion

There are a number of similarities between the QLine and the DPM that preceded it by some 30 years. Neither project was primarily conceived of as a transit project. Instead, their proponents primarily justified the project in terms of the economic development it would bring to the surrounding streets and in terms of its contribution to ‘livability’ by allowing tourists, city and suburban residents easier access to shops, restaurants, and events. When measured in these terms, the QLine is at least associated with a revitalization of its environment, although it is not clearly the cause of this revitalization. What is certainly the case is that the QLine, like the DPM before it, had significant support within the private sector. The QLine was the brainchild of private actors who saw a streetcar as being an important component in economic development and thus the rebirth of Detroit. Indeed, the QLine differs from the DPM, as well other streetcar services that have recently been built within the U.S., insofar as private and charitable bodies provided the majority of the money required to build and now run the streetcar. It is, however, important to note that QLine received financial support from the federal and state governments and in particular was shaped by the Obama administration’s advocacy and financial support for streetcars. The long-term plan, moreover, is for the QLine to become a public responsibility by 2027, and its current financial performance suggests that it may well require taxpayer support long before this date.

Neither the QLine nor the DPM was designed as a stand-alone project. Both were initially conceived as part of a larger regional transit network, something which the larger metro Detroit region has lacked in the post-Second World War era and arguably since the advent of the automobile as a means of mass transportation. The QLine's supporters continue to argue that it can make a positive contribution to a regional transit network. The reality thus far, however, is that the streetcar has not been accompanied by major steps towards such a system. Like the DPM, the story of the QLine's creation and its operation demonstrates the prevalence of regional divisions within the metro Detroit region. The QLine did not result from city and suburbs working together to build a mutually advantageous transportation system and does little to overcome these regional divisions. The QLine, like the DPM, does not extend from the city to the suburbs and nor is it easy for passengers to seamlessly transfer to them from one of the bus systems. While there has been some speculation about extending the streetcar further north to the city limits, there is as yet no concrete plans to do so and there are substantial financial barriers to overcome if such an extension is to occur. Like the DPM, the QLine does not come close to being financially self-sustaining. Both systems generate only a fraction of their operating costs through fares. This may stand in the way of a genuinely regional transit network as suburban leaders may be reluctant to see suburban tax dollars being used to fund the QLine just as their opposition has stood in the way of developing a regional bus system.

Both projects are also reflections of divisions within the city itself between the richer, predominantly white population that is now primarily located within the city centre where these transit options are located and the larger predominantly African American and poorer population that resides outside of the revitalized core many of whom are dependent on an underfunded public transit system and for whom the DPM and QLine are largely irrelevant. Study after study demonstrates the importance of public transit – and transit equity – to efforts to help rise people out of poverty by allowing them access to employment opportunities. A metro Detroit that provides economic and social benefits for all of its citizens rather than a wealthy minority requires more than either the DPM or the QLine provide in their current formulations.

References

- Afana, Dana 2017. "QLine isn't enough, but is a first step for Detroit transit, officials say at streetcar launch," *MLive*, 12 May, https://www.mlive.com/news/detroit/2017/05/qline_soundbites.html.
- Aguilar, Louis 2018. "Gilbert seals \$618M tax incentive package for 4 Detroit projects," *The Detroit News*, 22 May, <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2018/05/22/tax-breaks-dan-gilbert-downtown-detroit-hudson-book-monroe-development/629505002/>.
- Alberta, Tim 2014. "Is Dan Gilbert Detroit's new superhero?" *The Atlantic*, 27 February.
- Austen, Ben 2014. "The Post-Post-Apocalyptic Detroit," *New York Times Magazine*, 11 July.
- Barron, James 1984. "Flaws slowing People Mover project," *New York Times*, 23 November.
- Binelli, Mark 2012. *Detroit City is the Place to Be: The Afterlife of an American Metropolis*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

- Bliss, Laura 2018. "The joys of Detroit's ridiculous People Mover," *CityLab*, 2 November, <https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2018/11/detroit-people-mover-elevated-train-transit-boonboggle/574660/>.
- Bliss, Laura 2017. "Enough with the streetcars already," *CityLab*, 29 September, <https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2017/09/enough-with-the-streetcars-already/541365/>
- Bomey, Nathan 2017. *Detroit Resurrected: To Bankruptcy and Back*. New York: Norton.
- Brown, Jeffrey 2013. "The Modern Streetcar in the U.S.: An Examination of Its Ridership, Performance, and Function as a Public Transportation Mode," *Journal of Public Transportation*, 16(4): 43-61.
- Bradley, Bill 2017. "The streetcar boonboggle continues, this time in Detroit," *CityLab*, 16 May, <https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2017/05/the-streetcar-boonboggle-continues-this-time-in-detroit/526878/>.
- Culver, Gregg 2017. "Mobility and the Making of the Neoliberal "Creative City": The Streetcar as a Creative City Project?" *Journal of Transport Geography*, 58: 22-30.
- Davey, M. 2013. "A private boom amid Detroit's public blight," *New York Times*, 4 March, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/05/us/a-private-boom-amid-detroits-public-blight.html>.
- Detroit People's Platform 2017. "Transit gentrification," 19 February, <https://detroitpeoplesplatform.org/2017/02/transit-gentrification/>.
- Detroit Transportation Corporation 2016. *Transit Oriented Development Study For the Detroit People Mover – Final Report*, 29 April https://d3ghsr8ttmydvh.cloudfront.net/dev/dev/2017-11/DTC%20TOD%20Study%20Final%20Report_29Apr2016%20.pdf?QF_q5Xt1.0dzKJEOAkUaFZVszs07ZlGI.
- Doucet, Brian and Smit, Edske 2016. "Building an Urban 'Renaissance': Fragmented Services and the Production of Inequality in Greater Downtown Detroit," *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 31: 635-657.
- Dreier, Peter, Mollenkopf, John and Swanstrom, Todd 2014. *Place Matters: Metropolitcs for the Twenty-First Century*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press.
- Eisinger, Peter 2015. "Detroit Futures: Can the City be Reimagined?" *City & Community*, 14(2): 106-117.
- Eisinger, Peter 2013. "Is Detroit Dead?" *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 36(1): 1-12.
- Eisinger, Peter 2000. "The Politics of Bread and Circuses: Building the City for the Visitor Class," *Urban Affairs Review*, 35(3): 316-333.
- Felton, Ryan 2017. "Streetcars are a publicity stunt and Detroit's new trolley is no different," *Jalopnik*, 12 May, <https://jalopnik.com/streetcars-are-a-publicity-stunt-and-detroits-new-troll-1795107405>.
- Felton, Ryan 2014. "How Detroit ended up with the worst public transit," *Detroit Metro Times*, 11 March, <https://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/how-detroit-ended-up-with-the-worst-public-transit/Content?oid=2143889>.
- Fine, S. 1989. *Violence in the Model City: The Cavanagh Administration, Race Relations, and the Detroit Riots of 1967*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Foroohar, Rana 2014. "Detroit: America's emerging market," *Time*, 28 August, <http://time.com/3204249/detroit-americas-emerging-market/>.

- Gallagher, John 2018. "This is what Dan Gilbert owns in Detroit and beyond," *Detroit Free Press*, 14 November.
- Gallagher, John 2017. "Is QLine the start of something much bigger," *Detroit Free Press*, 2 May <https://www.freep.com/story/money/business/john-gallagher/2017/05/02/detroit-qline-transit-streecars/101212540/>.
- Gallagher, John 2010. *Reimagining Detroit: Opportunities for Redefining an American City*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Galster, George 2017. "Detroit's Bankruptcy: Treating the Symptom, Not the Cause," in Brian Doucet (ed) *Why Detroit Matters: Decline, Renewal, and Hope in a Divided City*. Chicago: Policy Press, 33-50.
- Galster, George 2012. *Driving Detroit: The Quest for Respect in the Motor City*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Gee, Marcus 2017. "Can a streetcar save Detroit?" *Globe and Mail* 24 April, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/detroit-transit-qline/article34796598/>.
- Georgakas, Dan and Surkin, Marvin. 1998. *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying*. Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press.
- Glaeser, Edward. 2011. *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Grabar, Henry 2016. "Can America's worst transit system be saved?" *Slate*, 7 June, <https://slate.com/business/2016/06/detroit-has-americas-worst-transit-system-could-the-regional-transit-master-plan-save-it.html>.
- Grengs, Joe 2010. "Job Accessibility and the Modal Mismatch in Detroit," *Journal of Transport Geography* 18: 42-54.
- Guillen, Joe 2017. "Little Caesars Arena: How the cost nearly doubled to \$863 million," *Detroit Free Press*, 6 September <https://www.freep.com/story/money/business/2017/09/06/little-caesars-arena-detroit-cost/616890001/>.
- Hall, Stephen and Jonas, Andrew E.G. 2014. "Urban Fiscal Austerity, Infrastructure Provision and the Struggle for Regional Transit in 'Motor City'," *Cambridge Journal of Regions Economy and Society*, 7: 189-206.
- Hyde, C. H. 2006. "Planning a Transportation System for Metropolitan Detroit in the Age of the Automobile: The Triumph of the Expressway," *Michigan Historical Review* 32: 59-95.
- Indergaard, Michael 2015. "Detroit's Regional Question," *City & Community* 14(2): 138-150.
- Kreichauf, René 2017. "Between Economic Revival and Social Disruption: The Redevelopment of Greater Downtown and the Emergence of new Socio-Spatial Inequalities," in Brian Doucet (ed) *Why Detroit Matters: Decline, Renewal, and Hope in a Divided City*. Chicago: Policy Press, 75-94.
- Lawrence, Eric D. 2019. "DDOT, SMART to launch unified payment system to cut hassle for Detroit bus riders," *Detroit Free Press*, 17 April, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2019/04/17/ddot-smart-bus-transfer-fees/3496478002/>.
- Lawrence, Eric D. 2018. "QLINE: Here's how it's doing after 1st year in service," *Detroit Free Press*, 2 May <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2018/05/02/qline-ridership-first-year/571528002/>.
- Lawrence, Eric D. 2017. "Without the Joe, what is Detroit People Mover's future?" *Detroit Free Press*, 26 December,

- <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2017/12/26/detroit-people-mover-joe-louis-arena-qline/971089001/>.
- LeDuff, Charlie 2013. *Detroit: An American Autopsy*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Livengood, Chad 2018a. "QLine falls short of ridership goals in first year," *Crain's Detroit Business*, 2 May, <https://www.crainsdetroit.com/article/20180502/news/659601/qline-falls-short-of-ridership-goals-in-first-year>.
- Livengood, Chad 2018b "A year later, delays still plague QLine," *Crain's Detroit Business*, 6 May, <https://www.crainsdetroit.com/article/20180506/news/660016/a-year-later-delays-still-plague-qline>.
- Lowe, Kate and Grengs, Joe 2018. "Private Donations for Public Transit: The Equity Implications of Detroit's Public-Private Streetcar," *Journal of Planning Education and Research*
- M-1 Rail 2018a. *Q-Line: On the Move*. Detroit.
- M-1 Rail 2018b. *Development & Construction Inclusion Report 2013-2017*. Detroit.
- Marklew, Tim 2018. "A brief history of the Detroit People Mover," *Culture Trip*, 10 April, <https://theculturetrip.com/north-america/usa/michigan/articles/a-brief-history-of-the-detroit-people-mover/>.
- Martelle, Scott 2014. *Detroit: A Biography*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press.
- Martin, R.W. 2004. "Can Black Workers Escape Spatial Mismatch? Employment Shifts, Population Shifts, and Black Unemployment in American Cities," *Journal of Urban Economics* 55(1): 179-194.
- Montgomery, Charles 2013. *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design*. London: Penguin Books.
- Montlake, Simon 2017. "Detroit charts a public-private path to its future, with streetcars," *Christian Science Monitor*, 12 May <https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/2017/0512/Detroit-charts-a-public-private-path-to-its-future-with-streetcars>.
- Moskowitz, Peter 2018. *How to Kill a City: Gentrification, Inequality, and the Fight for the Neighborhood*. New York: Nation Books.
- Motor City Freedom Riders 2017. "Why Rally for Real Regional Transit? A Guide for the Perplexed," 12 May, <https://motorcityfreedomriders.org/2017/05/12/why-rally-for-real-regional-transit-a-guide-for-the-perplexed/>.
- Neavling, Steve 2019. "Two years in, Detroit's QLine falls far short of expectations," *DetroitMetroTimes* 1 May, <https://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/two-years-in-detroits-qline-falls-far-short-of-expectations/Content?oid=21552552>.
- Nelles, Jen 2012 "Regionalism Redux: Exploring the Impact of Federal Grants on Mass Public Transit Governance and Political Capacity in Metropolitan Detroit." *Urban Affairs Review* 49: 220-253.
- O'Toole, Randal (2012). "The Great Streetcar Conspiracy," *Policy Analysis: Cato Institute*, 14 June.
- Pedroni, T.C. 2011. "Urban Shrinkage as a Performance of Whiteness: Neoliberal Urban Restructuring, Education and Racial Containment in the Post-Industrial, Global Niche City," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 32(2): 203-215.
- Provenzano, Frank 2017. "QLine connects 'economic development dots,'" *Michigan Economic Development Corporation*, 11 May,

- <https://www.michiganbusiness.org/news/2017/05/qline-connects-economic-development-dots/>.
- Ramos-Santiago, Luis Enrique, Brown, Jeffrey R. and Nixon, Hilary 2015a. "Transit Performance of Modern-Era Streetcars: Consideration of Five U.S. Cities," *Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board* 2534(1): 57-67.
- Ramos-Santiago, Luis Enrique, Brown, Jeffrey R. and Nixon, Hilary 2015b. "A Cautionary Tale of Two Streetcars: Little Rock's River Rail and Tampa's TECO Line," *Journal of Public Transportation*, 18(1): 1-17.
- Rapson, Rip 2014. "How did Detroit and light-rail transit appear in the same sentence? A case study and some implications," *Speech at the Rail-Volution Annual Conference in Minneapolis* 23 September.
- Risen, James 1985. "People Mover in Detroit seen as transit disaster," *Los Angeles Times*, 8 December <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1985-12-08-mn-14803-story.html>.
- Reese, Laura A., Sands, Garry and Skidmore, Mark 2014. "Memo from Motown: Is Austerity Here to Stay?" *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 7: 99-118.
- Shea, Bill 2018. "QLine cost \$7 million higher than previous estimate," *Crain's Detroit Business*, 28 August <https://www.crainsdetroit.com/article/20170828/news/637526/qline-cost-7-million-higher-than-previous-estimate>.
- Shea, Bill 2017. "QLine: A timeline," *Crain's Detroit Business*, 7 May, <https://www.crainsdetroit.com/article/20170507/news/170509857/qline-a-timeline>.
- Stengel, Richard and Mitchell, William J. 1986. "Horizontal elevator to nowhere," *Time Magazine*, 13 January.
- Sugrue, Thomas J. 2005. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Sutcliffe, John B. and Cipkar, Sarah 2017. "Citizen Participation in the Public Transportation Policy Process," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 26(2): 33 – 51.
- Terry, Nicquel and Marks Hicks 2018. "QLine has fewer riders than expected, report says," *The Detroit News*, 2 May.
- Thomas, J. M. 2013. *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Tompkins Bates 2012. *The Making of Black Detroit in the Age of Henry Ford*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Walgrave, Amanda 2018. "How will the QLine streetcar impact Detroit's economy and community," *visitdetroit.com*, 14 February at <https://visitdetroit.com/will-qline-streetcar-impact-detroits-economy-community/>.
- Williams, Candice, Ferretti, Christine and Ramirez, Charles E. 2018. "Why Amazon didn't pick Detroit," *The Detroit News*, 18 January.
- Williams, Tate 2017. "Detroit's new streetcar is an example of Philanthropy's rising power in cities," *Inside Philanthropy*, 16 May, <https://www.insidephilanthropy.com/home/2017/5/16/detroits-new-streetcar-an-example-of-philanthropys-power-in-city-planning>.
- Wilkerson, Isabel 1987. "Years late, Detroit's monorail opens," *New York Times*, 1 August, <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/08/01/us/years-late-detroit-s-monorail-opens.html>.