

St. Clair County Transit District

Analysis of Operating the Illinois Garage

Prepared for

The Illinois Department of Transportation

In Association with

The St. Clair County Transit District

Prepared by



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Disclaimer

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND STUDY PURPOSE

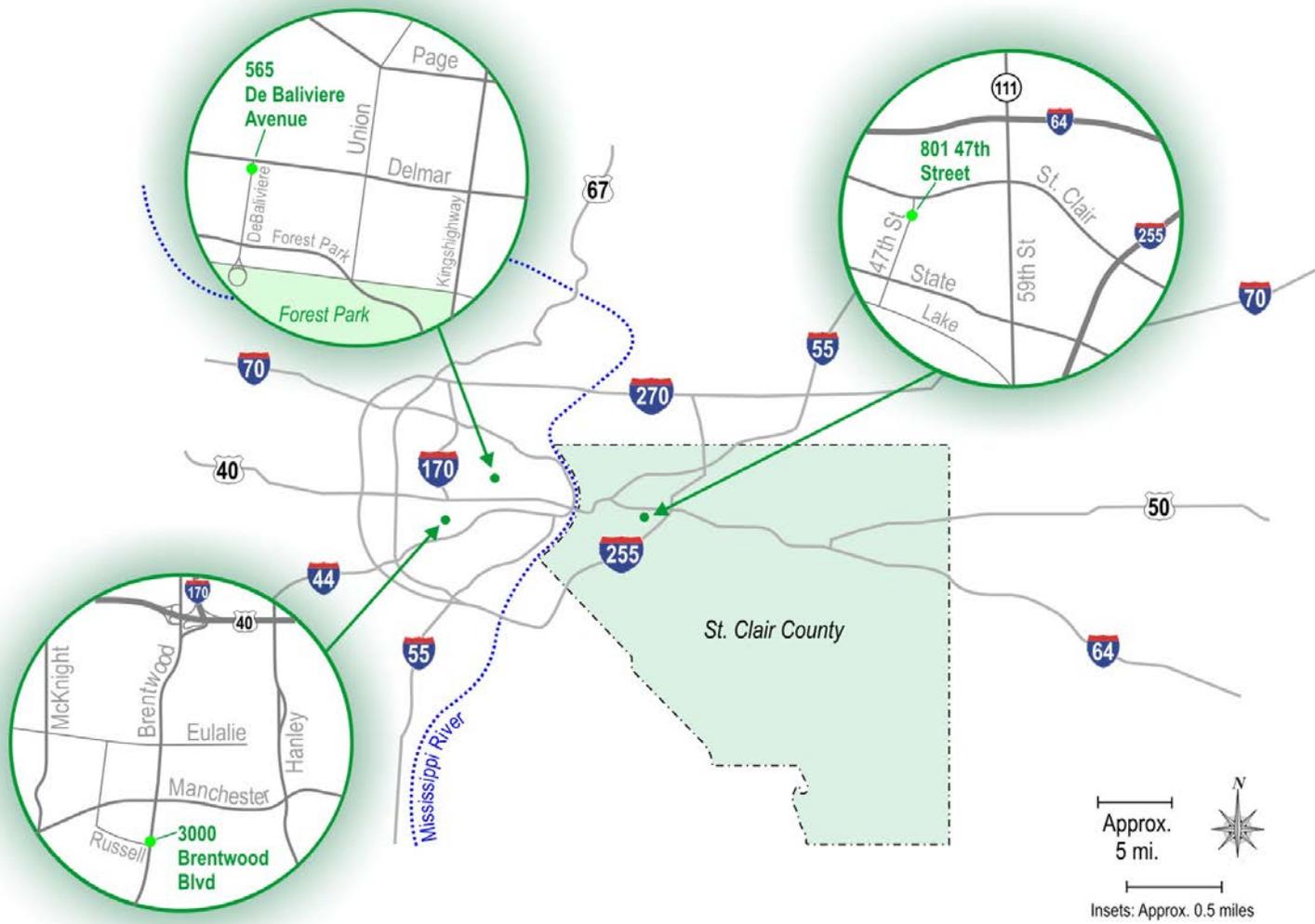
The St. Clair County Transit District (SCCTD) contracts with the Bi-State Development Agency (d.b.a. Metro) to operate its MetroBus and MetroLink services within St. Clair County, Illinois. St. Clair County's bus services are dispatched from the Illinois Garage, which is one of Metro's three bus garages (Figure 1). All of the buses and vans used within St. Clair County are currently stored and maintained at the Illinois Garage, including paratransit vehicles that the Alternate Transportation System (ATS) operates for St. Clair County's ADA and paratransit services.

Metro has considered closing the Illinois Garage for a variety of reasons and consolidating its bus services at the DeBaliviere and Brentwood Garages in Missouri. Consolidating services could potentially reduce costs, eliminate overhead from the garage and improve efficiency of Metro's bus fleet maintenance. On the other hand, dispatching vehicles from DeBaliviere Garage (the most logical alternative to the Illinois Garage) would significantly increase deadhead runs and increase the costs of maintaining ATS' vehicles. Therefore, this report focuses primarily on the potential cost and service implications of closing the Illinois Garage and moving Metro's bus storage, maintenance, and dispatching functions to its Missouri garages, primarily the DeBaliviere Garage.

The specific issues to be addressed in this study include the following:

- Increased bus mileage and operating hours necessary to operate St. Clair County services from the DeBaliviere Garage in Missouri, including travel time studies to determine peak and off-peak time schedules required to cross the Mississippi River;
- Cost implications of closing the garage, including the costs of additional deadhead mileage;
- Impacts of the closure on charges to the St. Clair County Transit District, which currently pays for service on a bus hour basis;
- The impact on Alternate Transportation Systems' vehicle maintenance costs resulting from closure of this Illinois Garage maintenance facility;
- Potential service degradation from budgetary cutbacks and increased deadheads; and
- Impacts of the Federal Capital Vehicle Maintenance Allocation Formula (although only indirectly connected with the Illinois Garage).

FIGURE 1. Existing Garage Location Map



CHAPTER 2: DATA COLLECTION

2.1 TRAVEL TIME STUDY

Two key pieces of information needed to evaluate the cost implications of closing the Illinois Garage are increased mileage and additional deadheads that would likely occur. For this report’s purposes, the project team conducted travel time runs between the DeBaliviere and Illinois Garages. Based on discussions with the St. Clair County Transit District, the project team conducted travel time runs along I-64 to/from the garages and along Delmar to/from the Eads Bridge to/from State Street. The consultant team chose to add the latter route since Metro can divert its buses from recurring congestion and maintenance work along the Poplar Street Bridge.

Table 1 depicts the travel time runs conducted on March 17, 2005 along both routes. It should be noted that the project team observed both congestion and maintenance along the Poplar Street Bridge.

TABLE 1. Travel Time Results

Route	Run Number	6:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M. Travel Time Runs			9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. Travel Time Runs		
		Start	End	Total (min)	Start	End	Total (min)
I-64 Eastbound	Run 1	6:05	6:22	17	9:35	9:55	20
	Run 2	7:05	7:28	23	10:23	10:44	21
	Run 3				11:48	12:12	24
I-64 Westbound	Run 1	6:30	7:04	34	10:00	10:21	21
	Run 2	7:30	8:05	35	10:45	11:09	24
Delmar Eastbound	Run 1	8:10	8:45	35	11:10	11:46	36
	Run 2						
Delmar Westbound	Run 1	8:50	9:25	35	11:50	12:26	36
	Run 2						
Route	Run Number	12:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. Travel Time Runs			3:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. Travel Time Runs		
		Start	End	Total (min)	Start	End	Total (min)
I-64 Eastbound	Run 1	12:39	1:02	23	4:16	4:40	24
	Run 2				5:11	5:51	40
	Run 3						
I-64 Westbound	Run 1	12:13	12:36	23	4:42	5:10	28
	Run 2	1:04	1:29	25			
Delmar Eastbound	Run 1	1:30	2:06	36	2:58	3:30	32
	Run 2						
Delmar Westbound	Run 1	2:18	2:55	37	3:37	4:15	38
	Run 2				5:52	6:39	47

2.2 CALCULATION OF INCREASED DEADHEAD TIME AND MILES

To determine the increased deadhead time and mileage, the project team estimated earlier dispatch times required to assure that runs begin on schedule and so added 40 minutes to run segments that would begin or end at the DeBaliviere Garage during the peak periods and 30 minutes to those during the off-peak periods. Since each run would begin and end at the DeBaliviere Garage, each roundtrip would have an increased deadhead time of 60 to 80 minutes. The use of Delmar Blvd. did not reduce run times and therefore was not considered in establishing these increased travel time estimates.

Trip distance between the Illinois and DeBaliviere Garages is 13 miles. Therefore, the consultant team added 26 miles to each route to reflect the additional deadhead mileage.

To calculate the yearly impact of the increased deadhead time and mileage, the consultant team listed each weekday, Saturday, and Sunday bus run that currently uses the Illinois Garage. These runs are shown in Tables A1-A3 in the Appendix. The consultant team calculated the yearly total, based on a typical 52 week calendar year.

Table 2 depicts the overall increase in annual deadhead time and mileage given the Illinois Garage’s closure.

TABLE 2. Yearly Increase in Deadhead Time and Mileage with All Buses Dispatched from DeBaliviere Garage

Timeframe	Attribute	Increased Bus Hours and Mileage			
		Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	Total
Daily	Hours	75.67	39.0	23.0	
	Miles	1,794	1,014	598	
Annual	Hours	19,673	2,067	1,196	22,936
	Miles	466,440	53,742	31,096	551,278

Dispatching all bus operations from the DeBaliviere Garage will likely add 22,936 hours and 551,278 miles to the St. Clair County Transit District’s annual existing operations. During this study’s cost phase, the consultant team observed that buses could avoid making a round trip to the DeBaliviere Garage if driver changes could be made in Illinois. During weekdays, 27 round trips could be avoided in this way. However, this option is hypothetical and would likely require changes in Metro’s driver dispatching policies. More information related to this option is discussed in Section 3.3.

CHAPTER 3: COST ANALYSIS

3.1 OVERVIEW

In this chapter, the consultant team uses two scenarios to analyze the cost implications of closing the Illinois Garage. In Scenario 1, all of Metro's operations are dispatched from the DeBaliviere Garage and all of its drivers would report there. In Scenario 2, all of Metro's buses would remain in Illinois during operating hours and all of its drivers would switch shifts in Illinois as needed. The following sections describe the cost implications of each scenario.

3.2 COST IMPACTS ON METRO TRANSIT OPERATIONS – SCENARIO ONE

The increased travel time associated with dispatching St. Clair County bus operations from the DeBaliviere Garage would eliminate any savings in overhead and maintenance. Under the current agreement between Metro and the St. Clair County Transit District (SCCTD), this change would shift costs from Metro to the St. Clair Transit District.

As previously discussed, dispatching all bus operations from the DeBaliviere Garage would add approximately 22,936 deadhead hours and 551,278 deadhead miles to Metro's bus operations within Illinois. Metro currently pays its drivers an average hourly rate of \$32.57 and spends approximately \$0.4976 per mile in fuel and related expenses. As shown in Table 3, using these cost factors, the estimated increase in operating costs for dispatching all Illinois bus services from DeBaliviere Garage would be approximately \$1.02 million. These expenses are conservative since they do not include recent fuel price increases, increased depreciation, or capital bus costs. They also do not include increased maintenance costs since these costs would likely be absorbed into Metro's new maintenance routine if the Illinois Garage was closed.

The Illinois Garage's closure and subsequent move to the DeBaliviere Garage would result in reduced operations overhead and lower supervisory and administrative costs. Metro previously estimated these costs savings at \$969,000 per year.¹ Table 3 shows that the net operating costs would therefore increase approximately \$52,352 annually.

Table 4 shows that the St. Clair County Transit District would pay an additional \$1.6 million annually if Metro closes the Illinois Garage. The St. Clair County Transit District contracts with Metro to provide bus service at a fixed rate per total bus hour. The current rate based on Metro's cost allocation formula is \$81.12 per hour. The consultant team recalculated the cost formula based on closure of the Illinois Garage. A combination of lower overhead costs and higher mileage resulting from the Illinois Garage's closure will likely lower this bus hour charge to \$79.54.

¹ SCE-Metro Estimates on various scenarios.xls, 2/20/2005", (Estimates of alternative cost scenarios by Metro Finance.)

TABLE 3. System Cost Impact of Closing the Illinois Garage – Scenario One

Timeframe	Attribute	Increased Bus Hours and Mileage				Cost Calculations		
		Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	Total	Rate (a)	Rate (b)	Cost
Daily	Hours	75.67	39.0	23.0				
	Miles	1,794	1,014	598				
Annual	Hours	19,673	2,067	1,196	22,936	\$32.57		\$747,036
	Miles	466,440	53,742	31,096	551,278		\$0.4976	\$274,316
Cost Increase from Added Mileage and Hours								\$1,021,352
Cost Savings from Closure of Garage (c)								\$969,000
Net Cost Increase (-Savings)								\$52,352

Notes:

- (a) From Metro annual unit cost analysis
- (b) <SCE-MetroEstimatesonScenarios> fuel and oil and materials cost
- (c) From <SCE-MetroEstimatesonScenarios> net difference in salaries, maintenance and garage costs between scenario A and B

TABLE 4. Cost Impacts on the St. Clair County Transit District – Scenario One

	Current Structure	With Changes (d)	Cost Change
Total Bus Hours	139,464	162,400	
Rate (d)	\$81.12	\$79.54	
Charge	\$11,313,316	\$12,917,319	\$1,604,003

Notes:

- (d) <FY20051stQuarterForecastRegionalModelNovember102004>

3.3 COST IMPACTS ON METRO TRANSIT OPERATIONS – SCENARIO TWO

Even if buses were maintained in Missouri, many of the required trips between Missouri and Illinois could be eliminated if Metro would keep the buses which serve Illinois counties in Illinois all day and switch drivers as necessary. However, this scenario is hypothetical and would likely require changes in Metro’s driver dispatching policies.

In this scenario, Metro and the St. Clair County Transit District could eliminate 27 weekday, 14 Saturday, and five Sunday round trips so that total operating costs would increase approximately \$630,886, as shown in Table 5. Since Metro previously estimated savings associated with closing the Illinois Garage at \$969,000, net costs would annually decrease \$338,114.

Table 6 shows that, that while there would be a net savings to the entire Metro system from closing the garage, the charges to the St. Clair County Transit District would still rise significantly because of bus hour charges for the service.

TABLE 5. System Cost Impact of Closing the Illinois Garage – Scenario Two

Timeframe	Attribute	Increased Bus Hours and Mileage				Cost Calculations		
		Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	Total	Rate (a)	Rate (b)	Cost
Daily	Hours	45.67	25.0	18.0				
	Miles	1,092	650	468				
Annual	Hours	11,873	1,325	936	14,134	\$32.57		\$460,355
	Miles	283,920	34,450	24,336	342,706		\$0.4976	\$170,531
Cost Increase from Added Mileage and Hours								\$630,886
Cost Savings from Closure of Garage (c)								\$969,000
Net Cost Increase (-Savings)								-\$338,114

Notes:

- (a) From Metro annual unit cost analysis
- (b) <SCE-MetroEstimatesonScenarios> fuel and oil and materials cost
- (c) From <SCE-MetroEstimatesonScenarios> net difference in salaries, maintenance and garage costs between scenario A and B

TABLE 6. Cost Impacts on the St. Clair County Transit District – Scenario Two

	Current Structure	With Changes (d)	Cost Change
Total Bus Hours	139,464	153,598	
Rate (d)	\$81.12	\$80.04	
Charge	\$11,313,316	\$12,294,753	\$981,437

Notes:

- (d) <FY20051stQuarterForecastRegionalModelNovember102004>

Metro has also discussed a third option, which is to maintain the buses in Missouri but dispatch them from another site in Illinois. While the consultant team has not formally analyzed this scenario, it believes that this scenario would not generate significant cost savings. Most of the additional hourly costs associated with Scenario 2 would still be incurred, if buses were moved daily across the river. To avoid moving the fleet across the river on a daily basis, an alternative storage and fueling site would be required, which could lead to substantial costs.

3.4 COST IMPACTS ON ATS VEHICLE SERVICES

In addition to providing maintenance and storage facilities for the fixed route buses, the Illinois Garage is used to store and maintain Alternate Transportation System (ATS)'s thirty paratransit vehicles. ATS provides Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and demand response paratransit services for the St. Clair County Transit District. These thirty vehicles consist of 26 Ford E-450 diesel 18 passenger step vans, and four thirty passenger buses. If the Illinois Garage were closed, these vehicles would require a new maintenance and storage arrangement.

Although many of the factors affecting ATS' operating costs are unknown or subject to negotiation in the absence of the Illinois Garage, the following three factors would very likely increase the costs of maintaining and storing ATS' buses:

- First, routine service and maintenance costs would increase. The Illinois Garage reports that it currently charges the Alternate Transportation System an average of \$45,000 per month for cleaning, repairs, tires, parts, fuel and oil. These costs amount to \$0.625 per mile based on an average of 72,000 miles per month. These costs are based on shop rates that are half of what a private garage would charge. Moreover, services such as cleaning are already done on site. Purchase of these services from a private garage would likely increase these costs to approximately \$0.90 per mile or \$64,800 per month. Under this scenario, total annual maintenance costs would increase from \$540,000 per year to \$777,600 per year, an increase of \$237,600.
- Second, the Alternate Transportation System would need to find another place to securely store its equipment. Currently, it stores its vehicles for free at the Illinois Garage.
- Third, the Alternate Transportation System would likely have to store its vehicles outside and thus exposed to weather if it moved to a new facility. Since storing vehicles outside increases vehicle maintenance costs and shortens a vehicle's useful life, this increased wear would likely require an additional purchase of one bus per year at a cost of \$200,000.

Adding all of these factors together, the smallest likely increase would be \$237,600, if the Alternate Transportation System could find favorable shop rates, indoor vehicle storage, or no-cost storage. With increased storage costs in reduced vehicle life, additional costs could easily exceed \$430,000 annually.

3.5 SERVICE IMPACTS OF CLOSING THE ILLINOIS GARAGE ON THE ST. CLAIR COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT

Closing of the Illinois Garage would have three important implications for future bus service in St. Clair County. First, routes would have to be restructured in order to reduce vehicle miles and keep Metro's service charges within budget. Scenarios One and Two would increase the St. Clair County Transit District's costs by 14.2 percent and 8.7 percent respectively. Bringing these service charges back to their current level would require bus hour cutbacks of 12.4 percent, if all dispatches were from the DeBaliviere Garage and 8 percent if Scenario Two was achieved.

Second, closing the Illinois Garage would not only increase costs and require service cutbacks, but also reduce service reliability in St. Clair County. These buses would then have to travel through the I-64 Corridor, which is highly congested and has a limited number of alternative routes (i.e. Delmar Blvd.). While normal delays can be accommodated by revising schedules and adding deadhead time, this corridor is often subjected to delays from accidents and other non-recurring incidents. If buses would be caught in these tie-ups and unable to start on time, system reliability will decline.

Finally, cost increases for the Alternate Transportation System will likely cause service reductions to seniors and people with disabilities. To the extent that these are ADA services associated with Metro's fixed routes, the St. Clair County Transit District will face higher costs or be forced to make additional cuts in associated fixed routes.

3.6 FEDERAL CAPITAL VEHICLE MAINTENANCE ALLOCATION

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) uses the Federal Capital Vehicle Maintenance (FCVM) allocation to compensate transit agencies for their capital equipment maintenance costs. Metro's allocation contains funding for its MetroLink and MetroBus systems as well as the St. Clair County Transit District. By agreement between the St. Clair County Transit District and Metro, the Federal Capital Vehicle Maintenance funds are split between the agencies. The portion that is allocated to the St. Clair County Transit District is treated as a credit against its reimbursement to Metro. The method of allocating these costs thus affects St. Clair County Transit District's operating costs.

Metro and the St. Clair County Transit District have an agreement, which splits this allocation based on total system passengers. Currently, the St. Clair County Transit District receives 14.76% of the \$15,929,062 allocation, with a positive adjustment of \$5,580 to account for passenger trips to St. Clair County that originated in St. Louis' Central Business District.

This section will show and evaluate several alternative allocation methods, including their potential impacts on the St. Clair County Transit District. Please see Table 7 for the current allocation and its alternatives.

The first alternative, which is listed in the second row of Table 7, shows the St. Clair County Transit District's allocated share without an adjustment for passenger trips in St. Louis' Central Business District. This adjustment was excluded because the consultant team has assumed that it will be treated separately or dropped altogether in the future, given its small size.

The second alternative, which is listed in the third row of Table 7, splits the allocation according to total vehicle hours. This alternative results in a smaller allocated share since only 12.62% of vehicle hours currently occur in St. Clair County, compared to 14.76% of passengers. This split improves for the St. Clair County Transit District only if revenue hours are considered. However, it is still below the passenger allocation because St. Clair's service is very productive and has further benefited from the elimination of several unproductive runs. The additional 22,937 bus hours that would result for dispatching all buses from the DeBaliviere Garage would still not raise St. Clair's percentage of total vehicle hours above the current allocation method.

The third alternative, which is listed in the fourth row of Table 7, uses vehicle miles rather than vehicle hours. This improves St. Clair County Transit District's allocation over its current use of the passenger method. Using revenue miles rather than total vehicle miles improves St. Clair County Transit District's allocation even further, since all of MetroLink's miles within St. Clair County are revenue miles. Under this alternative, St. Clair County Transit District's allocation would increase by \$477,982, to \$2,885,183 before any Central Business District adjustment.

The fourth and fifth alternatives, which are listed in the fifth and sixth rows of Table 7, lose the influences of MetroLink and therefore reduce the allocation of total system hours or miles. The consultant team, therefore, only found the third alternative to be better for the St. Clair County Transit District than the current methodology for splitting the region's Federal Capital Vehicle Maintenance Allocation.

This analysis did not consider the impact of new MetroLink services in Missouri which will likely reduce the St. Clair County Transit District's share of the Federal Capital Vehicle Maintenance Allocation under any scenario.

TABLE 7. Federal Maintenance Credit Allocation Alternatives

Allocation Factor		System Total	SCCTD	SCCTD Percentage	Total Credit	SCCTD Share
Current Method	Total system passengers with CBD allocation	\$43,591,719	\$6,436,303	14.76%	\$15,929,062	2,407,201 (a)
	Total system passengers without CBD allocation	\$43,591,719	\$6,436,303	14.76%	\$15,929,062	\$2,351,921
Alternative Methods	Total Vehicle Hours	\$1,472,721	\$185,842	12.62%	\$15,929,062	\$2,010,082 (b)
	Vehicle Revenue Hours	\$1,138,740	\$148,079	13.00%	\$15,929,062	\$2,071,375 (b)
	Total Vehicle Miles	\$21,784,258	\$3,671,814	16.86%	\$15,929,062	\$2,684,900 (b)
	Total Revenue Miles	\$18,848,103	\$3,413,900	18.11%	\$15,929,062	\$2,885,183 (b)(c)
	Total Bus Hours	\$1,368,196	\$139,464	10.19%	\$15,929,062	\$1,623,693
	Bus Revenue Hours	\$1,059,566	\$110,459	10.42%	\$15,929,062	\$1,660,593
	Bus Miles	\$19,407,927	\$2,366,285	12.19%	\$15,929,062	\$1,942,129
	Bus Revenue Miles	\$16,484,048	\$2,116,005	12.84%	\$15,929,062	\$2,044,763 (b)
	Bus Passengers	\$28,373,250	\$2,383,573	8.40%	\$15,929,062	\$1,338,165

Notes:

- (a) CBD Adjustment increases St. Clair allocation by \$5,580.
- (b) Metro Bus and Metro Link. CBD hours and miles allocated to St. Clair in proportion to non-CBD
- (c) Includes charter and special service.

CHAPTER 4: OVERALL SUMMARY

This study concludes that closing the Illinois Garage and dispatching all buses serving St. Clair County from DeBaliviere Garage will not result in net cost savings, but would shift system costs from Metro to the St. Clair County Transit District.

1. If Metro closes its Illinois Garage and moves its Illinois dispatching operations to the DeBaliviere Garage, Metro’s buses would travel an additional 551,278 deadhead miles and operate an additional 22,936 deadhead hours annually.
2. Even under an alternative service structure in which Metro moved each bus across the river only once per day and provided driver relief in Illinois, Metro’s buses would travel an additional 342,706 deadhead miles and operate an additional 14,134 hours annually.
3. The operating costs resulting from these additional deadhead hours and miles would be more than \$1.0 million if all dispatches were from the DeBaliviere Garage, or more than \$630,000 with Illinois relief drivers.
4. Under the current contract between Metro and the St. Clair County Transit District, costs would be shifted to the St. Clair County Transit District under either scenario.

- a. Closing the Illinois Garage and providing all dispatches from Illinois would increase the St. Clair County Transit District's charges under the current contract by \$1.6 million per year;
 - b. Using an Illinois relief structure to avoid some river crossings, the St. Clair County Transit District's annual cost for MetroBus services would increase more than \$981,000 per year.
5. If Metro closed the Illinois Garage, the Alternate Transit System (ATS) would annually face cost increases of approximately \$237,600 to \$430,000 for storage, maintenance, and operating costs.
 6. The total cost to St. Clair County transit agencies of closing the Illinois Garage would be between \$1.85 million (Scenario 2 plus the lower ATA cost) and \$3.5 million (Scenario 1 plus the higher ATA cost).
 7. The resulting cost increases and reductions in reliability from closing the Illinois Garage would require cutbacks in bus service to St. Clair County, including service reductions to seniors and people with disabilities.
 8. The consultant team's analysis of alternative allocation methods for the Federal Capital Vehicle Maintenance Allocation reveals that allocating this region's share of revenue credits by total system vehicle miles or total system vehicle revenue miles would increase the St. Clair County Transit District's share of the allocation from its current levels.