

QLINE ON THE MOVE

A ONE-YEAR
REPORT ON
DETROIT'S
STREETCAR
MAY 2018





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Q-LINE: ON THE MOVE

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INTRODUCTION

On May 12, 2017, the QLINE officially started moving riders up and down Woodward Avenue. For the first time in 60 years, Detroit set into motion its very own streetcar. One year later, 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. At the same time, the QLINE has revved up Detroit's urban revival – bringing with it more than \$7 billion in new investment for 211 development projects in the past five years alone. It's been called the "show pony of the revolution" in the "most exciting city in the world," at least by one visiting New York Times reporter. For Detroiters, it's a new way to travel on Woodward Avenue, connecting residents and visitors to major employers, destinations along the route and the heart of the city's burgeoning restaurant, retail and nightlife scene. "The QLINE's first year helped bring the Woodward Corridor to life," said M-1 RAIL president and CEO Matt Cullen. "QLINE has succeeded as a catalyst for investment and helped change the way Detroit moves."

It's been one year since the QLINE took its first turn on Congress Street – and what a year it's been. The QLINE has logged more than 1.3 million rides in its first year and enhanced the lives of residents, commuters and visitors alike. This report takes a close look at the QLINE's first year, highlighting where it's been and where it's going – assessing successes and scrutinizing challenges – with newly

released data and improvement plans. This report also looks at the role Detroit's first streetcar in more than six decades is playing throughout the region, how the unique public-private partnership that enabled the QLINE to go from a dream to a reality has become an important first step in a comprehensive regional transit system. So much so, that the federal government has announced \$60 million in funds for the next regional transportation project.

There's no question that the QLINE has changed the way Detroit thinks about transit – in one year, the QLINE has shown how one forward-thinking transit system can help to transform the communities that surround it.

"The QLINE's first year helped bring the Woodward Corridor to life."

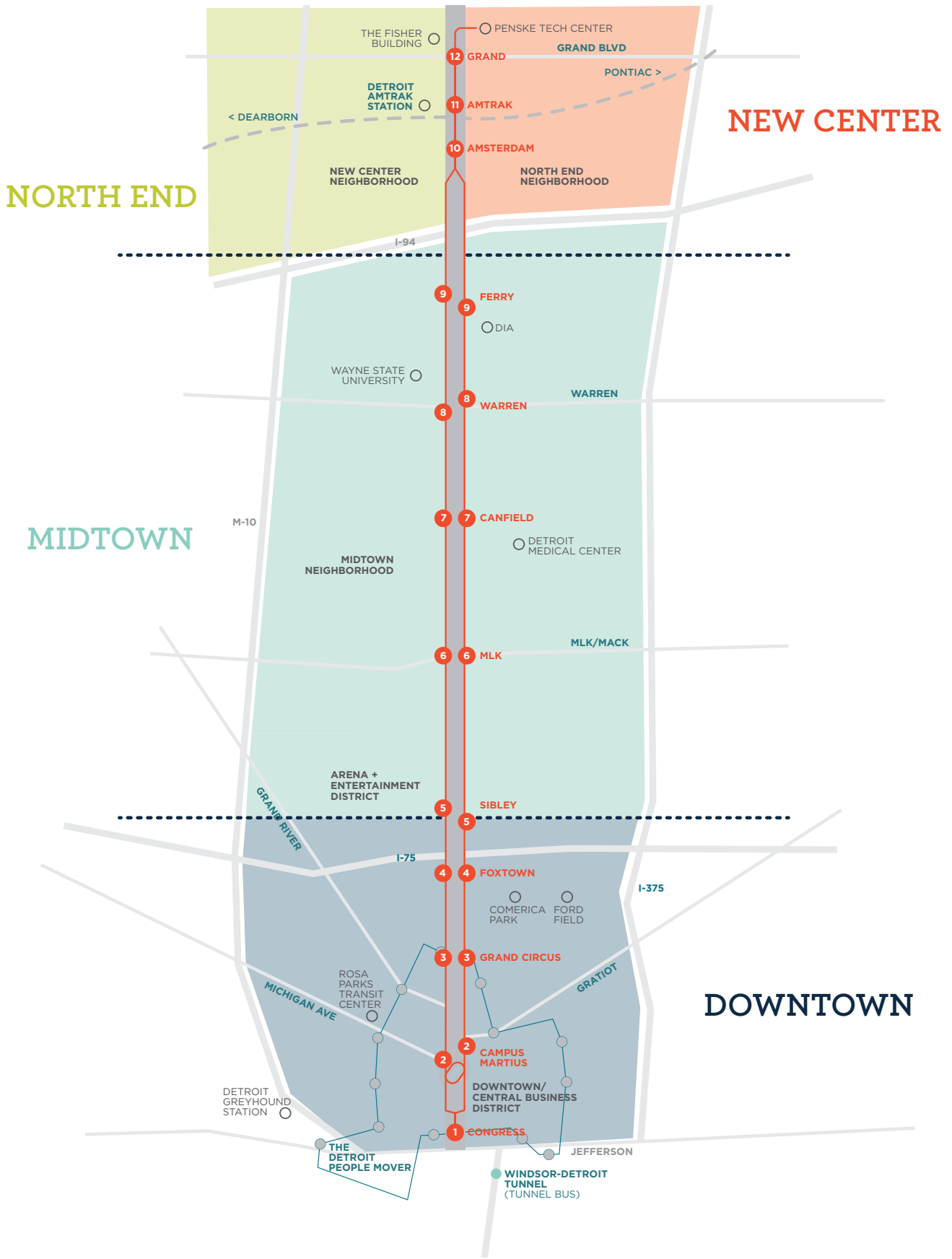
MATT CULLEN,
M-1 RAIL PRESIDENT AND CEO

RIDERSHIP ON PAR WITH OTHER CITIES

Official ridership data for the QLINE's first year is in, with a total of more than 1.3 million rides from

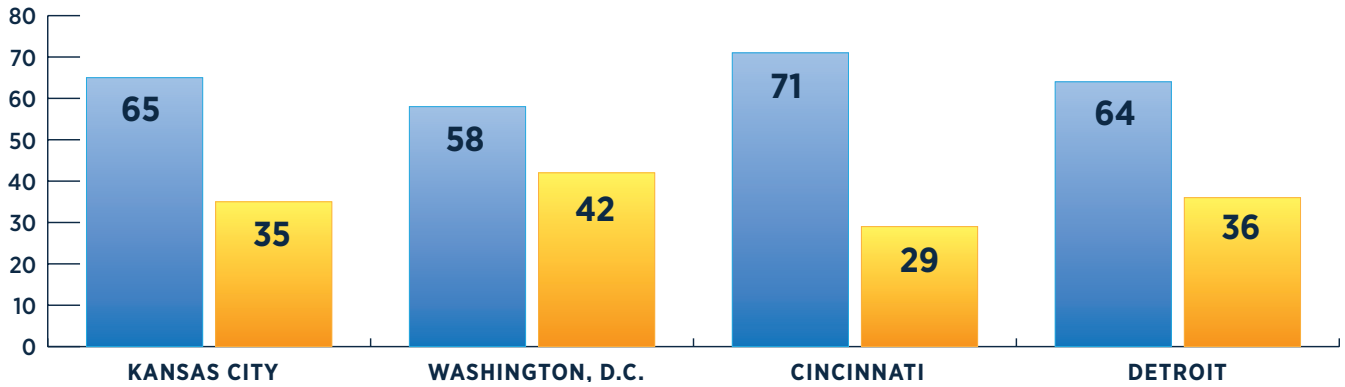
May 2017 through April 2018. As would be expected in a city where winter brings temperatures below zero – not to mention 31 inches of snow in one month – the QLINE had close to half the number of riders from November 2017 to April 2018 (2,700 average daily rides), as from May to October 2017 (average daily 4,660 rides). In fact, other cold weather cities – Kansas City and Cincinnati for example – see similar dips in ridership numbers in winter months.

	1 ST YEAR QLINE AVG. DAILY RIDERS
MAY 2017 - OCT. 2017	4,660
NOV. 2017 - APR. 2018	2,700
TOTAL YEAR 1 RIDES	1,350,000



QLINE STATION MAP

1ST YEAR RIDERSHIP % WARM VS. COLD MONTHS



When ridership numbers were broken down between the warmer months and the colder months, Detroit’s numbers were roughly equivalent to other cities. On the QLINE, 64 percent of the first year’s ridership occurred during the warmer months, compared to 65 percent in Kansas City, 58 percent in Washington, D.C., and 71 percent in Cincinnati.

All told, ridership numbers are expected to be on the upswing now that the weather is getting warmer. The most recent data shows that average daily ridership in April 2018 increased by 52 percent when compared to March.

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS
MEAN BETTER SERVICE**

“Working with our operating partner Transdev to continue improving service is our focus as QLINE enters its second year,” said Cullen. “We are working in close collaboration with the City of Detroit and MDOT to reduce delays by streamlining the process of towing vehicles obstructing the QLINE and preventing snow blockages during winter storms. The QLINE has also helped lead discussions with Olympia, Rock and other private partners to reduce delays during special events. We are optimistic these changes will lead to more reliable service for our riders.”

The QLINE can’t do anything about Michigan winters. However, as the weather improves, Detroit’s streetcar is committed to continually improving service to meet increased demand. To begin with,

the QLINE has had an almost perfect track record (98 percent) when it comes to having the requisite number of streetcars available for service. This, along with a wide range of operational improvements, has allowed the QLINE to bring its daily average headway – or time between vehicles – way down. One year ago, if a QLINE rider missed his streetcar, he had to wait an average of 19 minutes for the next streetcar to arrive. Now, a QLINE rider who misses his streetcar only has to wait 10 minutes to catch the next ride, during peak hours Monday through Saturday. In addition, time spent on a roundtrip ride has been reduced by 12 minutes and delays have plummeted from a high point in December. Overall, delays were minimal – only 2 percent of the total number of service hours were classified as delays of six minutes or more. The QLINE also has maintained an impeccable safety record throughout its first year, with only 18 reportable accidents, none resulting in citations for QLINE operators.

All these improvements were made possible by a hard-working and innovative QLINE team, who not only took on challenges proactively, but also immediately got to work searching for solutions as soon as any problems were identified. From traffic signal optimization and a new stop policy to less time spent charging and enhanced transit police enforcement, the QLINE has continuously adjusted and evolved to provide better, more efficient, and enjoyable service to its riders.

Specific examples of these solutions include optimized traffic signal timing at the Woodward Avenue



Meet Tamika Simmons

Tamika Simmons has been driving Detroit's streetcar from the very beginning. After 14 years driving motor coaches across the country, and spending too much time on the road, she jumped at the chance to use her driving skills close to home.

“It’s an interesting job,” Simmons said. “Woodward has a story every day. You see the people who sit at the different stops – they look for you and wave at you.”

Simmons works the early shift, stepping behind the wheel at 5 a.m.

“It’s kind of fun sometimes,” she said. “You’re on a track, you can’t really deviate from where you’re going, but our track flows with traffic, so you’ve got to work with cars on the road. There’s always cars that are trying to turn right in front of you.”

She likens driving a streetcar to driving a big computer.

“It’s not like you have a steering wheel and a brake pedal, everything is in your hands,” Simmons described.

Every season brings with it a learning curve. Rain can be a complicating factor – any time the tracks get wet, there’s more chance for slippage. Fortunately, the QLINE’s streetcars are equipped with two different braking systems.

“It keeps my driving skills fine-tuned,” she noted.

While Tamika hopes to continue driving the QLINE for a long time to come, she also wants to one day achieve the trifecta of planes, trains and automobiles.

“I’m trying to see if I can get a pilot’s license,” she said with a laugh. “I’m excited about it, I’ve just got to get my stomach together.”

intersections of Burroughs, Montcalm and Campus Martius; a triggered signal change at Congress; restricted right turn movements onto the I-75 service drive; an alternate drop-off point for the Little Caesars Arena and QLINE lane dedications from Temple to I-75.

The QLINE also has reduced charging time with higher than expected battery performance. Streetcars are now operating off-wire 80 percent of the time, which tops every other streetcar system in the nation.

This is just the beginning. The QLINE will be working to optimize traffic signals at other intersections along the existing 6.6-mile route to make each ride faster and more efficient. The QLINE team will continue to work with the Michigan Department of Transportation and the city of Detroit, Olympia, Rock and others to study traffic patterns, identify choke points and ensure that riders are getting a faster, safer, smoother QLINE experience.

Throughout the first year, the chief complaint from QLINE riders has been that streetcars weren't arriving as scheduled. The QLINE team has been working hard to address this issue and will soon unveil a revamped schedule interface for increased precision and accuracy. This new interface will change the way data is received and processed to ensure that traffic, and other elements that impact the streetcar's arrival, are

taken into account. In addition, it will include a time traffic overlay that is visible along the entire route – along with details about nearby attractions – to give riders the information they need to make informed transit decisions. All this will be seamlessly synched with the QLINE app on every type of mobile device.

Tickets are also available on the QLINE app – annual, monthly, day passes and three-hour passes can be purchased through the app or at a QLINE station. Over the next year, the QLINE team will be working with DDOT and SMART to achieve streamlined ticketing, giving riders the ability to effortlessly transfer from one mode of public transit to another.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONTINUES TO GROW

There's no question that business is hopping along the Woodward Corridor. In addition to the the new Little Caesars Arena, QLINE riders are using the streetcar to access Detroit's top cultural attractions – from the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Main Branch Detroit Library to the Max M. Fisher Music Center and the Detroit Opera House – and a wide range of culinary, retail and entertainment options.

The QLINE route's northern end has many exciting developments on tap – from the Brigitte Harris Cancer Pavilion, part of a 300-acre expansion and neighborhood redevelopment initiative, to the soon-to-be-completed redevelopment project near the Baltimore Station, which will include restau-

rants, retail and 23 upper-floor apartments.

Canfield Station, which brings riders to Midtown's many eclectic attractions, has been one of the QLINE's busiest stops. And Sibley Station, in front of Little Caesars Arena, has seen the most changes during QLINE's first year. With Wayne State University's Mike Ilitch School of Business scheduled to be completed this year, more positive developments are coming to that part of town.

COST, REVENUE AND FUTURE FUNDS

The QLINE came in just over its target for the first year's operating expenses. Actual direct system expenses were a total of \$5.8 million. As for revenue, the QLINE is still on track to operate through fiscal year 2020. First-year revenue projections come close to the \$1.2 million target with just under \$1 million in through mid-April, and this number is fully expected to go up with projected increases in ridership. From May 2017 to the beginning of September 2017, riders did not pay for the QLINE service – instead, the streetcar fares for all riders were funded through a generous grant from The Kresge Foundation. From September 2017 through April 2018, revenue shifted to the farebox – which brought in a total of \$417,050.

But QLINE is about much more than passenger fares and operational expenses. QLINE's operating partner Transdev employs about 50 people to run the QLINE operations. M-1 RAIL's commitment to building a representative workforce is demonstrated with 18 members of the team from Detroit, 24 African Americans and eight females on the team. In addition, the \$7 billion in economic impact along the QLINE route has helped bring Woodward Avenue to life, serving as a catalyst for investment and bringing new optimism for a regional transit system.

Detroit's streetcar is expected to bring in another \$60 million in federal funds for construction of the next regional transportation project that connects with the QLINE. The federal government made this \$60 million commitment in recognition of the \$100 million in private funds that were con-



Meet Mo Primus

“Good afternoon, how are you today? May I see your pass or your ticket? Is this your first time riding the QLINE?”

Riders who board Detroit’s streetcar during Mose Primus’ shift as an ambassador/fare inspector, are challenged not to smile when Mo turns his attention on them.

“I love my job. I love people. I love this city,” said Primus, a lifelong Detroit resident who also serves as president of the Yorkshire Woods Community Organization in his Eastside neighborhood. “I just try to make people smile. You don’t know what kind of day they’re going through so you give them a second to try to brighten up their day.”

Mo, who worked as a meat cutter for 42 years before launching his second career on the QLINE, remembers downtown at its most vibrant. He also lived downtown when it became what he calls a “ghost town.”

“To see all the construction going on it just amazes me, the different restaurants, the people actually downtown shopping, all the different events,” he said. “I’m happy, truly happy to see how Detroit is rebuilding itself.”

Mo started working as an ambassador on the QLINE in September 2017. He helps riders figure out how to purchase their tickets, find the right stop for their destination, or simply get around. He enjoys meeting new and different people every day – and developing relationships with repeat customers.

“I met this one young man – a college student – and we had a couple conversations. I told him about the community garden [4 Angels Garden] I started in my neighborhood. Now he’s recruiting some people from school to volunteer in my garden,” Primus said.

Working on the QLINE has been like having a front row seat to Detroit’s revitalization. For Mo, it’s inspired him to do more in his neighborhood.

He also likes to venture out to places on the QLINE route that riders recommend.

“As long as I had lived in the city, I had never been to the Whitney,” Primus said. “During my shift break one day I went to the Whitney and got brunch. It was off the chain.”

For the record, he had the chicken and waffles.



“The QLINE is a testament to what we can do together – the people of Detroit, business, government, philanthropy.”

RIP RAPSON, PRESIDENT AND CEO, THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

tributed to develop the QLINE. Because of the outsized commitment made by the local philanthropic and corporate community that made QLINE a reality, the federal government has committed to match funding for the next transit initiative that will continue transforming how Detroit moves.

CONCLUSION

The QLINE is much more than a streetcar, and it is much more than a way to get from one place to another. The QLINE is a roadmap to what's possible when people are connected. Detroit's streetcar embodies a future where the local region thrives as one – where community by community, neighborhood by neighborhood, connections are forged to create one way forward, together.

With its first full year coming to a close, and new, exciting developments ahead, the QLINE demonstrates the value of transit investment for the Detroit region. “The QLINE is a testament to what we can do together – the people of Detroit, business, government, philanthropy,” said Rip Rapson, president and CEO of The Kresge Foundation. “When we began this quest more than a decade ago, it was far from assured that we would ever see streetcars return to the Woodward Corridor after two generations. And here we are, providing more than a million rides a year and driving the core city's resurgence. Is it any more audacious to work toward a 21st century transit system to unify our entire region? The QLINE shows us it is possible.”



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