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Working Title: Collaboration between the Automotive and Public Transit Sectors to Enhance Workforce Training and Development Opportunities in Detroit, Michigan, USA	
Outline of Topic with Rationale for doing it: The question I plan to answer in my dissertation is, how can cross-industry collaboration between the public transit and automotive sectors enhance workforce training and development opportunities in Detroit, Michigan? Detroit is often known as the “Motor City” because it is a large manufacturing hub for the mass production of automobiles. Due to many factors, including increased global competition, the once dominant Detroit automotive companies have lost ground in recent decades. The economy in Detroit is lacking diversification outside of the automotive industry, which means job opportunities and the overall economy have suffered as a result of the market share decline (Millington, 2021). Detroit’s singular focus on the automotive industry and high private car ownership rates have hindered Detroit’s development of public transit, in addition to many other factors. As public demand and environmental sustainability needs surmount, a grand opportunity exists for the automotive companies of Detroit to lead the collaboration with the public transit sector for mutually beneficial and sustainable growth. This collaboration can create public transit development, workforce training opportunities, and more jobs for automotive workers in Michigan. The downfall of automotive job opportunities in Michigan is summarized well in this excerpt from a 1986 New York Times article: <i>“The reason, analysts say, is the increasing share of the market captured by imports and the shifting of supplier jobs to other locations. There was a great shakeout in the auto industry in this state starting in 1979, said David Verway, a professor of business administration at Wayne State University. We lost a great deal of industrial capacity. These were not just layoffs; the plants were permanently closed.” (Holusha , 1986)</i> A full recovery never happened after the downfall started in the late 1970’s. In 2013, the city government of Detroit became the largest city in the USA to declare bankruptcy. At a median income of \$27,838 USD, Detroit is the poorest city in the country with a population over 100,000 (World Population Review, 2024). There are glaring socio-economic issues in the city. The diminishing automotive industry and lack of economic diversification and adaptability have played a part in these issues, but the industry now has an opportunity to be part of the solution. The automotive industry of metropolitan Detroit collaborating with the public transit sector will not solve all of the socio-economic challenges in the city, however, it can serve as a positive step forward in environmental sustainability and future-proofing the local economy. The four main objectives I will focus on to achieve this thesis are outlined below:	

Communities of practice

- Knowledge sharing and cross-training between the automotive and public transit sectors will enhance both areas
- Talent development and job opportunities
 - New job opportunities will be created for talent that has lost their jobs due to automotive business leaving Michigan
 - Training, development and community engagement opportunities will benefit companies, workers, and the people of Detroit
 - Opportunity for engagement with NGOs, local government, and universities

Shared value to create community and business resilience

- Rising global competition has diminished the market share of Detroit automotive companies. Given the lack of industry diversification in the local economy, this has had a negative impact on the job market and financial well-being of the city and its people (Eberts and Kline, 2012).
- Diversifying the economy will create adaptability, longevity, and stabilization
- Opportunity to examine the role of technology in training and development, potentially leading to increased innovation

The circular economy

- Creating value through sustainability
- Increased innovation
- New avenues of sustainable revenue

Stakeholder involvement and supporting resources

- The main stakeholders are leaders of the automotive companies
 - I will mainly focus on the companies often referred to as “the big three”: General Motors, Ford, and Stellantis (formerly Chrysler). General Motors and Ford are still within the top three of the largest market share in the US. Stellantis is currently number five (Carlier, 2024).
- I will utilize research from the course to discuss how these companies can use sustainable leadership to achieve the objectives of this thesis. Other areas I will elaborate on:
 - This collaboration will help them future-proof their business
 - Evaluating their stakeholders by understanding the business value of sustainability and social responsibility
- Other partners and/or beneficiaries of this collaboration:
 - The big three automotive companies of Detroit and the large ecosystem of automotive suppliers in metro Detroit
 - Public transit organizations
 - In Detroit, the main ones are: Detroit Department of Transportation, SMART (Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation), Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA), Detroit Transportation Corporation
 - Automotive workers
 - Applicable union organizations
 - United Auto Workers (UAW): the largest union for automotive workers in the US
 - Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU): the largest union for transportation workers in the US
 - City, county, state, and national government
 - NGOs / non-profit organizations
 - Michigan Works Association, Michigan Workforce Hub, Hope Network

Workforce Development, Michigan Mobility Talent Consortium, and Michigan Mobility Institute

- Research universities in Michigan
 - University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Wayne State University (the largest university in the city of Detroit).

Indicative Literature (Theoretical ideas being used or tested e.g. circular economy):

- The business case for sustainability
 - [The Comprehensive Business Case for Sustainability](#)
 - [Business Cases for Sustainability: The Role of Business Model Innovation for Corporate Sustainability](#)
 - [Sustainable Leadership Practices for Enhancing Business Resilience and Performance](#)
- Circular economy
 - [Designing the Business Models for Circular Economy—Towards the Conceptual Framework](#)
 - [Doughnut economics: 4 Questions for Industry Leaders](#)
- CP3s (community-centered, public-private partnerships)
 - [How Cities are Reinventing the Public-Private Partnership – Four Lessons from Around the Globe](#)
 - [Rise of Community-Centred Public Private Partnerships \(CP3\)](#)
 - [Why aren't more cities and counties embracing public-private partnerships?](#)
- Other supporting literature:
 - [The Derailment of Detroit: Public Transit as a Threat to the Brand of Capitalism](#)
 - [Taking Action to Support Auto Workers and Manufacturers, Including in Michigan](#)
 - [Tracking the Transition of Michigan's Displaced Auto Workers During Significant Restructuring in the Auto Industry During Significant Restructuring in the Auto Industry](#)

Proposed Methodology and Methods:

- Qualitative method
- Collect sample data through in-depth interviews with 8-12 individuals
 - Target key stakeholders and subject matter experts in the following areas: automotive, public transit, government, universities, NGOs
- Find resources / contacts from other cities with successful public transit CP3 collaborations
- I plan to conduct a PESTLE analysis (Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal and Environmental) to guide my research (CIPD, 2024)

CITATIONS

- 1) Carlier, M. (2024). *Car Manufacturers' U.S. Market Share YTD 2023*.
www.statista.com/statistics/343162/market-share-of-major-car-manufacturers-in-the-united-states/
- 2) CIPD. *Pestle Analysis*. (2024).
<https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/factsheets/pestle-analysis-factsheet/#gref>
- 3) Eberts, Randall W. and Kenneth J. Kline. 2012. *Tracking the Transition of Michigan's Displaced Auto Workers During Significant Restructuring in the Auto Industry*. W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. <https://research.upjohn.org/reports/202>
- 4) Holusha, J. (1986, September 27). *Michigan Diversifying Its Economy*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/09/27/us/michigan-diversifying-its-economy.html>
- 5) Millington, M. (2021, October 27). *The interdependency of Detroit and the automotive industry*. MDR Home.
<https://mcstor.library.milligan.edu/items/1a7eabf1-0123-464f-957f-979be236fb68>
- 6) World Population Review. (2024). *Poorest cities in America 2024*.
<https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-city-rankings/poorest-cities-in-america>