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Senate Transportation Committee
Michigan Legislature
February 28, 2012

Toni Mocerì
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Cell: 586.619.9054

Senator Casperson and members of the Senate Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today in support of the Regional Transit Authority legislation, Senate Bill 909. My name is Toni Mocerì. I am here representing the Macomb County Board of Commissioners as well as my constituents in the City of Warren.

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners has long led the region in its support of public transportation. Continuing in this tradition, the Board of Commissioners has passed repeated resolutions in favor the creation of a regional transit authority.

Resolution No. 17 of 2011 passed on June 23, 2011 called on both the executive and legislative elected bodies of the City of Detroit, and Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties to support the establishment of a Regional Transit Authority; and called on the Governor and the Michigan legislature to take action to ensure passage of all necessary, related legislation in the Michigan House of Representatives.

On December 15, 2011, the Macomb County Board of Commissioners passed a Proclamation in support of the Formation of Regional Partners Advocating Transit Here, (R-PATH), which Commissioner Flynn detailed in his testimony.

Most recently, the Macomb County Board Commissioners unanimously passed Resolution No. 3 of 2012 on February 23rd. This resolution proclaims the benefits of Senate Bill 909 to the greater prosperity of our region and State, and encourages the State legislature to adopt it. The Board further requests that Section 5 of the Bill should be amended to require approval of each county executive and mayoral appointee to the new authority's board by the relevant County Commission or City Council.

Similarly, the Board requests that Section 6 of the Bill should be amended to stipulate that the citizens' advisory committee be appointed by entities other than the new authority's board, subject to legislative approval. Considering that the appointments are term-based, these amendments would help to

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guarantee quality candidates that are truly accountable to the communities they represent. The Macomb County Board of Commissioners believes these policy changes would ensure maximum citizen representation within the Regional Transit Authority.

For those members of the committee who may not be familiar with Macomb County, we are the only county to fully support the SMART bus system. We fund SMART through a countywide millage, and all 27 communities within Macomb County participate in it. There is no opt-out option. The Gratiot route serving Macomb County has more than 5,700 riders daily and is SMART's highest ridership route. Importantly, over 63 percent of Macomb County passengers are using SMART to go to work. I would also like to emphasize that while public transportation is crucial to talent and youth retention, Macomb County and the region is aging. By 2015, nearly a half-million of people 65 and older in metropolitan Detroit will live in communities where public transportation service is either poor or non-existent. Citizens of all ages need more options.

On a personal note, I believe that a comprehensive regional transportation system is fundamental to the quality of life and economic prosperity of southeast Michigan.

I first began riding SMART buses at the age of 14 because it allowed my friends and I to get to destinations without relying on rides from others. In 2007, I returned to southeast Michigan after my graduate studies, without a car. I had to make employment and housing decisions based on access to bus routes.

Especially in these tough economic times, we can no longer ignore the need of a growing population which faces similar choices, but in a way that is much more critical to their well-being. We need to address this gap with quality options which connect our residents — whether it is to work, school or each other.

#



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Senate Transportation Committee
Michigan Legislature
February 28, 2012

David J. Flynn
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Good afternoon. I want to thank the Senate Transportation Committee, Chair Casperson, and all of the members today for the opportunity to speak in favor of the proposed legislation establishing a Regional Transit Authority.

My name is David Flynn and I am a Macomb County Commissioner representing Sterling Heights. In that capacity, I also Co-Chair the county's Economic Development Committee.

I am proud to announce that the Macomb County Board of Commissioners has passed numerous resolutions supporting the establishment of a Regional Transit Authority, which will allow our community to capture much needed federal dollars. In a moment, Commissioner Mocerri will speak directly to the continued commitment by the Macomb County legislative branch.

However, my comments today will be focused on the need for comprehensive regional transit and I will make a business case for why such a system is an economic necessity throughout southeast Michigan.

First, I want to inform this committee about Regional Partners Advocating for Transit Here (R-PATH), which is a unique coalition of elected officials that has been meeting since August 2011 to champion the cause of a comprehensive mass transit system. R-PATH is a bi-partisan group comprised of the leadership of Macomb, Wayne, Oakland, Washtenaw and St. Clair county commissions, along with the Detroit City Council. R-PATH meets on a monthly basis to advocate and advance the cause of transit, which is a great example of how we all need to work across political and geographic boundaries.

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On so many levels, transit has a proven track record of revitalizing struggling cities and changing the fabric of its people by doing something very simple: connecting residents with the places they work, the schools they attend, and the entertainment venues they seek.

Looking at emerging regions throughout the United States; Denver, Salt Lake City, Portland, Las Vegas, and Cleveland have *all* used Rolling Rapid Transit to redefine their respective regions. I would be hard pressed to name a vibrant metropolitan area in the United States *or the world* that does *not* have a robust transportation system. Currently, our area has a fragmented, uncoordinated, and under-funded bus system. We can (and need) to do better for the 4 million residents living in southeast Michigan.

The positive effects of transit can be seen on a social, cultural, and most importantly, on an economic level. For every public dollar invested in mass transit, 6 to 8 dollars of private sector investment occurs. This means the revitalization of major thoroughfares, improved housing values, and small business creation along the corridors slated for Bus Rapid Transit.

As someone who is 26 years-old and a recent graduate of Michigan State, I can personally testify to the high volume of young talent that is leaving our state. The Detroit News reported that more college graduates are leaving Michigan than staying after completing their degree. Obviously, the lack of jobs is a driving force behind that statistic, but it is more complex than just available jobs. The best and brightest young talent not only wants, but it *demand*s, a better quality of life. Mass transit is a major component in that equation.

I will close on this note: there is a solid plan for regional transit proposed by Governor Snyder and before the legislature. Is it perfect? No, but it is real progress. Good plans have been presented to leaders 23 times before. What is required today is the political will and leadership to get the job done.

Metro- Detroit desperately needs to get into the "business of the future" again, and without question, transit needs to be part of the foundation of a shared future throughout southeastern Michigan.

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www.southeastmichigansummit.org

Regional Partners Advocating Transit Here (R-PATH)

History

The Regional Partners Advocating Transit Here (R-PATH) group was formed as an outcome of the 2011 Southeast Michigan Regional Summit. The Summit focused on the issue of regional transit and developing a Regional Transit Authority in Southeast Michigan. After careful study of the issue, those taking part in the Summit, which included members of the legislative bodies of Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw and Wayne counties as well as the City of Detroit, came to the conclusion that in order to move the region forward with increased economic development and mobility, citizens should be more informed of all sides of the transit discussion. R-PATH will collaborate with state legislators, non-profit groups and other organizations.

Mission Statement

R-PATH is an advocacy group whose mission is to communicate a unified message of support for the development of a Regional Transit Authority in Southeast MI.

Function

R-PATH also functions as a sounding board for constituents and a fact-finding group to provide citizens with the information needed to decide for themselves whether they want an RTA. Data on best RTA models and their practices will be gathered by R-PATH, and the information will be shared with county executives, mayors, and the public.

Who We Are

R-PATH is a voluntary, bi-partisan group made up of individuals appointed as representatives by the respective participating bodies: Macomb, Wayne, Oakland, Washtenaw and St. Clair county commissions, and the Detroit City Council.

Action Plan

The group meets monthly, and has developed a set of goals and benchmarks to monitor its progress. A number of public hearings, informational meetings, fact-finding trips, and a website will be used as vehicles to gather and disseminate information, and to facilitate discussion on the benefits and impact of a Regional Transit Authority for Southeast Michigan.

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Board Chair Kathy Vosburg
Commissioner Carabelli
Commissioner Toni Mocerri

Wayne County

Commissioner Alisha Bell
Commissioner Tim Killeen

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City of Detroit

Council President Charles Pugh
Council President Pro Tem Gary Brown

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Commissioner Jim Nash
Commissioner Dave Potts
Commissioner Beth Nuccio
Commissioner Craig Covey

Washtenaw County

Commissioner Yousef Rabhi
Commissioner Barbara Bergmann

As a group dedicated to transforming and improving the mass transit landscape of the metro-Detroit area, Regional Partners Advocating Transit Here (R-PATH) applauds Governor Rick Snyder's willingness to champion the need for a viable mass transit system in metro-Detroit.

It is R-PATH's goal to focus on the broader discussion and continue engaging public officials in useful dialogue that moves forward in favor of a comprehensive regional transit plan for our area.

We, as a group of city and county legislators working with day-to-day issues affecting southeast Michigan, recognize that the need for access to reliable transportation affects us all. The issue crosses generational, socio-economic and racial boundaries, as well as city and county lines. In 2012, we no longer both live and work in the same community, and a growing segment of the population that uses the available public transit options relies on these options daily. For instance, studies have shown that approximately 65% of SMART users utilize the service to get to and from work, and nearly one million people use SMART to travel to work, school, doctor's offices and shopping centers annually.

Not only does a comprehensive mass transit system transform the way we live, it produces a cleaner, healthier environment and quality of life. Numerous U.S. cities, such as Denver, Salt Lake City, and Portland have tested and proven its impact as an effective economic growth tool, and it has been shown that for every one dollar invested in public transportation, communities experience a \$6-8 increase in local economic activity. Clearly, the need to reap the benefits of a world-class mass transit system exists in metro-Detroit, and so does the opportunity. Regional transportation is worth the investment.

The first step in making this vision a reality is the creation of a Regional Transit Authority that will allow us to capture crucial federal dollars which will otherwise be funneled to other regions. We are urging our legislators to realize the impact and importance of this urgent step.

It is imperative that not only R-PATH continues to work together across political and geographic lines to push this common goal forward, but that all state and local leaders lend support on this transformative issue which has the ability to revitalize the region.

R-PATH (Macomb County Commissioners David Flynn, Bob Smith, Toni Mocerri, Jim Carabelli, and Board Chair Kathy D. Vosburg; Wayne County Vice Chair Alisha Bell and Commissioner Tim Killeen; Oakland County Commissioners David W. Potts, Jim Nash, Beth Nuccio and Craig Covey; Washtenaw County Commissioners Yousef Rabhi and Barbara Bergman; St. Clair County Board Chair Jeff Bohm and County Administrator Bill Kauffman, Commissioner Terry London; and Detroit City Council President Charles Pugh and President Pro-Tem Gary Brown)

#

Official Resolution of the Board of Commissioners
Macomb County, Michigan

**A Resolution Supporting Amendment of Regional Transit Authority Legislation
To Provide Maximum Citizen Representation**

Chair Kathy D. Vosburg, On Behalf Of the Entire Board of Commissioners,
Offers the Following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the County Commissions of Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw and Wayne Counties and Detroit City Council have issued proclamations recognizing the benefits of establishing a regional transit system in Southeast Michigan, and have formed Regional Partners Advocating Transit Here, a coalition to promote that goal; and

WHEREAS, Michigan House Bill No. 5309 and Senate Bill No. 909-912 [‘the Bill’] would create a Southeast Michigan Regional Transit Authority empowered to provide regional transit in Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne counties; and

WHEREAS, the Bill will provide for the planning, funding and operation of rapid transit lines that will connect the region, support economic development in our local communities, and provide new access to opportunity for our residents; and

WHEREAS, the Bill will support the coordination and effective operation of our local transit systems, providing for the basic mobility needs of riders; and

WHEREAS, Section 5 of the Bill as written creates a board for the new authority, consisting of one individual appointed by the Governor and nine individuals appointed by county executives and the mayor of Detroit; and

WHEREAS, Section 6 (15) of the Bill as written requires the board to create a citizens’ advisory committee consisting of residents of the region; and

WHEREAS, in order to make effective and appropriate decisions about the regional transit system, board members should represent the citizens of their jurisdictions to the broadest extent feasible, and the advisory committee should be empowered to ensure they do so.

NOW, THEREFORE, Be It Resolved by the Board of Commissioners Speaking on Behalf of All County Citizens As Follows:

THAT BY THESE PRESENTS, the Board of Commissioners of Macomb County hereby proclaims the benefits of the Bill’s passage to the greater prosperity of our region and State and encourages the Legislature of the State of Michigan to adopt it; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board recommends that Section 5 of the Bill should be amended to require approval of each county executive and mayoral appointee to the new authority’s board by the relevant County Commission or City Council; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that that the Board recommends that Section 6 (15) of the Bill should be amended to stipulate that the citizens’ advisory committee be appointed by entities other than the new authority’s board, subject to legislative approval.

Board of Commissioners

2011

RESOLUTION
NO. *Seventeen*

*Official Resolution of the Board of Commissioners
Macomb County, Michigan*

A Resolution in Support of the Creation of a Regional Transit Authority

*Commissioners Toni Mocerri and David J. Flynn,
On Behalf of the Board of Commissioners,
Offers the Following Resolution:*

Whereas, southeast Michigan is the largest region in the U.S. without high capacity rapid transit service in place or in development, which requires SMART and DDOT to run less cost-effective bus routes; and

Whereas, the southeast Michigan region spends \$75 per capita annually on transit services, while the average of the top 25 metropolitan regions is \$184 per capita annually; and

Whereas, the American Public Transportation Association projects that every \$1 spent on public transit projects generates an average of \$6 in local economic activity; and

Whereas, by 2015, nearly a half-million people aged 65 and older in Metropolitan Detroit will live in communities where public transportation service is either poor or non-existent; and

Whereas, working families earning between \$20,000 and \$50,000 are estimated to spend almost 30 percent of their household income on transportation, which is more than housing. Michigan's difficult economic times call for investment in mass transit; and

Whereas, establishing a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) allows for the capturing of federal and state funding, building projects and network expansion into other counties. The creation of an RTA is essential to following federal guidelines for developing regional transit systems; and

Whereas, southeast Michigan must demonstrate a willingness and ability to cooperate across communities to create and implement regional transit plans as well as develop reliable funding systems; and

Whereas, forming an RTA provides much-needed infrastructure funding along with cooperation among Michigan's most populous area; and

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, By The Board Of Commissioners, Speaking For And On Behalf Of All County Citizens As Follows:

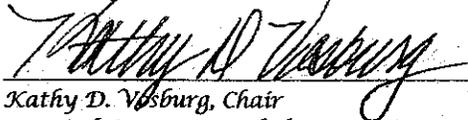
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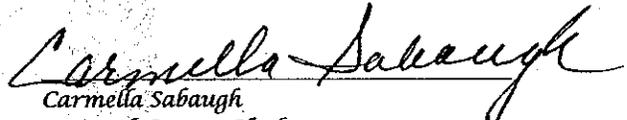
Be it resolved, the Macomb County Board of Commissioners calls on both the executive and legislative elected bodies of the City of Detroit, Macomb, Oakland and Wayne County to support the establishment of a Regional Transit Authority; and calls on the Governor and

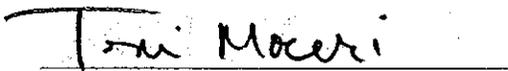
the Michigan legislature to take action to ensure passage of all necessary, related legislation in the Michigan House of Representatives and Michigan Senate.

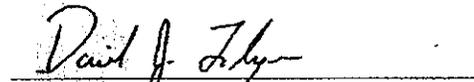
II

Be It Further Resolved, that a copy of this adopted resolution be transmitted to the Governor, and City of Detroit, Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne County governing bodies and state delegations.


Kathy D. Vosburg, Chair
Macomb County Board of Commissioners


Carmella Sabaugh
Macomb County Clerk


Toni Mocerì, Commissioner
District 1


David J. Flynn, Commissioner
District 4

Posted October 11, 2011

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Regional leaders announce formation of R-PATH

A coalition of county commissioners from Macomb, Oakland, Wayne, Washtenaw, and St. Clair counties and members of the Detroit City Council recently announced the formation of Regional Partners Advocating Transit Here (R-PATH) at the 2011 Southeast Michigan Regional Summit held in Clinton Township.

R-PATH will serve as an advocacy group for the creation of a Regional Transit Authority in the metropolitan Detroit area. The voluntary, bi-partisan group consists of a core of officials, currently: Macomb County Commissioners David Flynn, Bob Smith, Jim Carabelli and Board Chair Kathy D. Vosburg; Detroit City Council President Charles Pugh and Detroit City Council President Pro-Tem Gary Brown; Wayne County Commission Vice Chair Alisha Bell; Oakland County Commissioners David W. Potts and Jim Nash; Washtenaw Commissioners Kristin Judge and Board Chair Conan Smith; and St. Clair County Board Chair Jeff Bohm.

The announcement was made at the yearly meeting of regional leaders (formerly the Tri-county Summit), which was expanded this year to include the participation of Washtenaw and St. Clair counties. The topics of discussion during the event were regional collaboration and mass transit. More than 200 community and government leaders attended.

"This was the perfect opportunity to bring together key regional players with the intention of forging a common goal and laying the groundwork to reshape transit in our area," said Macomb County Board Chair Kathy D. Vosburg.

The event, held at both Macomb Community College's Lorenzo Cultural Center and Rojo Mexican Bistro at The Mall at Partridge Creek, was anchored by a presentation and panel discussion from Denver, Colo. officials on the benefits of mass transit, the obstacles they encountered, and the "lessons learned" while developing an RTA.

"It is time for serious, open and frank discussion leading to a true regional solution for transit in southeast Michigan. For too long, special interests acting for their issues and not for the public good have dominated the debate. This must change," stated adamantly by Oakland County Commissioner David W. Potts.

The city of Denver reports a \$4 return for communities on every \$1 invested in mass transit.

"I look forward to working with the other counties and the City of Detroit to get the Mass Transit System that we deserve. This is the best way of getting it done," stated Oakland County Commissioner Jim Nash.

The summit also featured a speech on the power of regional collaboration from Chairman of the Michigan Food and Beverage Association, Ed Deeb, and a presentation on creative leadership and teamwork from best-selling author/public speaker, John U. Bacon. Hosting duties for the 2012 summit were also accepted by Detroit City Council President Charles Pugh.

Macomb County hosted its last summit in 2007, aboard The Ovation, with a focus on water quality. Hosting duties alternate between participants yearly, with event costs paid for by summit sponsors. The first summit was hosted in 1998 by Wayne County, the Michigan State Fair, and the Michigan Association of Counties.

Published: Tue, Oct 11, 2011



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TRANSPORTATION

County board backs creation of transit authority

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An article by Leslie Shepard



No Comments

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners on Thursday, Sept. 22 passed a resolution in support of a new Regional Transit Authority (RTA).

The resolution calls for the Michigan Legislature and governor to enact legislation that establishes an effective RTA for southeast Michigan. The resolution further calls for legislation that supports an RTA and regional transit system by establishing state and local funding mechanisms adopted by a vote of the people.

Oakland County Commissioner Bill Dwyer (R-Farmington) introduced the resolution that passed in an 18-6 vote.

Dwyer said adoption of the resolution proves his county board colleagues are visionaries who understand that addressing transportation needs will bolster the region's economy.

"This vote demonstrates that Oakland County recognizes the importance of regional issues and transportation is one of those issues," he said.

However, it must be up to taxpayers to decide if they want to fund such a venture.

There have been attempts in the past to establish an RTA without much success.

"It's important that we deal with regional matters in such a manner that creates equal funding and equal benefit for equal outcome," Dwyer said.

Oakland County Commissioner Bob Hoffman (R-Highland) said he agrees with Dwyer that before an RTA is established, it must be mulled over and funded by each community's voters.

"We support the concept of an RTA, but we're not saying it should be a special type of transportation," he said. "We're just saying we support this if the taxpayers want to fund it."

Currently, regional transit agencies and road commissions act independently. There is no cohesive agency spearheading transportation needs in the region.

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Could Metro Detroit develop regional public transport?

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 06, 2011

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Macomb County is on board. Detroit believes it can happen. Oakland County, Wayne and Washtenaw will represent. Each had representatives attending last week's 2011 Southeast Michigan Regional Summit.

Excerpt:

"Citing statistics that show \$1 of public investment in regional transportation corridors leads to \$6 in private funds, Flynn said: "Regional transportation is worth the investment."

The summit featured a panel of speakers from Denver discussing that area's Regional Transportation District and its ambitious expansion efforts for light rail. This year's event, formerly the Tri-County Summit, was hosted by Macomb County commissioners and included representatives from St. Clair and Washtenaw counties, as well as those from Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties and the City of Detroit."

Read the rest of the story [here](#).

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Metro Detroit leaders to rally for regional transit authority

Metro Detroit area leaders will work together to advocate for a regional transportation authority and help capture untapped federal money, those attending today's 2011 Southeast Michigan Regional Summit said.

Macomb County Commissioner David Flynn, a member of the advocacy group announced at the summit — Regional Partners Advocating Transit Here or R-PATH — said the group will present a unified front.

"A regional authority allows us to build up a first-class system, which the people of our region deserve," said Flynn, a Democrat representing Sterling Heights.

Citing statistics that show \$1 of public investment in regional transportation corridors leads to \$6 in private funds, Flynn said: "Regional transportation is worth the investment."

The summit, which was held in Clinton Township, featured a panel of speakers from Denver discussing that area's Regional Transportation District and its ambitious expansion efforts for light rail. This year's event, formerly the Tri-County Summit, was hosted by Macomb County Commissioners and included representatives from St. Clair and Washtenaw counties joining those from

Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties and the City of Detroit.

Several speakers talked of the links between a well-connected regional transportation system and economic growth.

But despite the summit's focus on the benefits of regional transportation, not everyone in attendance was sold on the idea.

Oakland County Commissioner Jeffery Matis, a Republican representing Rochester and part of Rochester Hills, said he does not know how viable a regional transportation authority would be.

"Cost is a big concern," he said, noting that many municipalities are cutting back on services such as police. "At the end of the day, I'm against any tax increase."

During a question-and-answer session that included Sean Libberton, director of the Federal Transit Administration's Office of Capital Project Initiatives, Libberton cautioned those promoting light rail on Woodward Avenue against undercutting the area's underlying bus service, echoing other speakers who said a successful

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approach would need to include several modes of transportation and be regional in nature.

Detroit is to host next year's summit, and Detroit City Council President Charles Pugh, who also is a member of the R-PATH advocacy group, said he plans to focus on service sharing and consolidation.

"I'm encouraged. These kinds of regional discussions are something we need to have more often," he said, suggesting that quarterly meetings would be a good way to expand the effort.

Contact Eric D. Lawrence:
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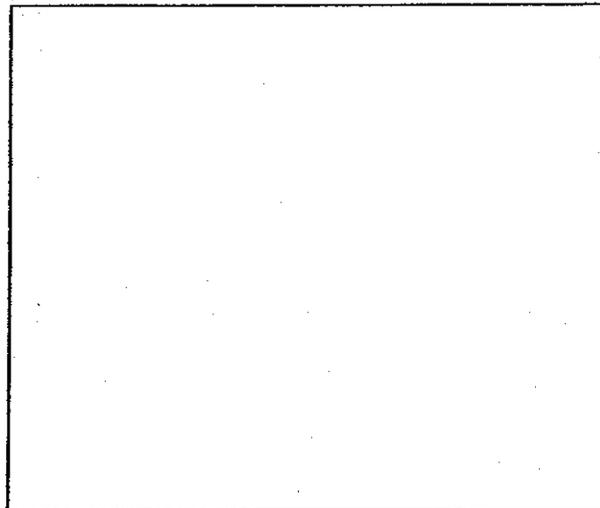
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Macomb County Joins Neighbors in Driving Regional Mass Transit

Macomb County commissioners recently joined commissioners in Oakland, Wayne, Washtenaw, and St. Clair counties, as well as members of the Detroit City Council, to form Regional Partners Advocating Transit Here.

By [Jenny Whalen](#) [Email the author](#) 6:00am

[3 Comments](#)



Related Topics: [Mass Transit](#), [RTA](#), and [Transportation](#)

Do you support a regional mass transit system for southeast Michigan? [Tell us in the comments.](#)

Mass transit has been a long time coming to the home of the Motor City, but if Macomb County commissioners and their regional counterparts have their way, such transportation will be developed sooner rather than later in southeast Michigan.

Macomb County commissioners joined fellow commissioners in Oakland, Wayne, Washtenaw and St. Clair counties, as well as members of the Detroit City Council Sept. 30 to form Regional Partners Advocating Transit Here.

R-PATH will serve as an advocacy group for the creation of a Regional Transit Authority in Metro Detroit.

"Establishing a regional transit system will be a gamechanger for the social and economic development of our region," said Macomb County Commissioner David Flynn, in a prepared statement. "It's time for the leadership of southeast Michigan to create a Regional Transit Authority that will allow our community to capture federal dollars."

The commissioners announced their plans for R-PATH at the 2011 Southeast Michigan Regional Summit recently held in Clinton Township.

"This was the perfect opportunity to bring together key regional players with the intention of forging a common goal and laying the groundwork to reshape transit in our area," said Macomb County Board Chair Kathy D. Vosburg, in a prepared statement.

The group took their inspiration from the success of mass transit in Denver, CO. The city of Denver reports a \$4 return for communities on every \$1 invested in mass transit.

Whereas Denver ranks 13th on a 2009 U.S. Census Bureau report of [Public Transportation Usage for the 50 Largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas](#), Michigan fails to make the list at all.

"We are fortunate enough to have the expertise of well seasoned transit officials from Denver to draw from as we set out toward the creation of an RTA for our region," said Macomb County Commissioner Bob Smith, in a prepared statement. "They bring with them a wealth of knowledge and good advice."

To date, nearly all of the major elected bodies in southeast Michigan have recently passed or are expected to pass resolutions in support of a Regional Transit Authority, according to the nonprofit organization, [Transportation Riders United](#).

The Oakland Press (theoaklandpress.com), Serving Oakland County

Oakland Press

News > Local News

Southeast Michigan governments meet for regional transit summit

Wednesday, September 28, 2011

By CHARLES CRUMM
Of The Oakland Press

County commissioners in Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties, plus the Detroit City Council, meet Friday, Sept. 30, for the annual Southeast Regional Michigan Summit at the Lorenzo Cultural Center at Macomb Community College, 44575 Garfield Road in Clinton Township.

The invitation-only meeting from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. focuses on regional mass transit.

Oakland County commissioners last week approved a non-binding resolution in support of a regional transportation authority, which would require action by the state Legislature.

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<http://detroitnews.com/article/20111001/METRO/110010339>

County officials join forces behind transit

CHARLES E. RAMIREZ
/ The Detroit News

Clinton Township— Leaders from five counties and the city of Detroit put aside differences Friday to work together toward a common goal: mass transit.

Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair, Wayne and Washtenaw counties, along with the city, will lobby together for a regional transit authority under a coalition announced at the 2011 Southeast Michigan Regional Summit.

More than 200 attended the summit at Lorenzo Cultural Center in Clinton Township, including Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel, Detroit City Council President Charles Pugh and Oakland County Commissioner Jim Nash, D-Farmington Hills.

The coalition is called Regional Partners Advocating Transit Here, or R-PATH. The voluntary, bipartisan committee has 12 core members from Detroit and the five counties.

"Mass transit is the most important issue facing our area," said Macomb County Commissioner Bob Smith, D-Clinton Township, one of R-PATH's core members.

"If you look at our region as a house, it has a foundation that's a little shaky," he said. "We can do three things about it: We can live with it, we can move away, or we can do what we should do — fix it. The way to fix it is with mass transit."

The group also includes Pugh; Nash; Detroit City Councilman Gary Brown; Wayne County Commissioner Alisha Bell, D-Detroit; Oakland County Commissioner David Potts, R-Birmingham, and several others.

Details about how the group will work are still being ironed out, but it plans to meet at least monthly to develop a strategy, said Macomb County Commissioner Kathy Vosburg, R-Chesterfield Township. Bell said Friday's meeting and the creation of the regional mass transit advocacy group is a step in the right direction.

"There are so many benefits," she said. "We just have to get past all of the naysayers, stop thinking in silos and start thinking cooperatively."

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ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

« Kristin Judge Resigns from County Board

Committee Briefed on Downtown Sidewalks »

Washtenaw: Transit

BY CHRONICLE STAFF

SEPTEMBER 30, 2011 at 7 pm

An advocacy group for regional transit – with members including Washtenaw County commissioners Conan Smith and Kristin Judge – was announced Friday, as part of the 2011 Southeast Michigan Regional Summit, according to a Detroit Free Press article. Regional Partners Advocating Transit Here (R-PATH) will lobby for a regional transit authority to tap federal funding, according to the report. [Source] The Washtenaw County board passed a resolution in support of regional transit at its Sept. 21, 2011 meeting. Earlier on Friday, Judge announced plans to resign from the county board on Oct. 9, to take a national cyber security job.

Section: Old Media Watch



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