



Legislation Text

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Resolution in Support of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Ballot Proposal

The Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA) was created by the Michigan Legislature in 2012. Its role is to create, implement and maintain a regional transit plan for the four counties of Washtenaw, Wayne, Oakland and Macomb. The City of Ann Arbor has a long track record of supporting local and Washtenaw County public transportation through the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA). Ann Arbor is well positioned to meet local public transportation needs as a result of the services provided by the AAATA.

Although local trips in the city are well served, there is a challenge confronting the City of Ann Arbor and its residents, visitors and employers. Increasing employment opportunities within the city and the four-county metropolitan region creates a travel need that is currently unmet. It is difficult, almost impossible, for an Ann Arbor resident to travel to a job in the RTA's region beyond the AAATA service area in a manner other than by personal automobile. Similarly, companies and employers in the city are seeking a qualified workforce from beyond our immediate resident population. Those regional travelers are relying on automobiles for their travel into Ann Arbor resulting in overcrowded roads, demand for significant parking facilities, and generation of enormous quantities of air emissions and greenhouse gases while consuming large amounts of energy.

The RTA has proposed a regional transit master plan and series of services as required to implement the plan. The services most immediate to the City of Ann Arbor include: The Ann Arbor-to-Detroit commuter rail service; innovative Bus Rapid transit linking downtown Ann Arbor with Ypsilanti; feeder services to the regional rail corridor; as well as, regional commuter express service connecting Ann Arbor with Plymouth and Livonia, among other similar services.

Beyond the immediate services described, the RTA's plans for Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties will knit the Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County oriented services into a four county network of public transportation service through initiatives centered on those parts of the region. The RTA will enable multi-county regional transit coordination to be realized for all of Southeastern Michigan. Additional services including paratransit and mobility management will enable increased mobility for people beyond the immediate service corridors, as well as seniors and people with disabilities. The attached resolution is offered for the consideration by City Council to announce the City's support of the RTA Planning and ballot proposal on November 8, 2016.

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor founded the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA) and has supported its provision of sustainable, effective multimodal public transportation options within the local community for decades;

Whereas, The larger geographic area of Southeast Michigan's four counties and two major population centers - Detroit and Ann Arbor - is not effectively connected by regional transit;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor, fourth most populous city in southeastern Michigan, with a population of approximately 118,000 and 124,000 jobs relies on effective transportation options to

foster positive economic activity while maintaining a desirable quality of life;

Whereas, The jobs in Ann Arbor are filled by approximately 80,000 incoming commuters each day, many from beyond the AAATA service area;

Whereas, The tens of thousands of jobs in the City of Ann Arbor and throughout the region are not readily accessible by public transportation creating an overreliance on the automobile system resulting in roadway congestion, significant demands for parking and personal and environmental externalities including but not limited to substantial energy consumption, air emissions and lost personal time;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor and Southeast Michigan cannot expect to compete economically with other major metropolitan areas without a modern, effective and reliable public transit system;

Whereas, The current lack of a regional public transit system in southeastern Michigan results in a fragmented, unconnected and incomplete public transportation system failing to meet the mobility needs of the citizens and employers in the region;

Whereas, Seniors and people with disabilities are woefully underserved by a nonexistent system, preventing them from safe and independent travel in the region including access to proper medical care and treatment, shopping and access to employment;

Whereas, Southeast Michigan is failing to secure mobility, environmental and economic benefit, that will accompany regional transit investments; and

Whereas, Regional transit must be strengthened to retain young workers, and improved to make the City of Ann Arbor and all of Southeast Michigan economically competitive, which will help all communities attract more businesses and create local jobs while growing in a more sustainable fashion;

RESOLVED, That the Ann Arbor City Council recognizes the need for and supports Southeast Michigan regional transportation cooperative efforts with the goal of design and development of reliable transportation system linking Ann Arbor with the counties in southeast Michigan; and

RESOLVED, That Ann Arbor City Council supports the Regional Transit Authority Ballot Proposal on November 8, 2016 ballot authorizing RTA to levy within Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne counties a property tax assessment at a rate of 1.2 mills for 20 years beginning in 2016 and ending in 2035.

Sponsored by: Mayor Taylor and Councilmembers Ackerman, Smith, Briere, and Westphal