

# TRU Priority: A Strong Regional Transit Authority (RTA) to Improve Transit in Southeast Michigan

**Southeast Michigan needs more and better bus service and real rapid transit**, to connect people to jobs, help families save money, and make our region a more attractive place to live and work.

Every other big city across the country has learned that **effective regional transit requires an effective Regional Transit Authority (RTA)** to coordinate, fund, improve, and expand public transit.

Michigan's legislature is considering creating an RTA for Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties, including Detroit (SB 909). The proposed RTA would:

- **Coordinate transit** throughout the region (but NOT replace or take over existing agencies);
- Plan, fund, and **operate a Rolling Rapid Transit service** along major routes;
- Propose to the voters new funding to for regional transit.

*(Additional details on reverse)*

There is unprecedentedly broad support for the RTA from:

- Elected leaders of all four counties and Detroit;
- Top business leaders and Chambers of Commerce;
- Senior, disability, union, and civic groups and transit riders;
- The Governor and the US Secretary of Transportation; and
- Bi-partisan legislators from across the state!

The Michigan Senate Transportation Committee debated and approved these bills back in the spring, with solid bi-partisan support. A majority of Senators support the bills.

**Yet despite urgent need and overwhelming support,  
Senate Majority Leader Richardville has not allowed the full Senate to vote!**

**Call Senate Leader Richardville (at 517-373-3543) and tell him to schedule the vote!**

- Join a big call-in day every week: Nov 14, Nov 21, Nov 26 and Nov 28!
- Call Sen. Meekoff too (toll-free 866-305-2130) (He manages the schedule.)



**Also tell your legislators today to support the RTA!**

*Ask them to ask Sen. Richardville to schedule the vote!*

- Call them today (look their numbers up at [www.MichiganLegislature.org](http://www.MichiganLegislature.org))
- Or use our easy e-action tool at [www.DetroitTransit.org](http://www.DetroitTransit.org) to send emails.

**Then urge your friends, family, and groups you're a part of to do the same! Thanks!!**



# RTA Background and Status

## Why is the RTA so essential?

Right now, southeast Michigan has dozens of different agencies running buses and shuttles and considering additional transit. There is very little oversight or coordination, leading to inefficient service and big gaps where no one is providing transit. There is also no agency in charge of improving and expanding transit for the region, so nearly no improvements have gotten done for decades. We need someone in charge of transit.

Also, our region lacks a dedicated funding source for transit, unlike every other major metro region in the country. DDOT depends on city funds and SMART only has a tiny property tax in some cities but not others and both are sorely underfunded. The RTA could put before the voters a dedicated transit tax to provide the funding to develop the quality transit we need.

## What specifically does the legislation do?

The proposed RTA bill package (SB 909, 911, 912, 967 and their companion House bills) would:

- **Coordinate and oversee transit** in Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne Counties, including the city of Detroit (but NOT replace or take over existing agencies) (SB 909);
- Plan, fund, and **operate a Rolling Rapid Transit service** along Woodward, Gratiot, and Big Beaver / M-59, and between Detroit, the airport, and Ann Arbor (SB 909);
- Be **run by a professional staff** and **governed by a Board** made up of two people appointed by each county, one appointed by Detroit, and one non-voting appointee of the Governor;
- Create a **Citizens' Advisory Committee** of riders, seniors, and people with disabilities;
- Propose to the voters a new regional vehicle registration fee dedicated to **fund transit** (SB 911);
- Allow for road lanes to be dedicated for transit-only use (SB 967); and
- Ensure cities cannot block transit by providing zoning oversight to the RTA (SB 912).

## What's the latest?

The Michigan Senate Transportation Committee debated and approved these bills back in March, with solid bi-partisan support. A majority of Senators have committed to supporting the bills. The House has held a hearing and is ready to move once the full Senate passes them. The Governor has committed to sign them.

So everything depends on Senate Majority Leader Richardville scheduling the full Senate to vote. Yet he has not held the vote, despite several past promises to do so. It may be because a few Republican Senators are strongly opposed or because it involves new funding or because of other policy distractions.

Regardless the reason, the legislature has less than ten days left in session. This is our last best chance!

## What has TRU done?

For the past ten years, TRU has been making the case that a strong RTA is essential to Detroit regional transit success. In partnership with the Trans4M coalition and others, we have testified before legislative hearings, mobilized public support, negotiated policy details, advocated to legislators directly and indirectly, engaged diverse partners, involved the media, and much more. We are closer now to a strong effective RTA than we have ever been. Please join our efforts to make the RTA a reality for southeast Michigan.