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Regional leaders support Municipal Partnership Act revision as way forward on transit *Legislative change allows Oakland, Wayne, and Washtenaw counties to pursue 3-county plan*

ROYAL OAK- Wayne County Executive Warren C. Evans joined with Oakland County Executive Dave Coulter, Washtenaw County Board of Commissioner Chair Jason Morgan, and Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan to support a proposed revision to Michigan's Municipal Partnership Act (MPA). The regional leaders say MPA revisions provide an additional mechanism and first step toward expanding regional transit in Southeast Michigan.

With the support of Michigan Speaker of the House Lee Chatfield (R-Levering) and Minority Leader Christine Greig (D-Farmington Hills), State Rep. Jason Sheppard (R-Temperance), the bill sponsor, joined the announcement on the Royal Oak Campus of Beaumont Health with several other elected officials.

"The MPA gives local leaders an opportunity to craft and finance a substantive, politically-viable transit plan for Wayne, Washtenaw, and Oakland counties," said Evans. "Transit is a priority for our region and offers a potential pathway to a regional solution. At this point in time, we need to move forward with a coalition of the willing and the urgency this issue deserves."

The proposed MPA revisions (House Bill 5229) would make technical revisions to the current law, passed in 2011, so that the region can have greater flexibility in finding a solution to transit.

"We are asking the Michigan Legislature to give us this tool so that we can begin the hard work of developing a transit plan that provides value to our communities," Coulter said. "Done right, improved transit and mobility has the potential to enhance economic development, resolve workforce constraints, and improve the quality of life for our residents."

House Bill 5229 will ensure municipal partnerships will be transparent and accountable to residents. Under the proposed legislation, voters in participating jurisdictions have the right to approve millages for any partnership. Additionally, millage revenue for partnerships will be



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protected from DDA or TIF captures. As with other regional endeavors, such as the DIA and Zoo, millage revenue for partnerships will not be subject to millage caps.

“We have been working on solving our regional transit challenges for years to allow us to compete against other states for major economic opportunity and investment,” Duggan said. “This legislation is a big first step toward a transit solution that has escaped us for too long.”

If the changes are approved by Lansing, leaders from Wayne, Washtenaw, and Oakland County as well as the city of Detroit will work with the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) to conduct a public engagement process and attempt to negotiate a three-county partnership as a first step in expanded regional transportation. Under the MPA, Macomb County could join later should their transit needs grow from their current full county SMART structure.

“Washtenaw County remains committed to working with our partners in Wayne and Oakland counties to develop a regional transportation system that works for our residents,” said Jason Morgan, Chair of the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners. “Regional transportation is critical to ensuring inclusive economic growth for Southeast Michigan and we are ready and willing to move forward with developing a three-county transit solution. The MPA gives us that opportunity to take that next step, together.”

Evans says he believes all four local leaders and the RTA will come together on the right plan for the region. “It has to be the right plan for all three counties and Detroit,” said Evans. “We are all mindful of working across the table to negotiate an agreement that meets the works for all of us.”

HB 5229 is sponsored by Rep. Jason Sheppard (R-Temperance) and is currently pending before the House Committee on Transportation. Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel, who was not in attendance, supports the other regional partners moving forward.

“We support the efforts of our regional partners exploring better connected regional transit options,” said Hackel. “As the only county in the region with a countywide service area, we look forward to future opportunities to better connect our region.”

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