

RE: Support of a Regional Transit Authority

WHEREAS, In 2009 the Wisconsin Legislature passed legislation included in Act 28, enabling the formation of Regional Transit Authorities, complete with the power of taxation necessary to fund their start-up and operations;

WHEREAS, In 2011, as part of Act 32, the Wisconsin Legislature passed legislation disabling the same Regional Transit Authorities, with no rational explanation or narrative for undoing what had been done two years earlier;

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Association of Mobility Managers (WAMM) said, introducing their 2016 Legislative Priorities, "Wisconsin is the only Midwest state without enabling legislation to create these authorities. Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) are a quasi-governmental entity that provides a governance structure for a unified transportation system and has taxing authority, therefore offering a funding alternative to property taxes;"

WHEREAS, WAMM added, "Regional Transit Authorities allow for a regional and comprehensive look at transportation. They encourage connectivity and multimodal approaches since the planning takes place with one body for the whole region. A multimodal and coordinated system improves the mobility, connectedness, and quality of life for those who are unable to drive themselves, particularly older adults, individuals with disabilities and those with low incomes;"

WHEREAS, WAMM further noted that "Medical centers, employers, job centers, educational facilities are very often regional in nature; why should transportation be any different? Developing transportation systems requires flexibility to create innovated services that can cross municipal and county borders and account for communities of different sizes. RTAs enable this to be done in a more efficient, effective and sustainable manner;"

WHEREAS, WAMM concluded the 2016 documents, "Transportation systems are a part of the infrastructure that helps people get to jobs, medical appointments, and remain active and engaged members of the community and local economy. Where there are strong systems and meaningful mobility choices, there are strong communities. People want to live and work in these communities and are seeking them out;"

WHEREAS, Our County places great importance on our system of mobility for the populations most in need of services that a Regional Transit Authority could provide our residents, and residents of lower-income counties in our immediate region; and

WHEREAS, our County places high value on the principles of "sustainability," and

WHEREAS, lack of mobility of low-income workers and retired person is a factor contributing to their lack of "sustainability", while Regional Transit would allow easier access to jobs, schools, health care and basic needs.

NOW THEREFORE BE RESOLVED, Jackson County calls upon the Wisconsin Legislature to quickly craft and pass Legislation once again enabling Regional Transit Authorities in Wisconsin and "making an appropriation" to fund such;

FURTHER, that there be no limitations place on the number of such Authorities, barring duplication of services or geographic overlap;

FURTHER, that Legislative obstacles to proceeding with near-100% renewable energy power for such RTAs be removed, keeping in mind future tightening of petroleum and natural gas supplies; and

FURTHER, that agencies and Legislative Committees charged with overseeing transportation needs, make the creation and link-up of these RTAs into one seamless working statewide system a top priority.

Respectfully Submitted:

Executive and Finance Committee










