

ESTABLISHING GOALS FOR REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY LEGISLATION

South central Wisconsin is becoming an integrated urban economy that is larger, more private-sector driven, and more geographically dispersed than in the past. In this era of change, Dane County needs a modern, efficient, regional, transportation system that is focused on connecting more people to jobs.

Transit ridership in Dane County is near all-time highs, and per-capita ridership of the Madison Metro Transit System is in the top 15 in the nation, outperforming cities with far larger population such as Miami, FL (5.5 million), San Diego, CA (2.9 million), and the Twin Cities (2.6 million).

Transit services in Wisconsin are regional in their service area, yet each is owned by a single municipality. (Milwaukee's transit system is owned by a county, although by a legal definition might also be considered a municipality).

To be effective and efficient transit systems should have regional governance, budgeting, operations, and planning. Regional transportation authorities (RTA) could provide a regional focus, create predictable and stable funding, and relieve pressure on property taxpayers.

State law must authorize a process and establish standards for the creation of an RTA, but the decision whether to actually form an RTA and how much funding it would need would be made by the local residents. Enacting RTA legislation in Wisconsin would help numerous metropolitan areas including those in the Fox Valley and in Eau Claire and La Crosse.

The Madison Area Transportation Planning Board is completing the Regional Transportation Plan 2050 for the Madison Metropolitan Area. This plan recommends a regional transit system including bus rapid transit, new suburban commuter express routes, expanded and improved local bus service, and other transit services. The plan documents that the current transit funding structure is unable to finance the regional needs and recommends implementation of a regional transit authority or district when authorized by state law

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the details of RTA legislation should be flexible enough to adapt to local needs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the authorizing legislation for an RTA should have following basic parameters:

- A representative RTA could be formed by one or more municipal governing bodies passing resolutions in support
- A referendum would need to be adopted by a majority of voters in each municipality forming, or seeking to join the RTA
- The amount of the sales tax would need to be authorized in the referendum, but could not exceed 0.5%

36 • The governing board would be comprised of elected officials, representative of the
37 communities within the RTA area.

38 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Dane County is committed to continuing discussions with
39 community leaders, business and other local governments about advocating for RTA legislation.

40 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be sent to Governor Scott Walker,
41 Chairs of the Senate and Assembly Transportation Committees, and the Dane County
42 legislative delegation.