

Forum on Mass Transportation

On October 24, 2009 from 2-4pm, approx 60 people attended a very informative program on mass transit hosted by [MOSES](#)' members [First Baptist of Birmingham](#) (Rev Babian and Leona Frost) and [Birmingham Unitarian](#) (Pat Hammer).

John Swatosh from the Regional Transit Coordinating Council presented the [Comprehensive Regional Transit Service Plan](#).

Jana Ecker, Birmingham planning director introduced the [Multi- modal Transit Center](#) for Troy and Birmingham.

OFFERING PRESENTATIONS SUPPORTING MASS TRANSIT WERE

[State Rep Marie Donigan](#)

[County Commissioner David Potts \(Oakland County\)](#)

[City Commissioner Scott Moore \(Birmingham\)](#)

Kevin Hrit from Congressman **Gary Peters** constituent services

[Tim Fischer, deputy director of the Michigan Environmental Council](#)



Also present was [State Senator John Pappageorge](#) offering 'restrained support' for mass transit.

It was emphasized that enhanced mobility and economic development are strongly interdependent.

Transit reform would fix basic services and add rapid transit corridors. Also necessary would be to have all the counties involved have a 'no opt out' policy for transit, particularly SMART. Currently Bloomfield Twp, Novi and Livonia are examples of cities/Twps that have a current 'opt out' policy. If these areas with their own small pockets of transit would 'opt in' to the larger system, there would be further savings to a mass transit program. Within a 50 mile radius is half the population of MI. **There was a commitment from those present to stress this issue in the upcoming elections.**

The top 25 metro regions in the country **but one** have mass transit. **The Detroit region is that one.** The top 25 spend \$185/capita. Detroit spends \$75/capita. For our region to develop we need to spend \$6.5-\$10.4 billion over 26 years (cost dependent on number of BRT's vs LRT's). Moving from BRT's to LRT's will only happen with sufficient ridership. In Michigan, Grand Rapids is moving forward with 'trains on tires'. SE Michigan needs to also have their political leaders (3 counties + Detroit) help our region move forward.

AMONG THE REASONS FOR MASS TRANSIT WERE:

- Young people prefer cities with mass transit vs autos.
- As Michigan's population ages and young people leave because of the lack of jobs and mass transit, a question of concern for those in more affluent areas is 'who will buy the houses there?' People want to maintain property values.
- Aging populations (MI is projecting towards 1:5) will need transportation. Without them, the economy will further decline so there needs must be addressed also.
- From a social justice viewpoint, 'what do we owe each other as citizens?'

Ponsella Hardaway from [MOSES](#) and **Megan Owens** from [TRU](#) urged contacting county officials and commissioners to promote expansion throughout Oakland County.