

March 28, 2013

Southeast Michigan Regional Transit Authority – Orientation Workshop

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To the RTA Board:

When are we **'going to get it'**? That question can be taken many ways.

The first is: When, after 40 years of talking, and arguing about it, are we **'going to get'** our regional *and* city transportation system back?

The second is: When is the State going to realize that if they don't provide the genuine, **honest**, competent leadership needed to create a true regional transportation system - we are not **'going to get it'**.

This means ignoring the self- interest of private individuals and business at the expense of the citizens.

This means the **RTA** telling the **Michigan State Land Bank** to put the decision to transfer the publicly owned, **157 acre Michigan State Fairground** property to private interests - for private gain - **'ON HOLD'**.

This property once was, and should be used again, as the site for an iconic, multi-modal transit hub and the centerpiece for a **Place-making**, Transit-Orientated-Development (**T.O.D.**) that will spur economic production and activity up and down and sideways – along **both** the Woodward and Eight Mile Corridors – and put Michigan back in the national spotlight.

The Land Bank, the MEDC, the DEGC, and anyone else who doesn't 'get' that the Fairgrounds is **the logical place** for a transit hub, or *does*, but still wants to let selected private individuals profit at the expense of the people, should **back off** and let someone who does 'get it' show you how it's done.

This land needs to stay in the hands of the people. A portion of it, 7-10 acres, along Eight Mile and adjacent to the 'tracks' needs to be transferred to the Regional Transit Authority for the future site of a 100% federally funded multi –modal transit station. The balance of the land, 150 acres, more or less, should be transferred to a non-profit, or authority, to manage on behalf of the people – the same way Eastern Market, the Zoo and Cobo Hall are.

They can decide, with the people's input, what the best use of this land should be and profit from any possible public/private partnerships that may ensue.

I respectfully request that the RTA Board provide the leadership that appears to be missing in Lansing and ask the Governor to stop the give-away of this strategic asset and keep it in the hands of the public until such time as it's true potential can be evaluated.

Respectfully,

Jim Casha