



#### PARTNERS

Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living  
Ecology Center  
Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice  
Michigan Suburbs Alliance  
NAACP:  
Ypsilanti/Willow Run Branch  
Ann Arbor 350  
Ann Arbor Center of Light  
Barrier Busters  
Casa Latina  
Duo Security  
Graduate Employees Organization  
Ground Cover News  
Growing Hope  
Heritage of Healing  
Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County  
Lecturer's Employee Organization  
Mentor 2 Youth  
Michigan League of Conservation Voters  
Salient Landscaping  
SOS Community Services  
Transportation Riders United  
Vault of Midnight  
Wake up Washtenaw!  
Washtenaw Biking and Walking Coalition  
Washtenaw Community Action Team  
Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights  
Zingerman's Creamery  
Zingerman's Deli  
Zingerman's Service Network  
ZingTrain  
826 Michigan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Partners for Transit calls for new funding for 'more buses, more places, more often'**

Partners for Transit – a coalition of business and community leaders, religious groups, social service organizations, and environmental organizations – today called on the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority to propose a new millage to advance the AAATA's five-year plan for improving public transportation in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Township, and the neighboring region.

Expanding public transportation will have a dramatic effect on enhancing the quality of life for the region's growing number of seniors and people with disabilities, according to Carolyn Grawi, director of advocacy and education at the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living. "Our region as a whole will be better off if we are readily able to meet the needs and provide opportunities for children, young people and adults with disabilities to be successful and be contributors at home, at school, at work and in the community."

In 2013, the City of Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township joined with Ann Arbor to form the Ann Arbor Area Transit Authority. The organization held 13 public meetings across the region last fall to gather feedback on the Authority's proposed five-year plan, and is scheduled to discuss findings at its board meeting tonight.

Improvements in public transportation will be critical to maintaining the region's economic prosperity, according to Rich Sheridan, CEO of Menlo Innovations and a supporter of Partners for Transit.

"Downtown Ann Arbor has become a vibrant hub of growing tech firms in the last few years," Sheridan says. "Menlo, Barracuda, PRIME, Google, Llamasoft and MyBuys are just a few of the tech firms that now call downtown home. Transit is one of the many factors that each of us need to provide the best possible work experience to the workers we are trying to attract and retain, which is to say we're keenly interested in any efforts to enhance the transit options already in place."

The Ann Arbor Area Transit Authority's five-year plan will significantly expand the quality of public transportation throughout the Authority's service area, expanding hours, adding additional routes, and increasing services for seniors, but there is no current funding mechanism for this expansion. Over the past year, the community has rallied to show its support for the transit expansion. The Partners for Transit coalition has grown to include more than 30 organizations and businesses that endorse the value of strong urban core transit.

"Public transportation provides a lifeline for members of our community. It gets people to jobs, and gives people access to the vital goods and services they need," said Shoshana Demaria, president of the NAACP Ypsilanti/Willow Run Branch. "Our community, seniors, disabled, students, young people and the environment need this expansion. The Authority must move forward to fund the plan."