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## **RTAs Provide Transportation Options for Business and Employees** GMCC Supports RTA Enabling Language in State Budget

**(Madison)** - To encourage regional transportation and increase economic competitiveness, the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) urged state legislators today to enable creation of a Dane County Regional Transit Authority (RTA) as part of the state budget bill. Current law requires state approval before municipalities can create an RTA.

GMCC Executive Vice President Delora Newton believes an RTA could be an efficient mechanism to manage regional transportation initiatives in Dane County.

“Our region needs a comprehensive, multi-modal transportation system to remain competitive in a global economy,” said Newton. “Allowing creation of an RTA would foster regional cooperation on transit needs to provide transportation options for employees, residents and visitors.”

Governor Doyle first included enabling language for a Dane County RTA in his budget to the Legislature. The Legislature’s budget committee, the Joint Committee on Finance, adopted most of the Governor’s recommendation with a few enhancements, including an expanded governance structure and a public referendum requirement on any proposed sales tax increase to fund the RTA.

The GMCC supports both modifications as they will improve the diverse municipal perspectives and require direct public input on funding. Newton says public education and involvement will be critical components to build an effective regional transportation system.

“For an RTA to succeed, voters must be fully informed about how monies collected will be used and must be convinced that a new tax is worth the investment for the short and long term,” explained Newton.

If enabling language is adopted, an authorizing resolution specifying the RTA structure and responsibilities will need to be adopted by the Dane County Board of Supervisors before an RTA can be created in Dane County.

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“Passage of enabling language is a first step to give municipal leaders a mechanism to implement a regional transportation system, while maximizing available federal transit dollars,” Newton said. “Once enabling language is adopted, further public discussion will be needed to determine what an RTA in the Madison region can and should include.”

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