



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WAYNE COUNTY TO PROVIDE PUBLIC TRANSIT PASSES AT NO COST TO EMPLOYEES
USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO COMMUTE TO AND FROM WORK**

DETROIT— Today, County Executive Warren C. Evans announced that effective January 1, 2017, the County will provide transit passes to employees who use public transportation to travel to and from work. This new initiative provides a new no-cost benefit available to all County employees while encouraging ridership of public transportation.

“This new benefit provides our employees a cost-free way to commute to and from work while promoting the positive impact of increasing the utilization of public transit,” Executive Evans said. “Getting more people out of their vehicles and onto buses is good policy. It eases traffic congestion and reduces the environmental impact of cars on the road while bolstering transit ridership.”

Under this new policy, the County will provide Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) or SMART passes to participating employees, ranging in cost from \$12 to \$77 per pass per month depending on the type of pass the employee needs. Approximately 60 of the County’s 3,700 employees, presently, use pre-tax dollars deducted from their paychecks to buy public transit passes to commute to and from work. Any Wayne County employee – seasonal, part-time or full-time – will be eligible for this program.

The Regional Transit Authority indicates that approximately 26 percent of Detroit households do not own a car, meaning increased access to transit helps remove a key barrier to employment.

“A reliable, comprehensive public transit system is essential for our urban and suburban region to offer a high quality of life to everyone and to foster a competitive business environment that attracts investment and talent,” Executive Evans said. “Increasing ridership can lead to a virtuous cycle. More riders create more support for public transit which increases the quality of our public transportation system making it easier for

people to connect with jobs, education and health care. This, ultimately, leads to a more prosperous region.”

Employees who do not currently ride public transportation can request a pass under this new initiative. In accordance with Internal Revenue Service regulations, an employer may provide qualified transportation benefits to their employees tax-free up to a defined limit.

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