



# NEWS RELEASE

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WAYNE COUNTY COMMISSION

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Release Date: Oct. 7, 2024

## Local county legislators discuss public transit, sustainability at 16<sup>th</sup> Tri-County Summit

*Wayne, Oakland and Macomb County Commission chairs pledge to continue collaboration to strengthen southeast Michigan*

Wayne, Oakland and Macomb county legislators met Friday at MacRay Harbor in Harrison Township for the [16th Tri-County Summit](#). With the continued theme of “Moving Forward. Moving Together,” participants continued to develop ways to work together to improve and strengthen the region’s approach on shared issues. Attendees received an update on progress toward the regional goal of improving the behavioral health continuum of care and they explored new ways to collaborate on sustainability and public transit.

At the beginning of the program Suzanne Coffey, Chief Executive Office of the Great Lakes Water Authority, announced a joint flooding resiliency study with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers that was recently approved. This led into the first panel discussion of the day featuring Erin Quetell, Oakland County environmental sustainability officer; Erin Kelly, Wayne County sustainability officer; and Lindsey Kerkez, a civil engineer with SEMCOG’s Southeast Michigan Healthy Climate Plan. They shared ideas for the most effective ways the counties can work together to improve sustainability across the region. During this session, moderated by Nick Monacelli from WDIV, panelists explored efforts and programming being undertaken by each county to address these concerns.

“This year’s event again shows the benefits the Tri-County Summits bring to residents of all three counties,” Wayne County Commission Chair Alisha Bell (D-Detroit) said. “The issues discussed – from behavioral health issues, to flooding and from sustainability to the future of public transit affect residents in all of our counties and actually cross county lines. So, a regional approach like this is the best possible

strategy in dealing with them. It's a pleasure to meet with our peers from Oakland and Macomb, especially Chairs David Woodward (D-Royal Oak) and Don Brown (R-Washington Twp.), and to work seriously with them on finding solutions."

Additionally, Carol Cain, Emmy award-winning producer and host of "Michigan Matters," moderated a panel that featured key stakeholders in regional transportation for our tri-county area. G. Michael Staley, director of the Detroit Department of Transportation; Dwight A. Ferrell, general manager of SMART; and Ben Stupka, executive director of the Regional Transit Authority, held a dynamic discussion about current challenges and future solutions for our regional transit system. Topics included accessibility, sustainability and innovative approaches to improve public transportation.

"This annual summit is one of the ways that we, collectively as county leaders, can step forward to address shared challenges," Brown said. "One example is the recent trend of heavy rain events that swamped our existing infrastructure causing environmental and economic damage, affecting our constituents. This calls for further investments in our stormwater management systems to minimize the damage. I am lucky to work together with Wayne County Chair Bell and Oakland County Chair Woodward; they understand that these issues aren't partisan and jointly we are working to bring state and federal dollars to our region to get these problems addressed.

During lunch, attendees heard from David Schuld, Deputy Director of Preparedness at Hagerty Consulting, regarding the importance of readiness and resilience in the face of emerging threats and hazards.

At the conclusion of the event, the three County Chairs pledged to mutually advocate for funding on all of these initiatives. They committed to come together again in 2025, this time in Oakland County, to continue to expand their joint efforts on these and other regional concerns.

"Collaborative efforts always produce more efficient and effective results, and the Tri-County Summit continues to be a valuable platform for county leaders to refine our goals and further strengthen our partnership on key issues," Woodward said. "Our joint efforts to make the region more sustainable, increase accessible and reliable public transit across the counties and continue our work toward improving mental health care in the justice system proves how much we can accomplish when the connection between our counties is strong."

Other Wayne County Commissioners attending the event included Jonathan C. Kinloch (D-Detroit), Melissa Daub (D-Canton), Terry Marecki (R-Livonia), Tim Killeen (D-Detroit) and Glenn S. Anderson (D-Westland).

The Tri-County Summit was first hosted in 1998 to create a forum to identify common issues for cooperative action. Previous topics have included mental health, criminal justice, broadband equity, economic development and regional quality of life.