

Washtenaw County HCMA Commissioner
Press Release, Development of a Detroit Metropark
January 6, 2004

Beautiful parks, hundreds of miles of bike and nature trails and a commitment to "open spaces" and community development means easy access to living and pleasure in every season. The County's excellent educational institutions, including the University of Michigan located in Ann Arbor, and Eastern Michigan University, located in Ypsilanti, attract some of the brightest minds in the country. Situated in southeastern Michigan approximately 30 miles west of Detroit, Washtenaw County is a unique part of Metropolitan Detroit area.

Washtenaw County has a rich history of supporting the regional development of the Metro Detroit area. Although Washtenaw County is one of the fastest growing areas in the state, the county has never lost sight of the idea that a strong Metropolitan Detroit increases the growth potential of the entire region.

As a member of the five-county Huron Clinton Metropolitan Association (HCMA), Washtenaw County has always balanced our interest in regional development with the needs of our constituents. Washtenaw County seeks the opportunity to lead the way in encouraging regional development by actively supporting the adoption of one of the four proposals currently being considered by the HCMA establishing a Metropark in Detroit.

Washtenaw County sees the development of a Metropark in Detroit as having the potential to impact regional development in the following ways:

- Revitalize stressed neighborhoods;
- Conserve open space;
- Limit sprawl;
- Increase community health levels.

We expect the proposal that we will accept to achieve the following criteria:

- It must be accessible to as wide of a portion of the HCMA population as possible;
- Its funding does not negatively impact HCMA operations within Washtenaw County;

Given the potential benefits to development, Washtenaw County looks forward to supporting a new Metropark consistent with our County's priorities.

John Balbach, Bobby Byrd, Brooke DeRenzis, Donn Gladish