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TO: Suzanne Shaw, Chair  
Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners

THROUGH: Robert E. Guenzel  
County Administrator

FROM: Mark J. McFadden, Director  
Washtenaw County Metropolitan Planning Commission

DATE: October 3, 2001

SUBJECT: Sauk Trail/US-12 Heritage Route

### **Board Action Requested**

It is requested that the Board of Commissioners endorse a resolution of support designating Sauk Trail/US-12 as a Heritage Route as it passes through Washtenaw County and approve the appointment of Gladys Saborio and Sue Kosky to represent Washtenaw County on an intergovernmental study group charged with heritage route designation, and assign a contact person from the county to communicate with the various commissions.

### **Historic Background of Sauk Trail/ US-12**

A Mastodon trail through Saline in prehistoric times, the Sauk Trail later became a path for Native American seasonal migration and an important thread through the wilderness for French trappers and fur traders. Father Gabriel Richard secured \$3,000 from Congress to secure the second nationally funded road in 1825. Orange Risdon, founder of Saline, and his assistant, Moses Allen, surveyed what was to become US-112. In the 1840s, the Michigan Gazetteer reported that this route was the most heavily traveled by stagecoaches and wagons in the U.S. To ease travel, many sections were planked or logged and at least four stage stops are extant. There are also documented Underground Railroad stations along the route. In the 1860s, the railroad followed the route of the old road leading to the growth of cities located in the corridor. There are numerous small to grand stations as well as hotels remaining from this period in history. The Good Roads Movement called for road improvements in 1900. The paving of roadway began in 1924 in Detroit and Chicago simultaneously, with the two projects overlapping in Jonesville. Wonderful auto courts, gas stations, and parks still remain from the next period of significance which was the era of auto tourism. In 1962, US-112 (the Great Sauk Trail) was decommissioned and replaced with the US-12 designation. In 1996, Gladys Saborio and Joanne Rasmussen organized a grass roots effort to have US-12 designated a heritage route in the State of Michigan.

## **Discussion**

US-12 runs through eight counties between the city of Detroit and the Indiana border. The eastern entrance is at the junction of Woodward Avenue and Jefferson Avenue in Detroit and the western terminus is at the state line just south of New Buffalo. In the last six years, four counties and twenty-three local units of government have passed resolutions of support for US-12 Heritage route designation. An intergovernmental study group charged with designation of the Heritage route has been set up and requires the appointment of two members to represent Washtenaw County. Gladys Saborio, co-founder and director of the Sauk Trail/US-12 Heritage Route (1996-present), and Sue Kosky, M.S. Eastern Michigan University in Historic Preservation, have been proposed as candidates. The study group will work to prepare a management plan, conduct a survey of the historic resources along the route and apply for a T-21 Grant from M-DOT. They will report back to the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission, who will in turn, through their contact person, keep the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners informed.

## **Impact on Human Resources**

None

## **Impact on the Budget**

None

## **Impact on Indirect Costs**

None

## **Impact on Other County Departments or Outside Agencies**

None

## **Conformity to County Policies**

This request conforms with County Policy

## **Attachments**

Map of Southern Michigan showing the path of US-12  
List of Endorsing Communities on Trail

A RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE DESIGNATION OF SAUK TRAIL/US-12 AS A HERITAGE ROUTE AS IT PASSES THROUGH WASHTENAW COUNTY, AND APPOINTS COUNTY REPRESENTATOPM TP AN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL STUDY GROUP FOR THE SAUK TRAIL/US-12 HERITAGE ROUTE DESIGNATION.

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

OCTOBER 3, 2001

WHEREAS, the Sauk Trail has a documented history of being a significant connector of both people and commerce in Southeast Michigan, including Native American seasonal migration, stagecoach and wagon travel, and Underground Railroad stations; and

WHEREAS, the trail was designated as US-112 during the 19<sup>th</sup> century; and

WHEREAS, paving of the roadway began in 1924 in Detroit and Chicago simultaneously; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, US-112 was decommissioned and replaced with the US-12 designation; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, Gladys Saborio and Joanne Rasmussen organized a grass roots effort to have US-12 designated a heritage route in the State of Michigan; and

WHEREAS, since 1996, four counties and twenty-three local units of government have passed resolutions of support for the US-12 heritage route designation; and

WHEREAS, an intergovernmental study group has been formed and charged with the designation process, and requires two representatives from Washtenaw County; and

WHEREAS, Gladys Saborio (co-founder of the Sauk Trail/US-12 designation process) and Sue Kosky (EMU graduate in Historic Preservation) have been proposed as candidates; and

WHEREAS, the study group will prepare a plan, conduct a survey of historic resources along the route, and apply for an M-DOT grant; and

WHEREAS, the representatives from Washtenaw County will report back to the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission, who will keep the Board of Commissioners informed

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby endorses the designation of Sauk Trail/US-12 as a heritage route as it passes through Washtenaw County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby appoints individuals to the Sauk Trail/US-12 heritage route designation study group, as follows:

Gladys Saborio  
Sue Kosky