



michigan suburbs alliance

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Suburbs Alliance Proposes Metropolitan Agenda *Regional stakeholders identify areas for policy reform*

FERNDALE – The Michigan Suburbs Alliance today proposed framework for a “Metropolitan Agenda” that identifies regional governance, sustainable land use, municipal finance, social equity and infrastructure as priority areas for policy reform.

“Our region is struggling against a number of systemic problems that demand resolution through legislative action,” said Executive Director Conan Smith. “We need to work together to break down borders and collaboratively push for state policies that promote economic prosperity, environmental sustainability and social equity in southeast Michigan.”

Today government officials, nonprofit leaders, business professionals, university professors and others joined the Suburbs Alliance to discuss the proposed agenda and prioritize the issues most important to the viability of the region. The Suburbs Alliance will use the input to further develop the framework with the support of other organizations working toward regional progress. Over the coming months, the Suburbs Alliance will hold additional meetings to identify specific goals for each policy area.

The Metropolitan Agenda will be built on the following issues:

- **Regional Governance.** Many of the challenges facing southeast Michigan demand that different governmental units work together, but the fragmentation of our governmental system poses barriers to implementing multi-jurisdictional solutions. New governing tools and programs that support local projects that address regional challenges will be a high priority of the Metropolitan Agenda.
- **Municipal Finance.** State laws that limit property tax revenue growth and major cuts to revenue sharing are forcing local governments across the state to cut essential city services. Cities need a system that guarantees funding that grows with inflation and ensures that they will not be penalized for rising property values.
- **Social Equity.** Despite the increasing diversity of our country, this region is the most segregated in the nation. State policies need to recognize the complicated dynamics of



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race and poverty. These factors need to be a consideration in all legislation that affects regional issues such as mass transit and affordable housing.

- **Sustainable Land Use.** From the region’s faltering air quality to the frequent beach closings due to water contamination, the consequences of poorly planned development throughout our region are increasingly clear. Southeast Michigan needs policies that encourage redevelopment of our urban areas and the sustainable development of new communities.
- **Infrastructure.** High quality roads and sewers, access to clean water, and a consistent and dependable energy supply are vital to our regional economic competitiveness. The Metropolitan Agenda will support policies that recognize the ongoing need for maintenance.

“Michigan’s first-tier suburbs are home to nearly a third of the state’s population, and they are facing challenges that require ‘greater-than-local’ solutions,” said Smith. “A Metropolitan Agenda will help us – as both cities, suburbs and more rural communities – address those problems that are systemic in nature and regional in scope. We have the energy and the intelligence – what’s lacking is a shared vision and common goals. With the right support and engagement, the Metropolitan Agenda can be the guiding light for our region.”

The Michigan Suburbs Alliance is a nonprofit coalition of twenty-three older, inner-ring suburbs in southeast Michigan that work together to address their collective challenges.

For more information about the Suburbs Alliance, visit www.michigansuburbsalliance.org.

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