



**Metropolitan Affairs Coalition's  
Platform of Issues of Concern to the  
Southeast Michigan Region  
August 2008**

The Metropolitan Affairs Coalition (MAC) is a unique partnership of business, labor, and government leaders in the Southeast Michigan, greater Detroit region...the only partnership that brings all those interests together. MAC prides itself on being bipartisan...emphasizing issues, not political parties or agendas. For half a century, MAC has been at the forefront on issues affecting Southeast Michigan's residents, quality of life, and economy. MAC believes that the success of the region's businesses, the preservation of our abundant clean water and clean air, and the enhancement of our quality of life all play important roles in improving our region. Both MAC's policies and programs reinforce this conviction.

Southeast Michigan's progress is significantly impacted by the decisions, policies, and priorities of the United States federal government. MAC adopted this platform of issues to present to the candidates for President, U.S. Senate, and U.S. House of Representatives for their response and support and, when elected, for their action. MAC's overarching theme is that **it is in the nation's best interest to preserve and build upon Southeast Michigan's abundant infrastructure, environmental, and economic assets.**

**Metropolitan Affairs Coalition's  
Core Platform**

**MAC believes that the federal government must reverse its pattern of general neglect of Southeast Michigan's infrastructure...its roads, bridges, public transportation, sewer and water systems.**

**MAC believes that preserving the region's environmental assets is critical to a competitive business climate and to the region's continued quality of life.**

**MAC believes mature regions, like Southeast Michigan, must have federal policy and incentives that promote their economic revitalization.**



## Metropolitan Affairs Coalition's Detailed Platform

**MAC believes that the federal government must reverse its pattern of general neglect of Southeast Michigan's infrastructure...its roads, bridges, public transportation, sewer and water systems.**

- The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETELU), the federal law which establishes federal surface transportation policy and funding programs, expires in fall 2009. In reauthorizing that act, a number of issues must be addressed.
  - There must be adequate funding for the nation's roads, bridges, and public transportation where funding does not meet current needs.
  - There must be substantial emphasis on mature regions of the country that need to rebuild aging roads and bridges on the federal system.
  - Michigan's return on federal highway transportation dollars must continue to increase over the life of the reauthorization (by the end of SAFETELU the federal money returned to Michigan for every dollar it sends to Washington should approach 92 cents).
  - Federal policy, funding, and regulatory actions should support cost-effective improvements to public transit, including rapid transit, especially in Southeast Michigan where the region suffers from a federal funding bias that favors regions that already have extensive rail systems.
  - Michigan's return on federal public transportation dollars must increase over the life of the reauthorization (currently the federal money returned to Michigan for every dollar sent to Washington is under 50 cents on the dollar).
- Federal support for Detroit Metropolitan and Willow Run Airports, the surrounding communities, and Wayne and Washtenaw Counties in developing the Aerotropolis (airport city) will spur long-term global economic benefit.
- Federal support is essential for implementing the Detroit Intermodal Freight Facility, which will enhance movement of goods by rail and provide an accompanying economic benefit.
- Funding in the Clean Water Act for improving municipal wastewater treatment must be appropriated at its authorized level.
- Funding in the Water Resources Development Act for improving wastewater treatment and water supply must be appropriated at its authorized level.

**MAC believes that preserving the region's environmental assets is critical to a competitive business climate and to the region's continued quality of life.**

- With over 20 percent of the world's fresh water, the Great Lakes are a regional asset with national and global significance. Following adoption of the Great Lakes Compact by the affected states, the federal government must ratify the compact to prevent major diversions of Great Lakes waters.
- Achieving clean air standards should be accomplished through locally developed strategies tailored to be most cost-effective for the business community.
  - The increasing tendency to impose multi-state air pollution control programs on Southeast Michigan must be reversed.
  - We must preserve the institutional framework in the Clean Air Act that holds state and local governments accountable for determining how to comply with standards.
- Addressing climate change must be high on the national agenda.
  - Federal legislation must be structured to ensure that all sectors contribute to reducing greenhouse gases in proportion to what they contribute to the problem.
    - This is a major policy matter that must be decided in laws established by Congress, not in regulations established by the USEPA.
- The environmental benefits of the region's billion-dollar investment in pollution control programs are threatened by invasive species.
  - Ballast water discharges, the invasion of phragmites, and the possible migration of Asian carp into the Great Lakes are three examples of known threats.
  - We must be proactive in preventing invasive species.
  - Federal programs to prevent invasive species are appropriate as these are national issues and individual states should not be forced to address these threats on their own, potentially placing themselves at a competitive disadvantage .

**MAC believes mature regions, like Southeast Michigan, must have federal policy and incentives that promote their economic revitalization.**

- Redevelopment
  - Federal tax credits and other incentives must be expanded to level the playing field for brownfield redevelopment vs. greenfield development.
  - Federal cleanup standards must balance the needs of environmental improvement and economic stability.
  - Innovative solutions and support should be provided to redevelop neighborhoods severely impacted by home foreclosures.

- Talent
  - Federal policy and funding must support K-12 and higher education to train Southeast Michigan's workers for a future, knowledge-based economy.
  - Federal immigration policy must recognize the realities in Southeast Michigan where well-educated and skilled immigrants contribute to the essential talent base.
  - Federal income tax, social security and other policy must allow flexibility to tap the talents of older, near or post-retirement workers in the work environment.
- Federal customs and immigration policy and staffing decisions at our U.S./Canadian border crossings must encourage the flow of people and goods while maintaining adequate security.
- Southeast Michigan must be actively considered in decisions on locating and retaining federal offices and facilities especially those types of facilities underrepresented in the region including defense and homeland security.
- Federal incentives to accelerate entrepreneurial enterprises must focus on regions that are undergoing major economic transformation.
- The sustainability of the region's economy hinges on developing new technologies to create alternative energy.
  - Federal policies and funding should capitalize on the brain power (knowledge base) needed to research and commercialize these technologies that reside in Southeast Michigan.
  - Federal incentives and appropriate funding must support research and development to move these technologies forward.
    - Particular emphasis should be placed on battery research and other research that will help the incumbent automobile companies.