



B uil ding One Community

It's in Our Best Interest



Metropolitan Affairs Coalition



Letter from the Chairperson



Metropolitan Affairs Coalition (MAC) is a regional public/private partnership dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and economy of Southeast Michigan.

Please visit our Web site at www.mac-web.org if you are interested in learning more about MAC and its *Building One Community* Initiative, or call 313.961.2270.

Regional problem solving is more important now than ever. Virtually every day we see issues and problems in the newspaper or electronic media that make that point – work together regionally or risk failing together regionally.

Whether it is the quality of our water, the condition of our roads and highways, the ability to move workers efficiently, enjoying nature, taking advantage of cultural amenities, or a multitude of other challenges or opportunities, it is clear that regional cooperation is a necessity. Working together improves our quality of life as well as our economic and job prospects. And, most important, by doing so we build a better future for our children in our metropolitan area.

That is why Metropolitan Affairs Coalition is a strong advocate for thinking and acting regionally and why we have launched *Building One Community*. Our objective is to promote a better understanding of how all communities have a vested interest in working for the benefit of the larger region.

Please take a moment to review this brochure . . . and consider the advantages of regional cooperation. After all, no matter where we live or work, we are really one big regional community with a shared, and, I trust, very bright future.

Sincerely,

J. Terry McElroy
Chairperson
Metropolitan Affairs Coalition
Senior Vice President, CFO, and Treasurer
The Auto Club Group

You're busy living your life – but do you ever stop to imagine the future?

It's not easy. Who has the time for gazing into a crystal ball? Besides, we might not like what we see there.

But just for a minute, imagine Southeast Michigan as it could be in, say, 10 years from now. Just for a minute, imagine this . . .

Business is Booming!

- New companies of all kinds are setting up shop in metropolitan Detroit, and established ones are expanding.
- New jobs are being created every day – and young, creative, tech-savvy professionals are choosing Southeast Michigan as the place they want to live, work, and settle down.
- The Detroit region is the world's leader in automobile manufacturing and is renowned as a center for high technology.

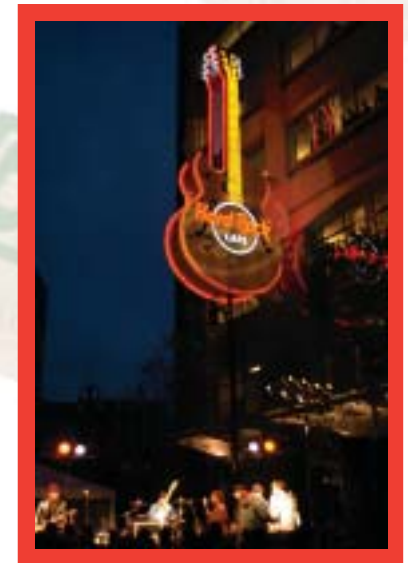
Detroit is Bustling!

- Motown is the place to be, with its “big city feel,” exciting nightlife, rich cultural opportunities, abundant shops, clubs and restaurants, and rapid transit – all of which have made Detroit a hot destination for tourists and conventions.
- “Urban blight” is a thing of the past – newly reclaimed urban lofts, apartments, and condos downtown paired with revitalized housing in the neighborhoods are home to a vibrant, interesting mix of young singles, families, and seniors.

- With a revitalized Detroit riverfront of greenways and parks, Southeast Michigan's international gateway proclaims pride in our region's natural beauty and environmental heritage.

The Suburbs are Thriving!

- Area-wide planning has slowed “sprawl” and encouraged redevelopment of mature communities where shops, restaurants, and transit connections are within walking distance, and where the place people call home is not just a house, but a neighborhood.
- The region offers a wide variety of lifestyle choices – from reasonably priced apartments, condominiums, and smaller homes for singles, young families, and “downsizing seniors” in established communities, to distinctive homes in charming historic districts, to traditional upscale, single-family housing in suburban or rural settings.
- Metropolitan Detroit has state-of-the-art public transportation – including rapid transit service – that takes the pain out of commuting throughout the region and easily transports visitors to area attractions and business travelers to their appointments.
- Nightlife, the arts, and recreational opportunities abound, and our diverse racial and ethnic populations add rich character to the local “scene.”



Research suggests that communities are becoming more interdependent – and interdependency is a hallmark of a successful region



And most important, people who live here – whether in the city or the suburbs – are proud to say, **“We’re from Detroit!”**

An aspiration? Sure. But it is an aspiration we can realize if we cooperate and work together. Regardless of our differences, we really do all want the same things – a good home, a decent job, a safe neighborhood, and a future for our kids in our metropolitan area.

The Rust Belt has Gone Green

- Lakes, rivers, and streams have returned to pristine condition, making it safe to swim, sail, water-ski, and fish without worrying about pollution.
- Air quality is at the highest standard because businesses, local governments, and citizens are collaborating to minimize pollution from manufacturing, transportation, and everyday household activities.
- Parks, greenways, bike paths, jogging trails, and open space invite people to walk their dogs, enjoy the outdoors, and turn their kids loose to play in safety.
- Preservation of natural habitats has increased native wildlife, including many species of fish, waterfowl, birds of prey, songbirds, reptiles, and mammals, and has encouraged people to get in touch with the natural world.



The 32-mile Detroit River links the Upper Great Lakes to the Lower Great Lakes, with over 5 million people living in its watershed

Aren't we really one big regional community?



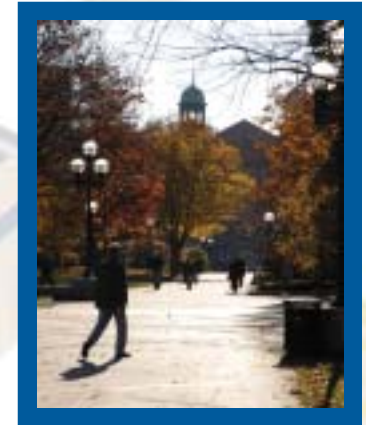
Think about it: Metropolitan Detroit is home to a great many political jurisdictions – 233 cities, townships, and villages in the seven counties of Southeast Michigan. We usually think of “our community” as the jurisdiction where our home or business is located, where we vote, where our kids go to school. This is where we live. This is where we belong. This is where our loyalties lie.

But while we may call one particular place “home,” we are also part of the broader regional community. For example:

- We commute to jobs and educational institutions throughout the region.
- We shop at regional malls and outlet centers.

- We receive medical care at regional hospitals and clinics.
- We run, walk, cycle, and roller-blade on greenway systems that link dozens of communities.
- We sail, fish, golf, water-ski, picnic, ride horseback, hold family gatherings, and enjoy nature at regional metroparks.
- We attend concerts, plays, and shows, and visit art galleries and museums downtown and throughout the metropolitan area.
- We patronize casinos, restaurants, and clubs, and attend special events like the Arts, Beats & Eats Festival, Thanksgiving Day Parade, the North American International Auto Show, the Ann Arbor art fairs, and the International Freedom Festival.
- We support the Red Wings, Pistons, Lions, Tigers, and any number of college teams and travel across many jurisdictions to attend games.

We may not always realize it, but we, in fact, act regionally in our everyday activities and travels. Together our many cities, villages, townships, and counties really represent one big regional community.



Each year, about 800,000 people from around the region, and the world, attend the North American International Auto Show

Why cooperate regionally? Because it's in our best interest



So we share regional resources and we take advantage of region-wide activities and services. We're already acting regionally.

And whether it's protecting the environment, strengthening our economy, improving government efficiency, expanding transportation options, fighting crime and terrorism, or enhancing recreational or cultural opportunities, cooperation between communities can improve the quality of life for all of us. Together we make our region – and our individual communities – a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

It all boils down to this. It's just in our best interest to collaborate and work regionally on so many of the issues we face. Think about it some more:

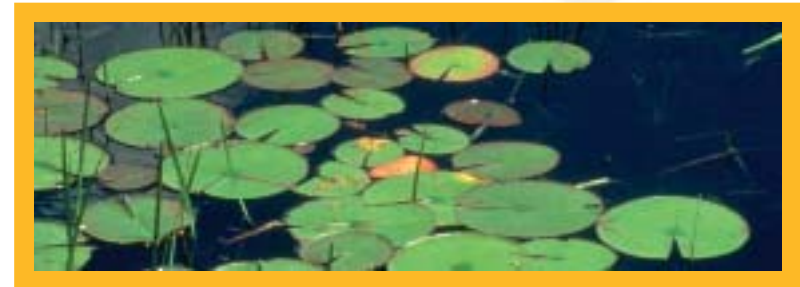
Don't we all care about clean water and air?

Our environment and ecology really have no political boundaries. Rivers and streams run through many municipalities – and upstream pollution in my community can flow downstream to yours. A plant producing obnoxious smells or contaminants in my city could well ruin a day in your township.

And what about jobs? Our very livelihood depends upon how well we as a region compete in the global economy. In our highly competitive world, economic

activity pays little attention to political boundaries. When a business makes a decision to locate or expand jobs, it's just not my community that is evaluated. Our entire metropolitan area is assessed for the quality of our workforce, infrastructure, environmental amenities, education and cultural institutions, and quality of life.

How about protecting our families from crime, fires, terrorists, or other emergencies? It just makes good sense for our police, fire, and emergency services personnel to share information, collaborate across jurisdictional boundaries, and join forces where needed. And does every community have the expertise and resources to mount sophisticated and



The Rouge River Watershed covers about 438 square miles, in 48 municipalities, with a population of over 1.5 million



expensive training programs? What about jointly purchasing with your neighbor costly public safety equipment that is infrequently used?

How would we get around if our roads weren't coordinated? If freeways, highways, and public transportation didn't connect one jurisdiction to another, how would people commute to work? How would manufacturers get the workers they need or effectively transport goods in and out of the region? And would it make sense for a five-lane highway to dump on to a two-lane street?

What about parks, greenways, and wildlife habitat? We need places to recreate, pursue outdoor activities, enjoy wildlife, and restore ourselves. Every community doesn't have the space or resources to create a metropark or a wildlife refuge – but together

we can. And how do you like it when your greenway trail or bicycle path comes to a halt at the boundary of your neighboring community?

Don't we all want good services and low taxes? In the end, a big reason cooperating with our neighbors makes sense is that we want good services – but we don't want higher taxes. We don't have the dollars to build our own museums, theaters, convention centers, transportation systems, recreational facilities, parks, and water and sewer systems. And our community can often create more services for our residents – and higher quality services – by cooperating with our neighboring cities and towns.

Ask yourself: Could we actually afford to go it alone? So when you stop to think, it really does become very clear – we can't go it alone. Regional cooperation is the way to go. Southeast Michigan as a region is much more than the sum of its parts. And the old “Detroit vs. the Suburbs” is out the door – we're all in this together.

All of our communities depend upon one another. We all stand to benefit from a shared vision and a shared determination to make things happen for the good of all.



31% of Southeast Michigan workers travel to jobs outside the county in which they live

Where's regional cooperation working anyway?

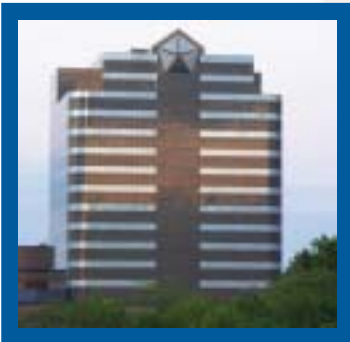


Sure, there are a number of areas where we can work together better for the benefit of your community and mine. The good news is that this is already happening. We have some great models of regional cooperation to follow. For example:

Automation Alley was created by Oakland County, and is an energetic alliance of government departments, educational institutions, and private businesses in Macomb and Oakland Counties working to strengthen the economic base of the region by developing and promoting a first-class technology cluster. By working together, Automation Alley partners are able to compete with other tech centers such as California's Silicon Valley and Boston's Route 128 in attracting world-class, high-tech workers to the area.



Courts and Law Enforcement Management Information System (CLEMIS) is a regional public safety management system coordinated by Oakland County that uses the newest computer technology to allow communication and sharing of information among about 150 criminal justice and public safety agencies in six counties. By providing an affordable technological resource and information database to agencies of all sizes, CLEMIS strengthens law enforcement and makes Southeast Michigan communities safer places to live and work.



Detroit Regional Economic Partnership is a public and private sector effort representing 10 counties in Southeast Michigan and the City of Detroit, along with 100 private-sector investors. The partnership markets the region nationally and internationally and provides a single point-of-contact for firms considering doing business in the region. It has branded and helped position Southeast Michigan as "Digital Drive" – a leading technology area and excellent place to do business in the North American market.

Downriver Community Conference (DCC) is a coalition of 18 communities dedicated to working collaboratively to enhance the economy and quality of life in Wayne County. It provides numerous services

While our region is the "Auto Capital" of the world, we are also a center of high technology and increasingly known as "Digital Drive"

on behalf of member communities including employment training, employer services, economic development, and household weatherization programs. DCC also helps shape and coordinate public policy affecting the area at the federal, state, regional, and county levels, and obtains grants and other financial assistance to successfully implement projects benefiting the region.

Greater Detroit American Heritage River (AHR) Initiative is managed and supported by the Metropolitan Affairs Coalition. It brings together communities and businesses along the 32-mile riverfront to promote economic development, expand riverfront greenways and other recreational opportunities, celebrate the river's rich history, and rehabilitate and protect natural resources and wildlife habitat. This MAC/AHR regional effort has helped raise over \$28 million for waterfront projects that are resulting in dramatic revitalization of established riverfront communities and producing important economic, environmental, and social benefits for the region.

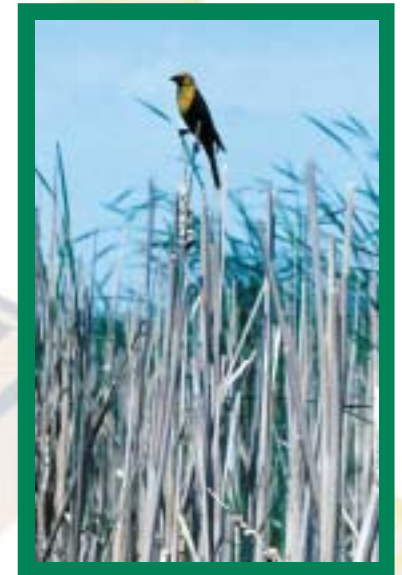


Regional Alliance for Firefighter Training (RAFT) is a coalition of fire departments and community colleges that offers fire service training. Today's firefighter must be highly trained in technical and sophisticated methods to effectively fight fires, provide medical treatment, and mount a wide range of aid and rescue operations. RAFT helps equip firefighters to save lives and property by providing high-quality training that would not be available on a community-by-community basis.

These are just a few examples of why it makes good sense (and often even good cents) to work and cooperate regionally. Numerous other models exist including:

- Clinton, Huron, and River Raisin Watershed Councils
- Conference of Western Wayne
- Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority
- Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge
- Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Park Authority
- Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
- Southeast Michigan Cultural Coalition
- Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transit
- Water Quality Consortium for Southeast Michigan

As you can see, **regional cooperation is working in a number of areas . . . but we still have a ways to go.**



The walleye fishing tournament along the lower Detroit River and Lake Erie attracts fishermen near and far and contributes \$1 million annually to the local economy

So what can we do to encourage regional cooperation?



Communicate the regional message: Tell your friends, neighbors, children, and colleagues about our regional community. Encourage them to think about the linkages and the interrelationships that make our many communities one regional family.

Become more informed: Learn about the regional efforts in which your community is involved. Are there other regional initiatives you should join or support?

Be a regional advocate: When you become aware of a new issue affecting your community, think about the possible larger impacts or relationships to your neighboring communities. Is there a regional approach that might be more effective or less costly?

Encourage your elected officials to work regionally: Your senator, representative, mayor, supervisor, councilperson, or commissioner is often focused on meeting the needs of your own community, which is only appropriate. But make sure that your representatives know that you value regional cooperation when it improves services, program efficiencies, and regional amenities.

Take pride in our region: The Detroit area's image often gets a bad rap, both locally and nationally. And too often we are among the culprits. We suffer from a poor self-image and many times voice that to others. In fact, the region has lots of things about which we can be proud. So be part of that growing number of people who say, **"We're from Detroit!"**



What do we think about regional cooperation?

MAC commissioned a survey of Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne County residents which revealed:

More than 80 percent of respondents said they support communities working together for the common good of the region. People are most interested in regional cooperation to:

- create environmental policies that benefit everyone
- improve public safety and anti-terrorism efforts
- enhance the area's image, increase tourism, and attract world-class events.

Most believe the quality of life in Detroit affects the entire region.

Sixty-one percent said cooperation may not work because too many communities may be afraid of losing local control.

Even after considering possible loss of control or increased taxes, sixty one percent of respondents supported regional cooperation.

Sixty-two percent said they believe racial divisions can be overcome and diversity can be an asset in working together.

Want to see complete results?

Visit www.mac-web.org

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Southeast Michigan is among the more complex regions nationally – 240 local governments that range from urban to suburban to rural

Building One Community

