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METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS COALITION

Metropolitan Affairs Coalition (MAC)
2026 Work Program

MAC's work program is driven by its coalition of business, labor, government, and education leaders; this coalition is dedicated to creating economic opportunity, improving quality of life, equity and sustainability, and promoting regional cooperation in Southeast Michigan. The work program stresses dialogue and collaboration, consensus building, and practical actions to move Southeast Michigan forward. MAC seeks to impact policy and economic development issues and bring its unique perspective to critical issues in the region.

MAC's special affiliation with SEMCOG affords access to outstanding research, data, and technical expertise that provide a strong foundation for its work. There are four main areas of work.

1. **Public Policy**

Purpose
Develop and communicate MAC common-ground positions to leadership in Lansing and Washington, D.C., the media, and opinion leaders.
Methodology

a. Development of MAC's policy platform

In 2026, MAC's Policy Platform Committee will guide development of two documents for public policy.

- The 2027-2028 MAC Legislative Action Priorities
- MAC's Advocacy Foundation

The Legislative Action Priorities will be narrowly focused on a few topics that MAC will proactively work to influence during the 2027 and 2028 legislative sessions. Primary focus will be on economic development as there will be a new Governor and SEMCOG and MAC will approve a new regional economic development strategy. This will be an important time in which to develop and promote MAC's regional priorities for state economic development policies, tools, resources, and assistance for regional/local economic development activities.

MAC's Advocacy Foundation will include the wide range of public policies supported by MAC and will be the basis for legislative engagement, beyond the Action Priorities, as opportunities arise during the 2027 and 2028 legislative sessions.

b. Implementing the policy platform

Pursue opportunities to promote policies that respond to current economic and political challenges and regional and state priorities, inform the public, and encourage action. MAC will promote the

policies included in both new documents through activities that may include convening issue advisory teams; developing new policy papers; creating opinion papers; co-sponsoring "Pulse of the Region" citizen surveys; sponsoring issues forums; and utilizing media releases, guest commentaries, and letters to the editor to share consensus positions. MAC will publish information and activities related to this work in our online newsletter, on our website, and on social media.

c. Engage Regional Leadership on policy priorities

MAC will engage with the county executives and Detroit mayor to identify and promote regional priorities. Business, labor, and education leaders may be engaged through activities such as symposiums; opinion pieces; and partnering to support implementation. Some of the priorities identified are infrastructure, mental health, economic development, workforce development, regional collaboration.

2. Economic Development

Purpose

Development and implementation of strategies in Southeast Michigan's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This document provides a blueprint for leveraging regional economic and place-based assets and identifying new opportunities in high growth sectors to increase economic and environmental resiliency, skilled workforce and shared prosperity.

Methodology

Every five years, SEMCOG and MAC lead the development of the region's Economic Development Strategy through participation in the Economic Development Council (EDC). In 2025, the EDC began developing policies and actions based on the findings of the forums, outreach meetings, conversations with key economic development stakeholders, and public surveys to further economic growth. The 2026 strategy will be presented to the MAC Board in February 2026 for approval. This includes an implementation plan which SEMCOG, MAC and other stakeholders will help implement depending on organizational priorities and capacity.

a. Education, Talent, and Workforce

Education and Talent priorities in the CEDS focus on identifying and implementing talent projects that:

- Align Talent Development with Workforce Needs
- Promote Upward Economic Mobility

MAC initiatives may include:

- Create a campaign to promote opportunities for upskilling for career development in healthcare (and other in-demand occupations) through video(s) and messaging.

- Promote careers in the essential economy through policies, best practices and collaboration with education, business and labor partners.
- Symposiums on key trends, technologies, and challenges impacting the regional economy. These may include issues such as the role of Artificial Intelligence and data centers on economic development, mental health in the workforce, and the future of air mobility.

3. Building One Community

Purpose

Promote efforts that encourage and strengthen leadership and cooperation to contribute to a stronger, more cohesive, and prosperous region.

Methodology

a. Shining Light Regional Cooperation Awards

MAC will collaborate with the Detroit Free Press on the annual *Shining Light Regional Cooperation Awards*. Key elements will include: a public nominating and selection committee process; seeking sponsors and opportunities with local media to promote the event and honorees; supporting student involvement; and using the program as a vehicle to encourage regional cooperation and highlight MAC and its mission. MAC will seek to expand the prominence of the awards and the honorees. Initiatives may include a nominations kick-off reception, tours of honoree organizations, social media campaigns highlighting the honorees and their current activities and initiatives.

b. Collaboration and Partnerships

MAC will continue to develop new and strengthen existing partnerships to help maximize the effectiveness and impact of policy, economic development and education priorities. These include civic organizations such as Detroit Regional Chamber, Citizens Research Council, Business Leaders for Michigan, Detroit Regional Partnership, Detroit Public Television, and SEMCOG.

c. Civility

MAC will continue to build one community through a focus on civility. This may include board discussions and presentations on valuing and modeling civility as well as recognizing its importance in a year with elections that will determine future policy priorities at the local, state and federal levels.

4. MAC Administration

Purpose

Conduct management, development, planning, and communications activities in support of MAC's mission.

Methodology

- General administration (Board meetings and engagement, financial management, Audit and Nominating functions, Board committees)
- Fundraising and development activities (renew annual/seek new funding sources, prepare funding requests and applications, manage corporate and foundation grants and other revenue sources)
- Communications and website management (maintain MAC website, social media channels), and contact management database in coordination with SEMCOG.