

# Core Legislative Principles

## Economic Vitality

**Healthy communities are essential to the economic viability and attraction of jobs to Michigan.**

Vibrant, municipalities are the economic engines of the state. Municipalities must maintain the ability to expand and provide the high level of services demanded by the residents. Michigan's cities, villages, and urban townships need to be given the appropriate tools to create economic development, redevelopment, and revitalization. This includes dedicating state and federal resources and amending state law to allow for more efficient local tools first and foremost to developed, full service communities for economic development, infrastructure and local improvements. New growth in existing municipalities should utilize existing infrastructure for the most efficient use of state and local public revenue. All those who benefit from a municipality through use of the infrastructure, municipal amenities, proximity to jobs, commerce, and cultural resources should bear a fair share of the cost of providing those services. This must be reflected in land use law. Municipal authority must be maintained and enhanced to allow for more flexibility and options at the local level. Necessary tools for appropriate revitalization and growth in developed communities include the ability to zone, flexibility in planning, local review and approval of buildings and new development, urban redevelopment options and tools, and economic development and financing strategies. Collaborative efforts by municipalities, townships, counties, chambers of commerce and various business associations should be encouraged and assisted financially. This partnering would help to eliminate duplication, could be more cost effective and would promote economic development that benefits local business that best fits with the goals of each individual municipality. These principles along with quality educational opportunities are the cornerstones that make Michigan communities competitive in today's global economy.

## Environmental and Infrastructure Sustainability

**Environmental regulations must be appropriately funded to adequately protect public health, based on scientific principles and risk analysis. Policies should encourage the development and redevelopment of residential, commercial and industrial properties in full service communities. Local government involvement in telecommunications and internet connectivity are essential for commerce, public safety, economic development, education and healthcare in the 21st century.**

Local governments are partners with state and federal agencies in protecting the environment and quality of life for our residents, serving as both regulators and members of the regulated community. As regulators, municipalities need adequate authority to set standards, enforce requirements and perform inspections. The state should continue to provide technical assistance and financial resources to local governments for the implementation of environmental programs. Municipalities must be directly involved in the development and review of environmental laws and regulations.

Local governments should retain the right to establish, own and operate existing or new municipal telecommunications systems and should have the opportunity to partner with private and other public service providers in order to provide access to this technology to Michigan residents. Partnerships must have proper communication and coordination to ensure that municipal rights-of-way are maintained without excessive disruption for construction or insertion of new technology. Communities must have the primary right to define locations in or near rights-of-way that meet the aesthetic needs of homeowners, the community, and the engineering needs of the provider.

## Ethical Conduct

**It is essential that all government elected and appointed officials abide by a code of ethical conduct.**

State and municipal officials must adhere to standards of conduct that promote transparency and public confidence in our system of governance. Ethics provisions should preserve options for locally developed and adopted ethical standards, as may be provided for in local charters or ordinances.

## Local Control

**Preservation of constitutional power given to the people of Michigan's communities to govern themselves in local matters must be carefully preserved.**

The powers of "home rule" were granted in the Michigan Constitution of 1908 and reaffirmed and strengthened in the 1963 Constitution. The strength and high standards that prevail today in local government in Michigan come from this long tradition of self-determination. Citizens adopt charters to govern themselves, and elect municipal officials to resolve significant issues in the public interest which best meet local needs and conditions. In order to ensure that communities can continue to provide a wide range of needed and wanted services, state and federal legislation must uphold the principles of local control and ensure that costs are not shifted to local taxpayers nor burdensome liabilities or unfunded mandates be placed upon municipalities. Functions or activities required by the state or federal government must include funding for implementation. Municipalities must also be given the flexibility to consolidate. They must be given incentives for consolidation, and current laws need to be streamlined and made more flexible for any communities that choose to consolidate.

## Municipal Finance

**Improvements to the municipal finance system are needed to provide fiscal stability and flexibility, which are necessary components of vibrant communities.**

Property taxes, city income taxes, revenue sharing, franchise fees, adequate compensation for use of municipal resources by third parties, other fees and various local option taxes are all integral components of a stable, reliable and balanced revenue stream for municipalities. The property tax system and municipal fee structure must be improved to provide greater flexibility for appropriate funding of municipal services. Elimination of any property tax liability without local approval must occur only if reimbursement is guaranteed by Constitutional amendment. Revenue sharing must be fully funded and be provided in greater proportion to full service municipalities. Existing revenue streams must not be eliminated without having alternative revenue sources in place. New revenue streams, including those that may be obtained through local option revenue sources, are essential to meet the future needs of municipal **residents** and to provide the infrastructure necessary for vital public services.

## Municipal Services

**Municipalities must be able to offer appropriate and desired municipal services that their residents want and need.**

Federal and state resources must be provided to maintain appropriate and needed municipal services that meet the human need and support a high quality of life in Michigan communities. Unfunded mandates must not be required by the state and federal government. In order to serve growing urban populations with water, sewer, transportation, police protection, fire protection, solid waste, stormwater, electricity, gas, communications, parks and recreation, public housing, and other services, municipalities need the autonomy to make appropriate management, financial, and operational decisions. Municipalities must be free to determine when it is appropriate to enter into and fund regional or multi-jurisdictional arrangements. They must be free of barriers that discourage cost savings through interlocal cooperation and long-range planning.

## Transportation

**To improve quality of life in Michigan's communities, multi-modal transportation infrastructure and transit operations are essential to ensure the safest, most cost-effective transportation system.**

Transportation infrastructure is a strategic investment that is essential to strengthening Michigan's economy. Long-term reliable transportation funding sources must be found to provide base line support for infrastructure improvements and transit operations. The use of existing transportation resources has grown dramatically in Michigan while funding systems have changed little. The global and interdependent economy relies on an increasingly mobile population and communities that offer accessible, high-quality services. Transportation is critical to both. Michigan's economy and quality of life in its municipalities are dependent upon the ability to move people and goods. Therefore, transportation investments have a direct impact on the ability of municipalities to continue to attract highly skilled residents and employees.