


the review

July / August 2020

the official magazine of the  michigan municipal league



POLICY FORUM SERIES

Fast Forward: Leading the
Future of Michigan Cities



BUILDING COMMUNITY WEALTH
LEADING THROUGH A PANDEMIC

the review

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Features

6
Scenario Planning:
A Tool for Michigan Cities to
Navigate an Uncertain Future
By Robert Goodspeed

9
**A New Rural Digital Divide
in Michigan**
By Jean Hardy



13
**The Stories of Climate
Change: Building Resilient
Communities**
By Dr. Victoria Herrmann

16
**League Launches
New Home Page:**
Emphasis on Community
Wealth Building
By Dan Gilmartin

17
**Deepening Our
Commitment to Place:**
An Agenda for Building
Community Wealth
By League Staff



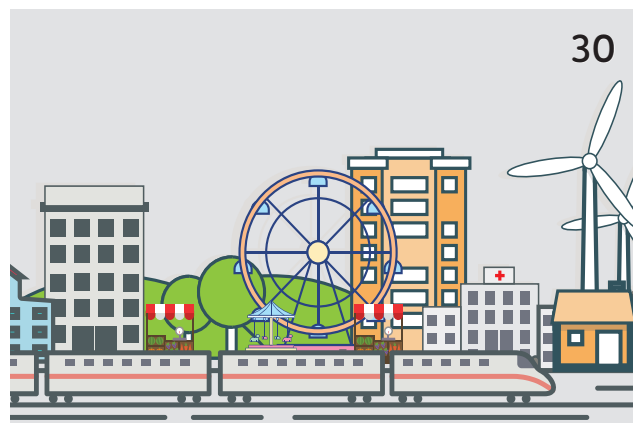
19
**Towards a New System
of Community Wealth**
By Bruce Katz & Ross Baird

22
**How Courageous Leadership
Can Help a Community
Through a Pandemic**
By Stephen Goldsmith

25
**Best Municipal Practices
Surrounding the COVID-19
Pandemic**
By Kim Cekola

26 COVER STORY
Fantastic or Frightening:
An Uncertain Future is
Decided by Preparation
By Shanna Draheim
& Selma Tucker

30
Community Wealth Building:
8 Basic Principles
By Ted Howard



Columns

- 5 Executive Director's Message**
- 35 Legal Spotlight**
- 36 Municipal Finance**
- 38 Northern Field Report**
- 40 The Lab Report**
- 45 Municipal Q&A**
- 46 Maximize Your Membership**



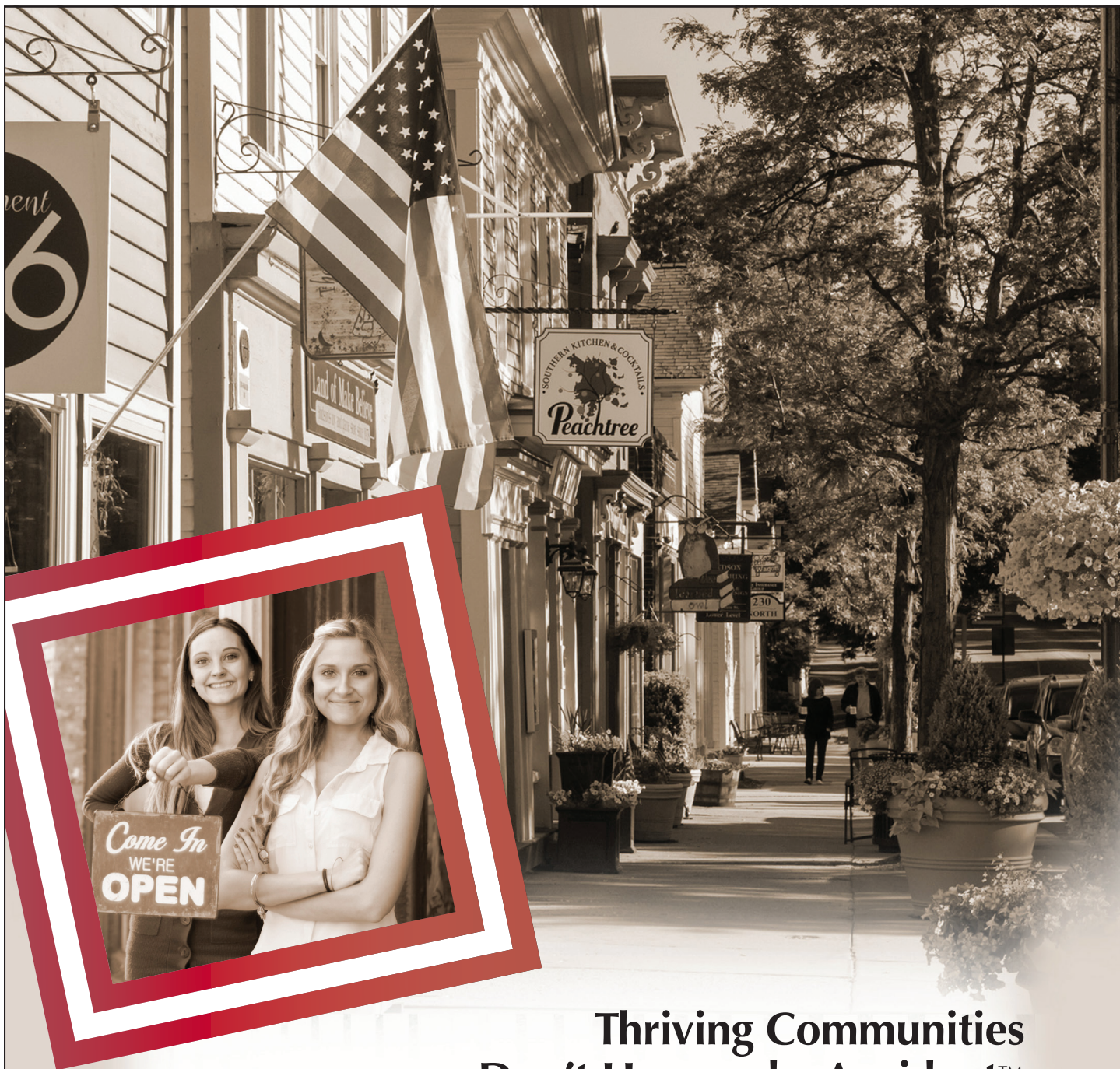
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the review

The official magazine of the Michigan Municipal League

Volume 93, Number 4

We love where you live.

The Michigan Municipal League is dedicated to making Michigan's communities better by thoughtfully innovating programs, energetically connecting ideas and people, actively serving members with resources and services, and passionately inspiring positive change for Michigan's greatest centers of potential: its communities.

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There Is No Status Quo

We stand at a unique juncture in history. Across the globe, every country is in the midst of a global pandemic. While we attempted to grapple with the fallout from this health crisis, collective passions have been inspired to action by the injustices we have witnessed. Across America and beyond, citizens have to come together against racism and call for criminal justice reform.

The enormity of these events, combined with the 'normal' issues and challenges that our communities face on a regular basis, might lead one to conclude that this is the time to be firm, stay the course, and not waver from the tried and true. But perhaps, the opposite is true. Perhaps, now more than ever is the time to be bold and thoughtful about how we collectively chart a better course—one that leads to sustainable community prosperity for all our citizens.

While the COVID-19 crisis continues to challenge the League and our members to respond to the needs of a rapidly changing pandemic, it is a crucial time to address ways we can navigate and adapt to an equally uncertain future. We have seen and been inspired by a myriad of local innovations in the pandemic response, but many of our communities still haven't fully recovered from the last shock—the housing market crash over a decade ago. As leaders of local communities, it is important to anticipate and prepare for the future to make sure we don't just merely survive a crisis but are ultimately able to emerge stronger and better. The topic of planning for uncertainty and weathering change has been the focus of three public policy forums that the League hosted in the past year. Whether the subject matter was Michigan's shifting demographics, the economy, climate change, or technology, responding to a rapid pace of change and preparing community leaders for emerging opportunities dominated the conversation.

As our kickoff speaker, Dr. Cindy Frewen, founder and CEO of Frewen Architects, Inc. and adjunct professor at the University of Houston Foresight Graduate Program, noted: "We talk about the future because it affects how we act in the present—which in turn shapes the future." Only by facing the necessity of change head-on do we have the chance to shape it for the better.

This will be a new way of thinking for many in our communities who expect local government to maintain stable and predictable services in response to challenging events such as catastrophic flooding, plant closures, and financial upheaval, to name a few. Local government is often urged to "fix it" by putting things back the way they were—a demand to rebuild the sandcastle quickly, before it washes away.

With the pace of change accelerating, it is important to pivot from stability to resiliency. How do we equip our communities to bend without breaking and navigate the challenges to emerge stronger? Our public policy speakers urged leaders to work from an appreciation of assets and strengths, rather than beginning with a lamentation of deficits. Michigan has an abundance of natural resources, scenic destinations, high quality agricultural land, top-notch educational institutions and research capability, and great places to live. We can continue to build on these assets by creating opportunities for more resiliency. We're calling that process community wealth building, and it is the next critical step in the League's work on placemaking.

There are significant challenges on our path to attaining our goals. Michigan's outdated municipal financial structure still has a stranglehold on local governments' ability to raise funding for badly needed fixes such as improving infrastructure. The lack of financial resources leaves communities vulnerable to setbacks and ill-prepared for world events beyond their control. Our expansive land development habits require expensive capital investment in new infrastructure while consuming natural and agricultural spaces. We have grave concerns about our industrial past as the specters of PFAS and green ooze literally rise from the ground. In addition, as the COVID-19 outbreak has devastatingly highlighted, racial and socioeconomic inequities are serious problems in our communities.

If we want to shift the impact of change from threat to opportunity, to build community wealth and prepare for resilient responses, then we all need to challenge ourselves to think in more innovative ways at the state and local levels. There is no status quo. As is said many times, the only constant is change, and we need to be ready for it.



Daniel P. Gilmartin
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ROBERT GOODSPEED

was a speaker at the Michigan Municipal League's October 2019 policy forum, tackling the topic of contemporary long-term planning challenges for cities. He offers these insights based on his research on how new information technologies can be used to improve the planning process and planning outcomes, and involves mixed-methods studies of innovative urban planning practice.



By Robert Goodspeed

SCENARIO PLANNING

A TOOL FOR MICHIGAN CITIES TO NAVIGATE AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Our cities and regions today face major challenges when it comes to shaping their futures. In some places, local stakeholders seek transformative spatial changes, such as stopping urban sprawl and pursuing greater sustainability. In other places, decision makers grapple with how to make their cities resilient in the face of growing uncertainties like storms, flooding, and heat waves intensified by climate change. Across the United States, leaders are increasingly turning to scenario planning, an approach to urban planning uniquely suited to these contemporary decision-making challenges.

When I introduced the concept of scenario planning at Michigan Municipal League's inaugural policy forum series event in Fall 2019, I could not imagine how relevant the method would become for Michigan's cities. Although interest has been building in scenario planning for many years, the COVID-19 pandemic has vividly illustrated the importance of planning for uncertain—yet foreseeable—events like pandemics and recessions.

Local governments, nonprofit groups, and other organizations that need to make decisions now may be able to apply scenario planning to consider various possibilities and think through their implications. While my research

focuses on the use of scenarios in urban planning, there is also a strong tradition of using scenarios in the fields of public health and emergency management specifically focused on pandemics. Andrew Lakoff describes this application in his book *Unprepared: Global Health in a Time of Emergency*. Beyond health specific applications, scenario planning can be used to prepare plans that are resilient to different economic trends.

What Is Scenario Planning?

Scenario planning is a method of strategic planning that builds on the creation and analysis of multiple plausible scenarios of the future. Originally developed as a tool for military and corporate strategic planning, scenario planning has been adapted by urban planners and combined with longstanding planning methods like visioning and consensus building for use in city and regional plans. Unlike traditional approaches that begin with forecasting, scenario planning starts with a different mindset: We can't predict the future, but we can better prepare for it.

At its core, scenario planning guides planners, community members, and other stakeholders through a consideration of various futures their city may face—the good, the bad, and the unexpected—in a few different ways.

Normative processes create several scenarios and identify one that describes a community's desired future to use as the basis for a plan. As the most developed type of scenario planning, such projects are used in urban planning primarily for plans concerning land use, transportation, or both. Such projects encourage a synthesis of quantitative analysis and discussion of community values, resulting in detailed, specific scenarios that enjoy community buy-in. Normative scenario planning processes can also incorporate scenarios that focus on uncertainties outside the control of city leaders—such as the amount of economic or population growth—to build a plan that describes how the city should respond under those different conditions.

Exploratory projects, by contrast, are generally qualitative and are best conducted when planners need to build a shared understanding of complex, new trends among diverse stakeholders. These projects create multiple hypothetical future scenarios, based on both changing trends and potential decision making, which allow planners to analyze uncertainties beyond city or regional control and their various effects. The results are improved understanding of key trends, recognition of uncertainties, and insights about existing plans.

These project types can be implemented at different spatial scales. Regardless of the specific approach used, to be most effective, scenario planning introduces an inclusive, participatory process that yields better plans and improves decision making.

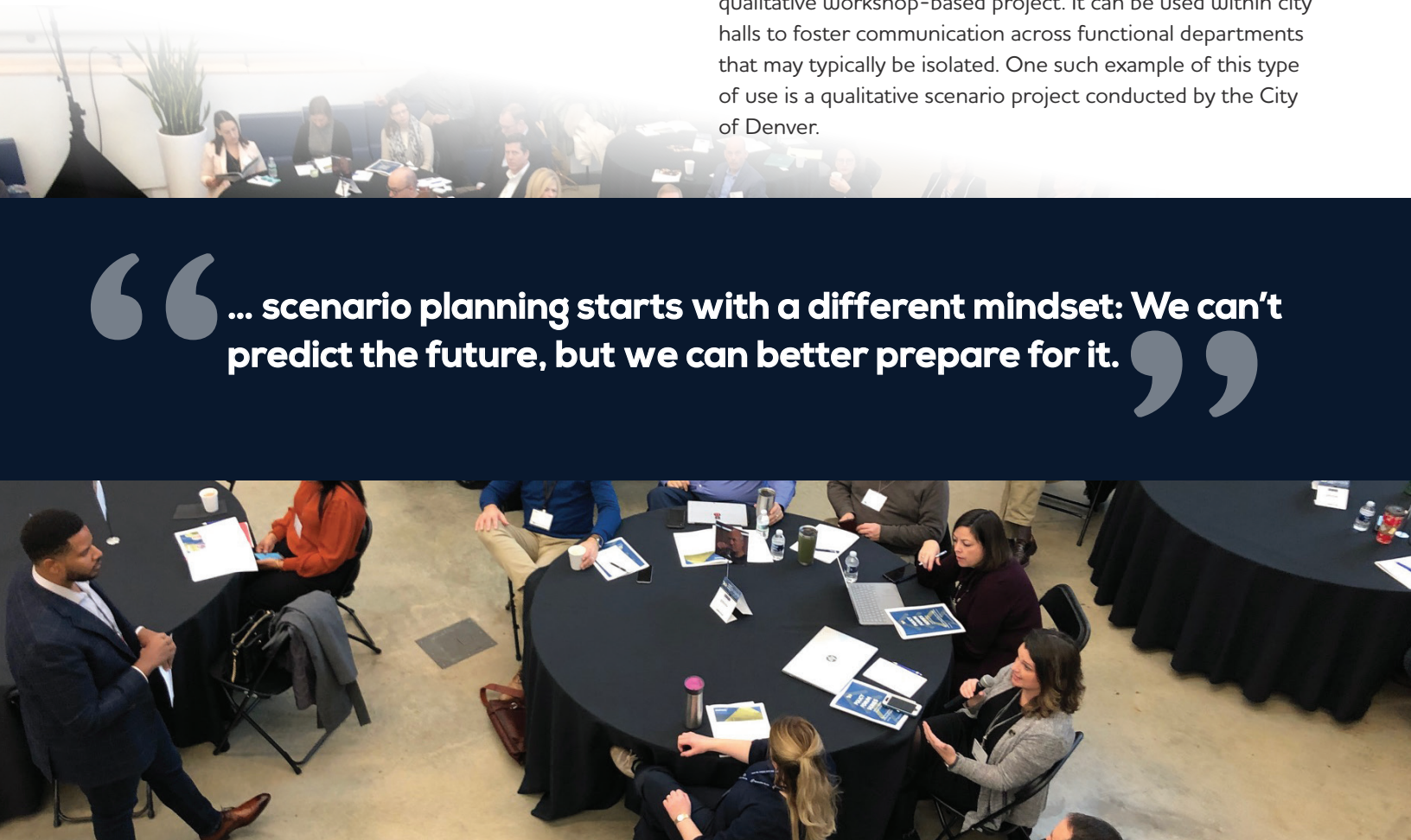
Example	Project Type	Scale	Case Outcomes
Envision Utah (1999)	Normative (focus on transformation)	Metropolitan Region	Shared vision to slow sprawl and invest in transit
Gwinnett County (GA) 2030 Unified Plan (2009)	Normative (focus on external uncertainties)	County	Detailed scenarios with recommendations for different levels of economic growth
Sahuarita (AZ) Exploratory Scenario Project (2014)	Exploratory	Municipality	Rich insights about existing master plan

Table 1. Examples of Scenario Planning Projects in Urban Planning.

Scenario planning could be used in several different ways by city leaders in Michigan. Scenario planning has a lot of power and complexity, so it's best for individual practitioners and organizations to build their experience and skill with it over time. In the current moment, organizations starting from scratch probably should focus on a particular plan or decision, allowing them to dip their toes in the water and explore methods and figure out how to use them effectively. For those who already have more experience, this is probably a good time to broaden or deepen their practice. For example, they could incorporate a broader array of possible futures or involve experts from new fields like public health.


Many regions or organizations will start with more discreet scenario projects to learn the methods and maybe do a strictly qualitative workshop-based project. It can be used within city halls to foster communication across functional departments that may typically be isolated. One such example of this type of use is a qualitative scenario project conducted by the City of Denver.

“... scenario planning starts with a different mindset: We can't predict the future, but we can better prepare for it.”





Regions and organizations that may already have some experience could consider inserting it into multiple plans or decisions that they are making, such as within a master plan, hazard mitigation plan, or long-range transportation plan. Creating scenarios for these types of plans can benefit from specific software tools, such as CommunityViz or UrbanFootprint, which allow the rapid construction and analysis of alternative land-use or policy scenarios. Finally, with many Michigan cities facing tight public budgets, planners can explore fiscal options for revitalization and use scenario planning tools like Envision Tomorrow to analyze the fiscal impacts of different land uses.

Cities in Michigan and across the country face unprecedented uncertainty in the coming years. Scenario planning provides a methodology to analyze uncertainty systematically and make informed and deliberate decisions to pursue more sustainable and resilient communities. 

Robert Goodspeed, PhD, AICP is an assistant professor of Urban Planning at the University of Michigan's Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, and the author of *Scenario Planning for Cities and Regions: Managing and Envisioning Uncertain Futures* (Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, April 2020). He can be contacted at rgoodspe@umich.edu.

Portions of this article are adapted from a Policy Brief published by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in March 2019, "Scenario Planning: Embracing Uncertainty to Make Better Decisions," <https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/policy-briefs/scenario-planning> and a related article

"COVID-19 Q&A: How Scenario Planning Can Shape Our Recovery Efforts," <https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/articles/2020-04-COVID19-how-scenario-planning-can-shape-pandemic-recovery-efforts> published in April 2020.

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Jean Hardy was a speaker at the Michigan Municipal League's December 2019 policy forum, addressing the role of technology in shifting rural economies. He offers these insights based on his research work in the Upper Peninsula since 2014.

A New Rural Digital Divide in Michigan

By Jean Hardy

In the summer of 2018, the Michigan Department of Transportation installed new sensors on all five traffic lights in Houghton, a city of approximately 7,500 people in the Upper Peninsula. These sensors, called V2I or vehicle to infrastructure sensors, provide autonomous vehicles with data about traffic and road conditions, and allow for communication between vehicles. The project was funded by an earmark from the 2017 Michigan State Legislature for autonomous vehicle research. As the home of Michigan Technological University, Houghton was chosen for these upgrades despite its rural location. In fact, with its annual average of nearly 250" of snow, it is arguably an ideal place to test technological infrastructure in extreme conditions.

Only a few months earlier, in June 2018, the same region was struck by horrendous flooding that destroyed many local homes and businesses, causing over \$100 million in damage. The catastrophic impact of the region's flooding was largely blamed on crumbling storm water infrastructure in unincorporated townships; most of it had been built in the early 20th century during the copper mining boom and never been replaced.

These examples point to a complex and growing problem in the world of economic development and municipal management, and one that many Michigan communities struggle with: it's often much easier to find funding and opportunities for flashy new tech projects than it is for basic infrastructure issues. This is especially apparent in rural communities with shrinking populations, and therefore shrinking tax bases, often left waiting to fund infrastructure until it breaks.



“... it’s often much easier to find funding and opportunities for flashy new tech projects than it is for basic infrastructure issues.”

Growth at All Costs?

“If you’re not growing, you’re dying.”

Many of us have heard someone utter this, or said it ourselves, in reference to the need for our communities to take a growth-oriented approach to development. This approach tells us that if our communities are not growing in population, attracting new businesses, and supporting growth in existing businesses, then they are dying. This “growth at all costs” attitude is embedded into the policies and practices that fund and guide the work of local governments and economic development organizations.

These policies and practices are responsible for the disparities that are emerging, like what is described above: where small towns and cities are being told they must constantly reinvent themselves, just so they can hope to survive the next cycle of booms and busts in the economy. These demands happen alongside decreased state and federal formula funding for necessary infrastructure, increased competition for the limited grant money, and in rural communities, shrinking tax rolls.

The goal with my research has been to unwrap the complexities at this intersection of economic development policy, technological advancement, and rural revitalization. I’ll briefly turn to an example of this issue that is emerging at the national level and then make some suggestions for how we change this.

Unrealistic Requirements

The Center on Rural Innovation is an “action tank” based in rural Vermont. Their Rural Innovation Initiative assists rural communities in creating innovation hubs. They argue, based on best practices for supporting high-tech innovation in cities, that innovation hubs need a combination of certain things: housing for young professionals, incubators and spaces for job skills training, and immediate access to cultural amenities. In fact, both Traverse City and Marquette are benefactors of their initiative.

But, in order to qualify for their program, the communities who apply need four things: high-speed broadband, significant portions of the community located in or near Opportunity Zones, a partnership with a four-year college or university, and a local nonprofit or government that will raise the matching funds necessary to secure the grants to build these innovation hubs.

Most rural communities don’t have these things. So, who benefits from initiatives like these?


Finding a Different Approach to Rural Economic Development

Policies that focus on economic growth and programs like the Center on Rural Innovation are creating a new digital divide, concentrating technological opportunity in already well-resourced rural communities. We often think of the digital divide as what separates those who have access to broadband and digital literacy from those who don’t, amplified by the urban-rural divide. A new digital divide is emerging,



Additional Topic Resources

Jean Hardy. 2019. "How the Design of Social Technology Fails Rural America." Companion Proceedings of the 2019 Conference on Designing Interactive Systems, 189-193. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3301019.3323906>.

Ronald R. Kline. 2000. *Consumers in the Country: Technology and Social Change in Rural America*. The John Hopkins University Press. 


Jean Hardy is a PhD candidate at the University of Michigan School of Information. He researches the role of technology in community formation and economic development in the rural Midwestern United States. He will be joining the Michigan State University Department of Media & Information as an assistant professor in Fall 2020. You may contact him at jkhardy@umich.edu.



one created by the ability to participate in new formations of the high-tech economy in the form of software start-ups, business incubators, and the ability to be seen as a viable market for high-tech futures.

Rather than rural areas being wholly left behind, rural communities that have the existing resource base to go after the competitive grants and development programs are taught to take advantage of their position as rural. These communities become the poster children for what it means to do successful and future-oriented rural development. Meanwhile, the rural communities that don't meet the exceptional standards are not only left behind with respect to technological development, but are facing increasing competition from the places where resources keep accumulating.

What do we do about this? Changes to municipal funding structures can only do so much to create opportunity for technological development. In reality, I don't think it's appropriate to put an innovation hub in every small rural town. I believe that we need to reorient our approach.

Rather than seek limitless economic and population growth, rural communities are better positioned to think critically about sustainability. We need to ask, what exists beyond growth? Rather than asking questions about what technology can do to revitalize a former mining town in the Upper Peninsula, we should be asking questions about what post-growth economies and opportunities look like that can sustain and secure the livelihoods of all people, no matter how many autonomous vehicles are driven on their roads.



Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many changes in the workplace: working from home, Zoom meetings, social distancing when returning. All of this while you still need to provide communication to your staff and residents. During this time, Abilita—MML's endorsed communications technology consulting partner—may be able to help. They can advise on your remote options for voice, chat, and video collaboration with co-workers. In addition, they will find ways to reduce your telecom spending while freeing up staff time.

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The Stories of Climate Change

BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

By Dr. Victoria Herrmann



DR. VICTORIA HERRMANN

was a speaker at the Michigan Municipal League's February 2020 policy forum, addressing the role of climate change in American cities. She offers these insights based on her research and writing on climate change, community adaptation, and migration.

When we talk about addressing climate change through national policy or local action, the first efforts that come to mind are often ways to reduce or prevent further emissions of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane. The use of renewable energy; curbing industrial meat production; and investments in efficient building technology, like those in downtown centers across Michigan, are all effective mitigation strategies. They aim to limit global temperature rise to two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, the agreed-upon warming that humanity can tolerate before experiencing the most destructive and dangerous effects of climate change. But mitigation is only one of three main pillars of climate change action.

Climate adaptation is a response to the adverse effects of climate change that humanity is unable to avoid. Even if we transition all our energy to renewables tomorrow, we will still feel the impacts of climate change because greenhouse gases we emit can stay in the atmosphere for decades or even centuries. Adaptation reduces the vulnerability of social, economic, and environmental systems to these unavoidable climate shifts by protecting communities. Strategies can include revising local land use planning to avoid flooding by rezoning building codes or augmenting natural defenses like mangroves and coastal marshland to protect a community.

How Is Climate Adaption Tied to Culture?

America's diverse tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets are not immune to vulnerabilities and need to be adapted to climate change impacts. Cultural landscapes, ethnographic resources, archeological sites, historic buildings, and traditions cannot change as quickly as is required to keep up with climate change. Importantly, climate change is not race, gender, or income neutral. Its impacts disproportionately affect low-income communities, communities of color, and women. Centuries of economic, social, and environmental injustices have made it difficult to secure resources to prepare for and recover from disastrous events. Resources that are available must be allocated to adapting vital infrastructure like clean water, schools, and fuel, leaving cultural heritage adaptation at the bottom of the list.

Climate-induced damage to the cultural heritage, family traditions, and historic sites that matter most to us is demoralizing in the short-term and hinders long-term recovery and resilience. Severing social ties, dislocating local knowledge on how to absorb shocks, and weakening cultural practices like food, faith and music all erode the adaptability of individuals and the social safety net of communities.



“...every single person has the potential to be a climate change hero, even if they don’t know it yet.”

Dr. Victoria Herrmann travels extensively for her research on climate change and adaptation.

What Impact Can I Have on the Climate?

Many people believe that most climate pollution is primarily the fault of large corporations and policy gaps. That leaves them wondering what impact they can have on the climate with the everyday decisions they make in their hometown or household.

The answer begins with an absolute need for a strong national climate change policy that swiftly transitions our nation’s economy into a low carbon future, invests in resilient infrastructure to safeguard every community, and dismantles America’s oppressive systems that result in environmental, climate, and racial injustice.

BUT—every single person has the potential to be a climate change hero, even if they don’t know it yet. We all have a part to play in America’s climate change story. Communities, local economies, and historic downtowns across Michigan need your commitment, your courage, and your compassion as mayors, managers, civil servants, architects, designers, planners, and historic preservationists to act ambitiously on climate change. They need you to leave your own table and build bridges with others outside of your field to implement intersectional solutions. The cost of inaction is losing the things that matter most to us.

Climate change needs preservationists to inspire us with stories of the ultimate recycling—re-using historic buildings that saves energy, land, and place. We need architects to design flexible structures that can withstand extreme weather both along our coastlines and in America’s heartland. We need planners to help us reimagine more equitable climate strategies that empower and incorporate the diverse local knowledge of American cities. We need oral historians to help document the unavoidable loss and damage to intangible traditions. We need researchers to help us better understand our threats from fires to floods, and innovative mitigation approaches. We need developers to advocate for and implement carbon-neutral climate-ready cities.

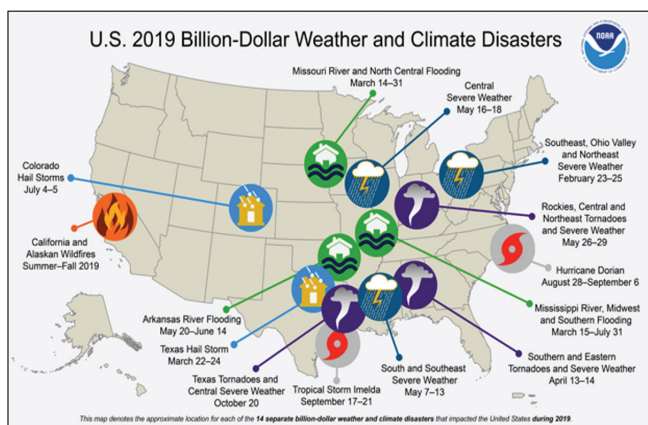
And, above all, we need mayors, city managers, and civil servants to be climate leaders and create spaces of connection for their constituents to come together to become community change makers. The places you love and care for so desperately need you, not only to save them but to make them part of Michigan’s climate change solutions. We cannot afford climate silence from anyone.

Is Michigan Poised to Survive Climate Impacts?

A common belief is that Michigan is in a good climate position. The state is not suffering like the Southwest and coastal communities on the Atlantic and Pacific. And Michigan doesn’t have hurricanes or earthquakes, only rare tornadoes, and it’s surrounded by fresh water.


Although climate change may look more intense in California’s wildfire country or along the Gulf Coast during hurricane season, no matter what corner of this country you call home—the coast, the mountains, the Great Lakes, or the Great Plains—climate change is already causing billions of dollars in damage and irreplaceable cultural loss. Michigan won’t face the more intense wildfires or hurricanes, but extreme heat and inland flooding are already challenging public health, safety, and economic prosperity. Michigan is projected to see a five-fold increase in heat wave days by 2050, which can lead to flash droughts, and nearly 340,000 people live in Michigan’s flood-prone areas. These threats require local leadership to keep communities safe by investing in cooling centers and flood mitigation measures, as well as retrofitting transportation and food systems to be climate resilient.

But climate impacts elsewhere also affect Michigan. Climate change and the extreme weather events it intensifies will continue to be the largest catalyst for migration, and the biggest threat to displacing communities across America. According to the Global Report on Internal Displacement 2019, “almost 10 percent of all disaster-related displacement in 2018 occurred in the United States.” Also, 96 percent of Americans live in counties that have been hit by a climate change-induced major weather event in the last five years.



This map depicts the approximate location for each of the 14 separate billion-dollar weather and climate disasters that impacted the U.S. during 2019.

In 2017, Hurricane Harvey made landfall as a Category 4 hurricane near Rockport, Texas and dumped more than 30 inches of rain on 6.9 million people. The historic U.S. rainfall displaced over 30,000 people and damaged over 200,000 homes and businesses. In 2018, California experienced its costliest, deadliest, and largest wildfires to date, costing \$24.5 billion and displacing thousands of households. And in 2019, historic Midwest inland flooding inundated millions of acres of agriculture, cities and towns, and wreaked widespread damage on infrastructure.

Because Michigan is in a region that is less impacted by extreme weather events, displaced Americans might look to cities like Detroit, Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, or Kalamazoo as places to relocate. One question every Michigan city leader should be asking themselves is, “How can I make my city a welcoming place for climate migrants from America’s eroding coastlines and fire country to make a new home and contribute to our economy and public life?” 

Dr. Victoria Herrmann is the managing director of The Arctic Institute, where her research and writing focus on climate change, community adaptation, and migration. She has testified before the U.S. Senate and House, served as the *Alaska Review* Editor for the **Fourth National Climate Assessment**, contributes to *The Guardian* and *Scientific American* on climate policy, and was named one of the most 100 influential people in climate policy worldwide in 2019 by *Apolitical*. Beyond the Arctic, Herrmann studies climate-induced displacement, migration, and relocation in North America and Fiji as a *National Geographic Explorer*. You may contact her at victoria.herrmann@thearcticinstitute.org

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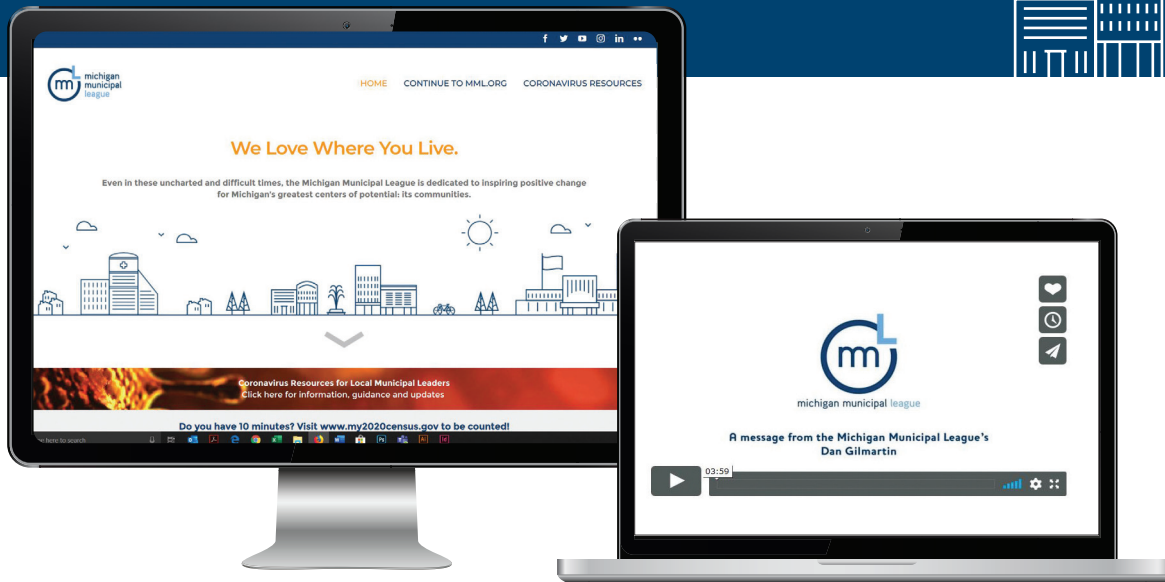
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LEAGUE LAUNCHES NEW HOME PAGE

EMPHASIS ON COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

By Dan Gilmartin



Michigan Municipal League CEO Dan Gilmartin lays out the vision for community wealth building in a video on our new home page.


We know that everyone in Michigan is confronting the COVID-19 pandemic in their own way. I've watched our local communities pivot to this critical emergency, providing answers to residents, helping deliver food to seniors, working to provide critical services under difficult circumstances. It's been remarkable—but not really surprising.

At the Michigan Municipal League, we are also committed to meeting the needs of our 520 members, cities, villages, and large townships. So, I'm very proud to announce the launch of the new home page for our Michigan Municipal League flagship website, mml.org. We've retooled our home page to recognize our new emphasis on evolving our work in placemaking, economic development, and municipal finance reform into the overall concept of community wealth building. To share our rationale for launching a new home page now and elaborating on what we mean by community wealth building, I recorded a video that's currently available on the page. I encourage you to watch the video as we make sure our communities are moving forward and are going to be competitive and resilient from an economic, health, and quality of life perspective.

The League's decade-long discussion of placemaking has helped many of our cities rethink their strategies to meet the needs of their citizens and attract new residents. Now it's time to take it to the next level.

Community wealth building is an intentional, block-by-block approach to building resilient, adaptable communities that improve the human experience by building incomes for all, creating ownership of housing and business, and prioritizing inclusion. It's about local people using their capital—monetary, physical, mental—to make their communities better, stronger, smarter, and local governments acting as a catalyst to make that possible.

We hope you will find this site thought-provoking and inspirational. We've redesigned it so you'll still be able to find the things that draw you to our website, including our Coronavirus Resources page as well as our traditional mml.org site.

We hope you enjoy it. Look around, then take a minute and shoot me an email about what you like, what you might not like, and how to make it better. 

Dan Gilmartin is executive director and CEO of the Michigan Municipal League. You may contact him at 734.669.6302 or dpg@mml.org.

“Experts from around the world—in academic, business, and public sectors alike—agree that investing in communities is a critical element to long-term economic development in the 21st century.”

-ECONOMICS OF PLACE

DEEPENING OUR COMMITMENT TO PLACE

AN AGENDA FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY WEALTH



By League Staff

The Michigan Municipal League and the communities we represent have spent more than a decade investing in placemaking strategies throughout the state, showing that “we love where you live” by lifting up what residents themselves love.

We have fought to give local leaders the flexibility and resources they need to serve their communities by advocating for municipal finance reforms and the preservation of local empowerment.

We have convened our members and partners to dive into the challenges posed by accelerating changes in our communities, whether those are economic, demographic, technological, or environmental, and to discuss how we can better equip local communities to tackle solutions to new needs and opportunities.

All these efforts have emphasized the need for resilient local systems—for communities that can learn, innovate, adapt, and prosper even in the face of adversity. They have also revealed that traditional models of economic development, focused narrowly on growth rather than on broadly enjoyed prosperity, have fallen short: large segments of our population have been left out, while shocks like the

“We have traded [community] stability for growth for so long we now find ourselves without either.”

CHUCK MAROHN, STRONG TOWNS
Trading Stability for Growth, 2020

housing finance crash of 2008 have reverberated across sectors and shown traditionally measured growth to be fragile.

In reflecting on the uneven economic landscape of post-recession recovery, the League has spent the past year pulling together threads from our past work into the concept of building community wealth. This model balances economic prosperity, sense of place, natural assets, and cultural substance.

Our planned rollout of this new framing was interrupted by another shock—the Covid-19 pandemic. Watching our members respond to this crisis has reinforced the need for new approaches and provided inspiration. Witnessing local leaders step up to serve in creative ways gives us confidence that we can collectively emerge from this crisis on a path to attain meaningful and equitable opportunity for our communities. That path is community wealth building.

The League's Pillars of Community Wealth Building

We define community wealth building as strategies that build community and individual assets, creating resilient and adaptable systems to address social and economic needs. The League will work with our partners to provide thought leadership, training, advocacy, resources, and best practices to build community wealth through:

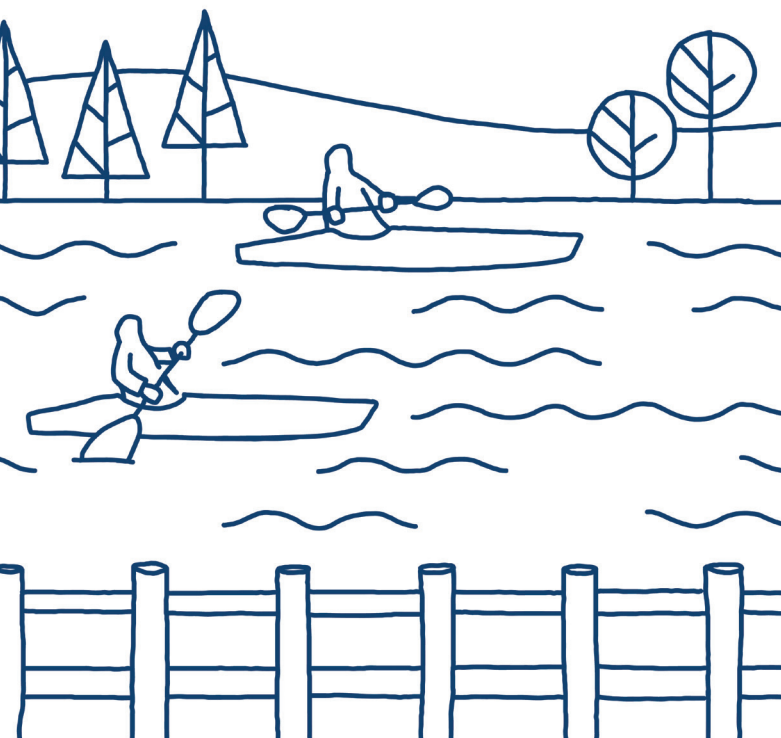
Resilient virtual and built infrastructure—the fundamental facilities and systems serving a county, city, or other area, including the services and facilities necessary for its economy to function.

Sustainable environment and natural resources—natural resources are managed to ensure long-term sustainability of and harmony between the built and natural environment and leverage their worth as public assets.

Economic and financial security—municipalities, community institutions, families and individuals are fiscally healthy. Economic systems ensure a community can be economically resilient and allow for the continued proliferation of prosperity.

Cultural and arts abundance—cultural identities, traditions and creative outputs are respected, celebrated, and recognized as critical assets that build social fabric in a community.

"Community wealth building is about developing assets in such a way that the wealth stays local... helping families and communities control their own economic destiny."
MARJORIE KELLY, DEMOCRACY COLLABORATIVE
What is Community Wealth Building and Why is it so Important?, 2014



"Community Wealth is being raised bottom up, and is fundamentally committed to upgrading skills, growing entrepreneurs, increasing incomes, and building assets."
ROSS BAIRD, BRUCE KATZ, JIHAE LEE,
AND DANIEL PALMER
Towards a New System of Community Wealth, 2019

What Is Community Wealth Building?

The League has developed our definition of community wealth building from our decades of work on policies and programs that promote people, authentic places, and sustainable economies, and from partners working around the country on related efforts. We know that community wealth building strategies are:

- **Incremental**

Community wealth relies on continuous investments in people and place to achieve its aims and avoids reliance on "silver bullet" projects. The sum of individual investments of money, time, and energy create cumulative progress far greater than any single endeavor.

- **Constructive**

Community wealth is measured in homes and hospitals; in storefronts and schools; in workshops and factories; in streets and services; in health and well-being. Investments catalyze a durable legacy that is enjoyed in the present and can be built upon by future community members.


- **Complex**

Community wealth measures require the investment of social and community capital in addition to financial resources and recognizes the critical interaction of these as central to improving the human experience in the community. Community wealth building increases the local economic multiplier effect by reinvesting and maximizing dollars within a community, improving economic conditions, and producing other public benefits.

- **Equitable**

Community wealth strategies recognize and repair historical inequities. Inclusion, in all facets, is a core tenet, while exclusion (of individuals or groups) is identified as a violation of human rights and an inhibitor of growth. Community wealth empowers individuals, embraces their participation, and celebrates their unique cultural contributions.

- **Participatory**

Community wealth is created by building and securing assets in communities, ensuring that ownership of those assets is more broadly and equitably distributed among community members. Individual investments are made with an interest in long-term health, economic opportunity, and resiliency. 

For more information on building community wealth, visit the League's new website at mml.org.

Source Booksellers is one of the beneficiaries of Detroit's New Economy Initiative's collaboration that works to develop an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.



TOWARDS A NEW SYSTEM OF COMMUNITY WEALTH

By Bruce Katz & Ross Baird

Reprinted with permission from a newsletter article with the same title on thenewlocalism.com.

The coronavirus pandemic will undoubtedly exacerbate pre-existing racial and ethnic disparities on income, health and wealth. As communities move to re-open their economies, they need to design and deliver strategies, ideally with federal resources, that upgrade skills, increase homeownership, and help entrepreneurs start and expand businesses. The paper described in this article, written before the crisis, provides a playbook for growing community wealth and addressing deep structural inequities in our society.

In October 2019, the *Nowak Metro Finance Lab* at Drexel University, *Accelerator for America* and *Blueprint Local* released *Towards a New System of Community Wealth*, a new paper by Ross Baird, Jihae Lee, Daniel Palmer, and me, Bruce Katz.

The paper makes some large observations and offers some big ideas for reform and transformation.

In our view, the United States is witnessing a radical shift—a quiet revolution—in its approach to the revitalization of distressed urban communities. For almost 60 years, the U.S. has dutifully delivered a top-down “Community Development” system, narrowly focusing on producing low-income rental housing with a mix of federal tax incentives, federally encouraged bank debt, and direct federal subsidies. Over the past decade, a new system has begun to emerge, focused on developing people rather than buildings, with a blend of public, private, civic and community leadership and capital. This system, which we label “Community Wealth,” is being raised bottom up, and is fundamentally committed to upgrading skills, growing entrepreneurs, increasing incomes and building assets. If codified and routinized, this system has the potential to bring hundreds of billions of market and civic capital off the sidelines into productive use and drive transformative outcomes for disadvantaged communities across the country.



“...a new system has begun to emerge, focused on developing people rather than buildings...

“Community Wealth,” is being raised bottom up... ”

The revolution is precipitated by a complex mix of market and civic dynamics, the evolving practice of the community development movement and the inspiring work of a new class of investors and intermediaries. Income inequality today is the largest it has been since the government began measuring it in 1967. Most urban neighborhoods, even those blocks away from reviving downtowns and robust waterfronts and university areas, are characterized by high poverty, low social mobility, weak market demand and growing income, health, education, and wealth disparities. Urban communities are also past and present victims of institutional racism. They sit on the “wrong side of the color line;” access to quality capital and mentoring to help residents purchase homes and build businesses remains scarce while parasitic capital for dollar stores, payday lenders, and check cashers is plentiful.

That’s the bad news. The good news is that across America we are seeing local, entrepreneurial, and often small efforts that are showing evidence of promise. Key players in the existing community development system are broadening their scope to go beyond housing and innovate on business demand as well as financial practices and instruments. At the same time, a new class of investors is entering the community space, focused on growing entrepreneurs and building strong local economies. Both the evolution of the old system and invention of the new have been accelerated by the latest federal tool, Opportunity Zones.

Community Wealth Approach

This paper represents our initial effort to capture the transformation underway. We define Community Wealth as “a broad-based effort to build equity for low-income residents of disadvantaged communities.” Going deeper, Community Wealth aims to build equity by:

- Growing the individual incomes and assets of neighborhood residents by equipping them with marketable skills and enabling full or partial ownership of homes, commercial properties, and businesses;
- Growing the collective assets of neighborhood residents by endowing locally run organizations with the ability to create, capture, and deploy value for local priorities and purposes;
- Improving access to private capital that has high standards, fair terms, a long-term commitment to the neighborhood, and reasonable expectations around returns and impact; and
- Enhancing inclusion by bringing fairness and transparency to neighborhood revitalization so that community voices are heard and respected and trust is restored, and local residents have the opportunity to participate in wealth that is created.

Embodying Community Wealth

This paper specifies the systemic changes that need to occur in policy, practice and institutions if this aspirational definition is to be achieved and realize its full potential. We identify seven strategies to: (1) uncover community assets and market dynamics; (2) enhance local business demand; (3) strengthen




The community wealth building approach has brought vibrancy along Lancaster Avenue in West Philadelphia. Photo courtesy of Ryan J. Debold.

neighborhood nodes; (4) expand businesses owned by people of color; (5) create access to “one-pocket” capital; (6); share value creation; and (7) support next generation institutions.

No one sector or level of society is sufficiently grounded or interdisciplinary enough to deliver the integrated transformation that is required. Rather, a mix of actors—existing community development entities, philanthropies, national financial institutions, the federal government, local governments, communities themselves—must spearhead new thinking and action around capacity, skills building, homeownership, entrepreneurship, and the local economy to replace an overly prescriptive and compartmentalized system of community development with a multi-layered and holistic system of community wealth.

Community wealth is part observation, part aspiration, and all provocation. The United States needs radical change at all levels and across all sectors if we are to alter fundamentally the life trajectory of disadvantaged residents and disadvantaged communities.

I hope you enjoy the read and, more importantly, that you provide Ross and myself with your comments, criticisms and suggestions. This paper has been inspired by cutting-edge research and practice and we need to deepen and broaden the discussion. 

*Bruce Katz is the founding director of the Nowak Metro Finance Lab at Drexel University and a partner with Accelerator for America to scale and replicate innovative economic development tools across the country. Katz is the coauthor (with the late Jeremy Nowak) of **The New Localism: How Cities Can Thrive in the Age of Populism**. You may contact him at bruce.katz@thenewlocalism.com.*

*Ross Baird is the founder and CEO of Blueprint Local and the founding CEO of Village Capital, one of the world’s most active venture firms over the past ten years. He is the author of **The Innovation Blind Spot: Why We Back the Wrong Ideas and What to Do About It**. You may contact him at Ross@blueprint-local.com.*

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How Courageous Leadership Can Help a Community Through a Pandemic

By Stephen Goldsmith

Reprinted with permission from a March 16 blog with the same title published on governing.com. You can view the original version here: <https://bit.ly/GovGoldsmith>.

In March, the Ash Center at the Harvard Kennedy School hosted an online meeting that brought together more than 20 senior officials from America's largest cities, and Professor Marc Lipsitch, director of the Center for Communicable Disease Dynamics at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, to help frame out facts and options in dealing with the novel coronavirus pandemic, a situation that none of the participants has experienced before.

The exchange raised complex new questions and at the same time highlighted the extraordinary importance of mayors, as well as those who hold corresponding elected positions in county government, who must make painful decisions while accomplishing the seemingly inconsistent goals of communicating bad news in a way that inspires confidence.

Make Sacrifices Early

Mayors must ask their residents to sacrifice before the full potential horror of the COVID-19 pandemic becomes visible; if these efforts are successful, residents may never appreciate the full scope of the avoided pain. Elected officials must make decisions that will cause residents to lose wages and small business owners to potentially shut down amid the cascading economic impacts of public service disruptions, program shutdowns, and canceled events. If not communicated clearly and in a way that overcomes confusion in the national message, this call to action could create a sense of government inflicting pain needlessly rather than responding prudently to a serious public health emergency.

Call Community to Action

The spread of the virus highlights one of a senior elected official's most important roles: calling the public to action to respond to a crisis. Officials who understand the importance of this role take actions on a daily basis that build trust and their capacity to rally the public. They do this through the ongoing transparency, clarity, and accuracy of their messages. And they do this by seeing that essential services continue to be delivered, displaying their jurisdictions' resiliency and dependability in times of hurricanes, floods, or pandemics.

The importance of calling the public to action is critical as we move from a mindset that we can contain the pandemic and impose sacrifice on only those who are ill to the concept that the only way to mitigate it is through everyone sacrificing a bit. The need for social distancing will stress the daily order of communities as never before. Leadership in this situation includes listening carefully to local and national public health experts, weighing the harms that will result from certain actions, and then acting quickly and decisively. It's the mitigation of the mitigation that takes creativity: school lunches for children no longer in school, childcare for single-parent healthcare workers and much more.

Lipsitch referred us to an event from history that showed the difference that courageous leadership can make: the stark comparison between the way Philadelphia and St. Louis handled the 1918 influenza pandemic. Philadelphia failed to cancel important events, including a massive war-bonds parade, and suffered five times the number of flu deaths as St. Louis, which took strong social distancing steps much earlier.


Bend the Rules

Which brings us to another tenet of effective local leadership in an emergency, the need to stretch and overcome bureaucratic rules that strangle and slow everyday decision making. I remember the first time I heard Mitch Weiss, now a professor at Harvard Business School but who at the time of the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013 was chief of staff to Mayor Thomas Menino, describe proudly how many rules he had broken to get a fund set up to help those hurt by the explosions. Mayors have emergency authority much broader than many might realize, and they should use it.

The effective use of emergency powers has been a hallmark of the response to the current pandemic in Seattle, one of the country's hottest spots for the coronavirus. Fortunately, Seattle's local government is one with extraordinary capacity. Deputy Mayor Michael Fong catalogues the tough issues officials are wrestling with, such as whether to impose a moratorium on residential evictions at a time of isolation and quarantine; how to set up financial assistance programs for struggling small businesses and their workers; and what to do about isolation and depression among older adults who can no longer congregate for meals and activities in senior centers.

Act Quickly and Decisively

"I think the most critical lesson is the willingness to move quickly and take decisive action without the typical deliberative government process," Fong says, "There is no time to study an issue or pilot a program or do community engagement. The time to act was yesterday, and mayors are on the front lines where their decisions could save lives."

Make no mistake: Cities need federal help—dollars, public health expertise, technical support such as test kits, and more. But mayors who meet the challenge of rallying the public when the virus's full harm is not yet evident, who know which rules they can break, and who are prepared to move against their normal goals of promoting civic events and economic activity will see the payoff as the pandemic subsides. Their cities will come out of this crisis more like St. Louis and less like Philadelphia a century ago. 

Stephen Goldsmith is the Derek Bok Professor of Urban Policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. You may contact him at 617.494.7358 or stephen_goldsmith@hks.harvard.edu

As they deal with an emergency like the novel coronavirus, mayors and county executives need to be ready to ask their residents to sacrifice, break bureaucratic rules, and move quickly and decisively.



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Coronavirus Resources

For information that is up-to-date and
relevant to your community visit:

mml.org/coronavirus

BEST MUNICIPAL PRACTICES SURROUNDING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

By Kim Cekola

To assist our members as they navigate the challenging landscape during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, the Michigan Municipal League has gathered a variety of best practices from communities across the state. The Best Practices page on our Coronavirus Resources site includes these categories:

- Continuation of service announcements (general and by service area)
- Emergency response plans
- Fiscal strategies
- Local economy initiatives
- Notices (building closures, meeting cancellations, meeting notices, virtual meeting policies)
- Online news articles
- Public messaging (mayors/presidents/managers)
- Resource Guide
- Staffing/returning to work

Mayoral Messages

Our mayors have put together truly wonderful video messages for their constituents. Mayor Nathan Bocks of Holland produces weekly videos that are about four minutes long. They are very caring, calming, and nicely presented. For instance, in one video Mayor Bocks spotlights city workers, “When you turn on your lights or water, think about your dedicated DPW staff. If you see them out, smile and wave. There are dozens of people that you don’t see, and they continue to do a fantastic job.”

Other inspiring messages include those of Mayor Vince Rose of Bridgman, “The beauty of this small city allows us to be appreciative that we live where we do... As a community we must pull together and help one another during this time of uncertainty. Everything will be alright. We will get through this together.” And Mayor Luther Kurtz of Charlevoix expressed this sentiment, “...each of us must work together to social distance and be mindful of how our actions will affect others—even when we don’t realize it.”




Supporting Local Businesses

Municipal leaders are also reminding citizens to support local businesses, like Mayor Scott Smith of South Haven: “As our businesses begin to reopen, please consider shopping local whenever possible. The fact of the matter is local businesses are going to need local residents to help them get back on their feet. Before purchasing an item online, consider visiting South Haven websites to see if a local merchant has the product. When shopping for groceries, check for produce grown by local farmers. Let’s remember that our local businesses have always been there for us. Let’s be there for them.”

To aid the local economy, Brighton developed a relief initiative for small businesses known as the City of Brighton DDA: Small Town, Big Hearts Initiative—COVID-19 Response. Partners include Lake Trust and Patronicity. Eligible businesses craft a crowdfunding project page directed towards their community and potential donor audience. To help maximize fundraising, Patronicity provides a personal campaign development coach. Lake Trust awards \$1,000 to campaigns that best embody the Spirit of Lake Trust and the Spirit of Brighton.

Fiscal Strategies

The fiscal strategies tab includes documents developed by the U of M Ford School of Public Policy: *Capital Spending During an Economic Crisis*, *What Does the CARES Act Mean for Local Governments in Michigan?*, and *IT Security for Mitigating Fiscal Risk of Remote Work*.

To view all the best practices we’ve collected to date, visit our Coronavirus Resources site at mml.org/coronavirus. If you have a policy or initiative that you think will benefit other municipalities, please email it to Kim Cekola at kcekola@mml.org. 

Kim Cekola is a research specialist/editor for the League. You may contact her at 734.669.6321 or kcekola@mml.org.

As an urban devotee and policy wonk, Selma Tucker graciously agreed to facilitate the Michigan Municipal League's Fast Forward: Leading the Future of Michigan Cities policy forum series. Read more about him here: www.linkedin.com/in/selma-tucker-b2264513/

FANTASTIC OR FRIGHTENING

An Uncertain Future is Decided by Preparation

By Shanna Draheim & Selma Tucker



The policy forums have been particularly valuable to me as the manager of a small town in Michigan. Besides providing an excellent avenue for networking with folks from a variety of backgrounds, the content itself has been thought provoking and most importantly, applicable. One of our forum speakers, Lucinda Linderman, discussed “Using Art and Cultural Activities to Engage People in Climate Change.” Her example of Misael Soto’s sandbag amphitheater in Miami Beach inspired me. Our beach hosts a popular summer concert series each year, and thanks to Lucinda’s presentation, Bridgman now has an option for utilizing our beach sandbags in a creative and useful way once Lake Michigan’s water level recedes.

-JUAN GANUM, CITY MANAGER, BRIDGMAN



“The only constant in life is change.” -Heraclitus

Chances are good you have heard that famous 2,500-year-old quote from a colleague or relative. You may have even uttered it to help yourself or a coworker process yet another major shift in a project that seemed so straightforward and simple when you started. We all know this game. Our job, as professionals, is to gain new tools and perspectives to manage change for a successful outcome.

It is in that spirit of continuous improvement and change management that *Fast Forward: Leading the Future of Michigan Cities*—a multi-day forum meant to support and energize public servants in their quest to lead their communities through tectonic change—was conceived.

Little did we know that this summit would precede, with uncanny timing, one of the biggest changes to our life and livelihood in generations—the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Special Forum for a Special Topic

In late 2019 and early 2020, the Michigan Municipal League hosted a cohort of about 60 local officials and state partners in a series of forums titled *Fast Forward: Leading the Future of Michigan Cities*, with generous support from sponsors like Public Sector Consultants, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, and others. We convened these forums to help prepare cities

and villages in Michigan for the accelerating social, physical, and economic changes we are facing—particularly from drivers like climate change, technological advancement, and evolving population demographics.

The point of the forums, just like that Heraclitus quote, was to give perspective on these changes so we can shift our mindset to more proactively see the opportunities they bring. Those opportunities could offer a tremendous upside for building community wealth through economic, social, physical, and health improvements. And, as our current health crisis demonstrates, these changes will challenge us and could complicate the operating environment for our communities as well.

Over the course of several months, the group met with state and national experts on scenario planning, smart city and mobility technologies, the role of business and philanthropy in advancing technology, climate modeling and resiliency planning. You can check out the programs at placemaking.mml.org/policy-forums/.

Speakers like Lilly Shoup from Lyft, Victoria Herrmann from the Arctic Institute, Cindy Frewen, futurist, and Rob Goodspeed from the University of Michigan shared data and tools on these topics and challenged us to understand some of the major factors behind future change in our communities, empowering us to shape the changes as opposed to being consumed by them. Two of those speakers are featured in this edition of *The Review*.



League CEO Dan Gilmartin interviews Lilly Shoup, AICP, senior director of policy and partnerships at Lyft. She was the first speaker at the Ann Arbor policy forum on technology in December 2019.

Municipal leaders get busy executing on the day-to-day needs of our communities. These forums are spaces to look ahead to the future, learn, network, and build on new opportunities. I'm now obtaining a certification as a Climate Change Practitioner from the Association of Climate Change Officers, which transpired through the Policy Forums.

-MELANIE PIANA, MAYOR, CITY OF FERNDALE

Insights for Inquiring Minds

Having a better understanding of the nature and pace of change will help us all plan for the related policy, infrastructure, and public service strategies that will be necessary for ensuring resilient and healthy communities. While the final forum has been delayed due to COVID-19, we have kept the wheels spinning by articulating key themes from the policy forums to inform the League's plans for the coming years. A few of the interesting takeaways include:


- **Successful communities will need local governance systems that are nimble and plan for multiple scenarios of the future.** No one can predict what will happen next week or next year, let alone ten years from now. Being open to change and willing to quickly adapt, identifying likely scenarios, and using good data and research to recalibrate and identify options are the best ways to be "future ready."
- **Changes in demographics, climate, and technology are very interrelated.** Shifts in one area have cascading impacts on the others. Changes in climate, for example, will likely impact where people live as extreme heat, weather events, and rising water levels push some groups of people to new locations. An increasingly soggy Michigan will look like a great place to set up shop if you're from the increasingly desiccated Southwest. This, in turn, can change the demographics of communities, which affects economic and health conditions, and so on.
- **People are not affected by shifting demographics, accelerating technology advances, and climate change in the same ways.** The drivers of change, without thoughtful and deliberate action, can exacerbate social, economic, and health inequities for many segments of our population. Equity must be a lens through which we evaluate future planning in our communities, lest our friends, neighbors, and loved ones get left further behind.

Leadership Matters

The conversations in these policy forums were eye-opening, even a little dizzying at moments. But listening to the talented local leaders in this state as they gave days of their time to learn about future trends, chew on new ideas, and share how their experiences are shaping a future vision for their communities was inspiring.

To know that these are the creative, empathetic, and studious people leading us into the future is reassuring because the moment we live in now, perhaps more than ever, demonstrates how important leadership is to our shared prosperity. Each of us has tremendous responsibility at home, at work, and in our communities. Deeply understanding what is at stake while sharpening our tools to manage change will help us serve the people who put their trust and faith in us.

As the League looks toward the future, we know that what we learned from these sessions will enable us to create solutions, networks, and policies to prepare Michigan for both the challenges and opportunities these changes present. Indeed, the lessons are coming in handy now and certainly will as the next major changes come around.

Shanna Draheim is the director of policy research labs for the League. You may contact her at 517.908.0307 or sdraheim@mml.org. 

Selma Tucker is vice president at Public Sector Consultants, a public policy research and management consulting firm dedicated to improving the quality of life for Michigan residents. Previously, he served in several capacities for the City of Grand Rapids, where he led the BetterBuildings for Michigan program. You may contact him at 517.484.4954 or stucker@publicsectorconsultants.com.



“...each local experiment with community wealth building is different, based on local context, ecosystem, resources, and champions.”



COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING: EIGHT BASIC PRINCIPLES

By Ted Howard

Reprinted with permission from Ted Howard. The original can be found on the blog post of the same name at community-wealth.org.

Community wealth building is a term developed by The Democracy Collaborative in the mid-2000s to suggest an alternative to the flawed economic development model that has dominated the U.S. since the early 1980s—a model that relies on “trickle down,” has little to say about ownership patterns over capital and wealth, and has as a chief metric the number of jobs created—regardless of the quality of the jobs.

At its core, community wealth building is about developing collaborative, inclusive, equitable, ecologically sustainable, and democratically owned and controlled local economies.

It can encompass a wide variety of strategies, institutions, and approaches including co-ops and employee-owned businesses, community land trusts, social enterprise, public banks and community development finance institutions, municipal and state-owned enterprises, and leveraging anchor institution economic power to benefit local communities.

There is no one-size-fits-all definition or model of community wealth building. Rather it is a bottom-up approach to community development centered on economic and community self-determination. This means that each local experiment with community wealth building is different, based on local context, ecosystem, resources, and champions.

Ultimately, community wealth building is about moving in the direction of an entirely different type of political economic system by linking these new bottom-up forms of economic development with economic and political interventions at various scales throughout the system.



Eight Basic Principles of Community Wealth Building

At The Democracy Collaborative, we have identified eight principles that are at the heart of community wealth building:

1. Labor matters more than capital.

We need a local economy in which people matter more than just maximizing profits. For instance, when a crisis hits, we need to act to preserve jobs rather than bailout the corporate bottom line. We can't let capital alone call the shots if we really want to build community wealth.

2. Local, broad-based ownership matters.

A thriving local economy requires local ownership, where the control and economic advantages of that ownership are spread broadly (for instance through cooperative, community, or employee ownership). With concentrated and absentee ownership, the economy works to extract wealth on behalf of those at the top.

3. Active democratic ownership and participation matter.

The neoliberal model sees communities as isolated individuals, engaged in civic life only as passive consumers. To build real community wealth, we need to rebuild the fabric of active community, with opportunities for real participation and collective decision making at all levels of the economy.

4. Multipliers matter.

When a purchase is made locally, that money stays in the community longer, because local businesses are more likely to spend locally. This translates into greater local prosperity, greater community stability, and a tighter-knit network of local people and businesses—all key to building community wealth.

5. Localizing investment matters.

There are vast pools of capital in the investment portfolios of local anchors, in personal and institutional bank deposits, and in our pension funds and retirement plans—imagine what's possible if these investments were put to work locally building community wealth, rather than fueling Wall Street and the city's extractive casino economy?


6. Collaboration matters.

Building community wealth isn't just about more money locally—it's about the power that comes from building lasting relationships of mutual support. Fostering effective collaboration between anchors, local government, and neighborhood residents isn't just a matter of convenience or capacity, it's intrinsic to the project of community wealth building.

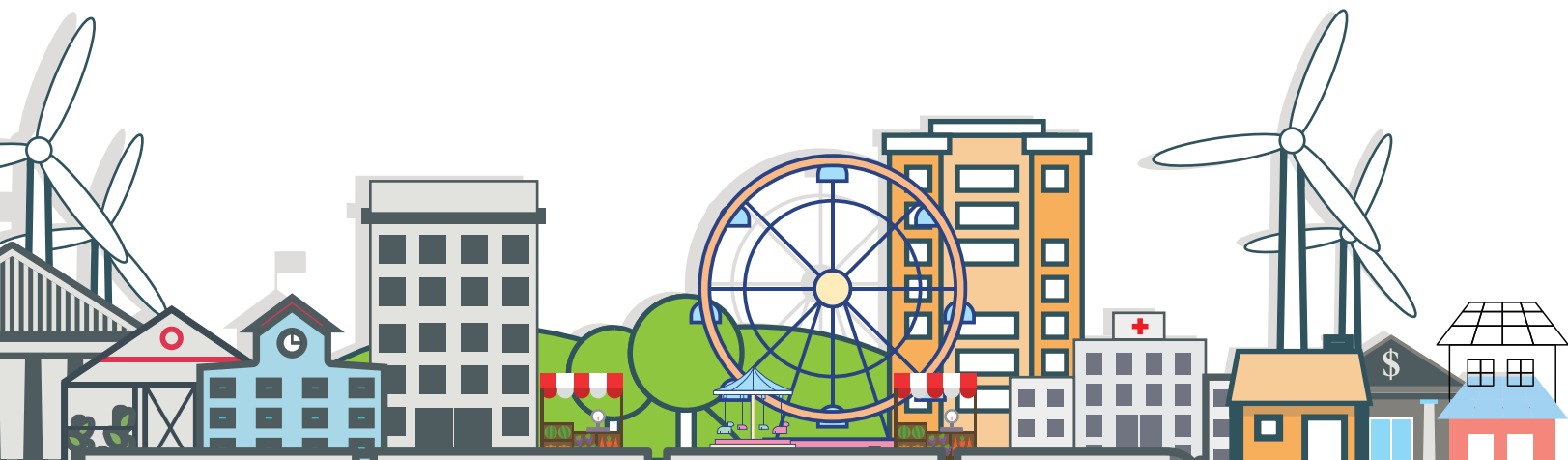
7. Place really matters.

Don't expect wealth to trickle down. Without an intentional place-based strategy to make sure local assets work to build local wealth, there's nothing stopping wealth from leaving your community. And you need an intentional strategy to make sure that locally the hardest hit parts of your community are first in line for new opportunities: inequities won't undo themselves.

8. Community wealth is where the next system begins.

This isn't about one or two good projects, or a small corner of a procurement budget getting earmarked for local vendors while everything else remains business as usual. It's about taking the first steps towards truly transforming our economy so that it works for the many, not the few. 

Ted Howard is the co-founder and president of The Democracy Collaborative. You may contact him at thoward@democracycollaborative.org.



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ServeMlCity

Act now. Shape the future.



The COVID-19 pandemic is hitting Michigan communities with both a health crisis and an economic crisis. The ServeMlCity initiative is designed to support communities in a wholistic way. ServeMlCity addresses both the near-term emergencies our communities are facing and supports innovation and collaboration for addressing the longer-term issues and opportunities.

For information on how you can partner on the ServeMlCity effort, contact Helen D. Johnson, president, Michigan Municipal League Foundation, at **734.669.6336** or **hjohnson@mml.org**.

ServeMlCity Objectives/Details

Create a \$2 million fund to support three objectives.

MML seeded the fund with \$100,000 to help Michigan municipalities address immediate capacity needs, and advance innovation and collaboration during disruption.

- 1** Provide technical assistance to Michigan municipalities to access, obtain, and implement COVID-19 related funds by pooling federal, business, and philanthropic sources.
- 2** Create regional teams of seasoned experts and academic talent to assist groups of local governments with short-term assignments to augment city staff by responding tactically and planning for post COVID-19 activities.
- 3** Provide regional innovation/collaboration grants that can leverage local and other sources of support to pilot and test innovations and new methods of collaboration in the delivery of critical government services.





Innovation Is In Our DNA

So, when COVID-19 knocked down the opportunity for our traditional in-person Convention, we rose to the challenge.

League staff is hard at work creating a first-class virtual event for this year's Convention.

- General Sessions
- Breakouts
- Expo
- Networking opportunities

**We can't wait to share the details with you soon.
Stay tuned!**



Court of Appeals Outlines Rules of Construction for Ordinance Interpretation

FACTS:

In June 2011, Webster Township, located in Washtenaw County, adopted a Zoning Ordinance which created several zoning districts, including an Agricultural District. One of the permitted uses in the Agricultural District was “seasonal agri-tourism, including but not limited to hayrides, pumpkin patches, corn mazes, and Christmas tree farms.” Ryan Nixon operated a farm on 330 acres in the district and in 2012 began renting a barn on his property for weddings. Nixon indicated that he was given permission from the zoning administrator on the basis that the use was “seasonal.” In 2016, the township advised Nixon that the Michigan Court of Appeals had concluded that the operation of event barns in Webster Township was not allowed within the district. (*Webster Twp v Waitz*)

Nixon then requested that the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) define the term “agri-tourism.” The ZBA concluded that wedding barns were not included within the definition of agri-tourism because they did not conform to the examples provided in the ordinance.

Nixon appealed to the trial court, which determined that there was doubt regarding the legislative intent. The trial court reversed the ZBA’s decision and concluded that wedding barns were included within the definition of “seasonal agri-tourism” under the ordinance.

The township appealed to the Court of Appeals.

QUESTION:

Did the trial court improperly apply rules of statutory and ordinance construction and exceed its authority when it reversed the ZBA’s factual findings and conclusions of law?

ANSWER:

Yes. The Court of Appeals reviewed de novo the interpretation and application of the township’s ordinance. It referred to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, MCL 125.3101 et seq., for the appropriate standard to review the decision of the ZBA. Citing *Janssen v Holland Charter Twp Zoning Bd of Appeals*, 252 Mich App 197, the Court of Appeals noted, “[t]he decision of a zoning board of appeals should be affirmed unless it is contrary to law, based on

improper procedure, not supported by competent, material, and substantial evidence on the record, or an abuse of discretion.” The Court of Appeals included within its opinion various guidelines for ordinance interpretation, including the following: “Generally, a reviewing court gives deference to a municipality’s interpretation of its ordinance.” “The purpose of interpreting a statute or an ordinance is ‘to discern and give effect to the intent of the legislative body.’” “A statutory provision is ambiguous only if it irreconcilably conflicts with another provision or it is equally susceptible to more than one meaning.” “Terms are given their plain and ordinary meanings.”

The Court concluded that the Webster Zoning Board of Appeals complied with the rules of interpretation when it interpreted the Webster Ordinance to exclude wedding barns from permitted uses under “seasonal agri-tourism.”

Nixon v Webster Township, No. 343505 (January 21, 2020) (Unpublished)

League Medical Marijuana Report

Aims to Help Communities Choose



AVAILABLE AT:

mml.org/resources/information/mi-med-marihuana.html

Steep Revenue Declines Call for Innovation

By Rick Haglund

Municipalities have struggled with the loss of billions of dollars in state revenue sharing over the past 20 years. And the Great Recession of little more than a decade ago slashed property tax revenues, forcing cities to make painful cuts in basic services. But they're about to face their most daunting task ever as they navigate the coronavirus pandemic, which experts predict will eviscerate local government budgets.

"Local governments will need help with their financial issues. They are dealing with what are just going to be enormous challenges," said Tom Ivacko, interim director of the Center for Local, State and Urban Policy (CLOSEUP) at the University of Michigan's Ford School of Public Policy. Indeed, a state revenue estimating conference in May predicted total state revenues, including the general and school aid funds, will plunge by nearly \$6.3 billion this fiscal year and next from a January forecast.

That's likely to mean huge cuts in revenue sharing and other state funds cities and villages rely on to provide services. Revenues in the state's general fund covering this fiscal year and next year are expected to drop by nearly \$3.9 billion from the January forecast. Revenues in an already strapped general fund are forecast to fall by a staggering 18.8 percent this year alone.

"Anybody who's reliant on revenue sharing is going to take a big hit," said John Kaczor, founder of Municipal Analytics, an Ann Arbor-based consulting firm. Kaczor also predicted big declines in other revenues municipalities rely on, including road funding, income taxes, parking fees, permitting fees, visitor bureau taxes, and water and sewer revenues. "The state has made it clear it has to balance its budget," he said. And that almost always means less revenue shared

with local governments. Many cities across the state have already furloughed hundreds of workers in response to the revenue hits.

U-M Launches New Municipal Finance Programs

That has led the Ford School to establish two innovative programs it hopes will help municipalities deal with the fiscal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. CLOSEUP recently launched the Fiscal Strategy and Resource Guide, which can be found at <http://closup.umich.edu/COVID-19/>. The website contains easy-to-digest memos written by public finance experts at state universities and other agencies. The memos address a variety of issues, including capital spending, how to enhance liquidity, when to contract for services, and how to plan for reduced expenditures.

The Ford School also has created the COVID-19 Consultant Corps (CCC), which will send public policy graduate students into city halls to help officials identify and apply for grants and provide other assistance. The program is reminiscent of the Civilian Conservation Corps, a Great Depression-era program that employed millions of young men to plant trees, cut trails, and build outdoor shelters. The university is paying for the service.

Ivacko said the Fiscal Strategy program grew out of a discussion with Kaczor, who was concerned that many local governments were unprepared to deal with the enormous fiscal challenges they were going to face from the pandemic. Even though Michigan just went through the longest period of economic expansion in its history, a CLOSEUP study in December found that 44 percent of local government officials surveyed said their jurisdictions were worse off than before the Great Recession.




"It's one more key indicator of Michigan's broken system of funding local government," Ivacko said. "We've had the longest period of economic growth in our history, but it's clear to us that the rising tide did not lift all boats in municipal government." Smaller local governments tend to be harder hit. Plus, they have an added disadvantage of not being able to afford the time and staffing to do necessary strategic planning for an uncertain future and find additional sources of revenue. "This crisis affects every area of finance, and we're going to help you think through that," said Stephanie Leiser, who heads the Fiscal Strategies project at the Ford School.

It's not that municipalities lack information on addressing fiscal issues during a crisis, even though the current pandemic is far more serious than local officials have ever experienced. "There are volumes of literature, but nobody has time to read it," Kaczor said. The Fiscal Strategies memos are generally about five pages long.

Ivacko and Leiser said there will probably be about 20 memos posted on the Fiscal Strategies website by the end of the summer. Many of them will be written by experts volunteering from the state's public universities and organizations including the Citizens Research Council of Michigan. The Michigan Municipal League is an adviser to the project.

Federal Aid Isn't Enough

At press time, municipalities were hoping for massive financial relief from the federal government. But the Senate and President Donald Trump have expressed opposition to a \$3 trillion package introduced in the House that state and local governments say is essential to their survival.

But even if municipalities seek significant federal aid, Kaczor said they need to do better strategic planning for a potentially grim future. The CLOSEUP initiatives could provide valuable assistance in that area. "We've been slapped (economically) twice in the past 10 years," he said. "If we're not learning from this, that's unfortunate." 

Rick Haglund is a freelance writer. You may contact him at 248.761.4594 or haglund.rick@gmail.com.



63

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"They're always available to provide advice on most planning or zoning issues and their advice is based on 35 years of experience in numerous communities throughout Michigan."

R. Brent Savidant, planning director, City of Troy



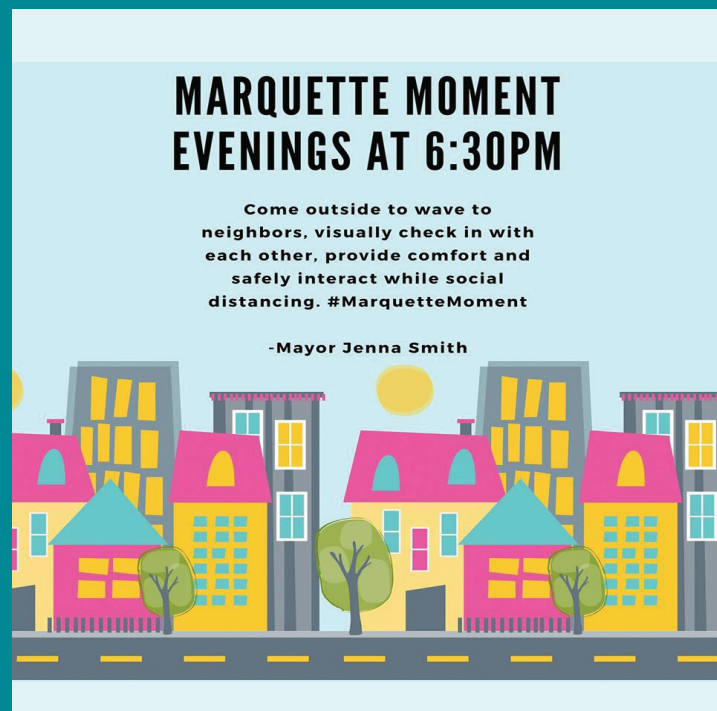
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MARQUETTE MOMENT

Brings Community Together While Maintaining Social Distancing Protocol

By Lily Simmons




Reprinted with permission from an article by the same title that appeared on April 1, 2020 on abc10up.com.

If you're feeling a bit lonely due to social distancing and other COVID-19 prevention practices, you're not alone. This week, the Marquette City Commission introduced an initiative to help everyone feel a little less isolated. The first "Marquette Moment" took place on March 31. Every day at 6:30 p.m., residents are encouraged to step outside their homes, wave to their neighbors, and check on each other. Mayor Jenna Smith says the Marquette Moment is a great opportunity to connect with neighbors and friends—even from across the lawn.

"It's helpful to be able to check in on people, say hi, and ask how things are going, especially some of the elderly or more vulnerable neighbors," said Mayor Smith. "In my neighborhood last night, we had 18 people out kind of at the end of their driveway, and there were a couple kids riding their bikes up and down the street maintaining social distancing. It was a really great way to get connected with some people when you're feeling kind of isolated."

The hashtag "MarquetteMoment" is being used on social media as an additional way community members can come together and share with one another. Anyone can post a picture or story of what they're doing each evening to reach out during this period of isolation.

"I would just encourage residents, if they want, to use #MarquetteMoment so that we can all see folks getting out there and connecting with their neighbors," said Mayor Smith. "Anything we can do to come together and show each other that we're here for one another is going to help us get through this difficult time period."

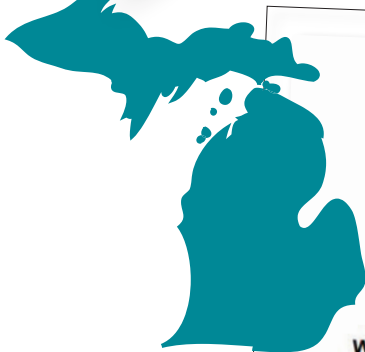
Mayor Smith would like to remind residents to stay at least six feet apart when participating in the Marquette Moment initiative. 

Lily Simmons is a reporter with abc10up.com. You may contact her at lily@abc10up.com.

“... Anything we can do to come together and show each other that we’re here for one another is going to help us get through this difficult time period.”



MARQUETTE
pop. 21,355



Proclamation Marquette Moment

WHEREAS, the citizens of City of Marquette, along with the rest of Michigan, are facing an extraordinary time of disruption to their daily lives and routines due to the COVID 19 outbreak and the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” Executive Order (EO 2020-21) and;

WHEREAS, in addition to physical health, the mental and emotional wellbeing of Marquette is of paramount importance to the City Commission and the community and;

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Commission feel it is important that the City provide an outlet where residents and families can provide comfort and safely interact with each other;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jennifer A. Smith, Mayor of Marquette, do hereby proclaim the start of the “Marquette Moment” community initiative where every evening at 6:30 p.m. residents and families are encouraged to come out of their homes, wave to neighbors, visually check in with each other, and generally provide comfort and safely interact with each other within the guidelines of proper social distancing.

DATED this 30th day of March, 2020.

Jennifer A. Smith, Mayor

I Do NOT Like These Trees

By Richard Murphy



Less than ideal placement of trees along Ann Arbor's Green Road.

Down the street from the Michigan Municipal League's Ann Arbor office is this row of oak trees, 20 years old or so. They line the vacant lot, about a five-acre grassy space, at the edge of an office park.

I do not like these trees.

It's nothing personal—they are very nice trees and have done nothing wrong—but they bother me every time I walk past them because they were planted in the wrong place.

Most likely, when the first phases of the office park were developed, the city's zoning ordinance required that these trees be planted around the edge of the site as a "green buffer" for the development, a common standard based on the theory that development is ugly and passersby need to be protected from it by a moat of plants. As in this case, these well-intended requirements can be counter-productive: by looking narrowly at the site, the development standards misuse good trees as mere damage control, when they could have been the seeds of a great place.

What If ...

Imagine if they had been planted as street trees, between the sidewalk and the curb, instead of ten feet behind the curb. At this point, they'd be shading a good portion of the pavement, and in another few decades might reach over the centerline—perhaps meeting trees planted on the other side of the street. This wide-open suburban byway, where drivers regularly drive 10 miles over the speed limit, would feel much more like a city street, with all the safety, cooling, stormwater, and health benefits that properly placed street trees provide.

Next there's the impact the trees have on the future development of that parcel. This site is a short bus ride from downtown Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan's campus and medical center, plus has two supermarkets, a drugstore, coffee shop, and several restaurants are clustered around the nearby intersection at Plymouth Road. If the trees were in their proper location as street trees, we could

easily imagine a neighborhood of townhomes at this location, opening the fierce Ann Arbor housing market to 100 or so more households. With front stoops near the sidewalk, parking limited and accessed from alleys in the rear, such a neighborhood would continue transforming the area.

But where the trees are now, 10 feet behind the sidewalk, they push any future development of the site back away from the street, encouraging a continuation of the carcentric suburban pattern. We only have to look at the site next door to see what kind of development these trees support: stormwater basin, parking lot, stand-alone office building, more parking lot.



Townhomes hugging the road in Muskegon.



Green Road's completely unnecessary left turn lane covered in snow.

Better Land Use


Streets reflect the use of the land around them. The road sees traffic levels of 3,900 vehicles/day, in SEMCOG's most recent counts. As a general rule of thumb, a street can carry about 10,000 vehicles a day with a single lane in each direction. The three-lane layout of this road is wildly overbuilt, especially considering how few places there are to make a left turn: it only makes sense because there's nothing better to do with the width.



Birdseye view of the Green Road trees.

In our scenario of street trees and townhomes, though, Green Road cries out to be a better street—to put that space to better use. Let's eliminate that completely unnecessary left turn lane, then put a row of on-street parking along the front of our townhomes on the east side of the street. Bike lanes along parking lanes are dangerous, so let's use the remaining width for a two-way protected cycle track on the west side of the street, creating a safer connection between the neighborhoods to the south, the commercial amenities at Plymouth Road to the north, and the campus access points to the west.

We could continue rippling outwards to see how these changes support even more momentum towards creating great human habitat, rather than moving cars at unnecessary speeds, but you get the point: the trees are in the wrong place.

Spoiler alert: Later this year we'll be rolling out the second Michigan-specific "Enabling Better Places" guide as part of the Project for Code Reform. This guide will focus on incremental tactics for updating local zoning codes to enable, not necessarily guarantee, development that supports great places in suburban corridors. As a hater of trees-in-wrong-places, I'm pleased to note the draft has "eliminate buffer requirements" on page 29. 

Richard Murphy is a policy research labs program manager for the League. You may contact him at 734.669.6329 or rmurphy@mml.org.

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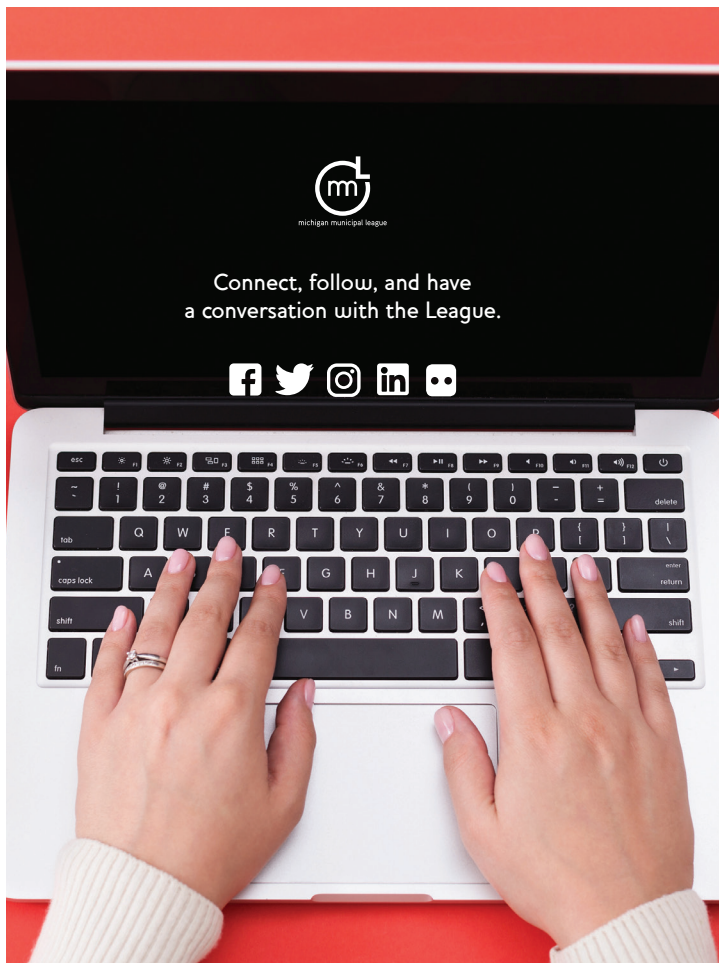
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Questions
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The Q&A—plus our white paper, sample ordinances, and other resources—are available on the Marijuana in Michigan page at www.mml.org.

Q. Does the League have advice on how to handle closed-session Zoom recordings after the minutes of the closed session are created? Should a copy of the Zoom meeting video be saved with the minutes? Particularly, should someone specific such as the city clerk be responsible for ensuring the security and/or deletion of the video to avoid accidental or intentional release?

A. There are two possibilities for your question regarding Zoom recordings of closed-council sessions. 1) Don't record the closed session, and 2) If you choose to record it, the recording can either be destroyed after the minutes have been transcribed, according to Clerk's Record Retention Schedule #24, or it can be saved. When saved, it should be secured by the clerk and not made available to the public and should only be disclosed if required by a court under section 7(2) of the Open Meetings Act.

Excerpt from Records Retention Schedule #24: Meeting Notes and Audio/Video Recordings (EVT)

Notes and audio or visual recordings of meetings of a public body of the city or village made for the purpose of transcribing the minutes may be destroyed after the meeting at which the minutes are approved by the public body.

EVT = one day after the date that the meeting minutes are approved. (MCL 15.269)."

Q. We had a virtual council meeting. When I list the guests in the meeting minutes, can I say "23 guests attended" or do I need to list each person that logs on to view the meeting?

A. While under the Open Meetings Act you are required to list the members of the council that attended, audience members are not required to be listed. In fact, the Open Meetings Act allows a person to attend a meeting without identifying themselves. Putting "23 attendees" is fine. If staff is attending the meeting and you have listed the staff members attending in the past, you should feel free to continue.

Q. We want to have a test virtual meeting. Would that violate the Open Meetings Act if it is just to make sure councilmembers are able to log on? It would be a simple "Hello, I'm here," and answer any questions they may have about the process?

A. A test meeting is fine as long as NO business is conducted except for the test.

Q. For public meetings during COVID-19 executive orders, our neighboring municipality is only using email as a way for public interaction during the meeting. Aren't municipalities supposed to allow public comments either via phone-in or a Zoom-type meeting?

A. Executive Order 2020-48 1(b) says, "The public body also may use technology to facilitate typed public comments that may be read to or shared with members of the public body and other participants." (<http://blogs.mml.org/wp/coronavirus/files/2020/04/EO-2020-48-Emerg-order-OMA-reissue-final-signed.pdf>). You need to ask your municipal attorney whether the use of email meets these requirements.

Q. We had a Zoom council meeting. One of our councilmembers is temporarily residing out of state during the stay-at-home order. The councilmember participated (including motions and votes) throughout the meeting though she was not physically present in the state. Does the executive order cover this?

A. The executive order treats any member of the public body participating electronically as being present and in attendance at the meeting, regardless of their actual physical location. Here is the language from the order: "Members of a public body and of the general public participating electronically will be considered present and in attendance at the meeting and may participate in the meeting as if physically present at the meeting." EO 2020-48, Section 1(c).

Q. I have a village email account. Are those emails subject to FOIA? In addition, I also have a village cell phone. Are the contents of the cell phone subject to FOIA also?

A. Under Michigan's Freedom of Information Act, all records created in the performance of an official function are public records, regardless of the method in which they were created (email, text, paper) or what type of device they are on. They must be managed the same way as those created and received using government computer resources. For more information, see the League's Fact Sheet: Email and the Retention of Records.

The League's Information Service provides member officials with answers to questions on a vast array of municipal topics. Call 1.800.653.2483 or email info@mml.org or inquiry@mml.org.

Michigan Municipal League Quickly Adapts to Changing Member Needs

FROM CRISES TO ONGOING CONCERNS

By Kim Cekola



michigan municipal league

Cities, villages, and urban townships are on the front lines of responding to the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Local elected leaders have the primary responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of their residents. Michigan local governments have longstanding emergency protocols for public health emergencies and community members rely on them to provide timely, accurate information about their local preparedness and response. The League is committed to providing local leaders with the necessary tools and resources to ensure communities are well equipped to navigate the current outbreak of COVID-19.

Questions on the Coronavirus?

The League Can Help!

The League wants to make sure Michigan communities have access to the most up-to-date resources for a potential public health outbreak. Due to the volume of questions Governor Whitmer's Administration received on the coronavirus (COVID-19), the League partnered with the governor's office to help answer and address the questions our members have. Look for questions and answers on our Coronavirus Resources web page.

Freedom of Information Act Guidance During COVID-19

The League received many questions about whether the governor would adjust FOIA during the COVID-19 pandemic, giving municipalities more time to respond when FOIA coordinators were not able to work in their municipal offices in person. We coordinated with an outside law firm to offer guidance on responding to FOIA requests. Regarding Executive Order 2020-38, we shared the opinion of our featured speaker on a thoughtful way to implement the order as to FOIA deadlines. We created a new Fact Sheet: FOIA Response Deadline Changes; posted a "Decision Tree to Assist Public Bodies in Responding to FOIA Requests," and a sample FOIA Request Response Letter.

In addition to the FOIA resources, we created many timely webinars in response to the governors' executive orders as they were issued. They can all be found on our Coronavirus Resources page and are free of charge.

COVID-19-Related Webinars

Details on these webinars can be found on our Coronavirus Resources web page.

- Coronavirus webinar with Michigan's Department of Health and Human Services
- Virtual Meetings Executive Order
- Deep-Dive Demo in Setting Up Remote-Access Meetings
- Crisis Communications
- Facebook for Community Communication
- Stay Home, Stay Safe Executive Order & What it Means for Your Community
- Update on Federal COVID-19 Response and Stimulus, with U.S. Senator Gary Peters
- Census 2020: Getting a Complete Count During COVID-19
- Leading in a Crisis, with special guest Harvard Professor Stephen Goldsmith
- New FOIA Executive Order/Flexibility During COVID-19
- Secure the Cities: Cybersecurity 101 for Michigan's Municipalities
- Michigan Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials COVID-19 Discussion
- COVID-19 Updates and Resources for Local Governments
- Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) —What Public Employers Need to Know
- Considerations for Municipal Enforcement of Executive Order 2020-42
- Re-Opening Your Community: What's the Best Strategy?



Ongoing Concerns

There has never been a more important time to be an active member of the League. We are dedicated to making Michigan's communities better by thoughtfully innovating programs, connecting ideas and people, and actively serving members with resources and services. Through advocacy at the state and federal level, we proactively represent municipalities in order to help them sustain highly livable, desirable, and unique places within the state. We create and offer services and events to our members to help educate and inspire them to remain focused on their passion for the areas they represent.

General Membership

Any incorporated city, village, or urban township in Michigan may become a member of the League on payment of the current membership dues. Currently, over 95 percent of Michigan cities, villages, and urban townships are members of the League.

Benefits of League Membership—Annual member dues include:

- Access to Annual Statewide Salary/Benefit Survey
- League Capital Office. This Lansing office is responsible for tracking and informing members of legislation, garnering grassroots support for or against legislation, and lobbying.
- Access to Member Services. Questions regarding procedures, ordinances, charters, etc., that do not require a legal opinion are researched by the information staff for the benefit of the member.
- Access to membership in the Legal Defense Fund
- Education and Training Programs (member rates apply)
- Attendance at League general meetings (member rates apply)
- One copy of the *Directory of Municipal Officials*
- League Communications
- Subscription to *The Review* magazine
- Access to the award-winning Risk Management Services (premiums apply)
- Access to the Group Unemployment Compensation Fund
- Access to Municipal Benefit Services (premiums and/or member rates apply)
- Access to Municipal Consulting Services (member rates apply)

MML Associates

This category of affiliation is open to incorporated townships, governmental authorities which carry on the functions of local government, and Michigan counties only.

Benefits

- Access to Annual Statewide Salary/Benefit Survey
- Access to Risk Management programs
- Access to the Member Services
- Education and Training Programs (member rates apply)
- Attendance at the League's Capital Conference and Convention at the member rate
- A subscription to *The Review* magazine
- Access to other League services at the member rate
- League Communications
- A copy of the *Directory of Michigan Municipal Officials*
- Access to the CDL Drug & Alcohol Testing Consortium at the member rate

MML Limited Associates

This category of affiliation is open to incorporated townships, governmental authorities, and government-related entities only.

Benefits

- Access to Risk Management Programs
- A subscription to *The Review* magazine
- Training announcements
- Other League services are provided at the non-member rate.

To inquire about membership, contact Member Programs Lead Emily Kieliszewski at emilyk@mml.org. 

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