



**Meeting Summary**  
Michigan Land Use Leadership Council  
March 24, 2003  
Boji Tower, Senate Hearing Room  
Lansing, Michigan

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***Council Members Present***

William Milliken and Frank Kelley, Co-chairs; Jim Barrett, Patty Birkholz, Liz Brater, Jim Brooks, Keith Charters, Steve Chester, K. L. Cool, Dan Gilmartin, Gordon Guyer, David Hollister, Colin Hubbell, Ruth Johnson, Robert Jones, Dan Kildee, Chris Kolb, Mick McGraw, Chris MacInnes, Larry Merrill, James Okraszewski, Lana Pollack, Helen Taylor, Kevin Turman, Hans Voss, Brian Warner, Heaster Wheeler, Gil White, Wayne Wood, Dan Wyant

***Council Members Absent***

William Anderson, Gloria Jeff

***Designees for State Agencies***

Sandra Clark, Department of History, Arts, and Libraries; Susan Mortel, Department of Transportation

The meeting was convened at 10:00 AM.

***Welcoming Address***

*Governor Jennifer Granholm*

The governor welcomed and thanked the members of the council for their participation in addressing this important issue. She noted the cooperation of the legislative leadership of both parties in selecting the members of the Council. She thanked the co-chairs of the council, former Governor William Milliken and former Attorney General Frank Kelley, for their willingness to lead this bipartisan effort to address issues of major importance to the future of our state. Her full remarks can be found on the council website ([Remarks, Land Use Council Meeting](#)).

Governor Granholm acknowledged the cooperation of the Republican leadership in the House and the Senate and invited Sen. Ken Sikkema, Senate Majority Leader, to address the council.

***Opening Remarks***

*Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema*

Senator Sikkema urged the council to do more than focus on the protection of greenspace and address the reasons why people leave the core city areas (e.g., good schools, neighborhoods, and housing). He reminded the council that the state has made strides on a variety of land use issues

over the last two decades, including efforts to protect sand dunes, lakes and streams, farmland, and wetlands. He noted that in each case there have been four principles that have made these past efforts successful. In each case the new laws:

1. Addressed tangible issues
2. Responded to well-documented problems
3. Involved solutions that respected other values (e.g., economic development and private property rights); and,
4. Were implemented with flexibility, recognizing the differences between areas of the state.

He concluded by saying that he looked forward to the recommendations of the Council, and believed the next weeks and months are going to be a real test of our ability to address the complex land use issues facing Michigan.

### **Welcome from Co-Chairs**

*Former Governor William Milliken and former Attorney General Frank Kelley*

Both expressed appreciation for the opportunity to help the diverse interests represented on the council to reach consensus on what needs to be done to address the land use issues facing Michigan. Both indicated their confidence in the group assembled and emphasized the importance of their charge and the opportunity the council has to recommend actions needed to preserve the quality of life for Michigan's future generations.

### **Status of Michigan Cities**

*Paul Hillegonds, President, Detroit Renaissance Inc.*

Paul Hillegonds outlined the importance of viable urban core areas to the economic future of Michigan. He expressed concern that the public cost of expanding infrastructure to support sprawl is fast outstripping our ability to pay for new infrastructure let alone maintain what we have. He cited examples of metropolitan areas in the United States where growth management has proved to be compatible with economic development.

Hillegonds presented the results of a Michigan Economic Development Corporation report [Benchmarks for the Next Michigan: Measuring Our Competitiveness](#). His remarks focused on the ability of Michigan to attract and maintain highly technical and educated 25–35 year olds that form the basis for technology based economic development. Among other things, the study indicated that Michigan ranks very low compared to competing states in similar latitudes. Vibrant core city areas were the major factor influencing where young professionals chose to live and work. His full PowerPoint presentation is available on the council website, [www.michiganlanduse.org](http://www.michiganlanduse.org).

He concluded his presentation by saying that while the state cannot dictate local land use decisions, it can encourage thoughtful decisions. Certainly the state needs to examine public policies and programs that subsidize development of greenfields. He encouraged the council to consider the factors that can promote urban revitalization that we know work, including:

- Encourage and assist in brownfield redevelopment.
- Support intergovernmental cooperation.
- Focus public resources on improving infrastructure rather than building new.
- Concentrate on preschool and higher education as investments in our future workforce.
- Support the development of urban greenspace to make our cities more livable.
- Examine ways to encourage tax base sharing to revitalize urban core areas.
- Fund appropriate transportation investments to better serve the needs in urban areas.

Hillegonds concluded his remarks by underscoring that there are compelling social and economic reasons for the council to make bold recommendations.

### **Council Protocols**

*Co-chair Frank Kelley*

Kelley asked that council members recognize that there will be assigned seating during meetings to facilitate discussion and to help council members to get to know one another. He pointed out that the binders prepared for each council member contains background materials and other information. He urged members to bring the binders to future meetings so that they can add materials that will be provided by staff. He also noted that the council website is a resource available to the members and the public alike to access information about council activities and background materials on land use. He outlined the following protocols that will be followed during the course of the council deliberations:

- Meetings will begin on time.
- No alternates may sit in the place of a voting council member. (Note that non-voting, state agency directors may send alternates when they are unable to attend.)
- Members are requested to raise their hand and may speak when acknowledged by the chair.
- PSC will prepare meeting summaries, which will be posted on the website.
- Council members' comments will not be attributed in the summaries.
- The council shall work toward consensus decisions, but if necessary, decisions by the council shall be by majority vote (e.g., one more than 50 percent of all members whether present or not).
- The council may establish subcommittees as determined by the council, with the consent of the chair.
- Minority reports will not be contained in the final report of the council.
- Meetings and documents produced will be open to the public.

### **Procedures – Public Comment**

*Co-chair William Milliken*

- Public comment will be taken during the last hour of each council meeting and at public hearings.

- Persons desiring to make public comment will be restricted in the time allowed for such comment based upon the number of people desiring to comment.
- Each person desiring to offer public comment will be requested to fill out a public comment card and provide it to staff prior to the start of the public comment period.
- Public comment will also be taken in writing:
  - Facsimile: 517/484-6549
  - Mail: Michigan Land Use Leadership Council  
c/o Public Sector Consultants Inc.  
600 W. Saint Joseph St., Suite 10  
Lansing, MI 48933-2267
  - Web: [www.michiganlanduse.org](http://www.michiganlanduse.org) (Comment Page)
- All comments received by the council will be reviewed and considered, but **will not** receive a personal reply.

### ***Introduction of Council Members***

The council members provided brief comments on their background and interest in land use issues. The members represent a broad spectrum of interests from throughout Michigan, characterized by a wealth of professional and personal experiences, and commitments related to land use issues. Non-voting state agency directors also provided comments at the meeting, outlining agency policy direction and programs that have an impact on land use. In most cases the state agencies are in the process of producing white papers on specific issues for use by the council and their comments at the meeting will be included in these reports.

The following are highlights of the comments made as appointed members introduced themselves and identified their interests in land use issues

#### ***Urban Revitalization***

- Emphasized the need for revitalization and productive re-use of land in our urban core
- Support of improved transportation, arts, and cultural amenities to make our urban core areas more livable

#### ***Stewardship***

- Demonstrated a passion for stewardship of Michigan resources—leaving our children a Michigan as good, if not better, than we found
- Keep a long-term perspective to help focus recommendations

#### ***Land Use Planning and Regional Cooperation***

- Expressed an interest in expanding the tools and resources available to facilitate better land use decisions by local governments
- Regional cooperation critical to addressing land use issues
- Plans are not enough, we need actions to assure coordination of state and local activities and programs, and new tools/resources to support wise land use decision-making

### ***Affordable Housing and Social Justice/Equity***

- Recognized that affordable housing is an important issue to many Michigan residents and a key consideration in future land use decisions
- Reminded members that while environmental protection and economic growth are worthy land use goals, they must incorporate the elements of social justice/equity

### ***Economic Development***

- Concerned that land resource based industries (e.g., farming, forestry, tourism, mining?) will diminish in value to our state if current land use trends continue
- Identified a major challenge to Michigan's future economic growth is tied to attracting and retaining investments and highly skilled employees; we must make Michigan an enjoyable place to live and work

### ***Consensus Building***

- Advocated for consensus on common-sense solutions to address identified land use issues
- Hopeful that the council can avoid the labels that have often divided people on land use issues and work for best answers for both public and private interests
- Urged consideration of "smart growth" principles that have been used effectively in other areas of the country to address land use issues
- Need for informed local voices in decisions affecting future land use decisions
- Council should thoroughly explore options and opportunities to improve land use decision making and considering what has worked in other areas of the country
- Groups must redirect the energy used in the past as adversaries to forge partnership for better land use
- More education and information is needed for government officials, businesses, and the general public to encourage better land use decisions
- There are examples in Michigan of diverse interests finding common ground on land use issues and this council has the opportunity to do the same
- Impressed with the quality and diversity of the council members and believe we can reach consensus
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- Believe the chances of reaching meaningful consensus is 50 percent (or 80percent according to another member)

### ***Michigan Land Resource Project***

*David Skole, Michigan State University*

Dr. Skole presented a PowerPoint presentation of the results of a study that looked at the future of land use in Michigan and the impacts on land-based industries (i.e., forestry, agriculture, mining, and tourism). The presentation visually demonstrated the profound changes in Michigan's land use patterns if current trends continue. The complete presentation is viewable on the council website ([Michigan Land Resource Project](#)).

## ***Michigan from the National Perspective***

*Bruce Katz, The Brookings Institution*

Katz outlined four major questions that were addressed in a study comparing Michigan to other states:

- What are the general trends affecting cities, metropolitan and rural areas?
- What are the consequences of those trends?
- Why is decentralization occurring?
- What do these trends mean to state policy?

The PowerPoint presentation is viewable on the council website ([The New Growth Agenda](#)).

### ***Questions and Responses Following the Presentation***

Q. Do you have information on the cost of decentralization of urban centers?

A. Katz—We have not looked at costs—it is a needed next step.

Q. Were the impacts to agricultural processing considered in the impact analyses?

A. Skole—The secondary losses associated with agricultural processing was part of the net loss calculated in the model.

Q. It is not clear why forestland increases and how that fits with the other data.

A. Skole—There is a period of time after agriculture ceases as a viable activity before new development occurs. During this period there is often an increase in trees on the abandoned farmland, but not often in sufficient quantity or concentration to produce a viable commercial harvest.

Q. You cite that the database used for a large part of your study is over a decade old. What do we need to build a more accurate and up-to-date database?

A. Skole and staff to the council—There is a white paper being prepared for the council that will address the issue of the land use database and what can be done to improve data to assist in land use decision-making.

Q. What is the impact of revenue sharing on land use patterns?

A. Katz—The best example of the impacts of revenue sharing is in the Twin Cities Minnesota Metropolitan District where it has been in practice since the 1970s. A report on the consequences of revenue sharing in this metropolitan area is expected to be completed in April and could be made available to this Council.

Q. What is the effect of fragmentation of decision-making at the local government level on land use patterns?

A. Katz—The Northeast Midwest Institute has been a little closer to the studies involving the impact of fragmented local decision-making on land use patterns. There are a number of examples throughout the country where there has been consolidation of local

governments on decision related to sanitary sewer service, water, transportation, and related public services that are aimed at improving land use decisions. In Pennsylvania, where every piece of land is within an incorporated municipality, they are currently considering what options short of consolidation will meet their goals.

Q. What is the correlation between a large number of local governments and decentralization patterns of growth? Couldn't other factors be responsible?

A. Katz—The research to date has looked at a number of factors nationwide, but the one common to all areas where decentralization has been occurring most rapidly has been the fractionalization of land use decision-making.

Q. How much is race a factor in the decentralization of urban areas?

A. Katz, Skole, with others contributing—Race is one of the top three factors affecting land use patterns, but does not define the extent to which decentralization has occurred. While it is true that the effect of decentralization has been racial stratification in many urban areas, particularly in Michigan, it may be more a result of decentralization than a primary cause. Economically disadvantaged groups, such as minorities are often left behind as urban areas are abandoned. That is not to say that race may not be an impediment in efforts to revitalize urban areas.

### ***Council Members' Expectations (Survey Results)***

*William Rustem, Public Sector Consultants Inc.*

Rustem outlined in a PowerPoint presentation, available on the council website ([Survey of Council Members](#)), the three highest land use issues as ranked by council members

- Need for urban revitalization
- Protecting land-based industries
- Need for coordinated planning

Other issues included: economic policies related to infrastructure and community services; planning policies and practices that inhibit positive land use changes; lack of understanding of issues by decisions makers and the public; inadequate public transportation; and imbalance of population growth to land consumption.

He also summarized the following key expectations listed by council members in the survey:

- Make policy and legislative recommendations
- Provide a forum for balanced presentation of issues that considers all perspectives and results in consensus
- Shape public opinion and policy
- Produce a document that will guide next steps
- Educate and inform the public and policymakers

## **Comments and Discussion of Issues**

### *Council Members*

Comment: **Would the council consider breaking into smaller groups to have more detailed discussions on particular issues and report back to larger group?**

Responses: Other council members—These are complex issues, but council members need to be on the same page if we are to reach consensus. As cumbersome as it is, it is essential that we keep the group together as much as possible.

Staff—We envisioned a three-step process involving 1) grounding in issues; 2) visioning by the council of what they would like to see in Michigan’s future; and, 3) recommendation on what needs to be done to realize the common future goals.

Co-chair—Perhaps smaller groups can be used effectively at the end of the process after a consensus has been reached on direction and priorities

Comment: **Who should Council members approach between meetings with ideas, concerns, or suggestions on process?**

Response: Co-chair—It would be easiest if council members contact Bill Rustem or other representatives of Public Sector Consultants with questions, issues, or concerns that come up between meetings. Bill will consult with the co-chairs as needed to respond.

Comment: **The survey results seem to narrow the issues before we can discuss them. I had expectation that this would be a shared learning process where issues are jointly developed.**

Response: Co-chair and staff—The survey was intended to help staff determine where the interest of the council was to better plan the meetings and information needs. We expect the council to focus in on issues they want to consider at a future meeting after the public hearing process is complete.

Comment: **Would like to see something built into process beyond August that would allow the council to follow through with the governor and the legislature on recommendations.**

Response: Co-chair—I will ask staff to consider this recommendation and have suggestions for consideration at a future meeting.

Comment: **What does consensus mean?**

Response: Co-chair—We would like to reach consensus where possible—that is where there are no objections to a recommendation. However, we realize that may not always be possible and ultimately we may have to rely upon a majority vote of the council where total agreement is not possible.

Comment: **Can we have staff prepare a summary of what other states have done so we have the benefit of their work on land use issues?**

Response: Staff—A summary of activities in other states, a compilation of previous land use recommendations in Michigan, and related materials have been or will be prepared by staff. Some are already on the council website and others are being prepared.

Comment: **We have lots of studies, we have relatively good data, and we don't need new research to take the initial steps to address our critical land use issues. Our state deserves better than it has had in the past to manage growth.**

Response: Co-chair—I did not know many of you when I came to this meeting. Having listened to you relay the experience and commitment that you bring to this process, I am relieved and excited about the prospects of what we can accomplish.

Comment: **Since the public hearings will all be on a single day, can council members obtain a summary of the public comments?**

Response: Staff—The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality will be taping the public comments received and preparing a summary for the council.

Comment: **Concerned that the public hearings are not located in areas where sprawl and related issues are a major concern.**

Response: Co-chair—I will ask staff to talk with you after the meeting for your suggestions on additional sites.

Comment: **Concerned that the public hearing scheduled for Grand Rapids will occur at the same time that many of the community leaders will be attending a retreat involving growth management in western Michigan.**

Response: Co-chair—I will ask staff to work with you to accommodate your concern and make sure those most involved in land use issues in your area have an opportunity to present their views to the council.

Comment: **Would hope that as the council reaches the recommendation stage that it considers not only what is possible in the short term but also what is needed in the next four- to ten-year horizon. With a longer view we may be able to think bolder.**

Response: Co-chair—Appreciate the thoughtful suggestion.

### ***Public Comment Period***

*Chaired by Council Member Keith Charters*

The public comment was taped and will be transcribed and summarized by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for council review and consideration.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.