



michigan suburbs alliance

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Suburbs Alliance Grows

Lathrup Village joins coalition of built-out cities

FERNDALE – The Michigan Suburbs Alliance last week welcomed the city of Lathrup Village into its coalition of older, built-out suburbs, marking an increased interest by local governments in working together to address shared challenges.

“Communities are finding that addressing many of the issues they face requires reaching beyond their borders,” said Suburbs Alliance Executive Director Conan Smith. “The Suburbs Alliance offers cities a forum for initiating collaborative actions and finding allies among their neighbors.”

Lathrup Village and other mature suburbs throughout southeast Michigan are facing a unique set of challenges relatively new to suburban communities; among them, changing demographics, growing retiree costs, and perceptions that redevelopment is difficult and complex in built-out cities. In addition, the crippling interplay of Proposal A and the Headlee Amendment and repeated cuts to revenue sharing in recent years are making it even more challenging to maintain core city services and leverage property tax revenue. Many cities have been forced to sell city property, reduce essential services and even raise taxes. Nearly all mature communities are feeling the strain – even those that are successfully attracting new investment.

The Suburbs Alliance, a nonprofit organization founded in 2002, was created by a group of elected and appointed suburban leaders to give inner suburbs a means by which to organize around their shared challenges. Named one of southeast Michigan’s most innovative organizations in 2006 by *Michigan Business Review*, the Alliance works to facilitate regional collaboration, encourage the use of innovative redevelopment processes and reform public policies that affect mature communities. Its members span Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, and Washtenaw counties.

Lathrup Village, a 1.5 square mile community in southern Oakland County, is entirely surrounded by the city of Southfield. It is known for its unique history of development and high quality homes. Lathrup Village will work with the Suburbs Alliance and its member cities to advance reforms to the state's municipal finance policies and increase intergovernmental cooperation in southeast Michigan.

Lathrup Village Mayor Frank Brock, Jr. initiated the move to join the Suburbs Alliance. "We in Lathrup are excited about the opportunity to collaborate and plan with other suburban communities on issues of mutual interest and concern."

More information about the Michigan Suburbs Alliance can be found at www.michigansuburbsalliance.org.

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