



michigan suburbs alliance

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## **Inner Suburbs Stuck in Policy “Blind Spot”**

*Report shows unique challenges threaten stability of cities, metro regions*

WASHINGTON –Leaders of first suburbs from around the country gathered to address the critical challenges threatening the stability of inner suburbs at a symposium put on by the Brookings Institution. According to a report released by Brookings, inner suburbs around the Great Lakes are more stressed than any in the nation.

The report highlights the following:

- Inner suburbs have a unique set of challenges – outdated housing and commercial buildings, deteriorating infrastructure, declining populations and changing demographics – that is threatening their long-term stability.
- One in five Americans live in a first suburb
- Because of their unique position, these cities fall into a "policy blind spot" because government programs focus more on supporting new growth in the outlying exurbs or fighting blight in central cities.
- These challenges threaten not only the cities, but the metropolitan regions in which they are located. As the link between major cities and new municipalities, inner suburbs are vital to regional health.
- State reform related to land use, transit, municipal revenue is the way we can save these cities.
- The need for first suburbs to form political coalitions is greatest in the Midwest, where they are most stressed and government structures are the most fragmented.

To read the report or learn more about first suburbs, go to [http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20060215\\_FirstSuburbs.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20060215_FirstSuburbs.htm). Contact Conan Smith, executive director of the Michigan Suburbs Alliance, for more information on the efforts being made in Michigan to address the challenges threatening inner suburbs.

The Michigan Suburbs Alliance is a nonprofit organization comprising a coalition of inner-ring suburbs that works to promote regional collaboration, economic development, and policy reform.

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