

SEMCOG REGIONAL UPDATE

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Executive Committee meets January 23

SEMCOG's Executive Committee will meet at 1 p.m. on Friday, January 23, 2009, in SEMCOG's downtown Detroit office. Action items to be considered by the committee are as follows:

- Approval of SEMCOG staff involvement in Metropolitan Affairs Coalition 2009 Program Agenda;
- Approval of changes to SEMCOG's policy on administrative modifications to the Transportation Improvement Program; and
- Electing a Vice Chairperson to fill a vacancy in the office of SEMCOG Vice Chair. The Nominating Committee recommends Oakland County Commissioner John Scott.

At the meeting, Cambridge Systematics will make a presentation on our region's role in the worldwide freight system and economic opportunities associated with efficient regional freight transportation. *Contact: Kathleen Lomako, SEMCOG Deputy Director.*

First SEMCOG Universities of 2009 scheduled for January and February

The first three SEMCOG University workshops of 2009 are scheduled for January and February and will focus on local government restructuring, ADA compliance, and dealing with the impacts of foreclosures.

Restructuring Under Sinking Revenues is planned for two dates and locations: Tuesday, January 27, 2009 (9 a.m.-noon at the SEMCOG offices and via online webinar), and Thursday, January 29, 2009 (9 a.m.-noon at Sterling Heights City Hall). The workshops will provide tools to more accurately forecast future property tax revenues, offer case studies of successful restructuring and downsizing efforts by local governments, and assist participants in dealing with their specific local fiscal issues.

Designing Pedestrian Facilities for Accessibility — Tuesday, February 3, 2009, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at SEMCOG's downtown Detroit offices. The workshop will provide local government engineers, planners, and ADA coordinators with information about federal regulations pertaining to public rights-of-way and outdoor developed areas.

Combating Local Impacts of Foreclosures — Tuesday, February 10, 2009, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at SEMCOG's downtown Detroit offices. The workshop will highlight best practices implemented by local communities, and resources

and assistance available from the federal government and financial institutions.

Register online now for these workshops (via SEMCOG's online Calendar on the workshops' specific dates). *Contact: Amanda Polanco, SEMCOG U Registrar.*

Local government effectiveness tip: Know the basics of your assessing process

Local government leaders are encouraged to fully understand the assessing process used by their community and communicate the process and timelines to constituents via newsletters and Web sites. Understand how assessors are developing state equalized values (SEV), whether by a one- vs. two-year averaging technique, plus how they are dealing with bank sales and foreclosures. Also understand how the taxable values (TxV) are established and the gap between SEV and TxV. Learn about the payment alternatives available to citizens in financial distress. Have the assessor develop projections for your property tax revenues. Then immediately begin the process to balance expenses with the revenue projections. Look beyond just one year and estimate revenues and expenses two years out and take the needed actions to address any deficits. Your county assessor's office has much more information on this topic. Please contact them for assistance. *Contact: Dave Boerger, SEMCOG Local Government Effectiveness.*

SEMCOG's efforts with federal stimulus program

SEMCOG is providing input into the federal stimulus package being proposed by the new administration. We have been involved in discussions with the Michigan Department of Transportation and our congressional delegation to be as prepared as we can to receive as much money as possible for needed infrastructure projects in Southeast Michigan. While the amount of dollars and rules for spending them have yet to be established, it appears that the funds will flow through existing programs and be subject to all of the requirements that go along with them. It also appears that projects will need to be under contract in either 90 or 180 days. We will keep you apprised as the requirements and final details are developed. *Contact: Carmine Palombo, SEMCOG Director of Transportation Programs.*

2007-2008 state legislative session wrap-up

The 2007-2008 session of the state legislature concluded with a whirlwind of activity. Bills to address the issue of

funding for transportation did not make it out of the legislature; however, legislation to move forward with rail along Woodward Avenue did pass. Other legislation that passed includes expansion of Cobo Hall, new education Promise Zones, expansion of historic preservation credits, changes to the way rental housing inspections are conducted, and preservation of 9-1-1 funding. Looking forward, the 2009-2010 session promises to be as equally challenging for legislators with many issues to address, including the state budget, funding for transportation infrastructure, and many others. *Contact: Karen Wieber, SEMCOG Planning Analyst.*

SEMCOG comments on EPA draft construction site rule

SEMCOG will work with member communities in commenting on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's proposed rule, Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards for the Construction and Development Point Source Category. This proposed rule, in some instances, would require construction sites to use sedimentation basins and meet a numeric limit set for stormwater leaving the site. *Contact: Amy Mangus, SEMCOG Environment Coordinator.*

SEMCOG hosts meeting on water quality issues

Local governments are invited to a meeting on Thursday, January 29, 2009, from 9 a.m.-noon in SEMCOG offices to discuss meeting water quality standards in Southeast Michigan. Specifically, the meeting will focus on efforts and research relating to meeting phosphorus and E.Coli standards. Experts from across Michigan will present their findings and next steps will be discussed. *Contact: Raymonia Dale, SEMCOG Executive Assistant, to RSVP.*

SEMCOG hosts Michigan Main Street workshop on February 2

SEMCOG will host a Downtown Revitalization Workshop on Monday, February 2, 2009, on behalf of the Michigan State

Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). This half-day workshop (9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.) at SEMCOG's downtown Detroit office will focus on state initiatives and programs to help communities revitalize their downtowns and main streets. The application process for the enhanced Michigan Main Street program and the Blueprints for Michigan's Downtowns will be discussed. *Contact: Linda Best, MSHDA, at 517-241-1737 for more information and registration materials.*

SEMCOG 2008 membership drive a success

As part of its 40th Anniversary celebration in 2008, SEMCOG initiated a year-long membership drive. During the year, we added nine new members and we are pleased to welcome the three newest members:

- Clay Township (in St. Clair County);
- Springfield Township (in Oakland County); and
- Macomb Community College.

SEMCOG membership now totals 164. *Contact: Amy Malmer, SEMCOG Membership Manager.*

SEMCOG is a regional planning partnership of governmental units serving 4.9 million people in the seven-county region of Southeast Michigan striving to enhance the region's quality of life. *Regional Update* is a publication of SEMCOG, financed through funds from state and federal grants and dues from member communities.

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