



# PAL UPDATE

## Building a New and Prosperous Michigan

September 2008



Successful **regions** in Michigan have come **together** with **one objective** – to plan for the kind of growth that would make them good places to live, work, and play.

## PEOPLE AND LAND AWARDS REGIONAL PROSPERITY INITIATIVE GRANTS

After many weeks of reviewing 26 proposals submitted by the deadline of May 12, 2008, the People and Land (PAL) Leadership Council has selected nine recipients of the 2008 PAL Regional Prosperity Initiative grants. The rigorous review process was completed in late August, after several months of preparation and planning the initiative, then reviewing proposals.

“The Leadership Council strictly adhered to the criteria it had developed,” said Julie Metty-Bennett, of Public Sector Consultants, who managed the process for PAL. “They knew what kind of regional leadership and partnerships would be essential to the success of the projects, and the parameters they wanted followed.”

The criteria established by the Leadership Council were forged over several months, as a result of the Council's conviction that the best opportunity to create positive and sustainable change in Michigan is at the regional level, given the state's inability to lead on the issues where economic, environmental, and social concerns converge. The Council first developed Six Pillars for Prosperity, which provide a focused agenda for changing Michigan's economic direction.

Next, the Council created the Regional Prosperity Initiative, making available multiple grants that require efforts to foster multi-sector and multi-jurisdictional collaboration at the regional level as a means to advance economic, environmental, and social progress. Eligible proposals were required to create and enhance a regional identity, work across multiple counties and provide sustained support and leadership for the collaborative work of opinion leaders in their region. In addition, the proposals had to make a convincing case for advancing their region's prosperity by responding to needs specific to that region and addressing one or more of PAL's Six Pillars for Prosperity.

Three types of grants were available: readiness, mobilization, and sustainability. The first, readiness grants, will allow key stakeholders within a region to build support and commitment for collaborative  
*(continued on back page)*

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# PAL PILLARS FOR MICHIGAN'S FUTURE PROSPERITY DEFINE LAND USE

As PAL grantees and advocates have learned over the past few years, explaining land use issues has never been easy, and certainly not to legislators, public officials, or the public. Those in the PAL “choir” have always had a pretty good idea what we were talking about, but we’ve struggled to find the right language to explain “land use,” which people as a rule don’t understand. The only thing that has really broken through is to give audiences examples of what successful land use looks like.

To help people understand how the principles of wise land use can be employed to create a more prosperous and livable Michigan, the PAL Leadership Council began discussions that examined research on the key drivers of successful economies and on the key land-based assets Michigan must focus on in order to drive its own prosperity. The Council found common ground on six key land use issues critical to Michigan’s future prosperity. These took the shape of the Six Pillars

for Prosperity that we outlined in the April issue of the PAL Update. Briefly, the pillars are:

- 1. Attractive Cities and Neighborhoods:** From major cities to small towns, we need vibrant neighborhoods where people want to live and raise families.
- 2. Highly Competitive Schools and Lifelong Learning Opportunities:** Education creates the skilled workers we need to compete in a global marketplace.
- 3. Knowledge-Based Technologies:** Job growth in Michigan will come from new and creative businesses.
- 4. Thriving Agriculture:** Michigan’s second-largest industry can provide food, fuel, and innovation while preserving beautiful rural landscapes.
- 5. Natural Resources for Recreation and Job Creation:** Michigan is blessed with natural resources that enrich our quality of life and enhance our economy.
- 6. Inclusive and Entrepreneurial Culture:** Innovation, new ideas, new people, new businesses: this is the currency of the New Economy.

Each of these pillars contains critical elements of land use applied to create a thriving economic environment for our state and its citizens. All of them are also inextricably intertwined. Two-page, research-based explanations of each pillar were developed by a collaboration of the PAL Leadership Council and the Michigan State University Land Policy Institute. They are available online at [www.peopleandland.org](http://www.peopleandland.org).

In addition, two other communications tools were developed and are available on the Website. One is a printed and e-brochure explaining People and Land and the way wise land use is exemplified by the Six Pillars for Prosperity. The other is an eight-minute video on the Pillars endorsed by the seven members of the PAL Leadership Council and the co-directors of PAL, Bill Rustem and Dr. Soji Adelaja.

(millennials) of their communities to co-create the places and opportunities that attract New Economy investment. The Congress will also share its findings and goals with the Detroit CVB.

## **Northeast Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance – Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG)**

NEMCOG will begin its regional work by convening leaders from all sectors – business, industry, colleges, agencies, organizations, and governments – to collectively create a Regional Prosperity Alliance for the region’s economic and future sustainability. It will organize and implement educational forums to address the key issues that all leaders must understand in order to create prosperous communities and implement a Regional Prosperity Action Plan.

## **Southwest Michigan Regional Collaboration – Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC)**

SWMPC will take advantage of its position as a convener of the region’s 360 Group, a network of

multi-sector, multi-jurisdictional leaders that have met bi-monthly for two years to discuss the potential of the southwest Michigan region. The Commission will further develop a “curriculum” of presenters and information resources to enhance the 360 Group’s understanding of the state of the region’s economic development, create a common vision, and develop regional goals and objectives.

## **Strengthening the Great Waters – Northern Initiatives (NI)**

Northern Initiatives will build on its previous Great Waters environmental tourism work with the Leveraging the Great Waters Framework, a project to increase awareness of the UP as one of the world’s greatest natural and cultural destinations. NI plans to create new economies through the identification, protection, and enhancement of natural, cultural, historic, and regional resources in collaboration with communities and their leaders. By actively engaging youth in the planning process and in direct preservation opportunities, NI plans to encourage future ownership of the promotion

and preservation of UP assets. NI is collaborating with the Sault Tribe of the Chippewa to develop a system of sharing tribal heritage as part of the region’s sustainable tourism offerings.

## **Quality of Place in Mid-Michigan – Lansing Economic Area Partnership, Inc. (LEAP)**

LEAP is creating a pilot project with the Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council (Mid-MEAC), and the Michigan Trails and Greenways Association (MTGA) that will transfer the region’s overall economic development strategy into actionable and measurable activities. MTGA’s work developing a green space preservation plan and Mid-MEAC’s “complete streets” initiative are important pieces in the region’s Quality of Place product. The pilot will serve as a model for LEAP to engage other community organizations to achieve community renewal. Another essential activity will be to convene community listening sessions to develop a full inventory and understanding of the region’s assets and develop plans to align, brand and market them in a global economy.

# PAL QUERIES THE CANDIDATES

In August, the PAL Leadership Council directed People and Land to send a land use issues survey to winners of the August primary election. To assist the candidates, it was an “open book test.” The package included a cover letter from the Council members, and a packet including two-page explanations of all Six Pillars for Prosperity for the future of Michigan. At its core, it is a candidate education effort, because the Pillars are in substance the PAL agenda – without once mentioning the word “land use,” which historically has made most political eyes glaze over.

In September, PAL sent the candidates who had not yet responded a reminder postcard asking them to download the survey from the PAL Website and fax it to People and Land. White papers on the Six Pillars together with other information are also available on the PAL Website. If you haven't visited the site for a while, you'll find that the address is the same, but the content is not. Check it out at [www.peopleandland.org](http://www.peopleandland.org).

Also available on the home page is a video featuring the members of the PAL Leadership Council demonstrating the same cooperation and agreement on key issues that has inspired them to continue working together for a better, more prosperous Michigan. The video focuses on the common ground the Council found reflected in the Six Pillars for Prosperity. When you have a few minutes, check it out. Bill Rustem and Dr. Soji Adelaja “host” the video and help frame the issues.

If you're interested in receiving print copies of the two-page explanations of the Six Pillars for Prosperity, contact [pal@peopleandland.org](mailto:pal@peopleandland.org). Same with the new PAL brochure. Let us know how many you need of each and for what purpose, and we'll see what we can do to meet your needs.



## PAL Leadership Council

**Jim Barrett**

*Michigan Chamber of Commerce*

**Brad Garmon**

*Michigan Environmental Council*

**Conan Smith**

*Michigan Suburbs Alliance*

**Donna Stine**

*Michigan United Conservation Clubs*

**Heaster Wheeler**

*NAACP – Detroit Branch*

**Gil White**

*Michigan Association of REALTORS®*

**Wayne Wood and Matt Kapp**

*Michigan Farm Bureau*

## PAL Leadership Partners

**Bill Rustem**

*Public Sector Consultants*

*PAL Co-Director*

**Dr. Soji Adelaja**

*Michigan State University Land Policy Institute*

*PAL Co-Director*

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## PEOPLE AND LAND AWARDS REGIONAL PROSPERITY INITIATIVE GRANTS

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regional efforts. The mobilization grants will help regions that lack significant or sustained momentum around regional solutions to land-based economic challenges, but possess the capacity and regional readiness to move forward. The sustainability grants were designed for regions with acknowledged momentum around regional solutions to economic and land use challenges.

During the process, not only were the written proposals examined in detail, but members of the PAL Work Group, resource partners from evaluation and communications, and members of the PAL Leadership Council met with each of the nine, questioning them about elements of their proposals, and helping to refine them. Once final drafts were submitted, the evaluation and communications teams drafted proposed technical assistance plans for each of the proposals.

“The process for evaluating proposals took some time because even the strongest proposals had to be fine-tuned somewhat to meet the criteria laid out by the Leadership Council,” said Metty-Bennett. “We had many other proposals that had wonderful projects or goals, but they simply fell short of meeting the Council's complete criteria.”

## SAVE-THE-DATE FOR SUMMIT

Plans are under way for a two-day Summit in Lansing on April 14-15, 2009, jointly hosted by the MSU Land Policy Institute and the Michigan Land Use Funders. People and Land will play a key role in this Summit, and will be encouraging past and current PAL grantees to participate. More information will be forthcoming this fall, but in the meantime, mark your calendars.

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