



The Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program (Metro Program) is the nation's premier provider of independent, nonpartisan research and analysis of the challenges and opportunities facing the country's cities and suburbs. On November 6, 2007 we will launch a three-year initiative that will include release of a cutting-edge national competitive agenda, public forums across the country and post-election work with the new Administration and Congress as well as state and local leaders to advance meaningful policy reform. As part of this initiative, we seek timely engagement from corporations, individuals and major philanthropies.

Context: The Window of Opportunity

The 2008 presidential election will take place during a period of profound change in the U.S., comparable in scale and complexity to the latter part of the 19th century. Broad demographic forces – population growth, immigration, domestic migration, and aging – are sweeping the nation and altering settlement patterns, lifestyle choices and consumption patterns. Substantial economic forces – globalization, deindustrialization, and technological innovation – are restructuring our economy, altering what Americans do and where they do it. These forces and others pose a central challenge:

How can the U.S. maintain its competitive edge and enviable standard of living at a time when the rules driving economic prosperity are being totally rewritten?

We believe that the ability of our nation to grow and prosper and meet the great environmental and social challenges of our time rests largely on the health and vitality of our cities and metropolitan areas. These communities make up 80 percent of the U.S. population and drive the national and global economy. They are our hubs of research and innovation, centers of human capital, ports of commerce and gateways of immigration.

Across the nation, America's metropolitan areas face daunting challenges. Areas of rapid growth are grappling with traffic congestion and escalating home prices, creating inefficiencies in productivity. Older industrial communities often have a workforce that is ill-prepared to compete in the changing economy and insufficient resources to fix their aging infrastructure and polluted lands. And, given global pressures, many metro areas are wrestling with how to grow quality, better paying jobs for their workers.

Action: Advancing a Blueprint for American Prosperity

With a decade of experience and a proven track record of quality research and policy impact, the Metro Program is well-positioned to spark a rich national debate. We propose an ambitious course of action:

We seek to develop a ***Blueprint for American Prosperity***, a roadmap for unleashing the full economic potential of our metropolitan areas.

With a series of thoughtful, provocative papers to be released over the next year, the Blueprint will:

- demonstrate that our metros are the engines of national prosperity and the key to American competitiveness in the global economy;

- illustrate how many of our outdated, outmoded federal policies are inhibiting the dynamic potential and growth of these metro areas; and
- present an integrated policy agenda that give metros the tools they need to leverage their economic strengths, grow in environmentally sensitive ways and build a strong and diverse middle class.

The Blueprint will offer specific, discrete recommendations in key federal policy areas including: research and innovation, transportation, workforce housing, education, energy efficiency, immigration and income-and-asset building.

We propose to create the Blueprint by actively engaging a network of 50 business and civic leaders, a **Metropolitan Leadership Council**, to support and guide our efforts. We seek to harvest the best ideas in corporate America gleaned from decades of experience. The Metropolitan Leadership Council will consist of no more than 20 corporations, 25 engaged individuals and 5 major philanthropies from across the country. The Council will reflect the political, geographic and racial and ethnic diversity of the nation and will include representatives from a cross section of economic sectors.

The primary role of this group will be to guide the design, development and marketing of this initiative along with helping to provide financial support. In performing this role, members of the Council will have the opportunity to interact with Brookings and a nationwide network of advisors consisting of the best city and county elected officials, university presidents and metropolitan business alliances. We seek a financial investment of \$150,000 over three years from each individual partner and \$300,000 over three years from corporate partners.

We hope to advance the ideas in the Blueprint through an aggressive **outreach and communications effort** that leverages the relationships we have built and hope to build throughout the country. We will work with all forms of media to convey our findings to a vast audience of leaders and practitioners, both through “hard news” stories as well as op-eds and commentaries. We will also participate in public forums throughout the country, starting with the official launch of the Blueprint initiative in Washington, D.C. on November 6, 2007. The DC launch will be followed by additional regional forums throughout 2007 and 2008 in metropolitan areas including Atlanta, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Kansas City, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix, and Seattle.

Why is the Blueprint Unique

The Blueprint initiative differs from other federal policy efforts in several respects.

First, the Blueprint is developing a national competitive agenda that builds from the expertise, knowledge and experience of a high level network of business, political and civic leaders from all across the country. We believe that these leaders and their metro areas are at the cutting edge of policy innovation in the United States and are guiding the way towards systemic and structural federal policy reform.

Second, the Blueprint is developing an agenda that is federalist rather than federal and truly engages states and metropolitan areas as worthy, necessary partners in the effort to promote economic growth and prosperity. The fact is that metropolitan leaders “can’t go it alone” in the global competition for talent and jobs; they need focused, accountable federal and state partners to unleash their economic potential.

Finally, the Blueprint is a long term effort that is designed both to inform the debate in the 2008 election and advance concrete legislative and administrative reforms once the new Administration and Congress take power.