



April 18, 2007

Ypsilanti Neighbors and Friends:

During the last couple of months, the city of Ypsilanti has continued to explore ways to improve service and reduce costs through regional cooperation with neighboring townships. However, regional cooperation must be carefully studied and implemented. Startup costs and infrastructure changes must be factored into a long-term plan. Short-term financial windfalls that will immediately balance Ypsilanti's budget will not happen.

Below I address two regional cooperation efforts that the city is undertaking: Automatic Mutual Aid and a Regional Police Authority study group. I also discuss my invitation to the MSU Intergovernmental Cooperation Conference.

Automatic Mutual Aid

The city of Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township are discussing enhancing the mutual aid agreement between the fire departments. Currently, each fire department aids the other during large fires. The responsible fire department arrives on the scene and then contacts neighboring fire departments if additional aid is required.

Automatic mutual aid (AMA) will dispatch the closest fire truck available, regardless of whether the fire truck is a city or township fire truck. For example, if the city fire department is closer to a township alarm location, then the city will respond first with the township arriving later to take over. The opposite holds true for a fire in the city that is closer to a township fire truck.

AMA promises to provide faster response times for both the city and the township, although cost savings will probably be negligible. A joint committee has been formed by the city of Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township to study the issue. The report will be due in October.

Regional Police Authority

Representatives from the city of Ypsilanti and the townships of Ann Arbor, Augusta, Northfield, Salem, Scio, Superior, and York have formed the Regional Police Force Study Group. The group has recommended that the consulting firm Vichow, Krause, and Co. be hired to create a proposal for a regional police authority. The firm has helped municipalities in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois form regional public safety organizations.

The proposed study will include a comparative cost analysis of current services, a recommended regional organizational structure, and a final report by the end of the year. Vichow, Krause, and Co. cautions that first year costs are likely to be higher than current operations costs, so a five- to seven-year financial forecast is recommended.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Conference

In May, Michigan State University, with the support of the Michigan Municipal League and other municipal associations, is hosting Intergovernmental Cooperation in Michigan: A Regional Dialogue. The objective of this two-day conference is to produce a consensus document on policy changes for facilitating greater regional cooperation.

I am one of eight people that the Michigan Municipal League has invited to participate in the conference. I look forward to working with other local officials and experts to form state policy recommendations that will encourage intergovernmental cooperation in Michigan.

The city of Ypsilanti is looking carefully for cost savings and service improvements through regional cooperation. These investigations will have a bearing on the city budget discussions beginning in May. All budget presentations in city hall are open to the public. I encourage anyone who is interested to attend and learn more about our city. Meeting information is posted on the [Ypsilanti city website](#) and at city hall.

With Best Regards,

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