

Metropolitan Policy

Through its innovative Blueprint for American Prosperity initiative, the Metropolitan Policy Program this year put forth ideas that resonated in the 2008 election debate and—more importantly—developed proposals for the federal decision making that now lies ahead. Both Sens. John McCain and Barack Obama embraced some of Metro’s recommendations in key regions. A new administration and a new Congress in 2009 give the program a wonderful opportunity to “bubble up” the kinds of state, metropolitan, and local innovations that Metropolitan Policy Program experts have been advancing for the past decade.

“Our work on the American economy shows that the top 100 metropolitan areas, home to two-thirds of our population, concentrate and focus the economic power of the nation,” said Bruce Katz, vice president and founding director of the Metro program and the Adeline M. and Alfred I. Johnson Chair in Urban and Metropolitan Policy. “Metro areas generate three-quarters of our GDP and garner the lion’s share of such assets as innovation, human capital, infrastructure, and quality places. They should be central to federal policy.”

The Minneapolis bridge collapse in August 2007 tragically underscored the perilous state of the nation’s physical infrastructure. The Metro program is informing next-generation thinking on federal transportation reform by highlighting effective efforts in the states and metropolitan areas. Likewise, the program’s work on integrating housing, transportation, land use, and energy policies under a holistic framework is influencing the climate change debate, as 43 percent of greenhouse gas emissions emanate from the built environment.

Blueprint for American Prosperity

One year out from the 2008 elections, hundreds of people came to Brookings for the launch of the Blueprint for American Prosperity and many more watched the presentations on a live Web cast. The Blueprint offered a powerful and compelling argument at an important point in history: The ability of the United States to compete globally and to meet the great economic, environmental, and social challenges of the 21st century rests largely on the health, vitality, and prosperity of the nation’s major cities and metropolitan areas.

To achieve those goals, the Blueprint argues that wholesale federal reform is necessary—breaking down the walls between anachronistic programs so that the national government is pulling in the same direction as the metropolitan regions that house the vast majority of

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Bruce Katz, vice president and director of the Metropolitan Policy Program, illuminates the 100 top metropolitan areas as the economic engines of the nation at the launch of the new Brookings Blueprint for American Prosperity.

American residents and provide the nation's jobs, innovations, and ideas.

As summarized by Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels in an op-ed, the Blueprint is "about making deliberate, conscious choices to chart our future. We want a genuine partnership and the flexibility to make the right decisions, a partnership that allows us to make headway on our challenges."

The first Blueprint publication unveiled at the launch and authored by Fellow Alan Berube, the Metro Program's research director, demonstrated how the top 100 metropolitan areas drive and dominate the American economy. The report received substantial media coverage and stimulated local editorials on the need to incorporate metro concerns during the 2008 presidential election.

A Blueprint Policy Series, initiated in April, released papers

arguing for, among other things, a National Innovation Foundation, shrinking America's carbon footprint, and new directions on transportation policy. The series also contained reports on the demographic and political dynamics under way in 10 "battleground" states, starting with Pennsylvania, that were crucial in deciding the 2008 election. Co-authored by Senior Fellow William Frey and Visiting Fellow Ruy Teixeira, the series represented a timely collaboration between the Metropolitan Policy Program and Governance Studies.

Generating substantial media coverage, specific policy papers delved into regional challenges in the Great Lakes and the intermountain west. Papers illustrated the economic benefits of integrating the Canadian and American economies in the Great Lakes region and explored how Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah are experiencing some



Deputy Director Amy Liu

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of the fastest population growth and economic and demographic transition anywhere in the country.

A network of nearly 100 partners from 30 metropolitan areas, including local elected officials, university leaders, and metropolitan business alliances have hosted dozens of presentations of the Blueprint in areas as diverse as Chicago, Dallas, Harrisburg, and Seattle.

In June 2008, at the two-day Summit for American Prosperity, over a thousand people showed

up at the Washington Hilton for the largest Brookings event ever. Unusual too was that most of the speakers were not Washington experts. The many faces at the podium included governors, mayors, county executives, and other representatives of what Bruce Katz called the "Metro Nation."

Economist Michael Porter told the large gathering that "as we look at the U.S. economy, what we have come to understand is there is no U.S. economy. Instead there are hundreds of metropolitan economies. Each of them is different. Each of them has different clusters ... which have allowed for high productivity. In fact, if you think about it, almost everything that matters for competitiveness is not federal—it's local."

Along those very lines, a major policy-framing paper, authored by the program's policy director, Mark Muro, presented



Audrey Singer takes audience questions on why the presidential candidates were not talking about immigration.

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Brookings Experts on Migration

borders raises new policy issues in both wealthy countries and in the developing world.

Research at Brookings includes work in the Metropolitan Policy Program on the demographic, social, and economic trends affecting U.S. cities and metropolitan areas. Senior Fellows Audrey Singer and William Frey have become leading experts on the new "gateway" cities and how race and immigration shape the modern-day electorate. Their work is widely read and cited by Republican and Democratic leaders.

In Foreign Policy, the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement operates under the auspices of the United Nations. Their

research on Darfur, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and other displacement situations provides a unique humanitarian and human rights perspective on crises that are too often seen only in strategic or national policy dimensions. Other experts in Foreign Policy are examining the implications of Muslims' increasing presence in Europe.

Cutting-edge computer modeling in Economic Studies examines migration trends and the ramifications of natural disasters.

Brookings budget analysts are conducting landmark research on the cost-benefit analysis of immigrant families in the communities and states.

Other projects at Brookings engage in research on trade and global labor markets and European integration. Governance Studies experts are increasingly examining the political ramifications of a changing America, including foreshadowing key trends in the 2008 election and beyond. ■



Elizabeth Ferris, co-director of the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement.

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a 21st-century vision of federalism that identified domestic policy areas where the federal government should take charge on global economic and environmental challenges. The paper also outlined where the next administration needs to empower metropolitan areas to drive sustainable growth and sustained prosperity.

Blueprint recommendations gained bipartisan support prior to the election. Sens. Barack Obama and John McCain joined the program's call for support of Great Lakes restoration as a critical step in strengthening the Midwest's economy. Sens. Susan Collins and Hillary Clinton introduced a bill that encompasses the Blueprint's recommendations on cluster-led economic development and the creation of a National Innovation Foundation. In June, Obama spoke at the nonpartisan U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting in Miami and mentioned Brookings by name, stressing the enhanced role that metropolitan areas need to play in the national economy.

On the state level, the Metro program continues to promote strategic thinking by governors and legislatures in adapting to 21st-century realities. For instance, the program convened nearly 1,000 people in Columbus, Ohio this year to develop a state agenda for restoring prosperity to the Buckeye State.

Metropolitan Infrastructure Initiative Launched

In fall 2007, Fellow Robert Puentes headed a new infrastructure initiative to address the pressing transportation and infrastructure challenges facing U.S. cities and suburbs. This work, supported by the Rockefeller and Surdna foundations, is closely coordinated



Bruce Katz addresses more than 1,000 people at the Summit for American Prosperity.

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with a network of political, environmental, and business leaders at the federal and metropolitan levels. One initiative goal is to adapt for U.S. policy consideration the innovative transportation policies and infrastructure investments found around the globe.

In a well-cited report released at the Blueprint summit in June, Puentes wrote that physical neglect, congestion, and environmental degradation now seriously compromise the efficiency of a network crucial to the national interest, with a price tag estimated in the hundreds of billions. It presented a new vision for national transportation policy that focuses on strategic infrastructure investment, metropolitan area empowerment, and state reforms.

Framing a Metropolitan America

The Metro program provides important context and framework for decision making. The program's Census-based analysis of U.S. demographic trends remains the only effort of its kind, providing up-to-date perspectives on the demographic, economic, and cultural forces remaking neighborhoods, cities, and metropolitan areas. William Frey and Audrey

Singer have become two of the nation's most-noted experts on dynamic demographic changes.

Singer co-authored an important book on the shifting patterns of immigrant settlement, *Twenty-First-Century Gateways: Immigrant Incorporation in Suburban America* (Brookings, 2008), which revealed how the current influx of immigrants is changing the U.S. landscape. She also worked with scholars throughout the Institution to design a new "all-Brookings" migration initiative (see box, page 24).

Visiting Fellow Christopher B. Leinberger's review of real estate development trends shed light on the presence of walkable urban neighborhoods in U.S. cities and suburbs that encourage more foot traffic and fewer cars. His field survey of 30 metropolitan areas, accompanied by his new book, *The Option of Urbanism: Investing in an American Dream* (Island Press, 2007), colorfully illustrated the rise of walkable urban neighborhoods, especially around rail transit lines.

At Home and Abroad

Brookings Greater Washington Research, led by Senior Fellow Alice Rivlin, conducted research

this year on several critical areas, including the need for strengthened community college programs in the District and a review of socio-demographic and economic changes among the District's population since 2000.

State and regional efforts across the country produced several standouts. In Pennsylvania, the program is now in its fifth year of working with such partners as the Campaign to Renew Pennsylvania to advance state efforts to address government fragmentation and to ensure the fiscal sustainability of local municipalities. Policy recommendations in the 2006 report on charting Maine's future have been advanced through a series of bond referenda and legislative and administrative actions.

In summer 2008, the Metro program launched a TransAtlantic Policy Series to identify policy innovations at the European Union, nation-state, and local levels in Europe that could be useful to U.S. policy-makers. New TransAtlantic Fellow Julie Wagner, based in Milan, conducted a "scan" of European examples of reforms and initiatives that might offer guideposts for the Blueprint initiative. ■