



CITY OF GROSSE POINTE WOODS
MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 14, 2026

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Susan Como, City Manager

SUBJECT: Michigan Municipal League (MML) 2026 Convention

I am requesting approval for Mayor Arthur W. Bryant and I to attend the Michigan Municipal League's *2026 Convention*, which is being held October 7-8 in Traverse City. The agenda is attached for your review.

These are budgeted items:

- S. Como: \$1,073.44 from Account #101-172-958-001
- A. Bryant: \$1,002.84 from Account #101-101-958-001

Attachments

Fund Certification

I hereby certify that unencumbered funds are available for the above purchase, and that the account number has been verified.

Treasurer/Comptroller Signature

October 7, 2026

8 a.m.–6 p.m.

Conference Registration Open

12:30–1:45 p.m.

Networking Lunch

2–4 p.m.

General Session — **Philanthropy and the Future of Local Leadership** & Community Excellence
Award Presentations

Governors' CDEF

Kick off the MML Annual Convention with a high-impact plenary on the future of local leadership. This opening session brings together leading philanthropic partners to highlight why local governance is critical at this moment in U.S. history. Each foundation president will offer brief, compelling remarks on the urgency of investing in local leadership and community trust. Moderated by Dan Gilmartin, who will frame the conversation and close with a unifying call to action, this session sets the tone for a conference focused on practical leadership, civic renewal, and the power of local government to deliver results where it matters most.

Speakers

Tonya Allen, President, McKnight Foundation

Rip Rapson, President & CEO, The Kresge Foundation

Moderator

Dan Gilmartin, Executive Director & CEO, Michigan Municipal League

4–4:30 p.m.

Delegate Check-In

Governors' Prefunction

4:30–5:30 p.m.

Annual Business Meeting

Governors' A

4–5:30 p.m.

CEA Tables and Voting Open

Tower Prefunction

6–8 p.m.

Welcome Reception

October 8, 2026

7 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Conference Registration Open

7:30–9 a.m.

Breakfast

Governors' CDEF

Michigan Association of Mayors (MAM) Annual Meeting & Breakfast

Attendance at the breakfast is limited to Mayors, Presidents, and Urban Township Supervisors.

The Michigan Association of Mayors (MAM) is the official nonpartisan organization of Michigan's chief elected officials. Representing over 100 Michigan communities, MAM works to assist the chief elected officials of cities, villages, and urban townships; advance the various interests and operations of communities represented by its members and all Michigan communities; promote cooperation among communities statewide; and advocate local interests at the state and federal level.

8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

CEA Tables and Voting Open

9–10:30 a.m.

General Session — A.I., Access, and the Future of Governance: Closing the Tech Gap in Communities

Governors' CDEF

At this point, no one can deny that artificial intelligence (A.I.) is having a profound impact on how we think, work, and make decisions. How can local communities harness A.I. in an inclusive, people-first way? In this session, Johnnie Turnage—activist, entrepreneur, and co-founder of Black Tech Saturdays—will lead a compelling, forward-looking discussion on the intersection of innovation and equity. Participants will leave empowered to make technology decisions that are wise, thoughtful, and focused on the human.

Speaker

Johnnie Turnage, Co-Founder, Black Tech Saturdays

10:30–10:45 a.m.

Networking Break

10:45–11:45 a.m.

Breakout Sessions

Smart Budgeting: Innovative Approaches to Financial Resilience

Tower Ballroom A

Municipal leaders must make sound financial decisions while balancing infrastructure needs, public expectations, long-term planning, and uncertainty in revenue and costs. They need practical tools that help them manage today's demands without losing sight of future stability. This session will cover budgeting and financial management strategies designed for municipalities. Learn about innovative budgeting practices, evaluate your local unit of government for financial stability and resilience, understand how to align financial planning with community goals, and discover best practices in developing meaningful, realistic five-year capital improvement plans.

Speaker

Michael Birchmeier, Principal, Client Accounting and Advisory Solutions, Rehmann

Presented by Business Alliance Program Participant Rehmann

The Vision Zero Approach for Safer Local Roads

Tower Ballroom B

Developed in Sweden in the 1990s, Vision Zero is a systems-based strategy aimed at eliminating all traffic fatalities that has since been adopted by communities worldwide. Michigan municipalities, including Ann Arbor, Detroit, and Sterling Heights, are also working towards achieving this goal. In this session, participants will learn about implementing the Vision Zero approach to resident safety, reducing costs for emergency services, and making communities more walkable and multi-modal.

Speakers

Garrett Dawe, Engineer of Traffic and Safety, Michigan Department of Transportation

Alicia Sledge, Director, Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning

Jordan Roberts, Public Services Administrator, City of Ann Arbor

Partnering in Philanthropy with the MML Foundation

Tower Ballroom C

Michigan has one of the densest philanthropy landscapes in the nation, holding the promise of unique, community-changing partnerships. This interactive breakout features Michigan philanthropic leaders who understand local issues and the opportunities in municipal partnerships. Session participants will explore how philanthropy has more tools of transformation to offer than just funding, and what municipal partners need to have ready when they set the table for collaboration. This is a chance to share on-the-ground realities and build the alignment that's possible because of our local democracy.

Speakers

Zosia Eppensteiner, CEO, Community Foundation of Marquette County

Randy Maiers, President & CEO, Community Foundation of St. Clair County

Nancy Boxey, Executive Director, Lapeer County Community Foundation

Community Voices at the Center: Guiding Data Center Development Together

Mackinac Ballroom***Sponsored by Michigan Economic Development Corporation***

Data centers are rapidly becoming essential infrastructure. This session explores how communities can lead the conversation around data center development by putting residents, local values, and long-term quality of life first. From land use and sustainability to job creation and community benefits, we'll unpack how engagement helps communities understand what's at stake, shape proposals to reflect local priorities, and build trust every step of the way.

Speakers

Beth Gibbons, Director, Resiliency Office, Washtenaw County

Cynthia Stump, Director, Local Government & Community Affairs, ITC Michigan

Rachel Witherspoon, City Administrator, City of Gibraltar

Eric Paul Dennis, Research Associate, Infrastructure Policy, Citizens Research Council of Michigan

A Beginner's Guide to Whiplash-Free Housing Development

Peninsula Ballroom

This session explores how local leaders can cultivate patient, healthy real estate development that is accessible to residents, beginning with supportive regulation. Participants will learn how to incorporate incremental development ideas into permitting processes, public infrastructure planning, and community dialogue. We will focus on building practical skills, strengthening local connections, and creating development-ready communities. Attendees will also learn about housing toolkits, policy stress tests, and public engagement strategies that can help communities support sustainable growth while working effectively with residents, developers, and other community partners.

Speaker

Jenifer Acosta, Housing & Community Development Consultant, Acosta Development

11:45 a.m.–1 p.m.

Networking Lunch

Governors' CDEF

Michigan Women in Municipal Government (MWIMG) Annual Meeting & Luncheon

Governors' A

Additional fee and pre-registration required

Take a break from formal presentations—this session is all about sharing wisdom, sparking ideas, and building connections. In small groups, we'll explore real-time challenges, community wins, and how to better support one another in our work.

1–2:30 p.m.

General Session — Democracy Starts Here: Leading at the Local Level

Governors' CDEF

This talk will explore how democracy in America depends on robust civic engagement at the grassroots level. It will highlight how local officials can act as visionary leaders, using their municipal platforms to solve community challenges and model transparent, responsive, and respectful governance.

Speaker

Dan Gilmartin, Executive Director & CEO, Michigan Municipal League

2:30-2:45 p.m.

Networking Break

2:45–3:45 p.m.

Breakout Sessions

What USDA Rural Development Can Do for You

Tower Ballroom A

USDA Rural Development offers tailored grants, loans, and technical assistance to help Michigan's local officials strengthen community infrastructure, expand affordable housing, and support municipal services. This presentation will provide an overview of Rural Development programs available for rural municipalities, including water and sewer, community facilities, housing, electricity, and telecommunications.

Speaker

Dom Restuccia, State Director of Michigan, USDA Rural Development

A.I. in Government: Promises, Pitfalls, & Preparedness

Tower Ballroom B

Artificial intelligence (A.I.) is already transforming financial operations across the public sector, but are we ready for what comes next? Tailored for municipal leaders, this session will offer a practical, comprehensive, and user-friendly overview of the benefits and risks of

A.I. implementation in local government through popular use cases, with a focus on organizational readiness. Participants will learn steps to effectively mitigate potential dangers and responsibly apply A.I. to their workplace.

Speakers

Cooper Dayton, Manager, Cybersecurity Risk & IT Audit, Plante Moran

Manharsh Mohan, Senior Consultant, Cybersecurity Risk & IT Audit, Plante Moran

Presented by Business Alliance Program Participant Plante Moran

The First Amendment & the Right to Peaceably Assemble

Tower Ballroom C

The First Amendment states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

To what degree are municipalities allowed to regulate gatherings? Municipal officials are tasked with protecting both the safety and functionality of the community as well as the Constitutional rights of individuals. In this session, learn about reasonable regulations on assemblies, including ordinances.

Speaker

Jonathan Tromp, Attorney, Mika Meyers

Legislative Update

Mackinac Ballroom

From the passage of the state budget to discussions on revenue sharing, housing, and property taxes, the Legislature continues to tackle a wide array of issues affecting Michigan's local governments. Our lobbying team will break it all down for you, offering insights into what's going on at the state and federal levels. Plus, find out how this year's elections might affect the upcoming lame duck session.

Speakers

John LaMacchia II, Director, State and Federal Affairs, Michigan Municipal League

Jennifer Rigterink, Assistant Director, State and Federal Affairs, Michigan Municipal League

Herasanna Richards, Legislative Associate, State and Federal Affairs, Michigan Municipal League

Dave Hodgkins, Legislative Associate, State and Federal Affairs, Michigan Municipal League

The Michigan Oasis: Implications for Future Planning

Peninsula Ballroom

As severe weather events increase and water resources grow strained, Michigan is often viewed as a place of relative stability due to its temperate weather and access to fresh water. These

trends could influence future population movement. This session examines what these shifts could mean through the lens of planning and zoning. Participants will learn about emerging migration trends and how they might translate into changes in housing demand, land use intensity, and development patterns. The session will explore how communities can be proactive in accommodating and thoughtfully managing growth while supporting community character, infrastructure capacity, and long-term fiscal sustainability.

Speakers

Alexis Farrell-Rodriguez, Senior Planner, McKenna

Saj Elle McBurrows, Assistant Planner, McKenna

Presented by Business Alliance Program Participant McKenna

4-5:30 p.m.

Vendor Reception

Join us at the Vendor Reception! Convention attendees, organizations, and companies can mingle and create connections that benefit Michigan communities.