

Oakland mulls Milliken plan to curb sprawl

By TIM RICHARD

is marginal and may not warrant preserving.

"We're not inviting people to move in," Doherty went on. "People are moving our way because they want to."

County Executive Daniel Murphy liked the idea of state departments coordinating their policies, but he disputed one of Brickley's statements. "I disagree with him that building roads and sewer lines are modes for causing 'flight' from the cities," Murphy said.



LT. GOV. JAMES BRICKLEY
'A forum' to stop sprawl

Some local officials from Oakland County are applauding, and others are scratching their heads in puzzlement at the Milliken administration's announcement it will set up "Community Development Cabinet" to halt "urban sprawl."

The problem is that one community's "sprawl" may be another community's "growth."

Lt. Gov. James Brickley, who will chair the cabinet, last week outlined its goals to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments. While everyone heard the same words, there was little agreement on what Brickley's words meant.

The Community Development Cabinet will consist of heads of such departments as Social Services, Labor, Commerce, Treasury, Management and Budget and the State Housing Development Authority. "It is a forum for state administrative heads to discuss issues which affect local units of government and coordinate their policies," Brickley said.

"NICE," said Troy Councilman Randall Hask, "but what are they going to do? Who are they going to do it for? And who are they going to do it to?"

"What does he mean by 'sprawl'?" wondered John Doherty, supervisor of West Bloomfield Township, one of the fastest growing communities in the seven-county region. "Some farmland

Lathrup Village Mayor Richard Cogger praised the cabinet as a method of "getting cooperation between state agencies and local units." Cogger cited local governments' dissatisfaction with the state Department of Natural Resources' air quality plan, saying DNR failed to gauge local sentiment.

County Commissioner Robert Page, R-Birmingham, said Gov. Milliken was using Brickley properly to chair the cabinet and agreed with Cogger that it could result in better state-local cooperation.

BRICKLEY CITED two kinds of "sprawl" — one that eats up farms and wetlands, and another that results in duplication of local government services and wastage of its energies.

"We cannot turn in our communities like last year's (car) model," Brickley said. After saying his cabinet would attempt to coordinate state policies between department departments, Brickley said:

"Let's look at some examples of governmental policies which seem to conflict with our philosophical goals."

"For years, federal policy encouraged expansion of the freeways from urban to suburban and rural communities, provided relatively low-interest mortgage money, and subsidized sewer and water services. These policies contributed to the flight from the cities."

"Governmental policies, in fact, are responsible for much of the urban sprawl we now face."

"Does the state's transportation program or sewer funding grant requirements promote new development? Do we need to revise our zoning laws, the Subdivision Control Act, the Plat Act?"

BRICKLEY PROMISED "a close working relationship with elected officials" and asked their help "in framing agenda items and developing policy recommendations to the governor."

Brickley is a former Detroit councilman who strongly promoted the establishment of SEMCOG, a voluntary planning agency for the seven-county region. He is a champion of regional cooperation and popular among SEMCOG board members.

In an interview, Brickley said the Community Development Cabinet would not become a "super-SEMCOG." Rather it would discuss such problems as Wayne County reorganization, that is, which services the county provides that should be provided by the state.

Would a problem such as finding an alternative to the cancelled M-275 freeway in western Oakland County be on his agenda? Brickley said how to find an alternative to the freeway might be discussed, but not what the alternative would be.

Typical questions: "Should we establish an urban think tank? Should we commission studies on urban development? Should we require an urban impact statement or a community development impact statement on state projects?"

That's just off the top of my head," Brickley said.

THE NEWEST member of Brickley's cabinet was announced by Gov. Milliken this week. He is James W. Jordan Jr., executive assistant for urban affairs and director of the governor's Detroit office.

Jordan, 29, is a graduate of Detroit Mackenzie High School with degrees from Wayne State University and Oakland University (in clinical psychology). He has been on Milliken's Lansing staff since 1977 as a program specialist in mental health.

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