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**EMBARGOED for March 14**

**Major, New Direction on Sustainability for Region's Municipalities**  
*Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Launches Greenest Region Compact*

**CHICAGO (March 14, 2016)** – Chicago-area cities and towns can expand and strengthen their efforts to protect the environment through an unprecedented compilation of consensus municipal goals and supportive resources. The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, with 273 members throughout Chicagoland, has launched the Greenest Region Compact 2. This new and exhaustive sustainability guide is expected to coordinate community efforts across the region resulting in superior quality of life and economic vitality for decades to come.

“The compact unifies action toward consensus sustainability goals and supports the mayors’ role as leaders in environmental stewardship,” says Franklin Park Mayor Barrett Pedersen. “It will pull together very practical, innovative ideas that are accessible to all communities, even those that are just beginning to address sustainability,” adds Pedersen, who co-chairs the caucus’s environment committee.

The committee compiled 30 local and nine regional or national sustainability plans, extracted their common elements and refined 49 consensus goals to create the compact. They fall into ten categories: climate, economic development, energy, land use, leadership, mobility, municipal operation, sustainable communities, waste and water.

The compact also provides a detailed framework of possible objectives and strategies from which a municipality can create a plan tailored to its needs.

“The synthesis of nearly 40 plans captures the collective wisdom and efforts of the residents, leaders, and sustainability professionals who created them,” says Park Forest Mayor John Ostenburg, also a committee co-chair.

The mayors caucus is challenging its membership to pledge support for the compact’s goals, and seeks to connect cities with resources to achieve those goals by creating a companion

Sustainability Network to guide implementation and help localities navigate complex policies and options.

The compact also aims to connect the dots between local action to protect the environment and state and national priorities. Here are two examples:

Towns can use green infrastructure – including bioswales, tree planting or permeable pavers – to mitigate flooding, a persistent problem for many communities. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers assistance and grants for these sustainable strategies. In addition, for towns that do advance planning to mitigate floods, FEMA offers a certification system that ultimately could provide homeowners a discount on their flood insurance.

The compact suggests these under-utilized FEMA programs as a practical solution to solve flooding problems in an environmentally-friendly way. The mitigation can save money, lives, and property – a win for all.

Congress recently extended a federal Investment Tax Credit that can significantly reduce costs of building and operating solar energy systems. Solar power generated by new systems can help Illinois meet targets in the Renewable Portfolio Standard. Linking clean energy programs, policies and local action can create jobs and bring clean solar energy to power public facilities.

The compact can produce regional clout on environmental issues by unifying behind common goals. For example, a current dearth of compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling stations limits the growth of green fleets. But more municipalities expressing support for green fleets, potentially will drive more private development to create additional (CNG) fueling stations. As capacity for these green fleets grows, the region will be able to report greater reduction in petroleum fuel consumption, a goal of the federal Department of Energy-supported Clean Cities Coalitions.

While the mayors caucus is still compiling resources to assist municipalities, it expects more than 100 cities or towns within the region to adopt the pledge. The caucus gratefully acknowledges Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust for its financial support of the Greenest Region Compact 2.

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#### **About the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus**

*The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus is a membership organization of the Chicago region's 273 cities, towns and villages. Founded in 1997 by then Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and leading mayors from nine suburban municipal groups, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus pushes past geographical boundaries and local interests to work on public policy issues. The caucus provides a forum for metropolitan Chicago's chief elected officials to collaborate on common problems and work toward a common goal of improving the quality of life for the millions of people who call the region home.*