A NEW BEGINNING ON THE HORIZON FOR OHIO
The past decade has seen considerable progress as job growth has remained steady and communities across the state have experienced promising comebacks. Yet, cities and towns across the Buckeye state continue to struggle to find sites for new businesses and employees, and many of Ohio’s businesses are desperate to connect workers to job opportunities. Communities big and small are looking to enhance their quality of life for their citizens. These challenges threaten to obstruct the advancements that have been made across Ohio.

The mission of the Greater Ohio Policy Center is to champion revitalization and sustainable growth. We believe Ohio deserves robust, effective policies and practices that reinvigorate communities, strengthen regional cooperation, and preserve open spaces and farmland.

What follows are recommendations for Ohio’s next statewide leaders and legislative policymakers for building on Ohio’s recent success by recognizing potential, leveraging momentum, connecting people to places, and reviving our most important assets to ensure a Greater Ohio.

Pragmatic policies for a brighter future

INCREASE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOB GROWTH AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT BY REDEVELOPING BROWNFIELDS

BETTER CONNECT WORKERS TO JOBS BY INNOVATING OHIO’S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

BOLSTER ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS BY ENSURING COMMUNITIES HAVE THE MEANS TO ENGINEER LONG-TERM PROSPERITY

READ THE DETAILED POLICY PLATFORM AT www.greaterohio.org/policyplatform

Greater Ohio Policy Center—2018 Policy Platform
Brownfields are former industrial or commercial sites where future use is affected by environmental contamination. There are as many brownfields as there are fast food restaurants in Ohio, and these 9,000 sites are found in every county in the state.

Ohio has the potential to bring in millions of dollars in additional investment, job growth, and foster economic development through the continued investment in brownfield redevelopment. These blighted properties are unusable for development in their current condition and create barriers to economic growth.

It can cost $15,000 to $35,000 to remediate one brownfield acre. Current state programs often target specific site types or only offer loans, both of which can limit redevelopment possibilities.

Under a former brownfields program in Ohio—Clean Ohio—every $1 invested by the state, generated at least $4.67 in new economic activity.

An investment strategy that is flexible and complements existing state and federal programs will help to unlock this land for new industrial, commercial, mixed-use and residential opportunities.

Policy Recommendations

STREAMLINE OHIO EPA’S VOLUNTARY ACTION PROGRAM (VAP) by providing options in addition to the covenant not to sue. Making regulatory reforms that provide legal assurances from the state to prospective landowners and real estate developers who did not contaminate a site under consideration.

ESTABLISH “CLEAN OHIO 2.0”, a program for brownfield clean-up and revitalization and that is designed for long-term stability. With funding of $25 million annually, this funding would complement and enhance current brownfield programs focused on industrial expansion.

Clean Ohio Success Story: Once known for its production of the Jeep Wrangler before closing in 2006, the Overland Industrial Park was redeveloped by the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority through two Clean Ohio grants. In May 2016 Dana Corporation announced it would open a high-tech axle manufacturing plant on site, with approximately $70 million of investment and creating 300 jobs by 2020.

Learn more about brownfields at www.greaterohio.org/redeveloping-brownfields
Ohio is a diverse state, requiring a range of transportation options that connect workers to jobs and residents to services. Public transit can serve as that vital link, but, currently, the small amount of state investment in Ohio’s transit systems hinders efforts to expand or even provide transit service. To ensure Ohio’s communities are as attractive as possible to businesses, and rural areas are as safe as possible, public transportation is an effective, cost-efficient, solution.

Transit is just one component of a fully invested, diverse transportation network. A statewide Active Transportation Policy, otherwise known as Complete Streets, would facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services and would match appropriate context-sensitive design guidelines to rural, urban, and suburban roadways. Safe roads not only protect all roadway users, including drivers, but also save money by avoiding collision and injury costs.

Policy Recommendations

ESTABLISH A DEDICATED FUNDING SOURCE FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, derived either from new or existing revenue sources, that provides $30 million per year to ensure workers connect to jobs and Ohio’s vulnerable populations have access to safe, reliable transportation options. 25 states, along with the District of Columbia currently dedicate specific funding for public transportation.

ADOPT A STATEWIDE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION POLICY that ensures the state’s roadways can safely accommodate all types of users and is sensitive to local context, facilitating the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services. 33 states currently have implemented an Active Transportation policy through agency policy or legislation.

- 19 Ohio cities or multi-county metropolitan planning organizations have adopted AT policies, resulting in a patchwork of policies around the state.

Fueling Innovation in Transit

Greater Ohio Policy Center, in consultation with advocates and interested parties, has developed recommended funding to provide public transit with the needed funding to innovate and modernize public transit systems, fund capital improvements and system operations.

Learn more at www.greaterohio.org/fueling-transit

Learn more about transportation at www.greaterohio.org/transportation-innovation
CREATE PLACES WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO WORK AND LIVE

Ohio’s legacy cities—older, industrial urban areas that have experienced significant population and job loss—were the engines of prosperity for decades, and they remain important contributors of new economic activity. Ohio’s metropolitan economies generate over 85% of the state’s GDP and our cities are the engines for that economic output. Their impact on the state’s prosperity as a whole is sizeable—as are the struggles affecting them and the people who live there and in other older, legacy communities.

Ohio can assist local communities that are striving to reinvest through the creation of new initiatives and support for best practice innovations that bolster the state’s economic competitiveness.

Ohio’s legacy cities have long histories of hard work and innovation that made them hubs of middle class prosperity. As the economy reorients away from their traditional industries, these communities are transitioning to be fully competitive in order to provide opportunities for their residents to thrive.

The challenge is clear: Ohio’s legacy communities need support and investment as they reorient to be competitive in today’s economy. Ohio’s legacy cities and towns must reinvent themselves—by building on their past, these communities can find new opportunities to thrive in the future. Local leaders have the will to succeed and remain committed to their communities revitalization and stabilization, but supportive state policy will be necessary to realize these places full potential.

Bolster Ohio’s Economic Competitiveness by Ensuring Communities have the tools they need to Engineer Long-Term Prosperity

Communities big and small provide Ohio with a unique quality of life that cannot be found anywhere else. Capitalize on these assets by investing in their success.

Learn more at www.greaterohio.org/reinvention-cities/

Policy Recommendations

EXPAND THE SCOPE OF JOBSOHIO by bringing to bear its incredible tools—such as its strong marketing platform, the ability to coordinate across state agencies to fast-track projects through regulations, and access to incentive-packages—on a broader range of investments that support community development and “placemaking” as economic development tools.

INCENTIVIZE PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION that can create new opportunities for housing and business development in underserved markets, workforce training programs that ensure workers have the right set of skills for available local jobs, and small business development support, particularly for underrepresented entrepreneurs, that can create jobs and local wealth.
ABOUT GREATER OHIO POLICY CENTER
The Greater Ohio Policy Center was incorporated as a 501(c)3 in 2007. GOPC is primarily foundation-funded; a small portion of its budget comes from private sector supporters and fee-for-service work. GOPC has a bipartisan staff and board and proudly advances policy recommendations that are non-partisan and data-driven.

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