



Local Candidate's Briefing Book



How to Create Smart Cities

Fall 2007



Greater Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization promoting—through research, public education and grassroots advocacy—public policy to grow our economy and improve our quality of life through intelligent land use.

Greater Ohio works to promote redevelopment of existing communities, strengthen regional cooperation, and protect the countryside and Ohio’s natural resources.

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Preface for the candidates (and citizens too!)

Do you want to win?

Are you worried that if you do win—what specific policies should you implement?

Read this and find out how to create a smart city.

We encourage you to read about these issues and understand the commitments to our policy solutions. Many people think these are in the best interest of Ohio's many diverse localities, and we know you are running for office to improve your community.

Do these issues resonate? The program ideas outlined in this briefing book includes changes the voters are looking for and your community needs—changes that will bring the smart (i.e. quality) growth and development Ohio needs to become great once again.

We've previously published Briefing Books, but this is our first locally oriented one, and we think it is going to be your playbook for victory. Don't just take our word for it though. Last year's edition was hailed in an op-ed by a senior editor of *The Columbus Dispatch*, stating that "Greater Ohio's playbook lays out coherent plans for smart land use and energy independence, livable cities and towns, preserving farmland, ending schools' reliance on local property taxes and restoring Lake Erie."¹

You and your staff may wish to review the book carefully and seek out Greater Ohio staff for clarification and additional information. All facts have supporting footnotes in the back of the booklet for your convenience. Hard copies of footnoted materials are available on request.

With warmest regards,

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P.S. Greater Ohio does not endorse candidates for political office and will remain scrupulously nonpartisan in all political campaigns. We want all candidates to be informed about the challenges that face Ohio and the policies that can grow jobs.

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Introduction

Ohio's communities are facing critical issues, and citizens are demanding answers. Greater Ohio, with the help of many partners, has developed this briefing book to help candidates and citizens think about the root causes which are keeping Ohio's cities from becoming smart cities. The policies proposed later in this book are our ideas on how to overcome these obstacles. We hope that this will be the beginning of an on-going relationship with you about how to return your city and the great state of Ohio to a prominent place in the United States.

Decades of haphazard growth and development throughout Ohio have contributed to numerous negative consequences for state and local economies, its people, and its future, including:

- Little or no economic growth
- Dwindling local tax bases
- Increased cost burdens on taxpayers and local governments for duplicative public services and new infrastructure
- City centers drained of people and jobs
- Reduced economic competitiveness

These consequences themselves produce a cascade of additional negative impacts. For instance, a dwindling local tax base may cause local jurisdictions to resort to their eminent domain powers in order to intervene and change land-use patterns to promote economic development. A weak local tax base also means less money for schools and other public services. Empty city centers caused by development outside the city are less attractive to young, educated workers who want to live in a culturally and economically thriving environment. This contributes to the "brain drain" from the state and declining property values, and it further weakens cities' economic competitiveness.

As metropolitan regions spread out, the new development at the edges requires new infrastructure that imposes costs on taxpayers and on local governments (especially burdensome if the region as a whole isn't growing much). Meanwhile, older infrastructure must be maintained. Older communities—with their beautiful brick roadways, historic buildings, and walkable neighborhoods—decline.

Smart growth is an alternative to urban sprawl, traffic congestion, urban decay and disconnected neighborhoods. A smart city is one whose children live a healthy, secure life walking to and from school and spend time with their parents, siblings, and other neighborhood families. By implementing our ideas on smart growth, your city or town can expand the range of transportation, employment and housing choices; promote public health; and create that unique sense of community and place that once made Ohio and its local communities great. Do you live in a smart city? If not, would you like to? Read this and stay in touch.

Executive Summary

In this briefing book, Greater Ohio identifies causes for Ohio's decline and winning programs to pull Ohio's cities and towns out of the cycle of decline. We believe that our state as a whole will have a more prosperous economy and offer a higher quality of life if we can begin to redevelop existing cities and towns into smart ones.

Our policy recommendations are designed to fit within Ohio's traditions of local control and property rights. If adopted, this package of policies would put our state as a whole in the forefront of states that are planning wisely for the future.

...we need to construct walkable communities where people spend their money close to where they live, so that their communities' services benefit from the taxes paid. When people walk to local retail shops, they also limit gasoline consumption and enjoy the health benefits of physical exertion.

These strategies are interconnected, as are the problems. For instance, we need to construct walkable communities where people spend their money close to where they live, so that their communities' services benefit from the taxes paid. When people walk to local retail shops, they also limit gasoline consumption and enjoy the health benefits of physical exertion. And the regeneration of cities and towns then helps preserve farmland, which provides substantial economic value for food and energy production. The proposed strategies contribute to increased neighborhood walkability.

(Thanks to the advances of the internet, the website Walk Score™, located online at <http://www.walkscore.com> allows users to input addresses, and it will give results of the area's "walkability," by cross referencing the address with the businesses (i.e. grocery stores, restaurants, etc.) in the area.) If you wish to attract people, you need to take the steps to make your community more walkable.

We are fortunate in Ohio because we have many older cities and towns that are worth preserving and already have walkable town centers. They already have the potential to act as growth centers that promote economic vitality. We do not have to create communities from scratch that displace productive farmland and invade the natural landscape. Recognizing the value of these existing communities and shaping policies that direct funds to reconstruct and revitalize them, rather than spending dollars on new developments that impose costs on taxpayers and have none of the assets or "spin off" benefits, is our challenge.

Constituencies for smarter growth

These land-use and economic issues form a suite of interconnected issues that resonate with a wide range of constituencies. Polling indicates that these issues are on the minds of local voters. Indeed, there is a growing hunger for reforms that can result in smart cities.

In Ohio, there is now an opportunity for local candidates to show real leadership and address real problems by advancing a smart growth vision that will lead to smart cities:

- City residents will respond to ideas for neighborhood reinvestment and brownfield reclamation.
- Residents of inner-ring suburbs will appreciate ideas for supporting redevelopment and maintaining tax base.
- Exurban residents will like ideas for managing growth, preserving rural character, and reducing traffic congestion.
- Rural residents will respond to ideas for restoring the vitality of Main Streets in small towns and supporting a healthy farm economy.
- Business leaders will respond to ideas for investing in great cities and walkable neighborhoods that can attract a highly educated workforce and stimulate innovation.²
- Environmental advocates will like ideas for supporting well planned development that provides transportation choices and preserves water quality and natural areas.
- Health advocates will support transportation alternatives such as rail, transit, biking, and walking—alternatives that promote physical activity and improve air quality.³
- Developers will like ideas to make the development process faster and more predictable.

Ohio voters want to hear a positive vision for what the state can do to enhance quality of life and get the state moving again. Moreover, the media are interested in these issues, so discussing them in public forums provides a good opportunity for earned media coverage. You want to get elected and are seeking to promote issues that will resonate with voters. Here are the issues and solutions you are seeking to make Ohio great again.

Ohio in the age of unraveling: Why nothing is working here

Ohio's economic decline is clear: it is reflected in the economic and social well-being data, in changing land use patterns, and in the decreases in general population and in numbers of young professionals moving to the state. Embracing smart growth is important not only for your city's future quality of life, economic and social well-being, but our state's as well. Consider the following Ohio statistics:

- An estimated 12.3% of Ohio's population was considered poor in 2005.⁴
- Ohioans on Medicaid went up 45% from 1998 to 2002⁵
- Ohioans receiving food stamps climbed 29%⁶

In other areas, Ohio has also been on a decline. The state recently:

- Ranked 4th in the nation for unemployment files claimed⁷
- Ranked 49th in economic momentum (at least we beat Michigan!)⁸
- Ranked 45th in economic growth⁹
- Had an unemployment rate of 5.5% in 2006, higher than the U.S. rate of 4.6%¹⁰
- Received a grade of "C" in quality of life¹¹
- Ranked in the top 10 in mortgage foreclosures¹²
- Ranked sixth in the nation in number of people leaving the state¹³
- Suffered a net job loss of 160,362, including 75,733 in Cuyahoga County alone, during a five-year period¹⁴

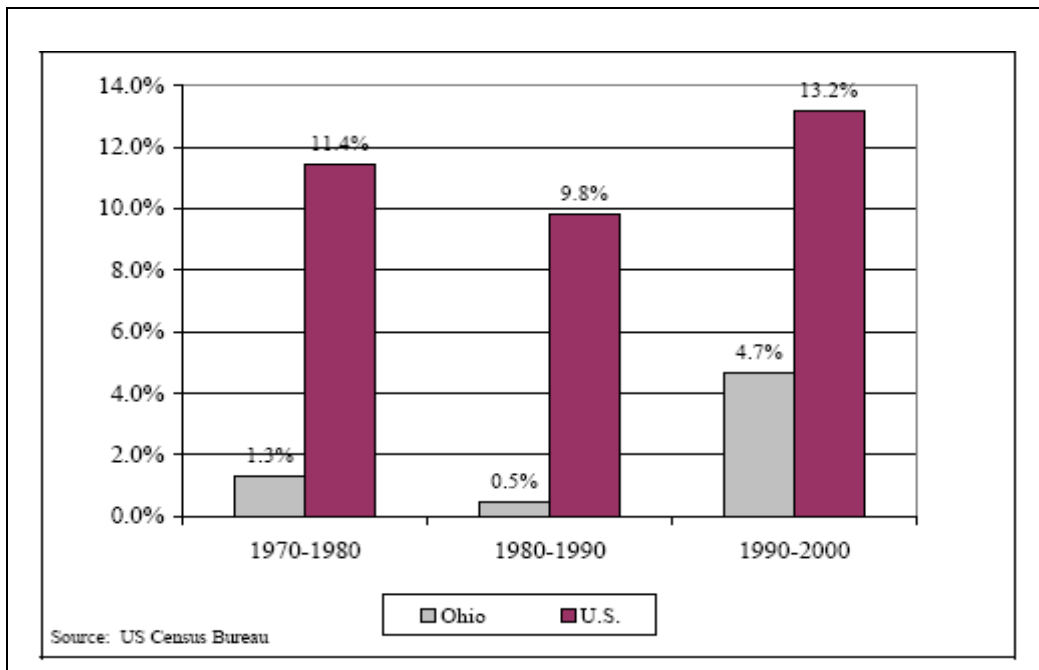
This decline cannot be blamed on cold weather. Minneapolis-St. Paul is amongst the most educated regions in America.¹⁵ Minnesota will grow by 11% with 73% of the growth in the Minneapolis region by 2010.¹⁶

"Creative people...don't just cluster where the jobs are. They cluster in places that are centers of creativity..."¹⁷

New estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau for July 2005 show Ohio grew by fewer than 14,000 people during the previous 12-month period, or 0.12%.²¹

Many of the educated, creative young people who are keys to economic growth just aren't coming here. "Creative people... don't just cluster where the jobs are. They cluster in places that are centers of creativity..." observes expert on workforce development.¹⁸ They like compact development in mixed-use communities and choose to live wherever there is good hiking, bicycling, walkable streets with fine restaurants, and coffee houses with Internet access.¹⁹ In other words, they like smart cities. Ohio, on the other hand, will see less than 1.7% population increase by 2010, which is consistent with our recent past.²⁰ New estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau for July 2005 show Ohio grew by fewer than 14,000 people during the previous 12-month period, or 0.12%.²¹ See the chart below for historic patterns.

Table 1²²



Ohio still seems more focused on 1950s-style “smokestack chasing” than strategic marketing of our strengths in pursuit of sustainable economic activity. Ohio used to lead the nation in home-grown talent. Now our development institutions act as real estate agents for large multi-national companies looking for tax-free homes. Yet even the elimination of business taxes won’t solve our problems. We have tried that with enterprise zones—which are tantamount to tax-free zones—and we hand them out like candy here. They have proliferated around the state, even to entice a company to move across the road from one political jurisdiction to another. Used like that, “tax-free zones” are a poor substitute for creating jobs or growing jobs in Ohio.

Ohio used to lead the nation in home-grown talent. Now our development institutions act as real estate agents for large multi-national companies looking for tax-free homes.

Are successful states low-tax states? Surprisingly, the link is weak between state tax burdens and economic development. Minnesota is ranked as business unfriendly by the small business survival index (47th), is ranked near the bottom (48th) by the state business climate index, only 27th by Cato Fiscal Policy Report Card, and 44th by The Economic Freedom Index.²³ It’s amazing that they have any growth or business at all, yet the Gopher State is beating us hands down in two big categories that drive future economic development—population growth and attracting educated people. As a result, Minnesota is ranked 9th in personal income per capita, remarkable for a state with no ocean.

Ohio's troubles rooted in land-use patterns

A study released in July of 2007 by Greater Ohio illustrates that we Buckeyes no longer live where we work, live where we shop, or even shop where we work. The implication is that some communities have less tax base from which to collect and thus less money to spend on public services, infrastructure, schools, and other local resident and homeowner needs. To meet those needs the taxes then go up. Remember, the best city or school district in which to live in Ohio is one full of outlet malls, industrial parks, where you own the only house; therefore your tax obligation is minimal, and your kids get the best education money can buy. The worse city or school district to live in is the bedroom community with no commercial activity. This latter scenario just described over half of the cities and school districts in Ohio didn't it? Is that smart?

On average a school district gets about 20% of its tax base from commercial/industrial uses. If all districts, with help of the Ohio Department of Development, could work toward reaching that 20% average, it would be a way of solving school funding. Fixing school funding requires a new state formula, but it equally requires a sea of change in approaching the solution in an indirect manner—making sure every school district is able to maintain a healthy local tax base. Instead, there is a rush for large, regional retail centers that bleed tax dollars from many cities and small towns.

This rush for retail is causing communities to offer ever-expanding incentives to attract large stores. In Ohio, we offer tax increment financing to everything that moves and provide tax abatements for everything that threatens to move, thus further depleting the local public coffers. Yet all this churning is producing empty stores and wasted resources.

The chart below (Table 2) demonstrates the incongruity of our lifestyles and the implications for our quality of life. It shows an analysis done for Greater Ohio of sales tax disparities in Ohio, and it has a simple statistical premise: if everyone who lived in a particular county shopped in that county, and no one from outside the county ever came in to shop, and no resident ever left to purchase anything, the county receives a value of "1." The number is normed for inflation and income. For instance, just over a quarter of the retail activity of Adams County residents occurs outside their county boundaries, so Adams County receives an index of 0.72.

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Trees

Trees increase property values and improve the tax base in communities

Trees improve neighborhood appeal, attracting business, shoppers and homeowners

Trees reduce the amount of pollutants in sewer systems, saving communities millions of dollars in water treatment costs.

Trees reduce levels of domestic violence and foster safer, more sociable neighborhood environments

The reason the Ohio school funding lawsuit was filed in Perry County is also made clear by these numbers. Half of the retail activity for Perry County residents occurs outside their jurisdiction, thus robbing their county of revenues through sales taxes. The schools lose commercial property taxes, and the municipalities lose income taxes. ²⁵

Also notice the changes that occur over time. Polaris Mall opens and Delaware County's index doubles while Franklin County's declines.

Please feel free to use this data to help personalize and regionalize your talks for each audience.

Table 2²⁶

1992 & 2005 SALES TAX COLLECTION RATIOS FOR OHIO COUNTIES, ADJUSTED FOR COUNTY POPULATION, PER CAPITA INCOME, AND COUNTY SALES TAX RATE								
	1992	2005		1992	2005		1992	2005
Adams	0.79	0.72	Hamilton	1.33	1.17	Muskingum	1.04	1.04
Allen	1.22	1.26	Hancock	1.29	1.32	Noble	0.54	0.52
Ashland	0.81	0.87	Hardin	0.68	0.65	Ottawa	0.99	1.00
Ashtabula	0.82	0.81	Harrison	0.52	0.57	Paulding	0.53	0.52
Athens	0.81	0.76	Henry	0.76	0.69	Perry	0.50	0.51
Auglaize	0.82	0.81	Highland	0.77	0.73	Pickaway	0.78	0.65
Belmont	1.12	1.11	Hocking	0.58	0.72	Pike	0.89	0.81
Brown	0.55	0.56	Holmes	1.06	1.08	Portage	0.71	0.78
Butler	--	0.90	Huron	0.80	0.80	Preble	0.60	0.65
Carroll	0.62	0.58	Jackson	0.86	0.89	Putnam	0.66	0.67
Champaign	0.68	0.68	Jefferson	0.87	0.84	Richland	1.14	1.17
Clark	0.87	0.77	Knox	0.80	0.84	Ross	0.96	0.91
Clermont	1.01	0.91	Lake	1.17	1.09	Sandusky	0.82	0.88
Clinton	0.91	1.01	Lawrence	0.75	0.65	Scioto	0.83	0.73
Columbiana	0.72	0.75	Licking	0.94	0.94	Seneca	0.77	0.73
Coshocton	0.74	0.72	Logan	0.96	0.96	Shelby	0.87	0.93
Crawford	0.71	0.72	Lorain	0.96	0.87	Stark	1.09	1.05
Cuyahoga	1.02	1.01	Lucas	1.09	1.10	Summit	1.17	1.07
Darke	0.77	0.77	Madison	0.64	0.69	Trumbull	--	0.84
Defiance	0.95	1.03	Mahoning	1.00	1.09	Tuscarawas	1.01	0.94
Delaware	0.68	1.25	Marion	0.94	0.91	Union	1.00	1.33
Erie	1.33	1.30	Medina	0.96	0.91	Van Wert	0.76	0.74
Fairfield	0.94	0.90	Meigs	0.66	0.49	Vinton	0.49	0.40
Fayette	0.92	1.34	Mercer	0.89	0.77	Warren	0.93	1.02
Franklin	1.41	1.18	Miami	0.95	0.89	Washington	0.97	0.90
Fulton	0.80	0.83	Monroe	0.78	0.55	Wayne	0.86	0.90
Gallia	0.92	0.89	Montgomery	1.14	1.04	Williams	0.86	0.72
Geauga	0.75	0.84	Morgan	0.60	0.50	Wood	0.94	1.05
Greene	0.77	1.07	Morrow	0.49	0.50	Wyandot	0.67	0.71
Guernsey	0.88	0.90						

Sales tax disparities in Ohio counties: Note that for 2005, 29 counties have sales tax capture below 75% including the following: Adams, Brown, Carroll, Champaign, Coshocton, Crawford, Hardin, Harrison, Henry, Highland, Hocking, Madison, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Morrow, Noble, Paulding, Perry, Pickaway, Preble, Putnam, Scioto, Seneca, Van Wert, Vinton, Williams, and Wyandot.

Also, 11 of these counties (Brown, Carroll, Harrison, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Morrow, Noble, Paulding, Perry, and Vinton) are below 60%. That means at least two of every five dollars of tax revenue is lost to the county. Some counties have no data in certain years because they did not have the local option sales tax in that year.

Ohio is losing its young population and not attracting young professionals

Cities must be attractive to educated people in order to be economically competitive. As Ohio University professor, Richard Vedder observes, “Cities with few college graduates have a hard time generating good-paying jobs. That, in turn, makes it hard to attract more college graduates... Society is paying people more for their brains than for their brawn.”²⁷

According to Cleveland State University professor Ned Hill, “The largest predictor of economic well-being in cities is the percent of college graduates.”²⁸

Where do members of the “young and restless” educated class want to locate? They tend to live in cool diverse communities close to the city center. According to one national study, “One of the most striking findings of research is that today’s young adults are much more likely to choose to live in close-in urban neighborhoods than were young adults 10 to 20 years ago. Today’s 25 to 34 year olds are about one third more likely to live in neighborhoods within three miles of a region’s downtown than are other Americans. Close-in neighborhoods with higher density, mixed uses, walkable destinations, lively commercial districts, and interesting streets can make a region more competitive for talented workers...Those regions that lack vibrant, close-in, urban neighborhoods will be at a disadvantage in attracting and retaining talent.”²⁹

*The wealthiest 10% of the population provides nearly half of all the tax dollars for the country, and attracting them to Ohio and our communities is key.*²⁸

These well-educated voters are also supplying the tax base for public spending. The wealthiest 10% of the population provides nearly half of all the tax dollars for the country, and attracting them to Ohio and our communities is key.³⁰ “Over the last 25 years, the wages of the skilled have continued to grow faster than the wages of the less skilled...the wages of the college-educated have grown by 22% while the wages of high-school drop-outs has fallen by 3%.”³¹ If this wealthiest 10% leave, then that city can no longer support police and fire services, causing safety concerns and thusly more residents fleeing.

As recently recognized by Senator George Voinovich in his draft report on energy independence, “young professionals are particularly likely to relocate to such areas. These people are a ‘fast-growing, highly educated, and well-paid segment of the workforce on whose efforts corporate profits and economic growth increasingly depend. They do a wide variety of work in a wide variety of industries—from technology to entertainment, journalism to finance, high-end manufacturing to the arts.’³² The ‘creative class’ also represents the next generation of energy consumers: people who are willing to adopt new technologies, and savvy consumers who are interested in doing their part to reduce their individual energy footprint.”³³

One more thing about these young, educated people that should be of interest to political candidates: those who hold an advanced college degrees are far more likely to vote than those who do not. In the 2004, 84.2% of all advanced degree holders voted, compared to the national average of 63.8%.³⁴ They are willing to pay attention to politicians who pay attention to their issues!

Table 3 ³⁵

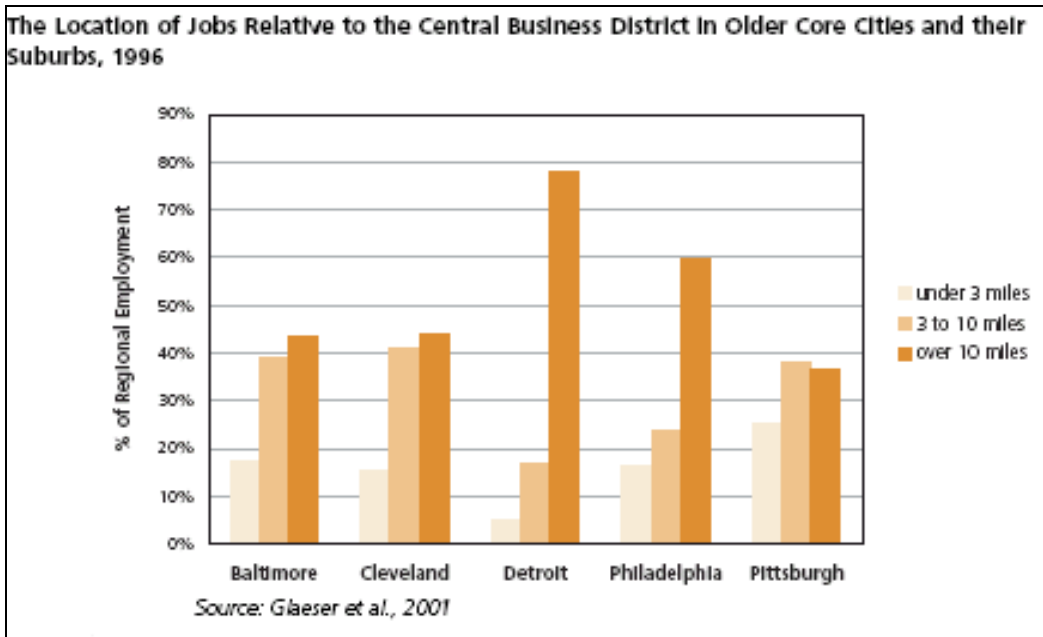


Table 4 ³⁶

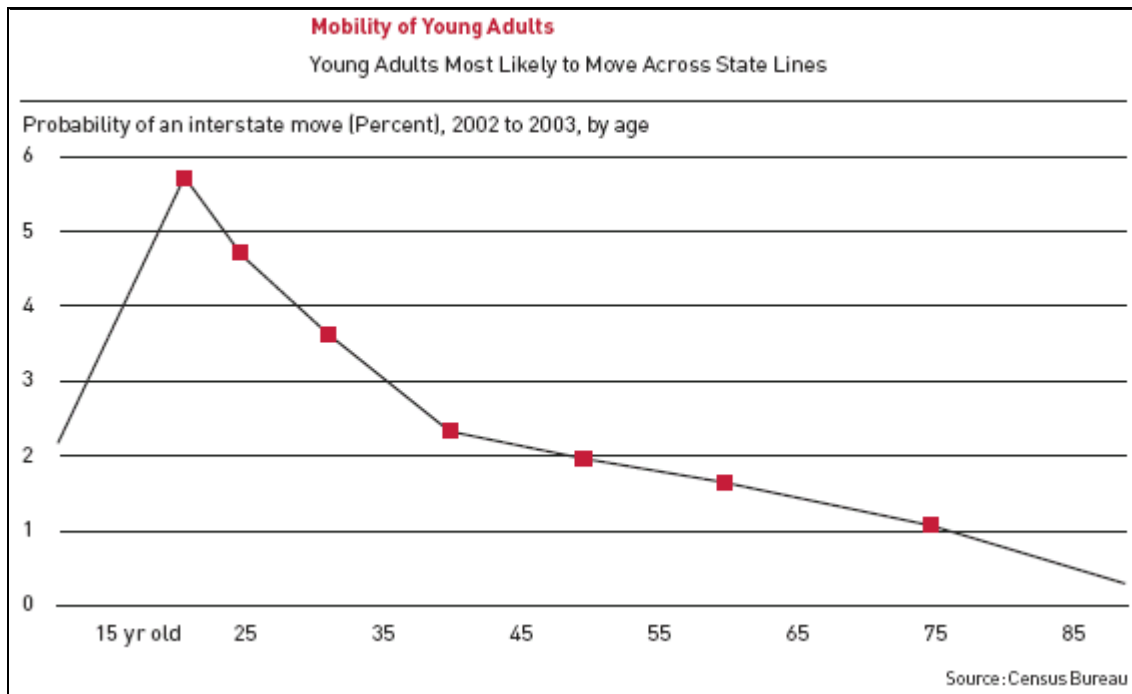


Table 4 shows how incredibly mobile young adults are but also shows how in later years "social inertia" can tie them to a particular commute-shed. Thus, if you can initially attract them to your community at a young age, you may be able to build up a comfort level that will keep them there as their industry develops.

Table 5³⁷

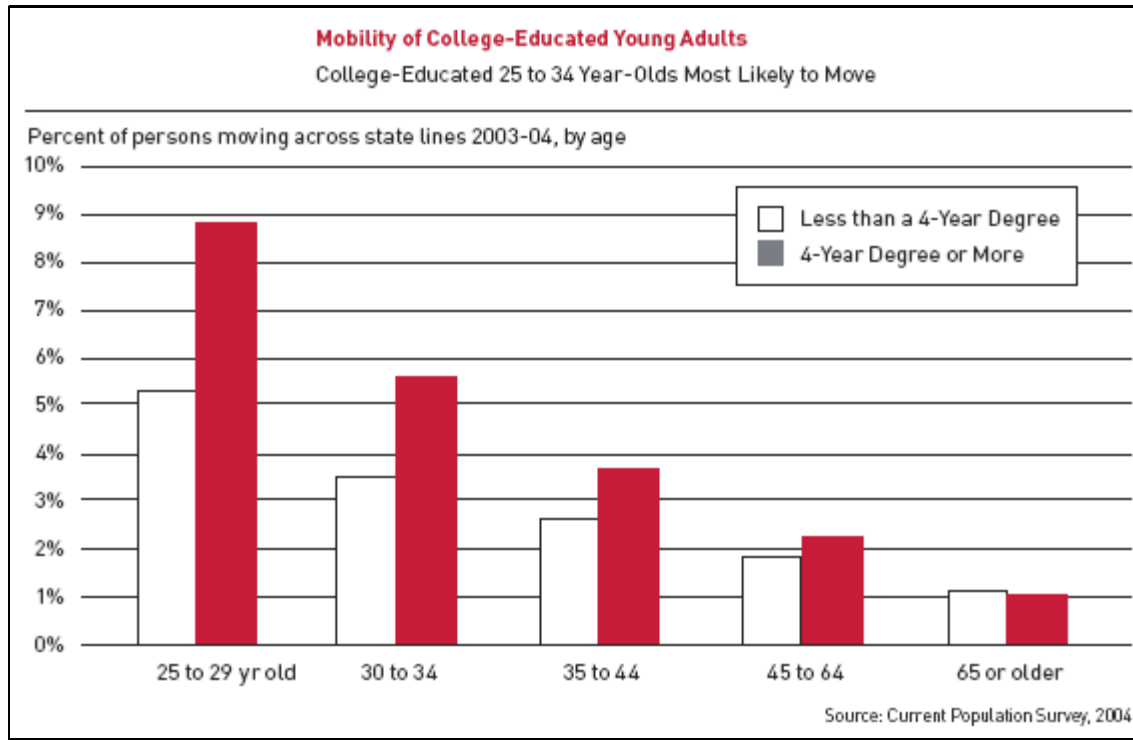


Table 5 illustrates how the “young and restless” are more likely to move if educated. Ohio’s problem is not with our kids moving out, but rather with a lack of others moving in.

Table 6³⁸

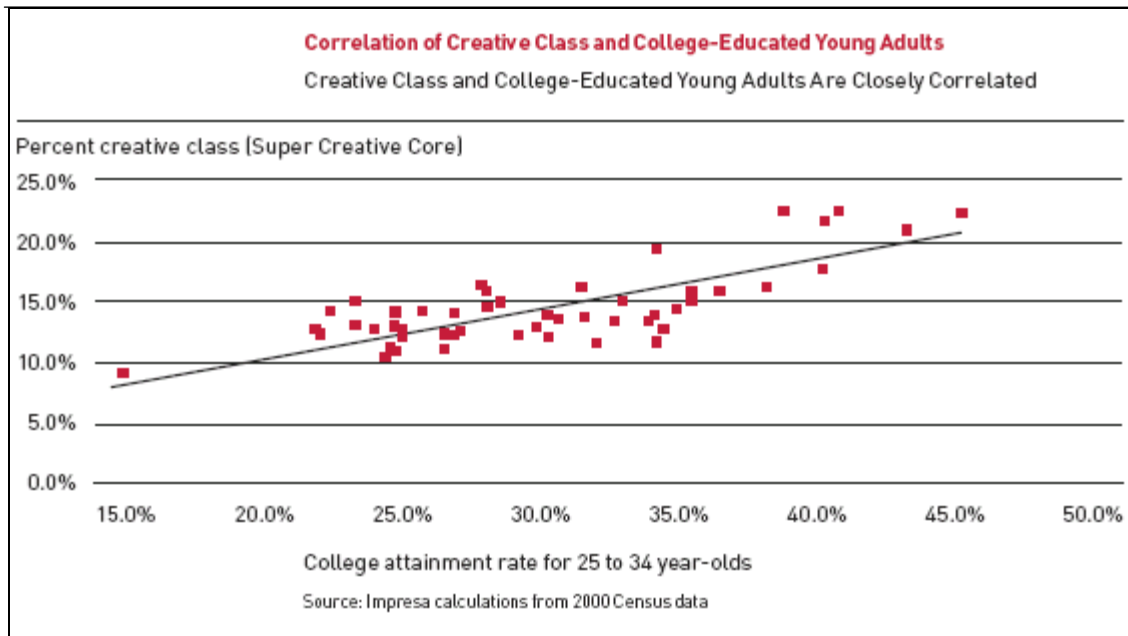


Table 6 shows the statistical correlation between the creative class and the young and restless.

Table 7 ³⁹

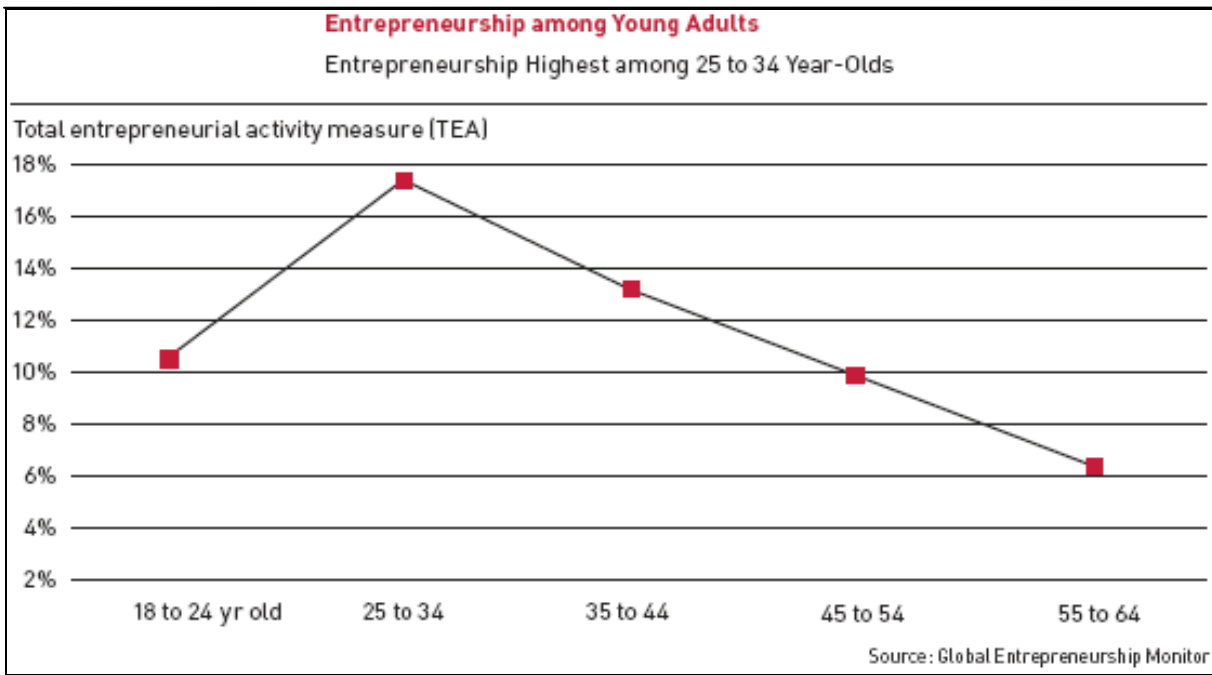


Table 7 shows the correlation between entrepreneurship and the young. It is interesting to note that the most explosive company developments are those from the young and restless. "A typical full-time worker in the U.S. with a four-year college degree earns about \$50,000—62% more than one with only a high-school diploma. The college-educated worker pays about 80% more in federal, state and local income taxes."⁴⁰

Winning Programs

On the following pages is a collection of ideas that will improve quality of life and long-term economic health of communities throughout Ohio. Here are a few examples of policies or programs that you may bring to your own community to address the challenges outlined previously. The format you see is as if the candidate were giving a speech to a local Rotary Club, a common venue for candidates. Each policy area starts with a **framing statement**, a short two or three sentence summation of the issue and proposed solutions. The next section, **policy framing and analysis**, is longer and more suitable for a longer speech or when the candidate is concentrating on this particular subject before a crowd. Finally, the section on **commitments and local contexts** explains what this policy would commit the candidate to do, so he or she is not surprised or trapped into supporting something that has overly broad implications.

Again, please note that Greater Ohio does not endorse candidates for office and will remain nonpartisan in all political campaigns. However, we want all candidates to be informed about

the serious challenges facing Ohio and the policies that can grow jobs and enhance quality of life in all communities. Contact us for a face-to-face meeting.

Reinvest in historic communities to attract young, college-educated workers and stimulate economic development to benefit all ages

Framing statement: If sprawl meant jobs, Ohio would have full employment—full employment for our children and grandchildren who flee Ohio because we have a lower quality of life and fewer attractions than other states. ⁴¹ We need to create the right environment to attract the “young and restless” and educated workers who lead economic innovation.

Policy framing and analysis: In the past six years in Ohio the percent of people living in poverty increased from 12% to 17%, our unemployment rate went up, the rate of Ohioans on Medicaid went up

Ten Things Wrong With Sprawl⁴²

1. Sprawl development contributes to a loss of support for public facilities and public amenities.
2. Sprawl undermines effective maintenance of existing infrastructure.
3. Sprawl increases societal costs for transportation.
4. Sprawl consumes more resources than other development patterns.
5. Sprawl separates urban poor people from jobs.
6. Sprawl imposes a tax on time by making certain amenities more remote and harder reach.
7. Sprawl degrades water and air quality.
8. Sprawl results in the permanent alteration or destruction of habitats.
9. Sprawl creates difficulty in maintaining community.
10. Sprawl offers the promise of choice while delivering more of the same.

45%, and the rate on food stamps rose 29%.⁴³ For the last two years *Governing Magazine* ranked Ohio 49th in economic momentum, we have now moved up to 47th, primarily due to Hurricane Katrina's impact on Louisiana. The only good news is we beat Michigan.⁴⁴ We have also been awarded a grade of "C" in quality of life.⁴⁵

One reason for this poor economic performance is Ohio's inability to attract and retain college-educated, creative people.⁴⁶ Increasingly, these young people are attracted to vibrant cities with livable, walkable, urban neighborhoods. An article entitled "The Young and the Restless in a Knowledge Economy" in *CEOs for Cities*, December 2005, noted:

Even within metropolitan areas, place appears to be playing an increasingly important role. During the 1990s, the preference of young adults for locations in close-in neighborhoods increased sharply. In 1990, 25- to 34-year-old adults were about 10% more likely than other residents in the metropolitan area to live in the close-in neighborhoods within three miles of the region's center. By 2000, young adults were more than 30% more likely than other metropolitan residents to live in these close-in neighborhoods. Between 1990 and 2000, the likelihood that young adults would choose to live in a close-in neighborhood increased in every one of the nation's 50 largest metropolitan areas.⁴⁷

Some studies have shown that commuting actually makes your constituents unhappy. Recently, the Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman and the economist Alan Krueger asked 900 women in Texas to rate their daily activities, according to how much they enjoyed them. Commuting came in last. The source of the unhappiness is not so much the commute itself as what it deprives people of. Every ten minutes of commuting results in ten percent fewer social connections. Therefore, commuting can be connected to social isolation, which causes unhappiness.⁴⁸ Do you want to have happy constituents?

Today's talented young people like cool cities that are full of renovated lofts, Victorian houses, and lots of brick...

If Harvey Firestone, Charles Brush, and John Patterson were alive today and graduating from Case Western, University of Cincinnati, the Ohio State University or another Ohio institution of higher education, would they choose to live in Ohio? Would we capture them and then rely on social inertia to keep them in our "commute-shed" as they spun off jobs? Today's talented young people like cool cities that are full of renovated lofts, Victorian houses, and lots of brick—places like the Warehouse District in Cleveland, the Short

North and Victorian Village in Columbus, and the now emerging area in downtown Cincinnati. They don't care about taxes (did you at age 23?), but they love places with demanding design standards.

Youth aren't the only ones who need attention though. Reinvesting to stimulate economic development can benefit Ohioans of all ages. With the baby boomer population aging, many elected officials are left wondering how to prepare to meet this group's increasing needs. If communities can adjust to this oncoming wave of seniors, then they can capitalize on it as well. One such way would be to look at new land-use plans and zoning codes that actually encourage

residences within easy walking and biking distance of such basic amenities as food markets, drug stores, cafes, banks and parks. This strategy is often coupled with another called a “walkability audit,” which identifies correctable barriers for seniors, such as short pedestrian crossing cycles and/or broken sidewalks.⁴⁹

Unfortunately, much of the development occurring in Ohio takes the form of low-density suburban sprawl rather than urban revitalization. Ohio ranks eighth in conversion of farmland to asphalt and rooftop, but we rank only 22nd in population growth.⁵⁰ This is out of balance. States with high levels of population growth have some reason to convert a lot of land. For instance, Texas ranked first in conversion of farmland, and second in population growth. Georgia ranks second and fourth. Florida is third in both categories, and California is fourth and first. See the pattern? At least we beat Pennsylvania in something; they are fifth in conversion of farmland and 26th in population growth.⁵¹ Sprawl is detrimentally affecting our fiscal capacity, because, for instance, roads and water and sewer lines cost are twice as much to build and maintain for houses on a 1-acre lot as compared to a 0.2-acre lot.⁵²

Ohio ranks eighth in conversion of farmland to asphalt and rooftop, but we rank only 22nd in population growth.⁵⁰

Slow the tide of vacant, tax-dead properties in Ohio

Framing statement: Ohio’s big cities and small towns are littered with tax-dead properties that generate little or no income for anyone, and instead collect weeds, abandoned cars, and old tires. These vacant and abandoned properties bring down nearby property values and eventually whole neighborhoods, attract criminal activity, act as fire hazards, and pose risks to our children. They afflict our country and cityscapes and appear as corroded teeth or gaping holes in a smile. Who wants to live in a community that presents an ugly face to the world?

Policy framing and analysis: Abandoned properties are proliferating in our cities and towns throughout the state. It is estimated that between 5% and 10% of our housing stock is now abandoned, vacant, or becoming an eyesore; and in some of our smaller Ohio Valley and old steel towns, the rate of vacant and problem properties is estimated to range between 10% and 20%, or double the state average. Additionally, the rate of abandonment is estimated to have increased dramatically in the decade between 1990 and 2000.⁵³ Finally, these vacancy numbers do not account for abandoned industrial and commercial properties.

Commitments and local contexts: To get vacant property back into productive use, a local strategy must be devised to help break the cycle of abandonment, and to improve policies for removing barriers to acquisition and redevelopment of residential, commercial and industrial land. An approach needs to consider the causes of abandonment: foreclosure, predatory lending, economic conditions, and urban outmigration.

Consideration also should be given to (but not limited to):

- Helping institute land banks in communities with an abandoned property rate of over 10% and ensure land bank powers are uniform from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

- Requiring property owners, including lenders, who have taken title to properties to record their deeds promptly and to take responsibility for taxes, maintenance, reuse or demolition.
- Mandating licensing criteria and bonding for real estate appraisers.
- Expediting foreclosure where tax liens burden a property.
- Helping local governments tighten code enforcement practices.
- Reforming building codes that deter re-use of old buildings.
- Creating additional financing mechanisms to help local communities meet the capital costs of redevelopment.

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Restore Main Streets to promote local economic activity for school districts

Framing statement: We no longer live where we work or shop and many communities do not have the economic activity necessary to sustain them. Downtown revitalization is crucial because we need to see income-tax paying businesses and residents filling the empty and underutilized areas in our cities and towns.

Policy framing and analysis: Ohio has witnessed an overall improvement of economic vitality in designated Ohio Main Street Communities. From January 1, 1998 through December 31, 2006, 44 communities had over \$315 million in public and private improvements while realizing a net increase of 382 new businesses and over 3,057 full-time equivalent jobs (see Table 8). Over 1,364 existing buildings have been rehabilitated, and 230 businesses have expanded within our existing downtown and neighborhood commercial districts.⁵⁴

The cumulative success of the Main Street Approach™ on the local level has earned these programs a reputation as one of the most powerful economic development tools in the nation.⁵⁵ In Ohio, the local Main Street programs have a reinvestment ratio of \$22.33 for every \$1 to operate the local program.⁵⁶

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Heritage Ohio Inc., Ohio's Main Street program coordinator, is dedicated to downtown revitalization and works toward assisting self-motivated communities of all sizes. Heritage Ohio provides technical assistance, training, and networking in all facets of downtown development to the local communities. Since 1977, the National Main Street Center has worked with communities across the nation to revitalize their historic or traditional commercial areas. Based on historic preservation, the Main Street Approach™ was developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to save historic commercial architecture and the fabric of American communities' built environment, but it has become a powerful economic development tool as well.⁵⁷

The Main Street program is designed to improve all aspects of the downtown or central business district, producing both tangible and intangible benefits. Improving economic management, strengthening public participation, and making downtown a fun place to live, work, shop and visit are as critical to Main Street's future as expanding current and recruiting new businesses, rehabilitating buildings, and managing parking. Building on downtown's inherent assets—rich architecture, personal service, traditional values, and, most of all, a sense of place—the Main Street Approach™ has rekindled entrepreneurship, downtown cooperation and civic concern. It has earned national recognition as a practical strategy appropriately scaled to a community's local resources and conditions. And because it is a locally driven program, all initiative stems from local issues and concerns.

Commitments and local contexts: Ohio’s Governor Strickland came out in support of Main Street programs during his campaign, and subsequently the state has allocated \$250,000 annually for its projects. Additionally, the Main Street program is lauded in Senator George Voinovich office’s draft report on energy independence as promoting walkable communities that lead to reduced vehicle travel. The report said, “Ohio should promote integrated marketing and branding programs for downtown events, such as the Main Street program... [and] Ohio should increase funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to match with the Main Street Program to draw businesses towards the city center and reduce vehicle travel to shopping and entertainment destinations.”⁵⁸

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Main Street communities are admitted annually via a competitive application process. To find out more information, contact Joyce Barrett through means listed directly above.

Table 8⁵⁹

Ohio Main Street Reinvestment Statistics	
Total Dollars Invested In Improvements	\$315 Million
Net New Businesses	382
Net New Full-Time Jobs	1,936
Net New Part Time Jobs	1,121
Business Expansions	230
Building Rehabilitations	1,364
Reinvestment Ratio	\$22.33/\$1.00
Volunteer Hours Donated	230,280
New Housing Units Created	381

January 1, 1998 through December 31, 2006

The figure is a map of Ohio with county boundaries. Numerous cities are marked with blue dots and labeled with their names. The labels include: Sandusky, Amherst, Elyria, Cleveland - Historic Gateway and Warehouse, Lakewood, Kent, Oberlin, Norwalk, Vermilion, Port Clinton, Bowling Green, Bryan, Van Wert, Lima, Wellington, Wooster, Orville, New Philadelphia, Millersburg, Delaware, Bellefontaine, Greenville, Piqua, Springfield, Canal Winchester, Cambridge, Troy, Harrison, Lancaster, Cincinnati - Clifton, Batavia, and Portsmouth. The date 'January, 2007' is printed at the bottom left of the map area.

Table 9: Current Ohio Main Street Communities ⁶⁰

Amherst	Greenville	New Philadelphia	Troy
Batavia	Harrison	Norwalk	Van Wert
Bellefontaine	Historic Gateway-Cleveland	Oberlin	Vermilion
Bowling Green	Historic Warehouse- Cleveland	Orrville	Wellington
Bryan	Lancaster	Piqua	Wilmington
Cambridge	Kent	Port Clinton	Wooster
Canal Winchester	Kenton	Portsmouth	Wright-Dunbar-Dayton
Clifton-Cincinnati	Lakewood	Ripley	
Delaware	Lima	Sandusky	
Elyria	Millersburg	Springfield	

How Greater Ohio can be of service to you

The problems facing Ohio and other states aren't simmering on the back burner, they're being looked at and studied constantly with the hope that solutions will be found before it's too late. Greater Ohio is working with local leaders, state policymakers and other partners to forge an agenda for change. In order to help facilitate this change, we want you to tell us about any local programs that have succeeded in your area. Then, we can work with you further to figure out the solutions specific to your area's other problems. Before you know it, our great state will be on the road to recovery.

For example, Greater Ohio, working closely with the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, based in Washington D.C., recently launched the *Restoring Prosperity to Ohio Initiative*, which focuses on revitalizing all of Ohio's cities and towns struggling with weak economies. Informed and inspired by the Institute's new report, *Restoring Prosperity: The State Role in Revitalizing America's Older Industrial Cities*, and its promising framework, the Initiative emphasizes that our Ohio cities and towns are ripe for revitalization. They possess the right assets -- e.g. educational and medical institutions, historic neighborhoods, natural amenities -- to overcome their challenges, as long as the right state policies are in place.

The Brookings Report examined hundreds of cities across the country and found more than 60, mostly in the Northeast and Midwest regions, lagging beyond their peers. The Report focuses beyond Ohio's large urban areas, specifically identifying nine challenged older Ohio industrial cities -- Canton, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dayton, Lima, Mansfield, Springfield, Warren, and Youngstown -- but it also can apply to many of Ohio's other great cities and towns that are unfortunately in an economic slump. The information contained in the Report clearly outlines the problems that are plaguing our cities and towns, making it a tremendously vital read for anyone wishing to run for an elected office.

Effective state and local policies and decisions will play a pivotal role in supporting revitalization efforts proposed or already underway in Ohio's many diverse communities. The *Restoring Prosperity to Ohio Initiative* is a three year process looking for Ohio-based solutions to problems outlined by the Brookings Report. No matter how much we work though, we still need your input to bring it home!

We are also involved in the *ReBuild Ohio Initiative*, the goal of which is to specifically confront our vacant and abandoned property issue in Ohio, as well as other efforts to foster alternative energy development, encourage reform of Ohio's eminent domain laws, and increase historic preservation throughout the state. Look for new local revitalization ideas that will emerge from these Initiatives in future Greater Ohio briefing books.

Remember and check back regularly to find out more about what's going on with our Initiatives. You can also find an electronic copy of both the Brookings Report and this year's and past Greater Ohio Candidate Briefing Books by visiting Greater Ohio's website.

Background on Greater Ohio

What is Greater Ohio?

"Greater Ohio: An Initiative for Ohio's People, Land and Prosperity" is a statewide network of organizations and individuals united to promote state policies for land use and development that revitalize existing cities and towns, strengthen regional cooperation, and conserve Ohio's productive farmland and natural resources. It was organized initially as a three-year campaign and is now incorporating as a 501c3 nonprofit.

Is Greater Ohio a "smart growth" organization?

Across the nation, "smart growth" has come to mean lots of different things to different people. In Ohio, we certainly need to grow smarter than we have in the past. If smarter growth means encouraging livable communities, better local and regional planning, cleaner air and water, more transportation choices, protection of farmland and green space, and a stronger economy, then, yes, Greater Ohio is a smart growth organization.

Is Greater Ohio a lobbying organization?

Our primary focus will be on research, public education and grassroots organizing. But, as needed to enact policy changes, Greater Ohio will lobby to the extent nonprofit organizations are allowed.

Does Greater Ohio support political candidates?

No. Greater Ohio is strictly nonpartisan. It was created to educate the public about important land use issues facing Ohio — issues that transcend partisan politics. We seek to involve people from all walks of life.

Where does the funding come from?

The majority of our funding comes from foundations in the form of grants.

How did Greater Ohio begin?

The concept for Greater Ohio was initially discussed at a meeting hosted in the fall of 2002 by Ohio-based foundations and the Funder's Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. With the help of organizations and individuals from around the state, the idea for a statewide reform effort began to take shape. Throughout 2003, a steering committee was created and

financial foundation support secured. By January of 2004, Greater Ohio was established and a kick-off event at the Statehouse attracted more than 200 Ohioans.

For further information

Visit Greater Ohio's homepage at <http://www.greaterohio.org/>

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People.
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