



Greater Ohio Policy Center

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**Greater Ohio Partners with German Marshall Fund
in Transatlantic Shrinking Cities' Project**

***Ohio leaders to examine European rebuilding practices
and policies for potential application in U.S.***

Greater Ohio Policy Center announced it has entered into a partnership with the German Marshall Fund (GMF) of the United States in Washington, D.C. and will play a leadership role in a new three-year GMF project, *Cities in Transition: Shrinking Cities*. The project will provide unique opportunities for Ohio's local and state leaders to learn from European cities' rebuilding practices.

"This initiative aligns directly with Greater Ohio's ongoing work to address challenges in Ohio's 'shrinking cities' and provides a golden opportunity to evaluate successful European policies and practices for their application to Ohio's cities, as well as inform state and national policies crafted for Ohio's many older industrial cities of all sizes," said Greater Ohio's Executive Director Lavea Brachman. "Ohio is 'ground zero' for 'cities in transition,' so our state and our cities truly can benefit disproportionately from this initiative."

The project is designed to build a sustained network of leading policymakers and practitioners from several older industrial U.S. cities and to provide opportunities to examine European practices for their applicability in the United States. Through tours, meetings and charrettes, participants from five selected cities – including Youngstown and Cleveland in Ohio – will work together to articulate policy challenges in their communities and identify and adapt successful innovative strategies adopted by European older industrial cities to address the myriad challenges arising from physical transformations associated with disinvestment and economic restructuring.

"Ohio and the larger Midwest region have much to learn from European industrial cities, which, only a few decades ago, faced similar challenges confronting multiple U.S. industrial cities today, such as shrinking population, high vacancy rates, and brownfields," Brachman said. "I look forward to helping state and U.S. policy leaders take lessons from Europe and apply them to our communities."

Brachman has been named a 2010-11 GMF senior fellow based in Columbus as the practitioner in the field who will help shape and lead the first year of this initiative, which focuses on land use and physical revitalization efforts. Representatives from participating U.S. cities will analyze and determine applicability of successful European policies and practices, such as “shrinking in order to grow,” in order to draw out and implement key elements that can contribute to addressing the complex challenges surrounding vacant properties and other land use issues in their communities. They will also work together to identify state and federal level policy changes that would be critical to help implement changes on the ground and facilitate the transferability of these policies from the European to American context, as well as potential limits of policy transferability.

In February 2010, Greater Ohio released a comprehensive blueprint for positioning Ohio for the next economy, *Restoring Prosperity: Transforming Ohio’s Communities for the Next Economy*, and has been actively promoting a set of recommendations from the report. The organization also is launching a series of pilot projects in cities around the state that align with these recommendations and illustrate effective ways for Ohio’s cities to grow in new ways.

More recently, Greater Ohio and Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program issued a white paper, *Ohio’s Cities at a Turning Point: Finding the Way Forward*, offering recommendations to reshape and renew Ohio’s largest and shrinking cities. It was co-authored by Brachman and Brookings senior fellow, Alan Mallach.

Greater Ohio’s *Restoring Prosperity* and *Ohio Cities* reports can be found by clicking on the following links:
<http://www.greaterohio.org/files/quick-downloads/restoring-prosperity-report.pdf>
<http://www.greaterohio.org/files/quick-downloads/shrinking-cities-paper.pdf>

During the three-year GMF initiative, which is supported by the Surdna and Kresge Foundations, participants will focus on one policy area in each of the three years: land use, manufacturing and workforce development. The project will be launched in October with a one-day stakeholder meeting in Detroit. Also planned is a December 2010 study tour to Leipzig, Germany and Manchester, England, both demonstrating successful shrinking strategies.

About Greater Ohio Policy Center

Greater Ohio, the state’s “smart growth” organization, promotes – through research, public education and grassroots advocacy – public policy to grow Ohio’s economy and improve the state’s quality of life through intelligent land use. Toward this end, Greater Ohio advances policies and programs that revitalize urban and metropolitan areas, strengthen regional cooperation, and protect Ohio’s open space, natural resources and farmland. Based in Columbus, Greater Ohio is non-partisan, non-profit, and foundation-funded. For more information, please go to www.greaterohio.org.

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