

A VISION FOR OHIO'S REINVENTION CITIES

Spring 2018

created by the **Reinvention Cities** network



We, the undersigned, support the vision for our communities that is laid out in the Reinvention Cities vision document. We urge our state lawmakers to enact policies, including those listed in this document, that will support our communities as they transition to be fully competitive in the 21st Century economy and provide opportunity for our residents to thrive.

Elyria

- Marcus Madison, City Council

Hamilton

- Joshua Smith, City Manager

Lima

- Jeff Sprague, Allen Economic Development Group & Greater Lima Region, Inc.

Lorain

- #LorainProud
- Andrea Neal, Russell Real Estate Services
- Lorain Historical Society
- Stephanie Wiersma, President & CEO, Lorain County Health & Dentistry

Mansfield

- Bradford Groves, President, Richland County Foundation
- Destination Mansfield-Richland County
- Jennifer Gerberick Kime, CEO, Downtown Mansfield, Inc
- Richland Area Chamber of Commerce
- Richland Community Development Group
- Richland County Regional Planning Commission

Marion

- Dean L. Jacob, Marion Community Foundation
- Marion Area Chamber of Commerce

Middletown

- Larry Mulligan, Mayor

Portsmouth

- Sean Dunne, City Council
- Scioto Foundation

Springfield

- David Estrop, Commissioner
- Horton Hobbs, Community Improvement Corporation of Springfield-Clark County
- Jim Bodenmiller, City Manager
- John T. Landess, Executive Director, Turner Foundation
- The Chamber of Greater Springfield
- The Greater Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Warren R. Copeland, Mayor

Warren

- Board of Trumbull County Commissioners
- Eastgate Regional Council of Governments
- Trumbull County Land Bank
- Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership

Zanesville

- Zanesville-Muskingum County Chamber of Commerce

Other

- James Woofter, Mayor of the City of Cortland

What is a Reinvention City?

Ohio's small 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 cities are transitioning to be fully competitive in order to provide opportunities for their residents to thrive. **These are Ohio's Reinvention Cities, and they are supported by a network of local leaders that are sharing best practices with one another and advocating for their needs at the statehouse.**

Ohio's Reinvention Cities have been home to presidents and industrial giants alike. These 15 small cities and their 5 mid-sized peers are part of Ohio's core identity and have a rich history of industry, innovation, and civic leadership. Today, more than 3.7 million Ohioans – one third of the state – live in these cities and their surrounding regions. The well-being of these communities is not only critical to the millions of people living in and around them, but also to the state as a whole.

The Story of Reinvention Cities

In 2000, small legacy cities began in a stronger economic position than their large or mid-sized counterparts. But by 2016, they had experienced the greatest overall declines in their economic health. Small legacy cities saw the size of their workforces drop dramatically, even as they grew in Cleveland and Cincinnati. Today, the share of adults in small legacy cities who are working or actively looking for a job is 6 percentage points behind the state average and nearly 13 percentage points behind Columbus. Poverty growth in small cities has also outstripped that of their larger counterparts.



Ohio's Reinvention Cities

The challenge is clear: these communities need support and investment as they reorient to be competitive in today's economy. Small legacy cities 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 cities' revitalization and stabilization, but supportive state policy will be necessary to realize these communities' full potential.

The next Gubernatorial administration and General Assembly have the opportunity to arm these cities and their leaders with the tools necessary to address the challenges they face. The vision that follows lays out what Ohio's Reinvention Cities can look like in the future with adequate support: **places that are vibrant, prosperous, connected, healthy & fair, and strategic.** It also details what state policymakers can do to help local leaders make this vision a reality while producing a return on investment for the state by increasing communities' abilities to chart their own path forward.

IN OHIO'S NEXT CHAPTER, OUR STATE'S SMALL CITIES WILL BE VIBRANT, PROSPEROUS, CONNECTED, HEALTHY & FAIR, AND STRATEGIC.

CORE PRINCIPLES

- Ohio's small legacy cities have an important role in Ohio's future as communities of opportunity where people from diverse backgrounds will choose to live, work, invest, and spend time.
- Helping small legacy cities transition to be prepared for new economic realities must be a partnership between local and state leaders, with local leaders making and executing revitalization plans that guide state investments and support.



Vibrant

Ohio's small cities are cared for, invested in, and full of life. That means there are people and a variety of transportation modes on the streets, thriving businesses in store fronts, strong neighborhoods for people with different incomes and housing preferences, and a mix of entertainment and recreation options.

What kinds of state policies get us there:

Policies the network & GOPC will lead on:

- Placemaking programs that make communities attractive to talent and businesses through physical investments like façade improvements, streetscaping, public art, and mixed-use buildings.
- Brownfields remediation funding and regulatory changes that encourage reuse of contaminated, vacant land.
- Assistance for rehabilitation and demolition that turn vacant properties into opportunities for redevelopment.
- Strategic subsidy and incentives to spur market-rate housing development and redevelopment in core neighborhoods.
- Active transportation policies that encourage road design that protects all users, including drivers, cyclists, public transit riders, and pedestrians.

Policies the network & GOPC will partner on:

- Preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings in downtowns and neighborhoods that create a unique sense of place.
- Parks, recreation, and green space improvements that contribute to quality of life and promote economic development
- Align state economic development strategies with the need for small business development, particularly for underrepresented entrepreneurs, that can create jobs and utilize vacant retail, office, and industrial space.



Prosperous

Ohio's small cities are economic engines for the state and their regions and provide economic opportunity to their long-term residents and newcomers. That means entrepreneurs have access to appropriate supports to start businesses; workers have the right skills – both technical and soft – to get local, accessible jobs and higher wages; infrastructure is adequate to attract, retain, and grow employers; and investors and financial institutions provide sufficient capital to support local innovation and economic growth.

What kinds of state policies get us there:

Policies the network & GOPC will lead on:

- Incenting capital investment that can create new opportunities for housing and business development in underserved markets.

Policies the network & GOPC will partner on:

- Workforce training programs that ensure workers have the right set of skills for available local jobs.
- Small business development support, particularly for underrepresented entrepreneurs, that can create jobs and local wealth.
- Incenting catalytic and venture capital investments in underserved markets to spur innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Sewer and water infrastructure upgrades that ensure communities have adequate and safe drinking water for the long-term.



Connected

Ohio's small cities are nodes in the worldwide digital and innovation economy. This means that entrepreneurs, businesses, residents, and their ideas are connected seamlessly to the rest of the world through fast, reliable broadband; residents can access jobs and amenities through a variety of reliable transportation options; goods can access their markets through well-maintained transportation infrastructure; and economic connections to larger cities and metros are reinforced with strong physical transportation and infrastructure connections.

What kinds of state policies get us there:

Policies the network & GOPC will lead on:

- Funding for appropriately-scaled public transportation that allows residents to access jobs and critical services.
- "Fix-it-first" infrastructure upgrades that reinvest in existing systems to ensure communities can compete for jobs and other investments.

Policies the network & GOPC will partner on:

- Broadband infrastructure funding that ensures residents have access to fast, reliable, and affordable internet and can compete in the global digital economy.
- Investments in transportation infrastructure that will enhance connections between small communities and larger metros, particularly those with major airports, and inclusion of small cities in transformative transportation infrastructure projects.



Healthy & Fair

Ohio's small cities provide opportunity for all of its residents, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disability. This means there are safe, adequate and affordable housing options for people of all incomes and ages; high quality schools in all neighborhoods that provide appropriate training and skills for the jobs of the future; access to quality health care facilities; and efforts to ensure that community leadership across different sectors is representative of residents.

What kinds of state policies get us there:

Policies the network & GOPC will lead on:

- Adequate financial support to build and maintain affordable, safe, and adequate housing for families and people of all ages and incomes, including older adults and children.

Policies the network & GOPC will partner on:

- A range of supports to ensure that all children have access to quality educational opportunities, from preschool through post-secondary programs, and have appropriate supports to succeed in school.
- Access to quality health care facilities, including emergency and basic medical care, and access to retail options with healthy food.
- Age-friendly policies that help older adults remain active members of their communities.
- Initiatives to ensure that historically-marginalized populations have a voice in community leadership.



Strategic

Ohio's small cities have strong civic infrastructure that is able to confront challenges, identify shared goals, and plan for the future. This means that there is a pipeline of diverse new leaders who are prepared to fill key community leadership roles in the future; coordination on the regional level about economic development priorities and opportunities; and long-term strategic planning for the community that is widely endorsed and successfully implemented.

What kinds of state policies get us there:

Policies the network & GOPC will lead on:

- Support for recruitment and retention of promising young people to create a pipeline of talent for critical community leadership roles.
- Incenting regional coordination between local governments, nonprofits, and private sector groups responsible for community and economic development.
- Financial support for long-term planning and plan implementation on the local and regional levels.



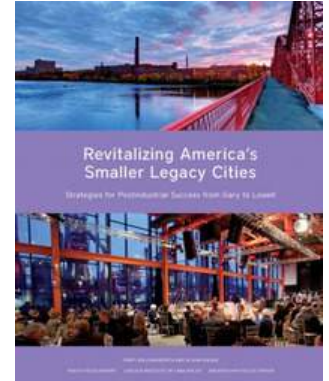
About Greater Ohio Policy Center

Greater Ohio Policy Center (GOPC) develops and advances policies and practices that value our urban cores and metropolitan regions as economic drivers and preserve Ohio's open space and farmland. Through advocacy, research, outreach, and education, GOPC strives to create a policy and political climate that allow our communities to stabilize and thrive for statewide economic growth.

GOPC has focused on the particular needs of smaller legacy cities and its research into successful revitalization strategies informed the policies laid out in this vision document. For more information on smaller legacy cities in Ohio and beyond, review the reports below at www.greaterohio.org

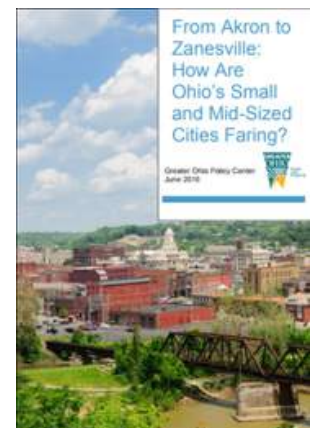
Revitalizing America's Smaller Legacy Cities

Authors Hollingsworth and Goebel examine the trajectories of 24 smaller legacy cities across 7 states from 2000 to 2015. Five Ohio cities are included in the report – Akron, Dayton, Hamilton, Lima, and Youngstown. The authors found that while many of these cities are facing severe challenges, strong and collaborative local leadership can help these communities forge a path forward.



From Akron to Zanesville: How Are Ohio's Small and Mid-Sized Legacy Cities Faring?

Ohio's small and mid-sized legacy cities—older industrial cities with populations greater than 20,000 situated in metropolitan areas with less than 1 million residents—are important contributors to Ohio's economy and social fabric. Like Ohio's larger legacy cities—Cincinnati and Cleveland—these cities faced decades of serious challenges stemming from population loss and the decline of large-scale manufacturing that were further compounded by the Great Recession.



For more information:
www.greaterohio.org/reinvention-cities