

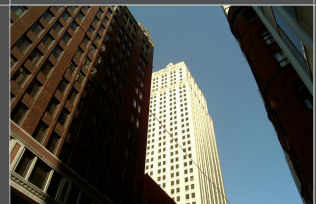
# REGIONALISM

## GROWING TOGETHER TO EXPAND OPPORTUNITY TO ALL

Presented to:  
THE PRESIDENTS' COUNCIL OF CLEVELAND



Submitted by the Co-Chairs of:  
THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FORUM ON RACE AND REGIONALISM



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## ABOUT THE STUDY

This study was commissioned by the Presidents' Council of Cleveland. The purpose of this research initiative is to understand how regionalism could impact the African American community. In addition, the goal of this research is to identify equity based regional policies that could improve conditions for the African American community, increase the social health and economic vitality of the entire Cleveland region, providing benefits to all residents of the Cleveland metropolitan region.



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## EQUITABLE REGIONALISM: The Path to a more vibrant, sustainable Cleveland region

The Cleveland region has many assets: a strong work ethic, a tradition of economic innovation, a legacy of community resilience and recovery, diversity, and a history of philanthropy and community commitment. Greater Cleveland boasts preeminent health care and research institutions; a rich arts community of museums, theaters, and music; and popular professional sports teams. Lake Erie also serves as a unique natural and urban resource, as highlighted in the City Planning Commission's 2004 Waterfront District Plan for Cleveland's shoreline. Yet there are tremendous challenges to building a sustainable future for the Cleveland-Akron area. Global competition and Rust Belt deindustrialization have forever altered the local and national economy. It is cooperative, collaborative regions—not isolated, fragmented municipalities—that will be able to most efficiently leverage capital and human resources to create more opportunity in the face of globalization.

A substantial body of research has shown that regional disparities depress the productivity, earnings, and overall quality of life and productivity for everyone across the metropolitan area. Regions struggling with economic and educational disparities are not appealing to employers seeking a well-educated workforce, robust local buying power, and sophisticated technology infrastructure—nor are fragmented regions conducive to networked entrepreneurialism. Indeed, fragmentation and disparity can lead to a vicious cycle: declining or stagnating resources (like public or private capital) means more competition for less, which in turn increases fragmentation, isolation, sprawling and uncoordinated development, and the mistrust inherent

in “winner take all” and “zero sum game” mentalities.

Greater Cleveland is at a crossroads: it can either embrace a bold new commitment to regional cooperation, fairness, and opportunity for all, or continue on a path of inequitable growth—and risk being left behind in the new economy. Urban-suburban disparities are no longer a new story, but public debate seldom focuses on the nuances and broader implications of these gaps. Basic comparison between suburban “haves” and central-city “have-nots” is an important starting point, but in order to implement a sustainable regional vision, it is also necessary to recognize the role governmental policy has played—and continues to play—in creating and perpetuating structural inequality in the region.

Cleveland requires region-wide solutions to end dysfunctional growth, build long-term cooperation, and promote a fairer, more efficient use of human and structural resources.

A cooperative commitment to equitable development—one that acknowledges and works within the context of the cultural, racial, and historical dynamics that

characterize any region—can put the region on a positive trajectory of growth, vitality and sustainability for all communities.

**We call for proactive policymaking that gives all people access to neighborhood resources, connections to opportunity-rich areas throughout the region, and a voice in the future of their communities. We call this “equitable regionalism.” Both words in the phrase are important.** The process must be informed by an understanding of the entire region, including all communities and all people; and the process must have equity or fairness at its core, not as a peripheral concern. Equitable regionalism affirms the need for every community to have a



voice in the resource development and future of the region. It builds and sustains region-wide, collaborative institutions with inclusive representation and a common goal: improving the health of the whole and expanding opportunity for all people and communities across the region. Equitable regionalism requires comprehensive and strategic investment in people *and* neighborhoods.

The central city and older suburbs must play a critical role in regionalism. The participation of prosperous suburbs is of course essential, but in too many metropolitan areas' past regional empowerment efforts, the central city and older suburbs—if they were included at all—were treated as silent partners. Exclusionary regionalism will only serve to exacerbate racial and economic disparities. Cleveland must draw on the best of its rich history and diversity to build an inclusive regional movement that rectifies past scars of racism and isolation.

When we began this report, we heard concerns that regionalism would benefit only suburban, affluent residents, and would require a region-

*A cooperative commitment to equitable development can put the region on a positive trajectory of growth, vitality and sustainability for all communities*

al government. This is not what we are recommending. In fact, most metropolitan areas that have embraced equitable regionalism have not pursued regional government due to concerns about

lack of inclusive, meaningful representation. To ensure that regionalism in Northeast Ohio includes a seat at the table for all stakeholders, we strongly recommend that community and municipal leaders dedicate space, time and resources to build and rebuild relationships—and frankly discuss historical tensions and concerns as a means to forge a more inclusive path. While perspective, history, and local accountability will naturally influence each of these leaders, all must be willing to work for the good of the entire region.

There is another reason for the city's critical role in regionalism. Despite the area's political fragmentation, the city in many ways defines the region, especially to outsiders like prospective residents or investors. Recent analysis by the U.S. Census Bureau revealed one-third of the Cleveland's population and half of all children were living in poverty—the highest rate among big cities in the nation. The disparities that directly and disproportionately harm Cleveland's African American community indirectly but consistently undermine the region's health and reputation: as one local mayor stated, “the perception of the region is the central city.”

Equitable regionalism must create access to opportunity, leadership and responsibility, with a particular focus on low-income communities of color. There are multiple strategies for connecting these communities to opportunity, including a focus on people, places, and the linkages among them. The people-focused or mobility approach seeks to remedy segregation and concentrated poverty by creating ways for low-income people of color to move to more economically mixed neighborhoods. An “in-place” strategy seeks to bring investment and other resources into distressed communities. The “linkages” approach emphasizes connecting low-income neighborhoods and residents to opportunity through strategies like improved transportation and social or business networking.

There are benefits and limits to each of these approaches, and equitable regionalism must integrate the most promising elements of each. We advocate for a comprehensive strategy that focuses on people, places, *and* linkages—creating new opportunities as well as expanding access to existing ones. This approach focuses not on redistributing resources—as is sometimes the fear of more prosperous communities—but instead on *expanding* the resource base. Investing in people, neighborhoods and communities promises returns not just to a select few individuals or neighborhoods, but to the entire region.



The Cleveland region's most important resource is its people—all of its people—and their energy, creativity, and hope for a better future. Equitable regionalism cannot succeed as a narrow, short-term effort, but must be a

*Equitable regionalism requires comprehensive and strategic investment in people and neighborhoods*

comprehensive vision in which every community can contribute to a vibrant, re-energized Northeastern Ohio. The success of equitable regionalism for Cleveland rests on the following principles:

- ***Create and grow communities of opportunity for the entire Cleveland region*** by connecting people—particularly those in the central city and older suburbs—to opportunity structures like quality schools, sustainable employment, cultural offerings, and safe, stable neighborhoods. This includes making strategic investments into the region's distressed communities, while addressing obstacles to growth and prosperity (for example, vacant and underutilized land, failing schools, or struggling local businesses). This reinvestment should utilize the untapped resources of existing urban neighborhoods to build wealth for the community and its residents.
- ***Work to reduce the destructive, inefficient competition among communities in the region*** for scarce resources; instead, encourage the leveraging of collective resources, vision, and energy to grow regional investment that benefits all communities.
- ***Cooperatively manage the region's sprawling development so as not to subsidize dysfunctional growth patterns.*** Unchecked growth fosters regional inequality, environmental damage, further disinvestment in declining areas, and a less competitive and sustainable region. We must direct investment

back into urban areas and improve existing physical and technological infrastructure.

- ***Improve the educational outlook for all of the region's children.*** Without a high quality education, our children cannot become tomorrow's leaders, entrepreneurs, artists, and teachers. Low-income students—and students of color in particular—need access to high-quality educational opportunities throughout the region. Education reforms should strive to provide additional resources to high-poverty, low functioning schools, but also allow for greater student mobility. There are a number of suggestions consistent with these short-term and long-term goals in the body of our report.

*There are multiple strategies for connecting these communities to opportunity, including a focus on people, places, and the linkages among them*

The full report accompanying this summary document provides over 50 recommendations for housing, land use, education, neighborhood development, economic development, transportation and public health. Implementing these policy visions will require leaders to bridge Cleveland's various racial, political and geographic divides. Trust building and communication are essential first steps in creating equitable regional policies. Through an equity-oriented regional approach, Northeastern Ohioans can grow together, creating greater opportunities for all of Cleveland's residents. While it is not likely that all the recommendations will be adopted, it is important that they be considered as a whole package: equitable regionalism's transformative power lies in its breadth and comprehensiveness.

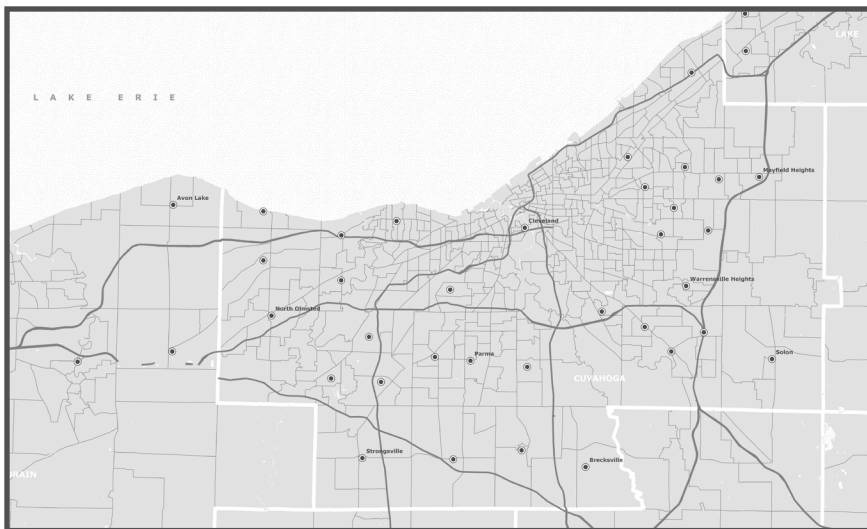
## CLEVELAND: A Region at a crossroads

As stated in the beginning of this report, the Cleveland region faces multiple challenges. Population loss—still a significant urban concern—is now affecting inner-suburban communities. The region as a whole is losing jobs, especially in the manufacturing sector, and this economic distress has stagnated regional population growth. At the

same time, suburban growth and economic polarization are further isolating many urban communities from the region's remaining resources.

*The Cleveland region ranked poorly compared to other large metropolitan areas with significant African American populations and other Rust Belt regions*

Most of the state's job losses are concentrated in Northeast Ohio. Between 2000 and 2005, the number of jobs in the Cleveland-Akron region decreased by 5.7 percent (a loss of more than 65,000 jobs). Unemployment in Cuyahoga County has risen by 50 percent since 2000. Cuyahoga County lost 16,200 jobs from 2000-2003, with manufacturing posting the greatest



share of these losses. Partly because of these economic trends, Ohio now leads the nation in foreclosures and is second in personal bankruptcy filings. National job growth trends contradicted the trends in Northeast Ohio, with a

national increase in jobs of 1.3 percent between 2000 and 2005. Statewide, Ohio had the fifth worst job-growth rate in the nation.

Cleveland is also lagging behind demographically and economically similar regions. For this report, researchers compiled an index of eight indicators of economic health, including population change; growth in housing starts; new business starts; job growth; vacancy rates; poverty rates; unemployment rates; and educational attainment. Based on our index, the Cleveland region ranked poorly compared to other large metropolitan areas with significant African American populations (such as Atlanta) and other Rust Belt regions (such as Detroit and Pittsburgh). Among the 21 regions with the largest African American populations, the Cleveland region ranked twentieth (with twenty-one being the worst performance). Among the 21 largest Midwestern (or Rust Belt) metropolitan areas, Cleveland ranked eighteenth, with respect to economic health.

In addition to job loss and population stagnation, Cleveland also suffers from continuing out-migration of jobs and people from its urban core to the suburban fringe. While the population in Cuyahoga County and the city of Cleveland declined 1.3 percent and 5.4 percent, respectively, the suburban Geauga and Medina counties posted Northeast Ohio's highest population growth, gaining 12 percent and 23.5 percent, respectively.

Population decline, job loss, and the resulting neighborhood disinvestment and resident isolation are not simply the product of free market growth, but instead reflect decades of public policy that prioritized uncoordinated suburban expansion at the expense of older urban communities.

Despite a slight decline in racial residential segregation in recent decades, greater Cleveland is still highly segregated. Census figures show Cleveland is the third most segregated large metropolitan area in the nation. Residential

segregation begets school segregation, as indicated by the high-poverty schools clustered in Cuyahoga and Summit Counties' predominately African American neighborhoods. Racial and economic segregation has significant impact on student performance, with sobering racial implications: only half of African American students in the city of Cleveland's public schools complete high school on time. Cleveland's segregation and economic distress are also causing rates of poverty to rise to extreme levels.

The challenges facing Cleveland, the region, and its African American community are all related. Cleveland residents' lack of access to health care, high-quality education, and living-wage jobs contributes to the destabilization of the city's economic and social health, and jeopardizes the competitiveness of the entire region. Gaps in educational attainment impair the region's competitiveness in the new global skill-based economy, where educated labor is a hallmark of an economically healthy region.

City-suburb competition for new jobs and residents produces a stressed, economically dysfunctional region, and reinforces longstanding regional and racial disparities. Cleveland needs to grow new jobs and resources in the region and to use the existing resources equitably and efficiently. Despite the region's interconnected problems, a turnaround is possible, and solutions to break this cycle are gaining support.

Ironically, Northeast Ohio's recent economic distress may provide a rallying point for regional responses to address the inequities and unbalanced investment that negatively affect the economic health of the region. Many older first-ring suburbs now suffer from the resource isolation normally associated with the central city. This creates the possibility for more cooperation between city and suburbs. Regional policy solutions to address inequities and competition will be the best response to Northeast Ohio's economic dilemma.

## LINKED FATES: How Cleveland's inequities harm the entire region

To create an economically viable and sustainable region, Cleveland must identify policies that will improve the health and wealth of all communities. Public support will be crucial to implementing an equitable regional vision. Leaders must emphasize that all residents and communities in a metropolitan area share a linked fate, and problems affecting one community will eventually prove detrimental to the entire region.

Racial and social inequities deprive Cleveland of its ability to innovate and advance due to inefficiencies, fragmented voice, cost and waste:

- **Wasted Creative Capacity.** Inequitable educational systems and concentrated poverty produce widespread educational disparities. High school dropouts—and even those who, despite having graduated, received a substandard basic education from failing schools—are likely to be ill-prepared for jobs in today's knowledge-based economy. At the same time, the demand for unskilled labor continues to decrease, leaving poorly educated workers marginalized. In turn, the region's lack of a large pool of talented, highly educated workers becomes an impediment to attracting businesses and employers. Educational disparities also stifle innovation and entrepreneurialism. The wasted creative capacity associated with a lack of social, economic and educational opportunity drags down the competitive strength of the entire region.

- **Fragmented Economic Voice.** Regions must act cooperatively and align key infrastructure and assets to attract investment. Competition between local governments fosters economic development "cannibalism," in which local governments fight to attract existing

*Despite the region's interconnected problems, a turnaround is possible, and solutions to break this cycle are gaining support*

businesses from one community to another. This zero-sum game obscures a more productive goal—nurturing assets and differentiating the region from other regions—and proves detrimental to the region’s long-term economic health.

- ***Paying for Exclusion.*** Greater Cleveland’s residential segregation is fueled by exclusionary housing policies that come at a price to all residents. Exclusionary zoning—local ordinances that discourage or prohibit multifamily and other types of affordable housing—artificially increases the cost of housing. Lower- and moderate-income families are either blocked from Cleveland’s suburbs or forced to devote a high proportion of income to rent or a mortgage. High housing cost burdens mean less disposable income to devote to family wealth building or spend in other areas of the region’s economy. Homeowners in segregated African American

*Metropolitan initiatives to address greater Cleveland’s racial, social inequities can help create a more vibrant, competitive, and thriving region for all residents*

neighborhoods suffer from depressed housing values that prevent them from building home equity at the rate of their suburban counterparts. This lost home equity represents unrealized wealth and assets for many of Cleveland’s low- and moderate-income families.

- ***Inefficient Infrastructure and Government Services.*** Highly fragmented regions—some encompass hundreds of local governments—are typically inefficient with respect to infrastructure and government services. The cost of this inefficiency is passed along to the taxpayers who fund each individual police force, fire department, or fragmented unit of other key public services. Fragmentation and unchecked growth also strain public works systems, as localities struggle to

keep up with the water and sewer needs of sprawling developments. Conversely, many urban neighborhoods have ample existing infrastructure, but due to population loss, too few residents to use these systems to maximum capacity. Disparate local tax bases also limit the ability of some older communities to maintain their infrastructure.

- ***Sprawl and Quality of Life.*** Unfortunately, sprawling development patterns often co-exist with segregation and inequity. As regional polarization increases, residents with the means to move feel pressure to follow suburban opportunity. The result is suburban and exurban sprawl—even in Cleveland, a region with limited population growth. Suburban sprawl can be not only financially wasteful, but if not thoughtfully designed and well managed, can cause significant environmental damage, such as loss of farmland, wetlands and open space. Environmental consequences, along with increases in traffic congestion and commuting times, affect the quality of life for everyone in the region.

- ***The Central City’s Untapped Potential.*** Historically, cities were the economic and social opportunity epicenters of their regions. Though contemporary trends like sprawl, urban disinvestments, and inequality have undermined this legacy, our urban areas remain cultural centers, and sites for high quality universities and medical institutions. Cleveland is rich with untapped resources: neighborhoods underserved by retail and other business; workers and entrepreneurs that could thrive if structural barriers to economic development were eliminated; vacant land which could be utilized strategically for new investment; and young people who are poised to excel if given access to quality education. In addition, thriving urban areas remain a magnet for young, educated, highly skilled new residents.

Representatives of the region’s various business, philanthropic, advocacy, education, faith



and political communities repeatedly noted the relationship between Cleveland's social inequities and the region's competitive strength. As one interviewee noted:

*"Research shows that the metro region is only as strong as its weakest link, and that even a wealthier suburb needs to pay attention to the region, which competes in the global marketplace. But if in your daily life, you have no connection to the communities and people left behind—life goes on. When the metropolitan areas were more compact and mixed-income, there was a greater sense that we were all in this together. But we keep separating ourselves with respect to class and race."*

Addressing Cleveland's racial, social and regional inequities with the goal of a more vibrant, competitive and economically thriving region, regional initiatives can improve conditions for all Cleveland residents. Metropolitan initiatives to address greater Cleveland's racial, social inequities can help create a more vibrant, competitive, and thriving region for all residents. Many Northeast Ohio residents now recognize the need to abandon isolated decision making in favor of collective solutions to the broader region's challenges. As one person interviewed for this study commented:

*"The small-box mentality in decision-making... is very counter to doing things on a regional basis. One of my hopes is to bypass some of the conversations we've been struggling with in the past. Maybe by having conversations on a regional basis, some of the "smaller boxes" can figure out ways to work together to tackle the larger issues."*

Regional dynamics strongly influence racial and economic equity. Equity-based regionalism is the most just and effective strategy to meet the metropolitan area's economic challenges. With Cleveland's past manufacturing strength becoming increasingly irrelevant to the global economy, the city's future is dependent on its most plentiful natural resource: the human capacity and innovation of residents. Today's high school student can be tomorrow's entrepreneur, political leader or CEO. Unless we reme-

dy the social, racial and interregional inequities facing Cleveland, this human capital will atrophy—and ultimately compromise the future of the entire region.

## WHERE TO START: The path to an equitable and sustainable Cleveland region

This study identifies more than 50 recommendations for policy reform in the Cleveland region, based on extensive local interviews,

*Equity-based regionalism is the most just and effective strategy to meet the metropolitan area's economic challenges*

analysis of conditions in greater Cleveland, and a national review of best practices. The following section provides an overview of some of the recommendations in the full report. (Please refer to the full study to review the entire set of recommendations.)

### ■ Education

The highest education priority is region-wide, high-achieving schools. Educational reform is necessary to advance equitable outcomes, and to foster greater opportunity for all of the region's residents. Cleveland must begin to address economic segregation in the K-12 system by making all schools high-quality schools, leveraging the strengths of high-performing suburban schools, and developing high-quality educational oppor-



tunities in the central city. Reforms must target existing high-poverty schools, to increase the likelihood that students can excel.

#### **Short-Term Recommendations:**

- *Develop district-managed public magnet/charter schools throughout the region, including in the center city.* Magnet schools must be racially, ethnically, and economically diverse, and should capitalize on the region's assets in health care and higher education.
- *Expand investment and access to early childhood education.* Intervening early

*Educational reform is necessary to advance equitable outcomes, and to foster greater opportunity for all of the region's residents*

in a child's life is critical, and establishing universal access to preschool could produce tremendous academic gains for all students.

- *Develop more school-to-career programs.* School-to-career programs can have positive effects on educational and occupational outcomes, including increased college attendance rates and rates of employment.
- *Implement service-learning initiatives.* Service learning develops civic engagement, increases awareness of community needs, promotes an understanding of politics, and fosters greater commitment to communities.
- *Provide extra funding and high-quality teachers to high-need schools.* Develop comprehensive programs that incorporate the needs of students, parents, and community members.
- *De-track students in underperforming schools.* De-tracking not only improves academic achievement for those previously in lower tracks, but for all students at every ability level. Explore curriculum reform

in underperforming schools to increase student achievement.

#### **Long-Term Recommendations:**

- *Provide access to high-performing, low-poverty schools throughout the region.* Offer students more choice in where to attend school; provide affordable housing in job-rich, high-opportunity neighborhoods; and improve linkages that help students in failing schools attend low-poverty, high-performing schools.
- *Eliminate concentrated high-poverty schools.* Raleigh, North Carolina has already achieved this, where no school bears more than a 40% poverty rate.
- *Establish collaborative education with community stakeholders.* Facilitate parent involvement with the school, and meaningful communication between schools and their communities.
- *Link P-12 curricula to universities and employment.* Leverage Cleveland's higher education institutions as resources for public school curriculum reform and employment readiness.

### ■ **Economic Development**

Economic development initiatives must reach those most disconnected from the region's economic growth. In Cleveland, it will be particularly important to support the region's minority business sector and invest in labor force development, especially for African American workers. Minority businesses are critical stepping-stones to economic growth for the African American community, and important contributors to the region's prosperity. Economic development initiatives should prepare all workers for today's economy and emerging Northeast Ohio job markets – and must eliminate barriers to strategic urban reinvestment.

- *Improve networking, mentoring, and relationship building among minority and non-minority firms.* Tap established African

American business owners to mentor aspiring African American entrepreneurs. Encourage business leaders of all races to examine lessons of successful mainstream enterprises and the particular challenges confronted by African American businesses.

- *Invite firms in Cleveland's emerging and growing sectors to participate in regional economic inclusion discussions.* Topics to consider include current recruitment / inclusion initiatives and neighborhood involvement. Establish a Cleveland Minority Business Accelerator.
- *Redirect capital to downtown, surrounding core neighborhoods, and inner-ring suburbs through innovative development policy.* Cultivate socially responsible venture capital to fund growth and real estate development in disinvested neighborhoods. Leverage public subsidies and policies to attract and maintain private investment in core neighborhoods and communities, especially for the development and support of key anchor institutions.
- *Lobby the Ohio Treasurer to direct a percentage of pension funds to socially responsible venture funds (SRVF), for use in leveraging property development, growth capital, and equity investments.*
- *Build coalitions to advocate for statewide Career Readiness Certificate legislation.* Include heavy and light manufacturers, health care, aircraft and traffic control, material moving firms, and local colleges and universities.
- *Expand the activities of Cleveland's Land Bank through a comprehensive regional land bank policy that draws on recent best practices in land banking.* Consult

with local municipalities, Cuyahoga County and various housing developers.

- *Expand on existing tools for regional resource sharing (such as Akron's Joint Economic Development districts).* Additional long-term fiscal equity initiatives could be modeled after Montgomery County, Ohio's government equity program, or Minneapolis's tax base sharing policies.
- *Promote urban policy that integrates local priorities with state-level incentives, similar to Michigan's "Cool Cities" program.*
- *Tap into countywide programs that have specific physical asset dollars earmarked for allocation such as The Cuyahoga Innovation Zones (see the Blue Ribbon Task Force 2006 Action Plan).*



*Economic development initiatives should prepare all workers for today's economy and emerging job markets and must eliminate barriers to strategic urban reinvestment*

## ■ Housing and Development

- Promote regional housing policy that connects affordable housing to areas of opportunity.
  - Preserve and expand the supply of affordable housing for low- to moderate-income families in opportunity-rich neighborhoods across the metropolitan area.
  - Provide subsidies to make housing in mixed-income, racially integrated neighborhoods more affordable to low- and moderate-income families.
  - Create a regional housing and neighborhood development plan—with input from business, advocacy, political and housing community representatives—that focuses on developing affordable housing in areas of opportunity.
  - Replace exclusionary land use zoning policies with inclusionary policies.
  - Use public revenue streams such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit to develop affordable housing in areas of opportunity.



- *Reverse foreclosure trends in greater Cleveland.* Cuyahoga County's foreclosure prevention program should expand to cover the broader region.
- *Reform state and regional land development policies.* Collaborate with organizations like Greater Ohio and the First Suburbs Coalition to advocate for statewide land use reform. Implement local initiatives, pilot programs or special cooperative arrangements (for example, development impact fees to restrict growth in sprawl-



ing areas). Consider regional collaboration for water and sewer system policy and expansion.

- *Expand neighborhood development capacity to bring resources into disinvested areas.* Utilize existing policy tools and assets, including the Land Bank program, Land Trusts, and Community Development Corporations, to promote inclusionary, mixed-income housing developments.

## ■ Transportation

Transportation access is critical to linking people and opportunity in the Cleveland region. Transportation investments also play a key role in spurring private sector investment in neighborhoods and communities.

- *Increase funding for transit* and consider innovative solutions for improving transportation efficiency, reducing the impacts of transportation on the envi-

ronment, and increasing infrastructure investments in urban core areas.

- *Address urban and minority under-representation in the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA).* While NOACA uses “weighted” voting in some cases, its current voting configuration still under-represents Cuyahoga County, Cleveland and African Americans.
- *Expand regional transit.* The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) needs to expand to provide



urban residents access to the current and emerging suburbs. Improving low-income residents' mobility--particularly for those making the transition from welfare to work--may be the difference between employment and unemployment.

- *Expand the reverse commute program.* Over 90% of new entry-level jobs in the Cleveland metro area are located outside of the city. GCRTA must provide a cost-effective and reliable “reverse commute”



for suburban job concentrations as well as for employees in the urban core.

- *Expand the low-income car ownership program.* Low-income car ownership programs provide enormous mobility benefits and employment access by making affordable and reliable vehicles directly available to customers, and providing low-cost loans and matched savings accounts for vehicle purchases.
- *Expand Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).* Provide transit-oriented development that allows access to clean, safe, and affordable transit service; housing options; a variety of goods and services; pedestrian and bicycle friendly places; and safe, inviting public spaces.

## ■ Public Health

Health disparities are complex issues requiring numerous types of intervention. The following policies could improve the overall health of the region:

- *Strengthen Hospital Accountability.* In order to strengthen nonprofit hospitals' commitment to communities, The American Hospital Association recommends: (1) more financial help for the uninsured poor; (2) hiring reputable debt collection companies; and (3) greater public accountability. Additionally, the region should remedy the trend toward disinvestment in urban care. Although hospitals are often already part of a regional network of health care, a more equitable model can equalize investments and provide greater access to the health care system for people of color.
- *Expand primary care clinics and outreach efforts.* Establish additional primary care sites—with access to public transportation and extended hours—in underserved areas. Coordinate multiple outreach programs, perhaps through collaboration between the Cleveland Depart-

ment of Public Health and the region's many health care providers.

- *Advocate for statewide health coverage.* Cleveland could be a powerful force in state-level advocacy for universal health care. The idea of universal health care is gaining support across the United States, with Massachusetts passing the first universal health care coverage program in April 2006. Health insurance reform proposals were prominent during Ohio's 2006 gubernatorial campaign, indicating public and political will to change.
- *Promote diversity in the medical profession.* Expand model programs like The Science and Medical School at John Hay High School and *Creando Posibilidades* at the Cleveland Clinic. Institute medical school diversity initiatives and utilize programs like the Ohio Physician Loan Repayment Program (OPLRP) to encourage physicians to work in health professional shortage areas.



## MOVING FORWARD

These recommendations are critical first steps toward a more just, vibrant, and healthy Cleveland. Leadership and coalition building will be vital to create the political momentum for change. Despite differences in race, income, neighborhood location or politics, everyone in the Cleveland region shares a linked fate that should motivate and guide policy reform throughout the region. Cleveland has reached a defining moment: our region can and must learn from mistakes of the past and pursue innovative new policies to ensure an equitable, sustainable future for all.

## More about the Authors of this Study

To conduct this research, the Presidents' Council selected the African American Forum for Race and Regionalism to assess what regional policies could improve conditions for Cleveland's African American community and improve the health of the entire region. The African American Forum for Race and Regionalism was founded to provide interdisciplinary research and an African American perspective on regional efforts. The forum's co-chairs include: Carl Anthony, who leads the Ford Foundation's Sustainable Metropolitan Communities Initiative; Angela Glover Blackwell, the founder and CEO of Policy Link; Robert Bullard, the Ware Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Director of the Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University; and John Powell, the Executive Director of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity and the Williams Chair in Civil Rights and Civil Liberties at the Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University. Deohn Ferris, the President of the Sustainable Community Development Group, Inc., acts as secretariat for the forum. All co-chairs and their affiliated institutions collaborated to conduct this research, providing a deep interdisciplinary pool of resources to answer the challenging policy questions confronting the Cleveland region.

To learn more about the forum please visit:

<http://www.aafrr.org>

To download the full study that accompanies this summary report, please visit:

<http://www.kirwaninstitute.org>

OR

<http://www.thepresidentscouncil.com>



## L A K E E R I E

### THE PRESIDENTS' COUNCIL OF CLEVELAND

The Presidents' Council is comprised of a group of chief executive officers from some of the largest African American owned-and-operated businesses in the Greater Cleveland area. The organization was established in 1996 to support entrepreneurial and economic development within the African American community, and to foster strategic alliances with CEOs of other Northeast Ohio major corporations to advance the growth and development of Council member companies.

As business leaders, the Presidents' Council provides leadership, innovative ideas, and resources to advance African American business and contributes to the overall growth and economic development in Northeast Ohio.

