Restoring Our Prosperity
The State Role in Revitalizing Ohio’s Core Communities

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Ohio faces stark challenges in the face of a changing economy

- Change in nonfarm employment, 2000-2007
  - Ohio: -3.00%
  - U.S.: 0.00%

- Change in population, 2000-2007
  - Ohio: -5.00%
  - U.S.: -4.00%
Ohio’s cities face difficult challenges as they struggle to provide safe, healthy neighborhoods to their residents

- Nearly 23 percent of housing units in Youngstown are vacant - nearly twice the national rate.
- In Cleveland, over 22 percent of families fall below the poverty line, over double the national figure.
- Compared to a national rate of 27 percent, just over 15 percent of Dayton adults 25+ have a BA degree or higher.

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2006 (city level numbers)
State programs and policies have generally failed to leverage key assets like innovation, human capital, infrastructure and quality places.

The state has been slow to respond with financial assistance to help stem the tide of decline wrought by the mortgage crisis.

Source: PolicyMatters Ohio analysis of OH Supreme Court data
Past efforts tended to be reactive, unfocused, failing to provide communities with necessary flexibility and support.

Ohio’s urban enterprise zone (UEZ) program is not targeted to places in need; it covers 215 zones in 85 out of the state’s 88 counties.

ODOD programs like the Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund or the Job Ready Sites program, provide only limited targeting to urban areas and places in need.

The financing formula for the state’s school facilities construction program favors rural areas over urban areas; school construction is rarely coordinated with housing, economic development, and other activities in the same communities.
The state can take a lesson from innovators at the local level

**Toledo**’s “New Schools, New Neighborhoods” program integrates school development into a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy.

A **Cleveland**-based partnership has initiated a strategy to acquire foreclosed properties for rehabilitation or removal.

**Dayton** is trying to “grow green”, building a revitalization strategy around partnerships with the University of Dayton and local hospitals.

**Dayton** and **Youngstown** have acknowledged becoming smaller and embraced the concept of “rightsizing”
Ohio needs to frame a state agenda for neighborhood revitalization

- Level the playing field between older urban areas and the rest of the state
- Use state resources to leverage comprehensive and coordinated neighborhood change
- Adopt market-based strategies for neighborhood change
- Engage key anchor institutions as partners in revitalization
- Take immediate action to address the impact of foreclosures and abandoned properties on neighborhood stability and vitality
This agenda should advance specific policy priorities to improve the quality of place in OH

*Stabilize neighborhoods and cities hard hit by the mortgage crisis:*

- Enact a stronger, more flexible land banking statute
- Expand and improve foreclosure prevention tools
- Strengthen code enforcement and nuisance abatement tools to minimize harm to impacted neighborhoods
- Provide targeted funding for the demolition of abandoned properties
- Develop and implement an integrated property information system” to track foreclosures and abandonment
This agenda should advance specific policy priorities to improve the quality of place in OH.

Create a new Urban Markets Initiative to unveil and leverage the market potential of core neighborhoods:

- Create a state-supported Urban Markets Initiative
- Identify select “Opportunity Neighborhoods” which merit the concentration of state and local resources
- Target state resources to comprehensive strategies in “Opportunity Neighborhoods”