

Summary Report

Our Place in the Urban Age

The Levin College of Urban Affairs 30th Anniversary Forum Series



Restoring Prosperity, A Strategy for Northeast Ohio

Our Place in the Urban Age is a year-long series of forums and exhibits celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs and exploring the dynamic role of cities in a world transformed by technology, climate change, modern lifestyles and a global economy.

- What will America's urban centers look like?
- What economic functions will they serve?
- How will the quality of life change?
- How will Cleveland and Northeast Ohio adapt?

On Tuesday, May 29, 2007, 170 people gathered at the Levin College Forum to hear Bruce Katz of the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program speak about what has frankly been the slow and painful transition from the older industrial era into the knowledge economy of today for many Midwest cities, including Cleveland. Those are the findings of the newly released report *"Restoring Prosperity: The State Role in Revitalizing America's Older Industrial Cities"*.

This isn't just about cities, it is about metropolitan areas.

Eight out of 9 metropolitan areas in Ohio are socially and economically underperforming. The prosperity of cities and their metropolitan regions are interconnected.

States matter, but we need to get them to fundamentally change the way that they act.

How do you address the problems faced by older, industrialized urban areas across Ohio and around the nation? One strategy is to get states recommitted to cities. States are the biggest investors in education and infrastructure. States must affirmatively leverage and support the institutions of our cities.

Reforming state policy needs to be a priority. This problem hasn't been just about markets and consumer preferences. Our policies have allowed this to happen. They've made sprawl easy and redevelopment hard.

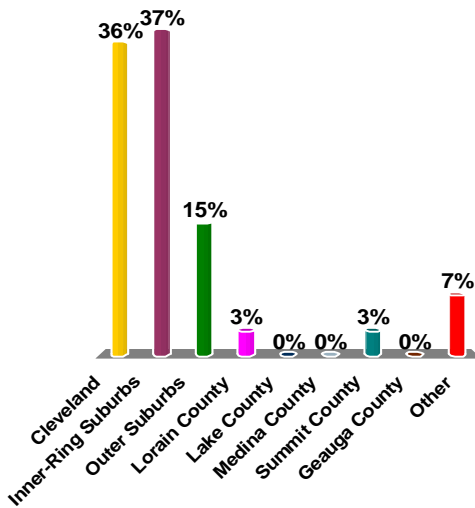
Youngstown's Mayor takes a hard look at his city's place in the state and the region.

Jay Williams, Mayor of Youngstown, shared with the audience the "Youngstown 2010" plan. He told participants that the city came to the hard realization that it wasn't going to be the city that it once was. This didn't mean that it was an inferior city, just a smaller one. The city had to re-examine its place in the state and its changing role in the region. Mayor Williams spoke of his city's refocused demolition program and the plan to turn excess land back into active, productive use.

Who Attended?

The Forum Program seeks to strengthen the capacity of the community to tackle difficult regional issues across government, business and civic sectors. Since 2000, more than 11,000 people have attended more than 100 forum events. So where did forum participants on May 29th come from in the region?

Where do you live?



Please indicate the sector you represent.

Private Sector	8%
Non-Profit	39%
Government	18%
Academia	8%
Entrepreneur	6%
Student	10%
Retired/not Working	3%
Other	7%

“Five Part Play Book for States”

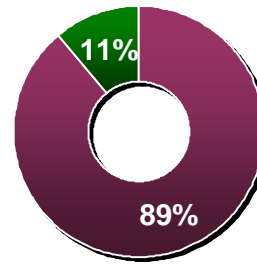
1. Fix The Basics: Work on good schools and creating a competitive business climate.
2. Build On Economic Strengths: Cities are the places where strong institutions are located, the so-called “eds and meds.” To foster a “high road” economy, states should help cities reinvigorate their downtowns and should invest in the eds and meds, along with culture and entertainment, and other industries that play to a city’s strengths. States also need to support cross-regional cooperation between metro areas.
3. Transform the Physical Landscape: States need to recognize and leverage the physical assets of cities to create marketable sites for redevelopment. In some places this may mean tearing down freeways along waterfronts or improving large public parks.
4. Grow the Middle Class: People tend to think of this as a responsibility of the federal government, but there are a lot of things that states can do to address this such as making work pay and reducing the cost of being poor.
5. Create Neighborhoods of Choice: Grow inner city markets, support mixed income housing and compel banks to operate in inner city neighborhoods.

Katz concluded by saying that the moment is right for change. Both Europe and the U.S. have many older industrial cities that are struggling with these problems, but unlike Europe, the United States has a growing population. Further, today’s young professionals have been brought up with positive popular images of city living. They’ve watched *Seinfeld* and *Sex in the City*, They are looking for an urban living experience.

Special Thanks to our 30th Anniversary Sponsors:

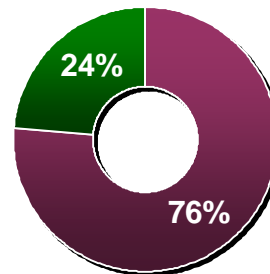
Enterprise Community Partners
Cuyahoga County Public Library
Jones Day
The George Gund Foundation

Did today’s forum give you new ideas that you can use?



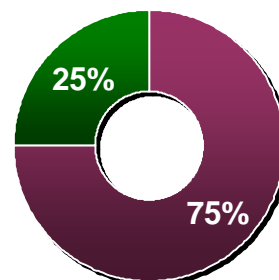
■ Yes ■ No

Did today’s forum inspire you to think about pursuing new collaborations?



■ Yes ■ No

Did today’s forum suggest any new strategies for transforming Northeast Ohio cities into hubs of innovation, places for sustainable living and places of opportunity?



■ Yes ■ No

Data was analyzed from 80 forum participants. Survey was conducted on May 29, 2007. Respondents were asked to answer a series of questions at two points in time during the forum program.

The results of audience surveys will be incorporated into an end of the series report.

All forums are archived at www.urban.csuohio.edu/forum