

NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

Economic Development

Need: Stop the Brain Drain - align local business needs with the local school system.

Opportunities:

- Create a comprehensive cradle-to-career (C2C) partnership to align education, training, business, and social services around increasing talent levels in Greater Columbus.
- Ensure that three- and four-year-olds have access to high-quality early childhood education.
- Expand efforts to introduce students to education and career possibilities from a young age.
- Launch a broad-based adult education campaign to connect individuals who did not complete high school or college coursework with opportunities for advancement and employment.

Need: Columbus must retain its best and brightest workers.

Opportunities:

- Support the pursuit of a microchip plant.
- Welcome and engage new residents who move to Greater Columbus with a relocating family member.

Need: Attract talented individuals to Greater Columbus.

Opportunities:

- Attract educated expatriates back to Greater Columbus through a "boomerang" marketing program.
- Support the promotion of Columbus State and Troy University's Phenix City campus as schools of choice for students from outside of the region.

Need: Strengthen the culture of entrepreneurship in Columbus.

Opportunity:

- Expand capital availability for individuals who lack access to traditional capital with a pre-seed microloan program.

Need: Columbus and the immediate region need a cohesive image and identity.

Opportunities:

- Pursue a major earned media campaign to generate positive coverage of Greater Columbus in external media markets.
- Support efforts to promote Greater Columbus through travel, tourism, and events.

Need: To attract new business, Columbus has to be a vibrant and connected place.

Opportunities:

- Collaborate across state lines to further promote activation of the Chattahoochee Riverfront through the region's core.
- Pursue policies and develop incentives to activate underutilized commercial, industrial, and neighborhood properties.
- Catalyze the development of new housing options and supportive neighborhood retail in the region's core neighborhoods.
- Beautify gateways into the region to make a positive first impression on visitors and enhance the built environment for the community.
- Evaluate options to expand public transportation coverage, frequency, and operating hours to connect residents to jobs and amenities.

Housing

Need: Improve access to quality housing.

Opportunity:

- Create and/or preserve affordable housing, such as housing rehabilitation assistance, down payment and/or closing cost assistance, and new construction.

Need: Remove slum and blight.

Opportunity:

- Efforts shall be made to demolish vacant and/or unsafe structures.

Need: Increase efforts to promote economic development.

Opportunity:

- Efforts shall be made to direct technical and business assistance, such as Section 108 loan repayments.

Need: Increase efforts to provide public services.

Opportunity:

- Expand and continue non-housing community development supportive services.

Need: Increase efforts to create/expand housing and services to homeless persons.

Opportunity: • Preserve short-term and long-term homeless facilities and associated services.

Need: Maintain or expand planning and administration.

Opportunity:

- Maintain (and possibly expand) administrative and planning costs to operate the CDBG and HOME programs successfully.

Land Use

Need: Eliminate sprawl and slow greenfield development.

Opportunities:

- Provide for more mixed-use development opportunities to create more density, reduce impacts on city services, and provide retail, jobs, and other amenities for residents. Areas proposed for appropriate mixed use development must be reviewed and planned to ensure viable services and amenities to create successful integration of the uses.
- Pursue policies and develop incentives to activate underutilized commercial, industrial, and neighborhood properties.

Need: Introduce new zoning regulations, techniques, and concepts to reintroduce into the urban core of Columbus.

Opportunities:

- Study and review modern zoning regulations, techniques, and concepts to incorporate into the Unified Development Ordinance. Some of these possibilities include, but are not limited to, form-based codes; accessory dwelling units; pocket neighborhoods; incremental development; and/or transit oriented design.
- Review current mixed-use zoning regulations that can be adapted to infill development situations.
- Columbus will incentivize development within walking and bicycling distance of existing and future transit and trail corridors to achieve improved location efficiency for housing, employment, recreation, and civic spaces.

Need: Create a determined focus on sustainability.

Opportunities:

- Implement a Plan4Health program in a pilot area of Columbus. Healthy environment places may provide access at varying levels to the resources for leading a healthier life, such as physical access to employment, healthcare, shopping, or social connections, for persons of all abilities.
- Create a pilot project that focuses on livable communities for all ages, with a focus on land-use, transportation, access to food, access to health services, and access to quality of life expectations.
- Focus efforts to create design legislation that supports aging in place.

Need: Research and implement new concepts regarding land-use and development.

Opportunity:

- As Americans continue to move to urban areas, increased pressure is placed on services and infrastructure. Seeking alternatives to traditional land-use and development standards need to be pursued.

Need: Offer incentives (via partners) for adaptive reuse.

Opportunity:

- Columbus is known statewide for adaptive reuse of buildings and property. Inventory historic properties throughout the community to identify need for adaptive reuse. Encourage market studies to be performed for these properties to establish opportunities.

Need: Create a neighborhood identity program.

Opportunity:

- Columbus residents typically identify themselves by which neighborhood they live. Neighborhoods are a source of pride and utilizing a system like those used in the Park District, the Original Historic District, and Morningside would help showcase these neighborhoods and potentially help market those neighborhoods for new homeownership and redevelopment.

Need: Remove barriers to redevelopment.

Opportunity:

- The limited amount of land available in Columbus for greenfield development creates a great opportunity for infill development back into the urban core. Barriers to redevelopment should be researched and potentially amended or removed.

Need: Focus on repurposing brownfields and grayfields.

Opportunity:

- Brownfield and grayfield properties are typically in the urban core of Columbus and are in dire need of redevelopment and repurposing. Brownfield opportunities can be supported by state and federal grants, but grayfield redevelopment is the responsibility of local government and/or private property owners. Many municipalities have repurposed grayfields for civic uses, such as Columbus' own Civic Commons, which is home to the Citizen Service Center, the Columbus Natatorium, the Columbus Library, the Muscogee County School District headquarters, and the Rainey-McCullars School of Performing Arts. Finding incentives for private parties to repurpose grayfields should be researched.

Needs Focus development efforts on infill development.

Opportunities:

- The limited amount of land available in Columbus for greenfield development creates a great opportunity for infill development back into the urban core. Barriers to redevelopment should be researched and potentially amended or removed.
- A land needs assessment can identify buildable land and lands available for redevelopment.

Transportation

Need: Preserve and/or enhance existing transportation facilities.

Opportunities:

- Prioritize maintenance of existing transportation infrastructure.

- Improve transportation opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Improve transportation opportunities for aging populations.

Need: Relieve congestion.

Opportunities:

- Continue to identify locations for intersection improvements including roundabouts.
- Expand Metra services to include new trends, such as electrification, ride-share partnerships, and smaller carrier vehicles.

Need: Expand ideals of complete transportation.

Opportunities:

- Build on the theme of alternative transportation modes and enhanced operational efficiency by introducing multi-modal plans and programs designed to create a seamless transportation system with efficient and effective operations.
- Continue commitment to expand multiple transportation options that provide transportation needs to all citizens and to enhance quality of life.
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle transportation as well as public transit.
- Implement 2014 Alternative Transportation Plan.

Need: Implement plans for high speed rail connection with Atlanta

Opportunities:

- Identify future Columbus Airport expansion opportunities.
- Provide safer transportation option between Atlanta and Columbus.
- Align with national transportation goals.

Need: Develop and maintain Columbus airport

Opportunities:

- Attract multiple low cost carriers.
- Increase connections with different regions.