

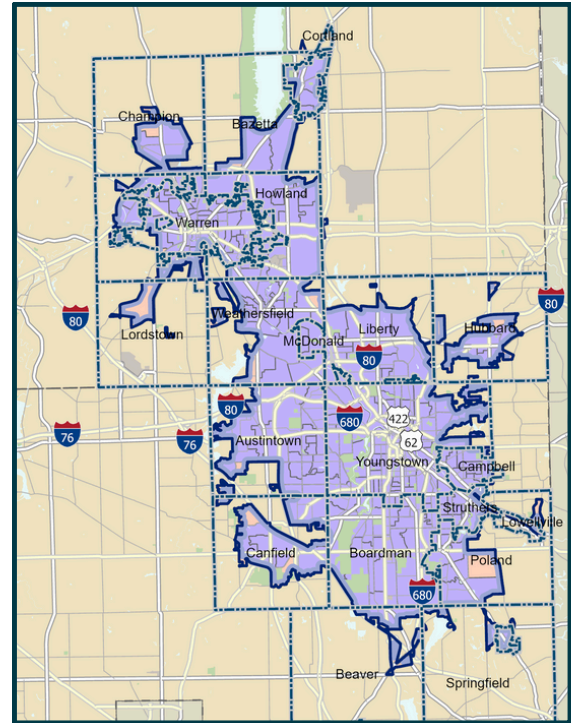
THE MAHONING VALLEY REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

Executive Summary

The Greater Ohio Policy Center (GOPC) and Reinvestment Fund were hired to create a Regional Housing Strategy for Mahoning and Trumbull Counties at the direction of the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments. **The Strategy includes recommendations for programs and initiatives that will help continue to stabilize and strengthen housing markets in the Mahoning Valley.**

The Strategy encompasses the full range of housing from luxury market rate to housing that serves the most vulnerable populations. It offers data-driven recommendations about policy, program, and funding adjustments that can help set the course for a better functioning housing market that encourages the types of housing that are needed in individual jurisdictions and sub-markets.

Research revealed population contraction, ample vacant land, small households, a desire for new housing options, and a need to address housing quality as top priorities for the Strategy. The Strategy also recognizes an eagerness among engaged and high-capacity organizations to tackle these issues.



STRATEGY COMPONENTS

- I. **Principles for Housing Development:** Provide the basis for the Strategy, based on quantitative and qualitative data
- II. **Housing Stock and Population Trends:** Provides insight into the potential housing market and development needs
- III. **Regional Recommendations:** Require collaboration across sectors and jurisdictions
- IV. **Localized Recommendations:** Implementable by organizations and local governments in their own communities
- V. **Appendices**

PRINCIPLES FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

- 1 Population projections suggest ambitious greenfield development will be difficult to support in the long run and the priority should be developing on vacant land within developed areas.
- 2 Championing small projects and developers is a winning strategy for the Valley.
- 3 Stabilizing places where people already live and improving the quality of life for residents is a top priority.
- 4 Renovating, repairing, and retrofitting existing units should continue to be a top priority.
- 5 New construction should mostly prioritize smaller homes and apartments in locations close to amenities with existing infrastructure.
- 6 Zoning modernization and consistency will lower development risk and allow new desired housing types to be built.
- 7 Wages have not kept pace with housing costs and leaders in the Valley should explore ways to close the gap.
- 8 Improved cooperation and regional coordination can help address shared challenges.

REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Regional initiatives require cross-sectoral partnership and new programmatic development. They are designed to address shared issues in a strategic, coordinated way.

Proposed new regional initiatives include:

- **Housing Consortium:** intermediary body at the center of the housing wheel ensuring alignment and coordination across sectors and geographies
- **Emerging Developers Training Program:** technical assistance and financial support to grow the developer ecosystem, promote infill housing, and keep wealth building opportunities local to Mahoning Valley
- **Coordinated Zoning Adjustments:** technical assistance and advocacy support to help local governments across the Mahoning Valley make needed zoning adjustments
- **Downpayment Assistance Programs:** partnerships with local employers to help recruit and retain talent and increase homeownership rates

LOCALIZED RECOMMENDATIONS

Localized initiatives can be implemented by individual actors in their own communities at any time, apart from the regional initiatives. They include strategies that are customizable to different types of local actors (e.g. local governments, non-profits, social service agencies, and developers) and for different market conditions.

These recommendations focus on the following goals:

- Protect existing housing stock and prevent decline
- Enhance existing neighborhoods and support existing residents
- Protect vulnerable populations
- Lower barriers to development and redevelopment

METHODOLOGY

To assemble the following recommendations, GOPC and Reinvestment Fund conducted interviews and focus groups with housing professionals, developers, and government officials/staff, analyzed quantitative and qualitative data; and conducted a regional survey of practitioners. For more information on the approach, please see the Appendix.

Three data analyses conducted by GOPC and Reinvestment Fund also inform for the Strategy:

- **Market Value Analysis:** A unique tool that identifies high demand markets, areas of greatest distress, and the various market types in between.
- **Housing Needs Assessment:** Analyzes the need for attainably priced housing among the general population and specific subpopulations.
- **Regional Tax Assessment Analysis:** Assesses the degree to which recent property tax assessment in Mahoning and Trumbull Counties are consistent, accurate and equitable.

Explore the full Strategy here: <https://eastgatecog.org/projects/planning-and-development/Regional-Housing-Plan>