

**The world is** *changing.*

**Greater Akron is** *ready.*

Communities across the U.S. are in the midst of a massive restructuring. Add to these macro issues significant local changes including new leadership, transformational polymer industry investment, and a shifting downtown landscape, Greater Akron is at a flash point. How we respond now to these shifts will shape the next decade and beyond.

**Elevate Greater Akron is a collaborative of government, business, and civic leaders working together to capitalize on opportunities in a rapidly changing world.**

Elevate Greater Akron is a way of working together. It is not a singular plan, but rather a shared vision and set of shared priorities to create a vibrant and more prosperous Greater Akron where all people have the opportunity to thrive.

**Learn more  
about how we  
are *elevating*  
the region**



### *Progress:*

In 2018, the **County of Summit, City of Akron, Greater Akron Chamber** and **GAR Foundation** came together to create a transformative, high-functioning, and collaborative economic development system for Greater Akron. Informed by market research, local interviews, and peer city insights, Elevate Greater Akron was born. Since then, we:

- Created the Polymer Industry Cluster and secured a **\$250K** Industry Sector Partnership Accelerant award, USEDPA Sustainable Polymers Tech Hubs designation, **\$51M** federal Tech Hub award, and **\$31M** state Innovation Hub award
- Published the Economic Case for Inclusion and hosted the 2019 Inclusion Summit
- Deployed **\$14.3M** in Covid Small Business grants to over **3,200** businesses
- Created the Greater Akron Business Navigator with over **200** resources for businesses
- Built a coordinated business retention, expansion and attraction ecosystem, serving over **320** companies a year
- Registered a downtown community development corporation and supported the attraction of over **\$176M** to downtown Akron

**ElevateGreaterAkron**  
*shared priorities for shared prosperity*



# Shared Priorities, Coordinated Effort



## Global Polymer Capital

- Pursue state and federal resources to advance innovations in the polymer industry and fuel the growth of the Polymer Industry Cluster
- Identify and support R&D projects that solve pressing challenges broadly affecting industry partners, especially where sustainability is a common theme
- Improve access to commercialization, including capital, for impactful innovations to be adopted by industry
- Strengthen and diversify the polymer industry supplier network and talent pipeline
- Attract polymer-specific companies and jobs to Greater Akron
- Reposition polymers beyond rubber and communicate a new, opportunity-focused, regional narrative that resonates with companies and residents of all types



## Opportunity Akron

- Continue to prioritize technical assistance and capital for new, start up, and existing Black-owned businesses
- Increase workforce training for careers in in-demand industries with an intentional focus on tailoring opportunities and outreach to Black residents
- Connect minority-owned businesses to procurement opportunities and facilitate peer-based learning on procurement best practices
- Help businesses diversify new hire pipelines and foster inclusive cultures
- Advocate for improved access to high-quality jobs and equitable access to early childhood education, transportation, housing, and other social determinants of work



## Strong Downtown, Strong Region

- Through the new Downtown Development Corporation, identify, engage, and close deals with potential investors and developers
- Increase downtown residents and address vacant commercial space through adaptive reuse
- Concentrate and curate retail activity, enhance key corridors, and develop a convention center-adjacent hotel to drive density, increase activity, and attract businesses and visitors
- Leverage trails, recreation, arts, culture, and entertainment to strengthen an inclusive sense of place, support a high quality of life, and increase the visitor economy
- Increase geographic connectivity and engagement with University of Akron students and faculty in the utilization and celebration of downtown



## The New Fundamentals

- Continue to drive coordinated, solution-oriented business retention, expansion, and attraction for large, mid-sized, and targeted-sector companies
- Support small businesses and entrepreneurs via coordinated support services, shared strategies, and shared measures that prioritize inclusive growth and longevity
- Cultivate and grow a vibrant network of technology-based startups, investors, mentors, and industry experts
- Provide regional employers with navigation services to overcome workforce challenges
- Prioritize site readiness with special focus on commercial real estate opportunities in and accessible to low-income and urban areas
- Coordinate regional funding proposals, advocacy, and communications to advance economic development in Greater Akron

## Leaders

