

GreenCityBlueLake

Arts & Culture

The arts challenge us—open our eyes to new possibilities and new worlds. In a region undergoing transformation, the arts force us to confront the tired, old ways, expose the ugliness, and inspire us to envision a better future. **We hunger for inspiration**, to be touched by higher truths. We want to tell our stories, sing our songs. We need festivals, happenings, dancing in the streets. For us, a sustainable community has poetry, elegance, and joy. It has a beautiful soul.

Building

We are builders. We want better communities, housing, schools, jobs—and all that will require changes to our built environment, both new development and redevelopment. We plan to meet our needs with affordable, high-performance buildings that use far less materials and energy than conventional buildings, while being healthy, delightful places for the occupants. **We dare to imagine that our buildings can be like living organisms that give back to the earth more than they take.** And we are extending our design intelligence to place our buildings together on great streets and public spaces—the public realm that enlivens the best cities.

Economy

Business—with its vast command of people and resources—has the power to change the world. In Northeast Ohio, that power is being harnessed to accelerate the transformation to greater sustainability. Our most successful and innovative businesses pay attention to the "triple bottom line" that broadens the measure of success to include economic capital, social capital, and natural capital. These businesses operate within a network of collaborative relationships, linking local capacities with the most advanced thinking from around the world. They are committed to this place, while participating in a global conversation about the responsibilities of sustainable business in the 21st century.

Education

Educated people are our greatest asset, but what and how do we teach? The interdependent, global society of the 21st century demands new lessons and approaches to learning. So we are teaching the habits of healing, regeneration, collaboration, the ability to think in whole systems. We are celebrating creativity and provocative questions. We are developing civic spaces in which to share, learn, debate, and invent our future. Most of all, **we are listening to this place**, discovering how to live here, learning how to love this part of the planet. And we hope that if we can pass this love on to our children, they will stay here and be able to find their own future.

Energy

Our civilization is driven by fire—driven by the burning of fossil fuels in our vehicles, buildings, and power plants. But there are signs the fire is not sustainable. The atmosphere is heating up from greenhouse gas emissions, and the era of cheap oil will soon come to an end. Quickly, we need a massive transition to an economy running on clean, renewable energy. Communities and companies that do not adapt will suffer serious economic disruptions; those who adapt first will gain competitive advantage. In Northeast Ohio, **we are committed to being a leader—seeking out the energy alternatives** that will drive innovation and prosperity. Joining with progressive cities and regions around the world, we will reduce our energy burden on the rest of the planet.

Food

We are what we eat, and, in many ways, the earth also is shaped by what we eat. Industrial-scale agriculture consumes vast amounts petroleum, chemicals, soil and water. And the processing and transport of food products thousands of miles to our tables consumes even more resources and energy. Northeast Ohio has beautiful farmland and a climate that permits cultivation of a diversity of crops. By eating more foods grown with care by local, organic farms, **we can reduce agriculture's ecological impacts and support the local economy.** We can also eat healthier! So we are developing a regional food system that links farms with consumers in the city—creating markets that nourish the soul and the earth.

Health

We are enmeshed in webs of life. Our health depends on the health of our families, communities, and the ecological functions of nature. We understand these relationships, and we are committed to promoting health in all of its dimensions. This goes beyond health care—an area where Northeast Ohio is already an international leader—to a profound questioning about what it means to live a good life in the 21st century. After all, health is not just the absence of illness; it is the fulfillment of possibility. Therefore, **we seek to nurture the potential of every person.**

Land

We live with diverse landscapes in Northeast Ohio. We have natural areas harboring remnants of biological richness that evolved here since the last Ice Age. We have a working countryside of pastoral beauty and picturesque small towns harkening back to the settlement of the Western Reserve. We have vibrant urban neighborhoods, great city centers, and an incredible industrial landscape. We love all these special places and seek to sustain the best qualities of each, emphasizing conservation, restoration, and redevelopment. In short, **we seek a regional pattern of settlement that allows us to live sustainably on the land.**

Spirit

Amidst the onrushing cacophony of modern life, we search for the center that can hold—hold us together as individuals, communities, and a shared earth. We start by slowing down, looking around, and standing firmly on the ground. This is our home, this territory on the shore of a Great Lake where glaciers have come and gone. **We feel the sacred resonance of this place.** We hear the ancient, whispered stories of the people, the land, the rivers. They teach us what we need to live full human lives—full of care, full of beauty, full of grace. Generation by generation, we are learning how to live here. **This is our Great Work.**

Transportation

Great cities concentrate choices and opportunities. Everything is made accessible, and the key to this accessibility is proximity. When the things you need—work, friends, shopping, recreation—are located close together, then you don't need much transportation to reach them. In Northeast Ohio, **we are developing cities, towns, and neighborhoods that offer this convenience.** And our transportation investments—for transit, bicycle facilities, walkable streets and urban boulevards—are contributing to the life of healthy communities where everyone has real choices about how to get around.

Water

We are water beings. Our bodies are mostly water, and at every moment we are exchanging water molecules with the surrounding environment. Indeed, we have a more intimate relationship with our local lakes and streams than with any person. As people of the Great Lakes, **we are also stewards of the largest bodies of freshwater on the planet** — a global resource of incalculable value. In many ways, our legacy will be determined by how well we care for water. We have come a long way in the past 30 years, and we are committed to doing even better in the future. We will celebrate water and be an example to the world.