



January 10, 2023

Mayor Justin M. Bibb
601 Lakeside Avenue, Room 227
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

Council President Blaine A. Griffin
601 Lakeside Avenue, Room 220
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

Dear Mayor Bibb and Council President Griffin:

This serves as the Greater Cleveland Partnership's (GCP) Letter of Intent for the Built Environment request.

See highlighted bullet points for additional information/ emphasis to be shared by C. Nance to Cleveland City Council's Workforce, Education, Training and Youth Development Committee
Christopher (Chris) Nance, Vice President, Construction, Greater Cleveland Partnership
Tuesday, January 24, 2023.

Statement of Interest

According to GCP's recent *Time to Expand* study prepared by Upjohn Institute, along with related analysis/ estimates over \$20 billion dollars will be invested in Greater Cleveland's construction projects in the next decade. Furthermore, our region will need hundreds of replacement workers each year to meet ongoing construction demand. Therefore, the Built Environment workforce collaboration is a timely and necessary response where the GCP will leverage our relationships with major employers and advance our decade long commitment to advance equity and inclusion across the construction sector.

- The Greater Cleveland Partnership is the region's leading economic development organization
 - GCP's membership includes 12,000 large, mid-size and small businesses
- Our (GCP's) work is grounded and guided by data.
 - As such, we are pleased to have commissioned, completed, and published a comprehensive update of our region's construction workforce titled; *Time to Expand* (link to full report here):
 - ["Time to Expand?!: A Workforce Study of Construction Occupations in the" by Kathleen Bolter, Jim Robey et al. \(upjohn.org\)](#)

Organization's Role

The Built Environment initiative will leverage GCP's Construction Utilities Buildings & Equity (CUBE) Initiative:

- GCP/CUBE is the strategic through-line for advocating and advancing inclusion efforts in the construction sector for over a decade:
 - The GCP's commitment to diversity in construction is rooted in facilitating the effort which produced, in 2013, the Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Community Benefits and Inclusion – which included creating a public / private working group known as the Construction Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) initiative now updated/reframed as CUBE.
- GCP/CUBE has/will convene major employers (aka project owners) - around the successes, challenges and opportunities for women and communities of color across construction
 - Over the years our construction inclusion efforts have included some successes and as well as some challenges:
 - **Successes:**
 - Produced two demand studies of the construction workforce (2014 & 2021) – and hosted a Construction Data Summit in May 2021
 - Convened major employers who voluntarily shared diversity outcomes for construction projects including workforce and FBE/ MBE's participation.
 - Brought nearly 100 diverse individuals into the construction sector – in collaboration with the Urban League, Towards Employment, El Barrio, Tri-C and the Building Trades - a model that has now been replicated by many of those same partners - - along with others.
 - Continued to refine our outreach strategies to include professional services, real estate development, utilities i.e. broadband - driven by an understanding of the marketplace and a commitment to equity.
 - **Challenges:**
 - Identifying sustainable funding sources to advance construction inclusion efforts
 - Limited understanding of the earning potential of construction careers, especially among youth and young adults
 - The perception – or even reality – that the construction sector is a “friends and family” business and - as such - women and communities of color are reluctant to invest the time and energy to fully explore opportunities
 - After a decade of good-faith efforts, overall workforce and business participation across the construction sector is low e.g., about 5% MBE participation in major construction projects over the last decade



- GCP/CUBE is actively engaged with the City of Cleveland in shaping a Community Benefit Ordinance (CBO) which will expand the legislative foundation to advance diversity efforts in construction.
 - The GCP/CUBE supported the several stakeholder/ outreach sessions that included: major employers/builders of major projects, owners of color, construction managers, workforce organizations and others to solicit input/feedback that are now informing the CBO legislation.
- GCP/CUBE will actively collaborate and leverage GCP's strategic and tactical engagement in key efforts that align with key aspects of the Built Environment initiative e.g., the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), the Apprenticeship Hub, Broadband Expansion and Sustainability Initiatives
 - The GCP serves as the lead organization for several key initiatives that require the creation and/or expansion of female and minority owned firms.

Built Environment's Connection to GCP's Strategy

The Greater Cleveland Partnership's mission to accelerate growth and prosperity for our region connects directly to the goals for the Built Environment initiative. Further, this initiative also aligns with GCP's All In strategies that include *abundant talent, appealing communities, and inclusive opportunity*. As it relates to *Abundant Talent*, the CUBE effort has served in a leadership role in shaping the construction sector's engagement with CMSD's PACE effort as well as the expanded **Greater Cleveland Career Consortium (GCCC)** to expand the construction talent pipeline. The City of Cleveland and GCP are driving the **Lakefront Development** (*read as appealing communities*) project which is being supported by CUBE's insights in guiding one of the Lakefront's key strategies - the community benefits working group. And advancing *inclusive opportunity* for communities of color and MBE's is at the heart of City of Cleveland's CBO/ legislation where CUBE is serving as a key advisor.

- [Greater Cleveland Career Consortium \(GCCC\) \(greaterclecc.org\)](http://greaterclecc.org)
- [Greater Cleveland Partnership will coordinate public-private engagement on lakefront project, with city in lead role - cleveland.com](http://cleveland.com)



Programmatic Alignment

GCP established its construction diversity efforts to focus on building equity in the construction sector by expanding job and business opportunities for women and communities of color. To support the Built Environment initiative, GCP will identify 15-20 MBE firms, with proven track records of success, that includes successfully completing projects across over 3 years and producing annual revenues of \$500,000 or more.

- Prospects/program participants will include FBE/MBE firms across the construction sector including, professional services (read - architecture, engineering, finance etc.), construction management as well as real estate management and development.
- Prospects/program participants will be supported, coached, and encouraged to move to the next level of business success by leveraging a variety of tools and programs e.g., access to capital, bonding and insurance, business advising etc.

Each firm will be actively engaged in the Built Environment effort by doing 2 or more of the following: meaningful hiring of interns, apprentices, full-time or part-time jobs (focusing on women and communities of color); partnering and collaborating with other MBEs to pursue meaningful contracting opportunities; or becoming a prime contractor, owners' representative, or joint venture partner.

- GCP will work in collaboration with both our employers and workforce partners to leverage the growth of FBE/MBE firms
- [Meet the Black woman-owned construction firm helping the Cleveland Guardians reimagine Progressive Field – Greater Cleveland Partnership](#)

Conclusion

The GCP is excited to serve as a key partner for the Built Environment initiative. It is our intention to fully leverage our experience, knowledge, and expertise to build collaborations that advance equity and inclusion across Greater Cleveland's construction sector.

Sincerely,

Patrice Blakemore
Senior Vice President of Equity & Inclusion, Greater Cleveland Partnership