

## MEMORANDUM

**From:** Emma González Roberts  
**To:** Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz  
**Date:** February 26, 2020  
**Re:** New Ideas for Economic Development Planning in Toledo

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**The purpose of this memorandum is to recommend new ideas for economic development planning in Toledo and steps for how to start exploring them.** As Toledo builds upon its momentum of economic growth, the City should root its economic development strategy in racial equity and inclusion. The City should begin by evaluating its existing economic development plans and programs with an equity and inclusion lens. This includes conducting Racial Equity Impact Assessments, setting City staff hiring goals, analyzing City contracts, and taking steps towards creating an Economic Equity Plan designed to make Toledo's growing economy work for everyone.

**While the unemployment rate has decreased and real per capita income has increased over the past ten years, Toledo's growth is not felt equally across all residents.** 26.5 percent of the population lives in poverty, in comparison to 14.9 percent in the State of Ohio and 11.8 percent nationwide<sup>1</sup>. Median household income for white families is \$39,414 in comparison to \$34,263 for Hispanic families and \$25,120 for Black families<sup>2</sup>. Directly addressing Toledo's challenges of concentrated poverty and racial wealth disparities through its economic development strategy is crucial to achieving overall prosperity.

**The City should evaluate its existing economic development efforts using Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIA).** The City could begin by conducting a REIA on one large proposed development (e.g. the Marina District) and one large economic development program (e.g. Community Development Block Grants). In the context of the Marina District, a REIA would provide a systematic analysis of which groups will benefit and which groups will be harmed by the development process and outcome. In the context of CDBG, a REIA would identify obstacles applicants face in the application process and provide an analysis of the extent to which the program is actually impacting communities that are most in need.

**As Toledo's seventh-largest employer, the City should understand the extent to which City employees represent the population and set hiring goals accordingly.** As City jobs provide a stable salary and outstanding benefits, the City should ensure that its staff is inclusive and representative of the population it serves. Upon conducting an analysis of current staff demographics, the City should make the information available through a public dashboard in the effort to hold itself accountable to its goals.

**With its \$268 million budget, the City should analyze the extent to which City contracts are being awarded to minority and women-owned businesses (M/WBEs) and set goals accordingly.** The City should conduct a Disparity Study that compares the total number M/WBEs operating in the City to the total number of M/WBEs that currently hold City contracts. Using this information, the City should set contract goals and consider creating programs and training targeted towards supporting M/WBEs success and longevity.

**Toledo needs an Economic Equity Plan that provides a roadmap for how the City will maximize the ability for all residents to contribute to and benefit from its economic growth.** The ideas outlined above are a starting point for developing a comprehensive plan to address equity across all economic development efforts including large development projects, small business support, job growth, and economic mobility. It is only through directly addressing racial disparities that Toledo can achieve lasting economic prosperity and improved quality of life for all. Please let me know if you need any additional information regarding these recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> "Poverty in Toledo, Ohio." 2017. Welfare Info. <https://www.welfareinfo.org/poverty-rate/ohio/toledo>

<sup>2</sup> "Toledo, Ohio." 2017. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

<https://www.rwjf.org/en/cultureofhealth/what-were-learning/sentinel-communities/toledo-ohio.html>

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