

GREATER ST. LOUIS INC.

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Updated STL 2030 Jobs Plan Released Following Extensive Community Feedback

Foreword by Greater St. Louis, Inc. Reflects on Public Comments

ST. LOUIS, May 5, 2021 – Led by internationally recognized economic development expert Bruce Katz, New Localism Associates today released an updated version of the *STL 2030 Jobs Plan*. The *STL 2030 Jobs Plan*, the first metrowide jobs plan in over a decade, provides a 10-year road map for boosting economic growth, increasing the number of quality, living-wage jobs, and reducing racial disparities in employment and wealth-generation to boost opportunities for all. Developed during the unprecedented era of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the jobs plan will help the St. Louis metro capitalize on its strengths to accelerate economic recovery with focus and speed.

The *STL 2030 Jobs Plan* recommends five actionable strategies to drive growth: (1) Steward an Inclusive Economy; (2) Restore the Core of St. Louis as the Jobs and Cultural Center of the Metropolis; (3) Build a World-Class Ecosystem for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs; (4) Become a Talent Engine and Magnet; and (5) Make St. Louis a Hub for Next-Generation Industries and Technologies.

Work on the plan began more than a year ago and included quantitative and qualitative analysis of the region's economy. A broad and diverse team of civic volunteers advised and assisted Katz throughout the planning process, along with local subject matter experts who participated in working groups focused on specific strategies. Katz also interviewed community, business, civic, nonprofit and economic development leaders across the metro. Greater St. Louis, Inc., the private-sector economic development organization that officially formed on Jan. 1, 2021, will shepherd the plan over the next decade.

Plan Strengthened by Community Feedback

In December 2020, Katz released a draft for public review and feedback. Over the course of nearly five months, residents from across the region shared their views, ideas and suggestions. Thousands participated in public meetings and dozens of feedback sessions with individual groups and organizations. Community leaders and residents also provided feedback via email and through the Greater St. Louis, Inc. website.

“Without a doubt, the extensive public dialogue and feedback from across the metro made this jobs plan stronger,” Katz said. “St. Louisans told us which ideas resonated most strongly, where the draft plan had gaps, and which recommendations needed additional thought and explanation. Perhaps most importantly, we learned which topics were of greatest concern to St. Louis residents. In my work globally, I have never seen such widespread community energy, engagement and participation around a jobs plan. I believe this will be a positive inflection point for inclusive economic growth in the St. Louis metro.”

Based on public feedback, Katz and his team made substantial revisions to the initial draft. One of the most significant changes included enhancing clarity and context around the definition and goals of inclusive growth. The revised draft recommends five top-line goals, which require further discussion and feedback. They are: (1) grow the number of quality jobs in the metro; (2) strengthen employer commitment to buy, hire and invest locally; (3) boost employment density and rejuvenation of the urban core; (4) increase the number of Black workers with quality jobs; and (5) expand entrepreneurship opportunities for Black and Brown residents. These goals will be refined through further stakeholder dialogue and feedback, particularly as economic recovery continues and more accurate data about current employment and economic conditions become available.

Katz and his team also reinforced the focus on the entire metro area and its assets, clarified the geography of the urban core, and highlighted the importance of arts and culture, among other revisions. Katz discusses these changes in greater detail in a video [here](#).

Foreword by Greater St. Louis, Inc. Reflects Feedback, Addresses Questions

In addition to the revised plan by Katz, Greater St. Louis, Inc. prepared a foreword to share additional context on the feedback process and respond to questions, comments and suggestions raised, specifically involving the plan’s implementation. The foreword was authored by several senior executives of Greater St. Louis, Inc., including CEO Jason Hall; Valerie Patton, Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer, and President, Greater St. Louis Foundation; and Steve Johnson, Chief Business Attraction Officer & President, AllianceSTL. These leaders collectively represent more than 70 years of professional economic development experience in the public and private sectors.

“We thank Bruce and the entire New Localism Associates team for their outstanding work to develop and revise the *STL 2030 Jobs Plan* and for the many hours they spent listening to residents across the metro,” Hall said. “This decade presents the opportunity for a new era of inclusive growth in St. Louis. In the early 2000s, civic leaders laid out a vision to create a vibrant biotech sector and entrepreneurial support system in St. Louis. That vision was tremendously successful. In the 2020s, this jobs plan gives us a new vision to expand the map of opportunities that will allow our metro to thrive. We want to make this a decade of growth and economic opportunity for all.”

“Stewarding inclusive growth must be a top priority for our region,” Patton said. “As we move forward, we must stay focused on increasing the number of quality jobs in our metro, while also closing the racial and spatial disparities that have held St. Louis back for far too long. With clarity, focus and intention, I am confident our metro can make great strides by 2030, but we know the work to achieve social and racial justice and economic opportunity must be ongoing.”

Focus Now Shifts to Implementation

With the revised *STL 2030 Jobs Plan* now released, the focus turns to implementation. For some strategies – such as Supply STL, which calls for metro-area anchors to use their purchasing power to drive growth and job creation in local small businesses, with particular focus on Black, Brown and/or women-owned firms – Greater St. Louis, Inc. will convene and lead. Recruitment of businesses in key industry clusters identified in the plan will also be a priority for Greater St. Louis, Inc. On other initiatives, Greater St. Louis, Inc. will play a supporting role.

“The *STL 2030 Jobs Plan* makes it clear that St. Louis has a distinctive advantage in key industry clusters and next-generation sectors that will be the focus of our business-recruitment efforts,” Johnson said. “As part of our ongoing business attraction efforts, we will be standing up business-led councils to develop clear and focused strategies for each of the priority industries identified in the plan. With these high-growth sectors as our target, St. Louis stands poised for renewed economic prosperity and job creation.”

The next decade also presents a transformative opportunity for St. Louis to become the global center of excellence in the geospatial industry, with cutting-edge advances in fields from precision agriculture to climate science to public health.

“The *STL 2030 Jobs Plan* reinforces key findings from the GeoFutures Strategic Roadmap, which centered inclusive growth as a core principle from the outset and is already delivering promising new initiatives by organizations like Harris-Stowe State University and Maxar Technologies to create opportunities for Black residents in this growing industry,” said Andy Dearing, Project Lead of GeoFutures, an initiative of Greater St. Louis, Inc. “We look forward to showcasing our metro’s geospatial strengths this fall when St. Louis hosts the global GEOINT Symposium for the first time ever.”

A range of civic and community organizations and coalitions will take the lead on other recommendations. For instance, Great Rivers Greenway, with many partners and community engagement, will drive completion of the Brickline Greenway, a key action item recommended under the Restore the Core strategy. In another effort, business leaders are already coming together to address the plan’s recommendations around workforce development.

“The STL 2030 Jobs Plan calls for industry-led workforce collaboratives as a key priority, and we are organizing to do just that,” said Nicole Adewale, Principal and Co-Founder of ABNA Engineering. “Leaders at Daugherty Business Solutions and Evernorth joined with area CIOs to frame a break-through approach to partnering with area high schools to exponentially grow the pool of diverse young people going into careers in Information Technology. I’m proud to be serving our community alongside leaders like Ron Daugherty, Tim Wentworth and Jon Joplin who are driving this effort. They created Access Point by reverse-engineering the traditional workforce pipeline starting with the identification of available entry level IT jobs and then aligning those needs with High School and Higher Education curriculum. This will accelerate inclusive growth and shorten the path to technology jobs. Innovative education leaders like Jeff Pittman and Kristin Sobolik are also key partners in this effort and are helping us drive alignment with industry to a whole new level. The pilot of 25 students underway right now will expand to hundreds next year and help transform how we grow the diverse workforce of the future.” Bank of America provided funding for the pilot.

Continuing to nurture St. Louis’ already strong support network for entrepreneurship and innovation is another key recommendation, as is increasing the entrepreneurial capacity of Black and Brown residents. Local organizations such as Arch Grants, T-REX, OPO Startups, the Cortex Innovation Community and BioSTL will play vital leadership roles in this work. Arch Grants recently surpassed the \$20 million mark as part of its Sustained Impact Campaign, which will enable the organization to increase its funding to entrepreneurs by more than 50% this year. Bank of America also recently donated \$1 million to Arch Grants specifically to support Black- and Latino-led start-ups.

“Every day, I see the diverse solutions and technologies that St. Louis entrepreneurs are creating to transform our community and the world for the better,” said Emily Lohse-Busch, Executive Director of Arch Grants. “Supporting and growing our entrepreneurial ecosystem will be a pillar of our metro’s growth over the coming decade – and beyond. The *STL 2030 Jobs Plan* gives us an important framework by which to orient our work and align our collective efforts for maximum benefit to the region.”

For More Information

The *STL 2030 Jobs Plan* is a living document that will evolve over the coming decade. Substantial work remains to create new capacities to drive forward key strategies recommended by Katz. The plan, including the foreword and an overview, can be found [here](#).

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Greater St. Louis, Inc.

Greater St. Louis, Inc. is a 501(c)(6) organization of businesses formed through the merger of five private-sector led and St. Louis-focused economic development and civic leadership organizations on Jan. 1, 2021. The five combining organizations were AllianceSTL, Arch to Park, Civic Progress, Downtown STL, Inc., and the St. Louis Regional Chamber. Greater St. Louis, Inc. brings together the business community to help drive economic growth and create opportunities for all with a focus on inclusive growth. Greater St. Louis, Inc. is in a position to drive economic growth with a unified voice, a bold agenda, and as one St. Louis metropolitan area that is anchored by a vibrant urban core. Additional information is available at www.GreaterSTLinc.com.