Greater Baltimore Committee Long-Term Strategic Priorities

- Creating and advocating for a competitive business environment to attract new businesses and expand existing businesses thereby creating jobs and opportunities.
- Developing and promoting a comprehensive and efficient regional transportation system capable of moving goods, services and the workforce.
- Building and nurturing a highly trained and educated workforce to meet the needs of the 21st century knowledge-based economy.
- Providing programs and services to GBC members that enhance their community involvement, open doors for new business opportunities, and highlight the company’s assets to the greater Baltimore community.

2011 Legislative Agenda

Resolving the now-chronic disconnect between state government leaders and Maryland's business and economic development community prompted the Greater Baltimore Committee to launch an initiative aimed at furthering the dialogue between our state's private and public sectors. The GBC conducted broad-ranging discussions, focus groups, feedback sessions, and other meetings with business leaders and economic developers. Participants included CEOs and business executives, current economic development directors from around the state, and seven former secretaries of the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development.

The objective was to develop a consensus among Maryland's business and economic development leaders on the key components of a strong business environment that will result in job creation, an increasing tax base and business vitality that will give Maryland a competitive edge as a business location.

Amid the maze of inconsistencies in national surveys and reports, some key strengths and areas of concern for Maryland emerge from the business climate rankings as a whole. Maryland consistently shows strength in growth prospects, technology and innovation, workforce education, and "new economy" resources. Consistent areas of concern include comparatively high corporate and individual tax rates, utility costs, crime rates and the cost of doing business. What Maryland can, and should, do is decide specifically who we want to be as a competitor for business location and expansion, and as a place for businesses to grow and prosper. Business leaders and policy makers in Annapolis should work to achieve a consensus on what key business development policies and business climate elements are important to achieving the goal of making Maryland the best possible competitor for economic growth.

If the recession has taught us anything, it's that a thriving private-sector is the engine that drives business growth, job creation and ultimately Maryland's economic future and quality of life.
Protecting A Viable Business Climate
- The Greater Baltimore Committee opposes any proposals to increase or restructure corporate taxes and supports the recommendation of the Business Tax Reform Commission not to institute combined reporting.
- Tax credits have proven to be a sound investment tool to spur economic growth and create jobs. The GBC supports retaining business tax credits including:
  - The full funding of the bioscience tax credit at FY 2011 levels in order to fully maximize the State's return and capitalize on this emerging industry.
  - The renewal of the Research and Development (R&D) tax credit at its current level to ensure a competitive environment with our neighboring states.

Growing the Economic Base
- Recognizing the tremendous potential for greater numbers of minority and women-owned businesses, the Greater Baltimore Committee supports the reauthorization of the MBE and WBE programs and other policies aimed at the development and expansion of minority and women-owned businesses including the funding of programs such as the Maryland Small Business Development Financing Authority.
- The GBC supports the extension of the Small Business Reserve Program, which offers more opportunities for small businesses to partner with the state and expand capacity within the private sector.
- The Greater Baltimore Committee urges increased funding of the Department of Business and Economic Development in order to assure that financing and necessary resources are available to Maryland businesses and those seeking to expand in Maryland.
- The GBC supports providing the Department of Business and Economic Development with the necessary tools to recapitalize early stage venture capital competitiveness and encourage investment in small and minority business enterprises.

Core Pillars for a Competitive Business Environment and Job Creation
- Government leadership that unites with business as a partner. Maryland leaders must set a welcoming tone that communicates positive support for business, respect for the private sector as a partner, not an adversary, and reflects a strategic plan for business growth and job creation.
- Workforce that is highly-educated and meets Maryland's business needs. Maryland's secondary and higher education institutions must offer access to quality instruction at all levels and cultivate a workforce that is well-suited to a modern economy and to the specific needs of Maryland's business sectors.
- Regulatory policies that are streamlined, stable and predictable. Maryland must project to businesses within and outside the state that its government regulatory policies are reasonable, relevant, free of surprises or redundancy, and considerate of businesses’ sense of urgency.
- Tax structure that is fair and competitive. Maryland’s tax policy must be perceived by business as being competitive and devoid of elements that unreasonably target specific businesses or business sectors.
- Competitive costs of doing business. Public policies must reflect a government predisposition to nurture business growth and to avoid arbitrarily or disproportionately imposing additional overhead upon the business sector.
- Superior transportation infrastructure with reliable funding mechanisms. An essential prerequisite of a competitive business environment includes well-funded and maintained highway, transit, port and airport infrastructure that provides reliable and efficient options to move people, goods and services.
- Strategic and effective state investments in business growth. The state must commit to substantive strategic investments, leveraged with capital assets, to nurture business and job growth. Investments should include competitive and effective tax credits, business development incentives, and tactical initiatives to nurture private investment in industry growth.
- Business marketing strategy that is aggressive, coordinated, long-term, and well-funded. Success breeds success. Competitive states celebrate their businesses’ achievements by investing in comprehensive communication and promotion to internal and national audiences of business strengths and the state’s assets as a place to live and work.

Education
- The GBC fully supports the continued growth and expansion of quality charter schools that are setting a new bar for innovative teaching techniques in Maryland. To continue the creation and expansion of these educational partners, the charter school law should be amended to grant broader autonomy. Teachers should be able to meet the needs of their students by offering educational opportunities on a case by case basis.
  - The Greater Baltimore Committee continues its support of investing in higher education to ensure that Maryland has a highly qualified and trained workforce to serve our growing knowledge-based economy.
  - The GBC recognizes that STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) subjects are at the core of the knowledge base economy critical to Maryland’s future. Every effort must be made to ensure that primary and secondary schools are deeply rooted in these subjects in order to properly prepare our youth for higher education opportunities and the workforce.
- A strong trend in positive test results indicates a well-structured partnership between the State of Maryland, the City of Baltimore and the Baltimore City Public School System. The Baltimore City Public School System and Baltimore Teachers Union successfully negotiated an agreement to provide for strong accountability and pay for teachers based on performance. The GBC supports the education reform efforts and opposes any changes that would threaten the continued progress of Baltimore City public schools.

Transportation
- The GBC remains committed to ensuring the construction of the Red Line from Western Baltimore County through Baltimore City and ending in Southeast Baltimore City.
- The GBC is committed to increased funding to ensure the sustainability and development of Maryland’s transportation infrastructure.
- GBC continues its long standing support of establishing a “firewall” to protect the integrity of the Transportation Trust Fund to ensure that the funds designated for the maintenance and expansion of our state’s transportation system are used for those purposes. Passage of “firewall” legislation is necessary to restore “public trust” in the Transportation Trust Fund.
- The GBC supports eliminating statutory restrictions on federal and state funds to pursue the Maglev system.
- The GBC urges the Executive Branch to work closely with our Congressional representatives to support federal transportation reauthorization.