

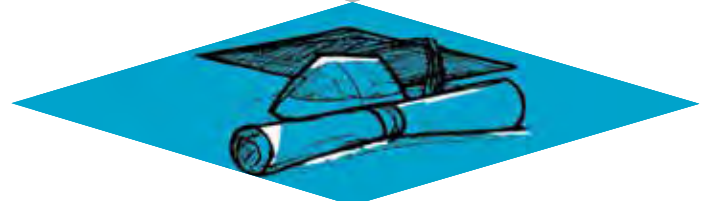
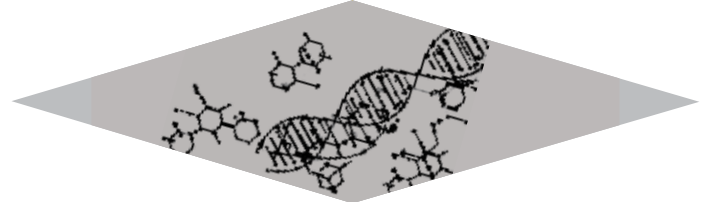


# 1955-2020

*65 Year Anniversary  
Retrospective*

*Vision, Leadership  
and Accomplishment*

# GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE



*Regional business leaders creating a better tomorrow . . . today.*

# 1955 GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

# 65 Years of Vision, Leadership, Accomplishment



Pratt Street Piers, 1955

## The Beginning

Eighty-three Baltimore business leaders met for dinner on January 5, 1955 and created the Greater Baltimore Committee.

The idea to create an action-oriented organization of business leaders to visualize ways to meet Greater Baltimore's competitive challenges and apply private-sector influence and resources to accomplish key initiatives had been percolating for three years among a small group of business leaders, including a young mortgage banker named James Rouse.



James W. Rouse

Private-sector leaders were concerned about growing challenges that Baltimore faced—a decaying central city, outmoded land use, declining property values and tax revenue.

The Greater Baltimore Committee was formed to take “prompt and aggressive action looking towards the solution of many of the city's most pressing problems,” announced a press release GBC founders issued at their first 1955 meeting. The organization was “not interested in glamour, platitudes or false promises,” but instead was envisioned as an action committee dedicated to developing solutions to chronic problems that were impeding the city's business growth.”



Downtown, 1958



Clarence W. Miles

Clarence W. Miles, a founding partner of Miles & Stockbridge and president of the Orioles, which he had brought to Baltimore the year before, was named the first GBC chairman. Thomas B. Butler, president of the Mercantile Safe Deposit and Trust Co., was vice-chairman; Daniel A. Lindley, president of the

Canton Company, was secretary; and Jerold C. Hoffberger, president of the National Brewing Co., was the first GBC treasurer.

Rouse was named chairman of the GBC's first executive committee. Rouse later served as the GBC's chairman in 1964 and 1965.

Its founders envisioned the GBC as “a voluntary citizen-arm of government; non-sectional; non-political, and non-profit making,” the press release stated. “It comes into existence because the problems of civic improvement in Baltimore are so complex, urgent and diversified that as many citizens as possible should assume a share of the responsibility.”

Among the city’s needs cited by the GBC’s 1955 founders were: accelerated construction of the Jones Falls Expressway; building a civic center for conventions, cultural activities and sports events; development of the city’s port facilities; developing a plan for modernizing mass transportation; and developing a comprehensive urban renewal plan.

The GBC was born out of an awareness that many proposals that would contribute to the economic, cultural, or social vitality of Baltimore City failed not because the opposition was so strong, but because the support was so weak.

At the time, many development projects were being proposed. However, most failed due to the lack of broad community support. The GBC’s founders “realized that no amount of programming by the federal government, and no methods of attack undertaken by public and private service agencies, could be successful unless they were also supported and influenced by local business leaders who knew Baltimore’s strengths and weaknesses first hand.”

It was to be the GBC’s role to work for the ideas that might initially lack a strong voice but which had significant meaning for the development of a greater Baltimore.

The idea of a business-led civic group like the Greater Baltimore Committee was not original. Founders cited similar groups that existed in 1955 in other cities, including Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, St. Louis, and Philadelphia.

The first GBC press release cited the Greater Milwaukee Committee’s record of accomplishment as evidence that “doing business in a fine, efficient, geared-for-motion community is better than doing business in a run-down, traffic-clogged, wretched community.”

## Early Years—Planning Baltimore’s Transformation

The many substantial issues tackled by the GBC during its early years, included construction of the Jones Falls Expressway, development of Friendship Airport (now BWI Marshall), construction of the Baltimore Civic Center (now Royal Farms Arena), and creation of the Maryland Transit Authority. But two hallmark projects were spawned by the GBC in its first 15 years that changed the face of Baltimore—Charles Center and the Inner Harbor redevelopment.

**Charles Center—the GBC’s first signature project.** The GBC started with Charles Center, a bold plan for massive redevelopment of Baltimore’s downtown core, a mid-town section between Saratoga Street on the north and Lombard Street on the south, and Liberty Street on the west and Charles Street on the east.

Highlights of the Charles Center project’s early development process included:

- 1956—The project was conceived by the GBC Planning Council, a nonprofit subsidiary formed and chaired by Hunter Moss, a commercial real estate consultant. After a national search, renowned architect David A. Wallace was hired as the council’s first director of planning.
- 1957—Mayor Thomas D’Alessandro, Jr. signed a contract with the GBC Planning Council and the Committee for Downtown to develop a plan for downtown revitalization. That same year, Walter Sondheim, Jr. was named chairman of the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency (BURHA).
- 1958—The GBC conducted a campaign to promote the proposed Charles Center project to elected officials and the public, gaining the support of Mayor Thomas J. D’Alessandro, Jr. In November, city voters approved a \$25 million bond issue for property acquisition and site work for the project.
- 1959—The City Council adopted the GBC Planning Council’s Charles Center project as an urban renewal plan. The Charles Center Management Office was created as a division of BURHA to manage the implementation of the GBC plan. J. Jefferson Miller, retired executive vice president of the Hecht Company, served as the office’s first general manager, insisting on a salary of one dollar per year. In 1965, the office would evolve into Charles Center-Inner Harbor Management, Inc., a nonprofit corporation.



Charles Center

**Inner Harbor—seizing an opportunity.** With work on Charles Center well underway, in 1963 newly elected Mayor Theodore McKeldin proposed a “new inner harbor area, where the imagination of man can take advantage of a rare gift of nature to produce an enthralling panorama of office buildings, parks, high-rise apartments, and marinas.”

- 1964—Architect David Wallace produced a plan for a 30-year, \$260 million effort to redevelop the harbor’s edge.
- 1965—Charles Center-Inner Harbor Management, Inc. was created as a nonprofit successor to the Charles Center Management Office. J. Jefferson Miller continued as general manager of the Charles Center project. Martin Millspaugh, who had been a key staff member of the Charles Center Management Office, became president and general manager of the Inner Harbor project.
- 1966—The Inner Harbor plan went before voters for bond funding. Walter Sondheim, Jr. chaired a committee to promote the plan to city voters. The GBC produced 300,000 flyers distributed to registered voters and civic organizations. In November, voters approved a \$12 million bond for the project.
- 1968—U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released a \$22.4 million federal grant for Phase 1 of the Inner Harbor project. In October, demolition began at Pratt and Cheapside Streets.

## Baltimore’s “Renaissance” Blossoms

The signature revitalization projects that the GBC championed in the 1950s and 1960s—Charles Center and the Inner Harbor—bloomed in the 1970s and 1980s. Meanwhile, the GBC turned its attention to “quality of life” issues, including education, housing, minority business development, regionalism, and cultivating the next generation of leaders for Greater Baltimore.

### Charles Center

The Charles Center project was fully completed in 1986. More than \$235 million had been invested, of which \$200 million had come from private sources. The project added two million square-feet of office space, 652 apartment units, the Morris A. Mechanic Theater, 3,000 parking spaces, and 430,000 square-feet of retail space.

### Inner Harbor attracts fast-pace of development

Many view the July 2, 1980 opening of Harborplace as the single event that characterized the Inner Harbor’s dramatic transformation from docks to a world-class

attraction. However, major development of offices in the harbor area occurred earlier in the 1970s, including the USF&G Building (1973), now the Transamerica Tower; the IBM Building, (1975), the Garmatz Courthouse (1976), C&P Telephone Company headquarters (1977), and the World Trade Center (1977).

The Maryland Science Center’s completion in 1976 preceded Harborplace’s opening by four years. Other attractions to blossom at harbor’s edge in the 1980s included the National Aquarium (1981), The Hyatt Regency Hotel (1981), and the Gallery (1988).

## GBC turns attention to “quality of life” issues

In the 1970s and beyond, the GBC called on the resourcefulness of its business leaders to meet Baltimore’s social and economic challenges just as they had done in the 1950s and 1960s to meet Baltimore’s physical challenges. Wholly new systems were demanded in education, housing, employment, and transportation.

Without them, achievements like Charles Center and the Inner Harbor would become islands in a sea of mediocrity—or worse. Even though the GBC agenda shifted toward what could be considered more “community development” issues, the rationale for involvement remained strengthening the region’s business climate and its economy.

- **Public education.** In public education, the GBC found a contributory role for the business community, recognizing that quality public education is a process fundamental to Baltimore’s progress in all other areas of community life. From its earlier educational programs—the Adopt-A-School Program, School/Business Partnerships, to later helping the city’s school system strengthen its budget management, the GBC sought reform in the City schools to ensure a quality and available workforce.
- **Housing.** Ardent work had begun in the mid 1960s to rid vital city areas of blighting influences. The GBC, through its Urban Renewal Subcommittee work during the 1970s, studied issues affecting housing, such as zoning, housing code enforcement and planning.
- **A reinforced regional focus.** From the 1950s through the 1970s, the GBC was an organization comprised of a small group of business leaders, focusing most of its attention on individual downtown development projects. In 1978, the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Baltimore merged with the GBC. This merger provided the area with a single, private-sector voice concerned with the problems and issues facing Baltimore City and its five surrounding jurisdictions—Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard counties. It was understood among GBC members that, while much of its early work focused on projects



*Baltimore Harbor, 1970*



*USF&G construction, 1973*



*Inner Harbor, 1977*

in Baltimore City, the GBC's ultimate focus was regional in nature, as evidenced by the GBC's earlier support for the 1963 creation of the Regional Planning Council, now the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.

- **Minority business development.** Recognizing the need among fledgling minority businesses for financing, the GBC in 1984 facilitated the creation of the Development Credit Fund (DCF) to serve minority businesses. The GBC gained commitments from the state's six largest banks totaling \$7.5 million, coupled with direct loan guarantees for minority businesses through the State of Maryland. The Development Credit Fund was the first joint public-private financing entity of its kind in Maryland.

### **A new stadium for the Orioles**

Sports play a key role in the spirit of any city. Historically, the GBC has had a role in professional sports development since its opening days. The GBC's first Chairman, Clarence W. Miles, teamed with Mayor Thomas J. D'Alesandro, Jr., and won the bid to bring the St. Louis Browns baseball franchise to Baltimore. Miles gained national attention for his persistence on what was regarded as a lost cause.

The GBC's contributions to keeping the Orioles in Baltimore and winning legislative approval for construction of the Camden Yards site are well documented. The GBC led business efforts to win legislative approval for the stadium project in 1987, and successfully defeated legal challenges from stadium opponents.

The GBC, stepping in at a critical juncture, broke the stalled lease negotiations between the Orioles and the Maryland Stadium Authority. The GBC arranged a guarantee to back the sales of season tickets for the next 10 years. GBC leaders recruited 30 members to support a \$10 million letter of credit to back the ticket sales guarantee that helped close the Orioles' deal. This initiative broke the impasse that led to agreement on a long-term Orioles lease and the construction of the Oriole Park at Camden Yards.



The GBC played a decisive role in a deal for a new football stadium in Baltimore, which resulted in the Ravens coming to the city.

## Other GBC initiatives in the 1970s and 1980s

- Support for construction of the Baltimore Convention Center.** The Baltimore Convention Center opened in August 1979. It underwent an expansion in 1996 that tripled its size. The center has been instrumental in building Baltimore into a major east coast destination. Today, Baltimore attracts more than 12 million overnight visitors.
- Created The Leadership program.** In 1983 the GBC launched The Leadership, a year-long “leaders in training” orientation program of seminars, weekend retreats, experiential activities, and meetings with some of the region’s most influential individuals. More than 1,000 executives from business, non-profits, and government have graduated from The Leadership.
- Created CollegeBound Foundation.** In 1988, the GBC teamed with Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development to create the CollegeBound Foundation, whose mission is to help inner-city students go to college. CollegeBound’s portfolio offers more than 220 scholarships, valued at about \$3 million. More than 300 students benefit each year from scholarships and grants from the foundation.

## Facing Stubborn Challenges, Updating the Vision

With the keystone Charles Center and Inner Harbor projects maturing, GBC leaders worked to address stubborn challenges facing the city and region such as education reform and public safety. The GBC also recognized the need for an updated vision to guide the development of the city and region in the 21st century.

**Targeting the biotech potential.** In 1990 and 1991, the GBC began its work to redefine Baltimore’s economic future to include a major emphasis on technology industries—particularly biotech. In the early 2000s,

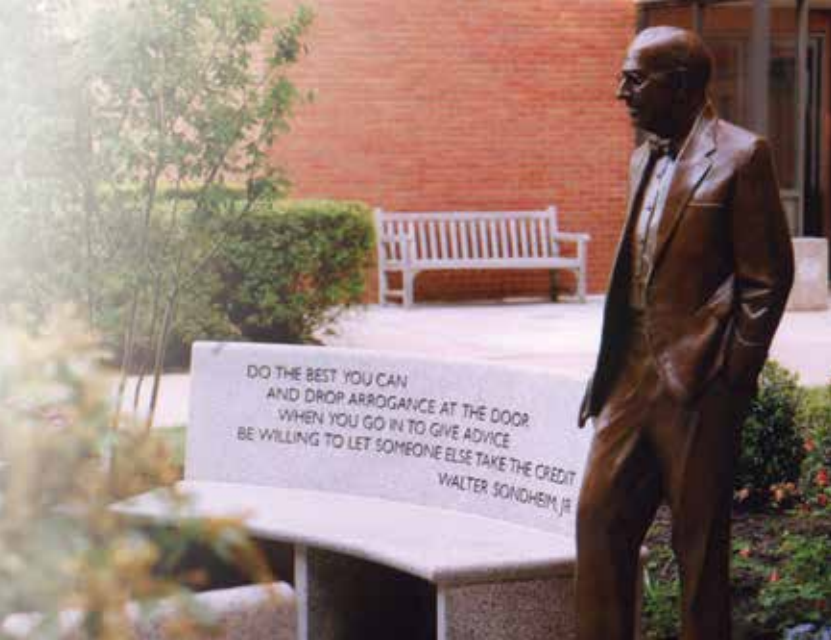
strengthening the region’s biosciences sector would emerge as one of the GBC’s top strategic priorities.

**Education reform.** In the 1990s, the GBC issued a call for “dramatic restructuring of our educational systems that promotes creative, entrepreneurial approaches to education.” In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the GBC played a key role in shaping funding and management reforms for Baltimore City Public Schools.

**Smart on crime.** In Sept. 1995, the GBC issued its “Smart on Crime” Report which, among other things, advocated for drug treatment on demand as a crime reduction strategy.



The GBC helped create the CollegeBound Foundation.



Walter Sondheim statue

**NFL football returns.** The GBC played a decisive role in the 1996 effort to gain legislative approval of the stadium deal that brought the Ravens to Baltimore.

**Promoting a regional perspective.** In July 1997, the GBC issued “One Region, One Future,” a report detailing that regions, not individual political jurisdictions, are emerging as the primary competitors in the global economy. In 1998, the GBC partnered with the Greater Baltimore Alliance (now the Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore) and subsequently with the Baltimore Metropolitan Council to produce a series of “State of the Region” reports, benchmarking the Baltimore region’s economic vital signs and those of 19 other key competing regions.

**Reducing homicides and violent crime.** In 1999, in its report “First Things First,” the GBC called on all Baltimore City mayoral candidates to adopt a goal of reducing homicides in the city by 50 percent. The GBC backed up its challenge by creating a \$500,000 homicide reduction fund and applied it to funding strategic or tactical initiatives aimed at reducing violent crime and homicides.

**City government efficiency.** From 2000–2002, volunteer GBC-member executives conducted a series of management and efficiency studies for key Baltimore City government agencies and its human resources management. In 2003, the GBC studied management of the city’s Inner Harbor operations and the fiscal operations of the city’s public school system. The city used the reports as “game plans” for reforms that saved millions of dollars.

**Restoring the Hippodrome Theatre.** In 1998, the GBC launched the Hippodrome Theatre renovation project by persuading Gov. Parris Glendening and Maryland legislators to include \$1.7 million in the state’s budget to begin project planning. During the next two years, the GBC led efforts that ultimately gained \$27 million in state funding and \$5 million in private funding, before handing the project over to the Baltimore Center for the Performing



Arts (now the Hippodrome Foundation). The Hippodrome Theatre at the France-Merrick Performing Arts Center opened on February 10, 2004.

**Building the region’s life sciences sector.** In 2002, the GBC developed a strategic initiative to leverage the region’s key strengths—its world-class research centers—to drive the next phase of the city’s revitalization and the region’s life sciences industry growth. Toward that end, the GBC worked to support the development of life sciences parks near the University of Maryland, Baltimore on the city’s west side, and adjacent to the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions on the east side. The GBC played a key role in the formation of East Baltimore Development Inc. (EBDI), with GBC members pledging \$1 million in operational funding to launch the non profit entity charged with managing the development an 81-acre neighborhood revitalization and life sciences research park.

**Transportation infrastructure, strengthening regional transit.** Since 2000, the GBC has focused on the major issue of transportation infrastructure. In 2003 and 2004, the GBC identified dramatically improving transit as a key priority that requires immediate attention if the region is to remain competitive for workforce and business development. During the 2004 General Assembly session, the GBC successfully gained commitments from Gov. Robert Ehrlich and state legislators to earmark more than \$243 million to begin planning the light-rail Red Line from Woodlawn to Bayview that would transform the region’s fragmented rail transit assets into a fully-integrated regional rail transit system. Later in 2004, the GBC and a coalition of civic and environmental organizations and foundations in the region formed the Baltimore Transit Alliance to push for continued funding and development of the Baltimore Regional Transit System. However, in 2015 Maryland Governor Larry Hogan announced that he would not provide state funds for the Red Line, which essentially killed the project.

Other transportation infrastructure issues have included advocacy for high-speed rail in the northeast corridor of the United States, improving rail freight transportation support for the Port of Baltimore, and the need to address 100-year-old rail infrastructure in Maryland and along the northeast rail corridor, including the Howard Street tunnel, bridges and Baltimore’s Penn Station.





*50th anniversary, William Donald Schaefer, Walter Sondheim and Helen Bentley*

**Strengthening minority and woman-owned businesses.** In 2003, the GBC developed the “Bridging the Gap” initiative to promote the inclusion of minority-owned and woman-owned firms in emerging business opportunities. The program provides recognition and support for minority entrepreneurs, networking opportunities with industry leaders, updates on best practices for key business management issues, and partnerships that nurture the development of minority-owned and woman-owned businesses. Initial partners in this effort included the late Baltimore Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, the Mayor’s Office of Minority Business Development, and the Governor’s Office of Minority Affairs.

Bridging the Gap accomplishments include an increased hospital procurement from minority-owned and woman-owned vendors by 114 percent. The initiative prompted the Greater Baltimore Urban League to honor GBC President and CEO Donald C. Fry and the GBC with its 2008 Whitney M. Young Jr. award. The initiative also received a major international award for small business development.

**Focusing on business competitiveness.** Since 2010, a primary focus of the GBC has been to address the long-term “disconnect” between Maryland’s government leaders and the private sector over Maryland’s business climate policy and the nature of our state’s competitiveness for economic growth and job creation. In 2010, the GBC facilitated a series of workshops and focus groups with business and economic development leaders that generated the “Gaining a Competitive Edge” report

articulating eight core pillars for business competitiveness. The GBC has since framed its legislative advocacy around the core pillars.

**A Compact for Competitiveness.** In 2013, building on the eight core pillars, the GBC sponsored the Chesapeake Conference of CEOs. During the conference a set of specific policy priorities was developed as the framework for a proposed mutual “Compact for Competitiveness” that government and private-sector leaders could jointly embrace to ensure that Maryland’s public and private-sector leaders are on the same page when it comes to the issue of strengthening Maryland’s competitiveness. The top priority, by overwhelming consensus, was reforming Maryland’s tax structure. Other priorities are: develop a 10-year transportation strategy, invest in Maryland’s port and airport resources, implement regulatory reform, deploy a STEM-related education strategy, invest in infrastructure, nurture innovation and entrepreneurship, strengthen the state’s economic development resources, implement outcome-driven accountability in K–12 education and leverage business resources and partnerships.

## Positioning the Region to Compete in the Global Economy

### Addressing the root causes of crime in Baltimore City

**GBC raises \$203,000 for business recovery.** In 2015, after some neighborhoods and businesses were affected by a brief period of civil unrest, the GBC raised \$203,000 for the Baltimore Development Corporation's Baltimore Business Recovery Fund. GBC member companies stepped up to pledge help at the GBC's 60th Anniversary Annual Meeting in May, just weeks after the unrest.

**GBC's "Boost for Baltimore Restaurants" campaign.** To assist Baltimore's restaurant industry recover from lost business from the civil unrest, the GBC's Board of Directors encouraged GBC members to participate in a "Boost for Baltimore Restaurants" event in the summer of 2015. The board requested that members take or pay for employees

to have lunch at a Baltimore restaurant in efforts to show support for the hospitality industry and local businesses in the city. Half of the GBC Board of Directors and 75 additional member companies participated, bringing more than 1,000 clients and employees to Baltimore restaurants.

**Coalition for a Second Chance.** In 2015, the GBC initiated the Coalition for a Second Chance to educate employers on the business case for hiring those returning to society from a period of incarceration, also known as returning citizens. Subsequently, the Coalition published a report, *Opening Doors to a Second Chance*, which outlined the importance of removing barriers to employment and expanding job opportunities for returning citizens.

**Task Force on Public Safety.** In 2016, to help improve public safety and help address Baltimore crime, the GBC Board of Directors formed a Public Safety Task Force. The task force engaged in an extensive review of public safety



*Modern transit options in Baltimore City's downtown area*



Baltimore's dynamic downtown skyline

and crime issues in Baltimore City and recommended solutions to address both. Following the completion of the task force's work, a Public Safety Task Committee was formed to follow up on the work and create positive change in Baltimore City and surrounding counties.

**Roca funding.** In 2017, four GBC member organizations agreed to provide the necessary initial funding to launch the successful youth crime intervention program, known as Roca, in Baltimore. The GBC's support for the program aligned with the Board of Directors determination that violent crime was the No. 1 issue to be addressed in Baltimore.

### Supporting a visionary transportation network and an inclusive workforce

**Red Line halted.** Newly elected Governor Larry Hogan surprised many in the Baltimore region in 2015 when he killed state funding to build a new light-rail line, known as the Red Line, in Baltimore. The GBC had strongly supported the \$3 billion Red Line, a 14.1 east-west light rail project, as a major economic growth and transportation project that would connect workers and communities with major job hubs. The Red Line was expected to be an economic boon to the region, generating more than 15,000 jobs and increasing household earnings in the Baltimore region by \$539.7 million. GBC President and CEO Donald C. Fry told reporters the city and region had suffered a "body blow" from the decision. Fry, along with city, state and federal officials, urged Governor Hogan to reconsider his decision, but he declined.

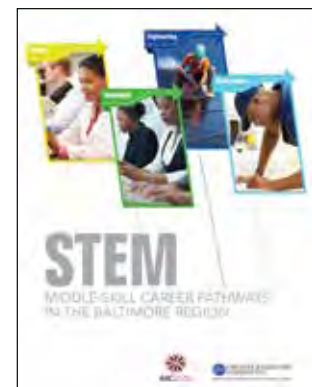
**Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan.** In 2019, the GBC took a leadership role supporting and promoting the establishment of a new vision and strategy to transform the region's transit system to ensure its economic viability and competitiveness. This effort included monitoring and participating in discussions related to the development of the Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan, which the Maryland General Assembly mandated.

## GBC leadership for a competitive economy

**GBC helps lead Global Cities Initiative Exchange.** The GBC took a leadership role when Baltimore was accepted in 2015 to join the Global Cities Initiative, a joint project of Brookings and JPMorgan Chase. As part of the initiative, the GBC and its partners on the project released the Baltimore Metro Export Market Assessment, a study which detailed industry sectors that Baltimore could further leverage to improve export activity in the region.

**GBC offers Bridging the Gap Academy.** In August 2015, the GBC started the Bridging the Gap Academy, a business accelerator for minority and women-owned businesses. Business owners selected for the academy gained valuable knowledge from professionals on how to start or grow a business.

**STEM report.** The GBC and Associated Black Charities published in early 2016 a report, STEM: Middle-Skill Career Pathways in the Baltimore Region. The report detailed opportunities that exist in Baltimore for middle-skilled science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workers and outlined six "Opportunity Sectors" that provide potential for local residents advance in meaningful employment.



**Support for Port Covington.** In 2016, the GBC came out in strong support for a proposal for the redevelopment of the Port Covington area in Baltimore City by Sagamore Development. The GBC supported Sagamore's request for the city to approve a tax-increment financing package to fund infrastructure. That request was approved by city officials.

**Greater Baltimore State of the Region Report.** In 2018, the GBC and Baltimore Metropolitan Council released the 2018 Greater Baltimore State of the Region report, which analyzed trends in demographics and other areas in the Baltimore region since 1998. The report concluded that the region's population has become more diversified, a higher percentage of residents hold college degrees, and the economy has transitioned from industrial manufacturing to one driven by technology, medicine, higher-education and service-based businesses.





GBC President & CEO Donald C. Fry (right) and diversity and inclusion expert Dr. Steve L. Robbins (left) at the inaugural Bridging The Gap Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Summit in 2019.

**Inclusion and diversity in the workplace.** The Baltimore Women’s Advisory Board was launched in 2018 by the Board of Directors of the Greater Baltimore Committee and was co-founded by GBC Board members Christine Aspell, Managing Partner for the Baltimore Office of KPMG, and Sabina Kelly, Greater Maryland Market President, Bank of America. The group was formed as the result of discussions with Donald C. Fry, President and CEO of the Greater Baltimore Committee, who believed the GBC should become more active in supporting women and their career growth. Through a number of events in 2018 and 2019 and its #bWomen initiative, the advisory board was active supporting, advancing and retaining women in the Baltimore market and ensuring that Baltimore emerges as a role model for equality in the workplace. In addition, the GBC held its inaugural Bridging the Gap Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Summit in 2019. The successful event informed and educated employers about the value that diversity and inclusion bring to the workplace.



Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore, home of the Preakness

**Keeping the Preakness in Baltimore.** The GBC was active advocating before the Maryland General Assembly in 2019 to ensure the Preakness will remain in Baltimore. The GBC also came out in support of a Maryland Stadium Authority concept to modernize the Pimlico Race Course facility and allow for year-round community use and other benefits.

**Howard Street Tunnel expansion.** As it has for many years, the GBC remained a strong supporter of proposals to improve the Howard Street Tunnel in Baltimore to accommodate double-stack rail cars transporting cargo to and from the Port of Baltimore. The GBC was supportive of a revised proposal that emerged involving a new engineering technology that would significantly cut the estimated price tag for the project. The GBC viewed a July, 2019 announcement that Maryland will receive \$125 million in long-sought federal funding to expand the tunnel as a positive sign that the state and CSX Transportation, which owns the tunnel, eventually would come together to provide needed additional funding to move ahead with the project, which is considered critical to the port’s future growth.



Improvements to the Howard Street Tunnel would ensure future growth at the Port of Baltimore (pictured). Photo Credit: Bill McAllen

**Higher minimum wage.** In early 2019, the GBC expressed its support of a proposal in the Maryland General Assembly to raise the state’s minimum wage to \$15-per-hour as long as a number of amendments outlined by the GBC were included to help protect small and mid-size employers. Legislators passed the minimum wage law with amendments included.

**Ensuring future success.** During 2018 and 2019, the GBC was active on a number of initiatives launched by the Board of Directors to ensure the region’s future economic success. These initiatives included a workgroup to pen a blueprint for Baltimore City’s economic success. The approved blueprint is intended to enhance and complement the efforts of the Baltimore Development Corporation, which is working on a federally-mandated Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. In addition an Arena Workgroup formed by the Board reviewed several private developers’ conceptual proposals for a new



Royal Farms Arena in Baltimore

Baltimore arena at Pier 5/Pier 6 and Port Covington, and the feasibility of a renovation of the existing Royal Farms Arena. The GBC Board also created the Regional Workforce Development Initiative to ensure that the region's workforce will have the employees and skills needed to remain competitive in the future. The project involves a multi-phase analysis to examine the region's future

workforce needs in high-growth, high-demand industries and identify the skills that will be required to meet those needs over the next 10 years.

## Ensuring stable and ethical government

**Baltimore Mayor's resignation.** The GBC's Board of Directors called on Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh to resign as Mayor in April 2019, after determining that she no longer possessed the public's trust or moral authority to lead the city after concerns regarding some of private business activities came to light. The board voted unanimously that her resignation, which came days later, would be in the best interest for Baltimore City.

**Government and ethics reform.** In the wake of Mayor Pugh's resignation, the GBC Board of Directors Baltimore City launched the Baltimore City Government Reform and Ethics Task Force to review the city's charter and its ethics guidelines with an eye on recommending changes to ensure greater transparency from elected officials and city government.



Baltimore City Hall

