



# New Cuyahoga Now

Joint News Release  
Cuyahoga County Transition Advisory Group and New Cuyahoga Now  
and Greater Cleveland Partnership

## **COUNTY, CIVIC LEADERS WORKING TOGETHER TO CRAFT HISTORIC TRANSITION** ***Action occurring in numerous areas as public invited to participate***

**Cleveland – December 16, 2009** – Plans are underway to ensure a thoughtful, inclusive public process around the historic restructuring of county government, according to the Cuyahoga County transition team and an external group of civic leaders collaborating on the transition. Also, discussions have begun to ensure momentum continues on important immediate countywide priorities, such as the Medical Mart and the upcoming Health & Human Services Levy.

Last month, voters approved Issue 6, which will replace the three county commissioners with an elected county executive and elected county council. Other county offices will be eliminated and/or consolidated under the government – which will take effect in 2011.

Cuyahoga County's Charter-mandated Transition Advisory Group ("TAG") met recently with New Cuyahoga Now ("NCN" – the group that led the successful county reform campaign) and the Greater Cleveland Partnership. TAG invited them to form a comprehensive civic coalition, that will represent – and work with – all sectors of the community during the transition and beyond.

The Transition Advisory Group, New Cuyahoga Now and the Greater Cleveland Partnership look forward to this coalition continuing to grow in the coming months with other stakeholders.

They also acknowledged the depth of experience of the county's workforce, affirming the great need for the continued insights and efforts of those who have honorably dedicated themselves to public service.

Over the next 13 months, these groups are committed to collaborating with the public and other partners in the spirit of transparency, inclusivity, accountability and equity to reposition the County for a strong and dynamic future to fulfill the specifics and intent of new Charter's objectives (see *attachment*).

### **Efforts already underway**

Collaborative efforts are underway to guide the transition. While working together, the groups will focus on those areas where they are best suited to play a role or have expertise.

TAG has begun preparing a baseline programmatic and fiscal assessment of all of Cuyahoga County government.

At least eight working groups are being formed to examine core operational areas such as finance, human resources and human services (*for a full list, see attachment*). Workgroup members will

include current county staff and community volunteers with expertise and/or interest in a particular area. NCN and the GCP will assist TAG in identifying leaders and members of these task forces. In addition, the GCP will help fulfill the critical need for talent and experience in large scale organizational turnaround to assist in providing a solid footing for the new County leaders in 2011.

Other workgroups will be formed by the coalition as new issues and ideas surface. They hope to identify committees and the composition of the committees in January 2010.

NCN and the GCP will continue its efforts on key priorities, including a code of ethics, campaign finance reform, economic development and other long-term, post-transition issues (*see attachment for full list*).

They will also maintain as a high priority supporting a County structure that provides adequate funding for necessary health and human services. Members of the coalition plan to individually and strongly advocate for passage of an existing county health and human services levy that will be on the May ballot.

Additionally, GCP and NCN affirmed the need to continue momentum for important civic projects such as the proposed Medical Mart and Convention Center, and intend with their membership and expertise to support the project however possible.

### **Transition structure**

Under the Charter, the TAG is responsible for “developing recommendations for the orderly and efficient transition” of County government in 2011. A steering committee will be created to oversee the work of the transition and to review recommendations as they emerge.

The groups envision a joint effort focused on achieving the following goals:

1. Achieve transformational realignment of county government through a true public-private-civic partnership.
2. Realize substantial efficiencies so that resources can be redirected toward essential County initiatives enhancing growth, job creation and health and human services.
3. Create an umbrella big enough to include all dimensions of the community and all the necessary skills and constituencies to ensure the group sets the right goals, gets the right answers and makes the right changes during this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Regular status reports will be communicated to the public using the media, public forums and other tools available. Cuyahoga County citizens can be assured that the transition process will be open and accountable.

### **Public Invitation**

Both TAG and NCN intend to secure public confidence and support during this historic opportunity. To do so, they understand the need to actively and openly engage Cuyahoga County’s residents, businesses, community groups and other stakeholders. The public will be invited to participate and voice their thoughts and concerns in several ways, including attending public forums or participating in workgroups and taskforces.

More information will be available soon on [www.cuyahogacounty.us](http://www.cuyahogacounty.us).

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## **Charter Objectives**

1. Focused, effective and accountable leadership;
2. Job creation and economic growth as a fundamental government purpose, thereby helping the County do a better job of creating and retaining jobs and ensuring necessary and essential health and human services;
3. Collaborative leadership with Cleveland, suburbs and others within the public and private sectors;
4. An improved focus on equity for all our communities and citizens;
5. Long-term regional and global competitiveness; and
6. Significant taxpayer savings by streamlining and eliminating unnecessary elected offices.

## **Transition Advisory Group Workgroups**

(to be co-chaired by county and civic leaders)

1. Finance/Administration
2. Human Services
3. Human Resources
4. Justice Services
5. Infrastructure/Supportive Services
6. Economic Development/Planning
7. County Council Planning
8. Boards and Commissions
9. Other groups may emerge in light of discussions

## **New Cuyahoga Now Priorities**

1. Code of ethics
2. Campaign finance reform for County officials
3. Economic development to benefit the entire County
4. Collaborative discussion about post-transition, long-term challenges.
5. Other issues that may emerge during the transition