



## **2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

The Greater Minnesota Partnership advocates for public policies and investments that stimulate prosperity throughout Greater Minnesota.

**The Greater Minnesota Partnership encourages Governor Walz and the Minnesota Legislature to make the following top priorities for the 2021 legislative session.**

### **Universal Broadband**

The internet is the backbone of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Unfortunately, too many people and businesses in Greater Minnesota lack access to the level of broadband service needed to fully engage in the regional and global economies, as well as social and community life. The state has a goal for all Minnesotans to reach access to high-quality broadband—defined as 100MBPS download and 20MBPS upload by 2026. The seven metropolitan counties are each at 98 percent or more of properties having access to 100/20 service. In Greater Minnesota, counties range from 99 percent access to less than 30 percent. The GMNP supports annual investments aimed at reaching the 2026 goal for FY22-26, most recently estimated at \$100 million per year, with a focus on awarding grants to increase speeds for underserved markets in addition to increasing access for unserved properties.

### **Greater Minnesota Child Care**

Every family in Greater Minnesota should have access to high-quality, affordable childcare. In order for this to happen, we need to increase the number of childcare providers serving Greater Minnesota, increase the number of childcare slots available for our families and workforce, and enhance the quality of care provided to our children. To accomplish these goals, the GMNP supports both investments and regulatory and market reforms that allow providers to operate financially sustainable childcare businesses while maintaining a commitment to a safe and nurturing environment for our young learners. We also support efforts to build a stable, high quality, diverse, and equitably compensated childcare workforce that encourages workers to enter and remain in the industry.

### **Workforce Housing**

Greater Minnesota's workforce housing market is broken. In most communities, a typical worker makes too much to qualify for government assistance programs but cannot afford to build a new home on their own. They cannot access private capital because the cost to build a new home is more than the house will appraise for once it is built. The high construction costs of multi-family rental units often require rents that exceed the housing affordability benchmark of 30 percent or less of a household's income. These factors are further complicated by lower wages that produce prevailing rents that do not justify private development of new multi-family units due to concern

that their investment will not find enough tenants who can afford the new units. Collectively construction costs, financing challenges and prevailing rents do not produce enough replacement units to our aging housing stock and thereby threatens our communities long-term tax base and ability to supply workers to our businesses for economic growth. In order to increase the housing stock throughout Greater Minnesota available to our workforce, the GMNP supports investments and regulatory reforms that aim to reduce the private market cost of developing new affordable and market rate housing and revitalize existing housing. Additionally, GMNP supports investments that will increase opportunities for senior citizens to access housing that meets their care and life needs.

**The GMNP supports continued and increased investment in critical areas that promote economic development and prosperity throughout Greater Minnesota including:**

### **Capital investment and Infrastructure in Greater Minnesota**

Capital investment bills are important in stimulating the state's economy and addressing the public infrastructure need across the state. A such, capital investment bills should focus on the key infrastructures—local roads and bridges, wastewater, and other infrastructure that grows local and regional economies in Greater Minnesota. At least 50 percent of all capital investment funding should be directed to Greater Minnesota.

### **Transportation**

A fully developed and maintained transportation system is critical for prosperity in Greater Minnesota. The GMNP supports a comprehensive approach for transportation, which includes sufficient funding to both maintain and expand Minnesota's transportation system.

### **Economic Development and Workforce Development Grant Programs**

Strategic and targeted investments in project-focused opportunities in an effective way to spur economic and workforce development in specific communities. The GMNP supports the state maintaining and growing investments in grant programs that have a proven record in creating job growth and maintaining existing employment. These programs include, but are not limited to: Business Development Public Infrastructure (BDPI), Minnesota Investment Fund (MIF), Job Creation Fund, Redevelopment Grant Program, Demolition Loan Program, and the Job Training Incentive Program. In addition to supporting the continued state investment in these programs, the GMNP supports changes to the programs that allow them to more effectively and efficiently address the needs of Greater Minnesota communities businesses, and employees.

### **Property Tax**

The GMNP supports protecting and maintaining Local Government Aid. LGA helps Greater Minnesota businesses receive needed city services while restraining local property taxes. The future investment in LGA should support including inflation and population growth to the formula to keep up the increase in population and inflation that facing city budgets.