2021 - 2022 Pro-Business Policy Agenda
Business Community Advocacy Council Approved
GRCA Board Approved

The Greater Reading Chamber Alliance will lead, educate, engage, inform and advocate to advance a policy agenda that serves as the voice for business at the local, state, and federal level. Our members want to operate in a business environment that allows them recover, grow, and thrive. GRCA's policy priorities reach beyond the legislative and regulatory agenda to encompass administrative policies that have implications on businesses, our community and economy. We urge Pennsylvania's legislature and the Governor to pursue a public policy agenda that will reinforce confidence among employers, provide resources necessary to develop a talented workforce and enable economic vibrancy for our Greater Reading Region – Berks County. Our member driven policy agenda is outlined below.

MODERN, SAFE, EFFICIENT AND RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE
Ensure our infrastructure is adequately funded to enable construction and maintenance of our aging transportation and utility systems along with other infrastructure. Modern, safe, reliable, and efficient Transportation Infrastructure Systems are a core function of government. Transportation systems and utility infrastructure is vital to attract and retain quality businesses to grow the economy, increase regional and PA competitiveness, and retain/create jobs. This includes Transportation, Transit/Mobility, Energy, Broadband and Water/Wastewater. Our members support continued regulatory reform due to current impediments on improvements and skyrocketing costs.

Our members support expanded opportunities for commuter systems through public and private investment in bus and rideshare capacity and the return of a passenger rail system between Reading and Philadelphia.

REGULATORY REFORM + LOCAL GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION
The business community needs continued regulatory reform from processes that impede infrastructure and business improvements and exacerbate costs. Permitting reform through increased transparency, consistent decision making, and continued reduction in the time needed to make permit decisions, coupled with limiting costs to businesses through regulatory and permit requirements is key to increasing economic development. Our members support working collaboratively with county and local entities to increase economic development while being environmental stewards.

RESPONSIBLE BUDGET + GOVERNMENT SPENDING
Renewed and increased support for funding of economic development programs that have positive social and economic impact in cities and municipalities across Berks County to move past COVID-19 and towards growth. We encourage all local governments to work collaboratively towards responsible and balanced budgets while understanding that all opportunities for cost-savings and efficient spending should be exhausted before new or higher taxes are considered to cover increasing program costs or recovering budget deficits due to COVID-19.

BALANCING LAND USE & RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT
Identifying the best strategy for responsible land use and development that maximizes economic development opportunity while retaining Berks County's rich agricultural tradition benefits everyone. It is imperative that all government entities, businesses, and community organizations within Berks County work together for a shared vision of our future to ensure opportunities are shared equally across the county. Our members also support adding opportunities to increase and expand access for affordable housing options across the county that will help attract and maintain a local workforce base.

PROVIDING A SKILLED WORKFORCE
Economic viability and long-term prosperity for Greater Reading – Berks County depends upon a well-educated and skilled workforce, paired with a healthy talent pipeline that addresses the growing skills

gap identified by our companies. Our members are committed to supporting collaborative programs that prioritize existing jobs, skills shortages, and talent retraining for jobs of the future.