**Key Messages:**

* Thanks to a lot of hard work these past few years, Michigan’s created nearly a half million new jobs, seen personal incomes rise and begun to grow our population again.
* But “doing better” isn’t enough to ensure Michigan’s long-term prosperity. We still need to make sure we’re building the kind of economy that offers more robust opportunities for everyone.
* Business Leaders for Michigan (BLM)’s goal has been to become a “Top Ten” state for jobs, personal incomes and a healthy economy.
* The **Plan for a Stronger Michigan** offers a roadmap for achieving these goals. It’s based on facts, what’s worked in other states and prioritizes three simple steps – Compete, Invest and Grow.
* We’re optimistic about Michigan’s future, but we can’t become complacent and we need to continue our momentum through election cycles.

**Michigan Today:**

* **Michigan is heading in the right direction on most economic output measures, but we still have a long way to go to become a “Top Ten” state:** 
  + We rank 14th in the U.S. for employment growth, but our absolute level is 30th among all states
  + Our per capita personal income growth ranks 10th in the U.S., but our absolute level is only 31st
  + Our per capita GDP growth is 7th among states, but our absolute level is still only 33rd.
  + While Michigan remains one of the 10 largest states, population growth is slow, yielding a ranking of only 38th nationwide.
* **The key is offering better value than competitors for the same or lower cost.** In a competitive world with many choices, the places that offer the most value for a competitive cost will win the most investment.
  + Today, Michigan’s business climate has risen from 50th in the U.S. in 2009, to 25th in 2017. Now it’s time to take it the rest of the way.
* **Other states aren’t standing still.** We can’t afford to be complacent or let election cycles deter our economic progress.

**Opportunity Areas:**

**We’ve Gotten More Competitive**

* State leaders have implemented strategies for attracting good jobs and reducing unfunded state legacy costs. Today, total state and local government spending in Michigan is six percent lower than the peer average and 20 percent lower than “Top Ten” states.
* Michigan’s tax structure is one of the strongest in the U.S. - it’s time to build on it.

**Michigan’s Talent Pipeline Is at Risk**

* Michigan faces a major talent crisis—our performance on many measures is well below peer and “Top Ten” levels.
* Only 23 percent of high school students are career- and college-ready at graduation.
* Michigan ranks 46th for fourth grade reading proficiency and 37th for eighth grade math proficiency. Further, we rank 29th for career and college readiness and 42nd for secondary career and technical education enrollment.

**Our Demographics Work Against Us**

* Michigan is the ninth oldest state in the nation, with a median age of 39.7.
* Worse yet, our state ranks 47th for out-of-state enrollment of college students and 17th for net migration of working age adults with a bachelor's degree or higher.

**Michigan’s Aging Infrastructure Needs Work**

* Michigan ranks 36th for broadband penetration and 45th for energy grid reliability.
* We also rank 38th for percentage of urban roads in poor condition and 37th for percentage of bridges in poor condition.

**Automotive Assets Are a Big Plus**

* Michigan is the capital of the global automotive industry & the place for businesses, researchers and entrepreneurs shaping the future of mobility. Nationally, we rank 1st in mobility patents and 1st in connected and automated vehicle projects.
* Home to 96 of the top 100 auto suppliers and 76 percent of North American automotive R&D, we are well positioned to lead in the emerging mobility sector.

**Michigan Innovation = Michigan Success**

* Michigan’s ability to imagine, create and export our products is solid.
* Our university R&D is still among the nation’s “Top Ten” states (5th) and our patent activity is right behind it (10th).

**Michigan Can Grow Faster**

* The state can benefit from coordinated economic and talent development efforts, as well as initiatives that help make Michigan an aspirational destination to live, work and raise a family.

**The Plan for a Stronger Michigan**

**The Plan is holistic, based on facts, and organized into three strategies:**

* **Compete:** Additional actions are needed to improve our ability to attract and retain good jobs
* **Invest:** We need to prioritize what we spend to grow the economy
* **Grow:** Actions that will accelerate the growth of good jobs

**While there are many facets of the plan, these are our 2018 priorities:**

* **Strengthen the state’s fiscal stability.** The plan calls for reductions in state and local debt, cost estimates for proposed legislation, and service delivery across jurisdictions. We need to lock in these reforms and smartly use state finances to ensure the long-term fiscal health of the state.
* **Build the state’s talent pipeline.** Michigan must create more educated and skilled talent at all levels. We need to improve K–12 outcomes, boost postsecondary enrollment and help Michiganders access the education and training programs they need to be successful.
* **Improve Michigan’s aging infrastructure. The state would benefit from forming** an infrastructure planning council to prioritize needs, achieve greater coordination between regions, ensure long-term planning and better asset management, and incentivize localities to improve water infrastructure. User fees should be utilized to pay for transportation and water infrastructure needs and broadband needs to be expanded in underserved areas.
* **Grow Michigan’s economy by leveraging its unique assets, most notably its potential Leverage Michigan’s unique assets, most notably by ensuring we become the Global Center of Mobility.** Michigan’s automotive industry represents the single largest potential growth opportunity for the state. We need to make sure the research and testing facilities, and talent needed to enable this transformation are based in Michigan.
* **Strengthen the cohesion, competitiveness and consistency of our economic development efforts.** The state needs stronger approaches to business attraction, as well as a unified economic development strategy.

**What BLM Will Do:**

**BLM will remain committed and engaged for the long-term.** This won’t happen over sight. Strong community and business leadership is needed to sustain efforts beyond election cycles.

**We’ll continue our work by:**

* **Benchmarking our progress and developing strategies to improve**
* **Raising public awareness and support**
* **Advocating for policy changes**
* **Championing projects where we think we can make a difference**

**A Stronger Michigan won’t just happen – we have to build it.**

**Let’s get started today.**