

## CEDS Working Group – DRAFT Minutes

CRCOG Conference Room

241 Main Street, Fourth Floor

Hartford, CT

02/15/2018 at 9:00am

### Attendance

John Shemo – MetroHartford Alliance

Elliot Ginsberg – Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology

Patrick McMahon – Connecticut Main Street

John Carson – University of Hartford

Becky Nolan – Metro Hartford Alliance

Tim Stewart – Greater New Britain Chamber of Commerce

Jim Burke – Town of Windsor

Scott Gaul – Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

Ilka Torres – RE/MAX Precision Realty

Lyle Wray – CRCOG

Tim Malone – CRCOG

Emily Hultquist – CRCOG

Mary Ellen Kowalewski – CRCOG

Chelsea Burket – Fourth Economy

Rich Overmoyer – Fourth Economy

### Introduction to the project

The meeting began at 9:05 AM. Lyle Wray gave an introduction to the project, the purpose of which is to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) that will help the region accelerate economic development in an inclusive manner. He also explained the three major parts of the project: performing a situational analysis to determine where the region is and what opportunities it should pursue; developing a limited number of “game changer” strategies; and assessing and developing the capacities necessary for sustained implementation.

Elliot Ginsberg noted that there a lot of good things happening in the region and the state and that we should not overlook them. We should look at what is already being done.

Lyle agreed and noted that often times it is a matter of scaling up initiatives that are already working.

Tim Malone added that this is not just a CRCOG project and that the strategies that come out of it will rely on other organizations. Lyle added that CRCOG is willing to organize and facilitate, but that implementation will be a team effort.

## Discuss Working Group roles and responsibilities

Tim explained that the project would have two committees overseeing it. The Working Group is smaller and will meet more frequently to discuss work products. The Advisory Committee is a larger group that will have fairly high level members who will mostly be involved in broader strategic discussions.

Scott Gaul asked who members of the committee should send comments or ideas to. Tim Malone responded that he is the appropriate contact.

John Shemo noted that the Alliance has traditionally been the convener of the business community and that implementation should be closely coordinated.

## Overview of Scope and Schedule

Chelsea Burket gave a brief overview of the scope for the project.

Elliot asked how the project will look at the dynamic changes that are taking place in various sectors. He noted that the world has changed considerably in the five years since the last CEDS was completed. The needs of companies related to workforce and resources have changed. Need to make sure those trends are being explored in a way that moves us ahead of the curve.

Chelsea responded that this analysis would mostly happen in the research phase and would build upon the data analysis that is happening now.

Elliot asked if we can just assume that advanced manufacturing is going to be a part of this.

Tim Malone responded that based on the data, and how big advanced manufacturing is in the region, it's almost certain that it will be.

Tim Stewart noted that some companies are already moving ahead with workforce development on their own, and not waiting for the state.

## Discuss resilience survey findings

Chelsea gave a brief overview of the findings from a resilience survey that had been distributed to the committee prior to the meeting. Chelsea noted that there was generally agreement that the state/region do well with quality of life issues, as well as having a globally integrated economy.

One notable finding was that affordable housing was seen as a weakness by all respondents. Other weaknesses focused on cooperation, governance, and financing.

## Review existing plan review findings

Chelsea gave an overview of existing plans the team has reviewed. She asked if there was anything that they had missed. It was suggested that they also look at the plan for the workforce board, a study done on the Insurance and Finance cluster, the community health needs assessment for the hospitals, research done for the Fairfield Business Council, the Connecticut Amazon HQ2 proposal, a report on Retaining Advanced Manufacturing talent, and Edgeless City/Growing Economy.

Chelsea then reviewed findings from the existing plans and reports. They were grouped into key areas of interest, including: industry specific growth opportunities; education and workforce; quality of life; innovation and small business; and transportation.

### *Industry-Specific Growth Opportunities*

Themes included: Strengthening business climate must underpin growth; several industries are particularly well-positioned; recent growth has been in low-wage jobs.

John Carson noted that the strengths we have are in the factors of production. Where we screw up is pulling it all together.

Elliot Ginsberg noted that we have a great higher education and great schools, but asked if it matches up with our needs? If it's a college bound workforce we do great. If it's an entry level workforce, we don't do well. Lyle added that the issues is complex. One issue is the match to what employers need. The second is educational disparities. Look at per capita spending on two year community colleges. We spend half of what North Carolina spends on community colleges

Elliot asked if the region's 38 towns have bought into a regional approach. He noted that if they're not invested it will go nowhere. How much acceptance on the state level to allow regions to do their own thing? Lyle responded that it's a work in progress but that there is general acceptance.

Lyle Wray also noted that the percent of the state's GDP that is based on income is very high.

### *Education and Workforce*

Themes included: the primary workforce issue is skill/education gap; departure of talent and lack of high-wage job growth are self-reinforcing; there is a significant mismatch of skills between workforce and employers.

Scott Gaul noted that what was missing from Jim Loree's slide from the Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth meeting, which detailed a number of competitiveness rankings, is that we're near the bottom of rankings on disparity and equity.

It was noted that we need to better engage employers in workforce training.

Elliot Ginsberg added that they're (the Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth) hearing from people who want to protect the institutions they've created. The needs of employers don't match up with how we're educating people. We need to listen to the supply chain.

Tim Malone asked if there had been any results from previous efforts to align vocational programs with industry needs.

Multiple committee members suggested that the consultants look at the Business Council of Fairfield County study on Connecticut's economic competitiveness that was done by McKinsey. Another suggestion was the Deloitte report on retaining advanced manufacturing jobs.

Tim Stewart asked if there was any discussion on why people leave.

Becky Nolan noted that quality of life is in the eye of the beholder. It only matters if you like what is being offered.

### *Quality of Life*

Themes included: quality of life must consider all people; fortunately, the region has many assets to build upon; diverse and affordable housing supports talent retention and attraction.

The consultants noted that Connecticut's urban cores underperform the rest of the state in quality of life measures. They also noted that in many surveys, people complain about the cost of living as an impediment. They noted some good points as well, such as many plans that look to improve quality of life in urban areas. They also noted that affordable housing is an impediment and that plans have called for it to be increased in areas adjacent to public transit.

Emily Hultquist suggested looking at the Growing Economy, Shrinking Emissions Study, which looks at the question of where to put development.

Jim Burke added that the CEDS should not avoid talking about affordable housing, even if it is a touchy subject. If it is a real barrier, it should be addressed, even if it would be someone else's role.

### *Innovation and Small Business*

Themes included: strong, but disconnected assets; small-scale innovation is comparatively weak. The consultants noted that the region has an increasing number of assets but that they are often disconnected and difficult to identify. They also noted, while corporate-scale innovation is strong, that there are barriers to smaller-scale entrepreneurship, like venture/seed capital.

Elliot Ginsberg noted that, regarding accelerators, it's important to look at the interests behind them. He also noted that the growth comes from who ends up making the stuff, not who develops it.

Lyle Wray noted that the big question is how do we harvest innovation and its results?

### *Transportation*

Themes included: transit-oriented development presents quality of life and economic opportunities; strengthen and leverage Bradley airport.

Lyle Wray stated that the big deal is getting connected to Boston and New York via rail.

John Carson noted that while moving people through Bradley is important, you have to look at logistics (freight) as well. Indications are that the airport is not doing that very well.

John Shemo noted that in terms of marketing the region, the best successes have been with international companies. The new Alliance CEO is accustomed to traveling overseas and that the Alliance expects this to be a big part of his job. It will be important to understand the best industry targets at a fine-grained NAICS level, and they hope to get that out of the CEDS process.

Patrick McMahon noted that we need a consistent message of who we are as a metro region.

Becky Nolan noted that the global mission council talks about what we are saying and how we are saying it to outsiders.

## Conclusion

Tim Malone thanked everyone for coming and said that materials would be posted to the CRCOG website soon.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00am.