

Metro Hartford Future – Implementation Committee DRAFT Minutes

2/3/2022 at 3:00pm

Via Zoom

Implementation Committee Members and Alternates in Attendance

David Griggs, MetroHartford Alliance (Co-Chair)
Jay Williams, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (Co-Chair)
Jackie Mandyck, iQuilt Partnership
Alex Johnson, Capital Workforce Partners
Patrick McMahon, Connecticut Main Street
Duncan Harris, Capital Community College
Jen Widness, CT Conference of Independent Colleges
Chip Beckett, Town of Glastonbury
Jennifer Gifford, United Way
Jim Horan, LISC
Jim Scannell, Travelers
Nicole Pac Bosco, City of New Britain
Ron Angelo, Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology

Additional Attendees

Lyle Wray, CRCOG
Tim Malone, CRCOG
Jack Antonich, member of the public
Supriyo SB Chatterjee, member of the public

David Griggs and Jay Williams called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM

1) Public Comment

No members of the public chose to speak at this time.

2) Introductions

Co-Chairs David Griggs and Jay Williams welcomed people to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

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Glastonbury / Granby / Hartford / Hebron / Manchester / Mansfield / Marlborough / New Britain / Newington / Plainville / Rocky Hill / Simsbury / Somers
South Windsor / Southington / Stafford / Suffield / Tolland / Vernon / West Hartford / Wethersfield / Willington / Windsor / Windsor Locks

A voluntary Council of Governments formed to initiate and implement regional programs of benefit to the towns and the region

3) Minutes from February 11, 2021 (Action)

Jackie Mandyck moved to adopt the minutes as presented. It was seconded by Chip Beckett. The motion passed.

4) Presentation of the CEDS Annual Report

Tim Malone gave a presentation on the CEDS annual report. The presentation is posted to the CRCOG website.

The following comments were offered by members of the committee:

Talent

- Tim Malone described progress with the talent goals of the CEDS, including the creation of Industry Sector Partnerships, the CampusCT initiative, and dual track learning opportunities.
- Alex Johnson noted that CWP is working closely with the Office of Workforce Strategy to put together an application for the EDA Good Jobs Challenge. This would provide additional resources for the Industry Sector Partnerships (ISP). Will create some ability to develop a flexible workforce training fund.
- David Griggs noted that MHA is partnering with CWP on the Next Generation Partnerships. Alex Johnson noted that it was a unique model for the state to have workforce partnering with economic development on ISPs.
- Lyle provided an explanation of the flexible training fund and noted that there are 70,000 vacancies in the state.
- Chip Beckett asked about the disaffected youth and whether there is outreach to them to determine what they want to do? Lyle noted that this would be an important issue for the update to the CEDS. We could look at best practices for engaging and training that population.
- Jackie asked how the supply/demand study is getting distributed to stakeholders? How are we pushing that information back out to folks? Alex Johnson noted that it was primarily put together for the leaders of the sectors involved, though it would be good to circulate it more broadly.
- Chip asked if CWP is reaching out to high schools in the region. Alex responded that they will be.
- Alex Johnson noted that a lot of the dual track work needs to involve the high schools in the region.
- Patrick McMahon asked if there is a list of companies already involved in CampusCT. Tim responded that he could reach out to AdvanceCT for more information.
- Chip noted that when Campus Philly came to CT they had talked about small businesses in the suburbs using the program. Jen Widness noted that the initial push with employers has been with larger employers to get sponsorships and funding.
- Jackie Mandyck asked if there are measures that track how many employees at major companies are coming from the state's colleges? Something to track whether this is making a difference. Tim offered to look into it but noted that the information may not be easily accessible. David Griggs noted that there are some data sets that help track some of that information but that they aren't very precise due to privacy issues.

Invest

- Tim Malone described progress made on developing a regional quality of place investment fund, transportation infrastructure, improving downtowns, and making development sites available.
- David noted that quality of place is so core to our ability to attract talent. While we haven't created this regional investment fund, there have been a number of investments by the state.

Employers are willing to go to the where the talent wants to reside. Tim noted that it may be worth reconsidering the strategy in the CEDS update.

- Chip asked what are we doing to promote our quality of place assets? It could be something physical. David noted that we need a Convention and Visitors Bureau for the region. Chip noted that it isn't just for visitors but also for people who live here or are considering moving here.
- Jen Widness noted that there is the CT for Me campaign that talks about quality of life to attract talent. She also noted that there is a lot of money flowing through the federal government and that we need to make sure the plan's goals are aligned with those funding opportunities. She also noted the new state programs and that we need to have a laundry list of projects ready for these funding sources. Lyle noted that we need to think about marshalling quality of life projects to get federal and state funding. Patrick McMahon added that congress is allowing earmarks again and that those could be a way of getting funding.
- Tim Malone discussed CRCOG's efforts to promote transportation infrastructure as well as Transit-Oriented Development. Lyle noted that momentum around TOD is increasing.
- Tim Malone described the region's brownfields efforts. He also noted that EDA has a significant amount of money to allocate to new projects.
- Patrick McMahon asked how we are going to inventory projects that are out there and ready for EDA dollars. Tim noted that CRCOG is considering creating a committee of planners and economic developers to help identify projects and track them.

Brand

- Tim Malone described MHA's efforts at branding the region and attracting investment.
- David Griggs noted that retention efforts have been mainly focused through the Hartford Chamber of Commerce. He added that the Hartford region is being seriously looked at by the logistics sector. The region has also had several wins with attracting smaller startups in the InsurTech sector.
- Tim Malone described several state initiatives that support entrepreneurship and innovation. He also described an EDA grant the region received that will provide webinars and meetups for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Next Steps

- Tim Malone described three grant-funded initiatives that CRCOG will be pursuing over the next year.
- Jackie Mandyck described a troubled local manufacturer and noted that we need a buy local initiative. Lyle Wray added that the other one is to localize your supply chains. He described an example in Cleveland. Hospitals could localize supply chains.
- Jim Scannell noted that most of the small suppliers are unable to supply us (large companies) with what we need. For a lot of these smaller suppliers, a Travelers or a Hartford is too big for them. We need to get them to focus on smaller companies they can supply. Need to help match small suppliers with small to medium sized companies. Jay Williams added that at the foundation they have established a pool of funds to help build the capacity of smaller firms. We have capital and are eager to invest in these smaller businesses. Chip Beckett noted that it would be helpful to have a website that allows businesses to search for local suppliers of goods and services.

5) EDA Grants Update

- Tim Malone asked the group what everyone would like to see from the CEDS that wasn't in the last one. Any elements that we missed or any process issues? Lyle Wray noted that there should be a lot greater emphasis on deeper outreach.
- Jackie Mandyck noted that people are sick and tired of planning and that they want to see action. People are sick of not seeing progress. Very important to tell the story of how we're doing and what has been accomplished. Lyle agreed that there is planning fatigue.
- Jim Horan agreed that it is a great idea to keep track of projects that are being implemented. He added that LISC is trying to align support around implementing goals identified by residents.
- Jack Antonich recommended that we embrace the SMART goals process.
- Chip added that we need to frame the region as a successful place and tell the story of the region more aggressively.
- Tim Malone noted that John Carson (formerly of University of Hartford) told him about a new advertising program with the university where students work on marketing projects for actual clients. Jackie responded that she has worked with them on a project in Frog Hollow.
- Tim Malone also noted that we want to focus on low-income populations (specifically the Asset Limited Income Constrained and Employed, ALICE). Lyle added that we want to look at various target populations as we move forward. Jack Antonich noted a new program that was focusing on entrepreneurship and the ALICE population. Jim Horan added that it can and should be tied to employment training opportunities. We should seek to tie addressing the needs of employees (especially ALICE population) with meeting the needs of employers.

6) Next Steps

Tim noted that the next step is to continue procuring consultant services for the CEDS update.

7) Other Business

There was no other business.

8) Next Meeting

Tim noted that the group had only met once a year so far. With the CEDS update we may want to have a more regular schedule. Possibly three times a year.

9) Adjournment

Chip Beckett moved to adjourn; seconded by Jim Horan.

The Meeting Adjourned at 4:17 PM