

Metropolitan Economic Policy Task Force (MEPTF)
Meeting Summary – June 10, 2003
Portland State University, Smith Memorial Student Union, Room 327

Chairman Rob Drake convened the meeting at 6.30 pm.

The following MEPTF members attended: David Bragdon, John Castles, Bill Christopher (for Jess Carreon), Steve Clark, Rob Drake, Erik Hovee, Ron Johnson, Vera Katz, Kim Kimbrough, Kathy Long Holland, Michael Jordan, Don Mazziotti, Craig Pridemore, Bob Terry, Diane Vines. Martha Schrader, Clackamas County Commissioner, attended as well.

Not attending: Jose Tornero, Carl Talton, Rick Willams, Bill Wyatt.

Introductions

Rob Drake welcomed task force members and the audience to the seventh and last meeting of the Metropolitan Economic Policy Task Force. Following short introductions, Marty Harris, Economic Development Director with the Portland Development Commission (PDC) presented the Regional Partners' 6-month work plan and the framework for a regional economic development strategy.

Regional Partners Six-Month Work Plan

Marty Harris presented Task Force members with the region's economic goals, which include building a diverse, stable, and resilient economy that is knowledge-based, business supportive, has strong international ties, creates and retains jobs, maximizes resources, balances growth and livability, is built with regional collaboration, provides a continuum of opportunities and infrastructure for business growth, and builds on existing/emerging industry strengths.

She then proceeded to introduce the Task Force to the work plan elements. Over the next six months, the Regional Partners will work on the following four initiatives:

- industry cluster development,
- regional marketing,
- industrial areas development, and
- commitment to regionalism.

Within the industry cluster development initiative, the Partners will focus on four clusters (silicon, micro to nanotechnologies, cyber-security, and metals and transportation equipment). The deliverables will be detailed industry data outlining needs and opportunities, the provision of findings and issues to support organizations, strategies detailing industry development roles and responsibilities, and 2 to 3 private-sector led recruitment / site selector calls per cluster.

The deliverable for the regional marketing initiative is securing funding commitments for a five-year regional marketing campaign and a contract with timeline for the implementation of the campaign.

Within the industrial area development initiative, the Partners propose the following deliverables:

- 2,000 acres of industrial land added to the UGB in 2003.
- Title 4 language amended.
- Agreement on Regionally Significant Industrial Areas.
- Development strategies adopted for Vancouver Gateway area.
- Regional Employment Lands Study underway.
- Regional contribution to State inventory of "shovel ready" industrial sites completed.
- 2-3 mechanisms for ongoing 5-year industrial land supply.

Deliverables for the Commitment to regionalism are:

- Commitments by organizations and individuals to "Champion" framework elements.

- 20 members in good standing in Regional Partners organization.
- Adoption of Work Plan and Framework by Partners organizations.
- Completion of application/acceptance by EDA of CEDS planning grant.
- Partners status report provided to the MEPTF – January 2004.

Harris presented the Task Force with the *Framework for Creating Shared Economic Priorities for the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Area*. She explained that the framework functions as a guide to what topics should be addressed in a regional economic strategy and how strategies should be implemented. The document will serve as a foundation for ongoing collaboration among the region's institutions and organizations and it will constantly be refined. She reiterated that the framework is a starting point for a regional action plan and that it will require focused, intense commitment from the private and public sector. According to Harris, critical to regional success are champions that take the lead on the actions identified in the framework. Where the Partners are not the lead, they are advocates and they recruit a champion.

She then talked about the six areas of economic focus, which are Innovation and Industry Clusters, Physical Infrastructure, Talent, Livability, Marketing, and Regional Collaboration. She outlined the difference between existing and emerging industry clusters and target or support industries. She also focused on the importance of innovation and on the notion of building upon existing economic strengths. Within the area of infrastructure development, Harris said that land and building supply needs to meet industry needs and that transportation and other infrastructure need to be maintained and strengthened. In the realm of talent, it is important to link training with workforce requirements. Harris also said the Partners need to identify the region's strengths in attracting knowledge workers. In the area of livability, the region needs to define the elements of this concept that strategically support its economic health and competitiveness. In marketing Harris said the Partners will proactively and cooperatively market and promote the area as a positive business location. She finished by outlining the elements of the framework that relate to regional collaboration. She said that collaborative implementation of economic policy and strategy is key. Examples include a smart permit and fee system, a tax system supportive of regional cooperation, and a regional economic database and forecasting system.

The Task Force then discussed the Partner's presentation. Diane Vines suggested being more specific regarding industry clusters and to focus on specific strengths within existing clusters. She added that she thought the work plan and the framework didn't elaborate enough about specific ways to improve innovation in the region. As for the sports apparel industry cluster, she mentioned that there are efforts underway to explore possibilities related to smart clothing and research cooperation between companies and the universities.

Steve Clark highlighted the importance of communication and marketing. He thinks that the Partners need to pay particular attention to communicate the value of an economic development strategy to the public. He had questions about ownership, champions and accountability.

Bob Terry expressed his satisfaction with the document, but expected that the Partners would present more details about actions and implementation tactics. Marty Harris explained that the Partners would actively work as advocates, catalysts, and facilitators for a broader regional dialogue and ownership. She cautioned however, that the Partners don't have much authority or resources.

Bill Christopher wanted to know how the Partners will examine and define livability and how the concept will influence other elements in the framework. Harris responded that the Partners will work together to address this concept and that it certainly will inform other areas and that there will naturally be tensions between some of the areas.

Eric Hovee inquired about the rationale for selecting the clusters for the cluster development initiative. Harris explained that cyber-security is already organized well as a cluster. The micro to nanotechnology cluster has political backing that can be leveraged.

David Bragdon asked how the regional marketing initiative would mesh with the state initiative that Wieden & Kennedy is working on. Kim Kimbrough mentioned that the Portland Business Alliance is already having conversations with the Governor's office and Wieden & Kennedy about coordination. They promised that the lines of communication are open and regional marketing efforts will complement state efforts.

Don Mazziotti asked Marty Harris if the Partners had thought about the financing of the regional economic development efforts. Harris outlined the fee structure of the Partners, which is a function of the size and nature of the member institutions. Fees range from \$1,000 to \$5,000 and in total the Partner's budget is about \$80,000. In addition, PDC offers fee-based services to Partner members for business recruitment and there is some modest income from the Portland Ambassador program. The actual work of the Partners, however, is done in addition to the members' regular day jobs. Mazziotti mentioned that he raised the question to make everybody understand that the Partners won't be able to undertake this effort unless there are resources. He also said that everybody ought to agree on the topics for the framework.

Very Katz agreed with Mazziotti about the need for a conversation about resources. She added that the notion of differentiation is missing and that the Partners ought to think about how one would describe the region and its special attributes. She added a caveat regarding availability of industrial land. Katz said that she is not sure whether attaching a number to the amount of land that needs to be available is necessary.

Kim Kimbrough mentioned that there is a need for going beyond a discussion among practitioners and soliciting political buy-in from the participating jurisdictions and organizations. He asked if there thought was given to having the members' governing bodies entertain resolutions. He thinks that this would send a strong message especially to the private sector about the Partners' intentions.

Mike Jordan added that even though the content of the framework and the work plan is good, there is a lot of organizational uncertainty and questions remain regarding commitment to the topics as well as the organizational capacity. David Bragdon responded that there is an element of faith to every partnership and that the group needs to rely on such faith.

Ethan Seltzer then summarized the discussion as follows: The Task Force agrees with the 6-month workplan, and its deliverables, presented by the Regional Partners. However, the Task Force will also expect to hear more at the 6-month report about the evolution of the Regional Partners partnership, the organizational capacity of the organization and funding available for specific initiatives, and further development of the framework, especially the notion of differentiating this region from others, specific cluster identification, and the definition of and workplan for addressing livability as a cornerstone for the economy. In discussion, members noted that the Regional Partners should be developing a regional economic strategy partnership embracing a broad range of public, private, and nonprofit sector partners. Seeing that commitment on the part of the Regional Partners to a broad partnership will be extremely important to convince individual interests that this effort can be successful.

Final Report

Ethan Seltzer solicited feedback on the draft of the Task Force's final report. Don Mazziotti mentioned the importance of establishing a concrete, numerical goal for job creation and to include that in the report. Kathy Long-Holland added that there needs to be a stronger statement about issues related to K-12 education. Ethan asked all Task Force members to get comments on the draft, should they have any, to either he or Heike by the end of the week.

Next Steps & Next Meeting

The Metropolitan Economic Policy Task Force will meet on Tuesday, January 13, 2004. At that meeting, the Task Force will assess the Partner's 6-month accomplishments. In the meantime the Partners will work on the implementation of their work plan. Task Force members asked that the Regional Partners develop a means for regularly communicating the state of the project to Task Force members. It could take the form of an email or newsletter...just something to let the Task Force members know that there is still a "pulse."

Marty Harris appealed to Task Force members to help identify individuals and organization who can function as champions, or who simply ought to be involved in the evolution and implementation of the framework.

Public Comment

No public comment was received.

Drake closed the meeting at 8.40 pm.