

## **Metropolitan Economic Policy Task Force (MEPTF)**

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### **Meeting Summary**

**November 12, 2002**

**Portland State University**

**Smith Memorial Student Union, Room 234/236**

Chair Rob Drake convened the meeting at 6.30 pm.

The following MEPTF members attended: Jesus “Jess” Carreon, John Castles, Steve Clark, Rob Drake, Erik Hovee, Ron Johnson, Michael Jordan, Vera Katz, Kim Kimbrough, Kathy Long Holland, Don Mazziotti, Maria Rojo de Steffey, Judie Stanton, Carl Talton, Jose Tornero, Diane Vines, Rick Williams

Not attending: David Bragdon, John Mitchell, Bob Terry, William Wyatt

### **Introductions**

Chair Rob Drake welcomed Task Force members and the audience and gave the opportunity for introductions. Members expressed their expectations and hopes for the Task Force work. A number of members hope to integrate existing economic development strategies at the regional level. Steve Clark, Vera Katz, Don Mazziotti, Carl Talton, and Kim Kimbrough stressed the importance of such a coherent regional strategy and vision. Eric Hovee hopes to position the region for more economic diversity and prosperity. Kathy Long-Holland emphasized the need to adopt a long-term economic outlook. Maria Rojo de Steffey stated that she hopes to find linkages between economic development and other public policy fields such as social services, housing, and transportation. Diane Vines expressed interest in linking the Task Force work with existing activities by groups such as the Oregon Council on Knowledge and Economic Development (OCKED) and the Oregon Science and Technology Park (OSTP) in Gresham. Rick Williams emphasized the need to design a regional strategy that fits the unique characteristics of this region. Jose Tornero stressed the role of the Hispanic community in the regional economy. Judy Stanton introduced the group to Clark County’s economic development and comprehensive land use efforts. Michael Jordan welcomed the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the connections between planning issues and the economy. Ron Johnson stressed his company’s (Portland General Electric) interest in growing the regional economy. John Castles hopes to contribute his insights from the New Economy Coalition and from the philanthropic community. Jess Carreon stated that Portland Community College is not only an education institution but also an economic driver in educating and training the region’s workforce and creating wealth. He stressed the importance of retaining an educated workforce and the needs of small and medium-sized businesses.

### **Regional Economic Development Partners**

Larry Pederson, Economic Development Director for the City of Hillsboro, presented an overview of the history of the Regional Economic Development Partners and regional economic development dynamics. He said that the Regional Economic Development Partners were created 10 years ago as an informal group of economic development professionals to focus on information sharing and a collaborative approach to recruitment and retention/expansion of businesses. Pederson stated that the Partners later added public policy to their tasks. He also acknowledged that there is no single regional organization or strategy in place to deal with economic development.

In his presentation, Pederson emphasized the economic interdependencies of the region’s six counties. Furthermore, Pederson argued that the reasons that brought companies to the Portland-Vancouver region have dramatically changed. In the past, traditional location factors such as cheap land, water, electricity, or transportation access played an important role. Today, characteristics that are inextricably linked to a place, such as quality of life, technical expertise, critical mass of industry cluster activities, and market access, have become more important due to internationalization.

Lastly, Larry Pederson stressed the importance of a strategy discussion that is vision-driven and he asked the Task Force members to help economic development professionals with directing their efforts towards this goal.

### **Task Force Charge**

Ethan Seltzer, Director of the Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies, introduced the Task Force charge, which is to engage in fact-finding regarding the state of economic development strategy in the region and the degree to which new strategy development is necessary. He pointed out that the mission for the Task Force is to review adopted and emerging local, regional, and state economic development strategies. The group will identify

- common themes,
- possible conflicts and gaps,
- opportunities and best practices for linking economic development objectives to land use and transportation planning and implementation actions and investments in the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area.

He emphasized that the Task Force is not being asked to develop a regional economic strategy. Rather, the Task Force has been charged to inventory, for the first time, what the region is doing with regards to economic development, and then to discuss what the metropolitan region needs to do next to reinforce its strategic economic goals.

### **Economic Development Inventory**

Staff handed the Economic Development Inventory document to Task Force members (the document is also available online at <http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/mep.html>). Ethan Seltzer stated that the document provides a starting point for the work the Task Force will do. He referred to the next meeting of the Task Force on December 12, at which Joe Cortright of Impresa Inc. will present an analysis of the inventory.

### **Discussion**

Task Force members engaged in a discussion about key issues that need to be considered in the future. Jess Carreon referred to the region's demographic changes, such as aging and ethnic diversification, and their impact on economic development. Jose Tornero reminded the Task Force of the importance of the agricultural sector in Oregon's economy. Rob Drake, Kim Kimbrough, and John Castles agreed on the region's successful track record in collaboration and cooperation with regards to public policy. Diane Vines referred to the work done by the Oregon Council on Knowledge and Economic Development (OCKED). In particular, she stated that MEPTF needs to take a look at technology areas in which the region is best positioned to compete. Kathy Long-Holland emphasized the importance of quality of life and education in attracting talent to the region. John Castles stated that the region has to overcome the perception that it's not a good place to attract senior-level management and venture capital. Michael Jordan expressed concern about issues related to the relationship of the Portland-Vancouver region to the rest of the state. Along the same line, Jess Carreon raised the question how a regional strategy will be linked to the statewide effort of the Oregon Business Council.

### **Next Steps**

Ethan Seltzer outlined the next steps for the Task Force. At its next meeting, Joe Cortright will present the analysis of the economic development inventory. Additionally, the Task Force will examine statewide and regional economic development efforts.

### **Next Meeting**

The next MEPTF meeting will take place on Thursday, December 12, 6.30 pm to 9 pm, in Portland State University's Smith Memorial Student Union, Room 229.

### **Public Comment**

Chairman Drake gave the audience the opportunity to make public comment. No public comment was received.

Chairman Drake closed the meeting at 8.15 pm.