

**OPEN FOR BUSINESS:
A NEW STATE GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
New York City Regional Economic Development Council
Second Meeting Discussion Group:
Developing Criteria to Identify Catalytic, Transformative Projects
Tuesday, August 23, 2011
The Graduate School and University Center, The City University of New York**

Meeting Summary

Facilitator:

Curtis Craven, Department of State

Attendees:

Carl Hum, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce
Cesar Claro, Staten Island Economic Development Corporation
Dr. Marcia Keizs, York College, CUNY
Gail Grimmett, Delta Airlines
Michael Sotto, representing Kathryn Wylde, Partnership for NYC
Kevin Ryan, Gilt Groupe
Michael Hurwitz, representing Marcel Van Ooyen, GrowNYC
Peter Spinella, representing Nick Lugo, NYC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Eric Ottoway, representing Steve Hindy, Brooklyn Brewery
Melva Miller, representing Hon. Helen Marshall, Queens Borough President
Francine Delgado, Seedco
Raymond Sanchez, representing Hon. Ruben Diaz, Bronx Borough President
Josh Gold, representing Peter Ward, Hotels and Motels Trade Council
Dr. Suri Duitch, The City University of New York
Daliz Perez-Cabezas, The City University of New York
Rachel Stephenson, The City University of New York
Richard Weber, Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

Curtis Cravens introduced himself and offered a context for the task before the breakout group, leading up to the council's final strategic plan, due November 14. The council began this process by addressing each chapter of the strategic plan: from a discussion of existing conditions, to an assessment of assets, opportunities, and challenges, to the formation of a vision statement, and now to a discussion of goals. The question to be discussed today: what are the strategies and criteria for the transformative projects that the council wants in its plan? Strategies and criteria will link the vision statement to the projects. Between this meeting and the next (Sept. 13), there will be additional work groups that will fully develop and refine the strategies and criteria that today's discussion produces.

Council member Francine Delgado volunteered to report out for the group.

Curtis began by asking for criteria. For example: Is a project shovel-ready? Is there financing in place? Does that matter? Is the project compatible with the values of the plan?

Suri Duitch reminded the group that the three broad areas reflected in the vision statement are infrastructure, human capital, and business development/reduction of barriers to business creation and growth.

Attendees began discussing possible **criteria**, including:

- The regional impact: the reach of a project, whether it impacts all of the boroughs, whether it is replicable within a reasonable time period
- Underutilized space in the outer boroughs that is in need of redevelopment
- Quality and quantity of jobs created, and the potential for derivative job growth; the location of jobs
- Is the project a consumer of services, or a creator of services? Does it have a double benefit?
- Maximizing the supply chain and creating business procurement opportunities
- Economic feasibility (discussion followed about what feasibility means: Is there a time frame for spending the funding? What will gain points in the application? Will funds be allocated in one period, or over a period of time?)
- Is it shovel ready? Would that preclude brownfields and other projects that could have a large impact but may take time to become ready?
- Sustainability. What can we develop that will have derivative impacts?
- Reasonable time horizon
- Criteria should apply to services, not just programs
- Measureable
- Leverages private funding
- Offers human capital training and development
- Impact on needy populations and areas
- Can the project spur an entire industry?
- Investment in green tech
- Regional impact (improve ability of regions to help one another)
- Organizational impact (ability to hire or partner with small businesses)
- Transparency of economic development, for measurement and inclusivity

Delgado noted that a number of themes had emerged among the criteria: feasibility, sustainability, measurability, leverage, and impact

The group then began discussing possible **strategies**, including:

- Including non-transformative projects, e.g., small businesses that are adding jobs, but not on a large scale. How can those businesses that will not qualify for the Excelsior program be assisted?
- Removing barriers to business. This may be seen as a structural area, but if the barriers are removed, many projects would be shovel-ready; without regulations, the time frame changes
- Are we recruiting, or are we developing resources that are here? How do we address the problem of the disengaged?
- Creating a business-friendly environment; helping businesses fast-track their development, perhaps through incubators that help businesses move through the red tape. Further discussion refined this to include a reduction of barriers, not simply assistance in overcoming them
- Tort reform

- Facilitation of participation in incentive programs (e.g., green tech); availability of technical assistance
- Increasing quality of life/community vitality through good job growth
- Fostering entrepreneurship through education (e.g., partnerships with CUNY)
- Supporting/expanding diversity
- Increasing competitiveness in all boroughs
- Infrastructure/transportation. Discussion followed that infrastructure/transportation should reflect greater outer-borough development. It is also a policy issue, as transportation is a significant part of business development. Improving water and rail travel and use of the waterfront are also sustainability issues, and transportation is also a key to making affordable housing available
- Balance between projects that have short-term, immediate impact, and those that have longer-term impact (e.g., setting up a factory vs. creating a biotech hub in partnership with universities)

Cravens reminded the group that the work group will get much more detailed and specific about these areas. He then asked for suggestions for **work groups**. Several were suggested:

- Job quality
- Regional linkages
- Transportation (intermodal) development
- Marketing strategies for New York City
- Education
- Asset mapping/management (underutilized assets)
- Availability of power/quality of utilities