

Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council
Inaugural Meeting Notes
11:00 a.m.
Thursday, August 11, 2011

Welcome and Introductions

Council members were welcomed at 11:00 a.m. by Lieutenant Governor Robert Duffy who, in turn, introduced MVREDC co-chairs Wolf Yeigh, SUNYIT president, and Larry Gilroy, president of Gilroy, Kernan & Gilroy Insurance. Lt. Gov. Duffy explained he will be chairing all 10 Regional Councils in the State, but that the co-chairs will be driving the meetings.

Co-Chair Yeigh said the Council represents a great opportunity to learn more about what the region has to offer as well as the challenges it faces. He said future meetings will be held at SUNY institutions around the six-county Mohawk Valley Region, with the next meeting at Herkimer County Community College.

Co-Chair Gilroy said many of the challenges are well known, but Council gives the Region an opportunity we didn't have a few months ago. He stated the vice chairs do not have all the answers and that is why a diverse membership was chosen. He said the Council is a team and he will do all he can to make sure we are one of the four winners.

Open for Business: A New State Government Approach to Economic Development

The Lt. Gov. Duffy presented "*Open for Business: A New State Government Approach to Economic Growth*," in which he described Gov. Cuomo's approach to creating a new operating model for NYS government. He said the Regional Council approach is the Governor's premier economic development program whose goal is to do everything possible to grow jobs.

Initial task and timeframes

Peter Walsh from the Department of State provided Council members with an overview of the strategic planning process. He referred members to the planning timeline, guidebook and manual in their binders and also available at <http://nyworks.ny.gov/>.

Mr. Walsh discussed the scoring criteria for each region's strategic plans, as well as the requirements for public participation in the planning process.

Report Out and Workgroup Selection

Assets:

Breakout Group 1

Positioned for hi-tech growth
Quality of Life
Affordability

Breakout Group 2

Geographic location
Quality of life
Developable talent

Challenges/Threats:

Breakout Group 1

Aging infrastructure
Overlap in government
Cost to do business

Breakout Group 2

Unfriendly business climate
Negative attitude – cynicism
Aging (population, infrastructure,
workforce, housing)

Vision:

Breakout Group 1

Discussed the options of having a short, mid, and long-term vision

Breakout Group 2

The Mohawk Valley has become the heart of NY success

Workgroups:

A quick overview of the structure and purpose of the workgroups was given. A member of the REDC will chair each workgroup, which will be comprised of members of the REDC. You are encouraged to bring in community and businesses to support this work. Each workgroup will have a name and plan. Workgroup will be brought back to the council for approval.

Vision

Chair: Randy VanWagoner

Members: Deb Auspelmyer, Richard Ball, Juanita Bass, and Bill Keller

Mission: To craft an economic vision statement for the Mohawk Valley. Workgroup should reflect on comments from Council members at the Inaugural Meeting.

Public Participation

Chair: Nancy Pattarini

Members: Peggy O'Shea, Dayton King, Carolyn Lewis, Ann Thane, and Frank DeRiso

Mission: To craft public participation plan that incorporates feedback from the public in all counties in the region; reflects guidance from REDC co-chairs; includes public meetings prior to plan development as well as public meetings on the completed strategic plan; can incorporate social media and focus groups, etc. Implements such plan

Strategic Writing Workgroup

Chair: Marianne Gaige

Members: Steve DiMeo, Wolf Yeigh, Mary Morse, Tom Quackenbush, and Harold Vroman

Mission: To craft collect information from other Workgroups and REDC council meetings to include in a completed Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan. Write and revise the plan when necessary. Also craft criteria to aid in the selection of projects for the plan. Craft criteria for the prioritization of projects for the plan.

Overall Strategies and Implementation

Chair: Nick Matt

Members: Steve DiMeo, Carolyn Lewis, Chuck Green, David Howard, and Ann Thane

Mission: To review existing plans, feedback from council members, public participation information, and workgroup reports and information to recommend strategies. Use priority projects and criteria plan to craft strategy and implementation plan for overall strategic plan. Select corresponding performance measures for each project and overall plan. Investigate and recommend potential assessment tools for plan implementation progress and successes.

SWOT Critical Issues/Regional Drivers/Regional Endorsement Standard

Chair: Mike Reese

Members: Scott White, Richard Smith, Daniel Robinson, and Steve DiMeo

Mission: To do a complete analysis of the regions Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (incorporating feedback provided at the inaugural meeting); Identify regional economic drivers; craft REDC endorsement standards for the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA); create ad hoc committees as needed to address information needed on specific industry sectors.

Wrap Up/Next Steps

Co-Chair Yeigh announced that the next Council meeting will occur August 24 at HCCC, with future meetings at FMCC, SUNY Cobleskill and SUNY Oneonta. Public participation sessions are planned from east to west between now and November, starting in Amsterdam.

Co-Chair Gilroy said the Council hopes to complete a draft vision statement by next meeting and encouraged all workgroups to look at the timeline.

ASSETS/OPPORTUNITIES

Breakout Group 1

Ranked 1st - Well positioned for hi-tech growth

2nd – Quality of life
3rd - Affordability

no wild fluctuations in economy; higher education capacity/diversity, strong overall education system; rural roots; affordability!; lifestyle options; well positioned for hi-tech growth (semiconductor); work force (willingness and desire/diversity); natural resources (land, beauty); location; quality of life; diversity of population; hi-tech resources (Air Force Lab); climate (stable); cultural tourism.

Breakout Group 2

Ranked 1st – geographic location (transportation, proximity available waterfront)

2nd – quality of life (safe, recreation, culture, museums, healthcare, etc.)

3rd – Develop Talent (higher education, viable workforce, work ethic)

higher learning; low-cost land; quality of life; affordable housing; family safe; waterfront (recreation, business, development); accessibility to transportation; corridors; geographic proximity to major cities; cultural diversity (Native American, Amish, great restaurants); viable workforce (refugee population: Utica, Gloversville, skills, etc.); good work ethic (access to potential workforce?); “lots” of healthcare institutions; strong K-12 schools vs. other states; established businesses to leverage names; distinct business clusters (manufacturing, agriculture, technology, finance, and insurance – 10 insurance companies in region); industrial parks with capacity; downtowns in the cities which are “ready for revitalization”; multi-generational successful businesses; recreational potential (trails, Adirondack); history; tourist trades and museums (nationally recognized); arts and culture; agricultural assets.

THREATS/CHALLENGES/ISSUES

Breakout Group 1

- Lack of clear regional identity
- 25% decline in high school grads
- Underutilized community/industrial real estate
- Fewer economic incentives
- Lack of IT infrastructure in rural areas
- Skilled workforce
- Available labor
- Lack of perceived cultural opportunities for young
- Overlapping government structures
- Lack of research institutions of higher education
- Energy costs
- Stagnant population growth

- Resistance to change
- Climate (where can we surf?)
- Aging population
- Sub-par educational attainment
- Transportation air/train
- Housing stock
- Aging infrastructure – sewers

Breakout Group 2

- Taxes (local and town – ability to change?)
- Regulations – consolidate local villages/towns
- Mandates
- Image of region – negative persona
- Aging population, aging infrastructure, aging workforce
- Transportation – rural, limited
- Poverty – illiteracy issues, higher number of individuals on assistance
- Loss of talented younger generation
- Lack of jobs
- Not a lot of political clout on a state and federal level

Overall REDC Notes

1st – Unfriendly business climate

2nd – Cynicism

3rd – Aging (population, infrastructure, workforce, housing)

4th – Aging infrastructure

5th – lack of clear regional initiatives/overlapping government

6th – Cost to do business

VISION

Breakout Group 1

- Planned/smart growth?
- Sustainable
- Focused
- Aligned/connected/team oriented
- Become a technology region of NY (cyber, info tech, renewable/agri tech)
- Leverage agricultural resources
- Resilient livelihoods!!
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Healthy lifestyles

Breakout Group 2

- Center
- Engaged
- Momentum
- Deregulated
- Thriving
- Growing
- Innovative
- Creative
- Fluid – changing to meet demands
- Nimble
- Evolving
- Effective
- Leveraged
- Positive
- Healthy
- One
- Successful
- Unified
- Educated
- Appeal
- Proactive
- Upgraded
- Prosperous
- Consolidated
- Streamlined
- Retired

WORKGROUPS

Breakout Group 1 – suggested committees

- Overall strategies
- Visioning
- SWOT
- Public involvement – collaboration
- Regional economic drivers/standards – performance measures and metrics
- Report develop/writing

Breakout Group 2 – suggested committees

- Vision
- Strategic plan writing workgroup
- Prioritize projects
- Inventory of regional (counties) – SWOT (economic drivers)

- Implementation strategy – leverage
- Public participation

REDC Committees Created (with chairs):

- Vision – chaired by Randy VanWagoner
- Public Participation – chaired by Nancy Pattarini
- Strategic Plan/Writing Group – chaired by Marianne Gaige
- Overall Strategies and Implementation – chaired by Nick Matt
- SWOT Critical Issues – chaired by Mike Reese

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