

MINUTES

Lakes Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) Strategy Committee Meeting

Meredith Savings Bank
South Main Street,
Laconia, New Hampshire

July 26, 2007

Committee Members Present:

Bill Beyer, Meredith Village Savings Bank	Henry Lipman, LRGH
Jennifer Boulanger, BCEDC	Linda Normandin, Laconia Savings
Mark Edelstein, NH Community Technical College	Gerry O'Neil, Private Sector representative
Debbie Frawley-Drake, Lakes Region Linen	Carol Pierce, Laconia Human Relations Committee
Theresa Lamson, Greater Laconia-Weirs Beach Chamber of Commerce	Jack Terrill, Lakes Region United Way

Others:

Carol Cantin, NH Department of Employment Security
Glen Copleman, CDFR
Pam Szacik, NH Department of Employment Security
Kimon Koulet, LRPC
Michael Tardiff, LRPC

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Bill Beyer at 5:10pm. The minutes were accepted as written by a unanimous vote of the committee.

Second Year EDA Funding Status Report

Kim Koulet reported on the proposal LRPC staff was preparing for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for continued funding of the CEDS development process. He reviewed the steps in the CEDS process that have been completed to date, including the draft economic climate analysis, the development of the regional vision, and the preparation of the industry cluster analysis. He then stated that it is now time to focus on the implementation plan - work that has already begun by the CEDS committee as it has discussed goals, objectives and action steps over the last month. With extended support from EDA, there will be more time for committees to work, suggest

priorities, and consider how the Lakes Region CEDS process will coordinate with the overall state of New Hampshire economic development planning process. He noted that monitoring progress is another key component of the CEDS.

Theresa Lamson asked if the preparation of more detailed cluster analysis data for the 30 communities in the Lakes Region would be part of the proposal. K. Koulet said that within the report there are data that identify key industries within the four county area of the Lakes Region. Late in the cluster analysis process, more detailed information at the community level was made available for use by the consultants. Due to the timing, not much analysis was undertaken of the more detailed data, although several tables with the community specific data were included in the report. He then noted there are some funds available to hire a consultant for additional work, such as analysis, as appropriate. He noted that the EDA recommends basing strategies and measuring results on the outcome of the cluster analysis process.

T. Lamson noted that she had not been surprised by any of the information that came out of the original cluster analysis. H. Lipman stated that while there may not be any surprises, it is important to review the data closely. B. Beyer followed that point by stating that there may not be any surprises to date because much of the analysis in the cluster report was undertaken using the four county data, not the data specifically from the 30 communities.

K. Koulet stated that if the committee wants to make the additional cluster analysis work a priority, an RFP similar to that of the original cluster analysis RFP could be released soon after additional funding was made available by EDA.

Continued Review Of Goals, Objectives, Action Matrix

B. Beyer continued the discussion of goals from the June 27 meeting by distributing a revised matrix of goals, objectives, strategies and resources. He referred to a matrix that he had passed out, and noted that it was slightly different than the chart that everyone had received previously in that he had identified specific committee members that could speak to the individual categories.

He said that six topics had been identified in June, and that at that meeting it had been decided that there would be further discussion at the July meeting in order to both better understand the topics and the directions those topics can take as well as better understand potential strategies to undertake the topics.

The draft matrix is as follows:

Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Resources
Break the Cycle:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Force Housing • Low/moderate cost housing • Other forms of ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three banks jointly develop affordable housing (CRA) • Communication with local municipalities • Battle contractor challenges • Encourage downtown housing • Rent to own 	

Build Employees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better prepare employees for a variety of jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships between Voc. College and other schools • Partnership between Music Festival and schools • “Follow the Child” 	
New Economy;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market available Incubator space • Business Parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish alliances with Boston area businesses • Promote micro enterprises BCEDC Ec. Profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation/technological grants
Cultivate social capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek volunteers • Tap available skill sets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Way programs exist 	
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Planning and collaboration (among towns, counties, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community best practices • Tie into plans • Reduce duplication • Smart growth 	
Preserve and enhance Natural Environment and Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance development goals within environmental constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote continued support of Winnepesaukee River project objectives 	

The CEDS Strategy Committee initiated the discussion of the goals matrix.

B. Beyer asked Jack Terrill to further clarify the term “Break the Cycle”. J. Terrill stated that one approach to economic development is to take our existing assets and make them stronger, which strengthens our region. He noted how certain citizens in the region often have difficulty moving into the middle class, and if we can increase the middle class we have undertaken economic development. He noted that education is a key as well is home ownership, i.e., the ability to build assets. He said the issue is eliminating barriers for people. Breaking the Cycle is allowing those who are motivated to move up. J. Terrill then noted that he would add additional objectives to the list as home ownership and education are both important elements when breaking the cycle. He then discussed certain specifics related to housing, including potential affordable home ownership programs that cap equity, but build equity for a down payment for a next house. He also referred to better education regarding the availability of the earned income tax credit. T. Lamson noted that these programs are already in place, and only need to be supported by the CEDS process. B. Beyer highlighted the work of Habitat for Humanity in the region. He said that one of the things a subcommittee formed to further discuss this topic would be to identify all of those projects and strategies currently underway in the region. T. Lamson said that it is also important for the CEDS committee to develop and produce things outside of the projects currently underway. Henry

Lipman stated that it would be important for the subcommittee to undertake an inventory of those projects currently underway, complete an assessment of those projects, and make suggestions related to what could be added.

B. Beyer brought up the topic of workforce housing, noting that a potential strategy is to develop a coalition among local banks to invest and create low and moderate income housing. H. Lipman followed that idea by discussing the idea of tying low and moderate home ownership to improvements in infrastructure in the region, which might be a way of making funding available for housing that may have not been available before. J. Terrill noted that he hoped that the CEDS process could help develop the agenda in the region. Gerry O'Neil noted that better buy-in of the agenda in the region may occur if there is a mixture of things already being done as well as new projects developed through the CEDS.

B. Beyer then observed that it was important to discuss how the six overall topics would be brought out to the community. Jennifer Boulanger stated that she understood that the committee was going to first identify goals and objectives, then identify projects in the region that are at different stages of completion through discussions with town planners and officials, and align those projects with the goals that have been identified. A key to this would be to go out and discuss the goals and projects with the individual communities. B. Beyer asked what the process should be to communicate the goals with the public. J. Boulanger brought up the idea of public forums.

K. Koulet then noted that the committee had developed a list of goals at the June CEDS meeting, and the list of goals dated July 13 was a result of that meeting. He said that the committee had said at the meeting that it would review the list at the July meeting to make sure there was consensus regarding the goals. He said that there may be unique things that the CEDS committee may wish to undertake related to individual goals while at the same time there are other related projects being undertaken by other organizations. He noted that workforce housing is one of many topics that had been discussed during the CEDS process. For the committee to reach consensus on goals, we should identify and prioritize the list to some extent. Linda Normandin asked about the process of revisiting the goals in the future. K. Koulet noted that we would need to look at the goals periodically.

Carol Cantin quickly outlined some of the tasks she felt the subcommittees could undertake, including a review of the goals and objectives under each topic and the preparation of a resource directory of contacts. B. Beyer noted that a three-month period for subcommittees to report back was appropriate. H. Lipman brought up a concern of the subcommittees broadening their work too much, and they should stick to the goals and objectives defined by the CEDS committee. J. Boulanger asked about the period of time that the CEDS committee had to complete the process. K. Koulet stated that, under current funding, it was July 2008. At that time he added that EDA might provide one more additional year of funding, which could extend the timeframe to complete and/or modify the CEDS.

B. Beyer then noted that there are six overall topics, and he thought there was a need to create six subcommittees to address those topics. J. Boulanger noted that a key point of the CEDS process was to make sure that funding would be available for projects. K. Koulet said that the funding issue was an important consequence of the process, but it was hoped that the CEDS process was larger than that. J. Boulanger asked what we needed to do to make sure the funding was available. K. Koulet responded that we needed an approved CEDS by EDA, which includes all seven components of the CEDS. Upon approval of the CEDS, funding for specific projects would then

be available, which is why specifics regarding individual projects is very important in the final document. He then highlighted the need for a list of specific projects for the whole region in similar detail as already drafted by BCEDC. J. Boulanger noted that she has been asked a number of times when the overall CEDS will be completed. K. Koulet also pointed out that the region can apply for district status once it has completed the CEDS. District status allows the district to leverage additional federal opportunities, including funding.

Glen Copleman then commented on the time it can take for a CEDS to be approved by EDA, stating that it has taken a month or more for other CEDS in regions that he has worked with to be approved. He further noted that the CEDS is a living document to be reviewed each year and completely rewritten every five years. He said the project lists can often change annually.

B. Beyer said that the committee should be working on the document while at the same time identifying projects, and he agrees with how J. Boulanger has met with representatives from local communities to identify specific projects.

G. Copleman also stated that it was important for the committee to hold public forums related to the CEDS to both educate people regarding the process as well as solicit their ideas. Questions were then posed regarding the potential funding and types of projects funded by EDA. G. Copleman referred to the water and sewer projects, and noted how important it was to leverage other funds in addition to EDA funds for individual projects. He again noted how important it was to both define goals and objectives and prepare a project list.

B. Beyer followed by saying that there are a great number of objectives that do not necessarily require EDA funding, but instead have to do with getting different people in the region to work together to accomplish goals. C. Cantin stated that she felt it was very important to get out into the community to start discussing the topics.

K. Koulet brought up the idea of a series of meetings that would bring the goals and objectives from the CEDS process out to the public for comment and where the public would be asked about specific projects for inclusion in the CEDS. H. Lipman noted his concern regarding how long that kind of process could take, and stated that we need to stay focused on the end product of the completed report.

Following a discussion regarding the need and type of public forums to gain information regarding goals and potential projects, H. Lipman described the building blocks he felt that the individual subcommittees would need to begin their work. They include collecting information on potential projects from each of the communities, as well as who in the communities are currently working on each of the six topic areas. He also emphasized the need to bring back everything that the CEDS committee is working on to a public forum so it can be validated.

Upon the completion of the discussion the committee organized individual subcommittees to continue working on the specific goals.

The subcommittees were charged to continue discussion related to their specific goal and to undertake the following:

- Compile a list of stakeholders in the region related to the specific goal
- Prepare a list of available resources related to the specific goal

- Investigate what initiatives are currently underway, and
- Discuss any possible performance measures related to the goal as required by the CEDS process.

The subcommittees were organized as follows:

Subcommittee	Members	Subcommittee	Members
<i>Break the Cycle</i>	Bill Beyer	<i>Cultivate Social Capital</i>	Jack Terrill
	Linda Normandin		Debbie Frawley-Drake
	Jack Terrill		Jane Wood
<i>Build Employees</i>	Mark Edelstein	<i>Collaboration</i>	Denise Sharlow
	Pam Szacik		Mark Scarano
	Gary Groleau		Theresa Lamson
	Carol Pierce		Jennifer Boulanger
	Carol Cantin		
<i>New Economy</i>	Henry Lipman	<i>Preserve and Enhance</i>	Rick DeMark
	John Howe	<i>Natural Environment and</i>	Joe LaPlante
	Moe Lafreniere	<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	Gerry O'Neil

Following the organization of the subcommittees, G. Coppleman stated that it was important to hold a public forum before the report is completed in order to help create the project list as well as help develop goals.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

It was then agreed that the next meeting of the CEDS Strategy Committee would tentatively be held on Wednesday, October 17 beginning at 5:00 pm. The meeting location will be announced.