

CREATING A REGIONAL IDENTITY

The Citizens League Regional Policy Workshop

(September 23, 2008)

Forty-one years after the creation of the Metropolitan Council, our region and economy have grown and changed in ways not imagined at the time. At the Regional Policy Workshop we will explore what it means to be a region and where acting “regionally” creates mutual benefits. How do we define the Twin Cities metropolitan region? For what purposes? Does our region have clear competitive advantages? Does our region have the infrastructure – physical and fiscal – it needs to thrive, both as individual communities and as a region? As individual constituencies within the region, in what ways are we accountable to each other?

Regional Policy Workshop Outcomes:

- To develop a relevant and effective framing of critical issues that the region needs to address in the coming years to maintain our quality of life and economic competitiveness.
- To build a diverse base of leaders from all sectors that want to contribute to addressing these issues.
- To establish the foundation for regional agreements that are actionable.

The Citizens League workshop will be designed as an active, results-oriented event. Toward that end, we will ask all participants to:

- Contribute to problem definitions and solutions according to the current realities of the particular policy question. It is our goal to involve a broad range of individuals, groups and institutions that are affected by a policy question.
- Share and learn from one another and be open to exploring the implications of various courses of action through a transparent process that expects all participants to engage in decision-making.
- Identify actionable next steps, where all participants connect their self-interest with the common interest to evaluate outcomes and to help set recommendations and next steps.
- Strive to make progress on the next steps by encouraging all participants to advance and sustain recommendations in the institutions where they spend their time and have the authority and influence to act.

It is our hope that the Regional Policy Workshop can be a multi-year effort that provides checkpoints throughout the year and reconvenes each year to evaluate progress and make new agreements that move us forward as a region.

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AGENDA

DOORS AND REGISTRATION (8:00 a.m.)*****

PLENARY SESSION: “Creating a Regional Identity” (8:30 – 9:15 a.m.) _____ ROOM 135AC

Moderator: Sean Kershaw

Outcome: Identify potential bases for regional action.

Present the findings of a pre-event survey:

- a. In what ways do people identify themselves regionally and how does that vary by function (e.g., shopping, education, jobs, transportation)
- b. Have we identified bases that we can build off of regionally?

BREAKOUT SESSIONS (9:30 a.m. – 12:00) _____

Session I: “Creating a Regional Vision Based on Competitive Advantage” _____ ROOM 135AC

Moderator: Jennifer Ford Reedy

Outcomes:

- Identify what participants view as our competitive advantages.
- Identify the resources that would be needed to create and/or maintain these competitive advantages.
- Identify how well-aligned our current institutional, governance and fiscal structures are with these competitive advantages.

In a global economy, regions become the basis for economic competitiveness. Are the strengths and attributes that we’ve built in the past sufficient in this new global era and are they the same strengths that could be a significant competitive advantage in the future? Participants will identify possible competitive advantages, explore the implications of pursuing them, and discuss what actions would be necessary to pursue the selected strategies.

Possible Questions:

- a. What are our competitive advantages in the Twin Cities region?
- b. What do we need to do to be economically competitive in the future?
- c. To what extent are **resources** focused to maximize our competitive advantages?
- d. To what extent is **leadership** focused?
- e. To what extent is our **problem-solving** focused? (How do we create the capacity and flexibility to solve problems in a fast-paced world?)

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Session II: “Creating a New Model for Resource Use”

ROOM 156AB

Moderators: Jon Commers and Stacy Becker

Outcome: Identify opportunities to get multiple benefits from public policy solutions.

Whether it is water, human capital, land use, or energy – the plenty of the past is disappearing. Within each sector (public/private/citizen) and throughout society, the goal is to cut across policy silos and economic impacts to get multiple benefits out of our policies and use of resources.

The last forty years were arguably an era of unprecedented wealth and resources in the United States, with abundant energy, natural resources, human capital, and tax revenue. For example, Minnesota’s dependency ratio – the ratio of the number of children and elderly to the number of working-age people – is predicted to reach an all-time low in 2010 (47.3), then begin to rise to 66.4 in 2030, with significant implications for tax revenues and expenditures. Participants will explore the concept of a new era of *relative* scarcity, and our possible responses to it.

Possible Questions:

- a. What impacts will the massive demographic changes just a few years ahead have on our resource use?
- b. Are there important and costly areas where we tend to use our resources in single purpose ways that could be developed more flexibly and adaptively (e.g., housing?)
- c. Are there important problems where solutions overlap (e.g., poverty and foreclosures, or poverty and early childhood education, or transportation and energy policy) and solving them together can be more cost-effective?
- d. Are there areas where incentives can act on self-interest to encourage people and institutions to do the right thing rather than react to programs and mandates?

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Session III: “Building Communities for a Lifetime”

ROOM 42A

Moderators: Gretchen Nicholls and Peter Brown

Presenter: Dawn Simonson, Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging

Outcomes:

- Identify approaches for communities to become more flexible, multi-purpose so that people of all stages of life can prosper.
- Identify relationships and infrastructure that would be needed on a regional basis.

It’s almost as hard to imagine our communities as “aged” as it is to imagine ourselves as “aged.” The rapidly approaching shift in demographics to an aging society has many implications for how our communities are built and operate. This breakout will be a case study using one or two real cities and examining the challenges and opportunities they face.

Participants will explore the issues of aging in communities, possible responses, and what policy and/or system changes are needed to support communities’ efforts to bring about sustainable, adaptable communities that serve people of all ages.

Possible Questions:

- a. How do communities adapt to the growing number of seniors? What are the key challenges?
- b. How can communities become more flexible, multi-purpose so that people of all stages of life can prosper?
- c. In order for communities to do what is identified in the case studies, what relationships and infrastructure are needed on a regional basis?

LUNCH (12:00 – 1:15 p.m.)

**Optional Lunch Session: “Foreclosures and Mortgage Performance Trends”
(12:45 – 1:15 p.m.)**

ROOM 135AC

Presenters:

--Michael Grover, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

--Melissa Manderschied, Minnesota Foreclosure Partners Council

Michael Grover will present the very latest mortgage data from the Federal Reserve Bank, including a look at what’s ahead by community. Melissa Manderschied will provide information on a draft plan to address foreclosures in Minnesota and let you know how to weigh in on the plan.

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PRESENT TO RESPONSE GROUPS (1:20 – 2:30 p.m.) _____

Outcome: Produce at least one important next step from each morning session.

Facilitators and one member from each morning session will present to response groups that worked on other sessions. The response groups will add their perspective on what are the most significant ideas from the morning sessions. This discussion will be expected to produce at least one key “next step” to report to the full group for possible agreement.

Group A: Competitive Advantage

Group B: Resource Use

Group C: Communities for a Lifetime

ROOM 156AB

ROOM 42A

ROOM 135AC

RESPONSE PANEL AND FOUNDATION FOR NEXT STEPS (2:45 – 4:30 p.m.) _____ **ROOM 135AC**

Moderator: Peter Bell

Outcome: Refine and synthesize ideas from the “present and respond” sessions.

The panel will answer the following questions (2:45 – 3:15 p.m.):

--Have you heard anything today that makes you think differently about our regional identity?

--Have you heard any idea or theme that could help build connections between policies areas?

Response Panel:

--*John Adams, Co-Director, University Metropolitan Consortium*

--*Russ Adams, Executive Director, Alliance for Metro Stability*

--*Laura Bishop, Director of Government Relations, Best Buy*

--*Frank Forsberg, Senior Vice President, Community Impact, United Way*

--*Rep. Jeremy Kalin (DFL-North Branch)*

Facilitators will present key ideas from the response groups (3:15 – 3:45 p.m.)

Panelists will respond to the key ideas that are presented (3:45 – 4:00 p.m.)

--What one idea or concept interested you the most and merits a further look?

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Foundation for next steps (4:00 – 4:30 p.m.)

Moderator: Sean Kershaw

Outcome: Rate the key ideas and next steps from the day.

The entire group will hear short descriptions of each key ideas and next steps and will then be asked three questions electronically:

- a. Rate each key idea on the basis of:
 - Importance,
 - appropriateness of next step, and
 - feasibility.
- b. Do you see a role for yourself or an organization in your sphere in the next steps?
- c. How willing are you to support and work on the next step?

Small Group Facilitators:

Jim Boyle

Janna Caywood

Bob DeBoer

Dianne Krizan

Beth Mercer-Taylor

Erin Sexton

Joel Spoonheim

Luke Weisberg

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