

SUMMARY MINUTES

ABAG Regional Planning Committee – Economic Strategy Committee
Monday, September 6, 2017, 10:30am-12:00pm
Ohlone Conference Room (1st Floor), 375 Beale St, San Francisco, California

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Pradeep Gupta, Mayor of South San Francisco.

Staff Present:

Cynthia Kroll, Chief Economist
Johnny Jaramillo, Principal Planner
Bobby Lu, Regional Planner
Arrietta Chakos, Policy Advisor/Resilience team

Attendees:

**Committee members or alternates*

Alex Andrade, City of Mountain View
Laurel Arvanitidis*, City of San Francisco
Jeff Bellisario*, Bay Area Council Economic Institute
Zelda Bronstein, Reporter
John Carrese, Bay Area Community Colleges
Tilly Chang*, San Francisco County Transportation Agency
Cindy Chavez*, County of Santa Clara
Dennis Conaghan, San Francisco Center for Economic Development
Gary Croft*, Contra Costa County
Karen Engle*, Alameda College
Christina Fernandez*, San Mateo County Economic Development Association
Terrence Grindall*, City of Newark
Pradeep Gupta*, City of South San Francisco
Bruce Knopf*, County of Santa Clara
Sibella Kraus*, Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE)
Darien Louie*, East Bay Economic Development Association
Cynthia Murray*, North Bay Leadership Council
Steven Sharp*, Sonoma County Economic Development Board
Margaret Tamisiea, City of Mountain View
Micah Weinberg*, Bay Area Council Economic Institute
Monica Wilson*, City of Antioch

2. Session Overview and Updates

Staff provided an overview and highlighted meeting topics:

- a. Update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS): Circulation copy of CEDS Profile is completed and posted on website (<http://abag.ca.gov/planning/economic.html>)
- b. County Board of Supervisors engagement:
 - i. CEDS Vision, Goals, and Objectives has been finalized for endorsement by county Board of Supervisors
 - ii. Staff continues to speak with Supervisors and staff to brief them on the initiative, learn of any concerns, understand local priorities and to schedule endorsement dates.
- c. Submission of the regional Economic Development District (EDD) application to the United States Economic Development Administration (USEDA) is tentatively scheduled for December 2017.
- d. Remaining tasks: economic action plan and performance metrics.

3. Presentation on EDD organization structure options:

Jeff Bellisario of the Bay Area Council Economic Institute (BACEI) presented results of their case studies, commissioned by MTC, on economic development organization structures in six regions outside of the Bay Area.

(<http://www.bayareaeconomy.org/report/economic-development-in-the-bay-area/>):

- a. Common economic development functions include: policy, economic research, site planning, workforce training, business services and marketing.
- b. Organization structure options:
 - i. Strengthen economic development planning capacity within MTC/ABAG
 - ii. Better coordinate activities of sub-regional organizations
 - iii. Create entirely new structures with specific economic authorities
- c. The form of the structure needs to be aligned with the functions this entity will pursue.

4. Discussion and Feedback

Members provided comments and feedback on EDD organizational structure based on the options presented by BACEI. The following is a summary of those comments, divided by whether they addressed the role of the EDD or the structure of the EDD.

On the roles of the EDD:

- There is concern that some issues are regional in nature, but some have been acted on at the local level (such as workforce development). This organization needs to have a regional focus, but also acknowledge local issues and actions.

A top-down approach will diminish impact and trust in this entity. Initially this organization could focus on coordination and providing a clearing house function and resources, instead of immediately pursuing several new initiatives. Staff and committee member response:

- Workforce Development is becoming more regionalized, and has been worked on at the regional level by workforce boards and community college consortium from the region.
- The work of a regional EDD organization would not supplant local efforts, but improve coordination and resources for local jurisdictions and firms.
- The regional organization could provide technical assistance and the CEDS framing to support local initiatives.

Several strategy members recommended that the regional EDD establish approaches to maintain regular contact with local counties and areas with unique concerns and opportunities, to ensure the organization is addressing their needs.

- The EDD organization needs to maintain a regional focus, understand where the region is going, and find out what we are currently doing well. We should map out economic development activities, efforts and programs operating in the region, analyze the gaps and overlaps of these activities, and prioritize tasks. This should be one of the first action items of the organization.
- Several participants emphasized the importance of this entity to make organizations in the region eligible to compete for new resources and new investments from Federal and state agencies and foundations.
- Because conditions can change rapidly, it will be important for the profile and strategic economic action plan to be flexible and updated as needed. Staff pointed out that USEDA requires periodic updates of this type.
- In the absence of collective action, inequities will continue to expand within the region. Addressing inequities should be a primary focus area and among the desired outcomes to be tracked. Staff pointed to the USEDA required support for distressed areas.
- The Bay Area Community College Consortium and the East Bay regional planning efforts among all four workforce development boards may be models for how the regional EDD could foster cooperative planning and action.
- For this to be more than just another board, the value proposition of the EDD needs to be clearly presented. Is it mainly a vehicle for obtaining funding? What more can it do that is not being done now? Staff pointed to the USEDA required strategic economic action plan and the improved regional economic coordination that other regions economic efforts have fostered as examples of the functions and value a regional EDD could provide.

On the structure of the EDD:

- Unlike other regions in the case studies, the Bay Area is a unique region where there are several high growth cities, which the structure of this entity should reflect.
- This entity should be within the regional agencies to coordinate regionally, but it must have a separate board / commission to guarantee neutrality, autonomy, impact and success to achieve whatever milestones are established in the forthcoming economic action plan underway. It is essential to bring regional economic leaders to the table that represent each major priority or goal area, who are capable of advancing solutions to key priorities, or who have access to those who will act.
- We should develop action areas with subject matter experts, and prioritize high impact actions with clear outcomes. Several action areas were suggested, including 1) continuing to map the economic development efforts within the region to prioritize EDD activities, 2) a focus on talent as a key to maintain our competitiveness and developing talent through partnerships between industry and public schools giving at-risk students exposure to a broad range of work alternatives, 3) capturing new business growth from the research and patents generated by the region's research institutions, and 4) planning ahead for maintaining and investing in resources needed for basic key clusters such as food and agriculture and the movement of goods.
- Upon formation, each board member will bring their unique perspective to the board, and help identify common issues that are being addressed in different forms across the region. The structure should be flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions.
- An EDD housed within the regional agencies is a good start to improving regional economic coordination. We must also specify the functions of this structure and how it will evolve.
- ABAG's obligation to all 101 cities and 9 counties and MTC's strong regional base provide a framework that the EDD can build on.

5. Wrap Up

Staff thanked all in attendance for their participation. The input collected today will be used to further develop the economic action plan. Please contact staff directly with any questions or comments.

6. Adjourn