



REGIONAL COVID-19 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOVERY PLAN

MEETING MINUTES 6/8/21

Steering Committee Meeting #1

Present: Brian Growth, Dean Shankle, Theresa Walker, Mark Laliberte, Karon Walker, Wendy Hunt, Dave Hennessey, Tim Sullivan, Lincoln Daley, Andrea O'Brien, Jennifer Kimball, Paul Shea, Ken Brown, Tim Cummings, Jay Minkarah, Camille Pattison, Tyler Distefano.

- **Project Goal:** Target development and redevelopment sites in the region. Identify sites and incentives and develop a marketing strategy with the support of the Steering Committee in the region.
- **Product:** Tangible product that carries economic development further after project completion. An on-line resource directory.
- **Study Area:**
 - New Market tax credit areas – complicated process that provides lucrative tax incentives to invest in census tracts/areas in a high level of distress.
 - Opportunity Zones – based on 2010 Census data and could change with the new 2020 Census data.
 - Economic Revitalization Zones – state designated.
 - Brownfields
 - Additional locations to be mapped include DW Highway in South Nashua, 101 A and possible additional commercial corridors in Hudson and Merrimack.
- **Foster Entrepreneurship:** Encourage businesses to locate in the region. Need to attract new businesses to replace those lost during the pandemic, especially small businesses. Need to look at the Entrepreneurship ecosystem.
- **Pandemic has disproportionately impacted retail, restaurants, and the hospitality industry.** Communities have stepped up to address this with outdoor seating and transition to take out food options.
 - Accelerated trend towards online shopping and remote work has impacted commercial real estate.
 - Find alternate uses for vacant commercial and retail space (if trend continues).
- **Will develop one or two separate surveys: entrepreneurship/startups and restaurant/retail/hospitality sector.** Seeking sub-committee members to guide questions and distribute surveys. Andrea O'Brien has survey experience and volunteered to be on the subcommittee.
 - Minimum of 3 focus groups for each entrepreneurship and hospitality.
- **Mark Laliberte: CEDR (Comprehensive Economic Develop Region):** meeting 2x a week in the Seacoast region with local and federal stakeholder input. Managed by Strafford Regional Planning Commission.
- **Key Issues:**
 - Lack of Workforce - Is it a lack of workers or lack of job training?
 - Many low skilled jobs are occupied at half capacity.
 - Lack of younger demographic (high education costs, expensive rents)

- Housing:
 - People are relocating to areas with less expensive housing.
 - Housing issue: workforce cannot affordably live in NH, therefore do not come here for jobs.
 - NH currently have the lowest housing inventory ever and the 1st time the average NH housing prices exceed 400k.
- Affordable childcare issues.
- Lack of motivation to return to work if workers are not deemed essential (unemployment benefits may subsidize income in the short term).
- Rise of remote working, lack of income/sales tax: supreme court legislation on taxation for remote workers.
- Break down stigma of decreased home values with adjacent development of “work force housing” (Londonderry may have few examples).
- Critical Task: Assess the landscape of NH (who lives here, how to attract people here)
 - New strategies, approaches.
- Resources:
 - www.nheconomy.com/eres
 - https://www.nhar.org/assets/docs/NHAR_MMI_2021-05.pdf
- Follow Up / Next Meeting Agenda Items:
 - Present development and redevelopment targets and priorities in the region.
 - Seeking input from the Steering Committee on key development / redevelopment sites in their community and the region.
 - Camille to follow up with Andrea O’Brien on survey development.
 - Establish Survey Subcommittee.
 - Discuss CEDR in greater detail with Mark Laliberte.
- Next Meeting – Tuesday, August 10th at 1 pm.