



REGIONAL COVID-19 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOVERY PLAN

MEETING MINUTES 8/10/21

Steering Committee Meeting #2

Meeting Attendees: Theresa Pinto, Stephen Michon, Allison Mclean, Andrea O'Brien, Brian Growth, David Hennessey, Dean Shankle, , Karon Walker, Lincoln Daley, Mike Reid, Paul Shea, Theresa Walker, Tim Cummings, Tim Sullivan, Tim Thompson, Wendy Hunt, Liz Calabria, Jay Minkarah, Camille Pattison, Ryan Friedman, Caleb Cheng and Tyler Distefano

Snapshot of Economic Development in the Nashua Region:

Caleb Cheng - Overview of the economic state of the region.

- US Census Data: NECTA (New England City and Town) data for most of NRPC region compared with Boston-Worcester-Providence CSA.
- The Nashua Region has salaries competitive with the Boston metro area and lower housing vacancy rates than both the Boston Metro area and the State of NH.
- In many categories the Nashua Region demographics fall between those of the Boston Metro Area and the State of NH including diversity, density, educational achievement, and median housing price.
- Less available housing than NH average.
- 68k people commute within region, 97k work outside region, 66k come into the region for jobs.
- People travel into the region north of Nashua region (Manchester, Merrimack, Concord) – high housing cost may exclude people who want to live and work here instead of commuting.
- People who commute outside of Nashua mostly work in Massachusetts.
- Workforce participation and unemployment rate are both in decline.
- Above average vaccination rate for USA; low minimum wage rate (not competitive compared to other New England states); aging working population; poor business environment; high in-state tuition.
- Household income is skewed in region due to commuters to Massachusetts; could skew the perception of wage rates from NH employers.

Mapping Update

Ryan Friedman - Interactive mapping session highlighting existing conditions in the study area and businesses mapped by category.

- GIS mapping of targeted Census Tracts (New Market Tax Credit, Opportunity Zones/Severely Distressed) to take advantage of tax incentivized zones.
- Highlighted the following: commercial corridors, vacancy data, brownfields, preliminary key development/redevelopment sites.
- Employment data from DOT (restricted use) and well as business data from the State of NH that NRPC staff coded according to business sectors. This data will be used for direct mailings and outreach for survey distribution.
- Tim Thompson ERZ data
 - Not accurate – please use this data:
<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1dPIBYGx-zdRqnDD5widl2Re0dro&ll=42.83800849070862%2C-71.48853065&z=13>

- Merrimack ERZ info: <https://www.merrimacknh.gov/economic-development/pages/business-financing-and-tax-advantages>

UNH Small Business Development Center Survey Results: *Camille Pattison - NRPC region specific results of the SBDC Business Resiliency Survey.*

- February 2020 Phase 1 and February 2021 Phase 2 of the UNH Small Business Development Center – Business Resiliency Survey Results.
- Nashua region businesses experienced a greater revenue loss than the rest of NH, possibly due to industry mix with a prevalence of manufacturing businesses.
- Highlighted use of federal funds from businesses.
- About the same number of businesses feel they are better off or the same, compared with worse off since the pandemic.
- Going forward; covid strategies may be permanently implemented such as (E-commerce, curbside pickup, QR codes, etc.).
- Metro Quest survey: Interactive and visually appealing to encourage participation.

Focus Groups: *Discussion and input of focus group themes.*

- Focus Groups: Entrepreneurship (Manufacturing, Technology, Women and Minority); Workforce (Focus on expanding pool of workers, training, housing); Hospitality, Retail, Restaurants (Restaurants, Women and Minority Businesses)
- Decrease in young people entering the trades. This may be a good focus group.
- Social workers/hospitals have a scarcity of workers due to competition with other minimum wage jobs/hospitals offering housing for employees (difficult in NH with housing scarcity).
- One employer is exploring the viability of hiring immigrants and assisting them navigate the path to citizenship.
- Developing a trades pipeline (Apprenticeship NH) by getting high school students interested at an early age.
 - Apprenticeship NH Webinar: <https://members.nashuachamber.com/events/details/creating-workforce-solutions-through-apprenticeshipnh-webinar-5481>
- Lack of labor due to many volunteers leaving roles during the pandemic (55-65+ age group).
- Drop in labor force possibly due to increasing home equity and appreciating retirement funds.
- Supply chain abnormalities could be affecting job recovery; good opportunity to identify regional clusters and distributors to increase resiliency.
- Affordable childcare could be a barrier for parents to return to work after the pandemic. Could create a more inclusive system for workers who work nontraditional shifts. “Childcare Deserts” exist in areas without any affordable childcare in the immediate area.
- Lack of east/west transportation could be barrier to job growth.

Next Steps: *Survey Development, Focus Groups, Selecting a Marketing Consultant*

- Survey Development: trial run using steering committee volunteers. Karon Walker and Steven Michon will test the survey.
- Marketing Consultant: RFP for marketing consultant - due on Friday 8/13.



- New Branding: Connect. Grow. Prosper. “Opportunities for a thriving economy in the Nashua Region”
 - Make the tag line more inclusive for a broader geography
 - Connect. Grow. Prosper. Is too similar Chamber of Commerce
 - Emphasis should be on reconnecting and recovering
 - Wendy Hunt: “Connecting Our Communities”
 - Greater Nashua/Souhegan Valley Region?
 - Could the product be the precursor to Nashua Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)?
- Agenda items for September meeting - Housing, workforce related issues (especially attraction), development of priority development sites, final survey.

Follow up

- Send slides to everyone.
- Send survey to Steve Michon and Karon Walker for a trial run.
- Please update data with the new Census data as it is released.
- Send a link for the mapping data.
- Send calendar invite for all future Steering Committee Meetings.

Next Meeting Date – September 14th 1pm

Moving Forward – 2nd Tuesday of each month

Feel free to reach out with comments and concerns:

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