



## **Economic and Workforce Development Meeting #2 Notes**

July 23, 2015  
1:30 pm to 3:30 pm  
City of Grand Rapids Parking Services  
50 Ottawa Avenue, NW

**WORKGROUP MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tracie Coffman (Co-Chair), Anne Armstrong Cusack, Jarrett DeWyse, Deborah Eid, Ashley Garrigan, Angela King, Denavvia Mojet, Bill Pink, Joy Pryor, Cheryl Schuch, and Kevin Stotts (Co-Chair)

**STAFF PRESENT:** Erin Banchoff, Johanna Schulte, and Kara Wood

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

Kevin Stotts and Tracie Coffman led introductions.

Notes from the July 9<sup>th</sup> meeting were reviewed. Under threats, the group discussed the limited ability of the City to provide economic incentives given State legislation. Kevin Stotts commented the Grand Rapids Workforce Demand Analysis provides data that represents an opportunity.

The group discussed making sure the employer perspective is represented in the conversation.

Bill Pink commented the need for scale could be a threat to the process.

The need for a regional perspective was mentioned in regards to transportation as a threat. The group discussed how employers could be involved in providing access to transportation, especially in areas that are not currently served by public transit. Identifying alternative means of transportation was discussed as an important strategy.

### **IDENTIFY GOALS:**

The group reviewed proposed goals identified during the July 9<sup>th</sup> meeting:

Attraction – Attract a diverse set of employers to the City of Grand Rapids that employs a diverse set of residents

Development – Increase the skills and education of residents so they may be employed by a diverse set of employers

Retention – Retain diverse employers and residents that contributes to a vibrant city

Joy Pryor asked how the goals could be more inclusive of entrepreneurs and small business as opposed to referring only to employers and employees. The group discussed business co-ops and worker owned businesses in other cities. The group decided “enterprises” is a more appropriate and inclusive description.

The group agreed that, in general, more equality of income is a goal of the group.

### **IDENTIFY INDICATORS:**

The group identified indicators of success and tools that influence indicators under each of the goals.

Attraction:

1. City of Grand Rapids Economic Development industry breakdown data

*Employer Incentives*

- TheRight Place
- City of Grand Rapids line item for co-op development
- Incentivize employers that require basic skills to locate near neighborhoods with high unemployment
- “Racism free” incentivizing and education

2. An increase in gainful minority employment and employment overall

*Employee Training*

- Community Ventures

3. Wage assessment/distribution

*Wage Legislation*

- Prevailing wage legislation
- Raising City of Grand Rapids minimum wage

4. Increasing knowledge sector employment

- Accelerate process to return foreclosed homes to the housing market
- Survey graduating College students about what they are looking for to better attract knowledge sector jobs

Development:

1. Socio-economic status

*Community Messaging*

- Emphasize the need for a post-secondary credential or high school diploma

2. Educational attainment including credentials

*Employer/ Employee Supports*

- Job training funds – connecting them to the needs of employers
- ESL/ABE education
- Social services in schools
- Incentivizing education and job training for employers

*Policy*

- Raising City of Grand Rapids minimum wage

*Youth Development*

- Ensure every child at GRPS graduates from college career ready
- MI Works Summer Youth Employment or any successful youth employment program
- Kent ISD innovation high, certificate program
- 9-12 grade teacher training/exposure to growth industries
- Internships (high schools or college) that lead to permanent employment, especially for minorities

Retention:

1. Population growth
2. Number of entry level jobs
3. Neighborhood resident diversity

*Employer Support*

- Employer housing incentives to keep people in and move people to the City of Grand Rapids
- Provide support to small employers to address their talent needs

*Quality of Life*

- Incentives for urban fresh food markets
- Complete streets – transit
- Arts sector funding
- Public spaces strategies
- Grand Rapids Public Libraries

4. Grand Rapids Public Schools enrollment
5. 24-35 Demographic

*Policy*

- Raising minimum wage in the City of Grand Rapids

*Interns to attract talent*

- Provide a list or exchange of local internships at local universities
- Encourage businesses to hire local interns

The group decided to gather more information on the identified indicators.

The co-chairs introduced a complexity vs. impact chart.

**NEXT MEETING:**

The group will discuss the complexity vs. impact chart at the next meeting and finalize short-, medium-, and long-term strategies and recommendations. Potential strategies from the Toolkit and other sources will be identified.

The next meeting will be on August 9, 2015 from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm.