

R9 Prosperity Initiative: Transportation Functional Team

Meeting 1 Summary (August 15, 2014)

Attendees:

Andy LaBarre, Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce
Carmine Palombo, SEMCOG/RTA Liaison
Charlene Page, Monroe County Business Development Corporation
Christine Linfield, City of Chelsea
Conan Smith, Washtenaw County Commissioner
Dan Swallow, City of Monroe
Jessica Burnside, United Parcel Service
Kari Martin, Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), University Region
Liz Treutel, Transportation 4 Michigan
MichaelFord, Ann Arbor Transit Authority
Pam McConeghy, Greater Brighton Chamber of Commerce
Ryan Buck, Washtenaw Area Transportation Study
Ryan Simmons, Monroe County Planning
Sean Brosnan, Wayne County Airport Authority
Steve Duke, Region 2 Planning Commission
Wayne Sieloff, Wayne County Airport Authority

Introductions, Overview, and Discussion Regarding the Focus on the I-94 Corridor

Washtenaw County Commissioner Conan Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the project consultants, Julie Metty Bennett and Shanna Draheim from Public Sector Consultants (PSC). As the coordinator for the Region 9 Prosperity Initiative, PSC will be facilitating the Transportation Functional Team.

Ms. Bennett provided an overview of Governor Rick Snyder's Regional Prosperity Initiative, how Region 9 (the greater Ann Arbor region) fits into the state effort, and what purpose/scope of the Region 9 grant project (see PowerPoint presentation for further details). She also talked about the charge, schedule and outcomes, or deliverables, for Transportation Functional Team.

Conan Smith and Kari Martin (MDOT) provided some background on why the Transportation Team should focus on economic prosperity associated with the I-94 corridor. They noted that:

- This is a significant corridor for economic activity in Michigan, and it connects some of the state's largest population centers.
- I-94 and adjacent transportation infrastructure (other highways, rail, major airports) are significant thoroughfares and connectors between Michigan's manufacturing centers and U.S./global markets.
- Increasing competition from nearby southern states that have invested in high-quality highways (and rail) could affect Michigan's economic health along the I-94 corridor, if trucking and anchor institutions are lured south as a result.

The group discussed the importance of the corridor for Region 9, agreeing that it was an important priority area. The group also discussed the fact that connecting highways (north-south connecting Monroe County for example) are also critical for economic health in the region, and that goals and strategies focused on the I-94 corridor should also recognize and integrate north-south priorities where relevant.

Development of Guiding Principles for Regional Collaboration on Transportation Issues

PSC facilitated a discussion with the group to identify values or principles that should guide the group's selection of priority transportation and economic development issues and goals for the regional prosperity strategy. The group agreed that transportation-related economic prosperity issues, goals or strategies they recommend should:

- Help Region 9 maintain or expand its competitiveness within the Midwest, U.S., or global markets.
- Include nonhighway or automobile infrastructure and/or programs
- Help attract and retain young people to the region (i.e., contribute to attractive quality of life)
- Modernize existing infrastructure systems in the region
- Have a multijurisdictional impact
- Improve people's access to jobs, services and goods
- Be politically feasible (i.e., can garner political support and funding)
- Minimize environmental impacts
- Help engage the region's business community
- Offer an opportunity to be a model for other regions and states

Priority Transportation-Related Economic Prosperity Issues

The final part of the meeting discussion focused on identifying priority transportation-related economic prosperity issues in the region. Ms. Draheim provided an overview of the results of the survey transportation team members were sent in advance of the meeting. Only a few people completed the survey, but the results helped start a discussion regarding priority issues. Numerous issues were raised and discussed, including:

- Quality and quantity of the highway infrastructure and bridges along the corridor
 - Roads, bridges, ingress/egress, linkages to other major corridors, capacity
- Safety
 - Differentiation between modes, lighting, truck and auto safety, other modes of transportation
- Efficiency
 - Movement of goods and people, travel time, reliability
- Non-auto transportation opportunities
 - Rail, intercity transit, nonmotorized
- Improving the region's market position

- Supporting a strong commercial/industrial base, maintaining competitiveness of corridor for movement of goods
- Use of technology for managing transportation and communication
 - Intelligent transportation systems, mobile applications
- Aesthetics of the transportation corridor and hubs
 - Building materials, landscaping along highways and rail corridors/hubs, creating community spots, lighting, improving community connection/pride
- Funding
 - Inadequate levels, public-private partnership opportunities, increased creativity for funding sources
- Quality of Life
 - Land-use connections (e.g., managing sprawl), creating livable communities, attracting young talent/stemming “brain drain”

While the group recognized that there is significant overlap among many of these issues, and that they are all likely to be addressed in the five-year prosperity strategy, four areas were identified as **priority issues** for the Transportation Functional Team to focus on:

Funding: How the group might collaborate on a project to expand the use of public-private partnerships in addressing some of the priority transportation issues.

Non-Auto Transportation Opportunities: The need to collaborate on regional transit, rail, and air transportation opportunities that could help make the region more competitive and contribute to overall quality of life.

Safety: Identifying goals and strategies that could help address some of the major highway safety issues in the region, including strategies for differentiating between modes of transportation, addressing carrying capacity, and infrastructure investments that could improve safety.

Quantity and Quality of Highway Infrastructure: How the quality of the region’s roads, bridges, interchanges, and connecting corridors affects business and talent location decisions, and affects funding availability for other community development needs.

Next Steps

PSC will send a Doodle poll to select dates for the next three Transportation Functional Team meetings. In advance of the September meeting, each team member is asked to write one goal for at least two of the four priority transportation issues and send them to Shanna Draheim (sdraheim@pscinc.com) by September 10. PSC will consolidate and group the goals submitted by the team, and provide them to the group ahead of the meeting.

The intent of the next meeting is to develop three to four goals for each of the priority transportation issue areas and identify a potential “Working Together to Learn” (WTL) project that addresses one of the priority issues. The group discussed a project focused on developing a model for public-private transportation models using Region 9 as an example. If there are other ideas for WTL projects, please bring them to the meeting.