

**Urban Land Institute (ULI MN)
Regional Council of Mayors (RCM)**

Regional Competitiveness Project Work Plan

The nationally recognized **Regional Council of Mayors (RCM)** was formed in 2005 and is supported by the Urban Land Institute Minnesota (ULI MN). It includes Minneapolis, St. Paul and 34 municipalities in the developed and developing suburbs. This collaborative partnership provides a non-partisan platform focused on building action strategies to raise the region's overall economic competitiveness and quality of life.

Urban Land Institute Minnesota (ULI MN) actively engages public and private sector leaders to foster collaboration, share knowledge and join in meaningful, strategic action to create thriving, sustainable communities. ULI MN is a District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members and sponsors. ULI's mission is to provide responsible leadership in the use of land and in the creation of thriving communities worldwide.

The Regional Competitiveness Project, a partnership among DEED, the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs (HHH), and ULI MN/RCM is a very creative and entrepreneurial initiative that aligns with the RCM goals of seeking regional collective action to strengthen economic competitiveness. There is great value in connecting these efforts supported by the leadership provided by metropolitan mayors.

The RCM created a Jobs/Economic Development Task Force, Co-Chaired by Mayor Stan Harpstead, Arden Hills and Carol Nielsen, Director, Research, Target Corporation, to address the barriers that limit regional job growth and economic development. Its key strategies will support the Regional Competitiveness Project as follows:

- 1) **Elevate the issue.** The RCM has successfully drawn attention to the long-term pressure on regional job growth; it will continue to elevate the need for regional strategic action to support economic competitiveness and quality of life.
- 2) **Provide Leadership.** RCM's non-partisan, entrepreneurial professional mayoral leadership is well positioned to support regional strategies. It has selected four priority areas and has developed action strategies and demonstrated results for each: housing, transportation, the environment and job growth/economic

development. In addition, Mayor Elizabeth Kautz, Burnsville, RCM Co-Chair, is in line to become the President of the US Conference of Mayors in January, 2010. She will leverage the work of the Regional Competitiveness Project in shaping her national platform.

- 3) **Connect with Industry.** Mayors provide significant connections to their local industry business leaders; these relationships will support and enhance the industry cluster analysis. In addition, RCM representation on the Itasca Project's Job Growth Task Force, to be co chaired by Ken Powell, President and CEO of General Mills, will link these two strategic initiatives and ensure that efforts are synergistic.
- 4) **Identify Regional Solutions.** In partnership with the HHH, DEED and the Itasca Project, regional economic strengths and weaknesses along with next step strategies, will be identified.

The Regional Competitiveness Project will be conducted over a two-year period.

Task 1. Develop a Detailed Work Plan and Assemble Project Team – July-August 2009

The work plan will be finalized and key dates will be agreed to with DEED, HHH and RCM. This will coordinate with the RCM Jobs/Economic Development Task Force.

Deliverables: Detailed work plan; Fund RCM – Staff Support.

Task 2. Conduct Strategic Review and Economic Analysis – August-December 2009

Metro Area strategic review and preliminary economic analysis conducted by HHH and DEED research staff. This will include cluster analysis and mapping; analysis of indicators of regional competitiveness, innovation and entrepreneurship; examination of best practices and benchmarking, e.g. Oregon Benchmarks, UC San Diego Connect.

Deliverables: Regional cluster analysis and mapping; best practices and benchmarking report; RCM Task Force coordination with HHH and DEED

Task 3. Mayors Review and Clusters Selection – September-October 2009

Schedule half day to kick off project and select clusters based on preliminary analysis and criteria. Criteria will be developed by HHH, DEED and RCM leadership and used for selecting three regional clusters for further examination, business interviews and the capstone workshop.

Deliverables: Industry cluster selection

• **Task 4. Conduct Industry Interviews and Focus Groups – October 2009-January 2010**

Mayors will conduct interviews with key business leaders in selected industry clusters. Focus groups may be set up to gather current information about clusters and the challenges and opportunities facing each industry. These initial interviews will also set the stage for the capstone workshop projects.

Deliverables: Coordinate industry cluster interviews & focus groups with representative Mayors; preliminary findings and issues.

Task 5. Conduct Capstone Workshop – January-May 2010

Conduct workshop for up to 25 HHH and Carlson School graduate students during the University of MN's 2010 spring semester (January 21-May 6). The capstone workshop will consist of five team cluster studies (three Metro and two in Greater Minnesota). Each cluster study will include a diagnosis, vision and action plan, and will culminate in a report and oral presentation to a guest jury of Mayors and other invited guests.

Deliverables: Capstone workshop cluster strategy reports; oral presentation to guest jury.

Task 6. Evaluate Cluster Projects and Action Plans – May-June 2010

Following the capstone workshop, the RCM Task Force will meet to evaluate the cluster projects and decide next steps based on the proposed action plans. This evaluation and decision on action plans will lay the groundwork for implementation in Task 7 and further define the regional competitiveness strategy model.

Deliverables: Coordinate RCM decisions on next steps for implementing cluster action plans.

Task 7. Implement Cluster Strategy Action Plans – July 2010-June 2011

This phase of the project will focus on implementing the cluster strategy action plans and engaging the Workforce Center System, WSA's, MnSCU, ABE in using the information from the cluster studies. During this phase additional clusters may also be examined.

Deliverables: Cluster action plans implemented as appropriate within the Metro Region; begin additional cluster studies

Task 8. Evaluate Project Results and Recommend Next Steps – October 2010-May 2011

The project team will evaluate the project results of the initial cluster projects and identify next steps for the regional partnership, state and local policy implications, and legislative proposals for the 2011 legislative session.

Deliverables: Evaluation of project; state and local policy implications; legislative proposals