

ULI Minnesota

Regional Council of Mayors

Regional Council of Mayors/ULI Minnesota Advisory Board Joint Meeting

June 8, 2013

GREATER MSP AHEAD INITIATIVE

Where Do We Go From Here?

There was no debate about the seven GreaterMSP*ahead* regional priorities; in fact, attendees at the special joint meeting of the Regional Council of Mayors, ULI Minnesota Advisory Board and ULI Young Leaders Group Executive Committee seemed itching to get started on making something happen.

Discussion centered mostly on *how* to get started, *what* to do first, and *which* way to proceed.

(The seven regional priorities are:

- Build an identity for the regional “competitive unit”;
- Cultivate an ecosystem adept at fostering and commercializing innovation and entrepreneurship;
- Accelerate job growth, talent attraction, capital investment and exporting;
- Supercharge our education system;
- Improve placemaking and connectivity;
- Develop resilient infrastructure that connects regional job centers; and
- Conserve and leverage our natural resources as a key regional asset.

[May 31st Event Notes.](#))

How to Get Started

Creating, promoting and accomplishing a common vision for the region is essential, most said. “We need to focus on a selected few priorities we all agree on that will benefit the region as a whole,” said Brandon Champeau, YLG. But Eagan Mayor Mike Maguire argued that, much as people set priorities together, individual action is needed. “I think we do a lot of coming together and talking as a region, but it inhibits individual action,” he said. “I’m going to commit to visioning in my community. If we insist on saying, ‘What should WE do,’ we don’t do things ourselves.”

Many in the group, and particularly YLG members, pushed for action. “At these sessions, we never really get to the action part,” said Max Musicant. “That’s the missing step.”

Edina Mayor Jim Hovland said it's critical that cities and—importantly—businesses and legislators talk together about how to move the region forward. “It's frustrating to move for action when there are other partners we have to work with who aren't in the same place.”

What to Do First

Two things—a common vision and identity for the region and a multimodal regional transit system—were proposed most often and most energetically by those in the group, with education close behind.

Regional vision and identity

Although those in the room were, mostly, agreed on the priorities for the region, they said it's important to have a common vision that is communicated to others. “We just have to get this simple regional message out there,” said Cathy Polasky.

“We need to reach out to a broader audience as we try to sell this vision,” said Hovland. He encouraged everyone to talk to the “unwilling,” as well as those who already buy into the same regional priorities.

The message about Greater MSP also needs to be communicated nationally, and probably globally. The region has a lot of great assets that are not known much outside Minnesota, people said. It's a region that's as good as that of Portland, but it doesn't have the same *cachet*.

“We have every opportunity to be far less modest about our centrist voice,” said Bake Baker. He pointed to a number of the region's strengths, including its immigrant communities, its support of entrepreneurial start-ups, its gay rights initiatives. Others talked about the arts, sports, park systems . . . the wealth of amenities in the region that make it not just livable but enjoyable.

Some said that Garrison Keillor's Prairie Home Companion has become the image of the Twin Cities for those in other areas—but it's an image that was created about 40 years ago and that doesn't represent what Greater MSP is now. “We're no longer cold,” said Hovland, “we're just cool.”

Modern transit system

“We need a real regional transit system that is part of both the economic and the social eco-system,” said Jay Walljasper. Almost every group listed transit as a key priority for the region.

Several people talked about the frustration of having the 2013 Minnesota Legislature pass only a “lights-on” transportation package, despite considerable lobbying and support from cities, counties and more.

Other priorities and ideas

Education came up at many tables, although there was less clarity about just what the education priority might be. For some, it's reducing racial disparities. For others, it was making sure the education system is broad enough to include young people headed for college and beyond and those who want and need good vocational training.

One group listed only one priority: taking advantage of diversity and the energy and resiliency it brings to the region.

Making sure younger people—and people from all ethnic and racial groups—are brought not only into the discussions but into the planning is essential and a number of people mentioned it.

John Shardlow said it might be good to bring other elected officials (not just mayors) into the discussions, so that rather than simply being lobbied by mayors, they understand the problems and support the solutions from the beginning.

Which Way to Proceed

There was nearly universal agreement that it's better to talk about a bigger vision, rather than one priority at a time. "We need a big picture that people can buy into," said Colleen Carey. "We've talked about, 'We need transit,' rather than a big vision.

Priorities need to be related to each other: Instead of identifying the Number 1 transportation priority, as if it exists by itself, ULI Minnesota and RCM should identify the Number 1 transportation priority that works with education, housing and jobs.

One person recommended that the ULI Minnesota initiatives be intertwined, rather than worked on separately.

The bottom line is a dynamic, economically successful, livable community—not simply a community with a great transit system.

Next?

Caren Dewar asked those attending if they are ready to enter into a "manifesto" on the seven priorities, responding to a call to action made by Josh Olson, YLG Co-Chair. "As far as I know, this is the first time these seven ideas have been put on a list like this," she said. A number have signed on already.

Results of the discussions will be used to inform the ULI Minnesota and Regional Council of Mayors strategic vision and action strategies, with a focus on regional impact —and soon. [Greater MSP Ahead Initiative Page](#)

REGIONAL INDICATORS INITIATIVE

The website for the Regional Indicators Initiative, which has tracked greenhouse gas emissions for 20 cities, is now online <http://regionalindicatorsmn.uli.org/>.

The website allows individuals to see how their cities have done in terms of emissions from 2008 through 2011 (data for 2012 will be posted soon). Energy use, water, vehicle miles traveled, waste and GHG emissions are all tracked and shown per-capita on an average daily basis.

The goal is to help cities increase their overall efficiency and level of sustainability.

COMING UP

The next RCM meeting will be Monday, August 12. RCM meetings are held on the second Monday of every month at Dorsey & Whitney.

Mayors are encouraged to email caren.dewar@uli.org with their suggestions for topics to add to the agenda.

ATTENDEES

The following individuals were in attendance on June 8, 2013:

Mayors

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| Jim Adams | City of Crystal |
| Ardell Brede | City of Rochester |
| Jerry Faust | City of St. Anthony |
| Mike Gamache | City of Andover |
| Mary Giuliani Stephens | City of Woodbury |
| Debbie Goettel | City of Richfield |
| Mary Hamann-Roland | City of Apple Valley |
| Shep Harris | City of Golden Valley |
| Kathi Hemken | City of New Hope |
| Jim Hovland | City of Edina |
| Tim Hultmann | City of Long Lake |
| Marvin Johnson | City of Independence |
| Elizabeth Kautz | City of Burnsville |
| Sandra Krebsbach | City of Mendota Heights |

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| Scott Lund | City of Fridley |
| Mike Maguire | City of Eagan |
| Duane Poppe | City of Osseo |
| Brad Tabke | City of Shakopee |
| Nancy Tyra-Lukens | City of Eden Prairie |
| Ken Willcox | City of Wayzata |
| Janet Williams | City of Savage |
| Gene Winstead | City of Bloomington |

RCM City Staff/Guests

Mark Casey, City of St. Anthony; Christina Diaz, Hennepin County Board; Beth Elliott, City of Minneapolis; Jim Erkel, MCEA; Margaret Kaplan, Minnesota Housing; Brad Larson, MnDOT; Anne Mavity, City of St. Louis Park; Bruce Nordquist, City of Golden Valley; Cathy Polasky, City of Minneapolis; Will Schroerer, Minneapolis and St. Paul Chamber of Commerce

ULI Minnesota Advisory Board

Bake Baker, McGough Development; Steve Berg, writer/consultant; John Breitinger, United Properties; Colleen Carey, The Cornerstone Group; Rick Carter, LHB; Katie Clark-Sieben, DEED; Gail Dorfman, Hennepin County Board; Bob Engstrom, Robert Engstrom Companies; Sarah Harris, University of Minnesota Foundation Real Estate Advisors; Jean Kane, Welsh Co.; Nick Koch, HGA; Michael Langley, Greater MSP; Diane Norman, RSP; Mathias Mortenson, M.A. Mortenson; Irene Quarshie, Target; Elizabeth Ryan, Family Housing Fund; John Shardlow, Stantec; Janelle Waldo, Blue Cross Blue Shield; Jay Walljasper, writer/consultant

ULI Young Leaders Group Board

Brandon Champeau, Joahna Franzen, Emily Goellner, Kevin Kuppe, Thomas McElroy, Max Musicant, Josh Olson, Danyelle Pierquet, Jeremy Striffler

ULI Staff/Consultants

Caren Dewar, Cathy Bennett, Aubrey Austin, Todd Firebaugh, Moira Petit, Linda Picone