



Department of Economic  
& Community Development

**10 Year Statewide Strategic Plan  
EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE  
02:00 PM – FEBRUARY 10, 2021**

**Meeting Objectives:**

- **Integrate and onboard new members**
- **Assess implementation progress and process**
- **Begin to assess any resource deficits in current structure**

**Meeting Attendees:**

- Martha Bentley
- Heather Johnson
- Brian Whitney
- Peggy Schaffer
- Melanie Loyzim
- Yellow Light Breen
- Dana Connors
- Amy Landry
- David Daigler
- Laura Fortman
- Jeannette Andre
- Dr. Joan Ferrini-Mundy
- Jake Ward
- Kimberly Hamilton
- Kelsey MacKinnon, DECD Staff

**Item 1: Introductions**

- **Martha Bentley:** Director of Economic Development Coordination at DECD. Key task is implementing the 10-Year Strategic Plan.
- **Melanie Loyzim:** Acting Commissioner of DEP. Chair of the Regulatory work group.
- **Yellow Light Breen:** CEO of MDF. Special interest in the opportunity intersects, and how we can integrate this work with the Economic Growth Council's measures of growth.
- **David Daigler:** President of Maine Community College System. Interested in supporting Maine's growth, especially through workforce development lens.
- **Laura Fortman:** Commissioner of DOL. Especially interested in growing local talent piece.

- **Amy Landry:** Executive Director of AVCOG (one of Maine’s 7 economic development districts). Served on the Strategic Plan committee and is on the MDF board with Yellow.
- **Dana Chambers:** President & CEO of Maine State Chamber of Commerce. Member of steering committee and ERC committee.
- **Kim Hamilton:** President of FocusMaine. Work to grow jobs in agriculture, aquaculture, and biopharma, and to attract & retain talent.
- **Peggy Schaffer:** Director of ConnectMaine Authority. Chairing Ubiquitous Connectivity work group.
- **Dr. Joan Ferrini-Mundy:** President of University of Maine. Interested in talent development and building the workforce of tomorrow. As Maine’s only public research university, also interested in statewide R&D.
- **Heather Johnson:** Commissioner of DECD. Strategic Plan is critical part of role.
- **Brian Whitney:** President of MTI. Leading the Innovation work group.
- **Jeannette Andre:** President & CEO of Maine Philanthropy Center. Interested in thinking through the Strategic Plan with a strong equity lens. Mostly involved in the grow local talent/attract talent spaces.
- **Jake Ward:** Vice President for Innovation & Economic Development at UMaine. Focused on the intersection between talent, infrastructure, and innovation.

#### **Steering Committee Overview:**

- Executive Steering Committee will serve 2 broad purposes in the Strategic Plan’s implementation:
  1. Block and tackle implementation team
  2. Thought leadership/advisory role
- We’ll continue to add individuals/other stakeholders as needed
- There should be robust back-and-forth between the work groups and the Steering Committee – with priorities and ideas flowing in both directions

#### **Item 2: Updates from Work Groups**

Four work groups met since the January Steering Committee meeting:

- **Grow Local Talent Work Group:**
  - Discussed the challenge of balancing long-term goals with urgent needs – will consider time horizon of projects/outcomes when determining priorities
  - Identified 4 additional individuals to be invited to the work group
  - Need a deeper understanding of the 10-Year Plan and ERC Report before determining priorities
  - Group members will write synopses of assigned 10-Year Plan action items and associated ERC recommendations and report out to the group at the next meeting. Will start to determine priorities from there.
- **Attract Talent Work Group:**
  - First meeting only included stakeholders external to state gov’t

- A lot of the work currently being done is around building social, community, and professional connection networks for people who are moving to Maine or moving within Maine
- Each committee member is identifying which action items they are already working on, and which pieces they want to collaborate on
- Will aim to put together clear timelines around short-term efforts at the next meeting
- **Promote Innovation Work Group:**
  - Reviewed the priorities in the 10-Year Plan and ERC recommendations – looking for actionable short-term and long-term steps to execute those priorities
  - Group prioritized a couple of low-hanging fruit items:
    1. Reconstituting/reinvigorating MIEAB
      - 32-member board made up of private sector and research representatives in 7 targeted sectors, venture capital reps, university reps, MTI, and a few others
      - 3 responsibilities:
        - Drafting Maine’s 5-year innovation action plan
        - Reviewing progress against the plan annually
        - Serving as EPSCoR state committee
      - Group will give at least 3 nominees per slot; need to come up with just under 100 names to refer to the Governor’s office
      - Brian put out call for volunteers in MTI blog post; about 50 individuals have reached out to Brian as of Feb. 10
    2. Seed Capital Tax Credit cap was already raised to \$15 million in 2020
  - Group is putting together a timeline and strategy for achieving other priorities
- **Ubiquitous Connectivity Work Group:**
  - ConnectME Authority is serving as this work group
  - Need to blend 2 considerations in this work:
    1. Programmatic piece
      - Opening grant applications, program implementation and oversight, etc.
    2. Policy piece
      - How do we change state policy moving forward to expand broadband service?
      - Not just about money, but also about how we do affordability, how we make sure everyone (urban and rural) has a good connection, etc.
  - [Maine Broadband Coalition](#) is doing a speed test, providing ConnectME the street level data necessary to do this work
  - Data Analytics project
    - ConnectME currently lacks the information to make good policy (basic info about networks, costs, potential revenue streams, street level data on serviceable locations, etc.)
    - Need this information to develop specific policies and determine how to best use resources

Three work groups haven’t met since the January Steering Committee meeting:

- **Modern Infrastructure Work Group:**
  - 3 distinct workstreams within this work group:
    1. Transportation/transit infrastructure
    2. Childcare infrastructure
    3. Housing infrastructure
  - Received leadership commitments for each subgroup; will be pulling together other members over the next month
  - The Strategic Plan and ERC Report have very clear recommendations in these areas – need to collaborate with people already doing this work
  
- **Business/Regulatory Environment Work Group:**
  - Work group membership is identified
  - Variety of legislation has been introduced – many members of the group have been discussing how the proposed legislation intertwines with this work
  - There are a strong set of projects outlined in the Strategic Plan/ERC Report that the group can kick off with, just a question of resources
    - For example, data management across agencies was identified as a priority, but it's a fairly expensive initiative
  
- **Hubs of Excellence Work Group:**
  - Hubs of Excellence ties in closely with the other workstreams – e.g., if we're trying to attract talent, hubs of excellence will keep people in Maine
  - Want to leverage/develop a broad range of assets in our communities – cultural opportunities, academic options, restaurants/shops, housing, modern transportation/infrastructure, etc.
  - The Hubs of Excellence piece will naturally follow the work of the other strategy areas
  - Many communities have also read the report and are interested in becoming hubs of excellence – so there's an opportunity to let external stakeholders take the lead while we do some of the foundational work

**Work Group Resources:**

- We'll be trying to bring in additional financial resources – leveraging what's available, and building out a system for marshaling external resources to match anything the state contributes
- We'll look to the leadership on this committee to think through the process for this

**Item 3: Priority Project List Development**

- Steering committee needs to map out the work that is being done externally and determine a process for collaboration before developing list of overall priorities. Need to ensure our priorities align with those of external stakeholders (e.g., FORMaine, SEAMaine, etc.).

**Item 4: Request for Collaboration/Stakeholder Engagement**

- We want to recognize that there is work happening in the community that we should capture, connect, and communicate with

- We also want to broaden the networks of people involved in this process

#### **Key Issues:**

- Need a clear structure to collaborate with external groups doing work that aligns with the Strategic Plan
- Steering Committee should develop formal operating principles that incorporate collaboration with existing structures – want to leverage and amplify the work already being done
- Steering Committee can also provide a DEI framework for these collaborations
- Need to identify local/regional efforts that align with the Strategic Plan, and provide education around the plan at the local level
- Requests for Collaboration can be broadened to be an invitation for external stakeholders to tell us the work they want to prioritize
- Can refer to the ERC subcommittees' work to see which stakeholders they heard from and identify where there might be gaps in the networks
- Martha and Kelsey are talking with MCBER about how to use network mapping software and analysis to evaluate our existing networks/any potential gaps

#### **Item 5: Communications**

- DECD is working on 2 levels of web presence around the Strategic Plan:
  1. <https://www.maine Strategic plan.com/> - Soft-launched storytelling platform where individuals can share how they connect with the plan, how they can help, etc.
  2. [DECD's website](#) will host the gov't content (work group compositions, meeting minutes, etc.)
- We'll want to ensure the prioritized project streams are visible – need to amplify both external and internal projects

#### **Item 6: Relevant Legislation**

- **LD149:** Came out of the need to upgrade and give flexibility around credentialing. Gives additional flexibility looking at foreign, out of state, and military credentials. Connects directly to Attract Talent action item.
- **LD2:** Looking at all legislation using a racial equity assessment. Supports some of the ERC work making sure we consider any unintended equity consequences that are associated with legislation proposed in connection with the plan.

#### **Item 7: Public Health/Health Care**

- Current recommendation is to include public health as a piece of each workstream. We can pull in individuals from the Alliance for Health and Prosperity where appropriate.
- Will discuss with Commissioner Lambrew the possibility of adding a fourth subgroup to the Modern Infrastructure work group that is devoted to health/public health.

## **Item 8: Next Steps**

- Martha will draft Request for Collaboration and share it with the group
- Martha and Kelsey will continue to map work that's already happening in the community
- Work groups will continue to develop their priorities, timelines, and milestones
- At our next meeting, the Steering Committee will then work to harmonize those projects against our overall priorities and map out an overall work plan