

RFC Q&A Session 2

March 17, 2021 – 3PM

Presentation

- **Strategic Plan Overview:**
 - Strategic Plan was released in Dec. 2019. Roadmap document designed to be used by multiple stakeholders.
 - Opportunity Intersects outlined in the Plan are based on robust data-driven analysis. Where the opportunity areas intersect are areas that can have strong multiplier effects across the economy.
 - There is a symbiotic relationship between these opportunity intersects and the foundational sectors of Maine's economy – they are intertwined and interconnected.
 - Strategic Plan is both a strategy and a plan – it's a plan that needs to be executed by the State, but it's also a strategy that needs to be embedded in the work of communities and other organizations in order to achieve its goals and visions.
 - DECD is responsible for the oversight of the Plan's implementation. We are looking at the products that need to come out of the plan, the processes we'll use, and the people who need to be involved.
- **Implementation:**
 - The implementation process is still being built out.
 - Implementation is currently being led by 7 strategy work groups (corresponding to the 7 strategy areas of the Plan) and an executive steering committee (responsible for operations and thought leadership)
 - Grow Local Talent and Ubiquitous Connectivity work groups are being managed by existing structures:
 - Talent: State Workforce Board
 - Connectivity: ConnectME Authority SWB
 - PPT Slide 6: The 4 work groups outlined in green have gotten started with implementation. The 3 in white are in concept – some work is happening, but structure isn't fully built yet.
 - Some work groups are also serving as FEMA solutions-based recovery teams to ensure alignment between recovery and Strategic Plan implementation.
 - PPT Slides 7-11: Highlighted action items are dependent on state action, either due to statute, some state funding mechanism, or an executive branch activity, but overall the list shows that many of the actions are dependent on partnerships and collaborations across public, private organizations and entities.
 - The Strategic Plan is designed to be a flexible document. Implementation should be informed by additional reports released in 2020:
 - Maine's Climate Action Plan
 - Economic Recovery Committee Report
 - Permanent Commission's Recommendations to the Legislature
- **Request for Collaboration/Invitation to Collaborate:**

- The Strategic Plan Steering Committee recognized we need more people involved in the Plan's implementation while ensuring everyone's time is put to its best use.
- We are trying to use the RTC and ITC process to understand and connect with what's happening out in the community.
 - You can find information on DECD's website [here](#). Check back regularly for FAQ updates.
- It's a strategy, a plan – and a collaboration of collaborations. We want to connect in and align with collaborative initiatives that are doing work that helps and aligns with the Plan.
- **Collaboration Definition:**
 - A collaboration needs each of the following 3 elements:
 1. Two or more (team)
 2. Working together (process or project)
 3. Towards shared goals (purpose)
 - Goals might be slightly different but complementary to those of the Strategic Plan, intermediary goals of the Plan, or exactly aligned with the Plan's goals.
- For collaborations already tacitly connected, want to make the collaborative relationship explicit
- For those collaborations not yet involved, we invite them in to continue to build with us
- We also hope to identify blind spots and build a more inclusive process
- The collaboration **can be:**
 - Working on any level of the plan – vision, goals, strategies, or actions
 - Time-limited or for the long haul
 - Focused on layering in recommendations and elements from the Climate Council, ERC, and Permanent Commission reports
- The collaboration is **not intended to be:**
 - State procurement process
 - One-on-one partnership with DECD
 - Primarily transactional – it's a relational relationship
 - Vendor relationship
 - Something you haven't started/you're not working on
 - Stressful
- The RTC/ITC process is a chance to form relationships between collaborating partners, the Steering Committee, and the work groups – promoting better communication flow, the development of collaborative materials, the sharing of resources, and the co-creation of solutions
- If I submit, what happens next?
 - Reviewed by DECD for clarifying questions
 - Reviewing by Steering Committee
 - Shared with appropriate work groups
- Possible outcomes of submission, depending on the submission and the scope of the collaboration:
 - Ask you to lead on an action
 - Give you support for what you're already doing

- Connect you with others doing similar work
- Say it's not a good fit if the collaboration doesn't connect/align with the Strategic Plan
- "Formalize" the relationship by recognizing you as a collaborative partner
 - Could be through social media connections, digital badging, etc. – we will work through this piece together

Q&A Session

Yellow Breen:

- **Q: Some organizations tend to be partnered on a regional or intermediary basis. Should they submit RTCs around each major collaboration they are involved in, or submit as an initiative that touches a lot of areas?**
- A: The expectation is for the collaboration to submit the RTC or ITC. We want to see where the overall collaboration fits in with the Strategic Plan's implementation, rather than seeing where an individual organization—even if it is an intermediary—fits.

Eliza Townsend:

- **Q: Can you expand on item B5: quality of place investments?**
- A: We are in the early stages in terms of what the projects might look like in that area. The intention is to work with local communities and identify what are some of those quality of place investments and what we can work together on. If there are things being done around those quality of place investment areas, we encourage you to submit as a partner – there is a lot of work happening in the community in this area, but it's not yet managed as a set of projects connected to the Plan.

Brian Bickford:

- **Q: Are there timeframes for addressing non-State-led initiatives?**
- A: The timelines are in formation. The work groups and the Steering Committee will be considering what the sequencing of those projects will look like. We are looking at three general timeframe buckets: (1) now to 2023, focusing on recovery and moving into growth; (2) 2023 to 2026, when we'll be in full Plan implementation; and (3) 2027 and beyond, when we will start to evaluate where we are and think about what needs to be done in the next 10 years. That said, we are looking to do a lot of piloting and learning from small projects as part of the implementation process – so there's real opportunity in any of these areas to make progress on individual projects in the near term, learn from those, and figure out how we might scale them.

Anna Stockman:

- **Q: Can you provide an example of collaborating on the vision, goals, strategies, etc., of the Plan?**
- A: The State Workforce Board is an example of a public-private collaboration whose work is aligned with the Strategic Plan. It's made up of public and private members and develops its own plan each year, which is now totally aligned with the Strategic Plan's strategies and goals. That said, a collaboration does not have to be directly aligned with every piece of the Plan to become a collaborating partner.

- A: Two examples of collaborations that may not align with every piece of the Plan but connect to multiple parts are FOR/Maine (looking at the opportunities within and the future of the forest products industry) and SEAMaine (a similar collaboration working in the sea products/ocean area). Both collaborations intersect with various elements of the plan, such as talent, innovation, and infrastructure.

Vicki Rusbult:

- Those of us that work at economic development districts are working on our CEDS plans. In our region (EMDC), we're combining that effort with the workforce strategic plan for the Northeastern Workforce Development Board. So, I think we'd be one that can pepper across different priorities and really represent the region we're serving and align with the Plan's implementation.

William Ferdinand:

- **Q: Is DECD collaborating with DHHS or private partners for affordable childcare system?**
- A: The childcare work stream is being led by the Children's Cabinet, which crosses over multiple agencies, including DHHS, and has a lot of private sector representation. That's the mechanism for working on the early childhood education piece currently.
- **Q: We need DECD and business support for childcare.**
- A: There are several opportunities through this RTC/ITC process to recognize where crossovers across systems are important. For the childcare piece, we've heard loud and clear that the business education piece around the importance of early childhood education as a component of this work. An additional benefit of this structure is that it provides an opportunity for cross-agency/sector/areas of expertise to work through any tensions around different strategies.

Brian Bickford:

- **Q: Infrastructure doesn't appear to be in the initial plan. I'm guessing you considered whether you can grow with existing infrastructure? I've always heard we need infrastructure to grow. Please dispel...**
- A: The Plan is focused on talent and innovation, so it focuses on the supportive infrastructure of public transportation/transit, childcare, and housing, as well as calling out ubiquitous connectivity as its own key infrastructure area. That said, the ERC also flagged the importance of strengthening Maine's overall transportation infrastructure, so that's feathered in as a piece of the recommendation, as well. We also want to consider the recommendations of the *Blue-Ribbon Commission to Study and Recommend Funding Solutions for the State's Transportation System* related to the overall transportation system.

Traci Gere:

- **Q: How do we take this plan and make it more visible on the local level? I'm thinking about an early high school student who is wondering about career opportunities and how they might plug into the big picture, or a small business who doesn't know it's happening. Are there communication efforts to connect these folks in?**

- A: This RFC and ITC process is part of that effort to give people an opportunity to say what's happening at the local level. There is a lot of great work happening locally, but people don't necessarily know about the Strategic Plan. We're hoping to use this process to promote marketing and awareness of the Plan, and to coordinate better communication with these local collaborations. We've also soft-launched a separate [Strategic Plan website](#) for individuals to connect in with the Plan and its strategies.
- **Q: Maine is a large state geographically. Is there a designated primary interface organization in each county or in each district? Who would be the point person for, e.g., York County? Where should people go for that?**
- A: Right now, in the implementation phase, there isn't a specific point person in each county/community. Amy Landry of AVCOG is on the Steering Committee representing the economic development districts (EDDs). There will likely be an opportunity for the EDDs as a group to be a collaborator and to serve as a mouthpiece on the ground.
- **Q: Is there any other county government connection?**
- A: There will likely be additional opportunities for us to make sure we have people from local communities that are seeing how they can connect in. We're hopeful that this collaboration opportunity will take advantage of some of those natural networks to make that happen (e.g., possible collaborating partners could include the EDDs as a group, the Downtown Center as a group representing many downtown areas, the Maine Municipal Association potentially connecting all their municipalities, DECD's Office of Community Development and some of their partners, etc.). Part of the RTC/ITC's purpose is to take some of those informal networks and make them more explicit and formal around this implementation work.
- **Q: It would be great to see some messaging around childcare and housing and how they connect to economic development.**
- A: When you look at this Plan in general, it doesn't look like a traditional economic development plan. It's about nurturing talent and innovation, and recognizes that those infrastructure pieces of childcare, housing, and public transportation are critical to economic development.

Final Thoughts

- We will share the slide deck and notes from this session. We will also continue to update the FAQ on DECD's website.
- We will be considering RFC/ITC submissions on a monthly rolling basis.