Economic Recovery Committee
Innovation Subcommittee
(Life Science, Tech, Energy, and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem)

Agenda with Accompanying Notes from Meeting
August 20, 2020
8-9:30 AM
Virtual via Zoom

Subcommittee members present: Betsy Biemann, Brian Hubbell, Ben Waxman, Chanel Lewis, Deanna Sherman, Tim Agnew, Vaughn Woodruff, Martha Bentley (staff)
Members absent: Adam Lachman

1. Review proposed workplan/schedule for Subcommittee work through September 11

   **Key takeaways:** The Subcommittee agrees on the proposed outline of the work through September 11. Subcommittee members discussed that the energy sub-sector work may need additional attention beyond the current Innovation Subcommittee schedule. In addition, the Subcommittee recognizes that its work (as well as the work of the ERC in general) will connect directly to the recommendations that come out of the Climate Council through Fall 2020, but that it also needs to have “peripheral vision” for actions and recommendations that may not fall directly into the Climate Council’s work. All agree that identification of the key economic drivers that can be leveraged need to be identified and discussed.

   **Action item and who is responsible:** Subcommittee Chair Betsy Biemann will connect with and communicate any guidance from the ERC Co-Chairs regarding the planning of a joint meeting with Infrastructure Subcommittee, likely in mid-September, that will focus on the energy sector.

2. Discuss Action Items in Strategic Plan (please read plan prior to meeting and familiarize self with action items for reference)

   **Key takeaways:** The Subcommittee members each had an opportunity to highlight the action items and expand on areas within the items that need further development, using the lens outlined in the overall ERC work plan for this stage (Given the new opportunities and challenges that have emerged in the last six months, which action steps in the Economic Development Strategy are most relevant today? • Where are the gaps? How can those gaps be filled?) The Subcommittee will also try to balance focus on what is actionable and how we make the 10-year Plan executable with being ambitious and using the urgency and possibility raised by the lessons of the pandemic to see what is
new. The Subcommittee will also remain vigilant not to let the focus on the 10-year Plan push us to look backward.

The Subcommittee identified support for entrepreneurship as gap in the areas of the action steps, as it is not explicitly outlined an action area within talent or innovation. The Subcommittee also highlighted the following actions for further expansion and discussion.

Talent Category:

• Web Portal matching students and employers
• Align curriculums with digital economy skills
• Engage today’s workers in continuing education to achieve credentials for career advancement
• Expand the professional preparation of educators at all levels in STEM and other digital economy skills.

Within these areas the Subcommittee agreed on focus and priority around connecting people with opportunities clearly and simply; the concept of the "one stop shop" or concierge should be prioritized, with an Integration of programs. The Subcommittee also discussed prioritizing updates and modernization of apprenticeship programs, and that important CTE work is happening but the immediate demand for workforce makes it hard. The Subcommittee wants to better understand the standards of apprenticeship programs.

The Subcommittee will further explore broadening definitions of training and reimagining the workforce.

The Subcommittee would like to explore how to leverage Federal, other funding sources, and creative financing mechanisms to support apprenticeship and other credentialed training programs.

Also identified as area of priority and specificity should be computer science, technical/vocation education, and entrepreneurship broadly (non-traditional ways to enter a field of work). These have direct connection to innovation and are key to the talent pipeline

• Support the Governor’s Welcome Home program

The Subcommittee identified the importance of expanding how we talk about and market Maine. The program’s focus should be to help us be open to a greater variety of people who may not have experiences common to what we often use to market Maine (“if you have never kayaked you don’t know it is amazing to be able to do so after work”)

• Expand – and simplify – the Education Opportunity Tax Credit
The Subcommittee supports this as a key priority for attraction and recommends making it as simple and broadly applicable as possible.

Innovation Category:

- Increase R&D investment levels in Maine
  The Subcommittee will explore making clear that this should be seen broadly to encompass entrepreneurship and the movement of R&D to the commercial stage so as to reap economic benefit.

- Identify areas of supply chain opportunity
  The Subcommittee support prioritization of this aspect of the “Hubs of Excellence” as this is a key mechanism for Maine so multiple areas can benefit from these hubs - adjacent and more rural communities. This action area can extend and multiply impact and economic inclusion.

Infrastructure Category:

- Promote “Quality of Place” investments
  The Subcommittee supports this as an area of priority and will focus on it as an expansive category that includes many elements

- Control and reduce energy costs
- Control Healthcare costs
  The Subcommittee supports these priorities as critical for innovation

3. Outline questions for panelists based on above

**Key takeaways:** The Subcommittee wants to state clearly what information is needed from the panelists, using the guidance provided in the ERC Work Plan for this phase of work. The Subcommittee also would like the panelist to reflect on the information from the perspectives of their own company or organization and the industry as a whole.

**Action item and who is responsible:** Subcommittee Chair Betsy Biemann and Subcommittee staff, Martha Bentley will finalize the information to be requested in the invitation.

4. Finalize list of panelists
Key takeaways: The Subcommittee would ideally like to hear as many diverse voices from the key four industry sub-sectors as possible, recognizing that sometimes it is difficult for small company voices to be heard. We will give industry representatives an option to participate in person or submit information in writing to be reviewed by the Subcommittee.

Action item and who is responsible: Subcommittee members will give any additional suggestions for panelists to Martha (Subcommittee staff) by close of business on Thursday, August 20. Subcommittee Chair Betsy Biemann and Martha will finalize an invitation that can be used by Subcommittee members to reach out within their own networks to provide written comments and Martha will send out the invitation to potential panelists. The invitation will outline the guardrails of the type of information the Subcommittee is seeking and will clarify the Subcommittee’s role and responsibility so as to temper an expectations of specific results from participation in the process.