

*myregion.org*  
Board of Directors  
**MEETING BRIEF**

**December 15, 2006 --**

Chairman Randy Lyon opened the meeting and welcomed new board members and asked them to introduce themselves to the group. Today, we will be looking at the history and the future of *myregion.org*. A Task Team that includes Joel Hass, Linda Chapin and Ed Timberlake will serve with Mr. Lyon to help determine a strategy for moving forward. The time to start planning is now, with 81.45 of survey respondents in support of this action.



Jacob Stuart provided a review of the history of *myregion.org*, citing the core value of inclusiveness that has helped to build the relationships across the region since our work began in 1999. A timeline was developed to depict significant benchmark during the past eight years. He also reviewed the organizational structure that includes the Foundation for Building Community, Inc., a 501 (C) (3) non-profit community-based organization. The budget details what the program actually costs including staff totaling \$350,000. These costs do cover the Regional Leadership Academy, Social Services Council, Economic Development District, Regional Indicators Update, Regional Councils, and How Shall We Grow?

The discussion today will center on our Assets, Issues and Opportunities, and Current Projects. Lead Consultant Don Upton, Fairfield Index, followed Mr. Stuart to facilitate the group conversation. We will gather information today through discussion, group sharing, and electronic polling. Preliminary survey questions covered board participation, funding sources, time invested, connectedness, community board service, why we should anticipate the future.

Inventory of assets should show what we are most proud of (collaborative culture, changing the way we do business in Central Florida), and which asset is most important to accomplishing the Regional Vision. Participants were asked to discuss which categories of assets should be retained as we move forward.

Hard and soft assets are quality of leaders, myregion.org staff, decision-makers elected and non-elected, collaborative media partners, \$\$\$\$\$, human capital and leadership, Jacob Stuart's ability to bring the players together, process and protocols, sharing of information and input, great communication, development of the network, coordination, brand and image, partners, culture of collaboration, elevating understanding of issues, creation of regionalism while building trust, data and research, identifying environmental assets for preservation, credible convener, paradigm shift in local government, new level of consolidation, legislative action beyond the local and regional jurisdictions may be necessary for implementation.

Breakout questions were then presented:

**Will our standing, as a convener be required in the future?**

Yes, without question, as coach or broker for consulting  
How do we move to grass roots level for implementation?  
Measure, record and report successes  
Value, knowledge and relationships serves all, business and government  
Understanding special interest groups agendas and understanding them.

**What are the key assets?**

Depth of talent and intellectual property  
Key leadership broad community representation, comprehensive data sets, diversity, political momentum, consensus for action, forced dialog  
Modeling agent, business may be dwindling

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Diversity and inclusiveness are crucial; staffing maintains consistency and continuity, courage to maintain variety of viewpoints

Shared vision and advancement of it, including its evolution

Powerful tools, research, truth in numbers, extended network, virtual, brand personalizes it across the region

Research already completed, may have difficulty implement, but can certainly powerfully leverage the agenda

Bringing Mayors and County Chairmen together has been unique

Have built a new awareness of the issues, understanding of density, transit and its value

**What is the value of these assets?**

Priceless because of return to community in future.

Potential is only beginning

Priceless, but pricey – funding is critical

Tampa Bay Partnership is looking to us for what we have done and are doing

The whole exceeds the sum of its parts we absolutely must go forward

**What are the priorities?**

Role of skilled management

Actionable items for political will and momentum, tangible results that are measurable, strategic long- and short-term goals.

Sustainability, communicating data effectively, benefits to community, be sensitive to attention span, community involvement at all levels

Reason for dealing with tremendous growth, implementation of next phase of framework to advance the mission

Continue to enable dialog, build networks around common vision, all politics are local and should be based on regional vision, benchmarking, should the vision be coast-to-coast

Educate public officials and educate the general public

Clearly articulating the regional vision and repeating it often, include ideas that are so attractive that the stakeholders will come along, academies that are specific

Seize opportunity to maximize momentum, build a sense of urgency

**Questions from the audience:**

What do we mean by tangible results? Compilation of data, there is nothing like it in the nation. But, what is next? Is there one thing we can do that will create a cascade of change?

Potential tipping point will be at the conclusion of the media week in January.

Provide for an inventory of strategies. Data will soon be out of date.

American Red Cross, on January 1, will consolidate four Red Cross organizations in the footprint of *myregion.org*. Joel Hass will serve as the Regional Director. He believes that is a direct result of our work in *myregion.org*.

As we talk about tangible results, we need to maintain our status as a convener to enable dialog rather than pushing political agendas.

Constant communication of the “wins” like the Red Cross must be continually distributed as a result of our work.

PRISM is moving forward under new direction of Dr. Jim Schott that came about with the help of *myregion.org*.

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Think of the vision as a map, but also a living, breathing entity. It provides necessary "cover" for elected officials to make the decisions that are "right" for the region.

Focus on top two issues identified by the public: green space and transportation that can lead to tangible results. Establishing dedicated funding sources are critical.

The product is the process itself.

In response to an earlier question, Mark Brewer responded to a question about social capital, gauging who was at the table when we began and which of those constituencies are still with us today. One important component is to bring back or recycle some of the business representation that we may have lost over the life of the process to date.

During a working luncheon, guests were asked to have a conversation about "must dos" that should be provided to the Task Team as they conduct their work over the next few months.

There was a strong consensus for what we have accomplished. In the short-term, it was felt that we must continue to invest time and money. What should *myregion.org* do as an entity and as an encourager for other organizations to lead? There needs to be a distinction on its role going forward. How can we measure our progress? Should we be identifying ten specific measures that will be indicative of successful implementation? The Vision that will be adopted in June 2007 will have no legal standing. What steps must be taken in order to translate the vision into action and reality.

Funding and resource development plan must be developed, and to what magnitude? Perhaps the establishment of an endowment for the long term should be considered. Develop a communications plan to the variety of audiences. Identify key business leaders in the community to bring back to the table to re-engage and re-energize. Create our own identity, differentiating *myregion.org* from the Orlando Regional Chamber. Engage existing Board Members. Who will implement the vision?

Data is our start point, but it is not our core competency, but, only if it remains fresh and updated. Vocabulary is very important. Focus messages in key core languages based on specific audiences. Better define Board Member roles in the community engagement process. Develop timelines for action, understanding that could cause some of our audience to drop out.

Need to set goals about what *myregion.org* should accomplish during the next few years, as well as the dollars that would be attached to those goals. Gaining an understanding of why businesses have remained engaged is very important.

Must begin to secure funding for next steps. Identify leaders to advocate tasks. Develop communications plans. Get buy in of decision makers at governmental level. Consider development of regional and local report card on specific indicators.

Take advantage of the window of opportunity for development of a base map. Tasks should be given to RPC to create an electronic map that local officials could use for decision making and for projecting results for their areas of responsibility.

Regarding communication, there is a continued need for grass roots communications to a variety of stakeholders and residents. Methods for continuous and deliberate engagement must be identified.

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Could we come up with a variety of legislative procedures and mechanisms enabling regional progress rather than on a county or municipal basis?

Public seems to be in agreement on environmental lands and transportation. The Wekiva Environmental Protection Act is in place to address both of these in completing the Western Beltway. Right now, Florida statutes encourage regionalism, but do not currently require it. The existing bureaucratic system does not facilitate regional growth.

There are three legs to the platform: Regional platform to solve land base issues. Could *myregion.org* influence legislation? Transportation – build transit systems to compliment densities. The establishment of the Regional Leadership Council and Council of Mayors are a first step in institutionalizing regional mentality and consensus.

Citizen involvement and citizen funding on a smaller basis would provide buy in and support. The funding well must include financial support at all levels.

Report card on development would call attention by elected officials to the issues. Develop something similar to the NFL like the QB rating system.

It all comes back to mission. Is *myregion.org* advocating specific initiatives or facilitating discussion. Reaffirm our mission or strategy and then address tactics.

Perhaps a grass roots communication, similar to what Project Hometown just put out, would help build critical mass and measure outreach. Have other groups in the region endorse aspects of the *myregion.org* platform.

Chairman Randy Lyon provided an example of the Urban Land Institute as a research provider and as a convener. It has never taken a role as advocate. There is a fine line to consider. Once you cross the line, stakeholders line up either with you or against you. In polling the audience, it became clear that the wish is for *myregion.org* to play the role of both advocate and enabler. Advocacy or lobbying could, in fact, eliminate some of the people involved. Should advocacy be limited to a very specific high-level group of issues?

The question was asked whether the six Regional Priorities would stand as *myregion.org* moves forward. Will they change? Will some be dropped? Will others be added?

Smart, Quality Growth, because of the urgency of that issue, raised it on the priority list as How Shall We Grow? Immediate attention could ebb and flow depending on what it happening in our region and in the world.

Mr. Lyon introduced Phil Laurien, Executive Director of the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council to present the five growth scenarios that have been developed as a result of the How Shall We Grow? Meetings held throughout the region, and engaging 9,000 citizens and community leaders.

Alternative A – Environmental Conservation

Alternative B – Town Centers

Alternative C – Transportation

Alternative D – Blend of A, B, C

The role of *myregion.org* can be that as a way-finder. Helping people find their way through the information and the opinions of the constituencies.

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At Envision Utah, the leadership team has now moved on to influential community positions that have been able to affect change that has impacted transportation, density, housing, etc.

Jacob Stuart summarized that we a grass roots, highly leveraged, community-based organization. Tangible results come in many forms. WMFE and its president, Jose Fajardo, has leveraged partners including WKMG, Florida Today and the Orlando Sentinel to produce a week of news coverage for How Shall We Grow? in January. A host of community media partners are also on board and will include an hour-long television show about Central Florida's growth. Residents will be able to share their opinion on the scenarios on the *myregion.org* website.

Phil Laurien presented an overview of the East Central Florida Economic Development District. The federal government will now only fund "regional" Economic Development Districts. In order to conform with EDA regulations, the ECFRPC must partner with a local organization.

The Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce and *myregion.org* would be perfect partners. For consideration would be communities with overpopulation, transportation issues, etc.

A motion was approved to support the ECFRPC, with the understanding that no costs would be required of *myregion.org*.

Randy Berridge provided information on the Central Florida Incubator and the grants that it secures to enhance economic development and entrepreneurship. He cited a number of successful projects that he attributes to the work of *myregion.org*.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned with best wishes for a safe holiday season.