MEMORANDUM

To: **Economic and Community Development Committee**

Date: **March 18, 2010**

From: **Annie Byrne, Associate Regional Planner**

Re: **Education and Workforce Development Recommendations**

Background

The *GO TO 2040* plan will include recommendations to improve and elevate education and workforce development. Through CMAP's partnership with The Chicago Community Trust, lead agencies were selected and advisory committees were convened to develop reports with recommendations on these topics. The Chicago Jobs Council prepared the workforce development report.

The focus of this memo and the presentation to the Committee is on the workforce development recommendations. Since the completion of the report in October 2009, the Chicago Jobs Council (CJC) along with the Chicago Community Trust and CMAP hosted a meeting with nearly 100 participants to discuss the report's recommendations and explore next steps, several of which are underway. Staff is continuing to work with key stakeholders and experts to further refine these recommendations and add details that have emerged since the completion of the report.

Workforce Development Report Vision, Goals and Recommendations

CJC and the advisory committee first expanded on the *GO TO 2040* vision statement related to workforce development and developed the following vision, which provided guidance for the goals and recommendations:

- The region's workforce will have the appropriate skills for jobs in the regional labor market.

- The region's businesses will experience only limited skilled labor shortages.

- Public investments in the region's human capital will occur through workforce development programs or other training that will prepare students and workers to excel in the diversified jobs of the future and that will support the economic stability and prosperity of the region's households and businesses.

The advisory council developed two goals, five focal areas, and 16 recommendations. The recommendations include specific actions, an estimated timeline, and identified the key entities to be involved. The following provides a summary of the recommendations, organized by the goals.

Goal One: Better coordinate the workforce development, education, and economic development systems to create a more efficient and effective workforce development network.

The first goal is to have better coordinated workforce, education, and economic development planning and information systems across the region. The advisors agreed that locally driven strategies are most effective, but a regional strategy should make sure the workforce, education, and economic development systems have shared goals and have a mechanism to share information. Coordinated planning and information systems would create a broader, more open mechanism for the innovation and more efficient service delivery. It would also increase the ability of all the systems (education, economic development and workforce development) to be proactive rather than reactive. To achieve this, a set of information system and planning system recommendations were developed.

Data Systems Recommendations

The advisory committee recommends a data system that provides integration between education, workforce development, and economic development data. We need a data network that is transparent and accessible so that individuals and businesses can use it and so coordination between workforce, education, and economic development planning and information systems is improved across the region.

Key steps of the recommendation include assessing current data collection, assessment of data needs, and identification of gaps. To achieve the integration described in this recommendation, the establishment of a region-wide data/information network or consortium should be established to facilitate data sharing between systems, establish innovative ways to provide data to end users, and communicate and maintain data in a way so it is useable. This network would help determine how newly collected information will inform regional planning for each system. There should also be ongoing monitoring to determine whether the integrated system is serving its purpose.

Planning System Recommendations

The recommendation for planning systems is to create a mechanism for coordination of workforce, education and economic development systems so they are better linked where they intersect. For example, the workforce development system can influence education strategies by

bringing relevant labor market information to curriculum development. In addition, better coordination between the workforce development system and the economic development system can help refocus strategies so they are more responsive. While there are instances where workforce development strategies improve the effectiveness of education and economic development strategies, the extent to which they support, leverage or influence education and economic development strategies should be strengthened.

Some of the steps outlined to achieve this recommendation include: assessing existing coordination between the systems, develop steps to address barriers to coordination, create an ongoing format for regular cross-system convening, establish common goals, create incentives and pilots that build cross-system coordination, develop cross-system solutions that meet specific workforce challenges, and implement an effective communication strategy to engage key entities across all systems.

Goal Two: Develop an integrated and adaptive career and education pathway system driven by skill needs of employers and accessible to all workers in the region.

The second goal is focused on improving a strategy of using the career pathways framework to support more workers and businesses with training, employment opportunities, and a skilled workforce. The goal is to develop an integrated and adaptive career pathway system that is accessible to more workers and better connected to the needs of employers. To be more effective and avoid duplication, the workforce development, education, and economic development systems should have a role in the development of the "pathways" between education, training, employment, and career advancement. To ensure the pathway systems are responsive to current business needs, and so they are accessible to more workers and employers, they should depend on a community-focused delivery system and flexible resources.

Career Pathways Mechanism and Working Group Recommendation

The advisory committee recommends a more fully developed mechanism for coordination and development of education and training pathways. To achieve this, a scan of existing pathways is necessary to better understand the extent of current career pathway initiatives. This scan would indicate what type of a cross-system pathways working group should be established. The working group should use the scan to identify gaps and determine what role each system has in developing and contributing to education and training pipeline. The working group should produce an implementation plan for a regional "hub" that will be responsible for an ongoing "mapping" of career pathways for industries and occupations. The coordinating hub should make sure necessary labor analyses are utilized and efforts are linked and are not duplicative. The group should evaluate performance and effectiveness of career and education pathways and recommend new strategies based on emerging best practice models.

Local Infrastructure Recommendations

A key component of realizing this goal is the important role of the community-focused workforce development network. To be truly accessible, adaptive and responsive to changing needs and emerging opportunities, the local delivery system of workforce development programs and services needs to be strengthened. To do this, the advisory committee recommends a scan of existing community-focused workforce development entities be completed to show the extent the current network provides an "on ramp" to a career or education path. An evaluation of this scan should be used to identify strengths and weaknesses of local service delivery networks, and then determine and recommend optimal community-focused service delivery.

Flexible Public Funding Streams and Policies Recommendations

To support the kind of integration and adaptive mechanisms and delivery systems described, public funding streams and public policies that support flexibility are required. In order to identify the kind of flexibility needed and what funding and policies need to be more flexible, a comprehensive review and evaluation of existing public funding streams used for workforce development in the region is needed. This scan should identify funding streams and policies that are most flexible and how they support effective career pathways. This information should then be used in a coordinated way to inform recommendations to guide new policies as appropriate.

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