



MEMORANDUM

To: Economic Development Committee

From: CMAP Staff

Date: September 18, 2012

Re: Freight Implementation Strategies: Next Steps

GO TO 2040 recommends a cluster-based approach to economic development because of its enhanced ability to describe a regional economy, recognize relationships between firms, and identify strategies building on embedded strengths. CMAP's recent [Freight Cluster Drill-Down](#) report uses this cluster approach to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the regional freight cluster, concluding with a set of implementation areas to best capitalize on the region's competitive advantage in freight and logistics.

At its last meeting, the Economic Development Committee helped launch the freight drill-down's implementation phase by brainstorming and refining one workforce and one innovation action area from the report. Building on this momentum, CMAP asks the Economic Development Committee to continue its work in advancing cluster support strategies. The Committee is asked to discuss the next steps of the targeted workforce and innovation strategies they developed in the July meeting.

Results of July Brainstorming Session

In its July meeting the Committee discussed the feasibility and effectiveness of numerous possible cluster support strategies and through deliberation narrowed its focus to a few key themes best suited for innovation and workforce support. These priority areas are summarized below:

Innovation

- Create a space and time for investors to meet with innovative freight companies
- Support freight by supporting manufacturing so that new innovations are built by regional manufacturing firms
- Promote a freight champion to act as an innovation catalyst

Workforce

- Link employers to soft-skills training providers with successful track records

- Inventory existing efforts to develop strategies so that efforts can be mutually supportive, not duplicative
- Improve communication: engaged employers can help recalibrate curriculum, improved web resources better disseminate opportunities and develop a deeper pool of applicants

Next Steps Discussion

The goal of the next steps discussion is to develop actionable items and identify lead implementers of the strategies honed in the last meeting. Questions include:

- For each strategy, what is the goal and end result? What would the successful implementation look like? Who are the lead agencies and what are their defined roles?
- Which of the above strategies are the most feasible given current fiscal and other restraints?
- Which strategies best build off of existing strengths instead of simply repeating existing support efforts?
- What resources are needed to transition from idea to implementation? What agencies could best provide these resources?
- What is the role of the Economic Development Committee? Advocacy/outreach? Facilitator? Lead implementer for one strategy? How can the expertise of the Committee best be leveraged?
- Given all these considerations, which next steps are worth pursuing?