

Sustainable Economies and Strong Communities:

Regional Chamber Strategies for
Growth

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Foreword

Michael Fleming
President & CEO
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The root causes of urban poverty are deeply embedded in decades of non-sustainable public and private policies around such vital human services as transportation, housing, education, environment and planning, as well as stubbornly rigid jurisdictional divides. Reversing those policies and ameliorating their consequences requires action on a regional scale through effective individual and institutional effort; the civil fragmentation that characterizes metropolitan America has made this very difficult. Because businesses operate regionally (while interacting globally), we believe that only enlightened regional economic interests can overcome narrow political jurisdictional interests. The American Chamber of Commerce Executives' Regionalism and Sustainable Development Fellowship has helped strengthen the resolve and the capacity of regionally focused, business-based civic institutions to confront and surmount policy and structural barriers to healthy, sustainable, just urban regions.

The Fellowship provided 37 chamber executives with hands-on training, peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, research, and examination of working models covering a wide range of growth and sustainability issues. The 37 Fellows, grouped into two cohorts, dove into key development areas such as infrastructure, immigration, land use, housing, education, environment, minority inclusion, and inner city challenges through meetings, online teleseminars, readings and development of regional action plans.

This white paper encapsulates the critical learning from the Fellowship meetings and examples from the Fellows' own regions. Regional leaders can use this document as they seek opportunities for collective action, create long-term partnerships, and channel their combined economic power and influence to promote business practices and public policies that build efficient and inclusive metropolitan regions.

Acknowledgements

The Ford Foundation

The American Chamber of Commerce Executives thanks the Ford Foundation for its support of the Fellowship. This funding accelerated the practice of regional sustainable development across the U.S. and helped create a new body of knowledge accessible to all interested in regional stewardship. The Ford Foundation is a resource for innovative people and institutions around the world. It was founded to advance human welfare, and all of its work flows from this fundamental commitment. For more information, visit <http://www.fordfound.org>.

The Heinz Endowments

The Heinz Endowments underwrote the participation of a team of six business-civic leaders from the Greater Pittsburgh area in support of developing a coordinated strategy for sustainable development in the region. The foundation's mission is to help the southwestern Pennsylvania region thrive as a whole community—economically, ecologically, educationally and culturally—while advancing the state of knowledge and practice in such diverse areas as the arts and the economy. For more information, visit <http://www.heinz.org>.

FutureWorks

Brian Bosworth and Stephen Michon of FutureWorks were the principals in the creation and implementation of the Fellowship, from crafting the curriculum and selecting speakers to providing invaluable one-on-one advice and counseling to the Fellows throughout the program. FutureWorks is a consulting and policy development firm that helps design and build the strategies and institutions that promote sustainable, skill-based regional economic growth. For more information, visit <http://www.futureworks-web.com/>.

The Ford Fellows

The 37 participants in the Fellowship provided insights into regional sustainable development practices across the country, many of which are incorporated into this white paper. Four Fellows contributed essays to this white paper; see the addendum. A complete list of Fellows appears in the appendix.

Citistates Group

Neal Peirce, Curtis Johnson and Farley Peters of the Citistates Group provided assistance in curriculum refinement and speaker selection for the Fellowship. For more information, visit <http://www.citistates.com/>.

Alliance for Regional Stewardship

Members of the Alliance, including Frank Beal of Chicago Metropolis 2020 and Dave Adkisson of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, served as faculty for the Fellowship. In addition, the Alliance Board of Directors, chaired by F. Michael Langley of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, provided assistance in curriculum refinement and speaker selection for the Fellowship. For more information, visit <http://www.regionalstewardship.org>.

Chamber Partnerships International LLC

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Chambers of Commerce as Drivers of Regional Prosperity

“Informed Americans are beginning to acknowledge that some crucial problems such as traffic congestion and pollution simply cannot be solved within municipal boundaries,” said noted regional steward John W. Gardner. “They want [their communities] to thrive economically, to be sustainable environmentally, and to have the web of mutual obligations, caring, trust and shared values that make possible the accomplishment of group purpose.”

The regionally-oriented business-led civic organization – chambers of commerce and similar entities – has the necessary tools to bring about the type of regional development that John W. Gardner insists all Americans want. Tools to bring jobs and economic opportunity to all, including disadvantaged residents and their neighborhoods. Additional tools to provide sustainable solutions to vexing environmental, energy and land management challenges. Tools to enable the regional chamber to ratchet up its role as chief engineer of private-public partnerships. Tools to envision a 21st century transportation system that efficiently moves people and products with little impact on the region’s air and water quality.

In metropolitan North America the regional chamber is the key driver of growth and shared prosperity for business, communities and residents alike. That was demonstrated by the 37 business-civic leaders who took part in the American Chamber of Commerce Executives’ Regional Sustainable Development Fellowship, an 18-month program that trained chamber leaders in sustainable growth strategy. Each executive gleaned a different, yet valuable, lesson from the fellowship and is applying it to overcome barriers to economic prosperity in his or her region.

In one case, an executive of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership used the fellowship as a platform to build a new regional land use agenda. The resulting framework shepherded resources and development in the greater Buffalo region along identified growth corridors, a break from unconnected multi-jurisdictional incentives, rules and requirements that drove growth in haphazard ways. The old way encouraged development that required significant new investments to build sewer lines, roads, and schools. The new way maintains the rural character of the region, encourages building where infrastructure is already in place, and fits into a wider vision of a prosperous region for both businesses and residents.

For their part, executives from six chambers of commerce in greater Pittsburgh used the fellowship to build a regional identity and marketing plan centered on a next-generation “green” building that will house the Center for Sustainable Landscapes. The building was designed to demonstrate the newest green technologies available, create global awareness of “what green means,” and help build a regional workforce for “green”-collar jobs.

A president from a chamber along the sprawling Florida coast gathered momentum and insights from the fellowship to successfully implement a regional workforce housing plan. It pioneered ways to reduce the burden of expensive housing on the area’s lowest-wage workers and fixed-income residents.

Tackling complex regional growth patterns. Promoting new green business models. Taking steps to ease a regional housing crunch. For chamber executives faced with the reality of globalization and fierce competition, attention to economic development and quality of life issues was no abstraction. Rather, they are the core of the 21st century chamber mission.

This paper makes the case that executives of regional business civic organizations, such as chambers of commerce, boards of trade and CEO councils, are ideally positioned to lead the way to regional sustainable development. Regional sustainable development ensures that attaining prosperity and a good quality of life now won’t preclude future generations from having the same opportunity. It is a growth strategy that uses natural resources wisely and builds infrastructure for long-term competitiveness. It shares prosperity across a range of business interests, residents and neighborhoods within one region. Using that definition as a premise, this paper seeks to answer four questions: What is economic development in the 21st century? What is *sustainable* economic development in the 21st century? Which roles should regional chambers play? Which actions should regional chambers take?

An addendum to this paper provides perspectives from four chamber of commerce executives seeking to answer these questions. These perspectives, which were written as part of the executives’ participation in the Regional Sustainable Development Fellowship, stand on their own as essays contributing to the regional sustainable development body of knowledge.

The first courses of the fellowship are over, but for the chamber executives who took part in them, the drive for sustainable regional development continues back home. It is clear that regional chambers have a key role to play; they can act to promote the long-term viability of a

region's assets and resources, rallying businesses to ensure that actions taken now will promote growth for generations to come.

What is Economic Development in the 21st Century?

Globalization and technological innovation are driving change in our economy and our lives. We are being transformed by the increasing movement of goods, people and capital across borders. Capital flows freely – from Beijing to London to Chicago – all in one day. Technology has never

“More than ever before, major metropolitan regions across the country, across the globe, are facing a new competition for talent and capital investment.”

Tim Sheehy, president,
Metropolitan
Milwaukee Association
of Commerce

before advanced so quickly and with such transforming quality. What was once produced by a factory of 1,000 workers in North Carolina can now be produced just as cheaply by a small and nimble firm of 50 workers in the same state, or in a place that half way across the globe. Competition is global and fierce. Companies in Seattle compete with those in Bangalore which compete with those in China’s Shenzhen district, Tel Aviv and Helsinki.

Two other seismic changes are taking place: the skills revolution and the search for energy alternatives and more efficient uses of our natural resources. The skills revolution is driven by the increasing need for humans to adapt and process new information rapidly. Skill and educational attainment has been a major driver of economic growth and will be even more so. And our “dream” demographics have come to an end. The number of prime-age workers is on the down slope and new entrants to the labor force, mostly immigrants and minorities, are not well-served by the education system. Schools they attend usually have fewer overall resources and support, leading to higher drop out rates and lower rates of college matriculation.

Changes in global consumption of resources and energy are just as important. It seems that global climate change and the demand for energy alternatives will, at the every least, change our current use of air, water and other natural resources. More emphasis will be placed on lower impact, higher efficiency models of utilization of natural resources. It is likely that this shift will alter how we view regional resource productivity and how corporations and governments manage natural resource-based assets such as water, land, and air.

Regions matter

The world is best thought of as a collection of competing metropolitan economies, inclusive of not only the city center but its suburbs and less-densely populated areas. At first glance it might appear that the metro region is an anachronism in a global economy. But while the world is getting smaller and more closely integrated, important economic differences still exist from place to place. Paradoxically, local differences like those found among metropolitan regions are becoming more important.

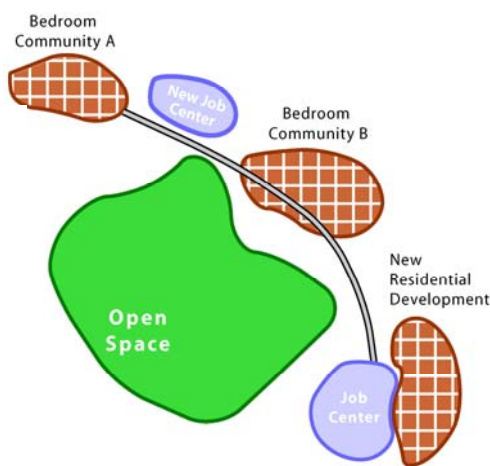
Companies compete not only in the head-to-head marketplace of products and services but also in behind-the-scenes skirmishes where the assets of the home region—financial, social, physical, environmental and human—emerge as key strengths and liabilities. Metros that develop well-organized transportation systems give firms efficient ways to transport goods and workers. Regions that take advantage of “green” initiatives allow companies to conserve natural resources for the long term. Regions with ample affordable housing, high-quality schools and worker-training systems, vibrant urban centers and socially cohesive communities lend a competitive advantage to the businesses that are based there. Indeed, businesses recognize that their

“The primary reason regions matter is that each region around the globe still has its own distinctive set of knowledge and expertise.”

Marion Haynes,
government affairs
director, Portland
Business Alliance

competitive well-being is increasingly tied to a region’s fortunes. They see that investment in the region’s social and economic fabric is as much sound business practice as it is a contribution to long-term economic prosperity—for their bottom line and the well-being of the citizenry. In short, companies select locations based on upfront costs compared to other sites, but also based on an entire package of regional offerings—what economists call “externalities”—that account for a range of impacts on the bottom line.¹

**Chicago
Metropolis
2020** – A
sustainable
solution to
the jobs-
housing
mismatch:
Put housing
near jobs.



¹Externalities are costs or benefits arising from an economic activity that impacts those not engaged in that activity. Externalities are not reflected fully in prices. For example, overuse of water by one company or industry could create long-term water shortages and increased water costs for nearby residents. Another example would be an efficient transit system paid for by taxpayers that reduces transit costs to ship a company’s goods, which leads to lower production costs for the company and lower prices for the consumer.

What businesses naturally account for in their location decisions is what the regionally-oriented chamber executive, volunteer member of a board of trade, and investor in a regional business organization know intuitively. These regional leaders focus their efforts on building a better regional “product”—the institutions, infrastructure, social conditions and business environment that lead to long-term stability and business growth. It is for this reason that metro chambers, boards of trade, and regional business organizations have become leaders in the new regional sustainable development agenda.

What is *Sustainable* Economic Development in the 21st Century?

“Regional sustainable development is best described as a marathon rather than a sprint.”

Todd Letts, former president and CEO, Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce

Regional sustainable development is a way to compete and prosper amid the vast global economic changes of the 21st century. Regional sustainable development is a positive, long-term growth agenda. It is focused on building per capita income and wealth within metropolitan North America while creating long-term opportunities for businesses *and* residents. It encompasses overlooked city and suburban markets, finds underutilized workers and residents, and brings the benefits of growth to the widest cross-section of people, companies and neighborhoods as possible. Regional sustainable development

advances growth patterns that meet environmental quality attainment standards. It combats fragmented, inefficient land use planning and wasteful development patterns that can concentrate poverty and increase the costs to businesses and taxpayers. It creates competitive, prosperous regions that are durable over the long term.

Regions are the building blocks of the economy and the platform from which to tackle issues of sustainable development. Metropolitan areas that prosper have research and development institutions that spin out technological adaptations of science and engineering innovations. Their businesses attract and retain talented and creative people. They have strong and flexible institutions for education and skill development. They use natural resources wisely. They are places where everyone contributes and everyone can be moved, housed and schooled.

Regions are also the platform where wholesale advantages can be won (and lost). Regions are where trust and familiarity can be gained, working relationships



Region Attracts International Investment

Companies from India, Denmark and France have recently chosen the region of Little Rock, Arkansas as their site for new production facilities and North American headquarters. The core of Little Rock could not provide the necessary resources for these projects alone and the Little Rock Regional Chamber's constant reference to "the region" —the workforce, demographic, infrastructure and lifestyle benefits of the entire metro—were key decision points. "Without the benefits of the entire metro Little Rock region, encompassing 11 counties in central Arkansas, these companies would never have chosen to locate here." Jay Chesshir, president and CEO of the Little Rock Regional Chamber.

can be built, assets moved and liabilities addressed. But what is required to be competitive can differ from one region to the next. There is no one formula that fits all. Good strategy requires an understanding of regional assets as well as the factors that support and detract from a region's competitive position in the global market.

Planning and implementation on a regional scale is where the action is. Business leaders recognize this. Businesses can lead at the regional level, where as civil jurisdictions lack effective mechanisms to address regional infrastructure and other issues—and too-frequently compete rather than collaborate in economic development. The business sector has the capacity to mobilize resources, the expertise to organize and implement complex undertakings, and the continuity of presence that extends beyond the term of elected public officials.

But no single business—or governmental agency—can effect regional change by itself, especially when faced with difficult challenges like urban sprawl, water shortages, inefficient transit systems, and cities and inner-ring suburbs with large numbers of labor force participants who are underutilized and left out of the market. As a result, businesses often turn to chambers, boards of trade and business councils to bring about regional change. Collective action through a chamber network is more effective than the action of any one company on its own. Chambers are able to speak with a unified voice. They have the staff capacity and policy focus that can best shape regional dynamics and influence public policy for business success and regional prosperity.

“Why do communities and regions fight so hard to establish a platform to assure future economic growth? Why do they—and we—bother? Because growth produces prosperity for everyone.”

Mick Fleming,
president, American
Chamber of
Commerce Executives

Sustainable Development is a “Pro-Growth” Agenda

A chamber's participation in these regional efforts is focused on taking actions to protect and promote the long-term viability of a region's assets and resources. Some call this the “don't screw it up” principle. It means that the actions that businesses collectively take ensure that prosperity will continue for generations to come. In other words, regional sustainable development *is* economic development that can be sustained over time. Sustainable development is a growth strategy that is neither environmentally nor economically self-limiting. Or, as Chicago Metropolis 2020 so succinctly identifies its role: it's the region that matters; we want to attract investment; we want to attract people; everyone must benefit.

More specifically, that means sustainable development advances regional patterns of growth that meet environmental quality attainment standards. It builds wealth by developing the skills of all metro residents and enables the market to find and develop the assets of distressed neighborhoods, and in the process creates job and business opportunities that go beyond city-suburban-rural divides, racial and ethnic divisions, and class separation. Sustainable development confronts inefficient systems of regional asset organization that concentrate poverty and increase business and taxpayer costs.

The Benefits of Growth

Short-Term Benefits	Long-Term Benefits
Maintains the current standard of living, at a minimum	Lowers the costs of goods and services through greater economies of scale in production
Accommodates the steadily growing population of the United States	Allows businesses and people to share resources more efficiently through greater economies of scale from geo clustering
Provides additional choices of where to live and work	Provides more consumer choices, employment options and social diversity
Generates new jobs, new income, new tax revenue, and higher property values	Stimulates greater opportunities for the revitalization of urban areas
<p>Source: Robert Wassmer and Marlon Boarnet. "The Benefits of Growth," Urban Land Institute, 2002.</p>	

In order for a business to increase the size of its market it must continually innovate and grow. It's the same thing for regions, which must continually build their products and grow. These two actions are the pillars upon which business can succeed and residents can prosper. Without innovation and growth, business dies—and so do regions. That is why the sustainable development agenda is a pro-growth agenda.

Without attention to regional "products" such as workforce quality, wealth creation, air quality, water quantity and infrastructure the region and the prospect for business expansion deteriorate.

If leaders in the Detroit metro ignore the transit needs of workers traveling from affordable neighborhoods to their jobs, the subsequent increase in costs to workers and business slows growth. If the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex fails to find a better way to use its short supply of water, chronic water shortages catch up to both business and residents and impedes progress. If the Bay Area decides to let the disparity increase between those who can afford to live and work in the area and those who can't, the labor shortage limits business expansion.

Paying Attention to Who Benefits from Growth

Chamber participation in the regional growth agenda isn't a "growth at any cost" mantra. Rather, it recognizes that long-term growth is linked to racial and social cohesion, bringing low-income people into the economic mainstream and tapping underutilized markets such as hollowed-out city neighborhoods or left-behind suburbs. In the name of creating a path for growth that will sustain itself over the long term, it asks the question, "Who benefits from regional growth?"

A cadre of economists has proven that paying attention to the social fabric and shared prosperity of regional development is a key part of sustained growth. Prominent among them is Manuel Pastor, the thought-provoking economist from the University of Southern California. His research has shown that regions showing higher levels of poverty and social separation suffer from sluggish growth over the long term. He evaluated 341 metropolitan regions and found that for regions with poor performance on measures of poverty and social tension (including disparate ratios of city-to-suburban poverty, high concentration those at or below the poverty line, and dissimilarity among black and white residents), regional income growth was negatively impacted.

Business strategists, company CEOs and chamber leaders know intuitively why this is true. For one, assets and markets if left underdeveloped create inefficiencies and a drag on economic



Santa Ana Business Alliance Brings its Poor into the Labor Force

In the central region of Orange County, The Santa Ana Business Alliance is advancing social equity as a strategy to achieve economic prosperity. It has created a comprehensive plan that assimilates the poor in developing the regional economy to meet marketplace demands by providing: (1) English language learning to the resident, student and worker populations that create jobs and advance careers supporting business growth; (2) training that moves unskilled workers into jobs, under-skilled workers into better jobs, and skilled workers into growth industries and ongoing training for the workplaces of the future; (3) workplace-specific educational reforms of rigor and relevance to graduate fit-for-hire workers; (4) employer-assisted worker housing and first-time homebuyer models to ensure a stable workforce.

performance. Workers with skills that are underutilized create over-investment in workforce training for labor that could be deployed elsewhere. Older, inner-ring suburbs left to decay become more expensive to redevelop later.

Social tension and ignoring ways to “pick up” underutilized assets (such as overlooking skilled inner-city workers for regional job opportunities or overlooking development opportunities in close-in suburbs) can also lead to bad policy decision-making. Lack of consensus induces “one-off” investments to appease certain groups. In this case, often one side of the ledger, usually the loudest and most disgruntled community groups, gets a disproportionate share of investment to the detriment of others or a mutually-agreed upon goal for regional growth. A more inclusive asset development policy is also a way of meeting other objectives for the public good. It moves particularly distressed assets into the mainstream economy rather than creating alternative support systems that are less productive, whether those assets are large tracts of troubled neighborhoods or underemployed segments of the labor force.

Finally, social exclusion and separation undercut regional “place-making,” the process of boosting a region’s attractiveness to business and workers. In an increasingly diverse world, those regions with racial tensions, social unrest, and high crime turn off highly desirable workers as well as businesses that must be responsive to an increasingly diverse customer base.

In summary, a central tenet of the regional sustainable development agenda is that if poverty spreads, racial tension deepens, and cities and suburbs become divided, regions will not grow and develop fully. Sustainable development pays attention to what extent traditionally disparate parts of a region grow together and who benefits from that growth. Regional chambers across North America practice these principles—from Santa Ana to Cleveland to Racine. (See chart).

Policies of Separation and Cohesion

Policy Exacerbating Social Separation

Lack of retail and redevelopment in older inner-city communities



Pockets of poverty and unskilled workforce



Private transportation with poor city-suburb connections



School systems with large disparities in test scores and amenities



Public infrastructure with few localized benefits



Policy Promoting Social Cohesion

Greater Louisville Inc. targets land assembly and corridor marketing to connect poor neighborhoods to regional opportunity

Santa Ana Business Alliance implements a comprehensive immigrant and poverty alleviation initiative

Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber adopts a jobs-to-housing regional transportation fix

Racine Area Manufacturers & Chamber links city school systems to improved resources and outcomes

Greater Cleveland Partnership mobilizes minority businesses for better contracting opportunities and shared benefits to minority communities

Source: *Framework from Manuel Pastor, "Cohesion and Competitiveness: Business Leadership for Regional Growth and Social Equity," Prepared for the OECD International Conference on Sustainable Cities, 2005.*

Green Policies that Sustain Growth and Natural Resources

Regional sustainable development presents new opportunities for metros to attract high-wage companies, reduce air pollution caused by long commutes, utilize water in ways that preserve its source, and create a high quality of life—in other words, places where people want to live, work and play. In the past decade the private sector has increasingly moved toward channeling the pattern and physical character of local and regional development in ways that increase the quality and long-term potential for development.

For the chamber community, the movement is natural. For one, the greening business is a bottom-line issue for company members. Improved energy efficiency, new product markets, and strong green-collar job growth offer major opportunities for cost savings, increased revenue and a stronger, more diverse economy. Just look at the millions of dollars in savings and reduced carbon footprint that could be achieved by simply switching to a more efficient system of lighting for one region’s roads. Robert Grow, director of government relations at the Greater Washington Board of Trade, documented that more than \$6 million in savings and more than 77,000 tons of reduced CO₂ emissions each year in the area surrounding the District of Columbia



**GREATER WASHINGTON
Board of Trade**
BOT Study Documents \$6M in Savings,
77K Tons of CO₂ Emissions Reduced
in DC Metro



would be realized if the region adopted a managed streetlight system. The savings generated from using existing green technologies to do this are equivalent to removing 14,239 passenger cars from the region’s roads and eliminating 8,824,714 gallons of gasoline emissions each year.²

Or take the role of the Long Beach Area Chamber, which acted as the key advocate for new, sustainable ways to tackle the environmental impact of increased cargo shipments through the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, the two busiest container ports in the country. The chamber supported key legislation and projects to take trucks off the road, reduce congestion and the CO₂ emission impacts of traffic along regional highways, and require ships to turn off engines while idling in port.

² Robert Grow, “Energy Efficient Streetlights: Potentials for Reducing Greater Washington’s Carbon Footprint,” for the Fellowship for Regional Sustainable Development, Greater Washington Board of Trade, March 2008.

More sustainable uses of regional land and infrastructure are also a significant part of creating economic growth and durability over the long term. Simply stated, sustainable land use management refers to a mix of development approaches that satisfy the choices of firms and citizens now without compromising future generations' ability to make a profit, earn a living, or enjoy open space. Consider traditional single-use greenfield development such as tract housing or large big-box commercial strips. This type of development presents few barriers to short-term gain, but in the process of achieving a quick return it often forecloses other higher return opportunities such as higher density, mixed use development. Most often the more sustainable choice is development that creates a mix of civic places, transportation access, housing variety, office and commercial space and pedestrian-friendly retail. The results are a higher capture of the possible land value, better long-term investment returns and a stable, robust tax base.³

The attorney-turned-urban planner, Scott Polikov, creates a straightforward benchmark to define sustainable land use practice: Are the places we build today going to be places in which people will be able to work, live and play 100 years from now? From this simple principle comes a number of surefire policies that build momentum for long-term market capture and sustainable development. These include using transportation investments to move people and goods *as well as* create livable places; developing a variety of housing options; and using open space to increase adjacent land values (think housing next to parks).

Sustainable growth policies on the regional level are also an antidote to sprawl and the squandering of limited resources such as air and water. Chambers care about these things because they are bottom-line issues. Sprawling growth requires the construction of new roads

³ Sustainable development avoids the shortest life cycle of the market and instead captures the highest value of space by building density and using good urban design.



NC Chambers Choose Sustainable Growth

The sale of two major parcels of land for new facility locations in North Carolina's Piedmont Triad region have opened 6,300 acres of greenfield space to the whims of unchecked sprawl. The chambers of Greensboro, High Point and Winston-Salem have chosen to harness the momentum of the market by building governance structures for regional cooperation, planned growth, and environmental stewardship of the vast area. The result? A plan for a high-quality, high-density mixed use project in the heart of the region that will preserve open space while generating jobs that pay high wages and create an environment where families want to live and work.

and highway interchanges. It leads to the construction of new schools and utility lines and requires new emergency response systems to be equipped to reach farther and farther out. Sprawling development patterns also increase traffic, clog roads and reduce worker productivity. More cars on the road lead to increased emissions and reduced air quality, and runoff negatively impacts watersheds. Sprawl strains municipal and regional budgets. Businesses wind up paying more for water or run into dwindling resources from which to draw. The inherent inefficiencies are obvious. Instead, regions that integrate transportation and land-use planning are better able to manage growth, improve the efficiency of travel, and contain infrastructure costs.

Land Use and Growth Management Policies that Build and Sustain Market Momentum

- Policies that encourage neighborhoods not subdivisions
- Transit that makes transportation choice possible
- Urban design that makes transit viable and accessible
- Green space seen as an investment opportunity
- Housing type variety that creates “move up” possibilities
- Retail that is an outcome, not an end in and of itself
- Redevelopment that is evolutionary not revolutionary
- Regional transportation that is a place-making investment tool

Source: *Scott Polikov, “Urban America and Sustainable Development,” for the Fellowship for Regional Sustainable Development, 2007.*

Which Roles Should Regional Chambers Play?

The path to regional prosperity and sustainable development requires leadership that can transcend 90-day bottom line perspectives and political ideological partisanship. The path must be a united one that crosses jurisdictional boundaries and builds partnerships among diverse constituents. It needs actions guided by strategy. The 21st century, regionally-oriented chamber is uniquely positioned to meet these needs.

Chambers of commerce pool the collective talent, strength, and influence of business and its partners, including local elected officials, nonprofit organizations and longstanding institutions such as colleges and universities. They act on a broad scale, not on a municipal basis, and reach into a metro area's central cities, inner core suburbs and growing ex-urban corridors. The professional leadership of regional chambers is skilled at working with government, nonprofit institutions, neighborhood groups and labor, which are all part of the complex fabric of regional social capital. Chamber members grow wealth, pay a significant amount of taxes, and dedicate a large portion of volunteer and monetary contributions to the community. These attributes position the regionally-oriented chamber to be a boundary-crosser, partnership-builder, strategy-creator and executor of solutions for regional prosperity and sustainable development.

Chamber as Regional Boundary Crosser

The rigidity of political jurisdictional boundaries presents hurdles to organizing for regional prosperity. For the most part, local government controls land use decisions such as land development, regulation and use alternatives, even in regions with flexible annexation and municipal boundary agreements. Further, municipal leaders are expected to fight neighboring jurisdictions for the next big corporate headquarters or industrial facility. "Winning" this recruitment battle means more money to fund local services—and locally elected officials are expected to do no less by their citizens. These factors are inherent in the way our governing systems work and make it extremely difficult to persuade separate jurisdictions to work collaboratively or arrive at cross-jurisdictional agreements to serve the entire region.

The regional chamber is able to understand the needs of a single jurisdiction while at the same time moving adeptly across conventional municipal, county and state lines.

Further, the definition of a specific region can be influenced not only by geography but also by the issue, individuals and organizations involved. For example, in the Kitchener-Waterloo area

“Our Chamber realized that its interests and influence needed to extend beyond municipal boundaries and that being competitive today means developing networks that bridge organization and political boundaries.”

Mark N. Eagan, CCE,
president and CEO,
Chamber of
Commerce of St.
Joseph County

of Canada, the geographic boundaries of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo define the region for the purpose of branding. It is branded as Canada’s Technology Triangle, and the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce plays a key role in forging partnerships to market the region under this technology brand through its multi-stakeholder Prosperity Council. Defining the region through its municipality boundary also makes sense in the context of land use planning purposes. But when the region considers tourism development a broader regional partnership with municipalities outside the region, such as Stratford with its strong Shakespearean Theatre, is just as relevant. Likewise, if manufacturing competitiveness is the issue, synergies are found by defining the region in the context of a broader Southwestern Ontario area. In all of these efforts, the chamber has taken a lead role in convening and working among the major stakeholders across traditional boundaries.

Boundary-crossing is central to regional sustainable development because it relies on the ability of a diverse set of interests to put aside their immediate parochial needs and work toward a common goal. Regional chambers represent business organized around these common goals in partnership with the greater community.

Chamber as Regional Partnership-BUILDER

Chambers are more partnership-oriented than ever. For one, their membership typically includes a diverse set of interests from the metro region. The report *Minding Their Civic Business*⁴ shows that chambers have embraced many atypical business interests as part of their membership and leadership base. It’s no longer unusual to see on a chamber’s board of directors representatives of universities, community foundations, labor unions and nonprofit organizations. Local elected officials are showing up more, too. Of course partnership at this level makes sense when building a more

“The chamber is most effective when it serves as facilitator and partner. A successful outcome is rarely an event for which the chamber can or does take meaningful credit.”

Richard Dayoub,
president and CEO,
Greater El Paso
Chamber of
Commerce

⁴ Brian Bosworth, Stephen Michon, Malo Hutson, and Erin Flynn, “*Minding Their Civic Business: A Look at the New Ways Regional Business-Civic Organizations are Making a Difference in Metropolitan North America*,” Prepared for the Ford Foundation and Metro Leadership Network, FutureWorks, Arlington, MA, 2004.

sustainable, regional economy. Research universities spur innovation and commercialization that are essential to growth. Their smaller cousins, the liberal arts and community colleges, are critical to turning out talented and skilled workers that attract industry and make companies more efficient. Infrastructure investments for regional development, such as those necessary to move goods and services to market, depend on good working relationships with publicly elected officials and government.

But partnership-building goes far beyond adding these diverse constituents to one's board of directors or simply including them in the membership. Sometimes it means reaching out to seemingly adversarial groups, as has been done by many chambers when partnering with labor unions. Take the Chamber of Commerce of St. Joseph County in Indiana. It has made a conscious effort to forge new relationships with the building trades to jumpstart better community-oriented construction projects. Other times it subsumed its leadership position in a

"In reaching out to many new counties in the region, we will have an even stronger regional impact on policy and we may also have the opportunity to significantly increase our number of affiliate chambers, economic development organizations and overall membership numbers."

Jay Byers, senior vice president, Greater Des Moines Partnership

project important to regional prosperity because other groups or stakeholders needed to be the face of change.

In El Paso, the regional chamber did this when the region wanted to repair a botched effort to build transportation infrastructure to move and accommodate the transit needs of an influx of 70,000 new residents to the region. City leaders and transportation groups turned to the Greater El Paso Chamber to revive efforts behind the scenes. In turn, the chamber presented objective data about new transit options, "patched up" relationships with community organizations and facilitated meetings among opposing parties – all in the name of creating working relationships for the betterment of the region.

Chamber as Creator of Regional Strategy

On some level the march toward regional prosperity is subject to market forces and out of reach of regional action. Individual corporations decide the wages they will pay their workers in response to their shareholders' desires. They adjust how and when products are made and services offered.

Other ways to build prosperity are within reach of regional action and institutions. Surely we can shape and influence the regional organization of transit options, the skill sets and educational

attainment of our workforce, the way our social classes and diverse neighborhoods are knit together, or the ways we consume air, water and energy. All of these inputs create the platform on which business and regions compete. Sustainable development rests on understanding the challenges and opportunities of each of these inputs and making choices that build a regional platform that is efficient, competitive and distinctive for the long term.



Portland Business Leaders Create Plan for Regional Sustainability

Business leaders from Greater Portland, Oregon's two-state and six-county region knew that continued growth rested on a long-term vision for the region. With that in mind, the Portland Business Alliance brought together businesses to build, lead and carry out a strategy for long-term economic prosperity. One result of the effort: a commitment to sustainability and efforts to better educate the workforce, coordinate land use policy, improve transportation, and support competitive clusters.

Chambers deal explicitly with issues of regional positioning, vision and assessment so that regional choices contribute to sustainable development. For one, chambers maintain systems of good data. They are brokers of research and developers of information that can be used to assess a region's competitive position, the use of its assets, and the areas that need attention.

Chambers and their members have a direct stake in and sometimes a direct say in the multiple systems that influence region-building. These systems include transportation systems, commercial corridors, workforce development and regional quality of life initiatives. Because of their position in the region, chambers are framers of the debate and, at their best, trusted conveners that offer a vision and strategic plan to move toward regional growth and prosperity.

Chamber as Executor and Leader of Regional Solutions

Regions need leaders who can cross all sorts of boundaries and collaborate with diverse interests. They also need good strategy. But regions also need institutions that can lead and execute on tough, complex regional concerns. The 21st century, regionally-oriented chamber presents a unique voice to lead and at times wrest power from those unwilling or unable to tackle issues that threaten regional prosperity.

Just look at central Iowa’s regional chamber, the Greater Des Moines Partnership, and its role in advancing a regional tax-sharing initiative to jump start key investments in shared regional assets that had been overlooked. The Partnership’s “Yes to Destiny” campaign coupled a one-cent regional sales tax with regional decision-making to preserve open space, build arts and cultural amenities, and sow the seeds of regional cooperation.

Another example is Greater Louisville Inc., the region’s multi-county chamber, which revitalized one of the region’s core, distressed inner city neighborhoods. Chamber-led efforts in West Louisville produced a comprehensive marketing campaign for the area, initiated retail investments in its commercial corridors, and improved processes for land assembly and Brownfield cleanup for previously underutilized industrial land.



Chamber Finds Solutions to Palm Beach Housing Crunch

The northern county chamber for Palm Beach, Florida used its volunteer leadership and financial backing to streamline permitting and generate capital for the creation of new workforce housing. The region had become unaffordable for workers who were providing basic services to the region—teachers, firefighters and police officers—and the regional chamber used its political capital and muscle to make more housing available to the region’s working, low-income families.

Which Actions Should Regional Chambers Take?

As chambers grapple with how to lead and build capacity to act for regional sustainable development, everything may change from within – from developing the right kind of leadership to communicating the right message to developing the right mission, programming priorities, membership focus and funding supports.

The Right Leadership

Today, chamber CEOs and their professional staff must carry most of the load when building partnerships and executing strategy for regional sustainable development. In the past, the paid leader—the CEO of the chamber—took his or her lead from the volunteer board. He or she relied on individual company executives to implement policy, testify at hearings and define agendas. However, as the pinch on company volunteer time increased and the regional agenda became ever more complex, the locus of leadership shifted to the professionals hired to run business-civic organizations.⁵ This has resulted in higher skill requirements and greater expectations placed upon professional staff members.

One requirement is that professional staff bridge the knowledge gap between their members and key policy decision-makers. In terms of industry-specific issues, corporate leaders will always know more than the chamber professional. But turn to the increasingly sophisticated and complex policy issues inherent in regional decision making—everything from land use to energy policy to workforce development—and corporate executives just don't have enough study time. The professional chamber executive is often eminently more informed and able to communicate than the corporate CEO



Greater Baltimore Committee's CEO Guides Regional Growth Agreement

As the Baltimore metro welcomed an influx of tens of thousands of jobs at two military bases—a once-in-a-lifetime growth opportunity—it also became mired in the town-by-town battle for benefits, with no thought to the region-wide impacts on land use, transit and housing costs. Each jurisdiction was in it for itself. That is when the CEO of the region's largest chamber, the Greater Baltimore Committee, stepped in to take a jumble of separate actions and help provide leadership to build a plan that shared both the benefits and impacts of growth region-wide. The result of his leadership: historic agreements among competing jurisdictions that set out principles for rational growth and management of shared impacts.

⁵ Hanson, et al, "Corporate Citizenship and Urban Problem Solving: The Changing Civic Role of Business Leaders in American Cities," *Brookings Institution*, 2006.

when the debate shifts to fighting for policy changes that connect regional competitiveness to sustainability.

“To lead, you have to be able to explain, because leaders bring others along.”

Susan Nall Bales,
president, Frameworks
Institute

The Right Message

Another requirement is that chamber professionals become skilled at communicating to a diverse set of regional stakeholders, from the big-city mayor to the regional planner, community foundation director, university president, labor union boss and legislative staffer. Increasingly that also means communicating the chamber’s sustainability message to citizens and voters in a region.

Communicating to these audiences is not the same as trying to sell a product, and the communication techniques need to be much different.⁶

Building sustainable regions is about participating in a messy process that winnows down a broad array of perceived solutions to one that achieves a more prosperous, sustainable region over the long term. Communicating to people about these shared goals requires an understanding of peoples’ prior orientations toward civic life (the values and frames from which they filter issues) and then finding ways to avoid the traps and pitfalls that will push people away from a common frame to tackle sustainable development issues.

This means we need to place our policy within big ideas and culturally shared values, like fairness, family and opportunity. Regional sustainable development is about opportunity for business to succeed, workers to meet the needs of their families, the environment to be there for generations to come. Only after communicating regional sustainable development policies within these frames first should we move to more specific issues (economic growth, employment and income, environmental protection) and finally to specific policies that are part of the regional sustainable development agenda (incentives to develop along identified growth corridors, job training for unemployed workers, and legislation to plan for the use of water resources).

This is a different way of communicating a message. It leaves the world of traditional marketing, the short-term sell to consumers to buy a certain product, and enters the world of public policy. It requires chamber executives to become much more adept at understanding the impact of who

⁶ See Susan Nall Bales, “Framing Public Opinion: Provide the right lenses so your audience can focus,” *Chamber Executive*, Spring issue. 2008.

speaks, how a problem is explained and which values are invoked when working toward regional solutions.

The Right Mission, Priorities, Membership and Funding

The “bread and butter” activities of the regionally-oriented chamber include influencing transit and land use policy for sustainable growth, utilizing the assets of low-income neighborhoods and workers, and encouraging the careful management of water, air and energy. The chamber places these issues squarely in the context of the metro region and understands that boosting regional competitive advantage means taking a long-term approach to prosperity. That means chambers will need to continue to find tools to build stronger, durable partnerships with government and other allies that have a vested interest in, and resources to contribute to, these issues. It also means finding even better tools to engage and involve citizens in creating a shared vision for regional prosperity.

Chambers are aligning their missions to better reflect these priorities and needs. Take northern Indiana’s Chamber of Commerce of St. Joseph County and its effort to reaffirm its actions and priorities by adopting a new mission, vision and positioning statement. With a new regional development agenda adopted by its board, the chamber’s old mission, “To serve the interests of member businesses through progressive leadership, advocacy and service,” changed to this: “To be a catalyst for growth and prosperity for our members and community.” Its old vision, “To be the premier business association to influence economic, governmental and community issues for the benefit of the region’s business environment,” became this: “To be a vibrant region in a competitive world.” Its brand shifted from “The Champion of Business” to “Advancing Regional Economic Prosperity.” Each change reflected its shift from a sole purpose business membership organization to leader and catalyst for regional growth and prosperity for its membership and community.

“Whatever the methodology enacted to deal with these complicated, often territorial issues, it is the role of the regional chamber to champion the call to regional sustainable development.”

Deborah Vance,
current chief of staff,
Mayor Langford, City
of Birmingham (AL)
and former vice
president, Birmingham
Regional Chamber of
Commerce

Re-orientation of priorities and mission to the regional sustainable development agenda also broadens the base of the chamber’s membership. Most chambers have become more inclusive, inviting community foundations, universities and government officials to become members and sit on their boards of directors. Some chambers build membership by extending their geographic

reach and influence, often crossing into new counties or including an emerging or newer metropolitan area.

Building and running a strong regionally-oriented chamber requires appropriate levels of funding for staff, strategy work and advocacy. If the work, territory and complexity of the issues grow, so too must funding streams. Funds need to be generated from a variety of sources, including private sector fundraising, dedicated public taxes, contracts with local governments and foundation grants. For midsize to larger regions, annual operating budgets of several million dollars should be expected.

“It is the professional community leader, the primary paid executive of the private sector regional economic development entity, who must provide visible, consistent leadership of the processes and people focused on economic success in the region.”

Mick Fleming,
president, American
Chamber of
Commerce Executives

Conclusion

In the interconnected world in which we live, it is simply impossible to address major economic and quality of life issues in a jurisdictional vacuum. Through the American Chamber of Commerce Executives’ Regional Sustainable Development Fellowship, two cadres of professional community leaders had the opportunity to examine the issues themselves, as well as the broader regional context that affects them all. During just the 18-month duration of the fellowship, the socio-economic and political landscape has changed further, with energy, housing, environmental and human capital issues becoming more complex, interrelated and global than ever. Business-led civic organizations – chambers and similar entities – simply must succeed. They must focus on building capacity, issue knowledge, regional strategies and leadership potential to ensure prosperous sustainable futures for the communities, businesses and people they represent. The Regional Sustainable Development Fellowship will continue to develop chambers and the people who lead them.

Addendum

Regional Sustainable Development Fellows had to identify a chamber-based action, initiative or effort to develop over the course of the Fellowship. This regional action project (RAP) was designed so that Fellows could apply what they were learning to a real problem or opportunity in their region. Some Fellows chose to focus internally, to reposition or reconfigure their organization as a regional leader. Others looked at ways to gain traction on specific initiatives that would promote sustainable growth. The RAPs will serve as legacy resources on regional and sustainable development for nonprofit, public and private organizations to spur their own efforts in this field.

The following essays represent four unique perspectives on building a regional sustainable agenda written by chamber executives who graduated from the Fellowship. A complete list of the Fellows and their RAP topics are included in the Appendix.

Optimizing Regional Economic Development Impact: An Essay on the Role of the Chamber

Todd Letts
Managing Director, eSolutions Group
Former President and CEO
Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce (Ontario)

Chamber Role

Helping community and business leaders anticipate, prepare for and facilitate change are important roles for a chamber of commerce, particularly during uncertain economic times. Developing strategies that will enhance regional productivity and prosperity is a core initiative of our chamber. The following steps have helped support this initiative.

Define the Issues

Being engaged with a broad landscape of industry and business sectors, the chamber has a favorable vantage point from which to define and evaluate the relevant issues that can bring about better regional economic competitiveness and quality of life.

The definition of region itself is an important role for the chamber. The concept of concurrent regionalism, that is, many regional initiatives occurring at the same time, is not uncommon. The definition of region is dependent not only upon geography but the issue, individuals and organizations involved. For example, in our area the geographic boundaries of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo define our region for branding. It is branded as Canada's Technology Triangle (CTT). This definition makes sense for land use planning purposes as well. When we are considering the issues of tourism, though, a broader regional partnership with municipalities outside the region such as Stratford with its strong Shakespearean Theatre may be a more relevant region boundary. Likewise, if manufacturing competitiveness is the issue, synergies by defining the region in a broader Southwestern Ontario context may be found.

The Waterloo region is fortunate to have a regional municipality, originally established in 1974, in which transportation, planning, housing, social services, public health and community services are part of its mandate. From an economic development perspective, CTT Inc., our regional economic development agency, has been in place for 20 years and has a strong record of

business attraction success. Our chamber has been a strong regional voice for decades. In recent history, it demonstrated its regional leadership by facilitating two successful chamber mergers. The first, in 1992, brought the Kitchener and Waterloo chambers together. The second, in 2001, saw the Kitchener Waterloo Chamber joined with the Elmira-Woolwich Chamber of Commerce.

In 2002, our chamber began a significant regional economic initiative with the establishment of what can be described as a business-led civic initiative—The Prosperity Council of Waterloo Region. It began with the chamber meeting with leaders in the technology community. Together, other business leaders were brought in to discussions that helped define the issues of greatest importance to our geographic region from a private sector business perspective. The issues included ensuring our region had adequate land to recruit new businesses. It also put emphasis on the recruitment of talent and the need to not only brand our region as an attractive place to locate but to ensure our health, post-secondary and cultural communities were on sustainable footing and prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.

Convene the Team

Regional economic development issues cannot be defined in isolation. In addition to finding or conducting the research needed to define the issues, a role that is often underestimated is the ability to convene. For the Prosperity Council, the chamber took a lead role in convening the major stakeholders. It started small, with the chairs and CEOs of the chamber and the local technology association, Communitech, talking about the importance of better engaging our larger employers in shaping our regional economic future. In 2003, our chamber joined with a neighboring chamber (Cambridge), the local technology association (Communitech) and the regional economic development agency (CTT Inc.) to convene a group of 75 CEOs at the first Prosperity Forum. The forum was co-chaired by two very influential business leaders. At the forum, all business leaders were challenged to identify the key strategic directions needed to make our region the best it could be within the next 10 years.

Articulate the Vision, Inspire and Empower

Through subsequent task force meetings, the Prosperity Council, led by the CEO of the chamber, facilitated a process to help business leaders articulate a vision for 2013 and identify five key strategies to address the relevant issues. A larger team of business and community volunteers were recruited in 2004. They were empowered to create specific actions that would implement the strategies identified.

Inspiring and empowering others is an important role for the chamber. Starting small and gradually bringing more people together that had skills to implement the strategy was an effective approach in successfully implementing our strategies. Finding opportunities for individual volunteers to feel good about their contribution to this larger economic development initiative was important. Our 2004 Prosperity Forum doubled attendance and received tremendous media support, adding to the Prosperity Council's growing influence in the region.

Communicate and Build Momentum

Another important chamber role is to find and trumpet early wins so that volunteers are encouraged to look for collaboration opportunities to optimize regional impact. Convening forums, creating a website, writing articles in local newspapers and business magazines, and creating electronic newsletters such as *Prosperous Times*, a quarterly update to business leaders—these are all important vehicles for maintaining momentum. In the beginning, the forums themselves were important wins. Local media called them historic. Hosting prominent provincial politicians at luncheon events added to the momentum.

As months progressed, successful collaborations occurred with regional planners and local economic development staff to establish an up-to-date employment land inventory. As a result Regional Council approved our recommendations to service 300 net new hectares of employment land. A virtual Entrepreneur Hall of Fame was established. Recommendations to the provincial government for investment in post-secondary and regional health care were adopted. Provincial investment was received for a number of industry cluster studies. The Prosperity Council welcomed new investment in the local arts scene from the Business Council on the Arts. Physician recruitment efforts have been enhanced. The Prosperity Council partners collaborated to provide seed money for the establishment of an immigrant employment network. The profile of the region has been significantly raised in the national and international media.

Be Persistent

Success took some time. The Prosperity Council's first six months were met with a lot of skepticism. Local government leaders did not know what to make of the initiative. Some prominent officials ignored it. Some mistakenly attributed hidden agendas to the chamber and its partners for championing the initiative.

The misperception that the Prosperity Council was a stealth municipal amalgamation strategy hampered early efforts. In our communities, any new regional initiative brings its share of naysayers. It was important to persevere through their early darts and arrows. By drawing on available economic research and articulating our agenda clearly in a January 2004 discussion paper entitled, “Moving our Economy from Good to Great,” the Prosperity Council was able to win over a lot of the early skeptics.

As outlined earlier, the chamber’s ability to convene is an important regional economic development tool. The chamber’s ability to bring not only corporate but community players to the table sent a powerful message. The power of 150 community leaders in one room speaks volumes about the credibility of the initiative.

Create New Habits, Structures

Ensuring sustainable regional development requires new collaborations, habits, structures and systems. The Prosperity Council of Waterloo Region has worked well for the past five years in strengthening an even more effective collaborative culture in our region.

Maintaining the initiatives that have been established as well as expectations for the future is proving challenging given that the Prosperity Council has no dedicated funding or staff. As it turns its attention toward a new arts development initiative, some partners have identified the need for additional funding and staffing. There is no consensus among Prosperity Council partners on the amount of funding and staffing required.

Support Concurrent and Evolving Regional Initiatives

The chamber will maintain its support for the Prosperity Council, although the chair role will likely transfer to another partner early this year. Sharing leadership is an important principle and it may be more appropriate for another partner to chair the council going forward. That’s not to say the chamber won’t look for new vehicles to lead and further promote regionalism and sustainable development. As the region continues to grow and evolve, so too must the institutions and structures for meaningful economic development. Concurrent with its continued support of the Prosperity Council, the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce will more actively explore stronger collaborations with Communitech, the regional technology association, to pursue new regional economic development initiatives with appropriate funding and human resource support.

Understand the Perspective of Time

In summary, regional sustainable development is a collaborative long-term initiative that continually evolves. A proper perspective of time is important in the success of any regional effort. Regionalism and sustainable development are best described as a marathon rather than a sprint. Keeping that perspective is important because certain parts of the journey will be faster than others, and some partners will want to work at a faster or slower pace. The chamber's role in helping volunteers to persevere is very important.

Equally so, it is important to recognize that many individuals and organizations are running in the same race to bring a better regional quality of life. Everyone has a contribution to make. Some will set the pace. Others will hold back until certain opportunities arise. Elite marathoners know that by working together, by collaborating at certain stages of the race, better performance can be achieved.

The chamber has many important roles to play in the regionalism marathon. It starts with defining the issues and convening the people that can bring solutions. It involves articulating a new vision, inspiring and empowering people to work together on strategies to tackle the most important issues. It requires lots of legwork to persevere. Communication is key. Trumpeting wins and helping volunteers to keep the faith are all important roles to keep momentum for change.

Finally, the chamber must always look ahead. It must recognize and communicate to its various constituencies where collectively we are in the race. The pace of global change requires constant awareness and adaptation to internal and external economic influences. The chamber must not be afraid to adopt strategies, structures and systems to ensure that optimal regional impact and quality of life is achieved.

Small, Rural Chambers Can Lead Regionally, Too

Todd Shimkus
President and CEO
Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce

Like many smaller chambers, the word “regional” is a key part of our organization’s name, the Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce. Traditionally this word was meant to describe the geographic region served by the chamber or the area from which new memberships could be sold. To the ARCC with just over 1,000 members in a tri-county region, however, the use of this word today is synonymous with a desire on the part of area business leaders to think and act beyond the village, town, city, and county lines established more than 200 years ago in this part of Upstate New York.

But moving beyond the regional model for membership sales to a paradigm where the word has greater meaning can be a daunting task for a small, rural or suburban chamber even if it calls itself a regional chamber. The two key questions to ask are: Does the organization’s leadership—paid staff and volunteer board—see a need to act regionally and promote regional solutions? Does the organization, particularly the chief paid executive, have the experience and capacity to be a regional advocate?

If the organization is prepared to lead, there is a role for smaller rural and suburban regional chambers to play in advancing regionalism and sustainable development. More important, perhaps there is a means by which action can be taken to advance a regional agenda for sustainable growth. Specifically, the chamber should consider: organizing an “intercity visitation;” advocating for regional solutions to infrastructure needs; leading by example by partnering with other local organizations; and utilizing the power to convene to initiate a public dialogue on issues of regionalism and sustainable development.



The ARCC Intercity Visit

The ARCC partnered with the Greater Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce in Oregon to plan our intercity visitation in April/May of 2007. This 4-day event enabled our 19-member delegation of officials from three separate counties to learn how that region had planned for and benefited from the technology boom that took shape over the past 30 years after Intel located a chip fabrication facility in Hillsboro. With our tri-county region now preparing for rival AMD to build a similar facility here, we wanted to see how this other community had doubled its population while enhancing its quality of life and avoiding the sprawl that characterizes Austin, Texas, and Phoenix, Arizona, where similar industries are located.

Intercity Visits

Partner with a regional chamber in a similar community elsewhere and organize an “intercity visitation.” Use this opportunity to explore how other model communities have acted regionally on issues related to growth, resource utilization and conservation, economic development, workforce training, transportation and education. Bring a delegation of local business leaders, school officials and elected officials and ensure that the visit includes opportunities for the group to become a team committed to helping the chamber advocate for adopting the best practices learned elsewhere back at home.

Become a Vocal Advocate

Become a vocal advocate for regional solutions to key public policy challenges. For small chambers, it may be counterproductive politically or culturally within a small community to seek the consolidation of police, fire or other local governmental bodies where public employees or local voters may object to change. Instead, the chamber’s advocacy may be better focused on advocating for regional solutions to capital infrastructure projects. In the case of roads, water and sewer services, for instance, the costs are almost always more than one small community itself can afford. Simultaneously, the provision of water, sewer and road infrastructure to certain areas of one community may have spillover impacts in the bordering communities as development follows the establishment of such infrastructure. The chamber is likely to have multiple points of access to lobby for such regional solutions including at the local level as operational or planning decisions are made and at the state and federal level by suggesting that funding be tied directly to the regional benefit resulting from the completion of the project.

Set an Example

The chamber itself can set an example by acting regionally. The notion of pushing a regional agenda is that other organizations—typically governmental—will then partner, consolidate,

Regional Advocacy

The ARCC is an active member of the Tech Valley Chamber Coalition. This coalition has made substantial progress in the past 10 years developing a marketing plan that has helped to brand our region as New York’s Tech Valley. At the urging of the ARCC, the coalition is now drafting its first public policy statement in support of capital improvements at all three of the international airports within Tech Valley. The idea is that while these airports are easily accessed today by leisure and business travelers, the same may not be the case 25 years from now if our region’s technology growth continues. Since the technology industry is worldwide, we will maintain a competitive advantage over areas like Portland, Austin, Phoenix and Boston if we can secure now the funding and regional planning that is required to expand highway connections to these airports.

ARCC Town Hall Meetings

In November 2007, the ARCC partnered with our local newspaper and our local television station to organize, host and televise a regional “town meeting” on the future of the Glens Falls Civic Center. We invited the public to debate and eventually participate in a non-binding vote to select from five options to manage and operate the facility going forward. The event attracted well over 200 participants and resulted in a substantial public dialogue regarding the regional benefits of the facility. Our next forum will come on or about the anniversary of our intercity visit to Hillsboro where the “town meeting” will focus on the subject: The Nanotech Boom is Coming—Is Our Region Ready?

collaborate or share services. The chamber itself should be a model for such regional collaboration with other organizations. For example, in 2008, the ARCC and the Tri-County United Way will combine their previously separate “annual dinners” under the theme of “The Power of Two,” with revenues from the event shared by both organizations. The ARCC and the Glens Falls YMCA are now partnering to create a “Healthy Workplace Initiative” in an effort to regionally respond both to our desire to create a healthier community but also to enable local companies to learn from others to reduce health care costs in the long run.

Whether the chamber collaborates with other local chambers, economic development organizations or local or regional nonprofit organizations, the chamber can set an example for others by partnering with others to host events or to raise money or to cooperate and share the risks associated with resolving a key community challenge. Another way to consider identifying potential

partners is to evaluate how other agencies are now limited from achieving success on their key initiatives because of the lack of business community involvement. Perhaps the chamber’s connection to the community as a door opener will be the catalyst that allows another organization to succeed and resolve a community challenge of ultimate benefit to everyone.

Issue Forums

Even if the chamber doesn’t adopt a regional public policy agenda, any chamber can organize and host a forum on regional issues. These public events and the resulting media attention will often raise public awareness of regional opportunities and will at least create a regional dialogue. The mere hosting of such an event may motivate leaders from adjoining communities to attend and network on an issue of substance for the first time. The power to convene is one of the best tools chambers of all sizes may have to advance a regional agenda because just as most business deals are done among people who know and trust each other, the same is true in government. The best way to build trust is to meet and get to know each other, to understand our interests and feel comfortable exploring options to do things in a different way.

Regional Sustainable Development in a Global Economy: Defining the Chamber's Role and the Tools for Developing a Strategy

Tim Sheehy
President
Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce

“Regional Sustainable Development in a Global Economy: Defining the Chamber's Role and the Tools for Developing a Strategy.” Big words for a big title, but more than ever before major metropolitan regions across the country and across the globe are facing new competition for talent and capital investment.

Well-documented in publications from *The Economist* to Thomas Friedman's “The World is Flat,” is that the growing ease with which people, capital, and work flow across geopolitical boundaries has created new competition for economic prosperity. If chambers are to successfully drive their regions as a place that can compete in a globally innovative economy then how do they put in place a winning strategy? Even more importantly, how do they successfully execute it?

So as to not skip over the assertion that a regional chamber is uniquely positioned to drive regional sustainable development, let me start with that point. Regional chambers through a combination of features are uniquely positioned to take on this role leading regional competitiveness. First, chambers represent the must-have constituency: employers. Second, they have relationships with all of the key community partners. Finally, they are held accountable to their investors—that must-have group, employers.

Since this article is directed at chamber executives and their boards, there should not be a big need to expound on why a chamber is well-positioned for this role in regional economic development. Whether every regional chamber does a good job representing employers, works well with other key constituencies (government, workforce development, education, labor, housing, arts, for example), and is held accountable for its effectiveness by its investors is not for this author to judge. The point here is no other organization in the region has the assets or the structure to take on the role of leading regional and sustainable economic development.

For those readers who are not as easily convinced of the unique position a chamber holds in driving economic development, a recent sampling of 50 chambers across the country conducted by the American Chamber of Commerce Executives found that over \$550 million is being invested through these chambers for regional economic development. As they say, “Follow the money.”

As impressive as that investment is, and it is being made primarily by the private sector, it is a small amount compared to what is being spent by regions across the globe to beef up their ability to compete for jobs. It is this growing competition that drives us as leaders of chambers back to the opening question: How does a chamber build a strategy and effectively execute it to drive regional sustainable development?

What Drives Economic Growth in a Region?

The starting point for an effective economic development strategy is an understanding of what drives real growth in a region.

Regions all over the world are blessed with special features. These features are usually “place-based.” For example, Orlando, Florida with its warm, sunny climate or Galway, Ireland at the doorstep of an emerging European Union. Or these features can be “resource-based” like Dubai, United Arab Emirates and its oil, or Milwaukee, Wisconsin and its fresh water—the oil of the next century. But few are blessed with such a place or set of resources that their strategies for regional and sustainable development don’t matter. More so today than ever before, economic prosperity is being driven by purposeful strategy and not by geographic location. As the minister of economic development for Singapore said to me, “Our history is as a port; our future is as a port of human knowledge.”

In this context, each region is also evaluated on its place-based assets, its resource-based assets, and its people assets. The evaluators are those seeking to invest capital and engage productive talent to produce their goods and services. The needs of these companies are driven by what Deloitte Consulting describes as “global footprint optimization,” which roughly translates into “Why would I look at your region as a place to expand or as a place to move to?”

Market Seekers, Resource Seekers, and Innovation Seekers

The answer to that question depends on what the company is trying to optimize with its location or expansion decision. Deloitte puts these decisions into three categories. As you look at these categories think about how you would evaluate the strengths of your own region against these criteria. I have summarized our evaluation for Milwaukee.

Market Seekers. They are looking to target new customers and revenue sources. They are driven by GDP growth, market deregulation and trade alliances that open markets to global companies. Think China, India, the European Union, Arizona or California. (Do we meet this criterion? No. Milwaukee is not a large, fast-growing or emerging market. We are unlikely to attract or get an expansion based on this criterion, though our proximity to Chicago does help.)

Resource Seekers. They pursue low-cost resources as the primary variable to optimize in establishing and altering their global supply chain footprint. Think again of China, India, Eastern Europe, Vietnam or Western Canada. (Do we meet this criterion? No. Milwaukee is not a place to locate if you are looking for a low-cost environment, labor, material, tax structure, etc.) A classic example is the movement of the apparel industry in search of low-cost labor in its move from the southern U.S. and Mexico to China and now to Vietnam and Africa.

Innovation Seekers. They target locations that offer a depth of talent, access to universities, research institutions, and the protection of intellectual property. Think Boston, San Jose and Charlotte. (Do we meet this criterion? Yes, in a number of areas like headquarters, small engine design, manufacturing and money management.)

The criteria are helpful in assessing how a region is perceived by investors. Combined with an assessment of which companies are driving growth in the region, you can put in place a framework to guide the strategies that impact the economic prosperity of the region.

So who is driving growth in a region and why are they your best customers for economic development?

The Region's Best Economic Development Customer

The only way a region grows is through the net new investment of capital and jobs. The return to a region from this economic activity is what drives growth. Additive investment comes from companies that export a majority of their goods or services outside of the region. These export drivers that currently exist in a region or have the potential to grow in or be recruited to the region should be the focus for regional sustainable development. Here's why.

The Fountain of Regional Growth

Think of the region's economy as a fountain of economic activity. The question we all face is how to keep that pool vibrant and fresh and ensure that the job opportunities are deep and broad. The only additive source of water pumped into the fountain comes from those exporting out of the region. This vital source provides the opportunity to supply jobs and investment to meet the needs of the exporter from within the regional pool. This pool of economic activity determines the width and strength of the fountain's base of support jobs.

Export Pool

Export drivers are the most important source for the region's economic fountain. These "job importers" are the source of activity in a regional economy producing the net flow of capital investment and jobs. The dollars and wages generated from a product manufactured or a service provided to a customer outside the region brings the ability for that "imported capital and wage" to be spent directly with a supplier or indirectly with the local diner, furniture store or plumber, and again spent somewhere else in the region. The cascade of economic activity from the export drivers at the source of this fountain creates economic activity in the region but unless new dollars are brought into the region the volume in the fountain never grows, it only re-circulates and ultimately stagnates.

In Milwaukee, for example, Bucyrus International, a global supplier of mining equipment, manufactures product in the region and exports to China, Canada, and India. The company has no customers in Milwaukee; all its jobs are tied to the export of that product. Those jobs go beyond the plant floor to finance, marketing, and research and development. By definition these jobs pay above the average wage in the region (in this case \$50,000 vs. \$38,000 which is the average regional income). This is a net increase to the region, providing opportunities for local suppliers and spilling into local services driven by the inter-regional expenditures. "Job

importers” like Bucyrus are at the source of our region’s economic activity, its most important asset, and a driver of regional growth.

Supplier Pool

The export drivers spill into the pool of employers defined as “export suppliers.” These companies, as the name suggests, supply services and goods directly to the export drivers. The more significant the supplier, the deeper this pool of jobs is for the region. There is certainly some mixing between these two pools as the export supplier may also be partially an exporter itself.

Following our Milwaukee example, Rexnord is a supplier of gears to Bucyrus but also an exporter of those gears outside the region to other customers. The relationship is both good for Rexnord as a supplier and a competitive advantage for the region because it is of value to the export driver Bucyrus International. The same is true of a large multi-office law firm like Foley-Lardner headquartered in Milwaukee providing its services locally and nationally.

Base of Support

The spillover from these two pools of economic activity, export drivers and export suppliers, is really what creates the breadth and depth of the remaining jobs in the region. This volume of economic activity determines the width and depth of the base of “support jobs” in the region. The base is made up of employers who are supported by the spending in the pool of economic activity and in turn support the local needs of those employees and their families.

This base of support jobs forms much of what determines the quality of life in the region and is the foundation that helps hold the imported and supplier jobs in the region. The quality of the amenities, personal services, education, culture and governance all are dependent upon the export driver, but the export driver is also dependent on the quality of this support base.

Each region has its own unique set of export employers pumping economic activity through the region. Understanding who pumps the economy is the key to developing a sustainable strategy. If you don’t have this flow mapped in your community, you have no idea if your work is helping to fill the fountain. Think of tending this fountain in a flat world where the competition for fresh sources of investment is developing at a historic pace.

Five Steps to Regional and Sustainable Development: Building a Strategic Framework

How then do you build a strategy that is actually focused on supporting your best economic development customers and growing and attracting more of them?

Step 1: Identify the Assets. An asset is defined as fundamental to or possessing a unique opportunity for the region's long-term prosperity. Assets serve to differentiate a region. The purpose here is to broadly collect and categorize those features that differentiate your region. Using the network of regional players, assemble a list and cull that list to those assets that really stand out.

Step 2: Assess the Export Drivers. Identify those companies that are responsible for importing jobs to the region by virtue of exporting their goods or services outside of the region. The task here is to build a profile of the region's most important employers. It may seem a bit counterintuitive but by narrowing the focus on those really driving growth, you can broaden the ability of the entire community to prosper.

Using a location quotient to identify industries that are overrepresented in your region is a good place to start. This tool allows you to see what industries have a greater presence in your region than normal. It helps make the cut between those companies that are serving the needs of the region and those that are primarily serving customers outside the region. With some basic market research and local intuition, you can build on this research to build a profile of employers who meet the definition.

Step 3: Map Opportunity Zones. The opportunity zone comes from understanding the needs of these critical employers, assessing how your assets stack up against those needs, and then building an agenda to improve assets and address any gaps.

Using as an example our largest export driver, manufacturing, which accounts for 173,000 of our 300,000 regional export driver jobs, we did what you should when you want to know what your customers think of you: we talked to them. We designed a call program, recruited over 150 volunteers and actually went out and called on the CEOs of 270 of our leading manufacturers. The results were invaluable in both the strategic collection of responses as well as the tactical (i.e. which employer has a problem now that we can resolve).

Regions have assets and they have liabilities. Chambers are in the business of improving the assets of their product (the region) and reducing its liabilities. The usual approach is to look, listen and benchmark. How do our taxes, infrastructure, health care costs, and workforce development systems look, what are employers saying about them, and how do we compare to other regions. Nothing wrong with the process, but on what basis do you make adjustments and how do you build a pinpoint public policy agenda?

The most important set of eyes (not the exclusive set) are those of your “job importers.” How do they view your assets and liabilities?

Back to our largest economic development customer, we made a deeper dive into the manufacturing sector, identified global trends impacting our manufacturing firms, evaluated which specific types of manufacturers were here in the region, and began to assemble the critical regional issues impacting their growth. That was followed by the development of a specific manufacturing council to better detect issues and keep our strategy current and focused.

Our task now is to complete the same process with each of our major export-driven corporate sectors.

Step 4: Develop a Strategic Agenda. By mapping the region’s assets against the needs of the driver industries we could more clearly see where we needed to focus our public policy and economic development agendas. Each driver industry has its own agenda focused on the critical issues that make our region globally competitive. The agendas are developed by the customers in each of these industries in connection with those responsible for parts of our key support base (technical colleges, workforce development and transportation infrastructure).

We can also identify from this process the cross-cutting issues that affect multiply driver industries (issues like transportation, employee recruitment, and availability of water). The light bulb here is not so much a set of new issues but a new way to look at those issues and a better context for connecting those issues to the economic prosperity of the region.

The incumbent export drivers, assets and a competitive market profile help frame a strategy and vision for the region. A region’s future prosperity is grounded in its assets and guided by its vision.

As much as I would like to end here, we do have investors in our economic development strategy. And as much as they like nice vision and mission statements, they really want to know how our work connects to key metrics that measure our progress as a region.

Step 5: Measure Progress With a Dashboard of Indicators. This final step is a tough but necessary exercise based on the “If you don’t know where you’re going, how will you know when you get there?” theory. I have seen a wide range of ways in which the impacts and outcomes of economic development campaigns are measured.

Certainly there are metrics such as number of deals, leads generated, lines of print promoted, and hits on the website. There are also broader and bolder statements based on a projection of the number of jobs created and capital investment made during the campaign period.

We settled on five dashboard measures that give the region a good indication of whether it’s headed in the direction of economic prosperity. They are fundamental measures of net migration of people and per capita income.

1. Net migration to the region
2. Educational attainment
3. Per capita personal income
4. Exported goods
5. Employment growth

We have a broader and deeper set of metrics “under the hood” that connects to this dashboard. But these provide a good annual snapshot of progress and give us a tool to measure against our peers. These metrics also allow us to ask ourselves “what did we do to impact these measures?”

Endgame: A Strategy for Regional Sustainable Development

For Milwaukee, walking our driver industries through this framework gave us a great sense of our assets and our challenges from the perspective of our best customers. It allowed us to frame the issues and engage the region’s leadership in a dialogue connected to what really drives our prosperity. It showed us that if we are going to compete, it will be largely on the basis of creating a competitive environment for innovation seekers.

Does this solve our challenges? No, but it puts us on the path with a strong purpose and a good sense of where we need to end up. Furthermore it connects us to a real vision for the region.

If we want to have sustainable development, then as a region our actions must put the foundation under our vision “to be globally competitive in an innovation economy.”

Our mission is also clear: “Unite our seven counties around a strategy to grow, expand and attract world class business and talent.” Without a good sense of who drives our growth, where we compete, and a strategy grounded in the discipline of this framework, our vision and mission remain nice statements but not a passionate expression of our purpose and future.

Social Equity: An Economic Transformation in Santa Ana

Michael Metzler
President and CEO
Santa Ana Business Alliance

With neither individual businesses nor government able to form effective regional alliances that transcend 90-day bottom line perspectives or political ideological partisanship, the leadership necessary to develop sustainable social equity solutions best resides with the community or non-governmental organization (NGO) sector. And the NGO entity uniquely positioned to win the social equity battle for transaction hill and, ultimately, the war of transformation, is a 21st century chamber of commerce.

A 21st century chamber of commerce represents the collective interests of the business sector that grows private wealth, pays the majority of taxes to government, and provides the principal source of voluntary contributions to the community. When business invests its time, talent and treasure through its chamber, it empowers it to balance economic prosperity with livability that builds a sustainable community.

In the central region of Orange County, the Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce is building a sustainable community by driving a triage of initiatives designed to correct lagging social inequities and build sustainable investment in social advancement. To grow ROI and get the talent regional business constituencies need, the chamber is advancing social equity as a strategy to achieve economic prosperity. In the process the chamber is turning around what has largely been a sidebar of transactional business giving into an economically and morally powerful strategy of transformational investing.

Santa Ana is a workforce community. Yet two-thirds of its eligible workers struggle to qualify for entry-level positions in sustainable growth industries because they lack the skills, knowledge and abilities of a 21st century workplace. Of those working, half typically work under a bilingual supervisor and in a career path that has flat-lined because they have failed to learn English sufficiently to meet the hiring requirements of 75 percent of all employers in the region. At the same time, out-of-reach workforce housing prices undermines the stability and contribution that home ownership brings to the community and the economy.

The Santa Ana Chamber has created a comprehensive plan that assimilates the poor in developing the regional economy to meet marketplace demands by providing:

1. English language learning to the resident, student and worker populations that create jobs and advance careers supporting business growth
2. Training that moves unskilled workers into jobs, under-skilled workers into better jobs, and skilled workers into growth industries and ongoing training for the workplaces of the future
3. Workplace-specific educational reforms of rigor and relevance to graduate fit-for-hire workers
4. Employer-assisted worker housing and first-time homebuyer models to ensure a stable workforce.

This values-oriented and performance-based approach to social equity takes the best of business (money and efficiency), the best of the NGO world (community) and the best of politics (selling the vision) to transform the area into a regional model for growing economic prosperity and through its demonstrated leadership has earned the support of its stakeholders.

Transformation comes from understanding the immediate needs of others, building synergistic alliances and advancing a consensus on desired outcomes. To build sustainable models of social equity change, the tools of success are a command of market information, building alliances and brokering solutions, and an authorization order to execute change.

Commanding Data

All special interest groups have data on which they rely. Few have empirical data and analysis on which all may rely. Having information on which all may rely demands a laser-like peeling back of economic and social layers hiding potentially destructive inequities and unschooled talent. Such an environment exists in the immigrant population of Santa Ana and central Orange County.

Empirical data is essential to defining and converting the social challenges of immigrants into economic opportunities for business. The environmental knowledge coming to the top exposes the needs of foreign-born workers and helps define and shape economic and societal roles.

For the immigrant worker, the goal is to become a self-sustaining member of the community and a competitive contributor to increased productivity in the workplace. For the employer, the role is the daily delivery of product and service and the ongoing renewal, reinvention, and reinvestment in its business and workforce to sustain profitability. The data suggests that business renewal may be enhanced through investments in social equity as a way of increasing both worker productivity and business profitability.

The chamber maintains a permanent research and development system of information gathering as an ongoing source and understanding of workforce, education and housing needs and the role they play in the economic and social well-being of the community, one that supports its role as a broker of solutions.

Brokering Solutions

A 21st century chamber must then leverage the commanding data and create programs that broker community solutions that create economic prosperity for its region.

For example, the Santa Ana Chamber is using its market data of specific skills, knowledge, and abilities in growth industries in launching a new knowledge-based learning and training paradigm shift called *High School, Inc. Academies*.

High School, Inc. Academies is a career-oriented high school in the poorest and most underperforming area in the region with a goal to provide the best-prepared graduates for the world of work. It is guided by principles of education reform that introduce workplace-specific skills, knowledge and abilities into the curriculum, new teaching methodologies, rigor and relevance in problem-solving, and real-world experiences in the workplace of industry.

The school houses six industry-specific academies of learning to serve a future student body of 2,600, one-third of which are English learners and from homes where a language other than English is spoken, mirroring a larger regional challenge.

To break the language barrier the chamber introduced its own initiative—*English Works*—to the classroom, home and workplace with a “Marshall Plan” strategy to bring 50,000 residents to English proficiency by 2012. To reach those unable to attend free classes outside the home due to multiple jobs and family obligations, the chamber brought to market an interactive language learning kit for individual home use.

Further leveraging its empirical data, the chamber is addressing the issues of housing density and ownership. *Home Delivery* involves government, businesses and residents in a focused address of first-time homebuyer challenges, employer-assisted housing opportunities, and a community-wide housing plan. The chamber brings to the table businesses struggling to attract and hold talent in a housing market priced beyond worker wages, long-to-longer commutes, and health-related absenteeism. These are economic and social inequities too often ignored by those with the authority but not the courage to act.

Executing Authority

When it comes to implementation, data and solutions remain on the threshold without an authorization order and the courage to act. With High School, Inc. Academies, English Works and Home Delivery, the chamber took steps to ensure execution.

As part of its negotiated agreement with the Santa Ana Unified School District, the chamber retains a majority of directors on a newly formed High School, Inc. Academies board to insure control of the policies and practices employed at the new school. This unique authorization order is an example of business wresting away the power of execution from those unwilling or unable to execute and the willingness of a government agency to empower a NGO with a proven track record of leadership and execution. The chamber is recognized by the International Center for Leadership in Education for its unique and innovative governing structure.

With English Works, the local community college district has empowered the chamber with time and money to manage this aggressive language enhancement program to the marketplace. In the process, the chamber has increased awareness and activity in the community and classroom and made available for home use over 2,000 individual language learning kits in pursuit of its 2012 goal of 50,000 residents to English proficiency.

The Home Delivery program launched under contract with First American Corporation empowered the chamber to research nationally best practices in first-time homebuyer and employer-assisted housing programs and to assess 22 cities in the five-county region of southern California for workforce housing opportunities.

Under a complex and uncertain housing environment, the City of Santa Ana has turned to the chamber to provide business leadership in the process of the city completing its state mandated housing element.

Where legal authority cannot be negotiated and granted, there are economically, socially, and politically compelling alternatives. There is power of the purse and persuasion, which will frequently trump legal authority.

In all of these programs, the chamber and its business investors have led the way in commanding data, brokering solutions and executing authority in the pursuit of social equity and the economic prosperity that builds a sustainable community.

Appendix I: Regional Sustainable Development Fellows

The participants and the regional action plans they created throughout the course of the Fellowship are listed below.

Laurie Actman

Chief Policy Development Officer, Select Greater Philadelphia (PA)

Cultivating Technology Transfer to Accelerate Regional Economic Development

Gayle N. Anderson

President & CEO, Greater Winston-Salem (NC) Chamber of Commerce

Creating a Governance Structure for a Multi-Jurisdictional Region

Carol L. Barkow

Director of Community Partnerships, Racine (WI) Area Manufacturers and Commerce

Building a Skilled Workforce

Cecil Bradley

Vice President, Policy, Toronto (ONT) Board of Trade

Greater Toronto Transportation System

Jay Byers

Vice President for Government Relations & Public Policy, Greater Des Moines (IA) Partnership

Creating a Strategic Regional Comprehensive Plan for Central Iowa

James “Jay” Chesshir, Jr., CCE, IOM

President & CEO, Little Rock (AR) Regional Chamber of Commerce

Public Safety

Richard Dayoub

President & CEO, Greater El Paso (TX) Chamber of Commerce

Prioritizing Transportation Projects

Bryan S. Derreberry, IOM

President & CEO, Wichita (KS) Metro Chamber of Commerce

Strengthening the Wichita Metro’s Talent Pipeline

Devon L. Dodson

Chief of Staff, Maryland Dept. of Business and Economic Development

Formerly: Vice President, Greater Baltimore (MD) Committee

Base Realignment and Closure

Mark N. Eagan, CCE
President & CEO, Chamber of Commerce of St. Joseph County (IN)
Building Organizational and Community Capacity for Sustainable Prosperity

Marsha Gordon, Ph.D.
President & CEO, Business Council of Westchester (NY)
Wired – Talent for Growth

Randy Gordon
President & CEO, Long Beach (CA) Area Chamber of Commerce
Regional Chamber Advocacy

David W. Graybill, CCE, CEcD
President & CEO, Tacoma-Pierce County (WA) Chamber
Becoming a Sub-Regional Leader and Partner

Robert T. Grow
Director of Government Relations, Greater Washington (DC) Board of Trade
Energy Efficient Streetlights

Sandra Gunner
President & CEO, New Orleans (LA) Chamber of Commerce
Inner-City Rail Project

Sally Haas, IOM
President, Pittsburgh (PA) Airport Area Chamber of Commerce
The Living Building (in collaboration with Heinz Fellows)

Marion Haynes
*Government Relations Director and Associate General Counsel,
Portland (OR) Business Alliance*
Regional Business Plan

DeVone Holt
President, The Urban Insight Agency
Formerly: Director, West Louisville Economic Development, Greater Louisville Inc. (KY)
Maximizing Underutilized Assets: An Inner City Revitalization Strategy

Lyssa Jenkins, Ph.D.
*Chief Economist; Vice President of Business Information & Research, Greater Dallas (TX)
Chamber*
Database with Location and Skills of the Residential Laborforce

Kathryn Zuberbuhler Klaber

Executive Vice President, Competitiveness, Allegheny Conference on Community Development

Executive Director, Pennsylvania Economy League of Southwestern Pennsylvania, LLC
The Living Building (in collaboration with Heinz Fellows)

Jeff M. Kotula

Executive Director, Washington County (PA) Chamber of Commerce

The Living Building (in collaboration with Heinz Fellows)

James Lazarus

Senior Vice President, Public Policy, San Francisco (CA) Chamber of Commerce

Bay Area Business Coalition

Todd Letts

Managing Director, eSolutions Group

Formerly President, Greater Kitchener Waterloo (ONT) Chamber of Commerce

Optimizing Regional Impact

Shana F. Marbury, Esq.

General Counsel & Manager, Inclusion Initiatives, Greater Cleveland (OH) Partnership

Minority Business Accelerator

David McKeehan, CCE

President, North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce

Initiative to Market Region and Foster Economic Development Collaboration

Michael Metzler

President & CEO, Santa Ana (CA) Chamber of Commerce

Developing a Growing Economic Prosperity Strategy by Incorporating Social Equity

Linda D. Nitch

Executive Director, Lawrence County (PA) Economic Development Corporation

The Living Building (in collaboration with Heinz Fellows)

Dewitt Peart

Executive Vice President, Economic Development, Allegheny Conference on Community Development

The Living Building (in collaboration with Heinz Fellows)

Vilma Quintana

Vice President of Community Partnerships, Orlando (FL) Regional Chamber of Commerce

Competitive Positioning of Central Florida

Melissa Rivers

Director of Regionalism, Memphis (TN) Regional Chamber
Sector-Based Career Pathway Development

Laura St. Pierre Smith

Vice President, Business Development, Buffalo Niagara (NY) Partnership
Implementing the Principles and Policies of the Framework for Regional Growth

Tim Sheehy, IOM

President, Metropolitan Milwaukee (WI) Association of Commerce
Milwaukee 7 – Globally Competitive in an Innovation Economy

Todd L. Shimkus, CCE

President & CEO, Adirondack (NY) Regional Chamber of Commerce
Advocate Regional Collaboration and Build Capacity for Change

Margaret Singleton

Vice President, Economic and Workforce Development, DC Chamber of Commerce and the DC Chamber of Commerce Foundation
Building Community Prosperity in the Washington Metropolitan Area

Kathleen “Casey” Steinbacher, CCE

President and CEO, Durham (NC) Chamber of Commerce
Formerly: President and CEO, North Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce
Workforce Housing

Deborah Vance, IOM

Chief of Staff, Mayor’s Office, City of Birmingham (AL)
Formerly: Vice President of Community Development, Birmingham (AL) Regional Chamber of Commerce
Creating a New Governance Structure to Influence Regional Collaboration

Doris Carson Williams

President & CEO, African American Chamber of Commerce of Western Pennsylvania
The Living Building (in collaboration with Heinz Fellows)

Appendix II: Regional Strategies Monographs

The Alliance for Regional Stewardship publishes a monograph series on topics of interest to regional stewards.

Regional Stewardship: A Commitment to Place. Monograph #1 (October 2000)

Empowering Regions: Strategies and Tools for Community Decision Making. A user's guide to tools for community decision making. Monograph #2 (April 2001)

The Downtowns of the Future: Opportunities for Regional Stewards. Monograph #3 (August 2001)

The Triumph of the Regional Commons: Governing 21st Century Regional Communities. Monograph #4 (October 2001)

The Practice of Regional Stewardship: Developing Leaders for Regional Action. Monograph #5 (March 2002)

Metropolitan Regional Grantmaking. Monograph #6 (October 2003)

Inclusive Stewardship: Emerging Collaborations Between Neighborhoods and Regions. Monograph #7 (November 2003)

Toward a Vision of the Livable Community.. Monograph #8 (October 2004)

Regional Business Civic Organizations: Creating New Agendas for Metropolitan Competitiveness. Monograph #9 (October 2004)

Regional Indicators: Telling Stories, Measuring Trends, Inspiring Action. Monograph #10 (November 2005)

Regional Stewardship and Collaborative Governance. Monograph #11 (March 2006)

