WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT
BOARD MEETING DATE: January 13, 2015

DATE: January 7, 2015

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Maureen McKissick, Strategic Development Administrator, City of Reno, Manager's Office, (775) 334-2253, mckissickm@reno.gov

THROUGH: Joey Orduna Hastings, Assistant County Manager
(775) 328-2016, jhastings@washoecounty.us

SUBJECT: Presentation, discussion and possible approval of the top themes that resulted from the Smarter Region community engagement process to determine a new regional economic development brand vision--Manager. (All Commission Districts.)

SUMMARY

The Smarter Region project is the outgrowth of Reno's 2013 IBM Smarter Cities Challenge grant award. Key members of the project have been working to determine a new regional economic development brand vision (Recommendation #4 of the IBM Final Report). On November 10, 2014, a summary of the community engagement process was released to the elected officials for the Cities of Reno and Sparks, Washoe County, the Washoe County School Board, and the members of the Nevada System of Higher Education who represent Districts 10 and 11. Staff is seeking Council approval of the top themes that resulted from the community engagement process.

County Priority/Goal supported by this item: safe, secure and healthy communities.

PREVIOUS ACTION

On May 15, 2013, the Reno City Council accepted the IBM Smarter Cities Final Report and provided direction to staff to undertake regional outreach to broaden the project to additional agencies.

On April 24, 2014, the Reno City Council approved the process of gathering community input to develop a new regional economic development brand vision.

AGENDA ITEM # 9

BACKGROUND

The IBMers recommended that the City of Reno, the original IBM grantee, consider "university town" as a meaningful economic identity. However, when the Smarter *Cities* project expanded into Smarter *Region*, it became necessary to re-visit the issue of identity and obtain regional buy-in regarding a shared vision among all 11 entities now participating in the project. Those entities are: Cities of Reno and Sparks; Washoe County; Washoe County School District; Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada; Truckee Meadows Community College; Desert Research Institute; Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority; University of Nevada, Reno; Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency, and The Chamber. The Smarter Region Management Team and Action Team have been working since December 2013 to obtain that buy-in.

The Summary of Community Focus Groups, Regional Economic Development Brand Vision, released on November 10, 2014, describes the process that was used to obtain community input from both the public and private sectors. The results of the process identified the following top themes:

1. **What exists that enables economic development and growth today?**
    1. Our geographic location
    2. Having a Tier 1 University
    3. Our quality of life
    4. Our competitive tax structure
    5. Our airport capacity, both in terms of air service and air cargo

2. **What is required to enhance economic development and growth by 2015?**
    1. A qualified, skilled workforce
    2. Continue improving highway and air service
    3. Improve downtown Reno

3. **What should the region aspire to be in order to achieve economic development success and growth by 2025?**
    1. Being known as a place to get ahead, a land of opportunity
    2. Being known as a place with a great quality of life, with diverse recreational opportunities
    3. Being known as a state-of-the-art center for technology, but technology "our way," not mimicking another region's excellence
    4. Being known as a community for the forward-thinking, creative class
    5. Having a high quality, educated workforce aligned to the region's industrial sectors
    6. Having a great university integrated with the community, especially the business community

Overall, the inputs showed the strongest alignment around the themes of quality of life, land of opportunity, technology and innovation, advanced manufacturing, and the educational systems that support those sectors. The participants expressed a desire to have a future identity built on Nevada's individuality and independent spirit which incorporated our developing expertise in entrepreneurialism and high-tech fields.

The next step of the process will be to synthesize these themes into a draft economic development brand vision statement that can be brought forward at a later date to the elected bodies for approval.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commission discuss and approval of the top themes that resulted from the Smarter Region community engagement process to determine a new regional economic development brand vision.

POSSIBLE MOTION

If the Board of County Commissioners agrees with the staff's recommendation, move to approve of the top themes that resulted from the Smarter Region community engagement process to determine a new regional economic development brand vision--Manager. (All Commission Districts.)

building a

Smarter Region

January 2015

IBM Recommendation #4: Brand the Vision, not the Slogan"

"Build a common regional macro-brand for the outside world while maintaining individuality in micro-brands for each jurisdiction/agency"

Common brand elements IBM identified in 2013

- Strategic location
- Business friendly
- Quality of life
- Lake Tahoe/outdoor sports

Smarter Region Summit, April 24, 2014: Approved process to undertake community information gathering to develop a new regional economic development brand vision. Specific direction to:

1. *Focus on community members/organizations with specific knowledge of economic development*
2. *Meet with members of elected bodies: Reno, Sparks, Washoe County, Washoe County School Board, and NSHE Regents for Districts 10 & 11*
3. *Meet with members of "Gen Y"*

Additional groups the team engaged:

1. Candidates running for local elected office in 2014
2. Presidents/CEO's of major employers which had expanded or relocated to our region in the previous 24 months
3. Presidents/CEO's of entrepreneurial businesses ("start-ups") which had launched in the previous 24 months

Summary of all participants:

Board of NAIOP
Board of WIN
Key staff of GOED
Participants in Rainforest Session
Board of EDAWN + major investors
Elected officials (R, S, WC, WCSD, NSHE)
Candidates for local office in 2014
Presidents/CEO's of major employers
Presidents/CEO's of entrepreneurial businesses

Timeline: December 2012 September 2014

Process: Small group facilitation

Method: Survey with 3 compound questions

Participants: 195 (83% private/17% public)

Product: "Summary of Community Focus Groups, Regional Economic Development Brand Vision" October 1, 2014

Economic Development Survey

1. What exists that enables economic development and growth today?
   a. Hard & Soft infrastructure/assets, e.g. fiber, transportation, regulation, FTZ, university
   b. Features/attributes, e.g. open space, affordability, culture, workforce, social events
   c Perceptions, both external and internal
2. What is required to enhance economic development and growth by 2015?
   a. Hard & Soft infrastructure/assets, e g. fiber, transportation, regulation, FTZ, university
   b. Features/attributes, e.g. open space, affordability, culture, workforce, social events
   c Perceptions, both external and internal
3. What should the region aspire to be in order to achieve economic development success and growth by 2025?

Results

1. What exists that enables economic development and growth today?

- Our geographic location
- Having a Tier 1 University SH1
- Our quality of life
- Our competitive tax structure
- Our airport capacity, both in terms of air service and cargo

Results

2. What is required to enhance economic development and growth by 2015?

- A qualified, skilled workforce
- Continue improving highway and air service
- Improve downtown Reno

Results

3. What should the region aspire to be in order to achieve economic development success and growth by 2015?

- Being known as a place to get ahead, a land of opportunity
- Being known as a place with great quality of life, with diverse recreational opportunities
- Being known as a state-of-the-art center for technology but technology that's unique, not mimicking another region's excellence

Results, continued

3. What should the region aspire to be in order to achieve economic development success and growth by 2015?

- Being known as a community for the forward-thinking, creative class
- Having a high quality, educated workforce aligned to the region's industrial sectors
- Having a great university integrated with the community, especially the business community

Next Steps

Presentations to local elected officials

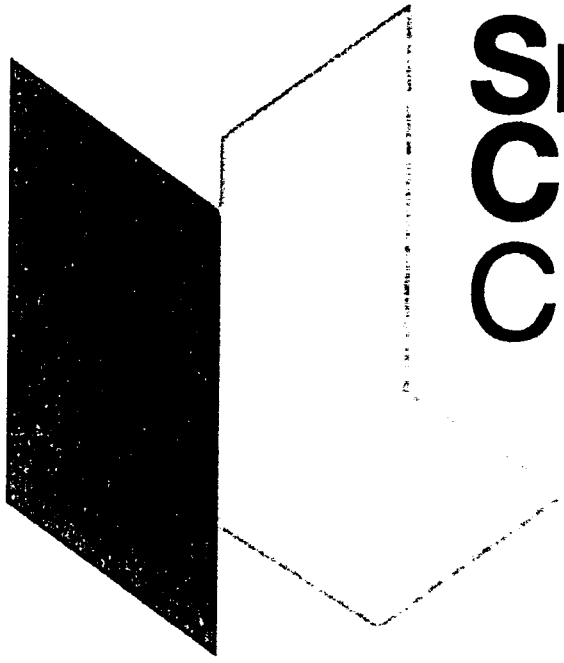
- January 13: Washoe County and Washoe County School District
- January 14: Reno
- January 26: Sparks
- NSHE Regents for Districts 10 & 11

Formation of short-term subcommittee to finalize vision statement

Summary
of
Community Focus Groups
Regional Economic Development Brand Vision

RECOMMENDATION #4

SMARTER REGION



Smarter
Cities
Challenge

October 1, 2014

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

On September 15, 2012, the City of Reno submitted an application to IBM for a 2013 Smarter Cities Challenge award. The IBM Smarter Cities Challenge program contributed the skills and expertise of IBM's top business talent to address critical challenges faced by cities around the world. From 2010-2013, 100 cities globally were selected to receive grants valued at over $50 million in total.

The challenge posed by the City of Reno focused on improving our economy:

> *"Reno desperately needs new industry and a skilled labor force, but efforts to revitalize its economy have been thwarted by the lingering outfalls of the Great Recession and a negative public image. The city and its numerous partners are joining forces to change that perception but we are challenged by access to key cross-sector information. Through a Smarter Cities Challenge grant, the City of Reno requests IBM's expertise in developing a roadmap for a shared System of Systems "analytic utility" of public data that can be used by all sectors as the common basis for sound decision-making and policy to guide and implement economic development goals."*

In November 2012, the City of Reno was selected as a Smarter Cities Challenge recipient. The IBM team arrived on February 11, 2013. Over the course of their three-week engagement, they interviewed 114 individuals from 54 regional agencies representing public, private and educational sectors. After analyzing our existing economic development assets and researching best practices, the "IBMers" developed a roadmap of five recommendations for how our region could achieve its economic development goals.

1. **Change the Mindset.** Develop an integrated regional economic development strategy.
2. **Be One Strong Voice.** Present one regional economic development face to the outside world.
3. **Harness Your Data.** Build a regional "System of Systems" analytics utility to support economic development.
4. **Brand the Vision, Not the Slogan** for the cities and the region as a whole.
5. **Invest in Your People.** Focus on education and workforce development to build a foundation for future growth.

Since receiving IBM's Final Report on April 30, 2013, the project has grown from being Reno-centric to regional; eleven entities are now part of *Smarter Region*. Progress is underway: a working group has been formed to implement the recommendations; a new governance model has been created and approved; and the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada has been ratified as the region's One Strong Voice.

The project now needs direction regarding the implementation of Recommendation #4, the creation of a new regional economic development brand vision. This report summarizes the results of an extensive ten-month community engagement effort that policy makers can use to formulate the new regional development economic brand vision. Approximately 200 participants who work in various economic development fields provided their assessments of our region's existing economic assets and areas that need improvement, and brainstormed ideas on an economic vision we could aspire to by 2025.

Introduction

At the conclusion of the 2013 IBM Smarter Cities Challenge engagement, the IBM Team[1] rolled out a "roadmap" with five specific recommendations for how our region could improve its economic development outcomes. Their fourth recommendation was "Brand the Vision, not the Slogan. Present a single strong identity for the cities and the region as a whole."

On March 1, 2013, in a community presentation to elected officials, government staff, business leaders, and the media, the IBM Team pointed out that our community has had a plethora of slogans through the years, everything from "It's happening here!" to "Reno, Reno, Twice the Fun" to "Many Communities, One County" to "All seasons, a thousand reasons." Some slogans defined a jurisdiction, while others defined the entire region. Many were tourism oriented. Each entity invested time and money in developing them. Some caught on; some did not. Some were not even intentional but reflected a period in history or media. To date, however, our region has not created a shared vision that identifies the important economic features that differentiate us from our competition and positions us to attract industries and jobs.

To quote from IBM's Final Report to the City of Reno[2], which compiled the Team's research into best practices, "For economic development to take hold and be successful going forward, the region needs to determine its 'brand vision' and then message and galvanize around it. The brand should reflect the values and attributes required to intellectually and emotionally connect the region. The brand becomes, in essence, a report card on whether IBM's first recommendation – to change the mindset – has taken hold and become assimilated into the region's fabric. Once established, the brand vision should be implemented by each jurisdiction and/or agency which can develop and maintain its own individual micro-brand.

A strong brand has several characteristics:

- **Laser focus**: It is not all things to all people; it focuses on what it does best.
- **Industry leader**: It ranks number one in a brand category compared to competitors.
- **Compelling/consistent look and feel**: It has a polished, professional look and feel that is consistent across all communications and makes its products instantly recognizable.
- **Understanding of needs**: The organization understands its own value and knows how to emphasize it.
- **True to experience**: It has loyal, passionate customers who experience minimal dissatisfaction and frustration with the organization, service, or product."

The future shared regional brand vision should accomplish specific goals. It should state a unique promise, should position against competition, and should drive transaction. A brand vision is not a slogan, a tag line, or a logo. Finally, a brand vision needs to have proofs: it needs to show that it is what it says it is.

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[1] Lori Feller, Strategy and Transformation Partner, IBM Global Business Services; Randy Kubich, Senior Engineer/Manager, IBM T.J. Watson Research Center; Dr. Alexey Ershov, Director, Business Performance Services, Growth Markets and Japan; Easwaran Venkatasubramanian, Director Global Funding, Investments and Foreign Exchange; Massimo Leoni, IBM Distinguished Engineer

[2] IBM Smarter Cities Challenge, Reno Final Report, April 30, 2013

A brand vision should reflect what a brand can and wants to become. The brand vision needs focused actions by all parties in order to be achieved: it takes commitment and hard work. Each party to the brand vision must develop "pillars," the attributes or principles which drive the brand down into the entity's operations and behaviors. A brand vision is aspirational but not so disconnected from what could be reality that no one will accept it.

To develop an integrated regional brand, IBM recommended that the following important questions need to be addressed:

1. What is the region's current economic development brand? What is it made up of?
2. What elements strengthen the brand? What weakens it?
3. Why have historical rebranding efforts failed to yield stronger industrial diversification, capital investment, and job growth? What steps need to be taken this time to avoid failure?
4. How does the region want to position itself for economic growth and diversification?
5. What steps does the region need to take to redefine its shared economic development brand vision? When should these things happen, and in what order?
6. How will the region engage the public with this new shared economic development brand vision? Using what methods?
7. Who will be accountable for the ultimate shared regional brand vision and the next steps resulting in brand creation and management?
8. How will the shared regional brand vision continue to evolve over time? What governance, including roles and responsibilities, are needed to sustain the regional effort to yield desired results?

The IBM Team suggested that some common brand elements that our region could consider included:

- Strategic location
- Business friendly
- Quality of life
- Lake Tahoe
- Outdoor sports

Implementation, Phase I

The IBM Team recommended that the City of Reno, the original IBM Smarter Cities Challenge grantee, consider "university town" as a meaningful economic identity. However, when the Smarter *Cities* project expanded into Smarter *Region*, it became necessary to re-visit the concept of identity and determine a shared vision among community stakeholders and the 11 entities participating in the project[3]. For most of the 20th century our region was known for gaming and divorce. Now, with those days behind us and a new economy – with new opportunities – emerging, what should our future identity be? What should we be known for in the outside world? What should we aspire to become?

In November 2013, the Smarter Region Management Team began discussing a strategy to address these issues. They designated a select four (4) person team (the "Team") to head up the creation and execution of the strategy. The Team members included, in alphabetical order:

1. Stacie Huggins, Airport Economic Development Manager for the Reno Tahoe Airport Authority
2. Tina Iftiger, Vice President of Airport Economic Development for the Reno Tahoe Airport Authority
3. Stephanie Kruse, past Chair of the Board of the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada (EDAWN) and past chair of the Smarter Region Management Team
4. Maureen McKissick, Strategic Development Administrator for the City of Reno

Originally, the Team contemplated soliciting input from the broad community. A 14-question, three-page survey was developed to guide facilitated focus groups as well as to obtain public input via a planned web portal. To ensure the survey's viability, the Team first "beta tested" it with the boards of EDAWN and The Chamber in December 2013 (approximately 55 total participants). The results were illuminating: the process didn't work as well with individuals who were not intimately involved with economic development process and strategies.

Based on the results, the Team shortened the questionnaire, sharpened the nature of the solicited input, and recommended that outreach be undertaken solely through facilitated focus groups whose members were experienced with economic development. After a thorough discussion with the Smarter Region Management Team, the approved focus groups were:

1. Members of the Board of the National Association for Industrial and Office Parks (NAIOP)
2. Members of the Board of Western Industrial Nevada (WIN)
3. The Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) key staff
4. Members of the Board and other major investors of EDAWN

The Team also incorporated many of the results of the Rainforest community visioning engagement hosted by EDAWN in March 2014. Approximately 85 members of the regional community participated in the Rainforest session, including members of the Team.

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[3] City of Reno; City of Sparks; Washoe County; Washoe County School District; Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada; The Chamber; Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority; Desert Research Institute; University of Nevada, Reno; Truckee Meadows Community College, Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency

The Smarter Region facilitated focus groups were conducted February - April 2014. In total, 152 people participated, 142 of whom (93%) were from the private sector. Each of the groups was asked the following set of questions:

1. What exists that enables economic development and growth today?
   a. Hard and soft infrastructure assets, e.g. fiber, transportation, regulation, Free Trade Zone, university
   b. Features/attributes, e.g. open space, affordability, culture, workforce, social events
   c. Perceptions, both external and internal
2. What is required to enhance economic development and growth by 2015?
   a. Hard and soft infrastructure assets, e.g. fiber, transportation, regulation, Free Trade Zone, university
   b. Features/attributes, e.g. open space, affordability, culture, workforce, social events
   c. Perceptions, both external and internal
3. What should the region aspire to be in order to achieve economic development success and growth by 2025?

The results of the process were presented on April 24, 2014 under Agenda Item 11 at the first Smarter Region Summit.

Using the inputs from the five (5) groups listed above, ten (10) regional assets that positioned us for growth rose to the top:

1. Manufacturing strength
2. FAA-designated Unmanned Autonomous Systems site
3. Tier 1 University
4. Quality of life
5. Highway and rail infrastructure
6. Competitive tax structure
7. Start-up culture
8. Telemedicine capabilities
9. Airport capacity: air service and air cargo
10. Logistics: distribution and e-commerce

With respect to improvements that would be needed to compete on the regional, national and international levels, the groups identified 11 specific areas:

1. Complete the regional fiber infrastructure
2. Continue improvements to highways and air service
3. Continue workforce development, both quality and quantity, for target sectors
4. Attract and expand high quality, tech workforce
5. Continue investments in targeted industry sectors
6. Continue support of entrepreneurial culture
7. Maintain stable tax structure
8. Sustain region's natural environment: green, open space
9. Improve downtown Reno
10. Embrace the brand we select
11. Believe in ourselves

The vision for 2025 – our aspirational goal – produced a range of inputs. Typically, this was the topic that resulted in the most engaged discussions. Participants enjoyed developing the vision for the future and every group had consensus that unique opportunities lay ahead. There were 14 common concepts that emerged:

1. Innovation center
2. State-of-the-art center for technology, but technology "our way," not a replica of another location
3. National center for Unmanned Autonomous Systems/Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
4. Logistics/e-commerce hub
5. Advanced manufacturing center/robotics
6. Place for entrepreneurs with a life
7. Space for maker-builders
8. Community for forward-thinking creative class
9. National prominence for telemedicine
10. Big Data/data analytics center
11. Place to get ahead/land of opportunity
12. Quality, educated workforce in areas we declare
13. Great university integrated with community/business
14. Great quality of life – diverse, rich in recreation

The Team received direction to expand the focus-group process to the elected officials representing the Cities of Reno (7 officials) and Sparks (5 officials), Washoe County (5 officials), the Washoe County School Board (7 officials), and members of the Board of Regents for the Nevada System of Higher Education representing Districts 10 and 11 (2 officials).

Implementation, Phase II

In response to the direction received at the Smarter Region Summit, the Team offered multiple facilitated focus-group sessions during July – September 2014 for the region's 26 publicly elected officials. Of the 26 officials, 11 (42%) participated:

- **City of Reno**: Council Members Brekhus, Delgado and Zadra
- **City of Sparks:** Council Members Lawson and Ratti
- **Washoe County:** Commissioner Berkbigler
- **Nevada System of Higher Education**: Regents Geddes and Trachok
- **Washoe County School District**: Trustees McLaury, Rosenberg, and Ruggerio

To ensure thoroughness and in a spirit of inclusiveness, the Team also engaged three (3) additional groups:

1. Candidates for local offices in the Cities of Reno and Sparks, Washoe County, and the Washoe County School District. *Please note that there are no 2014 candidates for Districts 10 and 11 for the Board of Regents of the Nevada System of Higher Education.*
   Ten (10) candidates participated. They included, in alphabetical order:
   - **Reno City Council**: Elisa Cafferata, Naomi Duerr, Paul McKenzie, Ray Pezonella
   - **Sparks City Council**: Charlene Bybee, Kristopher Dahir
   - **Washoe County Commission**: John Gavin, Terri Thomas
   - **Washoe County School District**: Veronica Frankel, Jim Shaw
2. Presidents/CEO's of entrepreneurial businesses ("start-ups") that had launched during the last two (2) years (12 participants).
3. Presidents/CEO's of corporations which had either expanded or relocated to our region during the last two (2) years (10 participants).

The facilitated focus groups in Implementation Phase II were conducted in a manner identical to the process followed in Implementation Phase I. By conforming to the same format and questions, the inputs from both phases could be aggregated and compared. In total, 43 people participated in Phase II: 21 were candidates or elected officials and 22 were in the private sector.

Summary of Findings

Overall, 195 people participated in Phases I and II. Of these, 33 (~17%) were government staff, elected officials and candidates, and 162 (~83%) were from the private sector.

In general, there were common themes across all the groups. Occasionally, there was an input that was unique to one person or one session. Each group had its own distinct dynamic; some were more robust than others. There was also variation in capabilities. The Team noted disparate levels of knowledge regarding existing conditions and current collaboration efforts, especially apropos of educational initiatives.

Every session with elected officials ended on time, while every session with a private-sector group ran long. Private-sector participants became very energized as they discussed the concepts and many continued communicating with Team members in the days after their session ended. All the private-sector participants expressed an interest in the outcome of the process and wanted to be kept updated.

The Team has organized the findings into three (3) matrices (below) showing a comparison of different groups' assessments regarding our region's 1) existing assets, 2) improvements needed to enhance economic growth, and 3) a regional economic development vision for 2025. The matrices list the elements in the order they were mentioned. The findings from Phase I are shown as an aggregate in the first column and each of the Phase II groups is shown separately in columns to the right.

1.) What exists that enables economic development and growth today?

Existing Assets	Phase I	Elected Officials	Candidates	CEO's	Entrepreneurs
1. Location	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Manufacturing strength	✓			✓	
3. FAA UAS/UAV	✓			✓	
4. Tier 1 University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Quality of life	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Highway/rail infrastructure	✓	✓			
7. Competitive tax structure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8. Start-up culture	✓	✓			
9. Telemedicine capabilities	✓				
10. Airport capacity: service and cargo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11. Logistics, distribution, e-commerce	✓	✓		✓	
12. Workforce		✓	✓		
13. K-12 education		✓	✓		
14. Accessibility of government officials		✓		✓	
15. Fiber infrastructure		✓	✓		
16. Low regulatory environment				✓	✓
17. Tech: software developers				✓	✓
18. Culture of work hard/play hard				✓	
19. Emerging districts/lifestyle					✓

The groups identified a total of 19 regional assets. There was 100% agreement on five (5) of them:

1. Our geographic location (i.e. west of Los Angeles, north of San Francisco, eastern edge of Sierra Pacific Megalopolitan Area)
2. Tier 1 University
3. Quality of life
4. Competitive tax structure
5. Airport capacity: air service and air cargo

The majority of the assets identified – eleven (11) of 19, or ~58 % – were deemed important by two (2) or three (3) groups. Interestingly, the CEO's and entrepreneurs were aligned on several of these findings. What is also noteworthy is that only public-sector participants – elected officials and candidates – thought that our current workforce and K-12 education were regional assets. The private-sector participants – the individuals in Phase I, the CEO's, and the entrepreneurs – did not voice this opinion.

The second group of questions asked participants to identify improvements that would make our region more economically competitive in the near term. This produced a wider range of inputs: 27 improvements were identified.

2.) What is required to enhance economic development and growth by 2015?

Improvements Needed	Phase I	Elected Officials	Candidates	CEO's	Entrepreneurs
1. Complete regional fiber infrastructure	✓		✓		
2. Continue improving highway and air service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Continue workforce development: align quality/quantity with industrial sectors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Continue investments in targeted industry sectors	✓				
5. Continue support of entrepreneurial culture	✓	✓			
6. Maintain stable tax structure	✓				
7. Reform state's tax structure		✓			
8. Sustain region's natural environment	✓	✓			
9. Improve downtown Reno	✓	✓	✓	✓	
10. Embrace the brand we select	✓				
11. Believe in ourselves	✓				
12. Retain educated students		✓	✓		
13. Focus on/ invest in K-12, UNR, TMCC		✓	✓		
14. Preserve/expand arts and culture		✓			
15. Foster innovation			✓		
16. Encourage business connections between education and industry			✓	✓	

Improvements Needed	Phase I	Elected Officials	Candidates	CEO's	Entrepreneurs
17. Sustain regional economic development and other efforts that have begun			✓		
18. Create gateways: Airport/Plumb, downtown to University				✓	
19. Improve image/awareness				✓	✓
20. Make gaming industry part of solution				✓	
21. Develop robust vocational/tech high school			✓	✓	
22. Improve access to venture capital					✓
23. Focus on attracting primary companies – wealth building					✓
24. Define unique identity – don't mimic another location					✓
25. Improve intergovernmental relationships			✓		
26. Create public transit systems that better align with needs of K-12 and higher education students			✓		
27. Create opportunities for adults, e.g. re-training, tapping into skills of retirees			✓		

In general, there was less alignment on this question than on the evaluation of our existing assets. The highest degree of consensus occurred around two (2) issues: workforce development and continued improvements to regional transportation infrastructure and air service:

1. All the groups identified access to a pool of qualified, skilled workers as needing improvement. Several groups, most notably the CEO's and entrepreneurs, stated that hiring and retaining an adequate number of skilled workers was the most significant business barrier they faced.
2. All the groups understood the importance of transportation in our regional economy. The subject of air service arose in the context of access to points east; many private-sector groups reported that flying to the East Coast and/or Europe entailed an extra travel day.

One finding was mentioned by four (4) groups: improve downtown Reno. This discussion focused primarily on appearance, cleanliness, safety, and the level of activity. Participants spoke favorably about sections on the periphery of downtown that had successfully been redeveloped, e.g. the Riverwalk district and the Freight House District, but desired to see additional revitalization in the urban core. The University-town concept came up repeatedly as a preferred direction.

There were eight (8) findings which were mentioned by two (2) groups:

1. Complete the regional fiber infrastructure
2. Continue support of entrepreneurial culture
3. Sustain the region's natural environment
4. Retain our educated graduates
5. Focus on/invest in K-12, TMCC, and UNR
6. Encourage business connections between education and industry

7. Improve the region's image/awareness of our assets
8. Develop a robust vocational/technical high school

Lastly, and the largest proportion – 16 of 27 or 59% – were the findings mentioned by only one (1) group. In this category, the different perspectives among some of the groups became apparent. Special interests emerged. For example, the CEO's expressed that the appearance of "gateways" into the region needed to be improved. They noted that when out-of-town business associates or prospects entered the community from the airport or I-80, their initial perception of the region was negative, especially concerning downtown Reno. Conversely, the entrepreneurial group thought that the downtown area was fine; they expressed an interest in access to more affordable commercial space, but the appearance of the gateways was not a major concern. More important to them was access to venture capital, a priority that would not be on the radar of other groups, e.g. candidates.

Finally, the groups were asked for their thoughts on the future vision for our community. What should we aspire to be in order to achieve economic success and growth by 2025? Occasionally, the Team prompted the groups' imagination by asking, "If you were to create a postcard for the future region, what images would be on it?" "What words (if any)?" We urged the participants to let their creative juices flow.

3.) What should our region aspire to be in order to achieve economic development and growth by 2025?

Vision for 2025	Phase I	Elected Officials	Candidates	CEO's	Entrepreneurs
1. Innovation center	✓	✓			✓
2. State-of-the-art center for technology, but technology "our way" – not a replica of another location	✓	✓		✓	✓
3. National center for UAS/UAV	✓				
4. Logistics, e-commerce hub	✓				
5. Advanced manufacturing center/robotics	✓				✓
6. Place for entrepreneurs with a life	✓				✓
7. Space for maker-builders	✓			✓	✓
8. Community for forward-thinking creative class	✓	✓		✓	✓
9. National prominence for telemedicine	✓				
10. Big Data/data analytics center	✓				✓
11. Place to get ahead/land of opportunity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12. Quality, educated workforce in areas we declare	✓	✓	✓	✓	
13. Great university integrated with community/business	✓		✓	✓	✓
14. Great quality of life – diverse, rich in recreation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15. "Post-college town"		✓			
16. Part of the economic mega-region		✓	✓		

Vision for 2025	Phase I	Elected Officials	Candidates	CEO's	Entrepreneurs
17. Financially stable local governments		✓			
18. Safe, urban, vibrant downtown		✓	✓		
19. Expanded arts and culture		✓			
20. Campus and downtown connected			✓		
21. Education is a core value			✓		
22. Retain small town feel			✓		✓
23. Diverse, economically healthy community		✓	✓		
24. Renewable energy, esp. geothermal, industrial leader			✓	✓	
25. Abandon use of slogans, emphasize experience of place				✓	
26. Burning Man association			✓		✓
27. Great public transportation systems			✓		

There was unanimous consensus on two (2) findings. All the groups wanted our region to be known as:

1. A place to get ahead, a land of opportunity
2. A place with a great quality of life, with a wide range of outdoor recreational opportunities

There was also significant consensus on four (4) additional findings. Four (4) of the five (5) groups thought our future identity should include:

1. Being known as a state-of-the-art center for technology, but technology "our way," not mimicking another region's excellence
2. Being known as a community for the forward-thinking, creative class
3. Having a high quality, educated workforce aligned to the region's industrial sectors
4. Having a great university integrated with the community, especially the business community

The next tier of consensus was comprised of eleven (11) findings which were consistent with the six (6) listed above. Two (2) or three (3) of the groups thought our region could be known as:

1. An innovation center
2. A center for advanced manufacturing and robotics
3. A place for entrepreneurs with a life
4. A space for maker-builders
5. A center for Big Data and data analytics
6. Part of the economic mega-region
7. Having a safe, vibrant downtown
8. A place that retained a small-town feel
9. Being a diverse, economically healthy community
10. A renewable energy leader, especially for geothermal energy
11. An association with the Burning Man Festival

In aggregate, the inputs show the strongest alignment around the themes of quality of life, land of opportunity, technology and innovation, advanced manufacturing, and the educational systems that support those sectors. The participants expressed a desire to have a future identity built on Nevada's individuality and independent spirit which incorporated our developing expertise in entrepreneurialism and high-tech fields.

Conclusion

The listings below are a compilation of the findings from the previous section which received the most broad-based support.

1. **What exists that enables economic development and growth today?**
    1. Our geographic location
    2. Having a Tier 1 University
    3. Our quality of life
    4. Our competitive tax structure
    5. Our airport capacity, both in terms of air service and air cargo

2. **What is required to enhance economic development and growth by 2015?**
    1. A qualified, skilled workforce
    2. Continue improving highway and air service
    3. Improve downtown Reno

3. **What should the region aspire to be in order to achieve economic development success and growth by 2025?**
    1. Being known as a place to get ahead, a land of opportunity
    2. Being known as a place with a great quality of life, with diverse recreational opportunities
    3. Being known as a state-of-the-art center for technology, but technology "our way," not mimicking another region's excellence
    4. Being known as a community for the forward-thinking, creative class
    5. Having a high quality, educated workforce aligned to the region's industrial sectors
    6. Having a great university integrated with the community, especially the business community

Next Steps

Staff will present this report to regional publicly-elected policy makers after the General Election on November 4, 2014. Because the Washoe County Commission and Washoe County School Board seat their new members in January 2015, staff is targeting that month to agendize the item for all the bodies. At the meetings, staff will seek direction and approval regarding the following actions:

1. Acceptance of the top themes which will be used to create the new regional economic development brand vision.
2. Establishment of a small, short-term subcommittee comprised of elected officials from Smarter Region Leadership and key staff to finalize the formulation of the new regional economic development brand vision.
3. The appointment of one (1) member and one (1) alternate from each body to serve on the short-term subcommittee.

The new regional economic development brand vision will be agendized for discussion and approval by all the members of the governing bodies at a Smarter Region Summit which will be scheduled after January 2015.

After approval, each of the 11 entities participating in the project will implement the new regional economic development brand vision through the development of individual "brand pillars." Brand pillars are the attributes or principles which drive the brand down into the entity's operations and behavior. The brand pillars are the concrete ways in which the entity brings the brand to life.

The adoption of a new regional economic development brand vision and the individual brand pillars will serve a fundamental purpose: it will allow the 11 Smarter Region entities to align their economic development strategies, outreach, and messaging. Although the 11 entities' individual brand pillars will be different, reflecting their different roles in the regional economy, alignment and coordination will ensure that we are all heading in the same direction. This is an ambitious goal. Although we have at times expressed common objectives, the Smarter Region entities have never attempted to formally align and actuate those objectives in concert.

The new economic development brand vision will serve another fundamental purpose. It will define our economic target, and in so doing, will have implications for the other IBM recommendations. If, for example, and without presumption, our regional policy makers decide that our economic vision will be framed around attracting and retaining high-tech industries and advanced manufacturing, then the educational and workforce development systems (IBM Recommendation #5) that support that future have a clear mandate: focus resources and energy on strengthening STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) proficiencies.

Finally, as we conclude this phase of work for Recommendation #4, the Team wishes to thank the hundreds of community members who participated in the visioning process and contributed their expertise and insights.