

## **Ideas from the MANUFACTURING BRAINSTORM at the AUGUST 8, 2017 CEDS MEETING**

The meeting kicked off with a presentation from the Urban Manufacturing Alliance on the state of urban manufacturing, the impacts/benefits on our economy, and how to incorporate equity principles into economic growth. The attendees were then split into three groups. The goal was to brainstorm a new or existing project/policy that will support local manufacturers and advance equity outcomes in your community, and identify potential opportunities and barriers for implementation. Participants could refer to a program they are already administering, an idea they heard in the presentation that they believe has regional applicability, or a new idea entirely.

The three substantive breakout categories were: Branding, Land Use Policy and Workforce Development. The following is a summary of the discussions from each breakout:

### **1. Branding**

- Who is here? Small/mid-sized manufacturers
- What is happening? City/Town Branding (North Andover, Haverhill) and Regional Branding (Merrimack Valley Means Business rebrand)
- Need to use branding to build social capital, community, and connections – strengthen identity externally and internally (i.e., the Mt. Washington neighborhood)
- Use story-telling as a way to empower difference stakeholders to communicate their missions
- Ideas:
  - Harness the process
  - Use “Made In” as a Regional Program (i.e., Made In the Merrimack Valley)
- Give small neighborhood organizations a “seat at the table” – this is an essential part of any marketing strategy and an essential part of building a more equitable economy.
- Focus on marketing the work being done locally, as opposed to focusing on attracting “outside” businesses.
- Bottom up economic development, not top down.

### **2. Land Use**

- Needs:
  - A supportive administration (mayor, city council) that will help with permitting, attracting, welcoming, etc.
  - Better transportation connections
  - Updated zoning laws (statewide)
  - An Ombudsman to serve as liaison for new manufacturers (this could be a shared person)
- Challenges:

## **Ideas from the MANUFACTURING BRAINSTORM at the AUGUST 8, 2017 CEDS MEETING**

- Compact/Dense areas make it challenging to balance housing and manufacturing (potentially a good place for vertical urban factory concept?)
- Current manufacturing is sequestered to industrial parks that lack connections to town centers and are not accessible, except by car (in many cases). Should/ can they be retrofitted (for example River Road in Andover)?
- 21E Issues
- NIMBYism
- Good examples of urban manufacturing (in and outside the Merrimack Valley)
  - CI Works in Amesbury
  - Greenpoint in NYC (vertical urban factory)
  - Market Live/Work environments (Portland design guidelines for the Lower East Side)
  - Windows on the first floor to showcase manufacturing
- Opportunities and Strategies to incorporate Urban Manufacturing in MV
  - River Street in Haverhill (access to Mt. Washington neighborhood workforce)
  - Focus groups w/start-ups in Boston
    - What are they looking for?
    - What do we have they don't have (or do have but we can do it better!)?
  - University connections (in the region and around Boston) – need to establish more
  - Clustering/industry ecosystems (i.e., food, textiles)
  - Education to City Councils/ZBAs
  - Identify businesses that we want to see or existing businesses in the Merrimack Valley that we would like to grow and strategize next steps: where can they go? What do they need?

### **3. Workforce Development**

- Need to modify the vernacular/terminology - manufacturing feels invisible as a career and still has dirty factory connotations to many people given history of this profession. How can we create a strategy to make it *more visible*?
  - Create job ladders?
  - What about Amp It Up?
- Demand for jobs is greater than supply that the Tech Schools are providing – more programming/curriculum. Put another way, the demand for skilled workers is greater than the supply of those employees. This shortage should create upward pressure on wages, and it demands more “ownership” among manufacturers for recruitment and training.
- React to funding that is available (i.e., EDA programs)

## **Ideas from the MANUFACTURING BRAINSTORM at the AUGUST 8, 2017 CEDS MEETING**

- What are the next jobs vs. the current needs?
- Create a role models/mentors/ambassadors program to promote manufacturing as a profession.
  - Dream It – Do It
- How can we reach youth? Need to outline the barriers (i.e., diversity). Identify social networks, engage professors
- Make recruitment episodic
- The government is throwing resources at the supply problem:
  - Through the Capital Skills Grants, Massachusetts is equipping technical high schools with up to date equipment.
  - Training funds are available from both the Feds and the State and these are being used to set up great training programs at the community colleges, tech schools, and private training suppliers – a pipeline has been built. But these grants are not sustainable.
- UTEC (example of training up our youth)
- Maker Innovation Labs are great opportunities – host a panel or presentation at one of these spaces that is promoted widely.
- Highlight differences in goals, values and visions of maker space vs. manufacturing
- How do we erase pay gaps? Need to work with employers to commit to investing in their workforce and training employees
- Increase awareness of state assistance/help
- Industry needs to recognize that when a skilled labor shortage exists, they have to train their own workers.
  - Create Apprenticeships: The Massachusetts Apprenticeship Initiative will help pay for this in the short term.
  - Raise pay levels and promote career opportunities
  - Tuition Reimbursement
  - Use state Workforce Training funds.