

Southwest Riverside SRT September Retrospective Meeting
September 24, 2024, 3-4pm via Zoom

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Key Takeaways

Engagement & Outreach

- Who we engaged - Nonprofits, intergovernmental organizations (utilities), school and community college districts.
- Most effective engagement - Virtual meetings, specifically council meet-ups, were effective, though maintaining engagement was challenging.
- What we learned - Resource sharing and cross-sector collaboration brought diverse perspectives on education, housing, and veteran services.

Lessons Learned in Developing the Regional Economic Plan (REP)

- Clear timelines and structured meetings with actionable objectives are needed. Affinity groups should be involved at key stages to add value rather than at every meeting.
- Improvement - Aligning the plan with other regional efforts and having clear, measurable objectives to keep participants engaged and accountable.

Economic Mobility & Job Creation

- Progress in wealth building - Job creation and support systems (e.g., childcare, transportation) are enabling economic mobility. Local businesses and nonprofits have built capacity to provide sustainable, family-supporting jobs.
- Future vision - The region has started creating fellowships and entrepreneurial programs to develop local capacity and move away from dependency on coastal regions.

Social & Organizational Infrastructure

- Training pipelines - Grassroots organizations are connecting people with educational and training opportunities.

- Projects to explore - Public transportation, childcare subsidies, and green economy jobs have been priorities. There is a focus on building incubators to support nonprofits and social enterprises.

Looking ahead to Phase 3 and 2035

- Clearly defining roles and responsibilities for participants to ensure accountability.
- Expanding networking and collaboration beyond funding to community-wide efforts, which would lead to future projects and better engagement from local entities.
- Increasing representation - City and county agencies, labor groups, and tribal nations need clearer roles and tangible tasks to motivate their engagement.
- Incubators & entrepreneurial support - Developing sector-specific incubators, especially in life sciences and green industries, is a key goal. Collaboration with existing local incubators will help identify gaps and focus areas.
- **Economic developers - They play a vital role by making connections, bringing in partners, and offering economic development insights to drive the plan forward.

Raw notes - Jamboard

Who did we engage?

- Nonprofit, intergovernmental organizations (utilities), school and community college districts

Who were we most successful in engaging and how?

- Community outreach was effective through council meet-ups
- Most attendees on Zoom, so switched to fully virtual which helped with consistency, but was a challenge with engagement

What did we learn from this engagement?

- Resource sharing, some people learned about programs they were previously unaware of
- Different organizations brought different perspectives on education, housing, veterans with cross-sector collaboration
- Some of the work that was happening in the region and the number of groups in the area

What aspects of the work were most successful in terms of generating the Regional Economic Plan (REP)?

- The first year, not a lot was being accomplished, unclear about what was happening, only went because it was my job to be there

- Need economic developers feedback if we are going to be successful, they would also know what triggers are required to make other things happen, and we need them in the next stage

What is an example of something that you would do differently to make the SRT more successful in generating a good economic development plan?

- Know which people are critical to which stages of work and keep people informed so they don't miss an opportunity, but contribute when needed
- Structure timeline to create structure first and then bring affinity groups in to review, tear apart, and add rather than having everyone in every meeting at every stage
- Actionable, meaningful meetings with objectives and hold each other accountable to accomplish those objectives
- Some months in the past year, we had a lot going on (spring time - plan review), and as time went on there was less clarity on the work that needed to be done. Need to show what specifically their contribution will be
- Need to align this plan with other regional plans and need to clearly articulate how other plans were taken into account in this one
- Attended 49 meetings and not much discussion on the REP, meetings were repetitive, liked the time we went through the project rubric to align with equity
- One clear objective for economic developers to keep them engaged
- Round 1 catalyst partners has organizations that did not join meetings but word on the street was that it was disorganized
- Get economic developers involved first then bring in the 13 affinity groups for comments, identify key groups in the timeline

When you think about how you personally engaged in Thrive, how and where did you feel you made an impact?

- The ability to bring funding opportunities to chamber members
- The first year, beneficial for Menifee chamber members, brought info to them, and didn't have to do it alone. There is funding to support growth
- Felt heard on feedback sessions at Thrive policy summit session to share feedback. Virtual meetings was a reviewer for applications in Tier 2
- Could have provided more feedback is there had been a way to comment on birds eye view of what needed to change with the entire process

Thinking about the next 10 years... What kind of progress have we made in terms of our economic mobility and wealth building strategies?

- Created jobs to support that influx of people from outside the Inland Empire
- People have economic mobility and can go back to school to get training, can reenter the workforce because they have childcare and transportation, able to make economic opportunities for their families
- Local businesses and nonprofits have built capacity to create jobs with family sustaining wages and do that sustainably
- Echoing green social entrepreneurs, 1-2 year local fellowship program

- Not be dependent on sister coastal regions
- ⅔ of people leaving Orange County are moving to our region, created jobs and support systems - childcare, housing to handle the influx while taking care of current residents

Thinking about the next 10 years... What kinds of collective or cooperative social and organizational infrastructure solutions did we develop?

- Training pipelines are in place, organizations and residents have access to jobs
- Grassroots are connected to educational organizations and connect people to training for jobs

Thinking about the next 10 years... What kinds of projects did we implement to help establish and grow these jobs?

- Create public transportation infrastructure that allows them access to training programs across the region
- Created child care program that subsidizes cost, increases access and ensure quality
- Local incentive programs created that promote green economy jobs
- Start incubator program for nonprofits - currently there is a lack of capacity to provide the services that are needed
- Provided financial resources to grow financial stability

Thinking about the next 2 years of funding through September 2026... What kinds of Round 2 and 3 Catalyst projects would most align with our Regional Economic Development Plan (REP)?

- Everyone's role is clearly defined for doing the work like whose job is it to own these objectives? People need to own delivery on these objectives
- Building out current structure for networking mixers, expand beyond funding to community collaboratives, connect organizations and people in the community would be more open to Thrive - this connect would lead to future pipeline of projects by being part of the build out

How can we build momentum to achieve our 10 year vision?

- Better representation from cities and county governing agencies, they approve planning and zoning for offices, industrial and higher ed and k-12 for training programs
- Affinity groups - aware of but not as engaged as we would like, especially labor and tribal nation members, need to have something for them to do and define a role that impacts them so they want to engage
- Sector/industry incubator - someone with entrepreneurial experience - a consortium to make sure everyone is informed and knows when to contribute
- Two incubators in the region - Temecula (not industry specific) and Murrieta. Elsinore (life sciences) and Menifee also want incubators - considering what they should focus on
- Should bring in local existing incubators to the table to provide feedback on what is missing

How do you envision your person or organization role in contributing to the next phase of the REP?

- As part of my job as an economic developer, make connections and bring in partners, and provide economic development perspective on the process