

**MINUTES OF THE INNOVATION DISTRICT
DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE MEETING #11**

Thursday, August 4, 2011 at 9:30 a.m.

**Holyoke Transportation Center
206 Maple Street, 4th Floor, Holyoke, Massachusetts**

Task Force Members Present:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tim Brennan, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> William Ward, Regional Employment Board |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kathy Anderson, City of Holyoke | <input type="checkbox"/> Christopher J Moskal, Springfield Office of Planning and Development |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Gilbert, James Dowd and Sons/Holyoke Chamber of Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Felix Morales, Premier Accounting |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> William Messner, Holyoke Community College | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gladys Lebron-Martinez, CareerPoint |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kip Foley, Cover Technologies, Inc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Dan D'Alma, IBEW, Local 7 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Larry Bay, Holyoke Works | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elaine Pluta, City of Holyoke |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Malone, University of Massachusetts | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eric Nakajima, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Doyle, CPA Consultant | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patrick Larkin, John Adams Innovation Institute – Massachusetts Technology Collaborative |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> James Lavelle, Holyoke Gas & Electric | <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Vedovelli, Massachusetts Office of Business Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Douglas Bowen, Peoples Bank (Holyoke) | <input type="checkbox"/> Richard Henderson, MassDevelopment |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Allan Blair, Western Mass. Economic Development Council | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> James Kurose, UMass/Dept. Computer Science |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Linda Dunlavy, Franklin Regional Council of Governments/Pioneer Valley Connect | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Helene Florio, Office of State Senator Michael Knapik |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Mullin, UMass Amherst | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natalie Blais, Office of U.S. Congressman John Olver |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dianne Fuller Doherty, Western Mass. Regional Office – Small Business Development Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Brenna E. Murphy, Office of State Representative Michael Kane |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ira Rubenzahl, Springfield Technical Community College | <input type="checkbox"/> Kevin Kennedy, Office of U.S. Congressman Richard Neal |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carlos Gonzalez, Western Mass. Latino Chamber of Commerce (Holyoke & Springfield) | <input type="checkbox"/> Donald R. Welch, Holyoke City Council |

Guests present:

Jeff Brancato, Office of the President, UMass
Ann Burke, Western Mass EDC
Indrani Kowlessar Gallagher, PVPC
Jeff Hayden, Holyoke Community College
Dan Hodge, HDR, Inc.

Robert Kispert, Massachusetts Technology Collaborative
Don Upton, Fairfield Index
Linda Vacon, Holyoke City Council
Mike Zwirko, Holyoke Medical Center

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Purpose of Today's Task Force Session by Co-Chairs

The eleventh meeting of the Innovation District Design and Development Task Force was called to order at 9:37 a.m. by Co-chair Tim Brennan who welcomed all those present. Mr. Brennan next thanked the Task Force members who had attended the Wednesday, August 3rd workshop that was run by the HDR consultant team. Mr. Brennan stated that the purpose of today's meeting is for the consultant team to review what they heard regarding the eight core strategies recommended in their draft report and to report back on the feedback they heard for the benefit of Task Force members who could not be in attendance. Mr. Brennan underscored that this meeting is the last opportunity for Task Force members to directly interact with the consultant team, and he encouraged Task Force members to ask questions and express any comments or concerns. Mr. Brennan then explained that a second important agenda item for today is for the HDR consultant team to review their project timeline to wrap up their work and produce the final report. Lastly, Mr. Brennan indicated a final item is to set the date of what's expected to be the Task Force's final meeting which is anticipated to take place in mid to late October. Mr. Brennan noted that at this final meeting, Task Force members will be asked to adopt the final report and agree on how to successfully implement the recommended action strategies. Mr. Brennan then moved to take up the next agenda item.

2. Minutes of Previous Task Force Meeting Which Was Held on April 6, 2011

Mr. Brennan called for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Task Force meeting which was held on April 6, 2011.

MOVED BY KIP FOLEY, SECONDED BY ROBERT GILBERT, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE INNOVATION DISTRICT DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 6, 2011.

Mr. Brennan asked if there were any questions, comments or corrections regarding the subject April 6th meeting minutes.

THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR CORRECTIONS, THE MINUTES OF THE INNOVATION DISTRICT DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 6, 2011 WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Mr. Brennan next called on Dan Hodge of HDR to take up the next agenda item.

3. Summary of Results From HDR Strategic Planning Workshop of August 3rd

Mr. Hodge proceeded to update Task Force members on the progress that the consultant team has made to date and indicated he'd review the schedule going forward from today's meeting. Mr. Hodge stated that by now all Task Force members should have received the draft strategy report which was the focus of yesterday's consultant workshop. Mr. Hodge explained that since the draft strategy report contains a great deal of material he would not attempt to review it in great detail. Mr. Hodge stated that he'd focus on key findings that came out of the August 3rd workshop and afterwards he'd talk about what the consultant team needs to do in order to complete the strategy plan and final report. Mr. Hodge emphasized that the draft strategy report actually encompasses four innovation eco-system foundational strategies and four industry cluster strategies which he'll review in greater detail later in today's meeting.

Mr. Hodge next displayed a PowerPoint slide of the project schedule. Mr. Hodge observed that the original project schedule had a nine-month timeline but he commented that the project will actually require 11 to 12 months. Mr. Hodge explained that the extension of the timeline is a reflection of the complexity of this project and the conscientiousness of the participants who are committed to doing a good job. Mr. Hodge then reviewed the seven tasks listed in his PowerPoint slide and noted that the first two tasks have been completed. Mr. Hodge explained that Task 3, 4 and 5 are the three strategy development tasks which is where the consultant team has most recently been focused on. Mr. Hodge noted that Task 6, encompassing Public Input, has been taking place throughout the planning process and, in many ways, meetings such as yesterday's workshop and today's Task Force meeting, are the culmination of the broad range of stakeholder and public input. Lastly, Mr. Hodge commented that under the final task, Reporting and Dissemination, the consultant team will produce all of the final report documents.

Mr. Hodge noted that in discussing the Innovation District, some people have a more precise geographic perspective while others hold a much more virtual or holistic viewpoint. Mr. Hodge then displayed a PowerPoint slide of a map which geographically depicted the targeting of land use in the Innovation District which was created in collaboration with the Holyoke Planning and Development Department in order to identify and refine land use and development opportunities located within this area. Mr. Hodge added that there is a large area on this map coded for residential areas, and at the center of this map is the City's arts and innovation district. Mr. Hodge observed that there are several areas which contain active industrial users and thus Mr. Hodge emphasized that there are areas the consultant team believes need to be preserved for industrial use. Mr. Hodge then noted that although this map has not yet been finalized, it tries to describe the various land uses found in Holyoke's lower four wards.

Mr. Hodge next noted that the HDR team's draft strategy document will be posted on Innovateholyokey.com and he explained that later in today's meeting there will be a discussion and an opportunity for additional feedback and comments. Mr. Hodge next called on Don Upton to present a summary of what key topics or themes were discussed at yesterday's strategic planning workshop. Mr. Upton stated that the goal of yesterday's five-hour workshop was to refine the recommend action strategies. Mr. Upton explained that there were 80 participants at this special workshop which included a combination of small group discussions and plenary sessions. Mr. Upton noted that workbooks with critical questions were used for the small group sessions and he added that the notes recorded in these workbooks by participants will be incorporated into the consultant team's final report. Mr. Upton praised the Task Force members who had participated in yesterday's workshop for doing their homework since this helped to make the discussions extremely productive and relevant.

Mr. Upton next reviewed the workshop's key objectives including: 1) creating an environment conducive to an honest discussion of the eight action strategies; 2) ensuring that Task Force leaders are available to provide context and background; 3) receiving recommendations on how to refine actionable strategies; 4) taking advantage of insights on how to optimize actionable strategies; 5) ensuring that the workshop reflects the thoughtful work of Innovation Task Force leaders.

Mr. Upton explained that yesterday's workshop was built around gaining feedback on the following eight actionable strategies:

- Site Ready/Policy Ready
- Entrepreneurial Eco-system
- Economic Development Delivery System
- Manufacturing Industry Cluster
- Talent and Workforce Development
- Digital Technologies/IT Industry Cluster
- Clean Energy Innovation and Development
- Urban Agriculture Industry Cluster

Mr. Upton next explained that the following questions were considered for each recommended strategy:

- Have we identified the necessary collaborative partners?
- What is missing?
- Are there additions or improvements to action items?
- How should action items be prioritized?
- Have we identified the right project lead(s) to get things started?
- How do we communicate successes/impacts?

Mr. Upton next stated that when he presented the actionable strategies at the workshop, the group indicated that the strategies are on target and that the focus of the workshop should be on refinements. Mr. Upton next observed that participants worked to improve the language and nomenclature of each strategy so that it worked for both Holyoke and the surrounding Pioneer Valley. Mr. Upton added that there was an acceptance of the importance of looking at the roles of municipalities and area leaders as well as local agendas and assets relative to the need for this region to have a global reputation since without a great regional reputation, the City of Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley will not gain the lift it needs to gain a strong and dynamic global standing. Mr. Hodge added that in several workshop sessions, participants felt

that some of the strategies were too Holyoke-centered without ample recognition of the significant role that the region plays. Mr. Hodge then emphasized that there clearly needs to be greater recognition and connection between the regional assets and action strategies if their implementation is to be successful.

Mr. Upton stated another suggested refinement to actionable strategies that was discussed at the workshop is to provide practical priorities on what work needs to be tackled first. Mr. Upton further underscored that all groups realized that all of these strategies ultimately need to be implemented although this will require several years to accomplish. Still another refinement that the group identified at yesterday's workshop involved 80 opportunities for new collaborative partners along with team expansion and improved networking. Mr. Upton noted that another refinement was the acknowledgment that identity and reputation cut across all discussions. More specifically, Mr. Upton stated that it's time for the City of Holyoke to recognize how its progress contributes to a much stronger brand and reputation. For example, Mr. Upton noted that there was broad recognition that asset and event mapping can make Holyoke a destination for skilled workers such as architects, analysts, educators and planners. Lastly, Mr. Upton stated that another strategy refinement recommended at the workshop was to confront and eliminate barriers to success. Mr. Upton then stated that when the Task Force reviewed the strategies, there were barriers listed at the end of each one and he observed that nine months ago, the Task Force would have found it difficult to discuss these barriers publicly. However, Mr. Upton commented that now Task Force members are asking the question, "How do we remove the barriers so that we can move Holyoke and the region forward?"

Mr. Upton urged that Task Force members and partners begin to think about project management needed for successful implementation of strategies linked the Innovation District project. Mr. Upton then urged Task Force members to ask themselves in the weeks to come such questions as: "If we are agreed on a strategy, who selects the meaningful project milestone resource?" "Who updates and intervenes?" "Who ensures that right questions are being asked?" "Who marks the milestone?" "How is the information managed?" "How do we map accountabilities?" "When do we share, convene and celebrate?" Mr. Upton stated that the next principal steps for the consultant team will be to transcribe the workbooks; handle report re-writes and test the new language to be incorporated in their final report.

Mr. Upton next asked if any of the team leaders at yesterday's workshop wanted to make any comments on his presentation at this point. There being no questions or comments from Task Force members, Mr. Hodge moved to take up the next agenda item.

4. Key Action Steps and Priorities Focusing on the Eight Core Strategies With the Discussion Led by Representatives of the Task Force

Mr. Hodge stated that the intent of this agenda item is to give team leaders who attended yesterday's workshop an opportunity to review what key issues were discussed at their particular session. Mr. Hodge noted that the team leaders for the Site Ready/Policy Ready session were Richard Henderson and Karen Mendrala from the City of Holyoke's Planning and Economic Development Department. Since neither Mr. Henderson nor Ms. Mendrala were present, Kathy Anderson provided brief comments on the results of this session. Ms. Anderson stated that the focus of the Site Ready/Policy Ready strategy is to make sites attractive and ready for businesses to move in. Ms. Anderson commented that this session developed several good ideas involving some of the local developers that are making large investments in the community already by forming a task force of their own to review lots and to figure out how to best use them. Mr. Hodge added that takeaways from this session included an emphasis on supporting infrastructure such as a new Holyoke train station and other downtown improvements. Mr. Hodge further commented that there was also a concentration from the group on including metrics on new housing units and residential development as part of this particular action strategy.

Mr. Hodge next moved to the Entrepreneurial Eco-system strategy session and he noted that Eric Nakajima was the team leader for this session. Mr. Nakajima commented that it was a very productive conversation and the insights from this session encompassing refinements about what the group thought were the key priorities to be emphasized. Mr. Nakajima stated that the first observation from this session was that there were actually a multitude of resources in Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley that were focused on entrepreneurial support and access to capital. Mr. Nakajima added that one suggestion his group cited was to create an easier point of entry for those trying to launch start-up businesses so that they can access the support resources that already exist. Mr. Nakajima next stated that the second point made was to understand where there are gaps in the capacity building support structure that can help businesses improve their products or which can help them to forge a solid business plan. Mr. Nakajima stated that the third point was to promote the City and Pioneer Valley as a place for pursuing entrepreneurship and maintain an ongoing dialog with local colleges and universities so that these

institutions can also provide entrepreneurial support. Lastly, Mr. Nakajima noted that we need to better understand and differentiate the various kinds of entrepreneurship and therefore we need to think about how to focus support on entrepreneurship activities within Holyoke, especially within its Latino community.

Mr. Hodge next moved to take up the Economic Development Delivery System strategy session and he noted that Linda Dunlavy and Allan Blair were its team leaders and he invited them to review the key results from this session. Mr. Blair stated that the discussion centered around improving the economic delivery system was fruitful and he added that participants came away with a better understanding of what needs to be done and how the system will work once it is in place. Mr. Blair observed that there is already a system in place which needs tweaking although he added that a better job needs to be done to describe what the current prospect management system is and the protocols associated with it. Mr. Blair explained that the Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council has been involved in managing the current economic development delivery system for decades and he was encouraged by the suggestions and new ideas that came out of this workshop session and most especially on how to make the current system an even better system. Mr. Blair further explained that there was some discussion on who would take ultimate responsibility for maintaining and managing this system and he explained that this would fall to the Economic Development Partners which is a group of regional and local economic development professionals. Mr. Blair next stated that discussions with the EDP will follow these meetings to better understand the desires of the EDP and its capability to continue to grow in responsibility in managing and maintaining the economic development delivery system.

Mr. Hodge then moved to take up the Talent and Workforce Development session workforce and he asked one of the session leaders, William Messner, to provide an overview of his group's deliberations. Mr. Messner stated that the discussion had focused on two dimensions. The first dimension tackled several questions such as, "How do we more intentionally focus our education and training resources on economic development activities?" "How do we get educational institutions to be more committed to the notion that they are in fact involved in the process of economic development?" "How do we involve CEOs and others who are involved in the training and education process to work more closely with the EDC and others to attract businesses and retain to Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley?" Mr. Messner noted that the second thrust of the conversation focused on realization that one of the perceived inadequacies of the region is the weaknesses in the K-12 system in certain areas in the Pioneer Valley. He added that the group concluded that unless we address this problem, we will be significantly handicapped in all our future economic development activities.

Mr. Hodge asked if there were additional comments about this session. Mayor Elaine Pluta observed that there are many reasons why Holyoke's schools are underperforming. However, she underscored that unless we address the concentrated poverty that exists in the City of Holyoke, it will be extraordinarily difficult for Holyoke to attract new businesses. Larry Bay agreed and he underscored that we need to go into more depth in recognizing the connection of poverty to the statistics which show that there is so much transiency of the Holyoke K-12 student body, so much so, that students routinely fall hopelessly behind in their education and frequently drop out of school entirely.

Mr. Hodge next segued to the Manufacturing Industry cluster discussion. Mr. Hodge explained that this is one of the draft strategies which was written with a heavy Holyoke emphasis because of an interest in enhancing its employment opportunities in Holyoke, and he added that there was a great deal of discussion on how precision manufacturing is an established regional industry cluster and that this strategy is intended to better reflect the connection of Holyoke to this regional industry cluster. Mr. Hodge further stated that the group in this session discussed new collaborative partners including trade associations, some of which were regional, and this conversation led into a discussion of the challenge of getting significant private sector involvement in this important industry cluster. Mr. Hodge commented that key topics at this session included workforce and the importance of access to capital especially for existing manufacturers.

Mr. Hodge next moved to take up the Digital Technologies/IT Industry Cluster, and he asked one of the session leaders, Patrick Larkin to offer his summary comments. Mr. Larkin noted that the group had a fascinating discussion about what can be done to grow and incent a digital technology sector in the region. Mr. Larkin next noted that upon reviewing the strategy that was developed the group felt that aspirationally it had the traditional elements that one would think about and thus there were not too many disagreements on the action items. However, Mr. Larkin commented that what became clear was the need to better organize this sector. Mr. Larkin then stated that the session participants reviewed the groups that were identified as collaborators within this sector from the beginning, and it was noted that several were identified as missing. Mr. Larkin then underscored that the fundamental question right now is, what are the catalyzing events that would bring the target groups together and convene as well as how to organize this sector to make it more robust? Mr. Larkin

stated that there was an acknowledgment that in addition in getting the sector organized there is an imperative in moving forward in attraction and retention activities for the IT and digital sectors as well as the economic development system and other strategies that look to attract firms to locate to this region. Mr. Hodge observed that another point which was raised during this session was to add Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing and Center and Research Consortium as a significant collaborating partner in the Digital Technologies strategy. However, Mr. Larkin wondered how could this potentially catalyze the organization of the Digital Technology structure? Mr. Larkin further underscored that there has to be a reason for people to want come together to effectuate change.

Mr. Hodge asked if there were other comments on the Digital Technologies/IT Cluster session. Jeff Brancato stated he agreed with Mr. Larkin that there needs to be some kind of activity to demonstrate that a critical mass exists and catalyzes it coming together. Mr. Brancato further stated that we don't yet have is a more detailed characterization of the current situation within this sector. Mr. Brancato next suggested that perhaps there should be a follow-on activity such a survey of companies and employees to better understand the base platform on which to build.

Mr. Hodge next moved to take up the Clean Energy Innovation strategy and he invited one of the session's leaders, James Lavelle, to review this session's findings. Mr. Lavelle noted that this strategy has the following two primary dimensions: 1) develop a strategy that allows us to scale the clean and inexpensive energy to meet what is hoped to be a growing demand; and 2) to execute this strategy in a fashion that will allow us to attract clean technology innovation and entrepreneurs to locate here. Mr. Lavelle stated that the discussion focused on adding more collaborative partners to the mix and identifying missing elements like as working more closely with universities such as the GHPCC Consortium Partners plus the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Mr. Lavelle noted that one of the challenges was trying to get the regional component blended in smoothly because there are some inherent assets in the City of Holyoke which are not ubiquitous throughout the region. Mr. Lavelle added that there was also a discussion on not only trying to develop the strategy but also trying to figure out who owned what at the regional level. Jim Lavelle added that there was also a discussion of key obstacles and to the need to identify an effective means to overcome them in order to make this strategy happen. Mr. Hodge asked Mr. Brennan for his comments since he was a Clean Energy session leader. Mr. Brennan noted that for this particular strategy there was a high level of confidence that this is emerging strategy right now. However, Mr. Brennan added that we need to remind ourselves of one of the bedrock tasks, specifically how do we create jobs for the City of Holyoke and the region? Mr. Brennan underscored that this sector has a lot of potential to create jobs in a variety of ways. However, Mr. Brennan noted that this has to be done at the local and regional levels and he noted that there was consensus at this session that the best way to capitalize on this strategy is to get as many things done as we possibly can and to use this as the raw material to help market the region on a national and global scale.

Mr. Hodge next moved to take up the Urban Agriculture Cluster strategy session and he invited session leader Kathy Anderson to give an overview of her session's discussion. Ms. Anderson noted that this strategy came out of the fact that waste heat that would be coming out of Holyoke High Performance Computing Center and could be used to heat greenhouses. Ms. Anderson also noted that Holyoke as well as the Pioneer Valley has a large Latino population for which farming is an important part of their culture. Ms. Anderson stated that the group reviewed the strategy and the collaborative partners list extensively since urban commercial farming involves several components such as distribution, preparation, canning and drying and thus there was a great deal of discussion on who those partners may be. Additionally, Ms. Anderson stated that there was a great deal of discussion focused on identifying the inventory of land that was available for commercial gardening and farming. Mr. Anderson further noted that although this strategy may begin in Holyoke but may grow to the region quickly because of the need of other partners up and down the Valley. Ms. Anderson noted that there was also a discussion on expanding local smaller gardening opportunities for local residents and bringing them to the farmers markets so that there's a multiple approach to this strategy. Mr. Nakajima added that there is a potential market opportunity available here in the Pioneer Valley for year-round farming and he added that there are mature group of farms up and down the region that may be able to utilize green house space on a year-round basis. He further noted that there may also be great opportunities to link local employment opportunities to a sophisticated group of farmers that exist throughout the Pioneer Valley.

5. Consultant Team's Game Plan and Timetable for Completing the Strategic Plan

Mr. Hodge thanked the workshop session leaders for sharing their insights and then reordered the agenda items by discussing the next steps for the consultant team. Mr. Hodge said these steps include revising the strategic plan based on workshop feedback and comments here today. Mr. Hodge emphasized that any additional edits and comments on the draft

strategy document were needed by August 11th. Mr. Hodge added that the next task is to pull together the complete technical report which includes the Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis and other elements. Mr. Hodge stated that the goal is to finish this report and the strategic plan documents ideally by the end of September 2011. Lastly, Mr. Hodge noted that the next step will be to convene the Task Force in late October for its final close-out meeting.

6. Task Force Discussion Centering on Strategic Plan Priorities and Milestones

Mr. Brennan asked Task Force members for any comments they had regarding strategic plan priorities that need greater attention. Mr. Messner commended the consultant team for pulling together the draft strategies document. Nevertheless, he stated that he was struck by fact that a document which focuses on a strategy for the Arts and Innovation District gives such short shrift to the arts. Mr. Messner also underscored that Western Massachusetts as a region has a reputation for being hospitable to the arts and he further commented that he believed we are missing an opportunity of not being intentional in developing the arts sector which has already begun to develop in Holyoke.

Mr. Nakajima agreed and he stated that for over a year he has been acting partially as the State's Creative Economy Director and he noted that this work has gotten him closer to what's occurring in the arts in the City of Holyoke. Mr. Nakajima observed that there needs to be a regional strategy that can link communities together, and that there are several dynamic centers of the creative economy that are distributed throughout the region. Mr. Nakajima further observed that the Pioneer Valley does not have an organization which pulls together creative people to do common marketing, programming and branding which could create greater visibility for Holyoke and the Pioneer Valley.

Ms. Anderson stated that Holyoke's Department of Planning and Development had brought together various artists together on three separate occasions to discuss how to market the arts in Holyoke and support each other as a group. Ms. Anderson added that the resources in the Planning and Development Department were limited and thus it was hoped that from this group an artist would emerge as the leader of this initiative and that her department would play the role of facilitator. However, Ms. Anderson noted that this never happened, but she underscored that something definitely needs to be done in this area.

Robert Gilbert noted that since the beginning of this project there have been lots of thoughts generated by Task Force members and he praised the consultant team for pulling together and precipitating out all these ideas and compiling them in the final report. However, Mr. Gilbert wondered, how do we go about implementing the strategy that has been developed? Mr. Hodge explained that the consultant team intentionally did not build in this discussion for today. Mr. Brennan stated that any commentary that can guide us to an action plan would be welcome but the development of action steps is not solely the job of the consultant team but rather is also a shared responsibility with the Task Force.

7. Next Steps for the Innovation District Task Force Including Confirming a Date and Time for a Fall Task Force Meeting

Ms. Anderson observed that the discussion appears to have segued into a discussion of Agenda Item #7, and she noted that the Task Force will have to look at who the governance group is going to be, where the resources are going to come from, and which strategies come first. Ms. Anderson added that the Kitchen Cabinet Subcommittee which is a subgroup consisting of Task Force members will need to determine how to carry out this strategic plan. Mr. Brennan observed that there will be a few tasks which are going to be difficult and he further underscored that there are many excellent ideas and recommendations but we can't immediately accomplish all of them. Given this, Mr. Brennan suggested the Task Force will need to select specific action items that can be accomplished in the short term in order to achieve the greatest positive impact.

Mr. Brennan asked if there were any other comments from Task Force members. Mr. Foley stated that in earlier Task Force meetings the group acknowledged that there is a large population in Holyoke which uneducated, mired by poverty and unemployed. Mr. Foley stated that he had hoped for an economic development focus to target these people to reverse poverty and create jobs for them. Mr. Foley stated that the strategy document has missed this point and he said that he has not seen anything in the strategy document that would create jobs for lower-skilled, poorly educated people. Mr. Anderson stated that the Urban Agricultural strategy addresses Mr. Foley's point and the education strategy discusses pathways to jobs for the future. However, Mr. Foley underscored the need to create lower-skilled jobs for Holyoke residents now. Mr. Foley emphasized if we don't move on this need right now, Holyoke will continue to have neighborhoods with high poverty

and high unemployment. Mr. Lavelle explained if the Holyoke Gas & Electric is successful with scaling low-cost energy there will be many local economic development prospects in the City that could create lower-skilled jobs; however, the City of Holyoke will need to provide low-cost energy in order to create them. Carlos Gonzalez noted that the Latino Chamber of Commerce is encouraging individuals through training at the Chamber to bridge the gap from being employees to becoming entrepreneurs and employers. Mr. Nakajima added that a lot of discussion during the Entrepreneurial Eco-system session revolved around emphasizing the importance of organizing a concerted effort to target entrepreneurial support for Holyoke residents.

Dianne Fuller Doherty extended her thanks to Mr. Brennan and Ms. Anderson for their leadership as well as to the HDR consultant team for putting together a tremendously comprehensive report. Ms. Doherty then observed that at yesterday's workshop there was a reluctance to prioritize tasks and she asked the group to consider as a next step prioritizing tasks and identifying leadership since this is an essential step as we transition into the implementation phase of this project. Mr. Brennan next asked if there were any brief comments from guests in the audience. Jeff Hayden of Holyoke Community College observed that we should continually work on the new strategies by building on strengths that exist and he cited as examples the Holyoke Children's Museum, the Heritage Park merry-go-round, the Volley Ball Hall of Fame and Heritage Park Museum. Mr. Hayden asked, how do we make the City of Holyoke a cultural Mecca for young people and families throughout the region?

At this point, Mr. Brennan proposed Thursday, October 20th as the close-out meeting and Task Force members agreed by consensus that the meeting should commence at 8:30 a.m. Mr. Brennan then extended his thanks to the consultant team who worked earnestly on this strategy document and he noted that this report is representative of the high quality work from which the Task Force can draw from. Mr. Brennan also expressed his appreciation to the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC) for their advice and guidance as well as to Governor Patrick's Administration for their support. Mr. Brennan then moved to take up the final item on the agenda.

8. Other Business

Mr. Brennan asked Ms. Anderson if she has any updates regarding Holyoke's Urban Renewal Plan (URP). Ms. Anderson commented that the URP was close to being finalized which details plans on infrastructure and beautification improvements especially those in and around the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center. Ms. Anderson then thanked Task Force members for their efforts in helping to advance the City of Holyoke and the region.

There being no further business to conduct, Mr. Brennan adjourned the August 4th Task Force meeting without objection at 11:35 a.m.