



Economic Diversification & Environment & Resilient Infrastructure Work Group

November 18, 2021

Attendees:

Gretchen Beesing, Catalyst Miami

John Rouge, College of the Florida Keys

Dr. Ana Carolina Coelho Maran, South Florida Water Management District

Isabel Cosio Carballo, Executive Director, SFRPC

The primary focus of the meeting was to discuss the economic recovery resiliency program, best practices, strategies, goals, and objectives, and to give an overview of the SWOT survey answers.

During the work group meeting, staff discussed with subject matter experts to develop a holistic understanding of the issues based on data and other information. Mark Cassidy gave an overview of the CEDDS process and how the participants will assist in writing a program of regional priorities and then outline the priority projects that will execute that plan according to what we think are the focus areas. Performance metrics will be developed for organizations that will carry out the work for the next five years.

Ms. Beesing gave an overview of the work and programs of Catalyst Miami. Most of their projects come from solidarity economics which is an economic practice that's more centered on democratic management and local control as opposed to a more neoliberal capitalism frame where there's this idea that privatizing everything will generate riches that eventually make their way to everybody.

The organization runs a few coalitions, including the Miami Climate Alliance and Miami and for Clean Energy where the focus is on policy and advocacy. Other programs were: Economic Development; North Miami Community Investment co-operative which offers direct services to help stabilize families, financially, including tax preparation, financial coaching, and managing a handful of credit building and loan products; Future Bound Miami, which is the Universal Children's Savings Program, for Miami Dade County Public Schools; Public Land work, such land banking, creating community land trusts etc.; Worker co-operative Model where Catalyst Miami organizes domestic workers to help them form more formal small businesses together.

Each Committee Member was asked what issues or challenges should be included in the Economic Resiliency Plan of the CARES Act grant. All participants agreed with the pressing issues that were stated from the previous work group members:

CARES Act:

1. Affordable Housing

- a. An inadequate supply of affordable housing, along with the skyrocketing real-estate market, made it hard for residents to afford a mortgage or to pay rent.
- b. Ms. Beesing stated that Miami Homes, for All, is working with a coalition of organizations including Catalyst which have been organized into Greater Miami Housing Alliance. They are working with a national intermediary, called the Center for Community Investment to apply what is called a capital absorption framework to the affordable housing crisis. This framework will illuminate pipelines for affordable housing, and get capital moving in the right direction

2. Transportation

- a. Lack of public transit

3. Workforce Development

- a. Workforce limitations such as inadequate training, low wages, and a high concentration of low paying jobs in the hospitality and retail industries that were the most impacted from the pandemic.
- b. Ms. Beesing recommended council staff research the Miami Foundation's work done to understand the workforce ecosystem, how to bring together different entities that provide workforce training and placement, and what improvements are needed where the ecosystem is weak. All info can be found on Labor Miami website.
- c. Mr. Rouge reported that the College of the Florida Keys has taken over an Opportunity Zone property in Big Pine Key north of Marathon that will be used for workforce development programs. In collaboration with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, the pilot program will focus on reef restoration, CLD licensing and other. Mr. Rouge will share this information with council staff.

4. Achieve New Business Attraction and/or retain existing businesses

- a. Lack of small business retention plans. The limited efforts to diversify the South Florida economy were hampered by the pandemic, and small business owners lacked a safety net to keep them afloat during the emergency
- b. Ms. Beesing stated that we are not a very strong CDFI community. There is a need for more urban leagues and CDFI certified organizations to get investment dollars in to then deploy them in regional projects.

5. Lack of Leadership and Communication

- a. Siloed governmental agencies whose systems aren't connected made resident support resources difficult, inefficient, and hard to navigate.
- b. Ms. Beesing reported that a survey done by Catalyst Miami to small business showed that most of the small businesses were not aware of the government financial assistance programs for businesses. Those businesses who were aware of such programs, were not able to take advantage because their businesses weren't entirely formal. Having more

active intermediaries to help navigate the system would help. Something that Mayor Daniela Cava is planning to do in the future to co-ordinate the CRAs in Miami Dade County to communicate and align their strategies.

Dr. Maran recommended the staff explore the Business Case for Resiliency published by the South Florida Climate Change Compact to get a better understanding on how climate change affects/will affect the South Florida economy and what types of investments are needed in the future to build resilience against future climate effects so that we don't get into a situation where we have a compound effect.

The group decided that the outcomes to include in the plan need to not only outline where do we want to be in 10-15 years, but also include actions on how to accomplish the goals and strategies recommended.

Mark Cassidy presented the CEDS – SWOT Analysis results from the work group members survey responses. The following were identified:

- I. **Strengths:**
 - a. Location, weather, and diversity
 - i. EDO collaboration, workforce development
 - ii. Broad small business community
- II. **Weaknesses:**
 - a. Cost of Living
 - i. Housing affordability
 - ii. Transportation/traffic
 - iii. Low wages/low skilled labor
 - b. Climate change
- III. **Opportunities:**
 - a. Collaboration between workforce development, major industries, economic development, and government. Coordinate efforts.
 - b. Universities and hospitals
 - c. Green industry/clean renewable energy
 - d. Tourism
 - e. Attracting Investment / Business Relocation Supporting local products and services in exportation.
 - f. Resiliency solutions
- IV. **Threats:**
 - a. Cost of Living
 - b. Housing
 - c. Leadership
 - d. Wage Gap
 - e. Resiliency/Sea Level Rise/Natural Disasters/Water

Mark Cassidy stated the common themes from all work groups are lack of affordable housing, climate, and transportation options. There is a government disconnect which is an impediment to everybody

working together for the common good. No work group is overseeing the environmental threats, the transportation problems, and we need to get unified to co-ordinate these efforts.

NEXT STEPS

- **2nd CEDS Strategy Committee Meeting – Monday, December 6, 2021, at 10:00am**
 - Finalize SWOT Analysis and Performance Measures
 - Staff will organize all the work group responses, distill them, and formulate key themes from the broad perspectives to have a discussion with all the committee members and finalize the goals and objectives, performance metrics, and selected projects.
 - Working topic – CARES Act Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives
 - Staff will give an update on the program, discuss plans, goals, and objectives, and identify specific things to include in the program.
- **2nd Work Group Meeting – Monday, January 10, 2022, at 10:00am**
 - Identify specific projects to recover economy and become more resilient to future shocks
 - Identify CEDS Goals and Objectives, discuss evaluation plan and framework
 - Develop economic resiliency project evaluation framework
- **3rd CEDS Strategy Committee Meeting - March 2022**
 - Draft CARES Act Strategy
 - Finalize Action Plan and Evaluation Framework, formal vision statement, goals, and objectives