

Economic Intersections of Rhode Island

a private sector-generated action agenda
executive summary



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Dear Friends,

Over the past three months, more than 200 business leaders and subject matter experts have participated in 20 sessions convened by the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation and Rhode Island Foundation to identify unique market opportunities at the intersection of industries. Our goal was to inform the *RhodeMap RI* process, which will produce an economic development plan for the state by October 2014, and generate specific actions that can be undertaken in the meantime.

Together, participants generated over one hundred action recommendations to create jobs and grow industries. The Fourth Economy Consulting team pushed participants to be specific about the necessary resources, leadership requirements, and impact potential for each suggestion.

In the following pages, Fourth Economy reports out on what was discovered during this process. In particular, this report summarizes the 21 most robust recommendations. (In the appendix of the full report, available at makeithappenri.com, the team also provides a list of every suggestion they were able to capture from the discussion.) As you'll see, the recommendations vary in scope and specificity. Some are already underway, while others need further exploration. Some require policy changes, while others can be led by the private sector.

We heard a lot of pride in Rhode Island's strengths and emerging opportunities. Participants were clear: our economy is intricately tied to multiple industries. They requested increased coordination and connectivity; collaboration doesn't always come naturally, but Rhode Island doesn't have time for unnecessary duplications or wasted opportunities. We heard loud and clear that Rhode Island needs some of these initiatives to achieve meaningful scale, and that Rhode Island must fully embrace its diversity for future economic growth.

We are excited about many of the initiatives that are underway and eager to see some of the new ideas tested. We were gratified to see new relationships and activities already emerge. And most importantly, we are encouraged by the commitment that members of the private sector have demonstrated throughout this process. Thank you to everyone who showed leadership by showing up, engaging with colleagues, and putting your ideas out there.

This process was – and continues to be – a call to action. While our organizations intend to be involved with several of these action steps, we are not the gatekeeper of the efforts. There is no one action step, person, or organization that can fix Rhode Island's economy; progress will require broad participation and leadership from every sector. We welcome your feedback and your leadership, and we ask you to keep us informed of your efforts.

Best regards,



Neil D. Steinberg
President & CEO
Rhode Island Foundation



Marcel A. Valois
Executive Director
Rhode Island Commerce Corporation

DEAR FRIENDS

January 2014

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Economic Intersections of Rhode Island



INTRODUCTION

Starting in September 2013, the Rhode Island Foundation and the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (Commerce RI) sought to engage a wide range of private sector representatives in a process of identifying opportunities and barriers to economic growth in the state. The recommendations for economic development actions in Rhode Island that are contained in this document are the result of the generous time contributions of more than 200 Rhode Island business leaders and representatives of business-serving organizations who participated in a series of three working group sessions. They offered over one hundred ideas and recommendations, and in the process began to identify new opportunities for collaboration and focus.

The eight working groups convened by the Foundation and Commerce RI were organized to provide private sector input into the *RhodeMap RI* process and to identify more immediate opportunities for economic development. Under the leadership of Statewide Planning as part of a Sustainable Communities grant, *RhodeMap RI* is a coordinated and forward-looking effort by the state to make Rhode Island a better place to live and work by mobilizing state and community assets in a whole new way. It will guide investments for years to come. Through *RhodeMap RI*, the state seeks to strengthen the economy, meet current and future housing needs, and plan for future growth through an integrated manner that will include strategies for transportation, land use, and environmental protection. Of course, any plan is only as good as the level of input and engagement of the people and organizations that will be guided by the plan.

The working groups were organized by Economic Intersections, a new way of considering the interrelatedness that exists in an economy and an approach that seeks to identify new market opportunities through business collaboration. A guiding question for these working groups was, "What can we do together to positively impact economic development, that we can't do alone?". Within each of the working groups, stakeholders shared similar goals, clients, resources, and the like, but many had not met or had the chance to work together to identify common barriers and opportunities. These working group sessions were designed to acknowledge and explore economic opportunities that could not be identified through traditional, quantitative analysis reliant on outdated North American Industrial Classification (NAIC) codes; rather these working groups exemplified a new way of thinking about economic opportunities that engaged multiple sectors to work collaboratively to support new business creation.

The first two rounds of Economic Intersection working groups included the following sectors of:

- Arts / Culture / Creative
- Biotechnology / Medical / Public Health
- Finance / Insurance / Real Estate / Corporate
- Logistics / Connectivity
- Manufacturing / Design / Makers
- Natural Resources
- Technology / Digital / Software
- Tourism / Hospitality / Visitor

It was clear in the discussions that as a small state, in addition to intra-sector collaboration, economic transformation will require collaboration between these sectors to efficiently invest the resources of time and money to create new jobs. During the third round of working groups, held in December, the facilitators organized the discussion by four themes, which emerged across many or all of the Economic Intersection groups. These themes included:

- Manufacturing and Design – Engaging people involved in the intersections between these fields, in which the state has identified assets.
- Food Value Web – A continuum of growing, producing, processing, distributing, and selling food and beverages that early working group participants cited as a real opportunity for the state.
- Business Ecosystem – The environmental components that business needs to operate, including capital, regulations, logistics, and technical assistance.
- Water-Related Economy – Accelerating the opportunity of an Ocean State into greater economic impact.

Ultimately, this Action Agenda reflects recommendations that resulted from all twelve working groups. These recommendations will be used both to inform the *RhodeMap RI* and identify opportunities for immediate action to impact economic development in the state.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." While the context was much different, Dickens's opening to *A Tale of Two Cities* aptly sums up the attitude of many of the Rhode Islanders who were engaged in the Economic Intersections working group sessions. There are numerous bright economic stars beginning to shine and opportunities to address the diversity of Rhode Island's changing demographics, while there are also lingering issues and deep inequalities that weigh heavily on the state's economic recovery.

Years of structural economic transformation will require more than short-term fixes or the pursuit of a 'great single initiative.' This is not meant to diminish the ideas that many in the community have had, rather it is to reinforce that for Rhode Island to change its economic plight, it must embrace a broad-based action agenda that creates short-term momentum, while also building on a long-term economic infrastructure to generate sustainable change.

It also must be an action agenda that develops a breadth and depth of capacity that allows for scale, measurable impacts, and sustained growth. During this process, numerous existing or previous efforts were highlighted, but it was repeatedly discovered that they lacked the financial and human resources to create the level of the impact desired. As a result, a continuous cycle of initiative development, limited resource allocation, limited performance, and loss of interest culminate in a lack of desire from leaders to do 'something new.' It will be critical to properly support the initiatives that move forward from this effort and to adopt an approach of rapid prototyping and continuous improvement.

The Economic Intersections process was designed as a critical input to the creation of the state's economic development plan. The process engaged private business professionals in a robust discussion about the job creation opportunities and barriers they are experiencing. It identified over one hundred ideas, and an iterative three-month process developed a handful of those ideas into the specific actionable recommendations included in this report. Further details and a full list of all ideas captured during the process are provided in the full Action Agenda, which can be found at www.makeithappenri.com.

Five themes were identified in the actionable recommendations that are being advanced:

- **Increasing Impact of Competitive Advantages:** Rhode Island's assets must be leveraged to create additional economic impacts.
- **Promoting Emerging Opportunities:** There are emerging economic opportunities in the state that could provide increased job creation potential as they evolve.
- **Supporting Intersections and Connectivity:** There are many good things occurring in Rhode Island and better coordination and information sharing would enhance their impact.
- **Building Capacity and the Business Ecosystem:** Rhode Island has opportunities and needs related to its business ecosystem, which must be addressed to improve the job creation potential of all companies and institutions.
- **Supporting the Talent Pipeline:** Rhode Island must enhance and grow the capacity of its workforce training capabilities and the connection between the workforce system and employers.

These themes are purposely broad, but within each stakeholders have identified specific actions that can be undertaken to create short-term impact with an eye towards ongoing and long-term benefits. The actions that comprise this Action Agenda are meant to directly create jobs and/or support job creators in the state. The chart below illustrates which Economic Intersections groups articulated or would be impacted by the specific recommendations.

Advancing many of the actions will require the involvement of multiple organizations, and the energy and passion for Rhode Island exhibited during the sessions suggests that the working group process was a beginning and not an end to this type of collaboration.

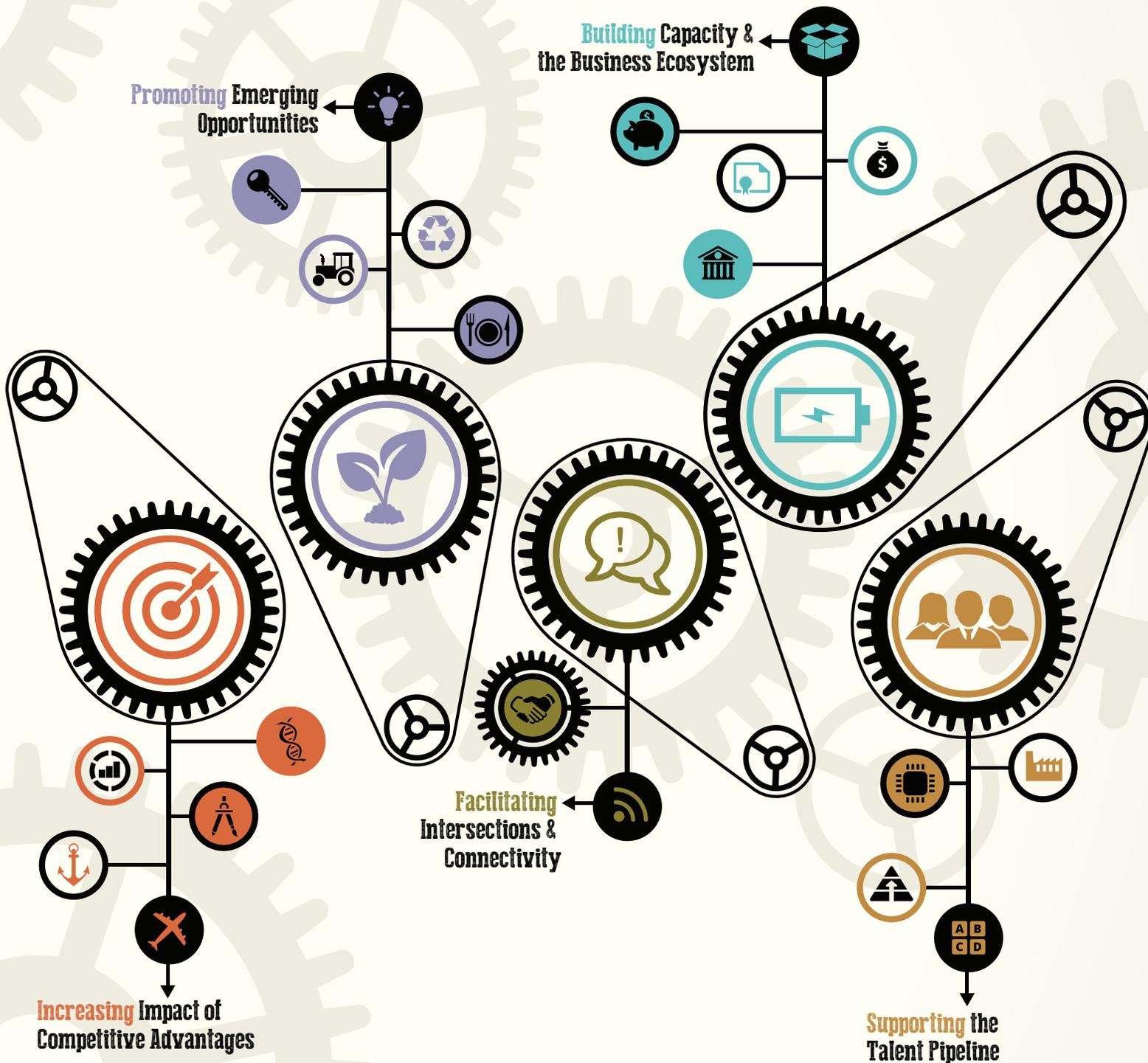
What follows is not an economic development plan; rather the recommended actions are an input into a larger economic development planning process. It is a goal of this effort that while the state continues to develop its statewide economic development plan through the *RhodeMap RI* process, some of these recommendations will be catalysts for immediate action.

AN ACTION AGENDA

Economic Intersections by Recommendation

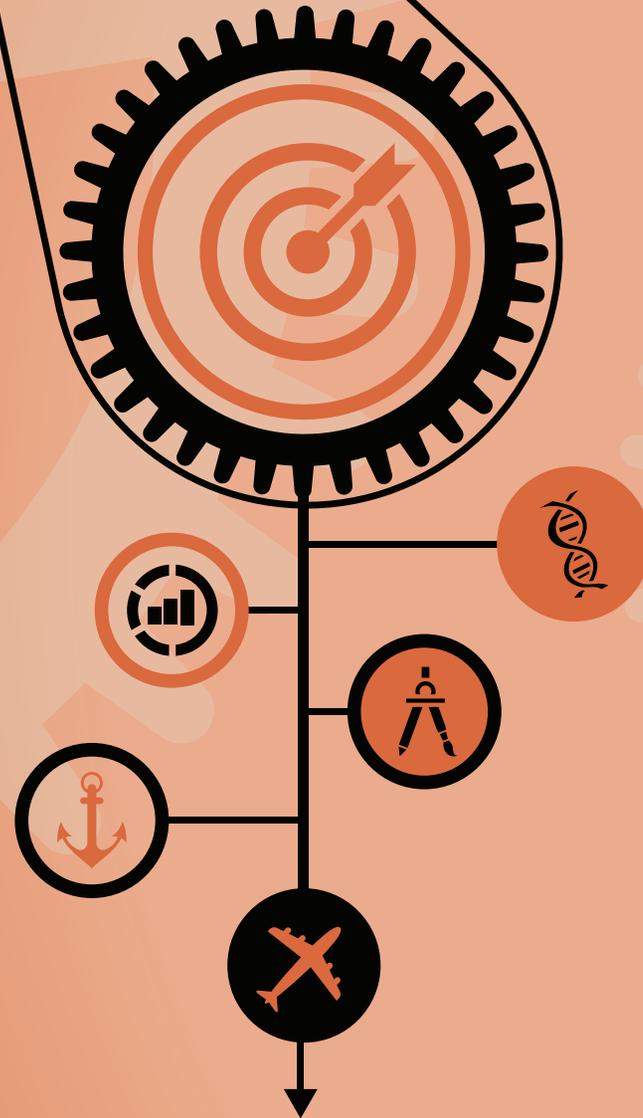
This table demonstrates which Economic Intersections contributed to, have a role in, or are impacted by the recommendations presented.

Recommendations	Economic Intersections							
	Arts / Culture / Creative	Biotechnology / Medical / Public Health	Tourism / Hospitality / Visitor	Finance / Insurance / Real Estate / Corporate	Technology / Digital / Software	Manufacturing / Design / Makers	Logistics / Connectivity	Natural Resources
Increasing Impact of Competitive Advantages								
Increase Impact Potential of Tourism Industry	⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗		⊗	⊗
Promote Access to Water and Marine-Based Businesses	⊗		⊗		⊗		⊗	⊗
Create the Rhode Island Center for Design and Manufacturing	⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗		
Support High Growth Company Opportunities Through Tech-Transfer		⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	
Accelerate the Opportunities Provided by the Bioscience, Neuroscience, and Medtech Sector		⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗		
Promoting Emerging Opportunities								
Claim Rhode Island as the Center for the Maker Movement	⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
Establish a Regional Center of Excellence for Marine and Cybersecurity Technologies		⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
Support a Stronger and More Resilient Rhode Island		⊗	⊗		⊗		⊗	⊗
Strengthen the Food Value Web to Increase Food-Related Jobs	⊗	⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗	⊗
Coordinate and Enhance Entrepreneurship and Small Business Support Services for the Food-Health Nexus		⊗		⊗	⊗			⊗
Facilitating Intersections and Connectivity								
Develop Online Communications Infrastructure	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
Enable Cross-Sector Collaboration to Propel Industry Strength and Success	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
Building Capacity and the Business Ecosystem								
Increase Logistics and Export Assistance					⊗	⊗	⊗	
Address Rhode Island's Capital Gap		⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗		
Create New Mechanisms and Support Systems for Providing Capital to High-Opportunity Affinity Groups	⊗			⊗				⊗
Enhance Technical Assistance and Industry Support Organization Capacity to Facilitate Job Growth for Small Businesses	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
Support the Office of Regulatory Reform Efforts	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
Supporting the Talent Pipeline								
Engage and Inform K-12 Youth and Families	⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗		
Assist Employers in Attracting and Retaining Qualified Workers	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
Develop the Information Technology Pipeline	⊗	⊗			⊗			
Develop the Manufacturing Talent Pipeline	⊗				⊗	⊗		



Increasing Impact of Competitive Advantages

As a small state, Rhode Island has considerable economic assets and competitive advantages that can be harnessed to change the state's economic future. During the Economic Intersections process the following opportunities were highlighted.



Increasing Impact of Competitive Advantages

Increase Impact Potential of Tourism Industry



Rhode Island's tourism industry is a major component of the state's economy. An IHS Global Insights study estimated that visitors injected \$3.4 billion into the Rhode Island economy in 2009 alone (the last year of complete available data). Unfortunately, national economic trends and increasingly aggressive regional competitors have successfully pulled market share from Rhode Island. There was a 19 percent decline in visitor spending between 2007 and 2009.

Considering that the tourism industry supported 42,000 direct and indirect Rhode Island jobs in 2009 (9 percent of the state's job base in 2009) and generated \$536 million in state and local tax revenue, Rhode Island risks restraining an indispensable economic and job growth opportunity by not effectively competing for visitor dollars. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the tourism industry is rebounding and many states are looking to improve performance as part of their strategic economic growth plans.

While Rhode Island possesses many strong natural and cultural tourism assets, other states are investing considerably more marketing resources to convince prospective visitors to choose their destinations. According to working group participants, the national average state allocation for tourism promotion is approximately \$10 million directed to state tourism budgets. Rhode Island's state tourism marketing budget is currently hovering at around \$500,000 annually, including staff. Influenced by expanded marketing efforts by other states, Rhode Island experienced a 14 percent decline in market share in the latest available forecast. If the state had maintained its 2007 market share levels, it would have generated an additional \$375 million in spending, 6,800 additional jobs, and \$87 million in new tax revenue.

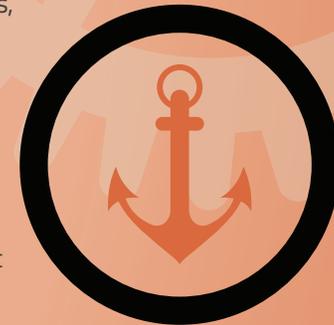
To create the foundation necessary for expanded impact of the tourism industry, Rhode Island should support two key efforts:

- **Create a Steady, Predictable Funding Mechanism for tourism marketing at Commerce RI:** Convene stakeholders to examine three proposed mechanisms to provide dedicated funding and support efforts to pass legislation.
- **Develop a State Brand and Interpretive Story:** More than a cute slogan, a sustained and resourced brand based on the DNA of Rhode Island is critical for defining the state from others and will have lasting results.

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation could convene stakeholders such as private businesses, regional tourism councils, industry associations, and arts and culture stakeholders to fully develop and implement this recommendation.

Promote Access to Water and Marine-Based Businesses

Water and Marine-Based Businesses, as defined by stakeholders in the Economic Intersection working groups, include those businesses offering products or services that relate to the water. Some examples include charter boat companies, boat repair companies, and shell/fishing ecotourism, and other water-based recreational and tourism providers. The marine trades and recreational boating alone generate \$1.3 billion in direct spending, 7,100 direct jobs, and \$327 million in direct wages in the state of Rhode Island. The marine trades include boatbuilding marine services, which range from yacht design, rigging, engine repair, sail-making, etc. Many of these companies such as Electric Boat and Hall Spar are world leaders in the industry and export products and services around the world. The total economic impact of the maritime trades cluster amounts to over \$2.2 billion in sales for Rhode Island businesses, and generates nearly \$118 million in tax and fee revenue for state and local governments.



The breadth and depth of the cluster of marine-related companies that exist in Rhode Island only exist in a couple of other places in the country. This coupled with the sales tax exemption on boats gives the state a true competitive advantage for further growth. While some efforts are underway to support this sector, additional investment and a strategic approach for targeting the subsectors with market potential are needed.

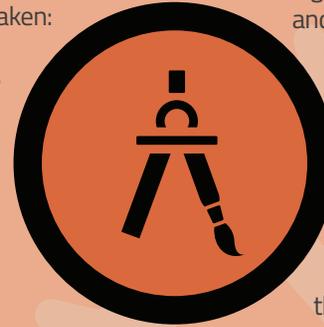
To accomplish this action the following steps should be taken:

- **Create a Marketing Strategy for the Marine and Water-Based Economy:** Some initial recommendations include marketing the continuum of boat building and repair services offered in the East Bay corridor, promoting marinas as “mini resorts”, creating an app to promote access to water and marine-based businesses, and elevating the reputation of Rhode Island seafood.
- **Encourage Municipal Participation in Promoting Access to Water:** Adding new piers and maintaining existing piers, incentivizing dedicated marina slips for ecotourism and other commercial uses, enhancing the “user experience,” and identifying and properly zoning sites for marine trades businesses are a few of the ways that municipalities can support this industry.
- **Strengthen Ties between Marine-Based Businesses and Ports:** Marine-based business could be strengthened by better leveraging the facilities and capabilities of the ports. For instance, the aquaculture industry could utilize cold storage facilities, and the marine trades could utilize ship-building facilities and specialized shipping capabilities.

A number of industry organizations, such as Rhode Island Marine Trades Association, Rhode Island Salt Water Angler’s Association, and the Rhode Island Shellfishermen’s Association currently represent stakeholders in these sectors and should be included in creating a marketing strategy. Statewide Planning can also facilitate the participation of local municipalities in these efforts.

Create the Rhode Island Center for Design and Manufacturing

In 2013, Rhode Island received a grant award from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to develop a Center for Design and Manufacturing as part of the federal Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership program. This grant is currently being used to design an effort that takes advantage of the combined design and manufacturing capacity residing in the state, including the Rhode Island School of Design, the world’s leading design institution. As the work of manufacturing continues to evolve, the collaboration between these sectors will be critical to idea generation, rapid development and prototyping, packaging, reinvention of products, and more. Rhode Island will seek to use its capacity to support existing manufacturers and attract partnerships from around the globe interested in taking advantage of the Center’s services.



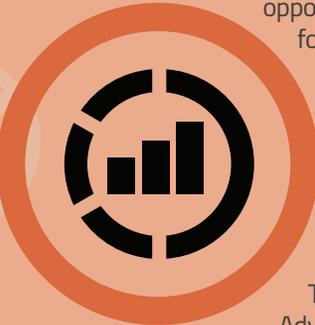
This effort is underway with the following steps:

- Evaluating assets and capacity of design and manufacturing,
- Analyzing workforce skills and capacity,
- Creating a business plan to determine market demand and service delivery models, and
- Developing a compelling case for Rhode Island’s fair share of federal investment currently being made in manufacturing resurgence around the country.

This action is currently in development being led by Commerce RI and a group of engaged stakeholders that include the Rhode Island School of Design, University of Rhode Island, Community College of Rhode Island, Bryant University, the New England Institute of Technology, and the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association.

Support High Growth Company Opportunities through Tech-Transfer

Rhode Island is home to numerous high-quality research institutions, such as universities, federal facilities, medical centers, and private companies. Their capabilities relative to global trends (e.g. healthcare, water, etc.) are significant assets and can be a source of economic opportunity. In order to realize these opportunities, stakeholders expressed the need for increased access to technology transfer and commercialization infrastructure within the state. Additionally, early-stage technology- and science-based businesses in Rhode Island described difficulties in establishing business relationships with prospective customers within Rhode Island.



The Rhode Island Science and Technology Advisory Council (STAC) is a champion of the innovation economy since 2005, led by council members representing major academic, business and policy organizations, with Commerce RI playing the role of advisor and program operator. In the future, STAC can increase its role and expand its range of activities in order to better provide new ventures, across all stages of development, with a dependable framework of support systems.

To improve this situation and create a better environment for innovation-related job creation, the following activities have been recommended:

- **Support Innovation, from Promoting Intellectual Property to Developing a Support Network for Startups:** Inventory and publicize intellectual property, host competitions and awards for commercialization, develop proof-of concept funding, and develop a network of service providers, mentors, and investors to support startups.
- **Connect Technology Companies with Potential Partners and Services:** Reduce the risk for established Rhode Island companies to partner with up-and-coming technology companies by coordinating personal connections between potential partners and creating an online, user-driven marketplace.

STAC is in the process of updating its strategic plan and can engage a group of organizations and businesses currently supporting high growth companies to further support the innovation economy.

Accelerate the Opportunities Provided by the Bioscience, Neuroscience, and Medtech Sector

Rhode Island is home to a diverse set of life sciences and medtech entities, including research institutions and drug and device developers and manufacturers that are working to bring new therapeutics, instruments, vaccines, software, and textiles to market. To realize the benefits of these assets, the community must focus on areas of strength and niche market opportunities. One such niche is in the area of brain science, where alignment between the research at Brown University's Institute for Brain Science, the University of Rhode Island's Ryan Institute for Neuroscience, and Lifespan's Prince Neurosciences Institute can leverage the entrepreneurial and design community to create new technologies and products.

To boost efforts already underway the following actions were suggested:

- **Establish a Cross-Sector Biotech, Medical, and Public Health Oversight Team:** The team would support a vision and coordinate and sustain statewide "intersection" activities and dialogue.
- **Establish a Statewide Inventory of the Sector and Conduct a Competitive Analysis:** The analysis should realize strengths, define gaps, and identify competitive edge.
- **Create an Identity for the Sector:** A narrative and identity would help the sector integrate into Rhode Island's statewide story to improve the profile of the sector and the state on a national and international scale. Other sectors should be engaged to coordinate this effort.
- **Enable and Incentivize a "Profile" System:** Engage regional peers to inventory, market, and connect expertise across the state (across discipline, sector, organizations).

A group of bioscience, neuroscience and public health officials has agreed to form a working group to continue to explore these actions.

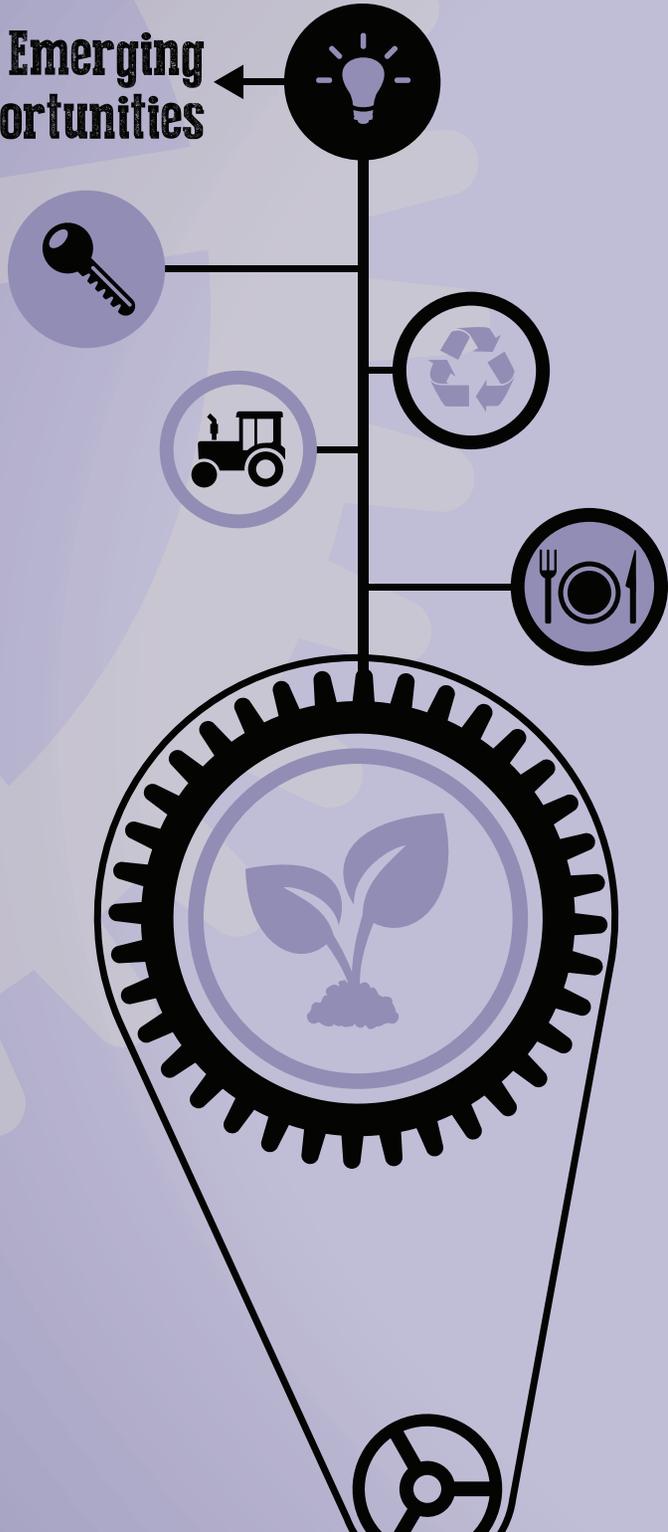


Promoting Emerging Opportunities

January 2014

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Economic Intersections of Rhode Island



Promoting Emerging Opportunities

There are often times when a new market opportunity begins to emerge, either from the evolution of another industry sector or to meet new consumer demands. It often takes time before these emerging opportunities are formally recognized within traditional economic development programs and priorities. As a result, opportunities to play a regional, national or global leadership role and seize the early benefits of these market opportunities are lost. Established infrastructure, organizations, and baseline information, from which action can take place, does not yet exist. Therefore, many of these opportunities require further definition and planning as a first step. Stakeholders suggested the following opportunities as prime for exploration.

Claim Rhode Island as the Center for the Maker Movement



According to makerfaire.com, the Maker Movement is “grassroots innovation” that can be developed in any community. According to Maker Magazine, many makers are hobbyists, enthusiasts or students, but they are also a wellspring of innovation, creating new products and producing value in the community. Some makers do become entrepreneurs and start companies. Rhode Island has historically been a community of ‘makers’, with jewelry, silverware, steam engines, furniture, textiles, glass, and other products being manufactured in the state for sale around the world. A base of industrial-scale maker activity continues in the state and is being bolstered by new market entrants. Claiming Rhode Island as the center for the maker movement will allow for increased awareness of the maker activities and resources in the state, opportunity for Rhode Island businesses to partner with local makers, and increased innovation through collaboration.

This action can be undertaken through the following steps:

- **Document Maker-Related Assets and Capabilities:** Segment by market type, including but not limited to manufacturers, colleges and universities, and students.
- **Form a Maker’s Guild:** A state-based association could help identify the sector participants and offer coordinated services and benefits.
- **Leverage the Maker Community to Support Business Growth:** Facilitating collaboration between makers and manufacturers and developing educational programs for local businesses could help spur job creation.

At the grassroots level, maker-related activity is underway. This action seeks to build upon those activities to accelerate the pace, growth, and scale of the people and organizations involved.

Establish a Regional Center of Excellence for Marine and Cybersecurity Technologies

Rhode Island’s marine-related research, education, and business organizations are continually exploring advances in marine technology, including resource management, marine engineering, underwater acoustics, marine device manufacturing, and other business, defense, and data (monitoring/analysis) areas. The University of Rhode Island’s Graduate School of Oceanography, Salve Regina University, the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport, and private businesses such as Raytheon are but a sampling of those who are advancing these technologies. A coordinated approach to connect and support these efforts can advance the region’s technology capabilities and provide a platform for pursuing additional projects, funding, and market opportunities for marine and cybersecurity R&D programs. These efforts can highlight Rhode Island’s strengths with the opportunity to collaborate on a regional level.

To accomplish this action the following steps could be taken:

- **Convene Stakeholders and Vet the Opportunity:** Stakeholders would represent the public, private, non-governmental, and higher education sectors in Rhode Island and neighboring states. Proposed Center activities include coordinating R&D, funding opportunities, and testing sites, and providing or connecting stakeholders to networking opportunities, technical assistance, and tech transfer support.
- **Plan for and Launch a Marine Center:** A neutral entity would need to be created to coordinate Center operations and communications. A full marketing and outreach campaign should accompany the launch.

The Southeastern New England Defense Alliance has convened a group of stakeholders to pursue this opportunity and could continue this effort.



Support a Stronger and More Resilient Rhode Island

Environmental and economic catastrophes are on the rise and there is a growing community of diverse practitioners that are focused on engineering better infrastructure and developing communities, structures, and systems to rebound quicker and limit the impacts from these natural and man-made events.

Accomplishing this will require new forms of products, new ways of evaluating and collaborating to build communities, and a systems-approach to how the economy operates. Rhode Island can be a national and global leader in designing and developing the systems and products to create resilient communities. According to a report from the Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association (RINLA), "Rhode Island is the smallest state in North America but has the greatest diversity in terms of its agricultural production and plant-based industries." This provides a unique opportunity to pilot and lead model efforts. The tools of resiliency, both plant-based and engineered products, will be created by companies someplace in the world, and the goal of this action is to have them created in Rhode Island. This will have the dual benefit of allowing the state to become more resilient and creating new industries that will create new jobs.

To accomplish this action the following steps should be taken:

- **Convene a Resilient Economy Collaborative:** This would be comprised of a broad range of stakeholders that could contribute to the vision of a stronger and more resilient Rhode Island.
- **Analyze the Opportunity and Plan for Economic Development through Resiliency:** Among the issues addressed should be nurturing existing firms and recruiting new firms associated with resilience technology, planning, engineering, construction, and investment, and analyzing incentives for businesses providing resiliency-related products and services.
- **Seek National Funding:** Rhode Island should position itself as a potential laboratory for testing and developing scalable approaches to economic development through resiliency.

The Rhode Island Foundation is convening an emerging "Stormwater and Green Infrastructure" coalition, which includes the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, the City of Providence, RINLA, the University of Rhode Island, and nonprofit groups such as Save the Bay, Conservation Law Foundation, Clean Water Action, and others. The focus is currently on developing a policy agenda and case studies but could be expanded or aligned with this recommendation.

Strengthen the Food Value Web to Increase Food-Related Jobs

Rhode Island's economy currently supports 1,200 small business farms and at least 146 identified food and beverage manufacturers, including wineries, distilleries, and breweries. Many other businesses represent other pieces of the food value web in Rhode Island, including United Natural Foods Inc., a national distributor of natural and organic foods. The concept of a "food value web" represents this range of businesses, from production to manufacturing to distribution to sales.

One percent of Rhode Islanders' consumption is from local sources. Nationally, local foods sales are booming. They grew from \$4 billion in 2002 to \$5 billion in 2007 to \$11 billion in 2011, according to John Ikerd, University of Missouri agriculture economics professor emeritus. Three-quarters of specialty food retailers say that "local" was the most influential product claim in 2012, according to the National Association of the Specialty Food Trade. According to the National Restaurant Association, this will hold true for 2014.

Historically the pieces of the Food Value Web have been thought of in silos with a focus on growers or processors, food and beverage manufacturers, restaurants, and ultimately consumers. Participants in the Economic Intersections discussion noted a greater opportunity in linking these market segments together in order to create, as one participant suggested, the "Silicon Valley of Food." The analogy demonstrates the excitement, and in some ways confidence, that stakeholders have in the food-related sector of the state.



To create a more integrated food value web, stakeholders suggested the need to:

- **Support Additional Growing and Harvesting Activity:** Access to land and water for agri- and aquaculture uses, business training, and support services were of utmost importance.
- **Enhance Processing and Institutional Order Fulfillment Capabilities of Producers:** Support for capital upgrades and a liaison between growers and institutions would serve this purpose.
- **Support Food and Beverage Manufacturers:** Support incubation facilities, provide education, develop a co-op, and pursue funding.
- **Create More Awareness Regarding Rhode Island's Food Opportunity:** In addition to drawing attention to some unique opportunities related to specialty and ethnic produce and food and beverage manufacturing, existing awareness efforts could be enhanced for greater impact.
- **Act as a Catalyst for Consumption of Rhode Island Food:** Underserved markets, anchor institutions, and major employers are all avenues for encouraging Rhode Islanders to eat local.

Segments of this recommendation are already under way. The Rhode Island Foundation could play a role in convening these various interests.



Coordinate and Enhance Entrepreneurship and Small Business Support Services for the Food-Health Nexus

Rhode Island appears to have a unique opportunity at the intersection between the food economy and the health economy (food-health nexus). The shift to an outcomes-based healthcare system and Rhode Island's implementation of the Affordable Care Act combined with the depth of food- and health-related research being conducted at the state's universities presents a unique market opportunity for new business creation. The few existing Rhode Island businesses working at the intersection of food and health are not only profitable companies, but also high-value companies, i.e. social enterprises. Edesia, producer of Plumpy'nut, may be one of the better-known examples. Johnson and Wales has recently announced the Food Innovation Nexus, an independent non-profit that will be catalyzing innovation and advanced stage start-ups around therapeutic and medicinal food; this announcement has catalyzed interest in identifying complementary efforts to take advantage of this opportunity.

For Rhode Island to support growth in this area, the following actions could be taken:

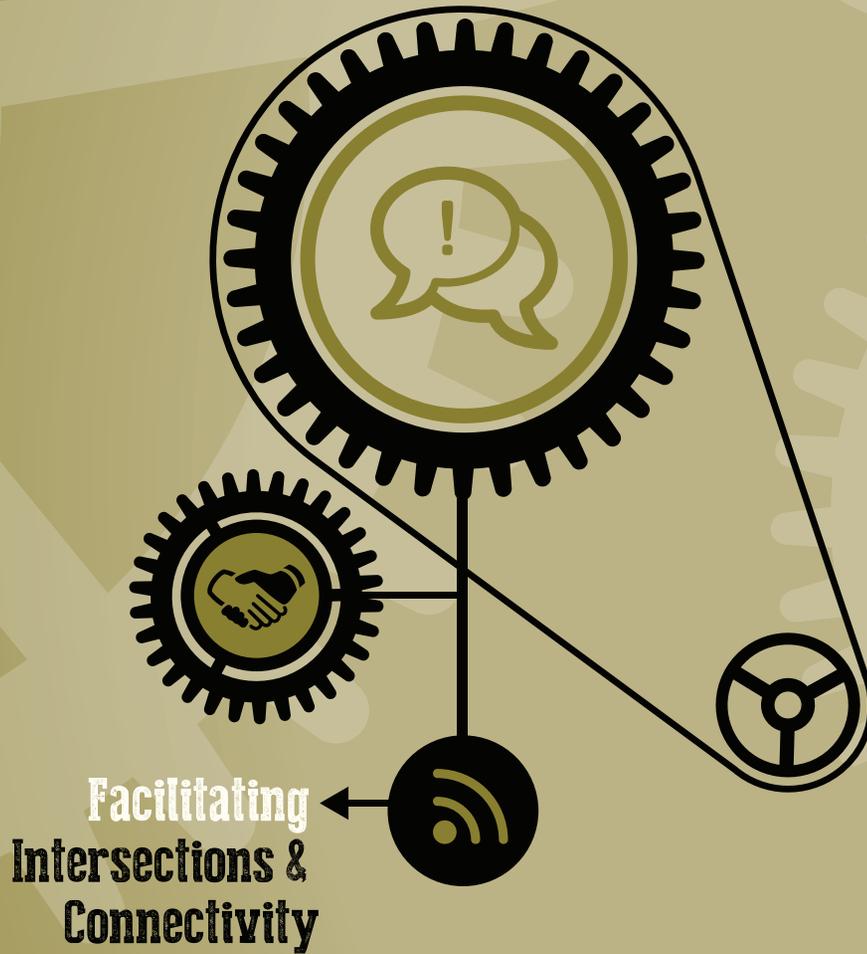
- **Identify the Value Proposition and Market Opportunity:** Further research, both qualitative and quantitative, is needed to identify several key value propositions for the food-health market opportunity.
- **Cultivate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Resources:** Once the most strategic opportunities are identified, non-profit, private, and public stakeholders have a role to play in supporting new and growing food-health nexus businesses.

Convening and analysis can begin as part of the economic development planning process underway in the state.



Facilitating Intersections & Connectivity

The spaces and methods for collaboration and communication are evolving daily and impacting our work and personal lives in profound ways. As recently as a few years ago the concept of sector collaboration in an economic development plan would be a foreign concept, but today, there is a deeper understanding that collaboration is what makes businesses succeed. To support increased collaboration in Rhode Island the following actions are recommended.



Develop Online Communications Infrastructure

During many of the workshops, participants expressed the need for a forum to share, promote, and celebrate talent, collaborations, and successes within and across their industries. Representatives from a variety of efforts shared their plans for databases to catalogue and communicate with industry stakeholders. If not properly aligned, these efforts run the risk of isolating their industry and members from broader cross-sector opportunities or causing “database fatigue” for end users. Coordinating these efforts has the potential to reduce duplication and increase impact.



Communications infrastructure should be developed to connect these sector resources, and encourage and promote collaboration. Specific actions include:

- **Implement a Centralized System to Connect Industry Networks:** Create a single shared database of Rhode Island individuals and businesses to reduce back-end development redundancy and create a real-time asset map of who is doing what in Rhode Island. A proposed system, named Tango RI, is gaining support.
- **Utilize the Database’s Information for Analysis and Planning:** This proposal already has the attention of the World Economic Forum because Rhode Island would be the only place with a statewide collaborative system that would allow for a real life application of new privacy and payment modules.
- **Complement the Database with a News Portal about Successful Collaborations:** This type of publication can create and disseminate the narrative of change, discovery, and excitement demonstrated during the Economic Intersections workshops.

A collaboration between Commerce RI and other organizations maintaining databases could support this action.

Enable Cross-Sector Collaboration to Propel Industry Strength and Success

Across nearly all industry sectors, stakeholders expressed a need for more opportunities to connect with other stakeholders within and across sectors to leverage talent, eliminate duplication, and cross-promote good work. For example, the logistics and connectivity sectors includes businesses working in warehousing and distribution, shipping, telecommunications, and supply chain management, just to name a few broad categories. All of these businesses share clients, and the success of their businesses is intertwined, yet they have no common platform for collaborating to address issues and seize opportunities. In addition, nearly every industry expressed interest in collaborating with the technology and arts and culture sectors to address a host of issues and opportunities.

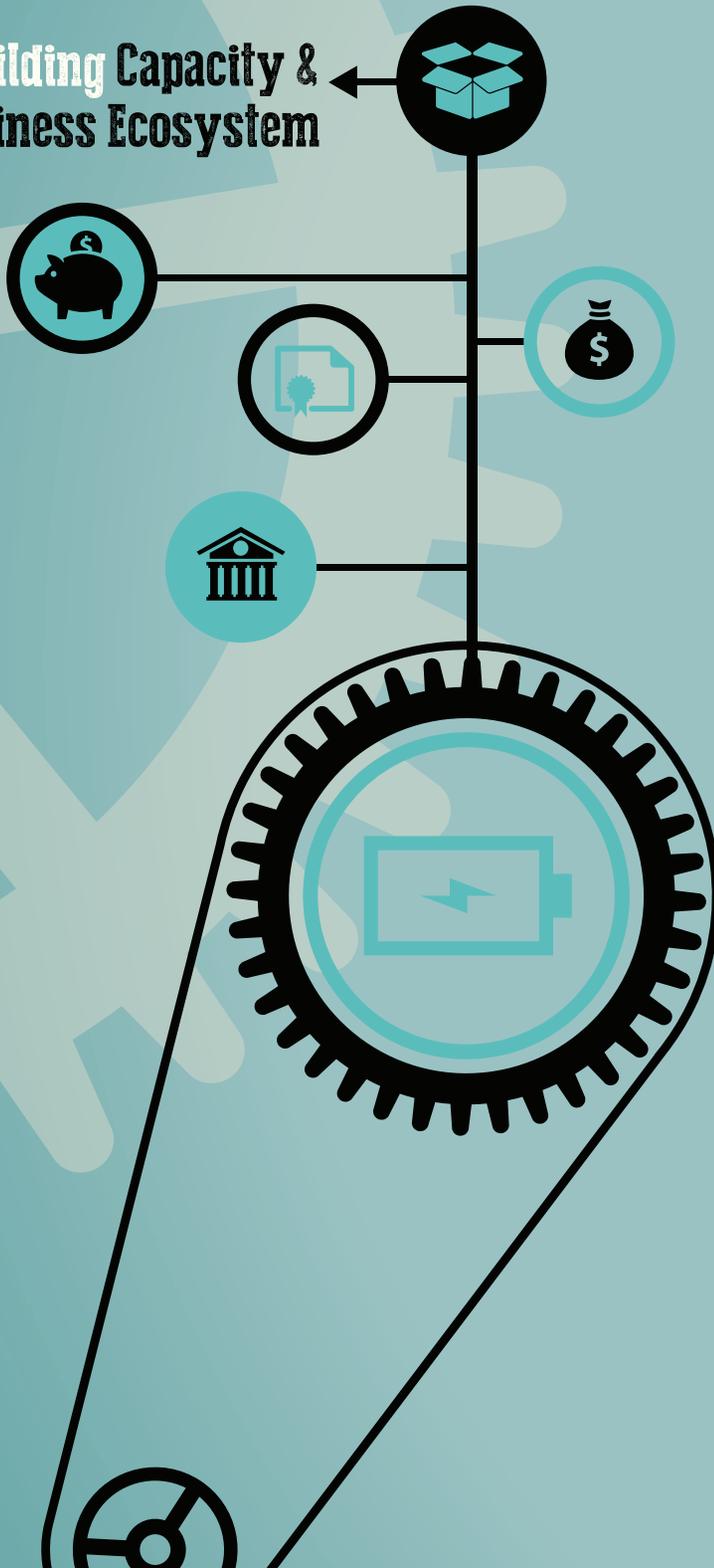
Together, Rhode Island’s industries and companies can be greater than the sum of their parts. However, that kind of meaningful collaboration requires an underlying infrastructure and environment. It is not enough to rely on random collisions alone. (Even convening these groups during the Economic Intersections process was a form of collaboration that benefited several participants as they developed new ideas and perspectives about their peers.) To enable further cross-sector collaboration, the following steps should be taken:

- **Engage Cross-Sector Stakeholders to Advance Market Opportunities:** Cross-sector events based on the “hackathon” format could be hosted regularly to address opportunities and barriers to growth.
- **Support the Development of Collision Spaces:** Whether new, neutral spaces, underutilized pop-up spaces, or existing space such as libraries, creating a physical infrastructure for collaboration is a key component.
- **Connect Projects to People and Resources:** Given that Commerce RI intersects with every sector and is frequently engaging a diversity of businesses, and that the Rhode Island Foundation supports many collaborative efforts, it would make sense for them to work together to develop a “circuit rider” to support projects resulting from these collaboration efforts.



Given their leadership in convening the Economic Intersection process, Commerce RI and Rhode Island Foundation could continue to play a role.

Building Capacity & the Business Ecosystem



Building Capacity & the Business Ecosystem

A business ecosystem is comprised of many connected pieces that support businesses throughout all stages of their life. An ecosystem should be able to evolve alongside the evolving needs of the businesses it supports. Capital, regulations, logistics, and technical assistance are four of the pieces that industry stakeholders suggested could be bolstered to better support their businesses. Many different types of organizations are involved in creating a strong ecosystem – public, private, non-profit, and higher education. Nearly all of the organizations supporting the business ecosystem could benefit from increased capacity and alignment. In order to improve Rhode Island’s business ecosystem the following actions were identified.

Increase Logistics and Export Assistance



The logistics and export service providers can be key partners in supporting the growth of other businesses. As existing firms look to global markets and new opportunities emerge for product manufacturing, the infrastructure and services that support shipping and export activity must evolve. In 2012, 48 percent of U.S. GDP growth was driven by export activity. According to Economic Intersection participants, Rhode Island is among the lowest funded states

relative to export support. Furthermore, Rhode Island's ports, shipping and trucking companies, and rail infrastructure could greatly benefit retailers and manufacturers in need of logistics services. However, a lack of awareness of these assets and small shipping volumes diminish their potential impact. While existing programs have had great success (e.g. According to their report, "Addressing Perceptions and Realities: The Rhode Island Manufacturing Renewal and Growth Program," the Rhode Island Manufacturing Renewal and Growth Program resulting in a 60 percent growth in exports, 500 new jobs, and \$16 million in sales according to tracking reports) stakeholders suggested that all Rhode Island businesses could benefit from additional assistance.

Specific actions include:

- **Identify Export Growth Opportunities:** Further data is needed to understand where Rhode Island's growth opportunities are relative to exports, which businesses would benefit from export assistance and to what extent, and what existing businesses have had success with exporting.
- **Create a ShipRI App:** Currently, many businesses use national providers such as FedEx or UPS to handle their shipping needs because they are unaware of local service providers.
- **Create a Rhode Island Shipping Association:** An independent Shipping Association would be able to combine the freight volume of small and medium sized companies and sign contracts directly with ocean shipping lines on their behalves, thereby reducing their costs for international shipping.
- **Addressing Regional Logistics Infrastructure Issues:** Logistics stakeholders should work with planners and state representatives to identify and address infrastructure issues such as congestion in Providence, weight restrictions on Massachusetts's bridges, and hazardous material transportation.

Address Rhode Island's Capital Gap

The availability of capital is a critical variable in the business ecosystem, and in Rhode Island it is one of the variables identified as a barrier to job growth. In this context, capital refers to the funding that can directly support companies, and the funding that can be invested in support services and programs that benefit small businesses. In the early stages of business growth, acquired capital through loans or equity investments often directly supports the hiring of new employees as the company seeks to get a product into the market or expand its operations. Rhode Island lacks an adequate level of this stage of capital and it creates much inefficiency in the business growth pipeline.

To address this issue, Rhode Island could create a Fund for Rhode Island's Future by employing a state-initiated financing mechanism that involves private sector participation and benefits a broad cross-section of companies with clear benchmarks for performance. Models exist in other states that can be replicated in Rhode Island. To pursue this action the following steps should be taken:

- **Research Appropriate Legislative Action:** Specifically consider the models of sector growth tax increment financing and tax credit sales, which can create independently managed pools of capital.
- **Determine Focus for the Fund and Process for Allocation:** The award of funds to a group for investment can be made by evaluating a set of criteria, such as previous investment track record, demonstrated knowledge of a state's entrepreneurial 'hubs', ability to secure match funding, and other factors that can be structured by a working group. Work as part of this effort indicates that there are startup companies in the areas of advanced manufacturing, information technology, biomedical, energy, and others. Fund managers should be evaluated based on their experiences with these sectors.
- **Find Supplemental Funding from the Private Sector:** The two common approaches are: utilizing the state controlled funds to invest in a private equity fund contingent upon \$3 to \$1 match or the greater of private funds, or providing a deal-by-deal match fund for companies securing private sector investment.
- **Track Results:** Create a transparent reporting structure to ensure that any funds provided must be closely monitored, reported on, and benchmarked against other states.

A group of private and public sectors leaders can convene to carry out the tasks described here.



Create New Mechanisms and Support Systems for Providing Capital to High-Opportunity Affinity Groups

Over the course of the Economic Intersections working groups, several areas emerged that required unique solutions to a lack of capital. Loan products in the marketplace (both public and private) may have underwriting limitations that cannot meet the needs of many of the affinity-related groups in Rhode Island. As a result many groups are left with few options. Three specific areas of focus that were highlighted in this process were minority-owned businesses, arts and culture organizations, and the agri- and aquaculture industry. (*RhodeMap RI* could explore other areas in need of unique capital solutions.)

Minority-owned Businesses

Rhode Island's Latino-owned businesses are a bright spot in the state's economy. According to figures from the U.S. Census Bureau 2007 Survey of Business Owners, Rhode Island Latino-owned business jumped from 3,415 in 2002 to 5,764 in 2007, an increase of 68.8 percent. Over the same time period, revenues increased by 115.4 percent, from \$213.7 million in 2002 to \$460.4 million in 2007. The Asian and African American populations also grew by 28 and 23 percent respectively over the past decade.

Creative and Cultural Economy

According to a 2011 New England Foundation for the Arts study, in 2009 Rhode Island's 1,163 arts and cultural organizations created 5,200 jobs and over \$324 million in economic activity. The National Governors Association, in its May 2012, report "New Engines of Growth: Five Roles for Arts, Culture and Design," described significant benefits of embracing the Creative and Cultural Economy, including: helping mature industries become more competitive, providing the critical ingredients for innovative places, catalyzing community revitalization, and delivering a better-prepared workforce.



Agri- and Aquaculture

It is estimated that plant-based and agriculture businesses in Rhode Island have a total impact of \$1.78 billion per year and 12,372 jobs. Additionally, in 2011, sales of fish landed by Rhode Island home-ported vessels in the commercial fishing sector totaled \$201 million; 1,506 vessels had commercial landings. An estimated 6,951 Rhode Island jobs are connected directly to harvesting, processing, distributing, and selling fish landed by Rhode Island home-ported vessels.

Despite the significant impact of these groups on Rhode Island's economy, lack of capital to address their unique needs threatens to stymie their potential. To pursue this action the following steps should be taken:

- **Support the Creation of a Community-based Minority-focused Financial Institution:** The community-based specialized financial institution would identify profitable investment opportunities that would also have a positive impact on the economic climate and quality of life in emerging minority markets by evaluating and developing deals and providing ongoing advice, contacts and support.
- **Support Specialized Funding for the Creative and Cultural Economy:** A Cultural Trust, a Cultural Facilities Fund, and an Innovation Seed Fund were three possible funding mechanisms to support the arts/culture/creative sectors. A coalition of arts organizations has been working to advance the concept of a Cultural Facilities Fund, and the Governor's proposed 2015 budget includes a bond for this purpose.
- **Specialized Funding to Grow the Agri- and Aquaculture Industry:** Partnering with regional banks and investors, providing low-interest loans for capital investments, and supporting succession planning were three needs identified.

NGOs working with or representing minority businesses (e.g. the RI Black Business Association, the Hispanic American Chamber of Commerce of RI), the Creative and Cultural Economy (e.g. the RI Council for the Humanities, RI State Council on the Arts), and the agri- and aquaculture industry (e.g. RI Shellfishermen's Association, Farm Fresh RI) could be involved in the development of their respective funding mechanisms.

Enhance Technical Assistance and Industry Support Organization Capacity to Facilitate Job Growth for Small Businesses

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, in 2010 small businesses represented 95.9 percent of all employers in Rhode Island and employed 55.4 percent of the private-sector labor force. The growth of small businesses in Rhode Island is an opportunity for local skill development, job creation, and industry diversification. Small and emerging businesses need specialized support systems to help them grow. Enhanced business services, such as training programs and mentorship, targeted towards small businesses, technology firms, and minority-owned businesses will contribute to new business creation and help the state's small and emerging businesses to succeed. To support emerging and small businesses and organizations the following actions should be pursued:

- **Align and Enhance Technical Assistance Organizations:** To realign services with demand from the small business community, technical assistance organizations could convene to map service provision, focusing on issues such as overlap, areas of unmet or emerging need, and types of mentorship most requested by small businesses and entrepreneurs. Ultimately, the system by which technical service providers are funded or promoted could incentivize services that lead more directly to a customer receiving a small business loan. Participants also raised the need for increased cultural competency among small business technical assistance providers.
- **Help Aspiring Business Owners Identify New Business Opportunities:** The feasibility of a program to connect aspiring business owners with current owners without succession plans could be investigated.
- **Align and Enhance Industry Associations:** New and long-standing industry associations are key mechanisms for helping small businesses communicate their needs to agency representatives and elected officials, and build their capacity to fulfill their missions. While Rhode Island has numerous such organizations, the sector still lacks the capacity, resources, and support necessary to fully serve small businesses.

Existing small business support organizations, including university-based programs, and industry associations will play a critical role in this recommendation. A neutral third party organization could convene them with private sector stakeholders to align and enhance services.



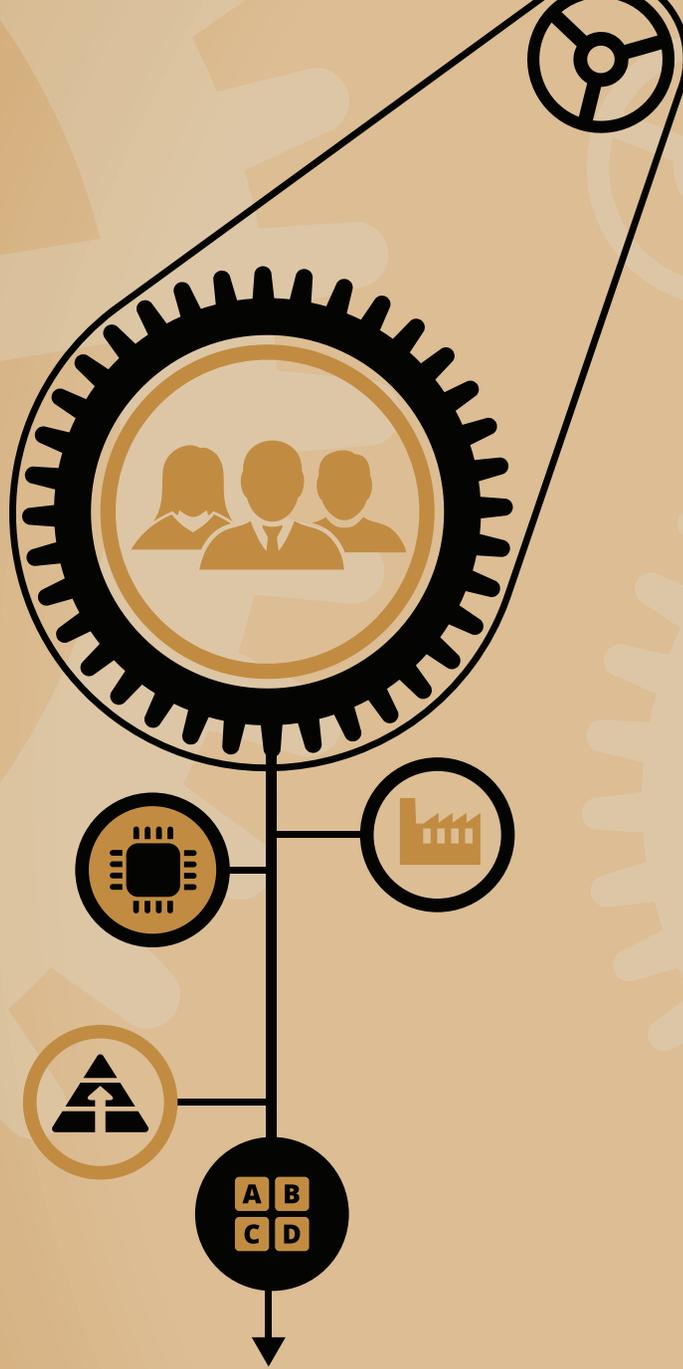
Support Regulatory Reform Efforts

Numerous participants reported frustration on dealing with the state and local regulatory environments. Therefore, there is wide industry support for the Office of Regulatory Reform (ORR) in its efforts to review all agency regulations that adversely impact small businesses. However, there seems to be limited understanding as to the scope, impact, and overall progress of this effort. Furthermore, stakeholders highlighted the need to:

- **Connect State-level Efforts with Local Review:** Creating consistency among municipal zoning and permitting processes, replicating the ORR review process at the local level, and implementing e-government services were identified as important steps to supporting business growth.
- **Assist Businesses in Navigating the Regulatory Process:** Creating/enhancing industry-specific ombudsmen to improve communication and help address issues between industries and their relevant agencies was suggested across nearly all Economic Intersections.

The Office of Regulatory Reform should continue to lead these efforts.





Supporting the Talent Pipeline

Supporting the Talent Pipeline

While Rhode Island continues to suffer from high unemployment rates, according to surveys done by the Department of Labor and Training approximately 10,000 job openings are going unfilled and business leaders are increasingly citing shortages of work-ready applicants for jobs they need to expand their businesses. Across Economic Intersection groups, access to talent was one of the most commonly cited barriers to business growth and innovation in Rhode Island. A particular sense of urgency surrounds the manufacturing industry, which has an aging workforce and limited younger workers stepping up to fill vacant positions, and the information technology industry, in which businesses face talent gaps on a national, basis. Participants from nearly every sector cited similar concerns regarding a lack of qualified workers.

Stakeholders are engaged in a number of emerging and growing efforts focused on seeking resolution to some of these issues. However, more coordination and awareness between the organizers of these efforts, private employers, and the community are needed to make a significant impact. Input received across the Economic Intersection working sessions points to the need for a comprehensive restructuring of the existing approach to workforce and skills development in Rhode Island. A 'system' analysis will need to be conducted to identify the overall gaps, costs to alleviate them, and most effective workforce system structure. Based on the input received, this system change may involve efforts such as: reviewing the Community College of Rhode Island's mission and redefining its role in meeting current and emerging educational and employment needs; enhancing the role and resources of the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB) in developing customized workforce training solutions; improving coordination between participants; improving coordination among K-12, higher education, and business communities to facilitate curriculum development that is geared towards anticipated industry demands; and establishing more flexible funding streams to support development of targeted training for high-demand occupations.

The Rhode Island Senate's recently released *Rhode to Work* legislative action plan provides specific recommendations on how state lawmakers can take action to get Rhode Islanders back to work. The findings of the Economic Intersections process align with and clearly support their recommendations. The *Rhode to Work* report provides a broad set of actions, while this Action Agenda focuses in on four specific ideas that were shared by the private sector representatives in this process.

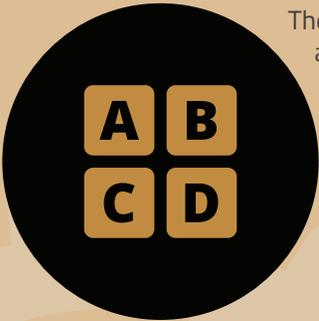
Engage and Inform K-12 Youth and Families

Improving exposure to diverse career options and higher education paths was suggested during a number of sessions. Participants indicated that students and families often lack information or have misconceptions about what careers in certain fields offer. This can be particularly true for immigrant and low-income communities where exposure to a wide variety of careers may be more limited, an obstacle that can be exacerbated by family language barriers.

Actions that should be pursued to prepare Rhode Island's youth for successful participation in the workforce include:

- **Expand In-School Career Counseling:** Strengthen the knowledge-base of counselors about existing and emerging career opportunities.
- **Increase Exposure to High-Opportunity Industries through In-School Industry-Led Events:** Hosting industry representatives will improve student exposure to occupational and career paths, with content tailored to the grade level.
- **Build Maker and Innovation Activities into K-12 Curricula:** Particularly at the high school level, there are activities to build on that engage students in maker and innovation activities, such as the Newport Tech Expo and the MET Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship's "Entrepreneurship 360" program.

The University of Rhode Island, Tech Collective, and the Governor's Workforce Board Industry Partnerships are just some of the organizations already working to address this recommendation. The Rhode Island Department of Education and the Department of Labor and Training would also be key public partners.



A B
C D

Assist Employers in Attracting and Retaining Qualified Workers

Many industry sectors cited difficulties in attracting qualified workers, particularly mid-level workers. Representatives in some industries, such as manufacturing, expressed great willingness to train workers on the job if only they could find workers with suitable soft skills and an interest in their industry.

To assist employers in attracting and retaining qualified workers, the following actions could be taken:

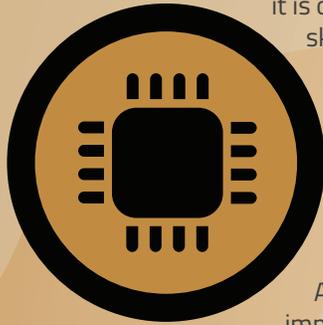
- **Continue to Track Labor Supply and Enhance the Dissemination of Information:** Effective labor training and internship programs require accurate and timely information available in formats that can be used by several types of stakeholders. Employers, guidance counselors, curriculum designers, and others need this information to support proactive approaches.
- **Expand "IT on Demand"-like Programs to Other Industries:** This effort managed by the Tech Collective could be expanded to other sectors with talent needs. Skills gap surveys, identification of training programs, and participant tracking are demonstrating success.
- **Expand Meaningful Interaction Between Higher Education and Industry:** A collaborative approach is needed around issues of skills gaps, labor market demands, and curriculum development. The URI Business Engagement Center was cited as a model that could be expanded to address this need.
- **Support and Enhance Work Experience Programs and Platforms such as bRidge.jobs:** Recent investments by the Governor's Workforce Board, \$500,000 for a match-fund for internships, and the Rhode Island Foundation's investment in bRidge.jobs should continue and be more broadly supported.

Public stakeholders such as DLT, RIDE and the Governor's Workforce Board, industry representatives and associations, and institutions of higher education will all have a role to play.



Develop the Information Technology Talent Pipeline

According to a 2013 IT skills gap analysis published by the Tech Collective, 13,500 people are working in Rhode Island as IT professionals. While this is an all-time high, employers participating in the Economic Intersection groups indicated that it is often challenging to find workers with the right mix of skills, including IT-specific skills, soft skills and general professional skills. Development of talent and interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM), particularly Computer Sciences (CS) at the K-12 levels will help Rhode Island increase its regional and national competitiveness across a variety of fields.



A number of efforts are substantially underway to improve Rhode Island's information technology talent pipeline. The following actions can be taken to support and expand upon existing efforts:

- **Convene a Summit Between RIDE and Computer Science Chairs:** The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and department chairs from university computer science programs should work collaboratively to address issues including the K-12 curriculum, scholarship programs, and family education on computer science opportunities.
- **Train High School Teachers to Use of Free Online Computer Science Tools:** Several national groups are offering free online platforms for teaching computer science, but teachers need help identifying the best ones.
- **Develop a Model for Increasing Computer Science Graduates in Rhode Island:** Engaging high school students in a structured short-term self-directed program could greatly increase the number of computer science graduates by 2017. The program would include elements such as coding classes, presentations by industry representatives, and college open houses.
- **Adapt Existing Rhode Island-based and National Work Experience Programs:** A gap year program, similar to Venture For America, could be created to encourage high school graduates to enter computer science-related fields.

Public stakeholders such as RIDE and the Governor's Workforce Board, private sector businesses and associations, and institutions of higher education will all have a role to play.

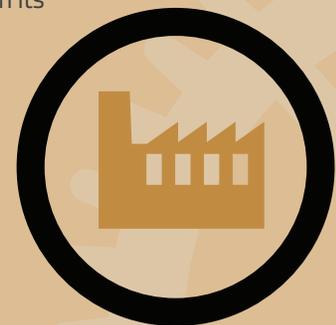
Develop the Manufacturing Talent Pipeline

A particular sense of urgency surrounds the issue of talent for the manufacturing industry. In 2012, more than 60 percent of Rhode Island's manufacturing workforce was 45 years of age or older, according to the Department of Labor and Training. Economic Intersection participants from the manufacturing industry reported great difficulty attracting younger workers to fill the imminent labor gap. Refreshing the talent supply for the manufacturing industry is critical in facilitating the continued evolution of manufacturing in Rhode Island. This can be accomplished through a combination of an awareness campaign, internship and apprenticeship programs, and regulatory reform.

To develop the manufacturing talent pipeline, the following steps should be taken:

- **Initiate an Awareness Campaign Targeted at Students and Un/Underemployed:** Focusing on existing and near-term manufacturing career opportunities will showcase the new manufacturing experience.
- **Explore Feasibility of a New Manufacturing-Focused Technical High School:** Such an effort would serve existing and future businesses and enhance Rhode Island's manufacturing reputation.
- **Address Regulatory Barriers to After-School Work Programs:** Create a specialized work permit or other authorization to allow high school students to gain after-school manufacturing work experience.
- **Develop a Manufacturing Apprenticeship Program:** An industry-wide apprenticeship program could target critical areas for skills shortage. Also, existing efforts such as the apprenticeship tax credit should be better promoted.
- **Modernize CCRI Manufacturing Program Facilities:** To mirror equipment and facilities being used in today's manufacturing, the Community College of Rhode Island must be better equipped and modernized to be able to effectively train its students.

Public stakeholders such as DLT, Office of Regulatory Reform, CCRI, RIDE and the Governor's Workforce Board, industry representatives and associations, and institutions of higher education will all have a role to play.



CONCLUSION

The ideas presented in this Action Agenda are in various stages of planning and execution, with some of them gaining additional momentum even as the working group process was conducted. This summary is meant to record the findings from the Economic Intersections process, but not to serve as a final set of recommendations for the state's economic development plan. A holistic economic development plan is needed to guide immediate and longer-term priorities that can be championed by the state, business leaders, the academic community, the non-profit community and citizens. In the meantime, there is much that can be done to make progress, and there is no time to lose.

Additional descriptions of the recommended actions can be found in the complete findings document at www.makeithappenri.com.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Commerce RI and the Rhode Island Foundation would like to thank the following people for contributing their time, energy, and ideas to this process:

Nick Adams, Care Thread
 Gail Ahlers, Ahlers Designs
 Michael Allio, Allio Associates, LLC
 Ted Almon, Claflin Company, Inc.
 Julian Alssid, College for America
 Alden Anderson, C.B. Richard Ellis
 Peter Andruszkiewicz, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island
 Susan Arnold, RI Association of Realtors
 Leif Askeland, Hasbro, Inc.
 Richard Asinof, ConvergenceRI
 Tomas Avila, Milenio Associates
 Ken Ayars, RI Dept. of Environmental Management
 Daniel Bacher, SpeakYourMind Foundation
 Dana Barlow, The Moore Company
 Daniel Baudouin, The Providence Foundation
 Theresa Baus, NUWC
 Robert Billington, Blackstone Valley Tourism Bureau
 Gavin Black, Moran Shipping Company
 Todd Blount, Blount Fine Foods
 George Bottomley, Johnson & Wales University Center for Physician Assistant Studies
 Kipp Bradford, KippKitts
 Terry Bradley, University of Rhode Island
 Shannon Brawley, Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association
 Barrett Bready, Nabsys
 Erik Bright, The Steelyard
 Jan Brodie, I-95 Commission
 David Brown, Whittet-Higgins
 Bob Burke, Pot au Feu - Independence Trail
 Russell Carey, Brown University
 Lisa Carnevale, Myranda Group
 Nancy Carriuolo, Rhode Island College
 Paul Carroll, City of Newport
 Lauren Carson, Rhode Island Clean Water Action
 Amber Caulkins, College & University Research Collaborative
 Daniel Cavicchi, Rhode Island School of Design
 David Chenevert, Swissline Precision
 Alan Chille, Providence Performing Arts Center
 Shayna Cohen, Food and Agriculture Consultant
 Peter Collins, A2B Tracking Solutions, Inc.
 Bruce Corliss, URI Graduate School of Oceanography
 Gail Costa, Care New England
 Jean Cotta, Portsmouth Nursery
 Chris Crawford, The Corporate Marketplace, Inc.
 Umberto Crenca, AS220
 Donna Cupelo, Verizon Communications
 Meredith Curren, Edgewood Holdings
 Robert Cusack, Whale Rock Point Partners, LLC
 Al Dahlberg, Brown University
 John Davenport, Brown Institute for Brain Science
 Angelo DePeri, Renaissance Providence Hotel
 David DePetrillo, Rhode Island Commodores
 Richard DeRienzo, Lefkowitz, Garfinkel, Champi & DeRienzo, P.C.
 Elizabeth Deschenes, Hasbro, Inc.
 Joseph Devine, Bridge Technical Talent
 Steve Devine, RI Department of Transportation
 Margaret DeVos, South Side Community Land Trust
 Judith Diaz, Lifespan

Paul Dion, RI Department of Revenue
 John Donoghue, Brown University
 Maeve Donohue, Nami Studios
 Peter Dorsey, Business Development Company
 Jonathan Duffy, Duffy & Shanley Inc.
 Davide Dukcevic, Daniele Foods
 Tom Dziki, United Natural Foods Inc.
 Craig Eaton, Twin River Management Group
 Jan Eckhart, Sweetberry Farm
 Dan Egan, Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Rhode Island
 Timothy Ehrlich, Ocean State Angels
 Barnaby Evans, WaterFire Providence
 Jonathan Fain, Teknor Apex
 Sergio Ferreira, Providence Startup Weekend
 Jeff Flath, eNow
 Katharine Flynn, URI Business Engagement Center
 Ray Fogarty, Chafee Center for International Business at Bryant University
 Susan Folco, Warwick Office of Tourism, Culture & Development
 Elizabeth Francis, Rhode Island Council for the Humanities
 Kelly Fredericks, Rhode Island Airport Corporation
 Nancy Gagliano, CVS
 Charles Garcia, Odyssey Consulting, LLC
 Myrna George, South County Tourism Council
 Scott Gibbs, Economic Development Foundation of Rhode Island
 Jennifer Giroux, Rhode Island College
 Gary Glassman, Providence Pictures
 David Goldsmith, Aspiera
 Patti Goldstein, Rhode Island Airport Corporation
 Jeremy Goodman, Roger Williams Zoo
 Morgan Grefe, Rhode Island Historical Society
 Geoffrey Grove, Pilgrim Screw Corporation
 Topher Hamblett, Save the Bay
 Ned Handy, Washington Trust Company
 Seth Handy, Handy Law, LLC
 John Harker, microPEP
 William Hatfield, Bank of America RI
 Philip Hawthorne, Blue Cross Blue Shield of RI
 Timothy Hebert, Atrion Networking Corporation
 Jeff Hirsh, The Lobster Pot
 Renee Hobbs, URI Harrington School of Communication & Media
 Richard Horan, Slater Technology Fund
 John Isberg, National Grid
 Junior Jabbie, Banneker Industries
 Karen Jedson, Warwick Office of Tourism, Culture & Development
 Wendy Jencks, Blackstone Valley Tourism Bureau
 Sharyl Jump, Naval War College Museum
 Colin Kane, Peregrine Group/ I-95 Redevelopment Commission
 Martin Keen, Focal Upright Furniture
 Jason Kelly, Moran Shipping Company
 Suzanne Kelly, Alex and Ani
 Steven King, Quonset Development Corporation
 Nick Kishfy, Mojotech
 Steve Kitchin, New England Institute of Technology
 Lisa Konicki, Westerly Chamber of Commerce
 Charlie Kroll, Andera
 James Kwon, Figmint
 Bernie Lambrese, Infusion Resource
 Steve Lane, Ximedita
 Leonard Lardaro, University of Rhode Island
 Jim Lavoie, Rite Solutions

Dale Leavitt, Roger Williams University
Darrell Lee, BCOG Planning
Adam Leonard, Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Rhode Island
Kenneth Levy, Johnson & Wales University
Alan Litwin, Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co.
Stephen Lombardi, East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce
Maria Mack, Canterbury Farm
Wendy Mackie, Rhode Island Marine Trades Association
Molly Magee, SENEDIA
Robert Mancini, Rhode Island Society of Certified Public Accountants
David Marble, OSHEAN
Chris Marsella, Marsella Development
Ray Mathieu, Narragansett Capital, Inc.
Evan Matthews, Quonset Development Corp.
Bill Mauran, Quality Landscape Services
Jim McCarvill, Rhode Island Convention Center
Bill McCourt, RI Manufacturer's Association
Michael McGivney, RI Shellfishermens Association
Dwight McMillan, Basics Group Inc.
Laura McNamara, East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce
Cheryl Merchant, Hope Global
Seth Milman, Daly Crowley Mofford & Durkee, LLP
Marcus Mitchell, Shere Strategy Enterprises
Eric Moffett, Seaview Railroad
Megan Moran, Block Island Ferry
Peter Mottur, GreenFins
John Muggerridge, Fidelity Investments
Karl Munzel, Site Survey Tech
Colin Murphy, Providence Design
Daniel Murphy, Home Loan Investment Bank
Richard Nagele, Fort Adams Trust
Robert Nangle, Meridian Printing
Dean Narodowy, Daniele Foods
Karen Oakley, Viking Tours
Paul O'Reilly, Newport Harbor Corporation
John Palumbo, Rhode Island Monthly
Jason Pamental, H+W Design
Ken Payne, Rhode Island Agricultural Partnership
Mark Pelson, Lambert Cove Acquisition Corporation
Charity Pennock, New England Clean Energy Council
Jenny Pereira, The Rhode Island Foundation
Aidan Petrie, Ximedica
Marc Petrowicz, Unilock
David Piccerelli, WSBE - RI PBS
Lee Pichette, Andera
Yahaira Placencia, Bank of America RI
Leo Pollock, Rhode Island Food Policy Council
Nicole Pollock, RI Dept. of Environmental Management
Edward Quinlan, Hospital Association of Rhode Island
Paul Raducha, Providence Energy Group
Lisa Raiola, Hope & Main
Deborah Ramos, North Central Chamber of Commerce
Lisa Utman Randall, Jamestown Arts Center
Lisa Ranglin, RI Black Business Association
Perry Raso, Matunuck Oysters
Janet Raymond, Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce
Cynthia Stewart Reed, LTR Holdings, LLC
Bob Rheault, East Coast Shellfish Growers Assoc.
Richard Rhodes, University of Rhode Island
Elizabeth Robson, Johnson & Wales University/JF Moran

John Robson, Norman Prince Neuroscience Institute
Ray Roch, Jr., Roch's Fruit & Produce
Shawn Rubin, Metryx LLC
Jesse Rye, Farm Fresh RI
Soren Ryherd, Working Planet
Navyn Salem, Edesia Inc.
Garry Sasse, Bryant University
Lou Schwewheimer, Pawtucket Red Sox
Kathleen Shannon, SHIFT
Dan Shedd, Taylor Box Company
Martha Sheridan, Providence/Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau
Karl Sherry, Hayes & Sherry
Kathie Shields, Tech Collective
Bill Silkes, American Mussel Harvesters
John Simmons, RIPEC
J. L. Singleton, Providence Performing Arts Center
Heather Singleton, Rhode Island Hospitality Association
Libby Slader, Libby Slader Interior Design
Christine Smith, RI Science and Technology Advisory Council
Evan Smith, Discover Newport
Cheryl Snead, Banneker Industries
Thorne Sparkman, Slater Technology Fund
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Rebekah Greenwald Speck, Riverzedge Arts Project
Randal Spencer, Concordia Manufacturing, LLC
Denice Spero, BioScience Leaders
Robin Squibb, The Granny Squibb Company
Nick Steffey, Narragansett Bay Insurance Company
Ted Stricklin, Experience Rhode Island
Robert Suglia, Amica Insurance Company
Terry Sullivan, The Nature Conservancy
Dan Sullivan, Collette
Jody Sullivan, Newport County Chamber of Commerce
Michael Sweeney, Duffy & Sweeney, Ltd.
Richard Talipsky, SEA CORP
Valerie Talmage, Preserve Rhode Island
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Allan Tear, Betaspring
Katherine Therieau, Chafee Center for International Business at Bryant University
Ethan Timm, The Figure Ground Studio
Michael Van Leesten, The Van Leesten Group
Greg Victory, Rhode Island School of Design
Marshall Votta, Leverage Health Solutions
Karl Wadensten, Vibco
Derek Wagner, Nicks on Broadway
Dave Wallace, Park Farms
Tim Walsh, Discover Newport
Bruce Waterson, Waterson Terminal Services
Catherine Weaver, Tupelo Gardenworks, Ltd.
Eric Weiner, Food Trucks Inc.
Fox Wetle, Brown University
Kevin Wilbur, Absolute Commerce
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