



June 9, 2021 Board/MIC Meeting Breakout Session Summary

Breakout sessions were part of the June 9th Board/MIC meeting. Four groups were created and facilitated by Executive Committee members, and they touched on following topics:

1. Comments and suggestions on today's meeting content
2. Leveraging RVA757 Connects' marketing communications efforts
3. Input on the I-64 Innovation Corridor Talent Study

Recap of Overall Input:

The following represents the general input of the four breakout groups. Detailed notes from each group are located in the Appendix.

Meeting Feedback (Comments & Suggestions):

Content & Delivery: Everyone felt the relevant and engaging content told the story well during the meeting. Participants were impressed with the current momentum of priority developments.

Board Size/Make-up: Many participants are eager to see more diversity in the Board and Councils as they are formed in the future. Some are concerned about the large Board size, but the establishment of active Councils will create greater personal engagement and impact in the region.

Priorities: Participants appreciated all the relevant data. Priorities are still considered essential to accomplish in the long-term for the megaregion. We should continue to actively share regional stories.

Collaboration: Most re-emphasized the importance of collaboration between all sectors, from education to business to legislative, engaging both private and public organizations. This includes reaching out to organizations such as the Greater Washington Partnership. Both RVA and the 757 want to be informed of each other's regional accomplishments, developments, and pursuits.

Leveraging RVA757 Connects' Marketing Communications efforts:

Directors and MIC members were impressed by the professionalism of the Marketing Communications efforts. Many participants requested continued engagement through testimonials, stories of the megaregion, and further education on organizational priorities. However, some participants questioned the "I-64 Innovation Corridor" positioning name.



Input on the I-64 Innovation Corridor Talent Study:

Most participants agreed that connectivity and collaboration between higher education and local businesses are the key to keeping talent in the region. Several individuals were impressed by the Campus Philly model, which RVA NOW and Campus 757 emulate.

One group brainstormed an innovative apprenticeship program that would more meaningfully connect college-level students in the I-64 Innovation Corridor with employers.

Multiple groups shared that it is critical to understand why students are leaving as well as how to attract talent in a post-pandemic world.

One group mentioned the potential in seeking talent from veterans/exiting military and individuals with disabilities. These groups shouldn't be overlooked for the talent pool.

Appendix

Group 1 Moderators: Ted Chandler, Peggy Layne

Meeting Feedback (Comments & Suggestions):

Positive:

- Information presented effectively and efficiently tells the story. Has WOW effect.
- Internet Connectivity well in place.

Needs:

- Ecosystems in both regions are next focus.
- Create "Critical Mass" around employers and lifestyle opportunities in both regions:
 - Address Retention
 - Tell story of RVA's initiatives
 - Wealth creation for diverse community
 - Collaborate with universities
- Increase Asian American representation in the Board/MIC.
- Share best practices with the Greater Washington Partnership (GWP), since they have a similar focus with future.

Looking Forward:

- Create Golden Crescent by including Richmond in both GWP and RVA757 Connects.



Leveraging RVA757 Connects' Marketing Communications efforts:

Positive:

- Collaboration is well-received, and communications have been effectively getting the word out.

Needs:

- Differentiate marketing with employment/jobs – Create a registry for employers to post vacancies and connect with colleges.
- Promote global ambitions – trade and commerce.

Input on the I-64 Innovation Corridor Talent Study:

- Go to Colleges/Universities – connect with HRBCs and provide a registry for job vacancies.
- Connecting with the next generation (beyond money):
 - Internal growth within organization
 - Inclusive community
 - Wealth creation
 - Housing
- Connect with next generation (grades 9-10)
 - Share opportunities for success and inspire early commitments

Group 2 Moderators: Tom Frantz, Bob Holsworth

Meeting Feedback (Comments & Suggestions):

Positive:

- Impressive organizational momentum and accelerated pace
- Notable leaders on the Board
- Relevant data analysis with excellent comparative features
- Website and communications
- Beyond expectations

Needs:

- More buy-in and attention from 757 than RVA
- Maintaining pace will be challenge

Looking Forward:

- Tighter focus on strategic priorities
- Emphasize story telling more
- Continue educating participants on events and opportunities in the corridor



- Include community college presidents in the region in a meaningful way – they can be major players in workforce developments.

Leveraging RVA757 Connects' Marketing Communications efforts:

Positive:

- Appreciation of WCG team
- Excellent communication with Board
- Very sophisticated for start-up organization

Needs:

- Debate on originality of "I-64 Innovation Corridor" naming – not sure if it will attract talent
- There is absence of overall marketing campaign for RVA757 megaregion
- Highlight extraordinary range of assets in the region – quality of life and distinctive features

Looking Forward:

- Continue adding testimonials
- Continue to pursue diversity and inclusion

Input on the I-64 Innovation Corridor Talent Study:

- Emphasizes marketing
- Follow Philly model:
 - Get students out of the classroom
 - Build stronger, more robust connection between higher ed and business
 - Recruit businesses to offer paid internships
- Speak with students to understand why they're leaving from their perspective
- Understand how region can be successful in attracting talent in new post-pandemic work environment

Group 3 Moderators: John Martin & Wilson Flohr

Meeting Feedback (Comments & Suggestions):

Positive:

- The I-64 gap funding is essential to our success.
- Participants really appreciated the relevant data.
- Overall – content was excellent and engaging.

Needs:

- We need greater connectivity in every way possible.



- It was suggested that the four target industries mentioned need to have a closer alignment with educational institutions.

Looking Forward:

- Take advantage of recognizing sea level rise and all the things we're doing to address it.
- Focus on tying in the Virginia Chamber, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), and Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP).

Leveraging RVA757 Connects' Marketing Communications efforts:

Positive:

- Direction was spot on – The marketing communications are appropriately advancing the I-64 Innovation Corridor story.

Needs: N/A

Looking Forward: N/A

Input on the I-64 Innovation Corridor Talent Study:

This group spent considerable time brainstorming an apprenticeship program that would more meaningfully connect college-level students in the I-64 Innovation Corridor with employers:

This concept centers around extended internships. Currently, many college students get internships during the summer of their sophomore/junior year. While some of these experiences turn into long-term employment, they're limited in scope by short summers, making it challenging for both student interns and employers.

Building on this, colleges and universities could restructure their curriculum. Early in a student's college education, the institution could encourage them to take a class/classes during the summer semester ("flex summer") and bank their required credits. This would afford a longer-term internship during one of their fall/winter junior/senior year semesters. These four-to-five-month internships would be sponsored by employers who are creating new jobs and potentially matched by GOVA funding. Conceptually, orchestrating this at scale could generate hundreds of meaningful experiences for both employers and interns that would directly lead to jobs for students upon graduation.

The group agreed that this preliminary concept was worth sharing with others as the start of a potential recommendation for our GOVA grant.

Additional thought: It was suggested we probe into the deep-seated reasons behind what's keeping some new graduates here and why others are leaving.



Group 4 Moderators: Sarah Jane Kirkland & Moses Foster

Meeting Feedback (Comments & Suggestions):

Positive:

- Appreciate size of Board, but wary of it becoming too large. Discussed having a thoughtful, deliberate conversation about the involvement of elected officials and the public sector. A lot of what we do straddles the private and public sectors.
- Capital Trail can be tremendous for the area. Referenced the positive impact of Atlanta's walking/biking corridor, the BeltLine. It's a unique attraction and leverage for marketing in the future.

Needs:

- Want a clearer picture of what's happening in both RVA and the 757 (from opposite markets).

Looking Forward:

- Build an Advocacy Committee to communicate with elected officials so they know what's going on.
- Incorporate HBCUs, who will be critical for Diversity and Inclusion as well as obtaining talent.
- Keep Directors/MIC members engaged with more robust committees – advocacy, elected official liaison, education, etc.

Leveraging RVA757 Connects' Marketing Communications efforts:

Positive:

- Glowing review of website and marketing communications. It informs people well.

Needs: N/A

Looking Forward:

- Emails that connect people to the website will be a critical component of expanding reach and understanding of RVA757 Connects.



Input on the I-64 Innovation Corridor Talent Study:

College students need to buy into what we're creating now. CIVIC's engagement of college students through the CIVIC Scholars Program was praised as a model to use.

Mentorship is great, but not scaling. Students want to be put to work – REAL WORK. They want the opportunity to make change, build, and create in an impactful way.

Other sources of talent that shouldn't be overlooked include exiting military/veterans and individuals with disabilities. The V3 program (Virginia Values Veterans) aims to educate and train companies on why it is a good business decision to recruit, hire, train, and retain Veterans, but also to help those committed companies meet their hiring goals. More companies joining V3 will help gain a greater handle on who's coming out of the military, when they're exiting, and how they are matched to the right career. From a disability perspective, it is a great source of untapped talent. 80% are underemployed or unemployed.

The infrastructure and new initiatives (such as offshore wind) provide great opportunities for work in the right field (such as welding). Site readiness and shovel ready sites are crucial to funding and moving forward with infrastructure-based initiatives.

Business retention and expansion are as important as attracting new businesses to the region. Showcasing the industry clusters can play an important role in attracting new businesses.