PROGRESS REPORT

The Rhode Island Foundation
October 15, 2012
THE RHODE ISLAND FOUNDATION

Founded in 1916, the Rhode Island Foundation is a proactive community and philanthropic leader dedicated to meeting the needs of the people of Rhode Island. Thanks to the support of our many generous donors, we are the largest funder to the nonprofit community in the state. In 2011, we distributed $28 million, primarily in the areas of arts and culture, community and economic development, education, the environment, health, and human services. In recent years, we have led and supported efforts to improve the state’s primary healthcare and public education systems.

At times, the Foundation goes beyond traditional grantmaking to influence critical or emerging issues in our state. We do this by providing a platform for public dialogue, convening stakeholders, and advocating for policy changes. To do more of this, we established a Civic Leadership Fund in 2012. Make It Happen RI was a direct outgrowth of the Civic Leadership Fund, and we are grateful for the inaugural donors who have supported this type of work.

We believe that stepping forward, engaging in civil and productive debate, and learning from each other is how we move Rhode Island ahead.
THE CONTEXT

The Rhode Island Foundation held Make It Happen RI to find ways for the private sector to help jumpstart and grow Rhode Island’s economy.

WHY FOCUS ON THE ECONOMY NOW?

Rhode Island has been hard hit by the “Great Recession,” and our recovery has been painfully slow. During the summer of 2012, we felt compelled to take on this topic for several reasons:

- **We are confident** in the wide range of assets, resources, and success stories in Rhode Island.
- **We are inspired** by the success of our recent Rhode Island Innovation Fellowship program, which proved that Rhode Islanders are eager to step forward with ideas and solutions.
- **We are frustrated** by many years of meetings, panels, symposiums, task forces, reports, and plans for economic development that have led to limited action.
- **We feel a sense of urgency.** Almost 60,000 Rhode Islanders are unemployed (the second highest unemployment rate in the country), and the resulting needs in our community continue to mount. Philanthropic and public dollars are strained. Urgency can lead to action while still being thoughtful and deliberate.

So the Foundation did what we thought was right: we brought together the community to help.

AND, WOW, DID OUR COMMUNITY RESPOND!

On September 7-8, 2012, we hosted Make It Happen RI at the Rhode Island Convention Center. More than 300 individuals from the private sector participated in working sessions designed to generate ideas of how to stimulate Rhode Island’s economy (what to do and how to do it).

We brought together a critical mass of Rhode Island’s key doers and thinkers — true diversity across sectors, industries, generations, and areas of expertise and experience — to identify short-term private sector actions to rekindle the economy and articulate a story or set of themes around Rhode Island’s economic development.
Participants included individuals from small and medium-sized businesses, large corporations, startups, labor, colleges and universities, and nonprofit organizations. (See page 11 for a complete list of all participants.)

Our mandate and the ground rules were to:

- Be realistic and positive
- Look forward
- Take rhetoric to action

Professionals facilitated the discussions in each room, and graphic recorders captured major notes and themes in the moment (see page 18). The topics covered were:

1. Attacking unemployment
2. Business environment
3. Closing skills gaps
4. High potential/High impact sectors
5. Leveraging/Maximizing sites
6. Marketing Rhode Island
7. Quality of place
8. Startups: Helping entrepreneurs thrive
9. Support and growth for existing businesses

Make It Happen RI was not intended to provide a long-term economic development plan for the state or to address the structure of an entity inside or outside of state government to oversee economic development. We appreciate the need for a focal point and grand vision but can’t wait.

There was no way we could accommodate everyone who wished to attend, so the public was encouraged to provide ideas and input to the Foundation. More than 80 people emailed us with their ideas, which were shared with Make It Happen RI participants in advance of the event. Local media covered Make It Happen RI and have continued to advance the discussion.

SO, NOW WHAT?

That’s the question many of you have (rightly) asked us.

This progress report is our pivot point from the two-day event to a year of action. It is not intended to be a definitive action plan. While we understand the value of a plan with very specific accountabilities and timeframes, this progress report represents our take on major themes from Make It Happen RI and suggested next steps — some that are already happening and some that we’d like to see happen.

We hope and expect that more ideas and action items will develop in the future.
In determining next steps, the Foundation identified priorities:

**Transparency and accountability:** We asked, you answered, and we feel accountable to you. This progress report includes a full report-out (beginning on page 19) of every idea discussed at Make It Happen RI that we were able to capture. The Foundation is not the gatekeeper of any of these ideas; we present them for your consideration and action.

**Momentum:** While we know there are no silver bullets to turn around the economy, Rhode Island needs some quick wins. We need to get beyond talking to specific action steps. This report outlines several opportunities for progress.

**Engagement:** It is clear that diverse, community-wide participation is key to meeting our collective challenges. To be real, change must be both top down and bottom up. We intend to provide ongoing opportunities for stakeholders to come together and take action. We also want to prevent silos from forming unnecessarily.

**Results:** We are sensitive to Make It Happen RI being labeled “another event” or this being “another report,” and we believe this will turn out to be different. It is our hope that — in collaboration with many in the community — the momentum to turn rhetoric into action will continue and build.

**HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE’VE BEEN SUCCESSFUL?**

Simply stated, we offer the following long-term goals:

- Lower our unemployment rate to the national average.
- Raise our median household income equal to the level of Massachusetts and Connecticut.
- Close the income, employment, and education gaps that exist in our state.
THEMES

Several overarching themes emerged from Make It Happen RI.

Within each theme, we have identified several examples of ideas that rose to the top and generated a lot of energy and interest at Make It Happen RI. By no means are these suggested action steps a full accounting of everything that is happening or that could be done.

1. CREATE JOBS.

We need more job opportunities in Rhode Island. This will require growing existing companies and generating many more startups. We must build upon existing support networks to provide small businesses and entrepreneurs with the capital, technical assistance, and human resources they need to thrive.

We must focus on existing industries (such as manufacturing, jewelry, food, and healthcare) and emerging industries (including medical devices, research and development, and cybersecurity). We should pay close attention to adjacent and cross-over industries and deliberately establish clusters. Rhode Island can also better leverage our position in the regional and global economies and encourage local and regional partnerships.

Action items include

- Create platforms and supports for the entrepreneurial community across the state.
- Explore the need and capacity for a private sector fund for early or growth stage capital for local companies.
- Support the growth of new investment vehicles in the state.
- Build a nursing sciences building in the Jewelry District to house the URI and RIC nursing schools, leverage private sector investment, offer state-of-the-art facilities and technology, and create construction jobs.
- Conduct outreach to assess the needs of individual Rhode Island companies to identify specific opportunities for jobs and growth.
- Convene the emerging medical technology field to create a strategy for growth of the sector.

2. CLOSE THE SKILLS GAPS.

Rhode Island needs a well-coordinated continuum of workforce development, from pre-K through higher education and across all state agencies and community providers.

We must find effective, efficient ways to train people who are unemployed and underemployed, leveraging public and private sector resources. The concept of apprenticeships — which Rhode Island was built on — has diminished; let’s bring it back beyond the building trades. Companies that offer in-house training should be held up as models of best practice. Proven community programs should be brought to scale.
Long-term, our education system must train students for the workforce. Expanded pathway programs, internships, and soft skills training provide important experiential learning opportunities. Rhode Island has enhanced its commitment to pre-K-12 education in the past few years. We must expand that commitment through higher education to increase the number of qualified graduates from our high schools, associate degree and certificate programs, and four year degree programs.

**Action items include**

- Better connect local college students with employers through internships.
- Explore with the General Assembly and the Department of Labor and Training whether companies could be paid unemployment dollars directly to hire those who are unemployed.
- Improve communication between educational institutions and the business community to assess, identify, and address specific skills gaps.
- Increase the use of education technology in schools and create a robust ed-tech ecosystem.

3. **BETTER CONNECT THE UNEMPLOYED WITH EXISTING JOB OPPORTUNITIES.**

As of October 1, there are 60,000 unemployed Rhode Islanders and 8,000 jobs posted on employRI.org. We can do a better job of connecting the two and providing necessary support and training.

**Action items include**

- Revamp the employRI.org website supported by the Department of Labor and Training to be user-friendly for job seekers and employers.
- Host a super job fair focused on filling the posted jobs. Have resources available to match those looking for work and those looking for workers and to provide necessary supports.

4. **ADDRESS SPECIFIC BARRIERS TO SUCCESS.**

An environment where businesses can start, grow, and thrive is essential. Rhode Island must address weaknesses (real or perceived) such as onerous regulations, an unwelcoming business climate, and underutilized sites. We want to say confidently, “Rhode Island is good for business, and business is good for Rhode Island.”

We can create a regulatory and tax environment that is consistent, fair, and focused on growth. Rhode Island does not have to be the least expensive state in which to do business, but leveraging our size, we could be the easiest. Investments in infrastructure (like schools and transportation) support business and create jobs.

**Action items include**

- Accelerate the review of all state regulations. The Office of Regulatory Reform under, Governor Chafee's recent executive order, is leading this review.
- Bring back the state historic tax credit.
- Work with experts from our local universities to analyze the various business climate rankings and determine targeted areas to address.
5. COLLABORATE.

Rhode Island has tremendous talent and resources within its borders. Over and over, we heard about public/private partnerships. Strong working relationships between and among our universities, industries, geographies, and sectors should be encouraged.

*Action items include*

- Sponsor an “innovation bus” to connect new entrepreneurs with established, successful companies that were started in Rhode Island and a CEO tour to spotlight best practices across industries and sectors.
- Ensure that economic decisions are based on data and facts by creating a research consortium of our higher education institutions.
- Launch a statewide buy local/source local campaign.

6. PROMOTE RHODE ISLAND INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY.

Repeatedly, we hear from people who choose to come to or stay in Rhode Island who value our small size, social connectedness, and unique charm. Within an hour, we can be in the city, the suburbs, on a farm, or by the ocean. Rhode Island is unique in our proximity to New York and Boston. Our 11 colleges and universities are economic drivers and offer a range of educational opportunities. Our vibrant arts and culture scene is a major source of employment and attracts national and international visitors.

Yet Rhode Islanders on the whole tend to focus on the negative, and our self-defeatist attitude gets in our way. Let’s celebrate what we have internally and sell it externally. We cannot wait for everything to be “fixed” to change the perception inside and outside the state. There is a need and an opportunity to craft and tell the Rhode Island story.

*Action items include*

- Develop a marketing campaign that allows every Rhode Islander to become an ambassador for the state.
- Continue to promote collaboration and coordination among the regional tourism bureaus, and increase the public investment in tourism.
- Host a science/technology showcase to highlight Rhode Island companies.
- Create a bank of successful Rhode Island case studies.
ACCOUNTABILITY

SO, WHO’S GOING TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

Make It Happen RI was designed with a spirit of broad and inclusive commitment and can do experimentation. The Rhode Island Foundation will continue to champion this approach. There are many action steps already underway and leaders emerging. For example:

- bRIdge.jobs — an online job board announced last week by Governor Chafee, Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Rhode Island Student Loan Authority, Rhode Island Office of Higher Education, and Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce — will link college students with available internships, particularly at small businesses that may have struggled with obtaining visibility in the past.

- A consortium of organizations is creating a new entrepreneurial platform that builds upon the work of the Rhode Island Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

- The Providence Foundation has developed an action plan focused on downtown Providence that includes items such as public space, the downtown office sector, transportation, permitting, and the plans for the I-195 land.

- A group of medical technology professionals has begun meeting regularly.

- The Highlander Institute is hosting an EdTech Camp for educators on October 26.

- Grow Smart RI has released an economic development action plan endorsing six infrastructure improvement proposals.

- Ocean State Angels is a new angel investment group focusing on the life sciences industry.

- LocalFirst, a participant in the SVPRI Change Accelerator, is developing a platform to promote local purchasing.

- Verizon is providing support to entrepreneurs who are developing mobile apps.

- Private companies such as Taco and Atrion are providing top-rate training programs for their employees and seeing tremendous success.

- AICU has convened the continuing and professional education leaders from the eight individual colleges and universities to identify opportunities to collectively respond to the workforce’s education needs.

- NE Tech provides specific employers with customized job training resources.

- The Chafee Center for International Business at Bryant University is expanding exports of Rhode Island companies and plans to coordinate broad outreach to 1,000 manufacturers with the goal of creating 10,000 jobs.

We are encouraged by this activity and know there are many more efforts underway.
WHAT IS THE RHODE ISLAND FOUNDATION GOING TO DO?

The Rhode Island Foundation is in a unique position to serve as catalyst at a time when action is clearly needed. The approach we are taking with the follow up to Make It Happen RI is both top down and bottom up. We will continue to lead, convene, collaborate, facilitate, support, promote, and challenge.

Specifically, over the next 12 months we are prepared to:

- Initiate action in areas where other leadership has not emerged by convening stakeholders and providing staffing, structure, and support.
- Accelerate efforts that are underway.
- Amplify what's working.
- Attempt to prevent silos from forming unnecessarily (but not be a gatekeeper).
- Encourage involvement and leadership from and among all sectors.
- Champion a sense of urgency in dealing with the economic challenges and opportunities in front of us.
- Promote a more inclusive dialogue with diverse constituencies.
- Report on progress.

This is not about developing a perfect plan or reaching 100% consensus, and idea generation and action steps are not limited to a point in time or an event. We hope this progress report will stimulate additional discussions. The time is NOW for action, investment, and innovation.

LOOKING AHEAD

Make It Happen RI was an important moment in our state’s ongoing economic development work, and it presents tremendous opportunities for greater collaboration, action, and progress.

As we go forward, let's recognize and celebrate successes small and large. Let’s try many things. Let’s learn from the things that don’t work and continue facing forward. Let's invest in our people so that all individuals who seek work can find it and all businesses who seek workers can find them. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and communities; let’s help them start, grow, and thrive. Innovation and entrepreneurship are cornerstones of our history and our future; let’s pursue new ideas. Let’s improve the overall business climate and remove barriers to success. Let’s empower people, departments, and organizations that are doing good work, and create a culture of consistency, fairness, and customer service.

And overall, let us believe in our state and each other, and let us tell the great story of Rhode Island.

The Rhode Island Foundation is committed to this effort, and we look forward to working with you to Make It Happen RI.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to those who shared expertise, ideas, energy, and goodwill with Make It Happen RI. We are inspired by and grateful to you.

Special thanks to:

Rhode Island Foundation board and staff

Our facilitators:

Fred Benjamin
Joyce Butler
Ed Caron
Lori Coakley
Maria DeCarvalho
Lois Kelly
Daniel Kertzner
Amy McLean
Mark Murphy
Jen Silbert

Our graphic recorders from AlphaChimp Studio:

Joe Azar
Lloyd Dangle
Emily Marko
Dean Meyers
Sue Shea
Leah Silverman

Staff at the Rhode Island Convention Center

Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council

Public officials

Governor Chafee
Senate President Paiva-Weed
Speaker of the House Fox
Lieutenant Governor Roberts
General Treasurer Raimondo
Secretary of State Mollis

Everyone who participated September 7-8

Those who contributed ideas
## PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lorne Adrain</td>
<td>RI Board of Governors for Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rhode Island Foundation Board of Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lloyd Albert</td>
<td>AAA Southern New England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Allen</td>
<td>Cherrystone Angel Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted Almon</td>
<td>Claflin Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil Amper</td>
<td>Capstone Properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alden Anderson</td>
<td>CB Richard Ellis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Andruszkiewicz</td>
<td>Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Babineau</td>
<td>Lifespan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil Barr</td>
<td>Trans-Tex LLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Baudouin</td>
<td>The Providence Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Beauchesne</td>
<td>Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra &amp; Music School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Begin</td>
<td>BNY Mellon Wealth Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Bennett</td>
<td>Johnson &amp; Wales University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Bennett</td>
<td>City of Providence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Beretta</td>
<td>The Robinson Green Beretta Corp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Beretta</td>
<td>Adler Pollock &amp; Sheehan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith Bessette-Zito</td>
<td>Westerly Economic Development Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina Bevilacqua</td>
<td>The Providence Athenaeum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garry Bliss</td>
<td>City of Providence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Botelho</td>
<td>Freedom National Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Bowman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Bowser</td>
<td>Rebuilders Automotive Supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Boyle</td>
<td>Cranston Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon Brawley</td>
<td>Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrett Bready</td>
<td>Nabsys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Brewster</td>
<td>The Economic Progress Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clyde Briant</td>
<td>Brown University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnold Bromberg</td>
<td>Benny’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick Brooks</td>
<td>Governor’s Workforce Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Burke Bryant</td>
<td>Rhode Island KIDS COUNT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Bush</td>
<td>College Unbound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Butler</td>
<td>Rhode Island Foundation Board of Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Byrnes</td>
<td>Olde China Trader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali Cabral</td>
<td>OIC of Rhode Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Callender</td>
<td>C2 Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Cardiff</td>
<td>Town of Westerly Economic Development Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Carey</td>
<td>Brown University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Carnevale</td>
<td>Myranda Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Carriere</td>
<td>Morgan Stanley Smith Barney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Carriuolo</td>
<td>Rhode Island College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay Carter</td>
<td>Retired President of Textron Financial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stacey Carter</td>
<td>RI Small Business Development Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annette Cerilli  
Bryant University

Ben Cerilli  
Yagoozon

Liz Chace

Buff Chace  
Cornish Associates

Paul Choquette  
Gilbane, Inc.

Lisa Churchville  
LGC Advisors

Gary Ciminero, CFA  
GLC Financial Economics

Michele Cinquegrano  
Verizon

Allan Cohen  
Cohen Heating Supply Inc.

Cary Collins  
Bryant University

Edward Cooney  
Nortek, Inc.

Ralph Coppola  
Meridien Benefits, Inc

Andrew Cortes  
Building Futures

Gail Costa  
Care New England

Bethany Costello  
GPCC

Barbara Cottam  
RBS Citizens Financial Group

Mark Cousineau  
Bank of America

Chris Crawford  
TCMPI

Umberto Crenca  
AS220

Henry Cugno  
Vision 3 Architects

Donna Cupelo  
Verizon

Robert Cusack  
WhaleRock Point Partners, LLC

Andy Cutler  
Cutler & Company

Cheryl DaCosta  
Tech Collective

Al Dahlberg  
Brown University

Polly Daly  
Rhode Island Foundation Board of Directors

Julian Dash  
Clean Economy Development, LLC

Larry Davidson  
Kahn, Litwin Renza

Karen Davie  
Women & Infants Hospital

Ruth Davis  
Ruth Davis Associates

Loriana De Crescenzo  
International Yacht Restoration School

Mark Deion  
Deion Associates & Strategies, Inc.

Kathy Demarest  
Amgen

Anthony DeMatteo  
Dimeo Construction Company

David DePettrillo  
Rhode Island Commodores

Richard DeRienzo  
LGC&D LLP

Paul DeRoche  
Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce

Stephen DeRosa  
Family Service of Rhode Island

Mathew Desjarlais  
East Coast Ophthalmics

Carmen Diaz-Jusino  
Center for Women & Enterprise

Bradford Dimeo  
Dimeo Construction Company

Robert DiMuccio  
Amica

Kelly Doern  
Crossroads RI

David Dooley  
University of Rhode Island

Sheila Dormody  
Emerald Cities Providence

Peter Dorsey  
The Business Development Company
Michael Downey  RI Council 94, AFSCME  
Dennis Duffy  Cape Wind  
Jon Duffy  Duffy & Shanley/Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce  
Steve Durkee  Cornish Associates  
Marcel Dutwin  ACC Contractors Inc.  
Dan Egan  AICU Rhode Island  
Timothy Ehrlich  Ocean State Angels  
Jorge Elorza  Roger Williams University/Rhode Island Foundation Board of Directors  
Barnaby Evans  WaterFire Providence  
Damian Ewens  Providence After School Alliance  
Barry Fain  Providence Media  
Matt Fair  Cushman & Wakefield/Hayes & Sherry  
Donald Farish  Roger Williams University  
Mark Feinstein  
Bruce Ferguson  Ferguson Perforating and Wire  
Carmen Ferguson  United Way of RI  
Sergio Ferreira  Providence Startup Weekend  
Kenneth Filarski  FILARSKI/architecture+planning+research  
Larry Fish  Southern RI Chamber of Commerce  
George Fisher  George Fisher Advisors LLC  
Bob Flanders, Jr.  Hinckley, Allen & Snyder LLP  
Katharine Flynn  URI Foundation  
Frank Flynn  R I Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals  
Raymond Fogarty  Chafee Center for International Business  
Paul Follett  Cherrystone Angel Group  
Gil Fontes  Colonial Printing  
Diane Fournaris  RI Small Business Development Center  
Donald Fox  Alashan Cashmere Company  
Kristin Fraser  KPMG  
Paul Gagnon  Paul Gagnon Realty  
Michael Gennaro  Trinity Repertory Company  
Scott Gibbs  Economic Development Foundation of RI  
David Gilden  Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP  
Larry Girouard  The Business Avionix Company  
Jenifer Giroux  Rhode Island College  
Maureen McKenna  Rhode Island Supreme Court  
Goldberg  Rhode Island Foundation Board of Directors  
Gayle Goldin  Women’s Fund of Rhode Island  
David Goldsmith  Aidance Skincare  
Nellie Gorbea  HousingWorks RI  
Karin Gorman  YKSM LTD  
George Graboys  
Dominique Grégoire  Alliance Française  
John Gregory  NRI Chamber of Commerce  
Matt Grigsby  Ecolect
Jeffrey Grybowski  Deepwater Wind
Bob Halkyard  Chairman, NOW Delivery
James Hall  Providence Preservation Society
Ned Handy  RBS Citizens/Rhode Island Foundation Board of Directors
Daniel Harper  Siren Marine
Jason Harry  Lucidux, LLC
David Hasslinger  Alnich Marketing
William Hatfield  Bank of America - Rhode Island
Mark Hayward  US Small Business Administration
Adrien Hebert  Trans-Tex LLC
Kristine Hendrickson  Salve Regina University
Mark Higgins  University of Rhode Island
David Hirsch  Rhode Island Foundation Chairman
Kathleen Hittner  Lifespan/Rhode Island Foundation Board of Directors
Kevin Hively  Ninigret Partners
Richard Horan  Slater Technology Fund
John Howell  Beacon Communications
Frank Jacques  Buxton Hollow Farm
Douglas Jobling  RI Small Business Development Center, Johnson & Wales University
Diana Johnson  I-195 Commission
Scot Jones  Groov-Pin Corp.
Misha Joukowsky  Resolute Racing Shells
Simone Joyaux  Joyaux Associates
Colin Kane  195 Redevelopment Commission
Linda Katz  The Economic Progress Institute
Justin Katz  RI Center for Freedom & Prosperity
Howard Kilguss  HK Associates
Steve King  Quonset Development Corporation
Steven Kitchin  New England Institute of Technology
Beth Kofron  Brown University
James Koloski  Shawmut Design and Construction
Ted Kresse  New Harbor Group
Charlie Kroll  Andera, Inc.
Scott Kwarta  BankNewport
Stephen Lane  Ximedica
Marie Langlois  Rhode Island Foundation Board of Directors
Richard Lappin  Regency Plaza
Wendy Lawton  Lifespan
Robert Leaver  New Commons
Tobias Lederberg  Lederberg & Blackman LLP
Adam Leonard  AICU Rhode Island
Kenneth Levy  Johnson & Wales University
Dennis Littky  Big Picture Learning/The Met School
Alan Litwin  Kahn, Liwtin, Renza & Co., Ltd.
Stephen Lombardi  East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce
David Lucier  Lucier CPA Inc.
Jim Ludes  Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy, Salve Regina University
Ben Lupovitz  RIBI Security
Kate Lyons  Capital Good Fund
Ron Machtley  Bryant University/Rhode Island Foundation Board of Directors
Stephen Maciel  End Hunger Foundation
Gregory Mancini  BuildRI
Robert Mancini  RISCPA
Thomas Mann  Pawtucket Foundation
Robert Manning  Grays Point Investments LLC
John Marcantonio  RI Builders Association
Ray Mathieu  Providence College
Sylvia Maxfield  University of Rhode Island
Edward Mazze  RI Manufacturers Association
Bill McCourt  Basics Group
Dwight McMillan  East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce
Laura McNamara  AskRI.org
Emily Grace Mehrer  Lifespan
Brandon Melton  EpiVax
Tim Messitt  Miglus Design Inc
Wanda Miglus  Big Picture Learning
John Muggeridge  Fidelity Investments
Brian Murphy  Home Loan Investment Bank
Kevin Murphy  Adler Pollock & Sheehan, P.C.
George Nee  Rhode Island AFL-CIO
Laura Nelson  Stauch Vetromile Mitchell
Ted Newcomer  Chow Fun Food Group
Roger Nozaki  Brown University
Deborah Obalil  AICAD
David O'Brien  Picture This Framing Center & Gallery
Joe O'Connor  Rhode Island Public Radio
Ken Orenstein  Orenstein Real Estate Services
Joseph Orlando  YKSM, Ltd
Rob Panoff  RPM, SVPRI, SCHHS, HBSA-SNE
Michael Paruta  Care New England
Christina Paxson  Brown University
Laura Pedrick  Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP/Newport County Chamber of Commerce
Karen Pelczarski  Blish & Cavanagh
Charity Pennock  New England Clean Energy Council
Marc Perlman  Ocean State Job Lot
Donna Perry  RISCPA
Jay Placencia  Bank of America
Gregory Porcaro  New Harbor Group
David Preston  Hospital Association of RI
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Quinn</td>
<td>1199 - SEIU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisa Quinn</td>
<td>Brown University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Ramirez</td>
<td>Social Venture Partners RI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Ranglin</td>
<td>RI Black Business Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Raymond</td>
<td>Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Stewart Reed</td>
<td>LTR Holdings, LLC/Rhode Island Foundation Board of Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Renn</td>
<td>Urbanophile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlene Reza Rossi</td>
<td>Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Rickman</td>
<td>Rickman Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Rittscher</td>
<td>Center for Women and Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Robitaille</td>
<td>Johnson &amp; Wales University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herman Rose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miriam Ross</td>
<td>Law Offices of Miriam A. Ross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawn Rubin</td>
<td>Highlander Institute/Metryx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soren Ryherd</td>
<td>Working Planet / The Retail Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Sabitoni</td>
<td>Laborers’ Local Union 271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary Sasse</td>
<td>Bryant University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Savoie</td>
<td>Carpenters Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Schoenfeld</td>
<td>Brooks Houghton &amp; Co., Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold Schofield</td>
<td>Harold Schofield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Scott</td>
<td>Scott Associates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucie Searle</td>
<td>Providence Preservation Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Sequino</td>
<td>Town of East Greenwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Shedd</td>
<td>Taylor Box Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merrill Sherman</td>
<td>Sherman Consulting LIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl Sherry</td>
<td>Hayes &amp; Sherry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Shorr</td>
<td>PC Troubleshooters, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Sibley</td>
<td>Brown University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Simmons</td>
<td>Westerly Economic Development Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Simmons</td>
<td>RIPEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Singleton</td>
<td>Providence Performing Arts Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libby Slader</td>
<td>Libby Slader Interior Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren Slocum</td>
<td>Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin Smith</td>
<td>Community College of RI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine Smith</td>
<td>RI Science &amp; Technology Advisory Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorne Sparkman</td>
<td>Slater Technology Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin Squibb</td>
<td>The Granny Squibb Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Staley</td>
<td>Rhode Island Statewide Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Steele</td>
<td>Community College of Rhode Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Stenhouse</td>
<td>RI Center for Freedom &amp; Prosperity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Sullivan</td>
<td>Collette Vacations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jody Sullivan</td>
<td>Newport County Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard Sutton</td>
<td>Providence Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Szostak</td>
<td>Szostak Partners/Rhode Island Foundation Board of Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Taylor</td>
<td>Kelly Taylor Interior Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allan Tear</td>
<td>Betaspring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jack Templin          Lockify
Pat Thompson          Piccerelli, Gilstein & Company LLP
Len Tinkoff           Corporate Performance Partners, Inc.
Bob Twomey            Webster Bank
Marcel Valois         Economic Development Foundation of RI
Michael Van Leesten  OIC of Rhode Island, Inc
Dale Venturini        RI Hospitality Association
Alfred Verrecchia     Hasbro, Inc
Greg Victory          Rhode Island School of Design
Joe Viele             Southern RI Chamber of Commerce
Robert Vincent        GTECH Corporation
Camilo Viveiros       George Wiley Center
Marshall Votta        
Ellis Waldman          Walco Electric
John Wall             
Bob Walsh              NEA Rhode Island
Traci Warrington      Salve Regina University
Joe Weatherby         New England Ships to Reefs
Christine West        KITE Architects
John White             Taco, Inc.
Peter Wilbur          Roger Williams University
James Wilkinson       SeaScape Lawn Care, Inc.
Jeffery Williams      The Cathedral of Life
Edward Wing, MD       Brown University Medical School
Meg Wirth              Maternova, Inc.
Melissa Withers       Betaspring
Scott Wolf            Grow Smart Rhode Island
Cliff Wood            Downtown Providence Parks Conservancy/The Providence Foundation
James Wright          Bridge Technical Solutions
Salvatore Zito        Real Estate Development Strategies
GRAPHIC RECORDINGS

Twenty five graphic recordings from the Make It Happen RI working sessions — like those pictured below — are available online at www.MakeItHappenRI.com.
NOTES

The following pages include all of the ideas and suggestions that we were able to capture from Make It Happen RI, organized by topic. Many ideas were repeated at multiple sessions. These are presented in no specific order.

**Attack Unemployment**

1. Improve public transportation infrastructure.
   - Create a radius within the state or tri-state area to eliminate need to own a car.

2. Better maintain our infrastructure.

3. Improve infrastructure in our ports.

4. Develop the port of Galilee.

5. Develop better ways to connect unemployed and potential employers.
   - Create a skill set database for local industries.
   - Host a career fair for the currently unemployed to tell them where current and future opportunities exist.

6. Study 1,000 employers to see what they currently do regarding job training and what can we do to help them.

7. Create a “we plan” of collective wisdom of leaders of the state (not a plan where credit is important).

8. Align incentives. Instead of paying unemployment directly to an individual, pay an employer the unemployment rate so it will cost less for them to hire workers.

9. Export globally and regionally.
   - Position Rhode Island to compete in the global and regional markets (i.e. sell products out of state).
   - Develop a clear plan for how Rhode Island can compete with global and local competitors.
   - Improve opportunities for interstate commerce. Enlist federal funding for this.
   - Provide the Chafee Center with more resources. Solicit funding from companies that are thriving.
   - Develop regional partnerships with other states.

10. Source local/Shop local
    - Create a business-to-business database of what businesses sell and create in Rhode Island. Include raw components. Engage the CPA community in compiling. Make it a public initiative to keep it alive. Track the percentage each company invests in local purchasing. Recognize companies with the biggest gains publicly.
    - Develop a business-to-consumer database to promote buying local and a promotion campaign.

11. Support small businesses.
    - Provide the SBDC with more resources (personnel, volunteers, and funding) to help small businesses.
    - Encourage buy-in from other universities (e.g. four colleges at $250,000 each per year).
12. Bring talented people into the state, especially entrepreneurs.

13. Create an incubator space for entrepreneurs (e.g. food court).

14. Build awareness of the support systems available for new and existing business.

15. Create a clear roadmap to opportunities for jobs or self-employment.


17. Prioritize jobs that are sustainable and offer growth potential.

18. Invest in leadership development.

19. Co-locate the RIC and URI nursing schools in the knowledge district.

20. Develop better relationships between private sector employers and higher education.

21. Strategically focus workforce development efforts on specific “anchor industries.”
   - What are we known for? What do we want to be known for?
   - Suggestions include tourism, hospitality, manufacturing, and biomedical equipment.

22. Don’t just focus on one or two sectors. Companies can be innovative across all industries.

23. Position Rhode Island as a “host state” and maximize our tourism and entertainment industry.

24. Use Kickstarter and similar tools to allow for alternative local financing to get products to the marketplace.

25. For currently unemployed, provide experiential learning opportunities such as internships and mentorships.

26. Promote internships as an opportunity to gain skills and experience.
   - Encourage employers to create more internships.
   - Ask the governor to support internships in every private company.
   - Provide paid internships for low income kids.
   - Create an inventory and communication plan for internships.
   - Work with schools to provide educational credit for internships.

27. Ask employers to invest more (time and money) in their workforce.
   - Expand the Taco model of leadership development and internal training.
   - This could include technical skills, soft skills, and general education.

28. Rethink funding.
   - Job training funding should be allocated to actual training.
   - Job training funding could be matched by private employers.
   - Allocate more money for job training.
29. Provide trade and skills education and different types of credentials.
   - Strengthen vocational training. Reexamine the curriculum.

30. Remove barriers so that when companies want to partner to offer courses, they can.

31. Tap into the endowments of companies and foundations that exist in the state to fund job training. $100 million to invest in Rhode Island!

32. Businesses need a clear sense of direction.
   - What should they focus on? What is their role?

33. Support workforce development at the senior level.

34. Consider equity issues.
   - Expand training opportunities in areas where unemployment is higher.
   - Focus on populations (e.g. ex-offenders) who have even fewer opportunities.

35. Build a climate/culture that embraces success.
   - We need a culture of optimism, support for entrepreneurship, and more positive thinking.
   - Spend more money on marketing the state.
   - Media needs a year of good news.
   - Document entitled "Rhode Island Ranks High" is being developed.

36. Reduce government barriers to success (lower tax rate, tax reform, less regulation).

37. Eliminate the estate tax.

38. Provide a clear, consistent, and predictable business climate. What can businesses count on?

39. Raise the minimum wage.

40. Consider a county government system.

41. Develop and enforce high standards of government service delivery.

42. Streamline and shorten regulatory and permitting processes.

43. Create more partnerships between employers and the education system (both K-12 and higher education) to prepare young people for work and identify career aspirations.

44. Develop a meaningful adopt-a-school program.
   - Pair lowest performing schools with top-performing companies.
   - Develop afterschool business clubs, internships, and technology opportunities.

45. Improve public K-12 education outcomes.
   - Allow for career exploration in high schools.
   - Ensure that graduates are college-ready.
   - Provide a 13th year option.
• Reach out at junior high level for opportunities in hospitality industry.

46. Change societal expectations and perceptions.
   • Promote stronger work ethic.
   • Promote the value of trades.
   • Promote the value of all work.

47. Invest in deep energy retrofits to deliver quality jobs.
   • Emerald Cities is a proven model.
   • Private sector institutions that have capacity and infrastructure should provide funding.

48. Encourage business-to-business peer support and mentoring (e.g. bus tours).

49. Encourage private employers to hire a set of new graduates each year.

50. Develop better partnerships with business and labor.

**Business Environment**

1. Bring back the historic tax credit.

2. Government and business have shared responsibility for economic development.
   • Political system must support Rhode Island’s business infrastructure.
   • Help government leadership understand what consequences are when they enact laws. Some new laws/regulations are not vetted beforehand for their consequences. An example is the Sakonnet River Bridge toll that will impact all the blue collar workers coming from Fall River and New Bedford to Aquidneck Island for work. Businesses on the island may lose these workers because of the high transportation cost.
   • Need to have a sense of urgency on specific topics (e.g. the way that pension reform was addressed).

   • Focus on ease of permitting and regulating processes statewide.
   • Synchronize efforts between government agencies.
   • Look at permitting within 90 days (like Quonset).
   • Registering a business needs to be more user-friendly. Charlotte, NC, treats every business like a rock star, small or large.
   • Create a review committee of those within certain sectors to identify opportunities for change.
   • Take an inventory of all regulations. Check for relevancy. Eliminate unnecessary/invaluable.
   • Bring in a third party to have accountability.

4. Focus on the state’s customer service environment.
   • Address deeply embedded attitude in government that business is the enemy.

5. Increase predictability in regulations, tax environment, and labor supply.

6. Host another session for government.
7. Professionalize the EDC.

8. Focus on data that supports economic development.
   - Evidence-based decision-making,
   - Create an economic research collaborative between universities and businesses,
   - Break down the metrics that go into “business climate is bad” to see how we can make some changes. There might be things that are easy to do.
   - Analyze metrics. Measure our attempts by what works.

9. Commercialize intellectual property (i.e. Virginia).

10. Workforce training and education.
    - Business involvement with apprenticeships, internships.
    - Provide funding for training incumbent workers.
    - Workforce retooling programs in CT, VT, and NH are models.
    - Universities need to collectively meet with employers to understand the skills gap so that higher education can become a better tool to solve that problem.

11. Have companies create summer internship programs that revolve around specific problems.
    - Recruit multi-disciplinary teams to attack these problems.
    - Brand the experience; make it a collective, exciting thing to do.

12. Organize private sector (e.g. MA Alliance for Economic Development).
    - Private sector funded group that develops data and develops programs.
    - Group can study legislative initiatives and potential impacts.


14. Internal and external marketing campaign for the state.

15. Hire half-jobs.

16. Can we create an infrastructure to make it easier to grow small businesses?

17. Research what other states are doing and adapt them for Rhode Island.

18. We need more incubators.
    - Use Fleet Center as a business incubator hub. Businesses could all support it and take it on as a project. People could apply to be part of it. Get young people to create startups.
    - Lack of funding for incubator.
    - Need more small business incubators for different industries (whether they’re high growth or not, could be in manufacturing, construction, etc.).

19. We need a master plan of all our efforts. There’s a lot of duplication and people not knowing what others are doing.

20. Articulate what not being competitive has cost Rhode Island.

22. Look at what Kansas is doing to address the “brain drain.”

   • Tinkering is a problem. Business needs to know what type of tax structuring to anticipate.

24. Education.
   • To attract employees and address workforce readiness.
   • Consolidate schools.
   • Local businesses could partner with schools to teach technical skills and life skills.

25. Regionalize government.
   • North Carolina is a good example.
   • Address Rhode Island parochialism.

26. Buy local effort.

27. Easier way for folks to transition from unemployment to employment.

28. Look at models of excellence in other states and model Rhode Island from those models.

29. Look at our comparative advantages, not our comparative disadvantages. What makes us different?
   Think Delaware, North Dakota.
   • Leverage our strengths.
   • What are our presumptions?

30. Rhode Island Foundation should poll people, create a database, hold government accountable.

31. Need new change agents and thought leaders…not from government and education, but from the people.

32. Consider working around government to work toward quick results. “Build away from government” to create capacity to do thing. “Create an environment where the government has to catch up.”

33. Convene the entrepreneurial community with the idea to have them foster greater coordination and business creation and growth.

34. Create an information center for individuals and businesses to find the information they need to be successful.

35. Foster semi-soft business networks.

36. Build a qualified candidate pool for elected positions.

37. Ask successful companies why they are staying here.

38. Provide training grants for new and existing employers in technology.
39. Create a new tax structure that is predictable.
   - Commercial tax rates are high, particularly in Providence.
   - Unemployment taxes are a high burden; look at programs in CT and MA.
   - MA will allow people to work during unemployment without impacting compensation.

40. Business needs a “can do” attitude.

41. Much is about shots on goal and times at bat.

42. Nothing happens without selling.
   - A group working together to sell this place could help Rhode Island leap forward.

43. In order to tell a story to market, we must pick a story. One story: Rhode Island has a unique and compelling startup environment.

44. Use Quonset as an example of business development scheme that works.
   - All permitting is taken care of for empty parcels in park, so you can hand a package to anyone who is thinking of locating there.

45. Four areas that mature businesses use to make decisions — taxes, bureaucratic regulation, cost of doing business, and workforce education. We need to focus on meeting business needs in these areas.
    - Create/adapt metrics around these and then demand accountability from both government and business.

46. Need group of leaders to take ownership of executing ideas (and prioritizing them). Not commodores, not chamber, must be a smaller group.

47. Create research and development investment tax credits for startups that are transferrable.

48. Infrastructure needs to be improved.

49. We need to create the roadmap to prosperity and then go to the government only as needed. An example is in the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. The program is followed, no matter who is in charge politically.

50. Take ideas that the EDC developed with the chamber for public-private partnership and instead make it private-education partnership. Use rich material at universities and practical needs at businesses and connect them, then brand the plan. In Orange County, CA it’s called Octane.

51. Convene a “science fair” or showcase of compelling entrepreneurs and their ideas.
   - Connect with established companies, funders, and universities.
   - Include potentially university-based innovations/ground breaking research.
   - Think of 3M model of internal science fair to cross-pollinate the talent in the state.
   - Cherrystone will support.
   - Rhode Island Foundation should fund.
   - Partner with entrepreneurship reporting at WRNI.
52. Build on what we have (Hasbro, Gilbane, Ximedia, Taco, etc). Brag about what we have and did have (Slater Mill, Textron, etc). Breed what we can have (startups and new ventures).

53. Address skill gaps in government sector (i.e. no training dollars).

54. Hold a legislative leadership conference to talk about some of these things.

55. Pick areas where we might have chance of succeeding.

56. Charter for public private partnership could be so easily tweaked for economic cultivation for national alliances.

57. Look at places where we’re not making investments that other states are. For example, we don’t have a dedicated infrastructure investment in housing.

58. Strengthen link between colleges and universities and chambers.

59. Continuing education program at Brown is a new effort and is looking to learn from private sector regarding skills gaps. What do people need for skills that would make them employable?

60. RWU law school and business school are resources that we can engage. Need to change the way we think about relationship building and partnerships. We can provide students with experiential learning opportunities by having teams of students working with cities and towns on economic development. Identify projects and resources.

61. Outstanding organizations ready to go to work (e.g. Chamber, Commodores). Need greater focus on education, workforce development. Pick three or four areas to make a difference. Private sector has drifted away from education, and it is one of biggest impediments from people coming to Rhode Island.

62. Highly strategic attraction networks. One chief attraction officer would be huge.

63. “Government is us.” Find places to be constructive and engage with government leaders. For example, Amica is working with office to improve DMV.

64. Need collaborative effort across educational institutions to find paid internships and housing for students in the summer.

65. It comes back to taxes and government fees. Energy and healthcare costs are problems everywhere. Access to capital isn’t a problem facing a lot of businesses.

66. Don’t think taxes are an issue. Problem is that business base isn’t here, so I export my skills and products to other places.

67. Crumbling infrastructures – education, tax policy income to property (2nd highest in country to Detroit).

68. Assemble group of corporate leaders with mayor after research is complete. A lot of companies and institutions based in Providence.

69. From government standpoint, long term strategic planning. Long term tax policy, fiscal, etc. Which industries do want to target 20 years from now?
70. Useful to look back and span decades. Greenhouse Compact? 1,000 page plan to position yourself in 20th century. $250 million. Need to think big like this.

71. MA tech collaborative is a sustainable public private initiative that draws on education. They now have brand and environment for growing those types of companies.

72. Predictability is important. Companies need to know what state will do in years to come. Not everyone in state will get a part.

73. Companies look for certainty, balance, and competitiveness in taxes, regulation of bureaucracy, cost of doing business, and workforce education.

74. Go from ADHD state to Beta state. This is the perfect place to execute a project or plan.

75. Our principal export is brilliance. Students going north and south.

76. Right Now Coalition. We need a core group of leaders and we'll all support that group. We need a handful of people with the courage to Make It Happen.

77. Separate idea lab for innovation that will serve public higher education but independent of government. As it builds, they will come along.

78. We need group of people that will design, plan, and define metrics. Publish stats, work with universities, private public partnerships. Publish consistent annual data and hold legislators and business accountable.

79. Look at previously-issued reports. Reintroduce and refine, but don't let it go.

80. Bring policies in Rhode Island in parity with neighbors. Secret agenda to not be #50.

81. There are three types of companies we are talking about: real early stage, established businesses, and outside the state (hardest to get). Where are we going to put our money? Tax policy and infrastructure needs to be in place to attract outside entities. Early stage short term focus first (cheaper ones).

82. Inventory companies that are thinking of bringing manufacturing back here from overseas (for many reasons), pitch them on moving to Rhode Island. Give them compelling information to make it happen.

83. Focus on financial services industry, which means high paying jobs.

84. Approach it like affordable housing – mandate for towns to have formula. If not reached, lose option to say no. Formula for cities and towns as benchmark.

85. Growing minorities in state. Strength of people from Dominican Republic, Guatemala, etc.

86. “Cost of government must be continued to be controlled and that requires more pension reform.” If this is considered an issue then what needs to be done is attacking the basic and big issue of the size and cost of government which goes to the efficiency and efficacy of government.

87. Have a group sponsor entrepreneurship reporting on WRNI then feed it to TV/papers, etc.
88. “Start it here”, partnership of colleges with Slater supported by investors, corporations, etc.

89. Reputation management.

90. Need for a strategic direction metric.

91. We live in an ecology. Extend yourself, extend your company.

Closing the Skills Gaps

1. Change public perceptions about work. All jobs are meaningful. All work has value.
   - Address the stigma regarding entry level jobs and sector-specific jobs. For example, people do not realize they can have a career in hospitality, and that there are hospitality careers all over the world.
   - Set clear expectations around training and education programs.

2. Obtain data to identify specific skills gaps.
   - Survey employers: Which specific skill sets do you need that you’re not finding?
   - Be specific. Go beyond years of experience to type of experience.
   - Identify workforce needs for next 10-15 years. Ask employers to forecast labor needs.
   - This data should inform educational and training offerings.

3. Create an economic research collaboration to forecast economic and workforce trends.

4. Connect individuals with existing training and employment services.
   - Ensure that available jobs and training opportunities are promoted and communicated.

5. Make small businesses aware of training opportunities.
   - Small business owners may not have the resources to create training programs themselves, but there are programs and funding available to them.
   - Create a database of all available programs.
   - Launch a marketing campaign.

6. Develop industry-specific standards for job training.

7. Get to kids earlier in a practical way.
   - Put educational curriculum in context by connecting it to real jobs and industries.
   - Link students with training and apprenticeship programs.
   - Involve local businesses in providing opportunities for students to find out what they want to do and what skill sets are necessary.
   - Increase summer programs at local schools.

8. Expand funding for workforce development. Don’t let funding perpetuate silos.

9. Determine the appropriate role of CCRI.
   - It could be a middle college, to allow students to transition from high school to college.
   - It could be Rhode Island’s job training center.
10. Educate and train for companies we want to exist in Rhode Island.

11. “College is not the only answer.” Expand non-college educational and training opportunities.
   - Need schools to provide training and license in trades.

12. Ask business leaders who are leaders in this area to pitch programs to their peers.
   - Chambers could lead a best practices business summit.

13. Expand the Governor’s Workforce Board.
   - Provide more funding.
   - Include representation from more sectors.
   - Charge Governor’s Workforce Board with business-to-business outreach to increase apprenticeships, internships, and other training opportunities.

14. Develop consortiums of employers to address skills gap by sector

15. Address un/under-employment among the older workforce.
   - Provide continuing education for senior citizens.

   - Program at high schools by foundations, employers, to have children see what jobs are out there and what skills are needed.
   - Businesses could adopt a school for educational programs, internships, etc.
   - Salve Regina University offers a training program for business owners on internship programs.

17. Collaboration between continuing education programs and businesses.
   - Convene continuing education programs, businesses, and public sector to identify specific opportunities for training. For example, New England Tech developed a surgical tech program in six months. URI is working with nursery, agricultural, and green industries.
   - Provide tiered opportunities for collaboration.

18. Improve public K-12 education system.
   - Prepare students for four-year colleges. Currently, 80% of students need remedial work.
   - Look at curriculum. Think about employability: reading, critical thinking, and problem solving. Are we teaching the right things for graduates to compete and thrive in the workplace?
   - Technology in the classrooms is critical. Electronic learning allows for students to engage at their own pace.

19. Expand adult education opportunities by focusing on experiential learning.

20. Promote apprenticeships (driven by the private sector).
   - Expand to job fields beyond construction by identifying the needs of specific employers.
   - Businesses should fund.
   - Individual employers or industry associations can work with educational institutions or community organizations to provide classes and certifications while also offering hands-on experience.
   - Pay participants.
   - Focus on employment readiness.
21. Replicate successful models. Take them to scale.
   - Encourage other employers to adopt the Taco model.
   - Lifespan offers a student internship/training program that has been successful. Students are provided with clear expectations. They are trained in specific job skills and soft skills. Many have been subsequently hired by Lifespan. The program has helped increase diversity at the hospitals.
   - Consider other training programs offered by public and private sector (e.g. Providence Housing, Sherwin Williams).
   - The Town of Westerly is developing a training/certification program to help high schoolers with career planning. The group reached out to the business community to build consensus around program development, and to encourage them to hire people who have gone through the program. The program also has an adult education component in the tourism industry, with the goal of helping people find jobs in other countries.
   - Rhode Island could start a work/travel agency. Currently in hospitality, jobs are being filled from external sources (e.g. J-1 visas).
   - The Rhode Island Nurse Institute is a “middle college” (four year program for students entering 10th grade) designed to prepare students for professional opportunities in health care.

22. Expand the Registered Apprenticeship program.
   - Registered Apprenticeship is national “earn while you learn” program that helps workers learn advanced skills that meet the needs of specific employers.

23. Expand training provided by the private sector.
   - More companies could provide training and educational programs for their employees. For example, Taco provides basic and industry-specific skills training.

24. Private sector driven internships
   - Develop a state program to connect small businesses with interns.
   - Encourage businesses to adopt schools and commit to providing students with education and internship opportunities.
   - Offer businesses a tax credit for having interns.
   - Peer-to-peer outreach is important in helping business owners see the value of internships and adapt the program to their company.
   - Encourage employers: once you get trainee graduates into your system, is it your obligation and opportunity to educate them and push them ahead.

25. Schools can partner with local businesses to develop specific training programs, and connect them with jobs.
   - Put together a course curriculum in junior and senior high school, or a continuing education program for adults. Follow up with paid internships, and encourage businesses to hire graduates.
   - The Chariho School district has a culinary program in its high school. There has been an overwhelmingly positive response from the community.
   - Some community colleges in Connecticut are developing similar programs.

26. Make Rhode Island a hot zone for computers.

27. Wages need to match basic needs to do even minimal jobs.

28. Assess whether there are enough jobs in Rhode Island for recent grads.
29. Temporary jobs.

**What are the skills that are missing?**

1. Basic educational readiness
   - Math
   - Critical thinking and problem solving
   - Reading/writing
   - School to work transition

2. Skills that anyone for any job should have
   - Employability skills
   - Interviews, resumes, letters
   - Computer literacy
   - Work ethic
   - Self-esteem
   - Confidence
   - Personal presentation
   - Initiative
   - Customer service
   - Oral and written communication skills
   - Negotiation
   - Appropriate dress and professionalism
   - Ability to be your own life-long partner
   - Ability to adapt

3. Skills unique to a particular industry job

**Specific industries mentioned:**

- Defense
- Advanced manufacturing
- Hospitality and tourism
- Health
- Environment
- Marketing
- Sustainable landscaping
- Painting
- Maintenance
- Nursing
High Potential/High Impact Sectors

1. Support the existing labor force in Rhode Island that needs employment (tourism, hospitality and retail). Next, consider new sectors (tech companies). Then there are islands of successful companies that companies could build around to support their needs.

2. RISD was built on industry. Return to that tradition by building a greater design industry.

   - Bryant has begun to compile assets in a report (Rhode Island Ranks High).
   - Balance of life is why we're here.
   - Not going to sell anything without a sales team.

4. Bring back the fashion and jewelry industry.
   - Style Week is a huge asset.
   - URI, RISD, RIC supporting this industry.
   - Industry with strong roots in Rhode Island that can employ all types of people.

5. Be part of Boston's huge medical market (life sciences, biotech, healthcare)
   - Local workforce and teaching institutes.
   - Take advantage of changes within industry.
   - Healthcare is a research engine.

6. Commercialize research. Bringing together several industries and congressional delegation to look at how we can create an entrepreneurial initiative around our research sectors.

7. Reallocate incentives to create clean industry enterprises. Provide access to intellectual capitol that exists already.

8. Convert former 38 Studios office space to a medical records storage headquarters for New England.

9. Convert Heritage Harbor into a center for jewelry design and production.

10. Create R&D plants at the hospital that will connect students and hospitals.

11. Leverage the academic medical centers and colleges through consolidation and innovation.

12. Establish a statewide plan for tourism.
   - Combine the tourism bureaux.
   - Further develop the tourism bureau so it represents the entire state.

13. Extend railroad transportation to Westerly.

14. Beef up the financial services sector by finding new ways to attract Fidelity type companies.

15. Foster the idea of putting out a RFP encouraging private developers to bid on a facility for a joint nursing building that would unite RIC and URI nursing schools.
   - Enticement for private developer because they could lease out the space.
Institutional collaboration.

16. Create a biotech incubator (on the 195 land?) for for-profit, young, life science companies that can be a larger project with the universities.
   - Small portion of that can be designated for riskier startups.
   - Fund these companies with a side car investment fund that can invest along Cherrystone and Slater.

17. Hold an annual technology showcase to expose our companies and emerging industries to the rest of the country.

18. Eliminate sales tax.

19. Hospitality industry is generous in working with adult learners; creates internships in order to grow industry.

20. Better collaboration between Lifespan and Brown to develop research workforce.
   - Medical institutions are an employer and driver.
   - Research brings money from outside of the state.
   - Develop workers that can do that research, working with universities. Currently, we work in silos and don’t leverage resources enough.

21. Leverage financial services assets into more jobs.
   - We have real density in financial services industry with Fidelity, Bank of America, Citizens, Amica, Met Life and Met Auto, FM Global.
   - Average pay per job is high.
   - Location between NY and Boston is key.
   - Marketing strategy to build awareness of financial services industry.

22. Increase number of technology graduates.
   - Tech sector cuts across industries, supports businesses.
   - Tech grads will attract businesses to state, grow entrepreneurs.

23. Commercialize and export intellectual property of our arts and cultural organizations.

24. Put the 200 great ideas on a list with captains. Come back with 5-pagers after three months. Assemble teams and come back with 1-minute pitches.

25. Create the “We Plan.”

26. Redefine missions of economic development away from “winner-loser” mentality to a mentality that facilitates development of multiple “winners”


28. Provide tax incentives for growing industries. No new taxes on industries that are economic drivers.

29. Hire locally.
30. Buy local.

31. Support micro-businesses by convening a forum for potential self-employed.

32. Collaboration between URI, Lifespan, and Brown to bolster academic medical center.

33. Create a resource center or database for small businesses, a coordinated place to go for information, funds, access, and funds hiring locally.
   - Consider collaboration with Rhode Island CPAs, NE Tech and Bryant.

34. Fully fund RICIE 2.0 through private sector and university support ($500,000).

35. Promote greater collaboration, intentional mixing of higher education institutions.

36. Build startups centered around medical technology, medical devices, medical care, etc.
   - This is a huge opportunity that is not apparent yet.

37. “Sector shmector!” It’s not about the sectors; it’s about the talent that systematically comes out of the universities.
   - Look at universities for centers of excellence that we already have.
   - Opportunities will be identified in those centers. Get out of their way.
   - R&D is an industry, and Rhode Island is a center for this, but we don’t view it as a sector.
   - Major corporations partnering with universities, and lots of small businesses want to be around that.

38. Quonset 2.0: create a vision for it to reach its potential.

39. Arts and design is a growing industry, with new businesses and new jobs. Look at Alex and Ani to understand why it shot forward.

40. Create an incubator process that focuses on microenterprise or self-employment.

41. Articulate agreements between private industries and higher education. Connect the dots for students from out of state and make them aware of opportunities to work here.

42. Name it. Identify the thing and then go after it. Identify clusters (food, hospitality, medical devices) where we have core strengths. Tell the world what we have to offer.
   - Establish a center for excellence (e.g. SVPRI has coalesced around companies with a social purpose).

43. Redefine mission of economic development away from winner/loser mentality to multiple winners.

44. Focus on “impact sector,” which is adding jobs.
   - SVPRI offers a full ecosystem to sustain social enterprise.
   - Online business incubator.

45. Create a solid academic medical center with allied health and medical research.
   - Power of adjacency.
   - Develop shared vision, common planning, mechanisms to collaborate within sectors.
46. Convening function outside of government is needed.

47. Establish a diverse medical technology association.

48. Declare ourselves a medical hub through associated adjacencies like medical devices.
   - Expand what’s already going on in medical industry. Convene all involved (universities, industrial design, medical device manufacturing). What do we want to create here? How do we collaborate better?
   - Declare ourselves a medical device hub. Device manufacturing is a massive competitive edge.
   - Medical center in I-95 land.
   - Leverage the $80 million in research and development at Lifespan to inform the industry and/or sector.

49. Need a better educated workforce.

50. Keep state businesses here by eliminating more taxes.

51. People should know about Prostart (restaurant industry).

52. Re-imbursements to professionals are low in Rhode Island. Need tort reform.

53. Warwick as a destination.

**What do you consider high impact, high potential sectors in Rhode Island?**

- Clean
- High tech manufacturing
- Advance manufacturing
- Nursing
- Heads in beds
- Interconnectedness
- Economic growth
- Software development
- Tourism
- Collaboration
- Cyber security
- Higher education
- Education
- Healthcare
- Life sciences
- Medical devices
- Medical research and development
- Biotech
- Design
- Population health
- Technology
- Career pathways
• Social enterprise
• Composites
• Renewable energy
• Human investment
• Plastics
• Economic freedom
• The free enterprise system
• Green
• Financial services
• Entrepreneurship
• Ports
• Distribution
• Education technology
• Arts and culture commercialization
• Ship building
• Local agriculture
• Farm to table
• Food science
• Pharmaceuticals
• Hospitality
• Tend to be a convergence of traditional sectors where technology meets healthcare, or where energy and materials merge.
• Airport is new high impact sector in Warwick.
• Marine science and engineering

Leveraging/Maximizing Sites

1. Bring back the historic tax credit.

2. Have a pool of money to fund small startups.

3. Implement street cars.

4. We need to grow business to create demand. Development is more economically restrained than site restrained.

5. Turn 38 Studios space into a new business incubator.

6. MIT owns a percentage of 326 biotech firms. We could do that in Woonsocket, Central Falls, Quonset, etc. Ask MIT to do a tech business plan for Rhode Island.

7. Need to address parking, too much surface parking. Creates problem for rain runoff. Zoning for Providence says that parking has to be hidden, less visible.

8. Improve permitting and regulatory processes.
   • Streamline processes.
• Decrease time required.
  o It could be a competitive advantage to have a faster permitting process. Austin, TX has a quick process.
  o Can we replicate the quick regulatory process that Quonset has?
  o Get private contractors to help fire departments review proposals to speed up the process.
  o Propose legislation for a state mandate for 90 day turnaround.
• Increase predictability.
  o Regulatory approvals should be predictable and definite. If we can get permitting done quickly with a high degree of predictability, then Providence would “be on fire.”
• Media can play a role in letting the public know how the whole permitting process bogs down new business.
• Private sector group come together to address problematic regulatory issues.
• “We can't track a permit but we can track a package from Malaysia to Middletown.”

9. Create a debt/equity pool to leverage private money to support small businesses.

10. Celebrate successes. For example, Quonset business park is working well.

11. Have incubators to bring retail into areas that are combined residential/business.

12. Have density instead of using too much space. Build up instead of building out.

13. Connect the waterfront park system (emphasis on SYSTEM).

14. Obstacles to address:
  • Need to critically address structured parking and highway infrastructure.
  • Existing buildings locked in by regulations.
  • Environmental clean-up and rehab costs.

15. Bring back the Convergence sculpture festival.

16. Would like to see more affordable condos (“IKEA” condos) in the $200,000 range (vs. $350,000) range.

Site-specific suggestions:
1. 195 land
  • Lots of potential for the small parcels that are on the edge of the larger parcels.
  • Possibility of mixed use housing and retail.
  • Make sure waterfront land is not taken up by business development. Let there be enough residential to enjoy the waterfront. Connect waterfront to Bay and both sides of river.
  • Cultural space that would accommodate 300-500 people that is easily accessible for performances, arts education.
  • More affordable residential opportunities (apartments and condos).
  • Make sure there’s green space that is safe and accessible for children and families.
  • Nursing school building.
  • Presence from hospitals and universities.
  • Have baseline permitting for parcels of 195 land.
  • Amenities such as grocery stores and dry cleaners.
  • Green spaces (parks, squares, courtyards, green ways, trees, flowers, etc.).
• Density – bigger, taller, pack it in.
• Public art.

2. Downtown Providence
• Make sure downtown is connected to waterfront.
• Activate the waterfront with restaurants, not just open space.
• How much vacant office and retail space is there? What are the key “tipping point” properties?
• Have green space, such as pocket parks, squares, and courtyards.
• Kennedy Plaza – need to move 8 stops.

3. Superman building
• “Icons are important.” Building matters for symbolism, central location, architectural importance.
• Should look at adaptive/mixed use (residential, retail, incubator, office).
• Need to study demand and feasibility.
• Tear it down?
• Meet with owners to discuss possibilities.

Other Sites:

4. Dynamo House (Narragansett Electric power plant)
5. India Point Park
6. Shooters site
7. Roger Williams Park
8. Cranston Printworks
9. Apex
10. Victory Plating
11. North Main Street near Pawtucket line
12. Nantucket Industrial space
13. Undeveloped/Protected waterfront
14. Downtown Pawtucket, land around the new commuter train station
15. Mills – could be urban agriculture, housing, industrial space
16. Westerly
17. Quonset
18. All the land between the State House and the hospitals
19. Pawtucket/Woonsocket industrial space
20. 35 acres in Castle Hill
21. Old Ciba-Geigy building
22. East Side – make more residential than West Side, mixed use
23. Wellington area and adjacent space
24. Area along railroad between Warwick and Providence, along Pawtuxet River
25. Underutilized land along I-95 and I-295 corridors
26. Undevelopable land that is locked for various reasons
27. Underutilized land along 95/295 interchange
28. Parking lots

General Principles:

• More green space attached to residential space.
• Turn abandoned city buildings into parks/green space.
- Tactical urbanism: have festivals in the area so that people become familiar with the area.
- Provide opportunities for citizens to contribute and advocate for their ideas.
- No big box retail.
- Mixed use.
- Connect with farmer’s markets.

**Marketing Rhode Island**

1. Change the culture of how Rhode Islanders feel about Rhode Island. “We need 1,000,000 cheerleaders.”
   - Launch a “think positive Rhode Island” ambassador campaign with residents and business leaders.
   - Have people talk about why they live and have businesses here. Equip internal ambassadors with talking points, elevator speech, and stories. Grow it virally.
   - Know, promote, and build on successes (including from arts and education).
   - Address and dispel negative chatter.
   - Internal marketing through media and other inexpensive ways. Personal referrals are a good way to promote Rhode Island.
   - “Nothing will happen if you don’t have a sales team.” Educate everyone; everyone is an ambassador.

2. Create believable, inspiring narratives for diverse audiences told by champions who are passionate about the state.
   - We need to believe in the narratives ourselves first.
   - Should have different narratives for different communities.
   - Must strike a balance of a “Rhode Island brand” and different narratives.
   - Need a simple, easy, central way to meld capacity and infrastructure for marketing. Need structure, platform, resources, public/private team.

3. Let the people brand themselves. Belief and change from within.

4. Develop an external marketing campaign.
   - We need new platforms for marketing and branding.
   - There must be a sustained, long-term effort.
   - Conduct market research.
   - Define objectives: grow companies, encourage startups, promote assets, attract talent, generate positive self-image.
   - Get a marketing team capitalizing on local talent: existing resources and strategic reallocation, professional team with private sector leadership, Rhode Island flavor.
   - Deploy consistent messaging.
   - Create a sales team with the capacity to follow through.
   - Stick with it…quit changing.
   - Beyond a campaign.

5. Be specific about the market we’re targeting. It includes companies who may consider moving here, companies here already, college kids, tourists, etc.

6. Create, promote, and manage a Rhode Island brand.
• Creation should come from within the state. Start internally; we need to convince ourselves, then others.

7. “Someone has to spend some money.”
   • Use state revenue for marketing and research.
   • “We have to be world-class in execution, not just ‘meh’.”

8. Circumvent the weaknesses and build on strengths.

9. Create a welcome wagon for new businesses.
   • Companies looking to come to Rhode Island should have a team of experts assigned to them from start to finish to assist with site location, permitting, etc.
   • Approach should be customized to each company’s needs.
   • It should be private sector led with government participation.

    • Create a one-stop shop for new businesses.
    • Take examples and best practices from other cities and states.
    • Need a go-to person.
    • Need continuity and accountability with legal authority, otherwise it becomes too political.
    • Regulatory/tax process needs to be fast and lean.
    • Political leadership needed from the entire cabinet of public agencies.

11. Combine mentoring, loans, and technical assistance for new businesses.

12. Site selectors need marketing materials.

13. Write editorials regularly regarding national agenda and Rhode Island’s response.
    • Potential topics include: pension reform, creative economy, Central Falls outcome, food innovation and Farmfresh RI, play off culture themes, and tourism stories.

14. Mentoring is an inexpensive and impactful way to connect and welcome people. Mentors provide advice, support, and the ability to plug in to a broader network.
    • Organize a clearinghouse event to connect mentors within the state.
    • Promote mentorship within businesses.
    • Evaluate the human capital we have in Rhode Island and in the region, including social venture capital, executive services, and entrepreneurs.
    • Promote internships within colleges, high schools, and organizations.
    • Example of economic gardening from Littleton, CO.

15. Develop “sister cities” for every town. Newport has several and this allows for cultural exchange and advancement of business.

16. Bring major corporations into collective marketing effort as ambassadors for economic development.

17. Ask business sector to invest in quality of life issues like bike paths.

18. Train taxi drivers on how to sell Rhode Island.
19. Expand the number of taxis.

20. RIF and private investors could put money on the table to incentivize new ideas, allow for experimentation, and let creative people compete.

21. Focus on keeping graduates in Rhode Island.
   - Have a structure in place for young talent who are looking for help. There are plenty of resources, but students are not aware of them.
   - Identify specific students and recruit them to come and stay here.
   - Lower unemployment, increased job opportunities, salaries, affordable housing are key.

22. Create tax breaks for Rhode Island companies to help with employees’ student loans.

23. Invest in a more robust, statewide tourism campaign.
   - Vigorous individual/regional efforts seem to be working (e.g., Newport, Blackstone Valley).
   - Create “centralized leadership,” i.e. a statewide advisory council for tourism and hospitality.
   - Support successful regional efforts with strong, statewide branding and marketing efforts.

24. Rethink existing structures.
   - Is there a place for multiple groups?
   - Do we need one central leader/body?
   - Are existing groups tinged with politics?
   - Some organizations change leadership with political cycles, and we need long-range leadership.
   - Balance coordination and execution with grassroots engagement.
   - Public and private partners are needed.
   - Independence is important.

25. Have a singular guru to coordinate marketing for the entire state.

26. Create an entity that manages outside business interest in Rhode Island.

27. Start more web businesses, which will lead to people staying here.

28. We need the infrastructure to support growth.

29. We have to have lots of experiments going on.

30. Be bold, not bland. “Holy shit, do you know what they’re doing in Rhode Island?”

31. Centralize and unify decision-making.

32. Market to individuals like New Zealand has (point system).

33. Expand food-based tourism.

34. The Rhode Island Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship could reinvent an incubator.
35. Private industry has talent, should put forth people to run for elected office.

36. Put together all the jazz festivals, film festivals, music programs, etc. under one unified person.

37. Create a list of resources which are available year round.

38. Encourage each attendee to recruit five people as ambassadors.

39. “Tend to customers, then attract new.” Value and highlight what is already here.

40. Share intellectual capital and focus on knowledge retention.
   - RIsurgence

41. Bring big business and entrepreneurs together to start an intellectual property dialogue.

42. Expand small business loans; make small businesses “rock stars.”

43. Create a new scorecard for the economic health of Rhode Island.

44. Make the Mayor and Governor more available/accessible.

45. Sell emotional and logical components. Use Silicon Valley Model.

46. Look at what other states do.

47. Don’t be “like” MA or CT; we are different.

48. Build bridges with energy of Kendall Square/Boston.

49. Promote diversity. Immigrant population is growing and needs to succeed.

50. Have outsiders recognize the benefits of Rhode Island, promote Rhode Islanders.

51. Integrate Rhode Island into university messages.

52. Create a unified catalog of success stories.

53. Showcase hubs of success.

54. Establish an internship in cultural mentoring.

55. Tax reform.

56. Need stronger relationships between arts/nonprofits and private industry.

57. Need to address deep problems like schools and job creation in order to sell our state.
58. Sacrifices should be asked of everyone, including businesses ready to start up.

59. Market the support network.

60. Be clear about economic value.
   - Businesses will not move to Rhode Island unless there is some economic reason to do so. While Rhode Island being “a nice place to live” is very important, Rhode Island does not have a measurable strength in regards to ease of doing business which is tied directly to cost and regulations.
   - Rhode Island must make a strong economic argument in answer to question: “Why should I move my business to Rhode Island?”

61. Promote our people.
   - Tell stories of why people are here, who is here. Market a self-identifiable, pride filled asset. Can come up to Rhode Island to find talent (even if this ends up an exporting talent strategy).

62. Find the connection between Rhode Island’s history and what we have now.
   - For example, RISD was founded to support industry and manufacturing.

What are we selling?
   - Smallness can be a unifying theme and an asset. Tout efficiencies of our systems. For example, we can put a meeting together quickly and should be able to boast about less red tape and less bureaucracy to help your business get started. Size is a great asset for tourism. It also allows for easier creation of social networks and meaningful impact.
   - Independence and entrepreneurship.
   - Creative economy.
   - Strong family values.
   - Place to start, grow, and stay.
   - “Only in Rhode Island”
   - Rhode Island has easy access to natural beauty, while in other states you have to travel.
   - Restaurants and food.
   - Newport and boating/mansions.
   - Folk and Jazz festivals.
   - Providence as a comeback kid reinventing itself.
   - There is a great tradition and history of creativity.
   - Cost of living is competitive
   - Celebrate density of higher education, arts and culture.
   - Quality of life.
   - Lots of entertaining, food, beauty in a small package.
   - Many dimensions.
   - Rooted tradition in family values!
   - Small size makes it easy to connect.
   - Young entrepreneurs love Rhode Island for networking/like-mindedness, smallness, accessibility, and elected officials.
   - Great harbor.
   - America’s Cup.
   - Music.
• Sailing.
• Arts/culture.
• Horticulture, agriculture, and the landscape industries are deeply rooted in Rhode Island tradition and the future of Rhode Island – Multi-generational small businesses tied to the land, innovation, values (family, quality of life, environmental, building a life), building culture/celebrating.
• Size and strong family values-contributes to good behavior of Rhode Island young people.
• Great place to raise children.
• Small, creative, entrepreneurial businesses like to be here in Rhode Island, and have clients outside the state.
• Leverage college population and summer population.
• Good place to live and work.
• Authenticity: real, not Disney, quirky/idiosyncratic.
• Opportunity: innovation, openness to ideas and growth.
• Diversity: of possibilities and access to variety of options.
• Lifestyle is what we should be marketing.
• We should be attracting young people.
• We should be selling hope as that is our motto.
• Live, work, travel.
• Providence has low cost urban living, demographic trends.
• Knowledge economy – leverage the young and brilliant.
• Location. We sit between Boston and NYC; no other city has this as advantage.
• One big college town.
• Tradition, history, rooted- institutions, community, genealogy of American Dream from colonial times.
• Size: Connection, access, agility, trust, “where everybody knows your name.”
• Rhode Island is a growth sector, with 500 new businesses over last six years.
• Rhode Island is independent and entrepreneurial.
• There is constant movement of people (visitors, tourists, students and entrepreneurs).

What weaknesses do we need to counter?
• Lack of awareness about ourselves and how others see us. People outside don’t know much about us. We’re not comfortable about our narrative. No research from outside.
• No cultural cohesion inside the state.
• Absence of interesting storytelling
• Very meta state.
• Negative perception that Rhode Islanders won’t travel around the state
• Concept of nepotism is rampant.
• Politics has to be taken out of the process.
• “Are we afraid of capitalism here?”
• Too much tax and regulation.
• Persistence of pessimism, negative mentality, cynicism, defeatist attitude.
• Myth that Rhode Island is a bad place to do business. This is a red herring. The cost of business is very similar across the New England states.
• Too insular, not looking outside.
• Poor leadership.
• Old guard leadership and politicos.
Skills gap persists, with a mismatch between people who want work and companies that need to hire.

**Quality of Place**

1. Boston is so vibrant; young people want to live and work there.
   - How can we replicate that real excitement to be there?

2. Restore historic tax credit.
   - We don’t have lot of land in Rhode Island.
   - Invest in our strengths.

3. Spend money to promote tourism.

4. Improve public transportation system
   - Integrated transportation system.
   - Publicize bus system.
   - Promote bike share, Zip Car rental, walkability – not just the bus and not just Downtown; public official accountability.
   - Ken Orenstein-bus riders are not being represented; tools out there that are new for economic development.
   - Improve transit system. Should be easier to get around this state.

5. Support the street car proposal in Providence, as an economic development tool.

6. Close the skills gaps.
   - Do we have enough skilled workers?
   - Trying to get and keep talent in policy arena.

7. Important to come up with indicators to measure progress.

8. High quality public education is critical.
   - Education starts early with pre-K. Have seen some systemic wins that we can build on (e.g. Race to the Top awards). We need to keep our eye on the ball and be publicly accountable for them.
   - Radical change of existing parochial education system

9. Rhode Island could create itself as the gender equity state to attract women and families to live and work here, start businesses here, etc.
   - A great place to live and work is an equitable place.
   - Make Rhode Island the best state for women in country. What a hell of bumper sticker.

10. Rhode Island was a leader for a long time in home daycare. Being known as family friendly is important.

11. Institute a full time legislature.
   - Important that people have confidence in the way it is managed.

12. Make sure we have affordable apartments and vibrant communities.
13. Partnerships between business, government, and nonprofit sectors in community-driven process to identify issues and indicators. (Example: Jacksonville, FL)

14. To have vibrant life here in Rhode Island, must have vibrant business community.
   - Need to give businesses solid reason(s) to come here.
   - Need to have job opportunities.

15. Expand the footprint of the Waterfire experience by making it easy for visitors to experience other aspects of Rhode Island.

16. Other than Just Do it, Let's Do It. We are the agency doing it.

17. Train taxi drivers so they know important places downtown.

18. Address estate tax.

19. Fix the roads.


21. Do what Andy Cutler does: let people in your own social networks know how great Providence and Rhode Island is.

22. “If everyone plopped down $20, that’s a project. We don’t need permission to do this stuff.”

23. Recommend and recruit conferences to Rhode Island.


25. Encourage more positive discussion on talk radio and in blogs.

   - Provide information to bring them out another 3-5.
   - Use technology.
   - Integrated approach, like Independence Trail.

27. Celebrate behavior that we want. Ask people to give 2 percent more to things they care about. Ask media to dedicate 1 percent of front page to things we celebrate.

28. City of Grand Rapids had a YouTube video of residents that went viral.

29. Build demand for people that want to come here by establishing sister cities.
   - Look for places that would appreciate us or teach us something.

30. Build an app for restaurants in Prov.

31. Build an integrated smartphone app that ties together restaurants, beaches, events, mass transit, etc.
   - IBM is looking for a test city.
   - Detroit is doing interesting things (Magic Bus tours, attracting young people from Chicago, encouraging local purchasing)

33. Have each town/city have a contest about what people like about their town or city. Report out at Vets.

34. Create and promote a downtown park system.
   - This is in the works. Need to create a public and private partnership, work with unions.
   - Park Festival run by Partnership for Providence Parks

35. Fox News had a program on education turn-around through technology, each kid has a computer, teacher can help kids learn at own pace.

36. Asset mapping.

37. Banners all over the state reminding people of what we do best.
   - Cleveland sold banners to building owners to raise money.
   - New signage is being designed for Providence currently.

38. Improve public safety.

39. Improve arts system.

40. Promote smart growth, prevent sprawl.

41. Promote energy efficient development patterns.

42. Improve civility in society.

43. High standards of government service delivery. The registry is a good example of improvement.

44. Infrastructure improvements – public transportation, education, open space, arts and culture, public works.

45. Find an opportunity for Rhode Island to be the best at something – public transportation, etc.

46. Look at Cleveland and their open space program.

47. Look at Worcester and their city center.

48. Buy art. Get tourists to do it, too.

49. Private sector must demand change, encourage public service, collaborate to make change.

50. Better communication between public and private sectors.

**What defines a good place to live and work?**

- Good education system
- Jobs
- Convenience
- Location
- Arts/culture
- Food
- Entertainment
- Walkability
- Public transportation
- Good churches/faith centers
- Open space
- Optimism
- Public safety
- Diversity
- Effective government
- Social capital, connectedness of people in the place
- Good bars
- Equity, level playing field

**What does Rhode Island do well?**
- Historic neighborhoods
- Easy to access quality experiences
- Diversity in small piece of real estate
- Ease of access
- Small size is our greatest advantage
- Airport
- T from North Kingstown to Boston
- Academic medical center
- All of the universities
- Gay, Latino mayors are symbols of hope
- Amazing people
- What Cornish and AS220 are doing downtown to build a vibrant community
- Good access to elected officials
- Tremendous urban rural balance
- Agriculture
- Transformation of Providence over past 30 years ago
- Food
- Restaurants
- Geographic location, proximity
- Urban to rural to seashore
- Friends, family, community
- Scale= accessibility, familiarity, consistency
- Higher education and private schools
- Providence is cool
- Beaches
- Arts/culture
- Architecture
- Jobs
- Lack of traffic
- Diversity
- Blackstone River Valley
- Renaissance and Providence
- Arts industry
- Newport
- Our shores
- Cleanliness
- Safety
- Trees
- History
- Affordability
- Singles, night-life
- Innovation/creativeness
- Openness
- Growth opportunities
- “Vibrant alternative culture”
- Diversity
- Ease of travel (both in the city and to the country)
- Big city amenities
- Small town feel
- Access to recreation
- Range of options
- Ability to make connections and be heard
- Authentic (not Disney)
- Organic growth
- Quirky
- Opportunity for innovation
- Access to a variety of options

**Startups: Helping Entrepreneurs Thrive**

1. Make the capital environment much richer.
   - Rhode Island is hampered by access to capital.
   - Create a fund to support entrepreneurial activities. Ask the 8-10 largest Rhode Island companies to make commitments to the fund. Get a backer like RIF to endorse it and outside commitments of $20-25 million.
   - Many large companies have policies and statutes to support local startups but they have no mechanism to do so. Need a mechanism for attracting and managing deals that the big companies are not able to provide individually.
   - Need an in-between “side car fund.”
   - Develop a community innovation fund.
   - Develop a community incubator fund.
• Get funds from outside sources like Kauffman Foundation.

2. Stop shoe stringing. We constantly damn ourselves by under-budgeting.

3. More emerging groups like the Cherrystone group and Ocean State Angels.

4. Engage specific domains of the private sector, and think of more specific ways for it to invest in startups in Rhode Island.

5. Create an anchor tenant incubator sponsorship. Big retail companies underwrite a themed incubation platform. They play an immediate mentorship role. For example, Gilbane could sponsor an incubator for new construction technology startups.

6. Instead of guaranteeing bank loans, guarantee leases for short periods. Startups need space.

7. Create a clearinghouse for space (Rhositelocator.com), a GIS-based inventory of available space.

8. Look specifically at what companies need for space: affordable, adjacent to other companies, etc.

9. Pratt has their own in-house incubators. Can we do that at Brown and RISD since so many startups are initiated by alum?

10. Need to provide, outside of structures, places for people to share their energy and ideas.

11. Plan and promote greater incubator/shared space and services.

12. Develop an affordable incubator outside of downtown Providence.

13. Better linkages between business plan competition, incubators, accelerators, Startup Weekend, etc.
   • Proposals that don’t win need mentoring, training, nurturing.

14. Create speed dating atmospheres between mentors, entrepreneurs.

15. Have an “innovation bus” that links old-school startups (Hasbro, Benny’s, etc.) to new ones. There are hall-of-fame companies that began here that are underappreciated.

16. Housing is a challenge. Create a foreign exchange program for startuppers.

17. Start-up school: work for a startup instead of creating one.

18. In order to have a sufficient number of successful startups, we need a bigger base than we have.

19. Create a central message board that connects successful entrepreneurs with the outside world.

20. Cross-pollinate design and business by mixing up the universities.

21. Expand the tech startup model to other sectors.
22. Create a software tool that provides startups with access to resources from larger companies (human capital).

23. Create a true statewide hub for entrepreneurs.
   - There is a microcosm of organizations that work together to support growth in Rhode Island, but outside small group, people aren’t aware of them.
   - Make small businesses aware that we are here.
   - Promote our existence to universities other than Brown and get students into the pipeline.

24. Host industry specific dating events to create connections for entrepreneurs.
   - Facilitate introductions between entrepreneurs and mentors.
   - Help companies create their own startups on the supply chain side.

25. Create more close connectivity between investors and startups, and between traditional business and startups. Meeting opportunities are essential for growth.

26. Copy legislation from New Jersey that allows startups to sell their losses. Find a champion and leadership buy-in.

27. More university funding for small business development centers (i.e. JWU).
   - What are the demands for those centers? What metrics have they been following?

28. Introduce our startups to major markets in the region.

29. Explore and build upon some of the local success stories.

30. Tour other regions that have healthy startup cultures.

31. Corporate partnering. Find big companies to give startups a job.
   - Biotech has built themselves on early partnerships between pharmaceutical companies and biotech startups.
   - Creates tremendous leverage on both ends.
   - Six large companies develop a customer manifesto to give startups a chance.

32. Create a website (RIstartup.org) that serves as a one-stop shop for startups of all sorts.
   - Could be run by the chambers and universities.
   - Include a database and map of all startups, mentor match-up, and information about capital, resource partners space, hiring, etc.
   - RIF should convene a meeting with universities and chambers to assess interest.
   - Build on concept of EDC resource portal “every company counts”
   - For those not lucky enough to bump into Janet Raymond, they have a place to go.

33. More promotion and education of the capital formation resources available in the state.

34. Establish stronger relationships with local educational institutions to tap students and influence course development.

35. Get a “story”- what is great at Rhode Island economically?
33. Identify the issues that affect the business climate that we can solve, such as regulatory reform.

36. Streamline the SBDC process.

37. Provide assistance to new businesses that are interested in Rhode Island.

38. Invest in infrastructure, like public education.

39. Create a marine technology center of excellence.
   - Coordination between industry, university research, and congressional delegation.
   - Commercialize study of organic research.
   - Coordinate IT, cyber, and marine.

40. Convene all of the people that support entrepreneurial activity in order to map resources, identify gaps, get the word out, and connect people.

41. Density attracts resources. Create a physical hub (Superman building) for small businesses and startups.
   - Business owners want to be in a place with other businesses at the same stage of maturity – several hundred small businesses.
   - E.g. Kendall Square in Cambridge.
   - RICIE 2.0

42. Bring back a stronger Rhode Island Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (RICIE).
   - Chamber is considering a proposal from Betaspring to launch RICIE 2.0.

43. Create an entrepreneurship zone; companies within that zone could have fees waived, permitting streamlined, etc. This is a place for public sector to participate.

44. Shared commitment from the higher education and healthcare systems to fund entrepreneurial activity.

45. Improve the pipeline by improving the IP and tech transfer policies at universities. How are institutions incentivizing researchers on how to patent intellectual capital?

46. Create incentives for banks and other funders to become involved in entrepreneurial community, offer the types of capital and technical assistance that are needed to propel entrepreneurs.

47. Create Kickstarter RI, a web-based portal for crowd investment.

48. Buy local products, services, and talent.

49. Expand on what is already out there.

50. Create a Rhode Island challenge patterned after the Mass Challenge (incubation happens for everyone in the class).

51. Prevent brain drain that happens every year.
   - Guarantee that students can get into internships and interact with local businesses and government.
• Universities need to pitch Providence and Rhode Island as a place to stay and live and work. Most of classmates were encouraged to go to NY and Boston.
• Host a job fair for entrepreneurs on campuses.

52. Create a loan forgiveness program for entrepreneurs if they stay within the state. The Rhode Island Student Loan Authority doing something similar for nurses.

53. As a community, we need to be more playful, more experimental, more bold. We need to be less afraid to fail.
• Startups are looking for fun.
• Have a sense of humor about ourselves.
• Look at other places that do this well.

54. Be cautious of the Providence centric frame of mind. There is great real estate in other towns.

55. Instead of Just Do It, Let’s Do It.

56. Document our startups better and promote statewide.

57. Create tax and regulatory incentives for startups.

58. Build a space and support network for post-SVPRI/Betaspring companies.

59. Better collaboration between Rhode Island tourism bureau and arts community.

60. Double density in Providence. Get 5,000 people to move downtown tomorrow. Make Providence a prototype.

What has made Rhode Island startups successful?

• Commitment to Rhode Island for personal reasons that encourages people to keep their company here, regardless of pressure to move.
• Lots of talent nearby.
• Those who moved from far away appreciated the low cost of living compared to Boston.
• Founders from Brown.
• Early community support.
• Early funding, angel investors.
• Local seed and angel funding (but at some point you outgrow the market). Easy to outgrow early funding sources in Rhode Island.
• Sensitive to customer needs: offer a unique product with good customer service.
• Grant from the city for Betaspring alums.
• Finding a niche.
• Access to regional seed money.
• Must see a need, focus on good goals, and hire good people.
• Customer service. Customers keep you growing.
• Created a family atmosphere.
• Limited hierarchy.
• Significant market opportunity.
• Key individual who brought business leadership.
• Attracted world class board members, advisors.
• Mentorship from a business planning point of view.
• Local relationship base that allow for building and risk taking.
• Tenacious founder.
• Robust support network- that is close to the origin of the business.
• Brown is a common denominator.
• Ability to change when things don’t go as planned.
• Personal investment.
• Angel investors who encourage entrepreneurs as mentors and funders.
• Once you reach scale, a lot easier to attract out of state capital.
• Affordable space.
• Community of entrepreneurs.
• Definition of success (growth energy, exit, profitability).
• First-rate knowledge of the industry and technology.
• Knowledge of who your customers are.
• Passion of founding core.
• Address a real need in the community.
• Connection to experienced mentors for advice, strategy and resource connections.
• Continually learning and evolving.
• Sharing the story/success beyond Rhode Island.
• Continuum of startups and small businesses that are constantly reinventing.
• Broad appeal, ability to export beyond the borders.
• Need to be adaptable, might end up differently than how it started.
• Strong funding to get company off the ground.
• Don’t need complicated business; a startup can happen over a weekend.
• Most successful startups gained from the ecosystem. Talent can be absorbed by others in the ecosystem. That supports businesses during difficult times and props them up as they accelerate.
• Lessons learned from failures go back into the soil.
• Rhode Island has the potential to make connections.
• Identify a need.
• Creative solution.
• Form team.
• Always looking for next move.
• Willingness to do whatever it takes.

Support and Growth for Existing Businesses

1. Create a collaborative amongst businesses to provide periodic mutual assessment of products, services, and markets.

2. Lobby government to increase funding for the small business development center.
3. Speak to government about having all people pay taxes and be part of the system.

4. Create a private sector advocacy group to create a voice for business for the state of Rhode Island.
   - Include tradesmen.
   - A Make Stuff Happen (MSH) group that works with government.
   - We need more work teams, not committees.
   - Create a Private Sector Leadership Council.
   - Inventory need and create a marketplace.
   - Good will created today needs an engine to drive the ideas and leadership.
   - Collaborate on specific issues: taxation, access to capital, regulations, access to resources.
   - Play a monitoring role.
   - Conduct a needs assessment.

5. Do this again. Keep this process dynamic. Meet again in small groups.

6. Re-engage an access to capital committee (independent of EDC).

7. Become more politically engaged.
   - Develop an exchange program (i.e. bring a legislator to work).

8. Ask a group of private local foundations to create an equity fund (RIF should invest).

9. Revitalize the BDC, tie in Cherrystone, and expand through a coalition of banks and larger credit unions. Create an entrepreneurial capital fund for businesses to grow and expand within Rhode Island.

10. Internships mentoring 17-25 year olds between private industry and high schools and colleges.
    - Identify programs that already exist and expand them.

    - Identify key aspects to support a positive image.

12. Create a roundtable or forum for conversation between government and private industry to address specific issues.
    - Predictable regulatory environment
    - Predictable tax environment
    - Easy access to training dollars
    - Reduce processes
    - Better tax scheme (competitive with top 20 pro-business states)
    - Eliminate fear of retribution from government

13. Private sector should reengage with the educational system on workforce development.
    - Bring together business leaders and university presidents.

14. Develop a “concierge service” for businesses entering Rhode Island or existing businesses that need assistance.

15. Provide small businesses with easy access to business mentors and best practices.
• Collect ideas from retirees and incubators.
• SCORE guides and mentors business leaders.

16. Create a contract/10-point plan for Rhode Island.

17. Rather than smart growth, think smart decline/consolidation.
   • It is not enough for every city and town to grow. We must focus resources on specific geographic
     locations, regionalize bodies of government, and have smaller and fewer governments.
   • Private sector representation in this effort is a first step.
   • Create a comprehensive plan.

18. Research best practices in other states.

19. Chambers of commerce provide HR training and business education.

20. Resource sharing – (e.g. bookkeeping, purchasing).

21. Create associations of like industries to assist one another and become a unified voice.

22. Connect the dots between travel and hospitality to arts and culture and neighborhood organizations.

23. Develop a virtual community.

24. Become more involved in supporting elected officials with an agenda for success.
   • Super PAC to elect officials

25. Create sector collaborations in identified growth/interest areas.

26. Identify the top 5 transportation/infrastructure deficits and put together a cross functional team to make
    recommendations in a defined period of time.

27. Have the state operate a 2 year budget cycle.

28. Review all regulations.

29. Reduce energy costs.
   • What are the possibilities of producing Hydro power?

30. Look at top Rhode Island businesses. Can they add one employee?

31. Apply the same processes that startups use with existing businesses to connect with resources. Use our
    network to be business leads for one another. Develop an online portal.

32. Develop a shop and dine local campaign with a micro-focus on “Rhode Island made and grown” products.
    There is a campaign in Michigan that encourages consumers to buying one item out of 10 local.

33. Need to flip the delivery system to a global delivery of services.
34. Institute baseline permitting.

35. Multiple groups need to collaborate and share information around key topics.

36. The Job Development Tax should be invested in job training.

37. Catalogue why businesses leave the state through an exit interview process.

38. Ask the banks to create a pool of capital for existing and new businesses, with a rotating board of directors.

39. Replicate/expand some of the job training programs from Johnson & Wales and New England Tech.

40. Provide tax credits for training.

41. Develop a Rhode Island strategic information network, a connector of expertise within state that can help businesses find information and grow.
   - It is an active network of expertise, not a glorified phone book.
   - Resources should include a website, sales staff, knowledge network, social network, and scalable platform.

42. Focus on manufacturing for export.
   - Pull together state, business, and foundation funds to assess need.
   - Raise awareness on export.
   - Pair up groups by export destination.
   - Identify markets and corporations.
   - Create a cooperative/network.

**What do existing businesses need in order to succeed and grow?**

- Capital
- Access to raw materials/real estate
- Definition of the product
- Demand for your product or service
- Qualified, educated workforce
- Employee training
- Retention, stability, and growth in workforce, in order to preserve training investment
- Physical geography – close to population areas
- Diverse product and client mix – a product people want to buy
- Knowledge of the marketplace
- Knowledge of the industry
- Culture of excellence
- Short and long term plan
- Company of innovation
- Strong leadership
- Service to community
- Understanding compliance systems, record keeping
• Effective marketing and sales outreach
• Business friendly environment
• Consistent, predictable, competitive environment
• Growth-oriented government
• Stable government policies
• Tax policy that makes sense
• Tax incentives to invest
• Short approvals
• Reasonable regulation
• Public sector that stays out of our way
• Public sector that asks how it can help, doesn't tell us how to run our business
• Access to public officials
• Agencies to help push through barriers
• Less government and more self help
• Ethical and pro-business government
• Good value received for our tax dollar
• Quality connection between industry and education
• Access to mentors
• Seek advice and help
• Local advice going beyond the mechanics
• Transportation and transportation links
• Utilities
• Access to physical plant
• Ability to quickly expand free of regulation
• Controlled costs – right equipment and right real estate
• Infrastructure (roads, parking, education, airport)
• Affordable housing
• Self-awareness of our own cynicism
• Customers that can afford to purchase
• Strong voice representing business community
• HR training for start up businesses
• Competition of like businesses
• Cultural amenities
• Positive attitude
• Empirical evidence
• Reliable business partners, e.g. the government keeping the playing field predictable and helpful
• Good public education system – from elementary to higher education