

ULI Minnesota

Regional Council of Mayors (RCM)

Opportunity for District Councils:

- To establish a nonpartisan, multi-jurisdictional platform for Mayors
- To disseminate ULI research and publications to public officials
- To elevate the brand of ULI as the go to resource on land use issues

Description: A partnership that provides a nonpartisan platform for 45 Mayors to build and implement action strategies that will raise the region's overall economic competitiveness and quality of life. Over the past 6 years, the RCM has become an influential voice for the region.

Purpose: Provide a means for Mayors to:

- convene on a multijurisdictional basis,
- learn about best real estate development practices for promoting regional economic competitiveness,
- develop regional strategies to make it easier to attract development for the wellbeing of the region, and
- build support for regional, state and federal policies that will keep the Twin Cities region a desirable place to live & work.

Partners: Partnerships are considered critical to the implementation of RCM action strategies. Representatives of the real estate and business communities, universities, nonprofits and foundations serve on the four Initiative Committees, helping formulate the action strategies. Partners are invited to attend the monthly RCM meetings as observers.

Governance: Operating without official by-laws, the partnership is a voluntary collaboration among participating Mayors and supported by ULI Minnesota.

Organization: Two Mayors serve as RCM Co-chairs. Oversight is provided by the Executive Committee comprised of the current and past co-chairs and the co-chairs of 4 Initiative Committees addressing housing, jobs, transportation, and the environment. ULI MN provides staff support.

Program of Work: The RCM program of work includes organization of monthly meetings for Mayors to learn about best practices for addressing regional challenges and opportunities, preparation of multi-jurisdictional strategies that improve regional competitiveness, and, from time to time, drafting of resolutions for individual Mayors to send in support of state and federal policies.

Role of District Council: Each Mayor is a ULI member, with access to ULI information (publications, senior fellow advice, etc.). Staff operates as a helping hand, providing administrative support, overseeing research and strategy development and executing leadership on behalf of the RCM engaging partners and organizing community initiatives.

Budget: Budget is approximately \$75,000. Funds come from ULI and foundations such as the Family Housing Fund, Target and Blue Cross Blue Shield.

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Toolkit for Impact

Steps for Organizing a Regional Council of Mayors (RCM)

Start Up

In 2005, two suburban Mayors asked ULI MN to organize a forum for Mayors committed to regional goals of economic growth and quality of life. The Mayors of Minneapolis and St Paul agreed to participate. 45 Mayors now participate in the RCM. The strong attendance record is attributed to the rich content of the meetings addressing the linkage between the policy and practice of real estate development and economic development and to the value of regular meetings for building inter-jurisdictional relationships.

Lessons Learned:

- Identify two or three mayors who recognize the need to compete regionally.
- Explain the RCM model, the value of regional cooperation and the need to meet market preferences for real estate development in order to retain and attract new economic development opportunities.
- From the very beginning, offer ULI quality programming that provides the Mayors with take home value.
- Hold regular monthly meetings that permit networking among Mayors, staff and partners. Annual information meetings were insufficient.

Monthly Meetings

The RCM meets monthly over lunch for two hours. The Executive Committee and staff plan meeting agendas by quarter with input from Mayors at previous RCM meetings and from the four Initiative Committees. Each agenda follows a format that allows time for networking and presentations with relevant take home value:

- Lunch and Networking
- Special Informational Presentation (often based on ULI material)
- Discussion about pending regional issues, proposed initiatives and strategies
- RCM Initiatives updates
- Mayors Updates

Lessons Learned:

- Limit attendance “at the table” to only Mayors, but permit their city managers to attend as observers.
- Invite partners in business and nonprofit sectors to attend as observers.
- Utilize the resources of ULI.
- Empower Mayors to run the show.

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Initiatives

The Mayors decide as a group which regional economic, social or environmental challenges they want to address. With assistance from the RCM Initiative Committees, they identify regional strategies and a local toolbox kit for municipal action. Membership on an Initiative Committee includes Mayors as well as leaders from the private sector, academic, nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. There are 4 Initiative Committees:

- Housing: partnering to implement tools and strategies that support a full range of housing choices
- Environment: promoting action strategies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect natural resources and support healthy living
- Jobs-economic development: fostering regional collective action to strengthen economic competitiveness and job growth
- Transportation: building on national and regional best practices to connect transportation and land use systems.

Lessons Learned:

- Focus work on action strategies and tools for specific changes and outcomes Mayors can deliver.
- Recognize the importance of partners and foundations for support.
- Pick something to do. For example, as part of the Opportunity City Program, RCM provided 7 suburban cities with local tools for planning and incentivizing different types of housing needed to meet changing demographics and market preferences.
- Bring new information about best practices to specific municipalities. For example, RCM facilitated development of the Navigating the New Normal workshops for city officials that offers practical solutions for addressing emerging opportunities for development and redevelopment.
- Work to bring the right partners to the table.

Resolutions

The RCM is a nonpartisan body that does not lobby. Occasionally, the Mayors identify regional, state or federal legislative matters with potential impact on the region's wellbeing. In the past, one or two Mayors have volunteered to write a resolution that states the regional implications of the matter under review and calls for responsible leadership to address the issue. Once approved on a consensus basis, the resolution is put on RCM stationary. Each Mayor has the option to sign, or not to sign, the resolution. The RCM as a whole does not sign resolutions.

Lessons Learned

- Give Mayors the option to sign or not to sign resolutions. This kind of flexibility underscores the RCM commitment to non-partisanship.

Toolkit for Impact

Sample Meeting Agenda Regional Council of Mayors



Regional Council of Mayors Meeting

Monday, October 10th, 2011

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

To help us plan for lunch, please RSVP

MEETING LOCATION

**DORSEY & WHITNEY, 50 S 6th Street, MINNEAPOLIS, MN
15th Floor-Seattle Room**

- 11:30 **LUNCH AND NETWORKING**
- 11:40 Welcome and Introductions: Mayor Jim Hovland
 Executive Directors Report: Caren Dewar
 Metro Watch
 PRESENTATION
- 11:55 Building on Innovation: The Significance of Anchor Institutions
 in a New Era of City Building: Tom Murphy, Senior Resident
 Fellow, ULI/Klingbell Chair for Urban Development
 DISCUSSION
- 12:40 **Regional Cluster Initiative** (attached): Mayor Gene Winstead
- 1:00 **MAYORS UPDATES**
- 2012 levy proposals
- 1:30 **ADJOURN**