

Monthly Capital Region Leadership Council Meeting Minutes

March 20, 12:00pm - 4:00pm, North Natomas Community Center

Leadership Council Attendees:

E	Adam Wilson	P	Gabe Ross	E	Paul Towers
A	Adelita Serena	P	Gloria Stearns	A	Rana Ghadban
A	Anthony Taula-Lieras	P	Ivory Watts	A	Robert Bendorf
A	Bill Camp	E	James Corless	A	Robert Heidt, Jr.
E	Cameron Law	A	Jason Buckingham	P	Sam Greenlee
A	Christy Jewell	A	Jeneba Lahai	P	Spencer Bowen
A	Crystal Bethke	A	Jenny Hatch	E	Suzanne Dizon
A	Denzell (Fedrequake) Nunsuch	E	Jeremy Brown	P	Tex Ritter
A	Daurice Smith	P	Kimberly Parker	P	Theresa Milan
A	Dawnte Early	P	Lindsey Nitta	E	Todd Cutler
E	Devin Middlebrook	E	Malaki Amen	E	Troels Adrian
P	Elisa Herrera	P	Michael Jasso	P	Volma Volcy
P	Eliza Tudor	P	Nkiruka Catherine Ohaegbu	A	Wayne Mitchum Jr.
A	Fal Asrani	P	Orville Thomas	P	William Walker
E	Gabby Trejo	E	Paul Bancroft		

"P" = present, "A" = absent, "E" = excused

Additional Attendees:

- Evan Schmidt, *Valley Vision*
- Renee John, *Valley Vision*
- Gretchen James, *Valley Vision*
- Chester Draculan, *Valley Vision*
- Richard Dana, *Community Strong Strategies*
- Isa Avancena, *Community Strong Strategies*
- Christina Craner, *Community Strong Strategies*
- Kyla Bryant, *Luminari Partners*
- Herman Barahona

I. Welcome & Framing

- Presented by Evan Schmidt, *CEO, Valley Vision*
- E. Schmidt provided an overview of the meeting goals and agenda.
- The last Leadership Council meeting marked a significant milestone with the approval of the project portfolio for the first round of Catalyst funding. Valley Vision staff is currently working on amendments to the second round Catalyst RFP based on input shared at the last Leadership Council meeting.

II. Action: Approve February 2025 Meeting Minutes

- Presented by Gretchen James, *Project Manager, Valley Vision*
- An amendment was made to the February minutes to correct the list of abstentions in one of the votes. That version is now reflected on our website and in the shared Resource folder.
- Oppose - 0
- Can Live With - 0
- Support - 14
- Abstain - 0
- The meeting minutes were approved.

III. Key Regional Updates

- Presented by Gretchen James, *Project Manager, Valley Vision*
- We Prosper Together awarded \$5 million into 11 transformative initiatives across the Capital Region. Projects funded in this first round span a diversity of sectors including biotech, clean energy, food and agriculture, and precision manufacturing. A second \$4 million round of funding is anticipated to be released this year to further advance regional goals.
- Catalyst Round Two Amendments
 - \$4 million is available for the second round of Catalyst funding.
 - Application language is being refined to better meet our program goals
 - Organizations not funded in the first round have already received or are in the process of receiving constructive feedback on their applications
 - We are exploring making a free grant writing workshop available either before the second round or early after the application opens.
 - E. Herrera asked why only \$5 million was awarded when there was \$6.5 million available for the first round.
 - E. Schmidt responded that out of the \$9 million Catalyst funding pot, up to \$6.5 million was available in the first round. During the evaluation process, the need to maximize funds available in the second became apparent. Organizations have more time to develop their applications for round two with feedback and additional technical assistance being provided.

- A question was raised about what the feedback process looks like behind the scenes, how the WPT team will go about it, what steps will be taken, and when people will be notified.
 - G. James answered that feedback with unawarded proposals shares what sections of their application performed the lowest in the evaluation process, along with a high-level summary of comments from the reviewers to indicate areas of the proposal that could use improvement.
- A question was asked regarding the funding awarded for the first round, which totaled around \$5 million when it was initially higher. Did you pull money from other places to make sure everybody was at 100% capacity of their requested budget?
 - E. Schmidt answered that contracts were finalized through individual negotiations to meet the Leadership Council's request to have at least \$4 million for the second round.

IV. Interactive Collaboration Session: Metrics Evaluation

- Presented by *Nader Afzalan, Founder, The Triangle*
- Nader Afzalan from the Triangle reviewed the work completed thus far to define metrics of success for the We Prosper Together initiative. Valley Vision, Community Strong Strategies, and the WPT Community Ambassadors have participated in interactive workshops, with today's Leadership Council meeting being the third and final of the series.
- Participants engaged in table discussions to provide input on the thresholds for equity and job quality, the importance of defining low-income communities, and the need for support services to meet equity goals. Participants then ranked metrics based on how well they align with We Prosper Together's objectives and impact.

V. State Updates

- Presented by *Evan Schmidt, CEO, Valley Vision*
- The Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development (GO-Biz) is making up to \$125 million available across two rounds of grant funding for the Implementation Phase of the California Jobs First Regional Investment Initiative program.
- Valley Vision is seeking to include projects in our region's project cluster. Projects must fall into one of the following categories and be seeking a minimum award of \$500,000.
 - Ecosystem Support: Market research, business support, supply chain development.
 - Infrastructure: Sector-specific infrastructure and real estate.
 - Workforce Development: Skills training and employment support.
 - Anchor Activities: Addressing key barriers to job creation in target industries.
- Up to \$15 million is available to support tribal-led economic development through funding for planning, pre-development, and implementation projects that support a resilient economy.

VI. [Meeting Adjourned at 3:25 PM]