

Topic: Economic Development**Convener:** Harry Gray and
Graham Smith**Room:** J**Discussion Summary:**

Economic Development should be about it being good for the metro area, as a whole, and where it should be located to best serve the needs of the whole community, not pitting different communities against each other in a way that may benefit a single community at the expense of the community. Example: Minneapolis has a program where they share revenues from development, so, when Mall of America came in, instead of having all the communities selling their soul and all their economic development incentives to get it, the region worked together to set its location and everyone benefitted. It's a regional focus. (But what about drive distance to that mall?) Example: Overland Park's convention center is now competing with Kansas City's. Our large-scale projects need to meet the needs of the general population, when a specialized development goes out of style it's a ghost town (example: soccer).

If we're proactive about how we go about doing economic development, we'll be deciding together, region-wide. How do you address local competition so that it benefits the region? Example: two other communities are competing to get the Steamboat Arabia; or an aquarium. What about individual business competition? As long as the project is happening in the community, it's good to have six different businesses competing for that project. One question is about the race to the bottom/lowest bidder—is the cheapest bridge even going to be the best bridge? The stadium is where it is because Jackson County had no mechanism to do other than to tax the people in its jurisdiction; this is contrasted by Union Station, which was a bistate mechanism. How do we get more private funding so that it benefits the community, like the Kauffman Center? Part of it is you have to have some vision of where everyone is going—example: a world-class symphony or ballet.

We should be operating like a business: How do we attract people and overcome the barriers to getting people to these jobs? We have to address homelessness and people coming out of prison. You can take a person who you think is a monster and give them a job; or you can take a person who never was a monster and turn him in to a monster. These people can be our leaders in business or the next crime boss or drug dealer.

Key is that asking people to think about 10, 20, 30 years in the future is difficult; most people are thinking about how to manage day-to-day. We have to forget about ourselves and think about what's good for the whole community: the poor person, or the homeless person, they are our weakest links — we need to address their needs in order to meet the needs of everyone. We need to grow up as a community, not stay as a cow-town.

Part of economic development is to provide opportunities for ex-cons or veterans or mentally ill to become productive members of society (example: homeless veterans who can't get a job because they are paranoid or PTSD or whatever)—this effects economic development, we need to reduce the fear in the community. Begging has become an industry.

Meeting time: Session 3: 11:30 a.m.**Recorder:** June Holte