

Jodi Duva:

Well, good afternoon. To everyone out there, I'm Jodi Duva. I'm the vice president for Cox business and also the 2023 chair for the OCBC Board. Thanks to those of you who are joining us today for this meeting on serve, which I'm sure everyone knows, but I'll just use it so that we all get used to it stands for Community economic resilience. And CERF was meant for Orange County, to build a more equitable and environmentally sustainable economy by supporting new plans and strategies to help us to diversify our local economy and also to develop sustainable industries that create good and broadly accessible. High paying jobs, so this of course cannot be done without the business community and that is why the private sector is a critical partner to helping us to execute CERF well. So, with that, thanks everyone for joining us and I will pass it over to Jesse Ben-Ron to talk a little more about CERF and what's next for us. So Jesse? Take it away.

Jesse Ben-Ron

I think for some of you probably have known, CERF a little bit or fairly well. The primary purpose of this is for those who aren't incredibly familiar with CERF and what this is all about. We'll have multiple convenings of this as we get to the more substantive stuff of what CERF will accomplish, and so I'll go ahead and discuss what those are, but we want to be able to make sure that people are aware of what CERF is. It's a very new thing, it's very broad and in many ways complicated. And so we want to make sure that a lot wasn't dumped on you, but things were brought to you in a digestible manner. The purpose of CERF funding is to build an equitable, sustainable economy across California's diverse regions and foster long term economic resilience in the overall transition to a carbon neutral economy. The major themes here when it comes to CERF, that will be brought up time and time again, are economic resilience, CERF kind of came out of the COVID pandemic, when they talk about resilience, they mean there are industry sectors, there are jobs that tend to do better kind of regardless of the economic environment. So resiliency is really important, like kind of these quality jobs that despite what's happening externally, people in these jobs remain employed, or these industries can still continue to go forward. Sustainability is yes, we want economic development, but we're not going to destroy the planet as we do. Equitable, the Orange County economy, has a lot of inequity, and so not only we're doing economic growth, but we're doing it for those who may not have had the industries that make sense for Orange County. 60 years ago probably was an industry that we probably invest heavy if CERF was such a thing back then. Now, not so much. We have medical devices. We have healthcare, we have hospitality, cybersecurity, we have a long list of strong industry clusters.

The state of divided itself up into 13 regions. Luckily for Orange County, where our own region. We're one of the few, along with, I think LA is really the only and current is really like the only counties that got to be its own region. As you can see, you know our our neighbors to the east. Both counties are together, our neighbors to the South. Both counties are pushed together. So I think this is a real opportunity for Orange County and Orange County stakeholders to really make decisions for Orange County. Although I will say it doesn't hurt to have conversations with your peers in certain regions, particularly those that are adjacent to us because our economies are so intertwined. So I think there's a benefit to this because it's about Orange County stakeholders. However, let's acknowledge that you know certain jobs or certain even people. People live in one region, work in the other. So let's recognize that some of the conversations should be had with other regions as well.

So what is CERF? CERF is a \$5 million kind of economic development planning grant. This is phase one. I want to emphasize this is a planning grant and I'll talk a little bit for implementation, but we haven't had much details from the state of what that would look like. So again, we are in the process of just planning this economic development plan coming up with strategies and then we'll go to projects, which is probably where most people's heads are at when they think grant opportunities. Usually when you write a grant, it's already projects in mind and project implementation. Right now we're only talking about developing a plan. And So what are the major outcomes of this plan? The state wants to see three things. Primarily, they want to see that a High Road transition collaborative or HRTC has been developed. They would like a regional economic plan developed for those of you who might know, because this is the business community, we have something called a comprehensive economic development strategy. This economic plan is probably closely related to that. However, I go back to some of those pillars or values that I mentioned prior where I don't think previous reports that had to really drill down on those aspects and then lastly is kind of deciding on strategic investments and projects.

Planning is important especially with all these different stakeholders, but I think like all of us, we want to see projects getting done that it isn't just a planning exercise. So ultimately, we will as a region decide what are the strategic investments and projects that will help us achieve this regional economic plan that we come up with. So the HRTC you know is an essentially an executive committee. I think most of these stakeholder groups probably talk amongst themselves. Maybe they talk to a few, but not truly to this kind of breadth. And so that's what's really important that we're going to go far by going together. Business stakeholders, but we're going to be talking to labor organizations and economic development agencies and philanthropic groups for there to be some kind of collective decision making. And then this is what the HRTC has been tasked with guidance and recommendation to the regional plan. And again, I'll talk more into detail what's in these regional plans ultimately need to approve this regional plan to the state and then they will the HRTC also needs to identify other planning processes and projects to align. And then I think ultimately, which is the most important thing is what are those initiatives and projects?

For phase two. So the HRTC kind of has been formed and I'll talk about more of your role as the business stakeholder group in subsequent slides. So the regional plan, part one right, what needs to be in? The pillars are there, equity, sustainability, again we want good paying jobs. We want access to those good paying jobs, so it's not just that the job pay 6 figures, but you need a masters degree. How accessible is that to people and then back to economic competitiveness, the industries or the jobs that makes sense. We want those quality jobs, despite whether there's a recession or not, or a pandemic again or not. Many of these jobs can kind of stay intact,

So what needs to be in the regional plan? Part One, the A regional summary. So a snapshot of the Orange County economy, but also stuff like public health and environmental inequity. So there needs to be kind of an environmental analysis and the interplay between these things, stakeholder mapping, it's really important to know who's doing what in Orange County. I think many times we're in meetings where somewhere someone says I didn't know you were doing that. We could totally partner and collaborate and we can maximize impact. So the whole point of the map is to notify the HRTC is aware of the great work you're doing in the Community, but this will also be a public facing document. So people of the public can see what an organization is doing. I might want to connect with them, to see how we can partner, and then there is I think more typical economic Reporting like labor market

analysis, what's the employment rate? How many jobs are in what sector versus another? Industry cluster analysis is very much the same thing where our largest industry clusters where our more concentrated industry cluster. So industry cluster may not be the largest, but it's so unique to Orange County. That's kind of what an industry cluster does and it basically you know strength, weakness, opportunity, threats. And then once we kind of developed what I would just call it more of the data phase then you move into, what's the vision, what are the strategies given the data set and then the HRTC will then be deciding what are the strategies for growth of targeted industries. How to increase economic diversification? How do we respond to economic shocks better? How do we increase economic equity? How do we increase equity when it comes to health and environmental? Because there are some people who live in even in Orange County, even though it's just one county a live in cleaner environments than another and then others and the state wants to see that we are not cutting against the current. And So what are the state strategies around environmental equity or increasing, you know have healthier having better public health outcomes? Or how the state is looking to increase quality jobs. These are all things that that the Orange County Group needs to be in constant in consideration of. So the state does want of all the regions coming together on things that again do not contradict what the state wants to do.

And another key point, because I talk about equity is there are definitions of disinvested communities and here are the definitions. I'm going to show you a map once I go through the deck to make it easier as we go through the slides to show you exactly where I think it's really important. I think that and as I go through it, there are, I think for people because we know Orange County, there are more disinvested then people would like to think. I think people on this call who know Orange County know that those exist, but maybe outside of Orange County there is kind of a perception that you know everything is kind of coastal and wealthy and everything is great here. But let's acknowledge that's not true. And so we have a map and maps and you can kind of dig in even by census tract. You could probably zoom in to the neighborhood you live in to see if the disinvested community or friends or families or neighbors. So we'll show you that and you can kind of review on your own time, but it makes it easier than like, well, what does this mean? What is that? A census tract with eight, with median household income at or below 80% of the statewide median income? That's a lot to kind of digest. So we just kind of have a visual representation of that.

If we want as a region to have the maximum dollars amount invested into Orange County from the CERF, that disinvested communities need to benefit from this and that's why the maps are really important understanding census tracts. So we can say the businesses are located in the census tracts or the residents live in census tracts. So this is where maybe if you look at the maps and you know your community isn't there, that doesn't mean that you can't or shouldn't participate in this because we have a Very mobile population and then maybe someone could be a business owner but lives in a disinvested communities track or one of the employees of the businesses. We could be supporting, through CERF, who live in a disinvested communities track, so we have to kind of be aware that it's not just necessarily physically located, but that it just it helps the residents of disinvested communities and we can kind of work through that as we continue along this process. I kind of alluded to it, but I don't like to talk too much about it because there's not many details, but let's acknowledge that this is where something significant can happen. \$450 million for the 13 regions to compete. Once we do the data, once we come up with the strategies, then we submit projects to the state for funding. And then as you can see, given that dollar amount, a significant amount of funding in order to execute some of these things. And so we

have these plan or we we're going to eventually agree on these investments and projects. But there are kind of values or tenants to this to these things and that is the projects have to align with the strategies of the HRTC and those values need to demonstrate equity promote state to climate goals, they need to have strong job quality and if possible there needs to be complementary. Maybe there are other grants that can get kind of woven in and that the state wants to see kind of other sources of funding as well that will have a stronger proposal and stronger proposals receive more funds.

The point of the stakeholder meeting for all of you is that yes, the HRTC exists, but we want broader stakeholder input and so providing input makes the HRTC make better decisions and so just because you're not on the HRTC does not mean that your input isn't credible and we as the business community need to have a unified voice, and we need to understand what are the things that we believe are best, and then those get compared to all the different stakeholder groups. So absolutely your feedback will be critical throughout this entire process and support the landscape analysis. It'd be great to have your organization kind of listed on there, so the HRTC and the public is aware of exactly what you do for the Community as it pertains to CERF.

We want to have subsequent meetings with the data. We'd like all of you to look at it and say, yeah, this makes sense with what I'm seeing given my position or this contradicts exactly what I'm seeing, or this is great, but there's not enough about this item or that item. And so we kind of it's almost like bringing up the document for public input when we do the data phase, we'll have a call where we'd like you to provide that input. To review and provide input, and then when we have the strategies conversation, we'd like you to provide input and say, well, you know that's not really how I see how we can have economic equity with environmental sustainability and I have stakeholders in my in with through my constituencies and this is how they're getting it done. Can we consider including that as well. Then when we get to the projects phase, we want to use this this group as the vehicle to say, hey, are there any great projects you're working on or thought about working on and in order to solicit projects from this sector. And then maybe, although it's still undecided, maybe this group will decide what Comes of the at least the business or the employer stakeholder group as far as what are priority projects? Again, that hasn't finalized, but that is the possibility. We probably will have another meeting just around regional plan part one for feedback, another meeting around regional plan Part 2 and then again use this call to be, here's the states SFP, here's all the visions and the strategies, so what are the projects that are the strongest for Us to send to the state for a significant amount of funding. So I think that's the point of these stakeholder groups.

The HRTC is cross-sectoral, which is of course the intent. However, there needs to be kind of a deeper understanding of what each sector wants to do, and that's the point of these calls and kind of why your input would be very critical and important. We'd like to bring the data to you before it gets finalized sometime in June, maybe July. Then we want to come back in October once we are discussing Strategies to get your input on strategies and then back in November again like the SFP from the state as far as project implementation and the regional plan Part 2 is complete. So with that I'm going to jump over to the web page because I think that Illuminates a lot as well. So and I will drop this in the chat and send it to you via e-mail after.

Here is the page. Our job is to try to condense that down because I don't want you to spend two or three hours just trying to understand what CERF is. We have a little bit of summaries, but I'll tell you where we're going to try to make it even more concise. If you want general updates, you can kind of

subscribe directly to it and we can update you on all these things. Here's the High Road Transition collaborative. So here are some of your peers representing you. If we click, do we have members of the California Native Tribe community, we can go to kind of education and training providers, some of our foremost institutions, grassroots and community based organizations, they're a critical partner in deciding what the community needs.

If you go on the website, it'll tell you when the next HRTC meeting is. It's open to the public, so much like this, you can call in and see the research for yourself. Provide comments, Ask questions directly for yourself if you'd like, and a calendar of events and when those meetings are, a stakeholder map, you could take the survey now. It would be great to understand your role in developing a High Road economy and that means achieving economic growth, economic equity and shared prosperity. So we'll get a calendar of events up in case you feel like you serve multiple stakeholder groups. You're not tied to just one. So by all means, you can join those as well if you're interested. And then we have outreach and engagement. So one will be a survey which you could take now. I would think it might help to wait a little bit more before you see more data, but some of those questions are about how do we how do we create a more equitable economy? How do we create a more sustainable economy while doing so? Those are all in the survey, but one thing that's also really important as well is that there is an RFP for outreach and engagement. Please take a look at that and again. I'll send that kind of I'll drop that in the chat or send an e-mail. But there is then funding to do outreach, it could be to disinvested communities, but we also need to again understand the perspective of the business community, to see like how do we grow a certain industry sector or how do we get employers to get people trained so that they can earn a higher income. And what are those jobs that are that are being hired and what are those jobs and what are the skill sets that they need? I think people should consider if you're if you're a local chamber, you know you have those communities, you can under you can survey or do some sort of focus groups with your members to really understand what the needs are of the business community and then connect that to what we're hearing from other stakeholder groups as well.

But here's kind of a map of all the census tracts here in Orange County, and there's even city line. This is just kind of based on ethnicity where our kind of Latinx population reside. Is in the yellow and the darker the color, the more maybe intense right? Or maybe more homogeneous. The region is and then kind of the red is probably where Asian populations, Here are the census tracts where the median household income for a family of four is less than \$95,000. That's considered low income by the state standard, and so here's you can see all the different color and again the more intense the color than the lower the income level. But as you can see right it spreads from north to South. There are disinvested communities in South County just as in North County and central Orange County as well. So you can kind of zoom in if you look over here you can kind of even search by address, but you can really zoom in and play around. And then what we've another criteria added in blue. So this is the states definition, from CalEPA.

We have hyper focused on the census tracts that have all that overlap and that's then primarily kind of in this region right here, but as I mentioned before depending on the amount of people you are working for a company in your community, they don't necessarily have to be located in the disinvested communities. So just understanding that that the residents of disinvested communities are the ones that benefit most from these decisions, so I I just encourage you to play around to get a sense of where the residents or where these projects need to be in order to maximize income from the state. And then there's some other supplemental documents. There's an executive summary. The planning phase plan I

think really lays out what we're trying to do here. It's about 15 pages and we are just getting it and translating to Spanish and Vietnamese as well to be respectful of our communities.

We've had a few HRTC meetings. You could see the agenda, you could see the meeting notes and recording in case you're available. And as they come online, these stakeholder meetings. So after this call, you'll see one under employer and Business Association. I know for a fact the philanthropic organizations already had one, so here's their information in case you wanted to review. And so with that, I highly encourage you and I can kind of just drop it in the chat right now. If you could review that website, but I'm here to answer any questions as well, both not only on this call, but after in case you want to learn more about CERF and to get engaged. Anna, could you introduce yourself, since you are a fellow HRTC member

Ana Urzua

Yes, of course. Good afternoon. I won't be able to stay for the remainder of the meeting, but my name is Anna Osuna. I'm also on the HRTC I mentioned I work with. A a business incubator. We're also a network of cooperative businesses in Orange County that's growing. So it's a pleasure to meet you. And I look forward to more people connecting and hope to spread the word and I'm glad folks are joining today. Thank you.

Jesse Ben-Ron

So, Laura, reinstating the timeline for the state. So by the end of August, we need to have that regional plan part one which is the prime of the data set part. And then by the end June of 2024 is when we have to have the strategies and the projects done, so we hope to maybe even try to finish a little bit earlier if we can in Orange County, but those are absolute deadlines given to the state or from the state.

There is not an answer yet Laura. The SFP from the state is where we don't quite know yet. There was a pilot project done several months ago that there is an RFP for that and I can the follow up. I'll go ahead and send that information as well. That might give us some insight as far as what the state is looking for when it comes to projects even broadly, let alone from a globally competitive standpoint. But we don't know who the winners are, which I think will be more telling. Once the state releases it, I'm sure we'll have a call specifically about the states SFP. What are people's thoughts about it? How can we organize around this SFP.