

The work of FOR/Maine continues to be accomplished through a robust and dynamic committee structure. Committee updates for Phase II are provided below.

Market Attraction: In Phase I, the Global Market Analysis committee focused on identifying opportunities for expansion of Maine's forest economy based on an understanding of wood availability, global market dynamics and the existing industry operators in Maine. Findings from this report indicated that Maine can be globally competitive in the production of 6 products (list here). In Phase II, Global Analysis work has shifted towards Market Attraction. The Market Attraction committee has initiated an RFP process to secure a consultant who will guide market attraction efforts for these six products by assessing our business attraction environment, recommending and developing marketing materials, and providing FOR/Maine with the information and connections necessary to generate and develop leads, resulting in the attraction of companies to Maine who will use our abundant softwood pulp and residuals. This committee is also exploring options for streamlining our business attraction pipeline, and creating specific contacts and protocols for forest industry leads.

Wood Supply: Understanding Maine's wood supply has been foundational to the FOR/Maine effort as we seek to expand the forest economy while preserving a legacy of sustainable forest management. In Phase I the wood supply committee identified that Maine's abundance of spruce-fir and residuals provide opportunities for growth, and that a significant amount of the wood resource is located on parcels controlled by small landowners. In Phase II, the Wood Supply Committee will continue to refine yield curves to explore scenarios for growth in the industry, and will work to engage small landowners to educate them on a variety of options for land management.

Transportation: The work of identifying priority improvements to Maine's transportation infrastructure that will benefit the forest economy has been underway since before FOR/Maine was formalized and will continue into Phase II. A recent report from AECOM identifies the current state and potential improvements to Maine's ports, rail and roads. The Transportation Committee is in the process of determining the best options for adoption or implementation of select findings from the report, and continues to strengthen relationships with Maine DOT.

Emerging Technology The work of the Emerging Technology committee will remain consistent to the Phase I mission of identifying and amplifying emerging technologies that are a potential win for Maine. Monthly stakeholder inquiries track new developments and partnerships between Maine & Co, MITC, the University of Maine, DECD and Biobased Maine continue to evolve. Phase II work is focusing on formalizing a process for identifying promising technologies and companies, assessing their readiness for development in Maine, and handing off the lead to Market Attraction. The committee is interested in focusing their list of potential technologies and conducting rigorous assessment of each, while remaining aware of new opportunities through participation at national and global trade shows and conferences.

Community: FOR/Maine's efforts remain grounded in the forest economies that support and are supported by industrial development. Lessons learned through listening sessions in Phase I continue to guide Phase II's work, and the committee is focusing on pre-development and implementation needs through conducting readiness trainings and workshops that will seed relationships between investors and community leaders, and demystify funding mechanisms that may make investment in Maine's forest economy attractive.

Workforce: The Workforce committee, a new addition to Phase II, is focusing on mainstreaming the forest economy in existing workforce efforts, understanding the demand for workers, and developing outreach and recruitment strategies informed by a clear and compelling career pathway. This work is just beginning and a strategy and implementation plan are emerging.