



## **2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**

### **Committee Meeting**

Wednesday, June 7, 2017

3:00 PM at WPCOG Offices

**Committee Members Present:** Tommy Luckadoo (Chair), Nancy Taylor (Vice-Chair), Rocky Brooks, Elle Engstrom, Gary Herman, Malla Vue, Lisa Miller, Sara Black, Christopher Todd, Zack King

**Committee Members Absent:** Stacey Rash, Trish Johnson, Lindsay Keisler, Crissy Thomas, Jeremy Ku

**Staff Present:** Anthony Starr (phone), Dee Blackwell, Sherry Long, John Marshall, Taylor Dellinger, Jason Toney, Duncan Cavanaugh, Amanda Wallace

I. **Call To Order**

Tommy Luckadoo, CEDS Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:06.

II. **Welcome and Introductions**

Mr. Luckadoo welcomed everyone present.

III. **Approval of May 31, 2017 CEDS Committee Meeting Minutes**

At the start of the meeting a quorum was not present, so approval of the committee meeting minutes was postponed until after the Community Life CEDS Strategies presentation was completed and a quorum was present (4:00). Mr. Luckadoo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 31, 2017 CEDS Committee Meeting. A motion was offered by Ms. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Todd. The minutes were unanimously approved.

IV. **CEDS Strategies: Community Life**

Mr. Cavanaugh stated that the first strategy of Community Life is to cultivate the next generation of community leaders. The strategy can be achieved by encouraging diversity and inclusion in the community decision making process, bolstering diversity participation by conducting sustained local government outreach to underrepresented populations, working with community group leaders to determine effective outreach methods, and determining if local governing boards need succession planning assistance. WPCOG, local governments, community groups and the private sector will need to work together to reach out to public and private sector leaders who can identify upcoming talent and create opportunities for young professionals to offer development input through "lunch and learn" meetings, forums or other on-going conversations. The responsible parties will determine the number of minorities on boards, the number of governing boards contacted and the ones who received assistance, the number of public and private leaders contacted and the number of young professional meetings and forums.

Ms. Taylor suggested combining the metrics of the number of governing boards contacted with the number of governing boards that received assistance. The Committee agreed to make the change to the strategy.

The next strategy is to create robust downtowns throughout the region. Local governments, downtown development associations, EDC's, tourism agencies, WPCOG, private sector, and community groups can achieve this by determining available resources for downtown development programs/projects/plans (downtown housing, streetscapes, sidewalks, etc.), assisting member governments with locally-approved initiatives and supporting community groups in the development of new cultural festivals and events. Measurable outcomes for this strategy are the number of projects and plans completed, the amount of grant funding awarded and the number of new cultural festivals and events that occur.

The third strategy in Community Life is to promote regional healthy living initiatives. This strategy can be achieved by determining available resources for recreation, sidewalk, streetscape and farmers market plans/projects, assisting member governments with locally approved initiatives, and assessing potential for a regional farmers market similar to the WNC Farmers Market in Asheville. This strategy also involves developing methods to address the region's opioid and illicit drug epidemic. Support will be given to behavioral and public health initiatives to explore development of an inpatient, outpatient, or virtual behavior health facilities and by researching potential grant opportunities, providing data/GIS analysis and attending meetings upon request. The responsible parties include the WPCOG, local governments, nonprofits, NC Department of Agriculture, Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba County Public Health departments, local mental health agencies, local law enforcement, and state and federal DHS. Metrics include the number of projects and plans completed, the amount of grant funding awarded, assessing the need for a regional opioid epidemic task force, and a response to local health department needs for research including grant opportunities, GIS analysis and attending meetings.

Mr. King mentioned that a regional farmer's market may not be possible, as most people will "stick with what they know" and go to one of the many local markets close to them. He mentioned that a mobile farmer's market could be a better option. Mr. Starr pointed out that while the retail side is an important part of a regional farmers market, its main business is for wholesale trade of agricultural products.

Ms. Taylor suggested creating a downtown space where people want to linger. She also suggested each community creating a group to explore the opioid epidemic, but also stated there should also be a regional group, focused on "supporting" as opposed to "developing." The Committee agreed to change that part of the strategy.

Mr. Cavanaugh stated that the next strategy is to develop methods to encourage active senior citizen participation. The Area Agency on Aging, local governments and real estate developers can work together to determine available resources for "aging in place" programs and plans and projects. They can also encourage the development of the active retiree market and assist

member governments with locally approved initiatives. Measurable goals include the number of "aging in place" projects and plans completed, the number of new active retiree residential developments, and the amount of grant funding awarded.

The question was asked to Mr. Dellinger if regulatory changes are having an effect on the opioid problems of the region, and if those can be tracked. Mr. Dellinger deferred this question to Mr. King, as this is his area of expertise. Mr. King stated that local health departments, ER's, and doctor's offices track data related to overdoses, arrests, newborns exposed to substance abuse, pills per person, etc., and that Catawba County ranks pretty high in terms of prescriptions. He stated that a regional taskforce would be very helpful.

V. **CEDS Strategies: Workforce**

Mr. Dellinger stated that the first strategy of Workforce is to update the Western Piedmont Industry Growth Analysis (IGA) and shape it as a tool designed for business recruitment efforts. The Workforce Development Board, WPCOG Data group and NC LEAD can work together to ensure the Workforce Development Board members and key stakeholders help shape the information that is needed in the IGA, add increased narrative with relative data sets and add links to online tools developed by NC Commerce Labor & Economic Analysis Division (LEAD). Metrics include gaining input from private sector workforce development board members whose industries are targeted for increase or decrease, as well as preparing an IGA that is precise, focused, and digestible by the industry, agencies, and government.

Ms. Miller suggested adding the number of presentations and public outreach efforts as a metric for the strategy. The committee agreed to add the metric to the strategy.

The next Workforce strategy is to align career pathways with education and training opportunities to meet industry needs. This can be achieved by developing broader Business, Industry, and Agency (BIA) Career Pathways, identifying pathways that impact the region now and in the future (increasing intern and apprenticeship opportunities in all four counties), and involving K-12 and BIA in determining the paths from education to the workplace. The Workforce Development Board, Workforce Development Board partners, K-16 groups (including high schools and community colleges), business and industry and WPCOG will also identify CTE/Vocational opportunities to line up with high school and community colleges and identify educational/training opportunities for higher-level students. They will work together to continue to expand high school course offerings that give college credit or lead to industry certifications, and evaluate effectiveness of Catawba County's K-64 initiative and implement similar programs in other counties in the Western Piedmont region. Metrics for this strategy include developing career pathways, defining and developing at least four regional industry-level career pathways, assembling local and regional BIA groups, developing marketing material to advertise and demonstrate the benefits of career pathways, and increasing the number of high school classes that offer college credit or lead to industry certifications.

Ms. Taylor suggested adding 4-year colleges/universities as a responsible party in this strategy. The Committee agreed to the change.

The next strategy is to maintain consistent, coordinated, long-term marketing of workforce activities across and within the region collectively (social media, new and emerging media). This can be achieved by promoting workforce system activities via a central website and applicable social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram...and new media that may arise) and strengthening workforce partner relationships to share all job/employment related media to promote the region. WPCOG Communications, Workforce Board and NCWorks Career Centers will collectively generate a daily/weekly/monthly post and repost of workforce labor activity (example: Hootsuite Application) as well as collect and analyze social media followers and shares of information. Metrics for this strategy are to increase social media followers 20% by December 2018 to reflect the impact of jobseeker and employer engagement, as well as to increase the advertising budget to boost posts on Facebook furthering the outreach of jobs and recruitment event opportunities not only within the region, but across the state and beyond.

The final Workforce strategy is to ensure sharing of competitive wages information (wage variances) and its impact on job recruitment and retention in the region. This can be achieved by analyzing comparable wages with other regions and making wage variances consistently available to assist the region with recruitment and retention efforts. WPCOG, NC Department of Commerce and EDC's are the responsible parties. Metrics include creating a data tool that reflects county and regional wage variances by industry and adding information on wage variances to the Economic Indicator Newsletter and focus on it in the upcoming IGA.

Mr. Brooks asked if we knew why some careers are being chosen over others. Mr. King suggested doing some research and recruiting other 4-year colleges to send graduates to our area for internships/apprenticeships. He stated that we needed to market outside of our region to attract people from outside this area. Mr. Herman noted that STEM WEST should be included somewhere in this area. The Committee agreed to make the changes to the strategy.

VI. **CEDS Strategies: Economic Development**

Mr. Dellinger stated that the first strategy of Economic Development was to construct additional "shell buildings" and "pad-ready sites" throughout the region. Local governments, private partners and federal and state grant agencies can team up to educate and motivate communities to develop 50,000 to 100,000 square foot buildings and pad-ready sites, to have one shell building move-in ready at all times, one under construction, and at least one in the planning process. These groups will also identify public/private partnerships for shell building construction, as well as the number and size of needed pad-ready sites in the region. The number of NC Department of Commerce's "Certified Sites" in the region needs to be increased, and rail corridors and railroad rights-of-way for potential economic development opportunities needs to be evaluated. Metrics for this include constructing at least 10 new shell buildings in the region, creating employment by moving businesses into the new shell buildings, and identifying the number of pad-ready and "Certified Sites" available/created.

Mr. Starr stated that convincing local governments that this is where the market has moved and the direction in which they need to go could be challenging. Ms. Long stated that Alexander

County is a prime example of how having a building available near a railroad and local government working together with private sponsorship is bringing jobs into the area.

It was suggested that EDC's be added as a responsible party. The Committee agreed to make the change to the strategy.

The next strategy is to create a regional site/building inventory for economic development. Mr. Dellinger stated that under this strategy a web portal could be created to use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) that shows the location and attributes of all commercial/industrial buildings and sites that are available for economic development, as well as maintaining a site to update as new inventory is available.

Mr. Starr stated that this is not as relevant as we once thought. The state has a statewide database, and while not every county updates the information as much as they should, that is a different issue. He stated that he was not sure that spending time and money to develop a regional database makes sense.

Mr. Luckadoo asked the group if they were willing to redact this strategy. The group all agreed. Mr. Todd suggested local governments adding an easily accessible link to their website so people can get to the statewide database. Mr. Starr stated that the link could be added as part of the marketing strategy. The committee agreed to the addition to the marketing strategy.

The next economic development strategy is to enhance the capacity for project and grant development. This would involve hiring additional staff to increase grant-writing capacity and grant administration for the region. Local governments, federal and state grant agencies and WPCOG would work together to hire additional grant writers and administrative staff, keep track of the number of grants awarded, as well as the amount funded and jobs created.

The next strategy is to maximize building reuse and site redevelopment opportunities. Local governments, EDC's, federal and state grant agencies, and WPCOG will combine forces to identify locations in the region that are idea targets for building reuse or site demolition grants, and prepare successful demolition/building reuse grant applications. Metrics involve listing the best building reuse/demolition sites and keeping track of grants received and jobs created.

The final strategy in the Economic Development section is to promote, support, and develop the Manufacturing Solutions Center (MSC), Morganton Campus of the NC School of Science and Math (NCSSM), the NC Center of Engineering Technologies (NCCET) and other critical economic development assets to the region. This can be achieved by developing a marketing plan to inform the community of the importance of MSC regionally, support MSCs mission to improve, develop, and create innovative products in furniture, hosiery, and other industries by creating strategies for expansion and growth, and continuing to track the company contacts that MSC has annually. The responsible parties (MSC, NCSSM, NCCET, EDC's, local industry, local governments, chambers of commerce, NC Department of Commerce, regional community colleges, Greater Hickory MPO, Greenway Public Transportation, federal and state grant

agencies) will work together to inform the community of the importance of NCSSM, develop newcomer welcome plans for students, faculty, parents, and visitors, create new economic development opportunities near campus (retail, restaurants, shopping, etc.), and support NCCET's mission to educate and train in engineering-related fields and in bringing ideas and innovation to the marketplace. Metrics include recognizing MSC as an important regional asset, expansion of MSC, opening the Morganton Campus of NCSSM as scheduled, and assessing new housing, retail/hotels, and recreational opportunities near the NCSSM Morganton Campus.

Ms. Taylor requested that "assistance in ensuring" be added before "The Morganton Campus of NCSSM opens as scheduled," since that is not an area fully in their control. She also suggested adding 4-year colleges/universities to the responsible parties. Committee members agreed to make the changes in the strategy.

#### VII. **CEDS Performance Measures**

Mr. Dellinger stated that as part of the CEDS process, the EDA suggests a list of performance measures on the overall economic health of the region. The performance measures are obtained from a variety of federal, state, and local data sources and are updated annually as part of the yearly CEDS update sent to the EDA. The performance measures can be used as a tool to measure the impact that the CEDS strategies are having on the region.

The performance measures are divided in the six CEDS topic areas previously discussed. Mr. Dellinger stated that committee members may choose to edit the performance measure list if the data is available. The approved performance measure list will be included in the CEDS report.

The CEDS Performance Measures for Infrastructures are:

- The number of water, sewer, and broadband grants
- Total water, sewer, and broadband project totals
- The number of transportation grants
- Total transportation project totals

The CEDS Performance Measures for Housing are:

- Number of housing units
- Number of vacant housing units
- Owner-occupied housing units
- Renter-occupied housing units
- Median housing value
- Median home owner monthly costs (Housing units with a mortgage)
- Median gross rent
- Percentage of home owners whose month expenses exceed 35% of household income
- Percentage of renters whose monthly expenses exceed 35% of household income
- Civil foreclosure cases
- Number of new site-built single-family permits
- Number of new multi-family permits (units)

- Estimated construction value of site-built single-family and multi-family permits
- Number of homes addressed through WPCOG grant programs

The CEDS Performance Measures for Marketing are:

- Total population
- Total population under age 18
- Total population age 19 to 24
- Total population age 25 to 44
- Total population age 45 to 64
- Total population age 65 and over
- Tourism expenditures
- Tourism related employment
- Local tourism related tax receipts

The CEDS Performance Measures for Community Life are:

- Number of persons without health insurance coverage
- Percentage of population without health insurance coverage
- Householders age 65 and over
- Life expectancy at birth

The CEDS Performance Measures for Workforce are:

- Resident labor force
- Resident number of employed
- Resident number of unemployed
- Unemployment rate
- Total number of jobs in the region by type (manufacturing, construction, health care, education, wholesale/retail trade, other services, public administration, other employment)
- Average weekly wages
- Percentage of population 25+ with a high school diploma or equivalent
- Percentage of population 25+ with a four year degree or higher
- Percentage of students (grades 3-8) passing end of grade tests (EOG's)
- Percentage of students (grades 9-12) passing end of course tests (EOC's)
- Percentage of students graduating from high school in four years

The CEDS Performance Measures - Economic Development

- Total number of business establishments
- Taxable retail sales
- The number building reuse and IDF (Industrial Development Fund) grants
- Total building reuse and IDF grant project totals
- Jobs created through WPCOG grants
- Percentage living below poverty level - all individuals
- Percentage living below poverty level - children (ages 0-17)

A motion to approve the CEDS Performance Measures was made by Mr. Herman and seconded by Mr. King. The motion was unanimously approved.

**VIII. CEDS Schedule Going Forward**

Mr. Dellinger stated that the next meeting will occur next Wednesday, August 2nd. During the meeting, CEDS Committee members will vote to recommend the approval of the CEDS report to the WPCOG Policy Board. Committee members will also discuss implementation of the CEDS strategies and a critique of the CEDS process. On Tuesday, September 26th, the WPCOG Policy Board will vote to approve the 2017 CEDS Report. The CEDS Report will be sent to the Economic Development Administration by Friday, September 29th, 2017.

**IX. Next CEDS Committee Meeting on Wednesday, August 2 at 3:00 P.M. @ WPCOG Offices in Long View**

**X. Other Business**

There was no other business at this time.

**XI. Adjournment**

As there was no other business, Mr. Luckadoo adjourned the meeting at 5:11 PM.