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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economic Development Administration
The Curtis Center
601 Walnut Street
Suite 140S
Philadelphia, PA 19106-3323

MAY 22 2014

Mr. Robert Crum
Executive Director
Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
9211 Forest Hill Ave., #200
Richmond, VA 23235

Dear Mr. Crum:

Thank you for the submission of your Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document. EDA appreciated the opportunity to review your first CEDS document for the year 2013.

We are pleased to inform you that EDA's review of your CEDS document and process align with the regulatory and programmatic requirements and your CEDS has been conditionally accepted by EDA. The priorities and focuses outlined within your CEDS document will help form the foundation of how EDA reviews applications for Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs from your region.

Please note that, to remain current, your CEDS will require annual updates, as well as a new or completely revised CEDS at least every five years.

We greatly appreciate the work of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission Board and CEDS Committee to develop this innovative, regionally-driven economic development strategy. EDA looks forward to continuing to work with you to help support the goals and priorities outlined in your recently submitted CEDS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Willie C. Taylor".

Willie C. Taylor
Regional Director

Handwritten initials in blue ink, possibly "WCT".

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
Regional Office
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

This checklist is based on the "Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) Summary of Requirements" published by the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The requirements for CEDS are contained in EDA's regulations at 13 CFR part 303.

The purpose of this checklist is to aid planning organizations in the preparation and evaluation of their CEDS documents, and to serve as the basis for EDA's review and approval.

Planning Organization:	Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
Address:	9211 Forest Hill Ave. #200, Richmond, VA 23235
Contact Name/ Title:	Robert Crum, Executive Director
Contact Phone/ Email:	804.323.2033 rcrum@richmondregional.org

A.) REQUIREMENTS FOR EDA-FUNDED CEDS

1.) Planning Organization Requirements

The Planning Organization...

- Has appointed a strategy committee.
- Has developed and submitted to EDA for review and approval a CEDS that meets the requirements outlined in 13 CFR 303.7
- Has made new or revised CEDS available for review and comment by the public for a period of at least 30 days prior to submission of the CEDS to EDA.
- Understands that, after obtaining approval of the CEDS, it is required to submit to EDA an updated CEDS performance report annually (See 'Summary' for requirements).
- Understands that it is required to submit a new CEDS to EDA at least every five (5) years, unless EDA or the planning organization determines that a new CEDS is required earlier due to changed circumstances.
- Has appointed and included a Board or Tribal Council List.

Comments:

2.) Strategy Committee Requirements

The Strategy Committee...

- Represents the main economic interests of the region.
- Includes Private Sector Representatives, as defined in 13 CFR 300.3, as a majority of its membership.
- Includes members broadly representative of the region, such as public officials, community leaders, representatives of workforce development boards, representatives of institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and private individuals.

Comments:

B.) TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

1.) Background

- The CEDS contains a background of the economic development situation of the region that paints a realistic picture of the current condition of the region.

The background includes a discussion of the following elements:

- Economy
- Population
- Geography
- Workforce Development & Use
- Transportation Access
- Resources
- Environment
- Other Pertinent Information

Comments:

Analysis identified chief workforce issue as fractionated delivery system.

2.) Analysis of Economic Development Problems and Opportunities

- The CEDS includes an in-depth analysis of the economic development problems and opportunities that identifies strengths and weaknesses in the regional makeup of human and economic assets, and problems and opportunities posed by external and internal forces affecting the regional economy.

The Analysis...

- Incorporates relevant material from other government-sponsored or supported plans.
- Demonstrates consistency with applicable State and local workforce investment strategies.
- Identifies past, present, and projected economic development investments in the region.
- Identifies and analyzes economic clusters within the region.

Comments:

The overall CEDS effort incorporates other key efforts such as the City of Richmond CEDS (circa 2010) and, more recently, the Capitol Region Collaborative.
Excellent analysis of cluster opportunities, including both industry and occupational analyses.

3.) CEDS Goals and Objectives- Defining Regional Expectations

- The CEDS contains a section setting forth goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic problems or to capitalize on the resources of the region.
- Strategic projects, programs or activities identified in the CEDS work to fulfill these goals and objectives.

Comments:

Lists critical goals and objectives. There are a number of programs and activities listed, however, they are very general in nature.

4.) Community and Private Sector Involvement

- The CEDS includes a section discussing the relationship between the community in general and the private sector in the development and implementation of the CEDS.

Comments:

5.) Strategic Projects, Programs, and Activities

- The CEDS contains a section which identifies regional projects, programs and activities designed to implement the Goals and Objectives of the CEDS.
- All suggested projects, programs and activities are listed.
- The projected number of jobs to be created with each suggested project are listed.
- Lead organizations responsible for the execution of the projects are listed.
- A prioritization of vital projects, programs, and activities that addresses the region's greatest needs or that will best enhance the region's competitiveness, including sources of funding for past and potential future investments are

Comments:

Detail on specific projects, better satisfying a formal project list requirement, was included as a supplement. This should be maintained as part of the regular document going forward. A more formalized grid/matrix would be helpful for ease of understanding as well as serving as a checklist for various project-specific data, including but not limited to anticipated job creation, potential funding sources, and project lead agency. Exhibit 69 includes a robust listing of goals and general actions, but stops short of identifying specific, discrete, achievable projects. There is an extensive listing of real estate development areas, sites, and opportunities, again with limited specifics. These focal areas do represent a good range of diversity by type, i.e. business parks, port (river and air), warehouse, etc. There is a business incubator opportunity identified in the supplemental list. However, given regional educational assets, one could reasonably expect more in the way of university-related economic development. Lead organizations should be identified for each project. These may in some cases be inferred by factors such as indicated property ownership, but it should be explicit. The same holds true for potential funding sources (including federal sources other than EDA).

6.) CEDS Plan of Action

The plan of action, as described in the CEDS, implements the goals and objectives of the CEDS in a manner that....

- Promotes economic development and opportunity.
- Fosters effective transportation access.
- Enhances and protects the environment.
- Maximizes effective development and use of the workplace consistent with any applicable State or local workforce investment strategy.
- Promotes the use of technology in economic development, including access to high-speed telecommunications.
- Balances resources through sound management of physical development.
- Obtains and utilizes adequate funds and other resources.
- The CEDS contains a section that discusses the methodology for cooperating and integrating the CEDS with a State's economic development priorities.

Comments:

Other potential funding sources were not clear. Additional detail for state-level cooperation should be included.

7.) Performance Measures

- The CEDS contains a section that lists the performance measures used to evaluate the Planning Organization's successful development and implementation of the CEDS.

Performance measures include:

- Number of jobs created after implementation of the CEDS.
- Number and types of investments undertaken in the region.
- Number of jobs retained in the region.
- Amount of private sector investment in the region after implementation of the CEDS.
- Changes in the economic environment of the region.

Comments:

Includes additions of sub-categorization of impact by cluster and focal areas and impact on unemployed population. The latter data set would be useful information to have and is a good addition to the basic data points.

This section was included as a supplement and should be maintained as part of the regular CEDS report in the future.

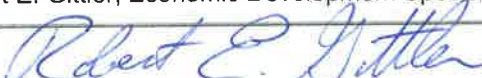
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
Regional Office
CEDS REVIEW & APPROVAL

Planning Organization

CEDS Reviewed by: Robert E. Gittler
Public Comment Period: October 29, 2013-November 29, 2013
Board Approval Date: December 12, 2013

Copy of Minutes and/or Resolution were Attached.

EDA Regional Office

CEDS Submitted to EDA on: 12/16/13; supplemental information received 1/28 and 4/1/13
CEDS Reviewed on: 1/27/13; 5/1/14; 5/22/14
CEDS Reviewed by: Robert E. Gittler, Economic Development Specialist
Signature:  5/22/14

Status: Approved
 Conditionally Approved
 Not Approved

Overall Comments:

The RRPDC CEDS was the first truly regional effort at a CEDS. Previously, only the City of Richmond had CEDS, and this was sporadic. The CEDS effort clearly shows a convening of the region in its entirety, including complementary initiatives such as the Capital Region Collaborative. A number of physical focal areas around the region were identified as targets for future economic growth.

The CEDS is conditionally approved. Items for inclusion and/or enhanced detail are:

1. Prioritized project listing, including (but not limited to) project detail such as impact, lead agency, and potential funding sources (not limited to U.S. EDA).
2. The listing should include projects that are specific and concrete, not just generalized area development efforts.
3. University-led economic development (including but not limited to technology-based econ.dev.) should be considered as an area to exploit more fully.
4. Detail about connection with state economic development priorities

If Applicable,

Deficiency Letter Sent on: n/a

Your Next CEDS is Due: April 1, 2015 (annual)