



**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)  
Strategy Committee Meeting**

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**Wednesday, January 17, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.**

Second Floor Conference Room  
1300 E. Second Street Defiance, Ohio

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**Members Present:** Matt Gilroy, Matt Davis, Denise Dahl, DonL Parsons, Jerry Zielke, Paul Andre, Jerry Hayes, Deb Gerken, Rick Kazmeircak, Erika Willitzer

**Others Present:** Emma Kirkpatrick (MVPO), Dennis Miller (MVPO), Dr. Mark Zeller (Wright State), Vicky Steele (Paulding County Economic Development), Carla Hinkle (Defiance County Economic Development)

**1. Introductions**

**2. Overview of Last Meeting**

a. SWOT Analysis

i. Emma Kirkpatrick of the Maumee Valley Planning Organization (MVPO) gave a brief overview of the last meeting. The SWOT Analysis was finalized to include mobility (transportation) and broadband capacity as opportunities. A lack of incentives for automation was added as a threat. Leisure and recreational opportunities were also discussed as weaknesses.

b. Internet affordability/connectivity

i. Dr. Mark Zeller of Wright State presented on internet availability, affordability, and connectivity as an economic development strategy. The national benchmark for fixed broadband services is 25 Mbps download, 3 Mbps upload. The committee discussed the addition of broadband affordability and availability to the plan and to also form a Technology Planning Group for implementation.

**3. Goals & Objectives\***

*\*objectives will be focused on a five-year time frame for implementation*

a. The goals, objectives, and action items were reviewed from the 2012 CEDS document. Updated goals and objectives based upon the 2012 CEDS were also presented by MVPO. Each goal, corresponding objectives and action strategies were discussed.

- i. The first goal is to improve the effectiveness of economic development efforts in the region. Objectives include coordinating the efforts of existing economic development organizations and establishing a cohesive marketing strategy for the five-county region. The group agreed that marketing and collaboration was necessary. It was suggested to also utilize the resources of NORED, Regional Growth Partnership, and Jobs Ohio. A regional online database using GIS web maps would also be helpful to promote development sites. Marketing could be expanded into the role of MVPO, which would provide a space on their website for economic development efforts in the region and provide a clearinghouse of data. Creating an Economic Development District after the approval of the CEDS was also discussed. An EDD could also regionalize the economic development efforts and create another tool for the region.
- ii. The second goal focused on enhancing and promoting quality of place assets. Objectives under this goal consisted of creating recreational and essential amenities, while promoting the region's natural resources and improving the availability and quality of housing. Committee members reported that promotion of small businesses as amenities is difficult, especially to encourage entrepreneurs and offer financial incentives. An example of day care businesses was given: these are in high demand, but are very expensive to set up, which discourages entrepreneurial efforts in that area. There is a visitor's bureau in Defiance, and a newly set up bureau in Fulton County. However, the other counties do not have visitor bureaus. A way to target visitors may be to capitalize on folks traveling through the region and advertise the region as a place to visit. Researching major events and offering digital advertising was suggested to jumpstart this. For housing, an analysis of housing needs should be completed so that developers can have concrete data to make an investment. Other initiatives to improve housing in the region included the promotion of development opportunities through CRA's, downtown revitalization projects, and encouragement of growth via zoning regulations. Efforts to reduce slum and blight were included within the housing objective, in order to continue making properties useful again.
- iii. Goal three concentrated on supporting the current and future workforce needs of businesses. Objectives include increasing the skillsets of the regional workforce through support of ongoing efforts with educational institutions, workforce organizations, and providing support to local businesses through financing, research, and feedback. The committee discussed the importance of involving the local manufacturers and businesses in leading the effort, as well as encouraging people to get the skills they need to work in the region and return. Understanding the skillsets required by each employer in the region will also be critical to determine a plan of action.

- iv. Addressing current and future infrastructure needs in the region encompassed goal four, with objectives to expand and market the development of shovel-ready sites and to support development through transportation access and supportive services. Initiatives to support the objectives included the expansion and support of “shovel-ready” sites and the provision of sites with adequate infrastructure. Additionally, the committee suggested the redevelopment of brownfield sites, especially those along railroads and transportation corridors.
- v. Goal five is completely new for the CEDS update. The need for broadband availability is essential in the region and necessary to be competitive nationally and globally. Therefore, goal five is to expand broadband availability and adoption. In order to make this a reality, stakeholder engagement through the establishment of a Technology Committee for the region is the first implementation item. The Technology Committee will then work together to create a Technology Plan and apply for funding to access infrastructure and educational needs to implement broadband availability, usage, and affordability.

#### **4. Project List**

- a. The committee was asked to consider projects that advance economic development and create jobs for inclusion within the CEDS. These projects can be those that are in early planning stages or are an expressed need within the region. Projects should support the goals and objectives of the CEDS and aim to implement the action plan. Funding sources do not necessarily have to be all by the EDA – other sources of funding should be considered to support economic development, growth, and resiliency.

#### **5. Adjourn**

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Next Meeting: TBA ~ March 2018  
- Discuss Projects and Performance Measures