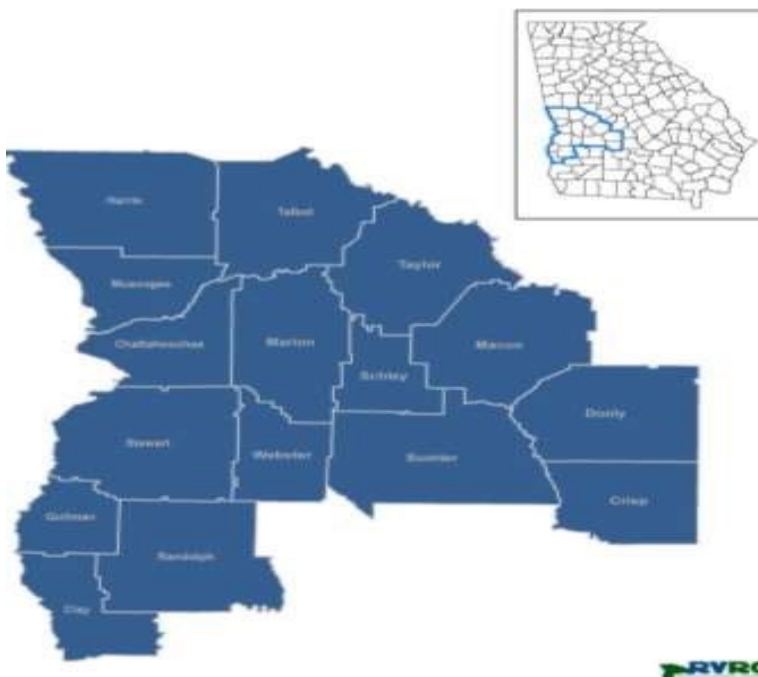


River Valley Regional Commission

Community Economic Development
Strategy 2021 Annual CEDS Update

River Valley Regional Commission

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy



The River Valley Regional Commission has made two substantive changes to our 5 year CEDS for the 2021 annual update. We believe the document as created along with the two changes during this past year does and will continue to serve the region well. We will continue with the additional work of helping communities in our region that have suffered the effects of Hurricane Michael in October, 2018. Several communities in the region will take years to fully bounce back from this disaster and the RVRC will continue to support their recovery in any way we can.

The River Valley Regional Commission submitted to EDA in July, 2020 a Revolving Loan Fund Grant Application for \$1,001,000.00. The grant application was approved by EDA and we will be assisting many businesses in our 16 county region that have been affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In addition to this, the River Valley Regional Commission submitted to EDA in July, 2020 a Covid-19 Supplemental Planning Grant Application in the amount of \$400,000.00. EDA approved the funding of this grant and it will be utilized to assist our region in many different areas of economic development efforts. We will place a particular emphasis on broadband (which is very much lacking connectivity in our rural counties) with a dedicated staff person to survey and provide conduits for assistance and knowledge for the region. Additionally, a second new staff member will be working on other initiatives outlined in our CEDS to include assistance to the region on best practices in community and economic development, assistance with tourism development and building community leadership.

21' CEDS Committee Members

Richard McCorkle, Chair

Chip Jones

Bump Welch

Pops Barnes

Tom Queen

Pam Jordan

Carvel Lewis

Janet Joiner

Colin Martin

Mickey George

Rebecca White

Regional Ed. Services

Stewart County

Marion County

Muscogee County

Taylor County

Talbot County

Georgetown-Quitman

City of Vienna

Dooly County

Macon County

Randolph County

Officio: Sarah Walls, RVRC

Jim Livingston, RVRC

Amy Varnum, DOL

Vacant, Georgia Dept. of Eco. Dev.

Casey Beane, GA DCA

MINUTES 11-20-19 – 11-30-2020

CEDS Meeting Minutes

CEDS COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
November 20, 2019

Persons Attending

Janet Joiner, Dooly County Econ. Dev.
Wally Summers, SGTC, Sumter County
Amy Varner, Department of Labor

Staff Present

Sarah Walls
Janice West

Welcome

Dr. Carole Rutland, Chair, was unable to attend the meeting today. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 AM. Due to the Thanksgiving Holiday approaching the turnout for the meeting was very slim but the Committee continued discussing matters of interest as is reported under the following topics.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the meeting in September 2019 and these minutes, November 2019, will be presented for approval hopefully at the next meeting.

Old Business

Broadband Initiative Update

It was reported that the Broadband Initiative is still a hot topic around the State. We will continue to stay involved as reported at the last CEDS meeting held in September by attending meetings held by these groups as they are scheduled.

“Executive on Loan” – The “Executive on Loan” program volunteer Ms. Laura Sibilia, from Vermont did visit the River Valley RC region and prepared a report of recommendations pertaining to broadband initiatives. She submitted her report and it was shared with all the CEDS Committee Members. Her full report of findings and recommendations is available at the RVRC as well as on the RVRC website <http://www.rivervalleyrc.org/>.

New Business

Project(s) for the New Year

The CEDS Committee discussed selecting two new projects for the New Year.

Two of the projects that the RVRC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has listed is to:

Encourage support and advertise regional festivals and events that attract local residents and Atlanta Metro residents.

The second item on the list is to encourage participation in regional tourism entities (Presidential Pathways, Plantation Trace and associated tourism associations. Janet Joiner reported that the Presidential Pathways Travel Association meets every other month and the next meeting will be in Plains in October.

Those present also recommended that we attempt to put together a list of the Cultural Arts Sites and other cultural sites. Sarah reported that she has begun trying to identify the entities that may already have the list for our 16 county region. She will report back as she is able to locate a list.

The above projects will be presented at the next meeting for the Committee's acceptance/approval.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled after the first of the year. The exact date, time, and place will be set at a later date.

Submitted by Sarah Walls

CEDS COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2020

Persons Attending

Janet Joiner, Dooly County Econ. Dev.
Wally Summers, SGTC, Sumter County
Paul Farr, SGTC, Sumter County
Dr. Edward Lee, Chattahoochee County
Shanda Blair, Taylor County Development Authority
Cynthia Carter, SGTC, Sumter County
Rebecca White, Randolph County Development Authority
Ricky McCorkle, RESA, Schley County

Staff Present

Sarah Walls
Janice West

Welcome

All those present were welcomed.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the meetings held in September 2019 and November 2019 were presented for approval.

Motion: After review of the September minutes, motion was made by Paul Farr and duly seconded by Ricky McCorkle. All present were in agreement.

Motion: After review of the November minutes, motion was made by Wally Summers and duly seconded by Dr. Edward Lee. All present were in agreement.

OLD BUSINESS

Project(s) for the New Year

Sarah reported that the two projects selected by the Committee at the last meeting held in November are as follows:

1. Encourage, support and advertise regional festivals and events that attract local residents and other out-of-region residents. The list of the regional festivals has been completed and the RVRC will continue to support and distribute the list throughout the River Valley Region.
2. Encourage participation in regional tourism entities (Presidential Pathways, Plantation Trace and associated tourism associations). We will continue to encourage participation.

Also, Sarah reported that she will put together a list of the Cultural Arts Sites and other cultural sites located within our 16 county area as was discussed at the last meeting held in November. Hopefully, she will be able to work on this after our CDBG grant writing deadline which is April 1.

NEW BUSINESS

There was some discussion about Land Banks. Janet Joiner reported that Dooly and Macon County have agreed to work together on developing a Land Bank. The Land Bank would be funded through an application process with DCA Incentive Funds.

Paul Farr, South Georgia Technical College, stated that one area we need to consider focusing on is workforce needs in our 16 county region.

Ricky McCorkle reported that he is set up to present to his RESA Board CCRPI scores recently released.

OTHER

Sarah reported that she would like some direction from the CEDS Committee as to what items they would like for future meetings to encompass. She would like suggestions from the members that could make the meetings really mean something at this time. Since Jim completed the 3 Year Strategy (which was excellent) she does not feel that she is adding much to the meetings and would like some input on now how to progress.

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January 22, 2020

Wally Summers suggested that some of us attend other Regional Commissions' CEDS Committee meetings to get a feel for what the Committee's next steps should be. Jim Livingston was able to come into the meeting for a few minutes and stated that every State and every regional economic region have CEDS Committees. Wally Summers stated that he would be glad to attend other CEDS Committee meetings to get a footprint of what others are accomplishing.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by: Sarah A. Walls

CEDS COMMITTEE

VIRTUAL MEETING

Meeting Minutes

October 28, 2020

Persons Attending

Janet Joiner, Dooly County Econ. Dev.

Paul Farr, SGTC, Sumter County

Amy Varner, Department of Labor

Ricky McCorkle, Marion County

Staff Present

Sarah Walls

Janice West

Welcome

Dr. Carole Rutland, Chair, was unable to attend the meeting today. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 AM. The Committee members continued with discussing matters of interest as is reported under the following topics.

Meeting Issues due to COVID-19

Sarah Walls reported that there have been no in-person meetings due to the COVID-19 Pandemic since the middle of March 2020. There have been many telephone discussions with the CEDS members concerning economic development issues that are affecting all of our communities due to the Pandemic but no official meetings had been held until now.

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October 28, 2020

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held June 24, 2020, were presented for approval.

Motion was made and duly seconded that the minutes presented for the meeting held June 24, 2020 be approved. All those present were in agreement.

Old Business Broadband Initiative/Tourism and Other Economic Development Issues Update

The RVRC recently received a new Economic Development COVID-19 Supplemental Grant in the amount of \$400,000. These funds are being utilized to hire two new staff members Camille Bielby, Planner and Savannah Brown, Planner. One will focus a great deal on broadband issues and the other will focus on other economic development issues including tourism. We will continue to stay involved as reported at the last CEDS meeting held June 24, 2020 by attending meetings that are held by the individual counties' economic groups as and if they are scheduled virtually.

NEW BUSINESS

Sarah Walls reported that the RVRC applied for and received a COVID-19 Pandemic \$1,001,000 Revolving Loan Fund. These funds will be utilized to assist any business that qualifies as having been affected by the Pandemic and can provide the required documentation in their pre-application. The RVRC is already beginning to receive pre-applications from businesses and, as of yet, no loans have been scheduled.

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October 28, 2020

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR CEDS COMMITTEE

Sarah reported that Ms. Carol Rutland, who has been serving as Chair is unable to continue serving on the CEDS Committee as well as the RVRC Council. It was pointed out what a great job she has done during her time as Chair.

It was then recommended to the Committee that we need to appoint a new Chair and that Ricky McCorkle has agreed to serve as Chair.

Motion: There being no other recommendations, motion was made and duly seconded that Mr. Randy McCorkle serve as Chair. All were in agreement.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be held after the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays. It was reported that we will continue to hold our meetings virtually and the notice will be sent to all with instructions on how to join each time.

Submitted by Sarah Walls

CEDS Meetings were held “virtually” during the month of June and the month of November 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

During the months of February, March, April, May, August, and September no meetings were held. However, the RVRC Council did meet each month virtually and most of our Committee Members also serve on the Council and, those that are not members always attend the RVRC Council meetings as well. So, all of our CEDS members are kept informed of information.