

**Subject:** Consideration of an Economic Development District in North Central Texas  
**Attachments:** image003.png

**From:** Lucille Johnson  
**Date:** August 15, 2013, 6:07:07 PM CDT  
**To:** Mike Eastland  
**Subject: Consideration of an Economic Development District in North Central Texas**

August 15, 2013

**TO:** County Judges, City Managers, Economic Development Corporations, Chambers of Commerce and Regional Stakeholders

**FROM:** Mike Eastland, Executive Director

**SUBJ:** Consideration of an Economic Development District in North Central Texas

NCTCOG has been asked by the Regional Office of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to consider forming an Economic Development District (EDD) that represents the North Central Texas region. Our region is the only area within the five-state area (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas) covered by EDA that has not yet formed a district; there are currently 23 EDDs in Texas.

Through its Partnership Planning Investment Program, EDA provides planning grant funds to support local organizations with long-term planning efforts. In order for this region to capitalize on the use of those funds, an EDD must be designated by the EDA.

To make application to EDA for EDD designation consideration, the region must prepare The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS). The CEDS is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies. The CEDS is an analysis of the regional economy through which broad goals and objectives are established that serves as a guide for identifying investment priorities and funding sources.

Through the EDD, planning dollars can be used to address economic project potentials for growth, redevelopment, job creations and sustainability. Our region has not been able to take advantage of funding from two of EDA's mainstay programs – Public Works and Economic Adjustment because we don't have a regional CEDS and we have not been designated as an EDD by EDA.

## **So, what Benefits to the Region and North Texas Economic Developers could be Realized with an EDD?**

- An EDD would allow all cities, counties, non-profits and others in the region to apply for EDA funding through the Public Works and Economic Adjustment programs (the two largest and most popular EDA programs);
- The EDD would support, not compete with, existing economic development organizations such as chambers, EDCs, downtown associations, the North Texas Commission, and city economic development departments by serving as an additional resource to help prepare and maintain the region-wide CEDS and help guide applicants through the EDA funding process;
- Both the CEDS and the EDD are flexible enough to allow for a great deal of input from key regional stakeholders as to how they are structured and used; and
- An EDD provides a direct link for funding from and communication with EDA, but would not pose any threat of the EDA interfering in any way with existing efforts in the region.

## **How Does our Region Stand Right Now?**

A review of EDA records shows the following:

- Our region is the only region in Texas that does not have an EDD, and we are the only EDA designated region in our five-state region (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas) without an EDD.
- In the past decade, only 38 applications have been submitted by an entity in our 16-county region. This is a very low number in comparison to other, smaller metros in Texas.
- Of those 38 applications, only 6 were funded, and of those 6 applications that were funded, four of them went to UTA (two university center grants and two technical assistance grants, with one of them being a continuation of a previous grant). The other two grants funded a renovation project by the City of Fort Worth and a feasibility study by the Greater Dallas Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.
- Of the 38 applications that came from our region over the last decade, 31 were from Dallas and Tarrant counties, three were from Collin County, two from Erath County (both for Tarleton State University), and one from Denton County.
- In FY 2012, EDA, in coordination with FEMA, issued a funding announcement in which \$16,251,000.00 in disaster relief was made available to our five-state region to help communities and regions devise and implement long-term economic redevelopment strategies through a variety of construction and non-construction projects to address economic development challenges.

Five counties in this region were eligible for these funds, which could be used for emergency work such as debris removal and emergency protective measures; permanent work such as road systems and bridges, water control facilities, buildings, contents and equipment, utilities, parks, recreational facilities, cemeteries and beaches; and wildfires.

One requirement of eligibility for this funding was that project funding requests be aligned with a relevant strategic economic development plan, which a CEDS will provide. No applications were submitted from this region.

It is clear that this region has not received much benefit from EDA programs for economic development projects. The presence of an EDD could help to address the situation.

### **What is Your Role?**

To apply for the planning grant, we will need the in-kind assistance of public and private sector stakeholders who are willing to put forth the time and work on the CEDS and to serve as an advisory committee. The preparation of the CEDS can take up to three years to prepare; however, with the assistance of the advisory committee and others working on dedicated elements of the CEDS, the document can be prepared in a much shorter time period.

So, we need to know your interest in and commitment to participating in the planning and preparation process of the CEDS. We also need your assistance in identifying other economic development stakeholders, both public sector and private sector, who can assist with the preparation of the plan.

### **Next Steps**

With your expressed interest in the establishment of an EDD, NCTCOG will prepare the initial planning grant application and submit it to EDA for proposed funding to plan and prepare the CEDS. If the grant is funded, we will appoint a Policy Advisory Committee and then schedule the initial planning meeting to begin work on the CEDS.

To assist us in assessing whether there is sufficient interest in establishing an EDD, we need your feedback. Please answer the brief questionnaire on the next page, and forward your responses to Lucille Johnson by **Friday, September 6, 2013**. We will tabulate your responses and let you know the results.

## Economic Development District in the North Central Texas Region

- Do you support/agree with the establishment of an EDD?

\_\_\_\_\_Yes

\_\_\_\_\_No

- If yes, will you commit your time and/or staff time to develop the Comprehensive Planning Report?

\_\_\_\_\_Yes

\_\_\_\_\_No

- Will you be willing to serve or appoint a representative of your entity to serve on an EDD Policy Advisory Committee?

\_\_\_\_\_Yes

\_\_\_\_\_No



\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Entity