

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between

Regional Economic Xcelleration Development

and

The Strategic Planning Committee

and

(“Implementation Team Leader”)

for

Goal: _____ Objective: _____

I. BACKGROUND

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) process is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies. As a federal document submitted to the U.S. Economic Development Administration for access to funding, the South Central Connecticut region submitted its first CEDS in 2003 and a subsequent five-year update in 2008. Between 2011 and 2013, the Regional Economic Xcelleration (REX) Development’s Strategic Planning Committee worked to comprise a five-year update for 2013. This comprehensive update will serve as a regional economic development action plan for the next five years.

II. PURPOSE

REX Development’s, the region’s public/private economic development partnership, strategic plan explicitly recognizes the importance of the CEDS as a unifying document around which the region’s economic development stakeholders, organizations and initiatives can be aligned. This continued alignment will result in:

- Increased efficiencies and elimination of redundancy.
- More effective deployment of financial resources to maximize tangible outcomes.
- An increase in the ability to measure program effectiveness and assess impact.
- Enhanced coordination and collaboration during implementation.

This regional strategy is intended to complement – not supplant – the successful efforts of the region’s many partners engaged in implementing local, regional, and state-level economic development programs and policies. It is hoped that this strategy can advance the pursuit of more collaborative and cooperative approaches to regional economic development for the betterment of the State, South Central Connecticut and its individual communities.

The main purpose of the MOU is to provide a mutual agreement among the two parties referenced, on the implementation methods discussed in the CEDS. This document will validate the support of the strategy's effective implementation. The roles and responsibilities detailed in the agreement describe the least amount of work to be performed by the stated entity.

This MOU does not attempt to address all the potential areas for co-operation between the stated regional entity and REX Development. There may be additional opportunities outside the scope of work described in this agreement, and the implementation team is encouraged to address these opportunities as they arise. Any needed amendments to the scope of work described should be brought to the Strategic Planning Committee's attention for approval.

III. REGIONAL ACTION AGENDA

GOAL 1: REGIONAL MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Enhance the region's image as a desirable location and destination to live, work, play and operate a business through an aggressive, cooperative external and internal marketing program and creation of a credible regional economic development team.

Objective 1: Regional Marketing, Communications and Advocacy

Enhance and implement the regional marketing and communications strategy in 2013 and beyond, including working from and with the State's marketing strategy.

Objective 2: Regional Economic Program & Best Practices

Maintain an Economic Development Program, based on best-practices, education and training, throughout the next five years.

Objective 3: Advocacy

Collaborate as "one voice" and advocate for policy on the municipal, state and federal level, supporting the goals and objectives described here and supportive of economic development needs in the region.

Objective 4: Regional Collaboration

Support and promote policies that would enforce regional collaboration and reduce competition among municipalities and other regions throughout the state.

GOAL 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

Develop, maintain and effectively utilize an excellent, integrated, multi-modal transportation, communications and information system that facilitates the efficient and convenient movement of people, goods and data intra-regionally, inter-regionally and internationally.

Objective 1: Tweed New Haven Regional Airport

Continue physical, structural and safety enhancements to airport to support a needed increase in air service.

Objective 2: Port of New Haven Dredging Project

Provide support for the dredging of New Haven Harbor. The Harbor, which has not been dredged since 2004, needs to be returned to its 35 foot depth and 400-800 foot width to support port industries and deepwater cargo shipping. Currently, it is uncertain whether the federal government will provide the \$10 million needed to complete this project.

Objective 3: New Haven-Hartford-Springfield and Shore Line East/Metro-North Commuter Rail

Complete the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield commuter rail line by 2016, with the goal of increasing annual trips by 1.26 million by 2030. Support rail service conducive to regional growth and increase rail service to both rail lines, while investing in necessary facilities and infrastructure, to include advocacy for Amtrak's NextGen High-speed Rail through New Haven, as opposed to inland routes.

Objective 4: Bus Service

Increase ridership of the region's bus and ridesharing services by 10% by 2017. Improve effectiveness by increasing frequency of existing routes by 25% and adding 10 new east-west bus routes in the South Central Region service areas, parallel with employment corridors.

Objective 5: Roadways & Bridges

Ensure adequate investment in the region's roadways and bridges to maintain current infrastructure, improve safety and reduce traffic congestion. More specifically, this goal focuses on the state-of-good repair projects and new investments which directly support economic development and job growth.

Objective 6: Telecommunications

Ensure that the entire region has adequate infrastructure to support 21st century communications and information systems, in order to benefit economic growth and business development.

Objective 7: Energy Infrastructure

Support the expansion of natural gas mains to commercial/industrial districts over the next five years in order to lower energy costs for commercial customers, create new construction jobs, and to use a domestic fuel that is currently underutilized and safer for the environment.

Objective 8: Water Infrastructure

Encourage exploration of regional funding mechanisms to support water main extensions for new industrial and commercial customers, for interconnections between water utilities, and to help fund the water infrastructure needs of the region.

GOAL 3: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & RETENTION

On a continuing basis, identify and assist in the development of policies, priority clusters and other businesses that capitalize on the region's diverse strengths and emerging opportunities.

Objective 1: Regional Business Assistance Program

Develop and implement an effective regional business assistance and retention strategy by 2014 to help existing businesses grow or remain in the region.

Objective 2: Entrepreneurs & Start-Ups

Foster innovation and new business development, by promoting “The Grid” (innovation ecosystem hub) and continuing to identify and assist prospective companies and entrepreneurs in priority business sectors to start and grow new business ventures in the region.

Objective 3: Small Business Development

Increase collaboration and connection of small businesses in the region, and work to provide needed assistance, training and support to small businesses throughout the region, including the creative economy.

Objective 4: Improve the Regulatory Environment

Continue to advocate for improved policies and procedures to promote the economic growth of the region over the next five years. Focus on regional permitting processes, cost of doing business, tax structure and a comprehensive energy strategy.

Objective 5: Expand Global Opportunities

Support and develop new opportunities for business to access expanded markets.

GOAL 4: WORKFORCE ENHANCEMENT AND HOUSING

Identify, stimulate and, where necessary, coordinate programs, services and initiatives ensuring that the region’s residents have affordable access to the high quality training, education and housing opportunities they desire in order to be a productive member of the region’s workforce.

Objective 1: Support Incumbent Worker Training

Support the need for additional annual funding, mergers or additional training programs for Incumbent Worker Training, to maintain or exceed the \$1,000,000 (\$1.82/capita in region) threshold per year.

Objective 2: Align Education to Business Growth

Work with State to build collaboration among public and private sector partners to engage in discussion of critical school-to-work issues, and grow STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) related education at all levels.

Objective 3: Support Community Colleges and High School Technical Programs

Meet emerging workforce needs by supporting innovative workforce development efforts at Gateway Community College, Middlesex Community College and area high schools, including priority cluster specific workforce efforts such as manufacturing technology programs.

Objective 4: Educate Primary/Secondary Students on Cluster Industries and Entrepreneurship

Initiate and utilize regional and state programs to educate primary and secondary students on real world work experience, including updating and introducing curriculum and internships.

Objective 5: Retain and Attract Young Professionals

Build upon and promote existing regional young professional organizations and work to develop additional programs, policies and mentorships to attract and retain young professionals to the excellent quality of life in the New Haven region.

Objective 6: Workforce Housing

Improve the amount and diversity of workforce housing by offering design and policy resources to the region's communities to help them address the region's critical shortage of housing at price points for middle income families.

GOAL 5: REAL ESTATE, LAND USE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Assist and support communities in developing and devising local land use policies and regulations that encourage effective and sustainable development, conducive to a livable region.

Objective 1: Brownfields & Redevelopment Fund

Continue the existing REX Brownfields program and expand funding for assessment and redevelopment by 2017, as well as expanding regional brownfields programs to include additional funding.

Objective 2: Transit-Oriented Development & Smart Growth

Assist the region's communities in developing and implementing land-use policies that employ transit-oriented development and Smart Growth principles to meet local challenges and needs.

Objective 3: Integrate Arts, Culture and Preservation with Economic Development

Promote community and neighborhood revitalization through artistic, cultural or creative policies, to include the reuse of existing sites, buildings or vacant lots for arts and cultural purposes (i.e. temporary public art).

Objective 4: Agriculture & Open Space Preservation

Encourage growth while maintaining or increasing agricultural production and open space preservation, to include at least 21% of the region's land area to be preserved as open space by 2017.

GOAL 6: FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Secure adequate funding to implement the objectives proposed by this CEDS.

Objective 1: Implementation Funding

Establish a multi-year funding commitment to support implementation of the Goals and Objectives of this Strategic Plan.

Objective 2: Implementation Team (s)

Develop implementation teams and committees

IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. *REX Development* and the *Strategic Planning Committee* will administer and keep current the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.
- b. *REX Development* will submit an annual update of the CEDS to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), and submit an overall update every five years, unless circumstances arise that lead to a change in development.
- c. The *Strategic Planning Committee* will hold, at least, four meetings a year to update the CEDS and monitor progress. This may lead to amendments to the CEDS action agenda that will need majority approval by the Strategic Planning Committee.
- d. The *Lead Implementer* will acknowledge and accept its designation and role as volunteer lead implementer of the specific objective identified in the CEDS.
- e. The *Lead Implementer* will hold at least two meetings a year with their respective implementation team.
- f. The *Lead Implementer* will work with their respective team to achieve the suggested strategies and provide modifications or additions to these strategies as deemed necessary.
- g. The *Lead Implementer* will work with their respective team to identify long term strategies and additional short term strategies (annually) to be presented to the Strategic Planning Committee.
- h. The *Lead Implementer* will record performance measurements for the identified objective, and will modify or amend (through addition or subtraction of measurements) stated measurements as they see fit.
- i. The *Lead Implementer*, or representative, will attend Strategic Planning Committee meetings, to provide necessary updates and progress.
- j. The *Lead Implementer* will report annually to *REX Development* on annual accomplishments of stated objective, at least 45 days prior to submission of the annual update.

V. DURATION AND AMENDMENTS

- a. This agreement shall remain in effect for one year from the date of the last signature.
- b. Upon annual review of the CEDS, the parties may extend or renew this agreement for an additional year, confirmed by additional signatures to an updated agreement.
- c. This agreement may be amended at any time with the mutual consent of all parties involved.
- d. No amendment of the terms of this MOU will be effective unless made in writing and signed by each parties authorized representative.
- e. Either party may terminate the agreement by providing 60 days advance written notice to the other parties.

SIGNATURE PAGE:

REX Development
Executive Director
Date _____

Strategic Planning Committee
Co-Chair
Date _____

Strategic Planning Committee
Co-Chair
Date _____

Lead Implementer

Organization
Date _____