



Development District of Central Texas

Board of Directors

Central Texas Council of Governments 2180

North Main Street, Belton, Texas 76513

Thursday, July 7, 2022—9:30 AM

Board Members Present:

Ginger Watkins: Cameron Industrial Foundation
David Williams: Kempner City Manager
Dean Roome: Bartlett Municipal Development District
Jamie LaDuke: Hamilton EDC
Ted Gonzalez: Central Texas College
Jim Gibson: Rockdale Municipal Development District
Stan Briggs: Imperium Real Estate
Charley Ayres: Workforce Solutions of Central Texas

Others Present:

Uryan Nelson: CTCOG
Anna Barge: CTCOG
Dominic Elizondo: CTCOG
Hope Geiger: CTCOG
Connie Quinto: CTCOG
Chip Adams: Texas Music Office, Office of the Governor
Gregory Conte: Texas Broadband Development Office
Kim LeBlanc: Texas Film Commission, Office of the Governor
Leslie Lawson: Texas Broadband Development Office
Kevin Keller: City of Copperas Cove

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by Ginger Watkins, Chair of the Board, at 9:30 AM. A quorum was present.

2. **Public Comments.** No public comments were made.

3. **Staff Updates.**

Dominic Elizondo gave an update about CTCOG activities, including the conclusion of CARES Act funding, the Leadership Central Texas and Rural Internship Programs, economic development newsletters, the Discover Central Texas project, the Small Town Summit series, a Newly Elected Officials Summit, the Veteran Employer Summit in June, 2022-26 CEDS implementation, plans for a Transportation and Opportunity Zone Summit and other economic updates from Workforce Solutions' Economic Snapshot for Q2 of 2022.

4. Discussion and Action Item: Regarding approval of minutes from the April 7, 2022, Meeting.

David Williams made a motion to approve the minutes, and it was seconded by Charley Ayres; the motion passed unanimously.

5. Discussion and Action Item: Regarding Approval of New Board Members

Two new members were before the Board for approval-Stan Briggs, the owner of Imperium Real Estate, as a representative for Morgan's Point Resort, and Michael Boyd, a City Councilman for the City of Killeen. Jim Gibson made a motion to approve their applications to the Board, and Charley Ayres seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Discussion Item: Regarding Texas Broadband Plan

Gregory Conte, Director of the Texas Broadband Development Office provided an overview of the development of the Texas Broadband Plan, plans to develop a competitive financial incentive program for broadband and State availability map. There were 17,000 respondents in online polls and many attendees for town halls and stakeholder meetings throughout the process. Conte also discussed funding for Broadband to the State, including ARPA and CARES funds, the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund, and the NTIA Broadband Grant programs. Ginger Watkins asked how many of the counties have done asset mapping/needs assessments for Broadband. Anna Barge noted that three or four Counties already have broadband plans and two more were preparing them.

7. Discussion Item: Regarding Texas Music Friendly Communities Certification

Chip Adams with the Texas Music Office provided an overview of how local communities can become certified as Music Friendly Communities by establishing a single point of contact for coordinating music industry resources and professionals with musicians and leading city strategy for the local music industry through an advisory board of stakeholders. Currently there are 36 certified cities, including Harker Heights and Salado. In order to become certified, cities must hold a Music Friendly Communities workshop, establish a Music Office and/or liaison, register with the Texas Music Office's directory, demonstrate partnerships with non-profits and music education programs, then create an advisory board.

8. Discussion Item: Regarding Texas Film Friendly Communities Program

Kim LeBlanc, Production and Community Relations Specialist with the Texas Film Commission, provided an overview of the Texas Film Friendly Communities Program. This program provides training and guidance to communities on how to accommodate filming and market themselves as media production destinations. Cities can become certified by attending a Film Friendly Communities workshop, create a liaison for the film industry, create filming guidelines, and submit digital photos of potential filming locations.

9. Discussion Item: Regarding Updates on the 2022-2026 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Implementation

Dominic Elizondo gave an update on the implementation of several high priority strategies in the 2022-2026 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Action Plan Matrix. One strategy was developing a regionally based tourism brand, which was being developed with the Discover Central Texas project. CTCOG and RGVision held their final stakeholder meeting for the project on Apr.18, after having shot footage at cities and towns across the region to use on the website for events and site listings as well as creating a promotional video for the region which was shown to the Board. The final version of the website was shown to the Board. An app is in production for Google Play and Apple that will contain the same information on events and listings for each city. Dominic Elizondo also discussed continued efforts to provide access for cities on the WordPress for the website. CTCOG hired a new VISTA who will work on things like marketing and search engine optimization for the site. The next strategy in the Action Plan Matrix for the CEDS was to hold an Opportunity Zone Summit. Dominic Elizondo provided a draft agenda for the Summit, which will include representatives from three Opportunity Zone Funds giving overviews on their investment areas and projects, and cities with Opportunity Zones in a panel discussing potential areas for investment. Dominic Elizondo noted that he is reaching out to as many of these Funds as possible to obtain a third Fund and host the Summit in late 2022. Anna Barge gave an overview of the Small Town Summit series as hour long webinars every other week covering topics such as digital literacy, CTCOG services, emergency preparedness, and downtown development. Two have been held on digital literacy so far, and the next will be later in June over CTCOG services. Anna Barge also provided an overview of the Veteran Employer Summit on May.19 with Texas Veterans Commission and CTCOG, which informed businesses and employers on best practices for hiring veteran talent. Barge also discussed the Newly Elected Officials Summit on Jun.21, which provided information to new city officials on the Open Meetings Act, CTCOG resources, grants, and ethics. Dominic Elizondo covered the strategy for creating a Central Texas regional brand for businesses. He discussed the 2022-26 CEDS' Appendix F, which detailed steps on regional marketing for business attraction, including formalizing an identity and identifying assets. Examples were shown in sites for areas in Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi, which contained data on key industries, fast growing sectors of the economy, and target areas for development to attract businesses. Ted Gonzalez asked if any of the information and data staff is looking to compile into a site would be linked to the Texas EDC site, which already contains similar information. Elizondo noted that if staff were to compile data on a new or existing site, they would be sure to link to the State EDC site as well. He also mentioned that they would include recommendations from Appendix F, such as a "value proposition" on what Central Texas has to offer new businesses, and creating content such as blogs and community interviews to target them.

10. Discussion Item: Regarding Updates on Regional Broadband Initiatives

Anna Barge briefly discussed various broadband opportunities and initiatives for the region, including the Connected Nation Broadband reports for Milam, San Saba, and Lampasas, and Bell and Coryell Counties' hiring of Foresite Group as a broadband consultant for usage of ARPA funds. CTCOG will also work with cities and Counties over the summer to apply for broadband funding as available through IJJA programs. The State Broadband Plan was mentioned and Board members were encouraged to read it. David Williams brought up the shutoff of Wi-Fi service in Lampasas the previous few days and mentioned that now would be a great time to reach out for public input on broadband needs.

11. Discussion Item: Regarding Federal and State Legislative Updates Pertaining to Economic Development

Anna Barge discussed the programs funded by the recently signed Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act (IIJA). Barge noted to look out for grant programs in Dominic Elizondo's newsletters.

12. Discussion Item: Regarding Updates on Grant Opportunities

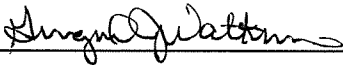
Dominic Elizondo provided an update on State and Federal grant opportunities, including the TxCDBG Community Development Fund, which CTCOG had selected water/sewer, street improvements, and first time yard connections as priorities for FY 2023 project applications, the FAST fund, which closes in late July and funds purchase of service vehicles including firetrucks with a 50% match, the Safe Streets for All Program for creating Safety Action Plans and implementing projects to prevent roadway deaths, the Reconnecting Communities Program for removing mobility barriers, the USDA Reconnect Program round 4 for acquiring and constructing infrastructure for broadband, the NTIA Broadband grants, and the Texas Workforce Commission's Skills for Small Business for Employers Program for training employees of businesses with less than 100 employees. Ginger Watkins asked if the Reconnect grant portion could be used as match for other grants and Dominic Elizondo noted that he didn't see it specifically prohibited in the guidelines, but most grants do not allow Federal or State funds as match for their grant.

13. Board of Directors' Comments.

Charley Ayres noted that the possible partners in the CEDS' Appendix F for regional marketing for attracting businesses should include Fort Hood as they have great potential for workforce recruitment. Ginger Watkins also noted that EDCs were not included as a list of potential partners. Anna Barge stated that staff did not want to duplicate what TAPP or Hiring our Heroes were already doing, and Charley Ayres stated that many employers only go to hiring events at Fort Hood rather than use those organizations' services as they do not reach prospective employers from outside of the region.

14. Discuss agenda items for next meeting on Thursday, Oct. 6th, 2022, at 9:30 AM.

15. Adjourned at 11:11 AM



Ginger Watkins, DDCT Chair



Uryan Nelson, Planning Director