



**Development District of Central Texas  
Board of Directors**

Central Texas Council of Governments 2180  
North Main Street, Belton, Texas 76513

**Thursday, October 6, 2022—9:30 AM**

**Board Members Present:**

Jamie LaDuke: Hamilton EDC  
Ted Gonzalez: Central Texas College  
Brian O'Connor: Nolanville EDC  
Ginger Watkins: Cameron Industrial Foundation  
Dean Roome: Bartlett Municipal Development District  
Cynthia Hernandez: Belton EDC  
Cheri Shepherd: Gatesville Convention and Visitor's Bureau  
Bobby Whitson: Bell County Commissioner's Court

**Others Present:**

Uryan Nelson: CTCOG  
Anna Barge: CTCOG  
Dominic Elizondo: CTCOG  
Hope Geiger: CTCOG  
Connie Quinto: CTCOG  
Anita Janke: CTCOG  
Thomas Butterfield: Office of the Governor Office of Economic Development and Tourism  
Dan Kelleher: City of Temple Main Street Program

**MINUTES**

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- 1. Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by Ginger Watkins, Chair of the Board, at 9:31 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 completion of the Discover Central Texas website and app, the Opportunity Zone Summit, economic development newsletters, the Small Town Summit series, plans for an EDA FIRE event in early 2023, 2022-26 CEDS implementation, plans for a Transportation and Opportunity Zone Summit and other economic updates from Workforce Solutions' Economic Snapshot for Q3 of 2022.
- 4. Discussion and Action Item:** Regarding approval of minutes from the July 7, 2022, Meeting.

Ted Gonzalez made a motion to approve the minutes, and it was seconded by Dean Roome; the motion passed unanimously.

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

A new member were before the Board for approval-Brian O'Connor, the new director of the Morgan's Point Resort EDC. Cynthia Hernandez made a motion to approve his applications to the Board, and Ted Gonzalez seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**6. Discussion Item:** Regarding Texas Main Street Program

Dan Kelleher, the Temple Main Street Program Administrator provided an overview of the Main Street Program in Temple. The Main Street Program allows various stakeholders in a city (businesses, governments, non-profits, residents, etc.) to have a unified vision for developing its downtown. It utilizes the National Main Street Program's four point approach to downtown improvement: design, promotion, economic vitality, and organization, to implement historic preservation efforts that spur economic development. Temple has a Main Street Advisory Board with four committees for each of these points which meet monthly. The Promotion Committee deals with any promotion for activities and advertising, as well as assisting businesses with marketing plans. The Economic Vitality Committee works to keep and expand businesses, connect business owners with property owners, and work to attract new businesses. The Design Committee works with everything in the physical or built environment, reporting on building improvements. The Organization Committee deals with bylaws, meeting schedules, and community outreach initiatives. When a city becomes certified as a Main Street city it is given access to the staff from the State Main Street Office, including designers, architects, and economic development staff. Businesses can fill out a form and send photos of their business to the State and the design team will provide a free design for restoration. Temple has a Strategic Investment Zone (SIZ) which provides match for grants businesses apply for. Temple's Main Street Program also offers "targeted persuasion" and training for businesses, and collaborative promotions. Mr. Kelleher showed several examples of new development and historic preservation in Temple. He explained that all Main Street cities sign an annual agreement with the Texas Main Street Program, submit quarterly activity and reinvestment reports, and an annual six-standard report. Cities that score high on these reports become nationally accredited. The six standards are: A broad based community commitment, active leadership and organizational capacity, diverse funding and sustainable program operations, strategy driven programming, preservation based economic development, and demonstrated impact and results. The application process requires that the city create a Main Street Manager position. All new Main Street Cities receive a visit from the First Lady of Texas. Anita Janke asked what impacts and results are measured by the standards, and Mr. Kelleher said that they look at examples of successful programs or programs that have grown over the past year, as well as examples of preservation of buildings, community, outreach, etc. Dominic Elizondo asked how façade improvements and other programs are funded. Mr. Kelleher said that every city does it differently, but Temple has a Redevelopment Zone (RZ), which is a Tax Increment Finance Zone, in its downtown. He also mentioned that some cities use hotel occupancy tax.

**7. Discussion Item:** Regarding Texas Enterprise Zone Program

Thomas Butterfield, a Finance Specialist with the Office of the Governor's Economic Development and Tourism Office, provided an overview of how local communities can use the

Texas Enterprise Zone Program. This Program provides sales and use tax refunds to businesses to encourage investment and job creation in economically distressed areas of the State. Cities nominate businesses for the program and they are eligible to receive refunds based on their investment for up to five years. Businesses may reapply after this term. Six businesses are allowed to be designated in the Program per fiscal biennium for cities with less than 250,000 people and nine for cities with a population of 250,000 or more. Application deadlines are quarterly in September, December, March, and June. Enterprise Zones are Census Block Groups where at least 20% of the area are at or below poverty level, are classified as a Federally Designated Renewal Community, Federal Empowerment Zone, or Federal Enterprise Community, is an area located in a Distressed County (none in the DDCT region are Distressed), or are in the boundaries of a defense base development authority. Qualified businesses must be located in the Zone and 25% of new permanent jobs must be held by residents of the Enterprise Zone, economically disadvantaged individuals, and veterans. If located outside the Zone, it must be 35%. Businesses must apply to the city to be nominated for the Zone, and if nominated the application goes to the State to be approved and the Project moves to the Comptroller's Office. If the Project meets the requirements of the Program, the business receives sales tax refunds. Since FY 2016 the Program has averaged 51 project designations per fiscal year, more than \$4.7 billion in investment, and created or retained more than 50,000 jobs. Ted Gonzalez asked if the 76% of all jobs created or retained being in manufacturing was in the State as a whole or just the DDCT region, with Mr. Butterfield responding that it was for the State. Cynthia Hernandez asked if this Program could only be accessed by an existing company, not a development project. Mr. Butterfield stated a construction company could apply but they couldn't count contracted labor towards the requirement, but the funds towards construction could count towards the sales tax refund. Mrs. Hernandez asked if the Zone designations were automatic based off of the demographics or if there was an application process. Mr. Butterfield said that the Zones are updated every ten years based off of Census poverty data.

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

Ginger Watkins congratulated staff for the monitoring and tracking of the CEDS 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. shot footage at cities and towns across the region to use on the website for events and CTCOG and RGVision completed the development of the website and app, and CTCOG is now working on advertising for the website on social media. 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, to be held on Oct.7, 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. Mr. Elizondo also showed a list of questions for the panel that will be asked, including asking what current investments exist in the Zone, and what plans there are for future investment. 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. The next two Summits will be later in October and November over

economic development and tourism. Anna Barge also noted that staff was working with Hiring our Heroes to host a Military Spouse Networking event with employers, which is planned to be held in November. Kolin Yancey spoke on the CEDS strategy dealing with creating marketing materials for CTCOG. He has created a one page document detailing the services each CTCOG department offers, which will be sent out to city managers and posted on social media once approved. 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. Mr. Elizondo showed the CTCOG site in the Regional Economy and Regional Demographics menus, which had been updated with 2020 Census demographic and Workforce Solutions data on employment, industry, occupation wages, educational, ethnicity, median household income, and major employers.

**9. Discussion and Action Item:** Regarding Approval of use of EDA Planning Grant Funds for Discover Central Texas Advertising

Dominic Elizondo said that staff had receive confirmation from the EDA that the DDCT would be able to use the EDA three year Planning grant "Other Expenditures" line item for advertising as it would fall under "Program outreach and other specific purposes necessary to meet the requirements of the award." Mr. Elizondo said that staff as well as VISTA Kolin Yancey researched advertising cost estimates for Facebook, Google, and billboards. He showed a breakdown of the costs, finding that Facebook was cheaper with lower estimated monthly clicks compared to Google, but was able to target demographics that click on the ad more. Billboards would cost anywhere from \$669-\$7,000 per month depending on the location with limited ability to gauge efficacy. Mr. Elizondo broke down the line items where funds could be transferred to "Other Expenditures," finding that a total of \$7,622 would be available for the line item. Uryan Nelson asked if staff would be able to receive reports on metrics and who has clicked on the ads. Mr. Elizondo said he believed there would be monthly metrics reports, with Anita Janke stating that each post can have its individual metrics tracked. Ted Gonzalez asked if Facebook cast the widest net, and Mr. Elizondo said you are able to select what demographics and locations to target, but it can adjust based on who is actually clicking the ad. Cynthia Hernandez asked if staff had looked on Instagram and if DDCT should look into doing billboard since a domain can be used for the billboard to track the visitors we're receiving. Mr. Elizondo said that staff had not done a cost estimate for Instagram since a Discover Central Texas Instagram had not been created yet (after this meeting it was found that Facebook ads automatically post to Instagram). Mr. Nelson said the motion can be for moving funds to the line item rather than choosing a specific social media platform in case a better option was found. Cheri Shepherd asked if there was a dedicated staff member as social media manager, with Mr. Elizondo saying that Mr. Yancey would be the point of contact for all social media associated with Discover Central Texas. Mrs. Watkins said that it would be important to respond to comments on social media as well. Mr. Gonzalez made a motion to approve the moving of the funds, and Mrs. Hernandez seconded the motion.

**10. Discussion Item:** Regarding Updates on Regional Broadband Initiatives

Anna Barge briefly discussed various broadband opportunities and initiatives for the region. The State Broadband Plan was mentioned and Mrs. Barge said that there would be future funding opportunities through the Plan down the road. Mr. Nelson said that at the Texas Association of Regional Councils Economic Development Committee, a representative from Connected Nation spoke about funding opportunities from NTIA and the State Broadband Office, and that as that information comes out, it will be shared with the region.

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

Mrs. Barge discussed the programs funded by the recently signed Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act (IIJA). The RAISE Grant NOFO for FY 2023 will be opening in Fall of 2022.

**12. Discussion Item:** Regarding Updates on Grant Opportunities

Dominic Elizondo provided an update on State and Federal grant opportunities, including the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Technology grant from USDOT for pilot projects of advanced technology in public transportation, FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities grant for improving resiliency in public infrastructure, the Reconnecting Communities Program for removing mobility barriers, the USDA Reconnect Program round 4 for acquiring and constructing infrastructure for broadband-at least 50% of the households in the service area should have access to 10 Mbps and 1 Mbps upload to be eligible for the grants/loans, as well as the USDA Community Connect grant program for construction and acquisition of broadband infrastructure, the USDA Rural Microentrepreneur Program and Intermediary Relending Program for financing revolving loan funds for microentrepreneurs and economic development, the Office of the Governor's Texas Travel Industry Recovery Grant Programs with hotels, motels, and beds and breakfasts being eligible for up to \$20,000 in grants for October, and the Texas Veterans Commission's General Assistance Grants for developing employment support, financial assistance, temporary housing, transportation assistance, and entrepreneurship training for veterans.

**13. Board of Directors' Comments.**

There were no comments.

**14. Discuss agenda items for next meeting on Thursday, Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 9:30 AM.**

**15. Adjourned at 11:20 AM**



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Ginger Watkins, DDCT Chair

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Uryan Nelson, Planning Director