

UPPER COASTAL PLAIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT
MISSION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES MID-TERM REPORT
FISCAL YEARS 2016-2018

MISSION: *“Improve our region by providing planning, economic, and community development services to member governments and allies at the local and regional levels”*

GOAL #1: Continue to serve as the U. S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) recognized Lead Planning Organization for the region’s Economic Development District.

ACTION PLANS:

1. Appoint, maintain, and facilitate a Strategy/Advisory Committee (CEDS Committee) to represent the main economic interests of the region and utilize them to help guide the CEDS priorities and processes. Can include sub-committees with additional appointees as needed.

The CEDS Advisory Committee had no changes in appointments for the final year of the current 2012-2017 CEDS. They met in the fall of 2016, as did the Economic Development Sub-Committee.

The Board appointed themselves as the new 2017-2022 CEDS Advisory Committee for the upcoming 5-year re-write. They also appointed a CEDS Strategy Development Group to guide the detailed development process.

2. Develop, maintain, and implement the Region’s 5-Year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that may contain sections on the background of the regional economic development situation, an analysis of economic development problems and opportunities, goals and objectives defining regional expectations, community and private sector participation, strategic projects/programs/activities, a plan of action, and performance measures.

PDS staff previously completed a Five-Year update of the Upper Coastal Plain Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). CEDS 2012-2017 was the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed with diverse public and private sector participation. CEDS 2012-2017 incorporates guiding principles and standards of EDA and other federal agencies through a partnership with NC

Tomorrow. The CEDS planning process involved all sectors of the economic development community including local, regional and state economic developers, planners, private industry, educational institutions, elected officials and multiple ground-level community organizations.

In the fall of 2016, the CEDS Economic Development sub-committee and the CEDS Advisory Committee met and recommended changes to project lists which were approved by the UCPCOG Board of Directors. The process of creating a new CEDS began in early 2017 and adoption of a new strategy will happen in October, 2017.

3. Create an Annual Performance Report on CEDS approved activities, accomplishments, and performance measures which will be presented to the CEDS Advisory Committee for review and to the UCPCOG Executive Committee and Board of Directors for approval.

The CEDS Annual Performance Report was approved by the Advisory Committee in their October 2016 meeting and submitted to EDA.

4. Develop, write and administer and economic development related grants and loans through EDA for member local governments and the region.

See below for details on ED related grants. Please note that Community Development Grants in that section also support CEDS Vision, Goals and Objectives due to their relationship to economic development. The PDS Director also supports the efforts of the Business Development Center and AAA in seeking to write and develop grants related to that department.

5. Work closely with local, regional, state, and federal economic development professionals and their partners to help meet local and regional economic development needs and priorities.

The CEDS and CEDS process is regularly and consistently utilized to help communicate to the UCPCOG BOD, ED officials, community stakeholders, and others. Goals, assets, objectives, strategies, and action items and performance measures from the CEDS are regularly considered when building partnerships, submitting grants, and developing regional cohesion. Some highlights for the 2-year period include:

- **Local Food Economy:** PDS has partnered with the NC Rural Center and others to submit and receive a \$238,000 grant from USDA-RD for the Rural Food Business Assistance Project. PDS has a \$35,000 sub award to direct businesses into a business development assistance pipeline and to build networks and marketing for the region's local food efforts. The project is on track and under budget. A one year extension may be requested.
- **Wilson Community College:** And their Foundation received a notice of award from EDA through its Public Works program with PDS grant writing assistance and

- **EDD support.** The award covers 50% of a \$2,000,000 project to renovate the prior Lee Automotive sales and service center into an automotive technical education and hands-on training center. The project is on time and on budget and expected to be completed summer of fall of 2017.
- ***Halifax 1 Million Gallon Tank (Freebird):*** A Notice of Award was received for the grant application submitted on behalf of Halifax County to EDA under the Economic Adjustment Program. The \$2,004,225 infrastructure project supports the location of a wood pellet manufacturer along US Highway 301. This project will add 300 jobs to the region and is going through final closeout.
- ***Brownfields:*** Partnerships were formed with region community development corporations (CDCs) during the EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant application process. The UCPCOG Brownfields Assessment Program provides assistance to its 18-member Partnership of UCPCOG towns, cities and counties and is identified in the Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Actions section of the CEDS. Key accomplishments include:
 - EPA granted the UCPCOG a second \$400,000 Assessment grant for the identification, adoption and assessment of sites hindered with redevelopment by real or perceived contamination.
 - Vacant/underutilized buildings inventory for UCPCOG Brownfields Assessment Grant Program continues to be updated.
 - In the last 12 months, new sites have been adopted into the program for environmental assessments. Sites have Prospective (re) developers associated with them that anticipate job creation. Sites were previously adopted for assistance in Littleton, Roanoke Rapids, Rocky Mount, Halifax County, and Northampton County.
 - Assistance was also continued to other municipalities in the coalition.
- ***NC Tomorrow Initiative:*** UCPCOG participated with other Councils of Government across the state to conduct two NC Tomorrow Summits to educate officials, leaders and others on this state-wide comprehensive economic strategy that helps guide the UCPEDD's CEDS. A new 5-Year NC Tomorrow is being created for 2017-2022.
- ***Sustainability:*** The UCPEDD Staff and associated stakeholders organized and held the 4th Annual Easter North Carolina Sustainability Summit on October 26th at Halifax Community College. Two-hundred people participated in the 12 session, clean car show, exhibit hall, keynote and speaker panel.
- ***Broadband:*** PDS worked to gain a stronger understanding of the region's rural broadband infrastructure, public access to high speed internet, and develop expansion opportunities into underserved areas. This has included meetings with the State's new Broadband office and area service providers.

- **Tourism:** PDS participated in meetings with NC East, NC DOC, and tourism officials throughout eastern NC to develop various tourism databases, marketing, and strategies to capitalize on new tourism opportunities.
- **SC2 Initiative:** Rocky Mount was federally designated as a Strong City Strong Community partner and as such was assigned a Federal Agent from USDA-RD to oversee and help coordinate federal agencies, resources, and assistance to further the comprehensive and sustainable development of this anchor City in the center of the UCPCOG Region. UCPCOG, as the EDD worked with the initiative and building strategic partnerships to help revitalize key communities, assets, and ensure regional participation in the process.
- **Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency:** A US DOE Grant application titled, “*Powering Energy Efficiency & Impacts Framework*” seeking to address energy efficiency needs in underserved low income neighborhoods.
- **Center for Energy Education -** Geenex LLC broke ground on constructing was previously known as the Solar Center of Excellence. Located in Halifax County, it has been rebranded the Center for Energy Education and an Executive Director has been hired. They presented at the 3rd Annual ENC Sustainability Summit mentioned above, presented to the UCPCOG BOD/CEDS Committee, and have held various community and media events. The project is for solar power research and education, as well as a solar generation plant to sell power. Geenex LLC is partnering with Halifax Community College for workforce training.
- **Hurricane Matthew Resilient Recovery:** UCPCOG was one of three EDDs that received a two-year, \$200,000 grant from EDA to hire a Disaster recovery Coordinator to assist a minimum of 10 low capacity local governments with recovery from the damage of Hurricane Matthew. UCPCOG is the lead EDD in partnership with the Mid-East Commission and the Albemarle Commission, providing technical assistance and information to local governments from Princeville to the Village of Hatteras. A Disaster Recovery Coordinator was hired February 2017.

In addition to providing support to selected local communities, UCPCOG closely follows developments at the state and federal level, as new programs and funding streams emerge.

GOAL #2: Continue to provide grant and loan related services to member local governments from individual communities to multi-jurisdictional partnerships for planning, economic development, community development, and other needs and priorities.

ACTION PLANS:

1. Provide technical assistance to member local governments and allies in the research and development of grant and loan projects including, but not

limited to, assessing community needs, identifying potential projects, locating funding resources, and identifying prospective partners.

During FY 2016-17, PDS had consultations with numerous members, allies and communities and provided technical assistance to assess their needs and qualifications to match grant/loan opportunities. This includes meetings between The PDS Director and/or staff and county/municipal Managers/Administrators, Mayors, Commissioners, Boards, and Committees. During this process we described the grant/loan objectives and requirements and worked to determine a commitment by the recipients to provide the necessary information and resources for the grant/loan application and project.

Grant agencies and programs monitored and matched to needs for funds include: US Economic Development Administration (EDA), US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), US Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA-RD), NC Park and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF), NC Rural Center, NC Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), NC Dept. of Environmental Quality, NC Dept. of Transportation/Solar Center - Clean Fuels and Advanced Technology(CFAT), Golden Leaf Foundation, and others.

2. Assess community and regional needs, research, write, and administer planning, economic and community development related grants and loans from agencies such as NC Department of Commerce (DOC), Community Development Block Grants, NC Department of Environmental Quality(DEQ), NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF), Golden LEAF, USDA-Rural Development, EPA and others to meet member local government and regional needs and priorities.

PDS continues to coordinate federal, state and local funds to meet the goals and objectives of the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Action Plan and other local and regional plans, goals, and objectives. Funding received through the EDA Public Works Program, NC Department of Commerce, NC Department of Environmental Quality, and NC Rural Center and others have helped the UCPCOG make progress on infrastructure, business recruitment and retention and improved quality of life for its citizens. The Project Summaries and lists below provide an overview of efforts. New awards this period are underlined.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Summary: In total, 8 projects were worked on containing \$5,627,225 worth of investment during the period, leveraging an estimated \$150 million of additional private and public investment and creating or anticipated to support approximately 500 construction jobs in the near-term future and creating over 1,000 permanent jobs. Of these projects, 4 were completed during the period and 4 new projects were initiated.

In addition to these projects summarized above and listed below, other relevant work included assisting Northampton County and the Town of Seaboard and an industry with sewer infrastructure needs, working with 2 area Community Colleges on leveraging state bond funds with federal funds (one application submitted), consultations with numerous small towns on

economic revitalization efforts, participation with city downtown redevelopment efforts in Rocky Mount (Monk to Mill, Downtown Community Facility), and Wilson (Commercial Building Reuse), support of the new CSX-CCS Multi-modal Hub, work on promoting the NC Tomorrow Economic Development Strategy, meetings with regional tourism stakeholders on opportunity development, and determining various opportunities and strategies to address the rural broadband infrastructure gaps.

- *Halifax County: EDA Grant, Klausner Rail Extension and Sewer Infrastructure Project - \$1,400,000 (nearing completion)*
- *Halifax County: EDA Grant, 1 Million Gallon Tank Infrastructure Project - \$2,004,225 (nearing completion)*
- *Wilson Community College: EDA Grant, Lee Campus Automotive Education Facility - \$1,000,000 (nearing completion)*
- *Upper Coastal Plain: EPA Community-Wide Brownfield Assessment and Cleanup Grant - \$400,000 (2nd award) (nearing completion)*
- *Upper Coastal Plain: NC Dept. of Transportation and NC Clean Energy Technology Center, Clean Fuel Advanced Technology Project - \$40,000 (completed)*
- *Upper Coastal Plain: NC Dept. of Transportation and NC Clean Energy Technology Center, Clean Fuel Advanced Technology - \$45,000 (2nd award)*
- *Upper Coastal Plain: USDA Rural Business Development Grant, Rural Food Business Assistance Project - \$238,000*
- *Upper Coastal Plain: US DOE Grant, Powering Energy Efficiency & Impacts Framework grant - \$500,000*

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (Including Parks and Recreation)

Summary: In total, 32 projects were worked on containing \$18,644,980 worth of investment during the period. Of these projects, 12 were completed or were in late stages of closing out during the period, and 13 new projects were funded. Again, new funded awards this initial period are underlined.

Additionally, the department invested time and resources on approximately twenty-five (25) additional projects that have been submitted to funding agencies for consideration during the period and/or are actively being researched & further developed. This investment of time resulted in the newly funded projects and have prepared others to compete for future funding.

Black Creek:

- *DENR Green Grant/Loan, Water Meters/Well Improvements \$392,188 (closing out)*

Castalia:

- ***Parks and Recreation Trust Fund + Land & Water Conservation Funds, 400,000.00 (Completed)***

Enfield:

- ***CDBG-Infrastructure, MLK Water Line Improvement \$233,107 (completed)***
- ***CDBG-Infrastructure, Town Wide Water System Improvements \$1,871,356***
- ***Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, Phase III Community Park - \$36,500 (completed)***
- ***Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, Phase IV Meyer-Oakview Park \$145,069***
- ***2017 Disaster Recovery Raw Water Pump Station Electrical Upgrades \$100,000***

Littleton:

- ***CDBG Catalyst Grant, library and museum renovation, housing rehab, pedestrian landscaping \$433,065 (completed)***
- ***Parks and Recreation Trust Fund \$156,600 (self-administered by the Town)***

Lucama:

- ***CDBG Infrastructure, Water Line \$165,000 (completed)***
- ***Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, \$24,700 (completed)***
- ***Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Phase III \$25,000***
- ***2017 DWSRF Water System Improvements Grant/Loan \$122,248 with \$366,742 Principal forgiveness***

Saratoga:

- ***CDBG-I, Speight School Road Sewer Extension and Improvements \$1,143,942***
- ***CDBG-I, Gardner's School Road/Daiselle Place/Pitt Road Sewer Improvements \$856,055***
- ***2016 DWSRF Hwy 222/Church Street Water Line Replacement \$217,848***
- ***Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, Phase III \$23,500 (completed)***
- ***Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, Phase IV \$46,358***

Scotland Neck:

- ***CDBG-I, Sewer Improvements \$1,568,280***
- ***CDBG-I, Water Improvements \$1,291,900***
- ***CDBG-Catalyst Grant, park improvements & housing rehab \$391,475 (completed)***
- ***Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, Phase I \$10,000 (completed)***
- ***Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, Phase II \$49,000***

Seaboard:

- ***CDBG-Infrastructure Water Treatment System \$671,071 (completed)***
- ***CDBG-Infrastructure NC305 Municipal Sewer Extension \$655,848***
- ***Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, Phase I \$177,000***
- ***2016 CDBG-Infrastructure Town Wide Sewer \$1,344,152***
- ***2017 DWSRF Water Distribution System Improvements \$1,654,492 Golden LEAF End Stage Lagoon \$200,000***

Seaboard/Northampton County:

- Department of Commerce CFC/West Fraser \$568,769

Sharpsburg:

- DWSRF, Water System Improvements Grant/Loan \$1,000,000 with \$500,000 Principal forgiveness
- 2017 DWSRF Water Distribution Improvements Grant/Loan \$1,499,018 with \$499,672 Principal forgiveness

Sims:

- Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, Phase I \$75,000

3. Organize and host grant and loan workshops and conduct other educational and training activities to provide local governments with information regarding grant and loan programs.

Grant and loan workshops as well as individual and group meetings were organized and held for member governments and allies at various times throughout the period. These ranged from multi-agency workshops containing multiple presentations held at the COG and elsewhere to small group meetings/consultations with individual municipalities and agencies focused on specific programs and projects. It also includes presentations by guest speakers to the UCPCOG Board.

Funding agencies presenting in the region included USDA-RD, NC DOC, NC Rural Center, NC DEQ, NC School of Government, and others. Member governments were also informed of and invited to similar events nearby the region including in Raleigh, Henderson, and elsewhere.

4. Develop and maintain both new and current partnerships with public and private entities that improve the ability acquire grants and loans to serve member local governments, their stakeholders, and the region.

PDS continues to partner with private contractors, engineering firms and our local communities on several types of infrastructure related grants/loans (listed in section 2 above). PDS also continues to partner with other Council of Governments to develop multi-regional funding opportunities. Examples include working the Mid East and Albemarle Commissions on Hurricane Matthew recovery, with Kerr-Tar COG on the Clean Fuels Advanced Transportation and the Roanoke River Basin 205(j) water quality projects, as well as Mid East Commission, Eastern Carolina Council and others on the NC Tomorrow Initiative.

Numerous new relationships were created by the PDS Director and PDS staff. Key relationships are in place and being maintained on behalf of the members and UCPCOG with all of the above mentioned entities as well as member government staff and elected officials. Numerous other public and private organization relationships are also in place for strategic partnership and leverage including area chambers of commerce and the region's economic development groups, area industries and large private businesses, universities and community colleges, non-profit environmental groups, community non-profits, etc.

5. Research and develop strategic and special projects utilizing new funding sources or unique grant opportunities to extend the department's activities into new areas of local and regional priority (i.e. water quality and quantity, air quality, open space and recreation, transportation, clean energy and efficiency, historic preservation, active and healthy living).

While the staff primarily utilized the more established funding sources, many unique activities occurred including:

- *A US EDA Hurricane Matthew Grant to aid those most impacted in North-Eastern NC. (PDS Director led creation of the 3 grants fund for the State).*
- *A 2017 Disaster Recovery Act Grant award to the Town of Enfield for the Raw Water Pump Station Electrical Upgrades.*
- *A US DOE Grant application titled, "Powering Energy Efficiency & Impacts Framework" seeking to address energy efficiency needs in underserved low income neighborhoods.*
- *A NC DEQ Land Easement Monitoring Contract for the larger eastern NC region.*
- *A NC DEQ CDBG-I application was converted to a NC DWSRF Grant/Loan for the Town of Sharpsburg. One of the first in the State.*

GOAL #3: Continue to support and provide traditional planning, community development, and land use services to member local governments individually and regionally.

ACTION PLANS:

1. Work with local governments and regional stakeholders to create and implement regional plans and initiatives that meet the needs and opportunities of the region as a whole for sub-regions.

UCPCOG's PDS staff engage in with members and allies on numerous regional projects. Highlights include:

- *Air Quality & Transportation: Continued to provide support and publicity for the NC Clean Energy Technology Center Clean Fuels Advanced Technology (CFAT) project to member local governments. Awaiting new grant sub-award for the 2017-18 year.*
- *Energy Efficiency: PDS was awarded a grant through the U.S. Department of Energy titled "Powering Energy Efficiency & Impacts Framework". This projects seeks to address the energy efficiency needs in underserved low-income neighborhoods throughout the region while promoting collaboration amongst the local, state, and federal agencies that provide assistance to these neighborhoods.*

- ***Hurricane Matthew Recovery: PDS led an effort to acquire EDA Grant funds to provide direct technical assistance to the most severely impacted local governments and their communities. This resulted in UCPCOG, ECC, and SEREDC receiving \$200,000 each to assist the Northeast, Central-east, and Southeast portions of eastern NC.***
- ***Water Quality: PDS has partnered with Kerr-Tar COG and NCDEQ DWR to host a regional educational workshop in the Roanoke River Basin under the Clean Water Act 205(j) section.***

2. Contract with member local governments for the preparation of plans and ordinances including, but not limited to, land use plans, subdivision ordinances, zoning ordinances, minimum housing codes, parks and recreation plans/reports, capital improvement plans, and annexation qualification reports.

PDS offers our members the ability to update various plans and ordinances so they can competitively apply for grants, manage growth and community needs, comply with state and federal regulations and obligations, and optimize tax revenues and growth opportunities. Highlights this year include:

- ***Red Oak: A contract to update the Town's Zoning Ordinance (ongoing);***
- ***Pinetops: A contract to conduct an Annexation Study (ongoing).***

3. Provide member local governments with temporary planning and/or ordinance administration services, including but not limited to zoning, subdivision, and minimum housing code administration, as well as ETJ annexation implementation and administration.

PDS offers and provides our member governments with temporary services that are often renewed on an annual basis. This past period included:

- ***Conway: Continuing under renewed retainer contract to assist the Town with Planning and Zoning Administration services***

4. Host workshops and seminars on subjects which may include, but not be limited to, Board of Adjustment and Planning Board training, solid waste management, floodplain management, stormwater management, meeting management, housing and economic development and project financing.

Board of Commissioners Retreats: Executed for the Town of Sharpsburg.

Planning and Zoning Board and Board of Adjustment Trainings: Executed individually for the Town of Roanoke Rapids and regionally for multiple towns via a workshop held at UCPCOG offices by the NC School of Government.

5. Contract with local governments for special projects.

GOAL #4: Continue to provide important demographic, geographic, technical, resource and other data and information to member local governments and their stakeholders.

ACTION PLANS:

1. Maintain and share current and past data and demographic information for each county and the region using US Census Bureau and other sources.

PDS has access to current population, socio-economic, employment and numerous other types of data and helps member governments and allies with data needs on a case by case basis. General statistics and data in the region is also updated with the CEDS rewrite and Annual CEDS Updates.

PDS continues to serve as the Regional Clearinghouse Coordination Center. The staff received and sends out State Clearinghouse requests for comments on projects to relevant geographic areas and stakeholders and returns comments to the State.

PDS served in the past as a State Data Center Affiliate but state funds utilize to support the effort has ceased and most information is now readily available on line.

2. Maintain a Geographic Information System (GIS) and applications to support local governments and allies with mapping and related needs.

PDS primarily provided GIS maps to local governments as part of developing grants for projects or fulfilling grant obligation deliverables. PDS staff has begun the process of collecting GIS data to create and house regional asset maps for recreation and water/sewer infrastructure.

Town of Halifax: PDS staff aided the Town in an effort to update the Town Zoning Map.

Roanoke Rapids: A GIS and Mapping Service contract was implemented to aid the City's mapping needs and new Zoning Map was created for the City.

3. Communicate grant, workshop, training, best practices, and other resource information through workshops, newsletters, email, web sites, and other tools and project work and/or by request.

Grant announcements, workshops, and other items are made through the COG's E-Newsletter. Additionally, staff sends e-mails of pertinent and timely information as appropriate to various groups like the UCPCOG Board, Small Town Mayors, Managers and Administrators, Economic Development Officials, Planning Directors, etc.

GOAL #5: Continue to communicate the services, roles and responsibilities of the Planning and Development Services Department.

ACTION PLANS:

1. Update, print, and distribute a departmental brochure explaining the services the department offers.

A updated PDS Marketing Brochure was created explaining the department mission, services, staffing, and other details and it is updated as appropriate.

2. Make presentations to member government boards, commissions, committees and to their stakeholders and allies on planning, community and economic development, grant/loan, GIS, and the other projects and services provided by the department.

PDS staff made presentations to member government boards and others over the course of the year. These primarily fall into 4 general categories: Educating officials on PDS and UCPCOG services; Introduction of new PDS staff; review of and/or action on potential or existing grants, projects, policies, or initiatives; providing technical expertise on an item or issue of concern to a Board or committee.

3. Upgrade, update, and maintain the COG website to feature and/or link PDS services and projects.

Only minor update were made to the PDS website during the year due to other priorities, staffing and funding levels. The Website is under formal evaluation for revision by the UCPCOG Program Directors.

4. Send grant/loan alerts with specified planning services solicitation memos.

PDS contributes to the UCPCOG e-Newsletter distributed to members and allies. The e-Newsletter is sent once or twice monthly and primarily contains information gathered by PDS, other staff, and the Executive Director.

5. Utilize surveys and other input/feedback tools to help communicate services while ensuring the department identifies and meets member local government and regional needs.

PDS continues to survey and interview our member local governments on an individual basis during meetings and visits and by phone regarding their current methods of enforcing their land use and other codes/ordinances, what plans/strategies are in place and their age.

6. Contribute news articles to COG newsletters and other publications and media sources about successful projects and grants.

Staff continues to contribute announcements and news items to the monthly E-Newsletter, semi-annual publication, and Annual Report. Media announcements are also made on an as needed basis for various events and public meetings. Examples in the period include both radio, television and newspaper articles on the Annual Sustainability Summits, announcements of funding workshops, and public notices for Brownfields Phase II Environmental assessments and as required for various grant applications and their projects.

GOAL #6: Continue to develop and/or make adjustments to the department that ensure its economic viability while meeting the needs of member local governments and the region through the fulfillment of the organization and department Missions.

ACTION PLANS:

1. Monitor the availability of, and apply for, grants/loans and other funds on behalf of local governments, their allies and stakeholders, and for the region as a whole that pay for project management, administrative, planning, development and other project implementation expenses incurred by staff.

All funding agencies, other COGs, foundations, and more are monitored. All PDS staff perform this function and relay opportunities to member governments and allies through the E-Newsletter, email, and individual contacts.

PDS prepared approximately twenty-one (26) grant applications for funding over the project period. Due to a lack of competitiveness determination during the processes, or complications and/or unexpected delays on some projects, not all applications were completed and submitted for funding.

The Executive Director continues to work with other COG/LRO Directors to put regional legislative and/or program (state funded) packages together to fund regional initiatives, such as “water resources” (water supply, conservation, and quality), broadband, air quality, and other regional issues.

2. Offer fee for service contracts to local governments and regional stakeholders that cover project development, grant/loan application and other personnel costs and associated expenses.

As the Federal EDD, UCPCOG has some limited federal funds provided by EDA through a recurring three-year Partnership Planning Grant to help seek EDA grant funding for economic development projects. Likewise, CDBG funds often allow grant writing services to be recovered as part of an administration contract should funds be awarded. However, PDS no longer receives state funds that can be utilized to assist members with grant writing services. As such, it is often necessary for the department to charge a fee for many grant writing services. A common example is for the NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grants. These contracts are traditionally done on an at cost basis.

During the period four such fee for service contracts were performed for members and allies.

3. Maintain and improve upon a database of local government and regional assets and needs, including items such as ordinances, plans, training, water and sewer services, infrastructure, land uses, and more.

PDS continues on an ongoing basis updating spreadsheets that show status of Land Use Ordinances, Infrastructure-Water/Sewer (Capital Improvement Plans, Asset Management Plans, etc.), and Environmental plans/documents (including Well-Head Protection and Water Loss Prevention) for each local government in our region.

4. Create and maintain professional relationships, networks, and resources that support the department, its Mission and this Program of Work.

PDS staff have hundreds of relationships across dozens of networks to ensure professional capacity and leadership including all the above mentioned federal and state agencies as well as various professional associations, trade groups, non-profits, and interest groups.

5. Reassign responsibilities within the department as necessary to meet the changing needs of local governments and the region that best utilize strengths of existing staff members and resources available.

Both the Executive Director and PDS Department Program Director continue to spread work assignments out to various staff members as their time and talents permit. Work is consistent with efforts to require staff to become proficient in several areas and work as a cohesive team. This promotes better product results, flexibility in performing project tasks, and greater ability to attend meetings for projects.

6. Offer ongoing appropriate professional and technical training for department personnel to ensure their capacity to meet high service delivery standards for member governments and the region.

During the period, PDS staff were offered and attended state and national conferences on relevant areas of expertise including Brownfields, CDBG-I, PARTF, NC DEQ, general grant/loan writing, sustainability, government planning, etc. Staff were also provided technical training in the areas of computer software (GIS, Word, Excel, and Outlook). Additionally, the UCPCOG supports the renewal of professional certifications by allowing training during work hours and paying for relevant certifications required to optimize professional performance, networks, and skills.

7. Recruit, interview, and hire qualified applicants to replace any vacated position(s) or meet new and/or increasing service needs, when necessary.

Two new personnel were hired; Planning Technical Assistant and a Community Development Manager. Over the period, a contractor was hired to administer our local foods grant award. Temporary staff services were also utilized at key intervals for general administrative support.