

THE CEDS PROCESS

The Original 2002 CEDS

In developing its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Meramec Region, MRPC strived for maximum public involvement. At the onset, staff and board developed a process that was as inclusive as possible for the MRPC board and local elected officials as well as the general public.

MRPC's Planning Committee, made up of 16 MRPC board members, doubled as the original Regional CEDS Committee. Its function was to provide guidance on the CEDS process, encourage local participation, review the CEDS as it was being drafted, provide general advice overall and to recommend the final document to the full MRPC board for approval.

As outlined in MRPC bylaws, board members serve on one of three standing committees: Operations, which addresses financial and personnel issues; External Relations, which deals with membership, boardsmanship and public relations/marketing activities; and Planning, which identifies regional needs and helps determine the commission's role in addressing those needs.

The CEDS process was a natural fit for the Planning Committee. Original Planning/CEDS Committee members were:

From Crawford County—Les Murdock and Willard Walls

From Dent County—Gary Brown

From Gasconade County—Charles Schlottach and Suzanne Welker

From Maries County—James Kleffner

From Osage County—Chris Dickneite

From Phelps County—James Morrison, John Petersen, Paul Smith and Kim Wilson

From Washington County—Arthur Brockschmidt and Roger Williams

At Large Members—Earl Brown, representing disabled; Dick Hudson, representing emergency planning; and Brad Frazier, representing labor.

Earl Brown chaired the original committee. Appendix 1 provides additional details on the Planning/CEDS Committee. Planning and Development Manager Connie Willman provided staff support for the committee and was responsible for the development of the original CEDS. She was assisted by Executive Director Richard Cavender, Assistant Director Bonnie Prigger and Secretaries Donna Hanger and Janet Metzger.

To gather input for the 2002 CEDS, two strategic planning meetings were held in each of the region's seven counties over a two-year period. Additionally, three strategic planning sessions were conducted for the city of St. James at its request and that information was also included in the CEDS. The number of invitees for the county meeting ranged from 110 in Osage County to 898 in Crawford County. The mailing lists included businesses, industries, banks, schools, economic/industrial developers, social clubs, religious

organizations, local governments, Chambers of Commerce and others. Press releases were also published in the newspapers, encouraging the general public to attend. Samples of the press releases can be found in Appendix 2.

The same process was used in all seven counties and the agenda for the first meeting included an overview of the CEDS and the process used, development of a vision statement, identification of strengths and needs and a prioritization of those needs. At the second meeting, the previous meeting was reviewed and participants then formed into focus groups to develop action plans for the top ranked needs. At the conclusion of the second meeting, the focus groups reported on their action plans. Following the meetings in a given county, MRPC prepared a draft strategic plan that contained all the information gathered in the two meetings. These reports are located in Appendix 3. Counties were encouraged to continue the planning process to finalize the strategies and then begin addressing the action plans.

During this time, the CEDS committee was kept up-to-date on the meetings, and individual members assisted in encouraging local participation.

After all the county meetings were completed, a list of regional needs was compiled—grouped by topic—and is shown on the matrix located in Appendix 4. The matrix of needs was used to develop the Regional Action Plan, located in Chapter 3.

A Regional CEDS Meeting was held on February 12, 2002. All persons who participated in the county meetings were invited to this meeting. The participants reviewed the matrix of needs and the draft Regional Action Plan and offered their input on additional ways to address issues from a regional perspective.

To ensure that the CEDS was an accurate representation of regional needs and that the proposed actions were feasible, the initial draft of the CEDS document was presented to the CEDS committee for review at its March 14, 2002 meeting. The CEDS committee provided the draft to the full MRPC board that same evening so members could thoroughly review the document before adoption. MRPC's board officially approved the CEDS on April 11, 2002. County Resolutions supporting the CEDS may be found in Appendix 5. The MRPC Executive Director has been responsible for reporting on the progress of the Regional Action Plan and its results. The Planning Committee has reviewed the CEDS annually, and staff reported results to the Economic Development Administration.

The 2007 Update

On August 22, 2005, Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt signed Executive Order 05-21, amended the boundaries of the Meramec Regional Planning Commission to include Pulaski County. Pulaski County petitioned MRPC for inclusion in the region after withdrawing membership in a neighboring regional planning commission. The county, along with the cities of St. Robert, Waynesville and Dixon, officially joined MRPC in September 2005. The city of Crocker joined in April 2006.

In order to offer Pulaski County the same services as other member governments, staff felt it necessary to gather data about the county and determine a prioritized list of needs. This supplement to the 2002 Meramec Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy provides such data, along with a list of needs identified by local elected officials in Pulaski County. Additionally, each county provided an updated list of needs for the 2007 revision.

The Planning Committee members providing oversight for the 2007 CEDS update include:

- From Crawford County—Kathy McCann, Jim Schatz, Les Murdock and Roger West
- From Gasconade County—Ron Jost
- From Maries County—Ray Schwartze
- From Osage County—Chris Dickneite
- From Phelps County—Dennis Wilson and John Petersen
- From Pulaski County—Darrell French, James Morgan and Dennis Thornsberry
- From Washington County—T.R. Dudley, Tina Patterson and Bob Vinyard
- At Large Members—Franky Todd, representing aging; and Dawn Warren, representing emergency management.

Evaluation

The Regional Action Plan will be used to establish MRPC's scope of work for each year. The milestones for each year will be used to guide the activities of MRPC during that year. This list will be submitted to EDA in the annual planning grant. The Scope of Work will be carefully reviewed and a list of items that have been completed will be compiled. An additional list of any items that were not accomplished by the deadlines will be compiled, along with explanations as to why these milestones were not fully accomplished.

The CEDS will be reviewed and revised annually by the MRPC Planning Committee and the MRPC Board. The results of this review process will be submitted to the Economic Development Administration in June of each year.

The strategy will be rewritten every five years, revising any demographic and socio-economic or other data that may have changed.

Performance Measures

The Regional Action Plan identifies the milestones for each major regional goal with a target date for each. MRPC staff will continue to compose the annual scope of work, using the list of milestones for any given year. The MRPC Planning Committee will review the performance progress every six months to determine if target completion will be met. The overall performance measure will be a 60 percent completion rate of all scope of work activities. This percentage is based upon the fact that there is often little

control over project completion due to lack of funding availability and/or local decisions to abort a project. Therefore, it is feasible that about 60 percent of the proposed projects will be completed.