

**DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
REGIONAL COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FORUM
MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: September 30, 2009**

The first meeting of DVRPC's Regional Community and Economic Development Forum (RCEDF) was held on September 30, 2009, from 10 AM to 12 PM. The Regional Community and Economic Development Forum will meet on a quarterly basis to address current issues in land use, housing, economic development, and transportation in the Greater Philadelphia region. The Regional Community and Economic Development Forum represents a merger of the Land Use and Housing Committee (LUHC) and the Land Use, Transportation, and Economic Development (LUTED) committee.

Louis Cappelli, Jr., Esq., Camden County Freeholder Director, DVRPC Board Chair, and Co-Chair of the RCEDF, opened the meeting and welcomed participants. Barry Seymour, Executive Director, DVRPC, provided an overview of the new RCEDF group and its purpose.

The first presentation was by Willie Taylor, Regional Director, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). Mr. Taylor provided an overview of EDA programs and priorities, the Philadelphia Regional Office structure and staffing, FY 2009 and supplemental program funding, an overview of the grants process, eligibility criteria, and the role of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). He introduced Alma Plummer, formerly of the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, as the new point person for southeastern Pennsylvania. Mr. Taylor indicated that his office is looking at the following criteria when evaluating grants: regional impact, a collaborative approach, tangible results, innovative concepts, and continuity in business operations ("recession proof"). EDA investment opportunities target projects that are strategic, demonstrate economic diversity and longevity, and address a critical need. Mr. Taylor announced that the CEDS co-authored by DVRPC, Select Greater Philadelphia, and the Ben Franklin Technology Partners is officially approved. To be eligible for EDA funding, projects must be included in the CEDS. Projects that have already been submitted for EDA funding should be re-submitted now that the CEDS is approved to ensure compliance with the CEDS requirement.

Mary Bell, Manager of Demographic and Economic Analysis at DVRPC presented the region's CEDS. Ms. Bell discussed how the CEDS co-authors worked collaboratively with a public/private consortium of economic development organizations and agencies to prepare the CEDS. The CEDS was created to satisfy EDA requirements. Ms. Bell identified the following roles for the CEDS:

- Analyze the region's economy and identify regional challenges and opportunities
- Integrate economic development with land use and transportation planning
- Integrate human and physical capital planning
- Establish regional economic development goals and objectives
- Leverage EDA funding for regional goals

Now that the EDA has approved the CEDS, the final version will be published in both printed form and available on the DVRPC website. Ms. Bell discussed how the CEDS includes a listing of key regional projects identified by the region's planning and economic development officials.

She indicated that the next steps would be to distribute the report, define a process for periodically amending the list of key regional projects, submitting annual CEDS performance reports, and updating the CEDS at least once every five years.

Mr. Cappelli next discussed the Tri-County Economic Development Summit, which is a joint program of Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester counties. The Summit promotes growth and economic development across more than 100 municipalities in South Jersey. Some of the major initiatives achieved by the group include shared services, such as emergency training, medical examiners office, and establishing a regional youth center. In addition, the group has worked cooperatively to create job opportunities through coordinated workforce investment boards and direct growth to the areas that can best support development through joint marketing and site selection referral.

Laurie Actman, Mayor's Liaison, Metropolitan Caucus, Mayor's Office, City of Philadelphia provided the next presentation. The Metropolitan Caucus is a newly-convened group of elected leaders from Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties. The Caucus is pursuing a regional energy strategy that could leverage federal stimulus dollars for economic development, energy management and efficiency, and green jobs to foster the growth of sustainability projects in the Greater Philadelphia region. Ms. Actman noted that the group's goal is to retrofit not just buildings but the regional economy; the group will use a strategy of leveraging new funding with existing assets including the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants program, city and county climate action and sustainability plans, and regional and state incentives.

In the final presentation, Mr. Seymour addressed plans for DVRPC to participate in the Pennsylvania Local Development Districts organization. The southeastern Pennsylvania area is not covered as a Local Development District (LDD). DVRPC does not seek to become a LDD, but is considering a role in which it would partner with the state's other LDDs to act on shared interests.

Following Mr. Seymour's presentation, attendees provided updates of their organizations activities and the meeting was adjourned.