



Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
2017-2022
Annual Update FFY 2020



The following is submitted on behalf of the Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments to the Economic Development Administration (EDA), a federal agency located within the United States Department of Commerce. The contents of this document have been made in accordance with 13 C.F.R. § 303.7



KERR-TAR REGION

- Town of Bunn
- Town of Franklinton
- Town of Louisburg
- Town of Youngsville

Granville County

- Town of Butner
- City of Creedmoor
- City of Oxford
- Town of Stem
- Town of Stovall

- City of Roxboro

Vance County

- City of Henderson
- Town of Kittrell
- Town of Middleburg

Warren County

- Town of Macon
- Town of Norlina
- Town of Warrenton

Adopted by the Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments’ Board of Directors in August 2017, this report is intended to provide the Board with information on the Goals and Strategies identified in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan. The CEDS is a regional economic development plan required by the Economic Development Administration for Economic Development Districts. This report outlines the progress the Council of Governments has made in furtherance of the CEDS from October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020.

GOAL 1: Build on the Region’s Competitive Advantages and Leverage the Marketplace

- Strategy: Develop and implement an outreach campaign to attract targeted manufacturing businesses to the region with an emphasis on the Triangle North Industrial Parks and the Person County Mega Site.

	Achieved	Ongoing	Notes
Interview site location consultants for best practices on attracting new businesses to the region.	Yes		Report conducted by Mr. Ivan Baker, IEDC Disaster Recovery Volunteer Program entitled: <i>Observation Report for Maximizing Industrial Park Marketing</i> (2020).
Develop marketing materials based on research and feedback.		Yes	Economic Development Directors have requested marketing material(s) on Triangle North sites.

- Strategy: Cultivate Economic Entrepreneurship through Entrepreneurial Activity.

	Achieved	Ongoing	Notes
Expand access to capital by increasing outreach for the COG’s Revolving Loan Fund and Micro-Enterprise Fund.		Yes	Routinely market the Council of Governments’ two existing loan programs.
Foster greater collaboration through Chambers of Commerce, small businesses, Economic Development Commissions, and Small Business Technology Centers.	Yes		In February 2020, hosted an Economic Development Summit - Focus 20/20 in Henderson.
Connect entrepreneurship trainings in Community Colleges with county and regional resources to develop a one-stop shop/business incubators for entrepreneurs.	Yes		A session at the Economic Development Summit was focused on entrepreneurship, facilitated by the Warren County EDC Director featuring the President& CEO of NC IDEA.

GOAL 2: Establish and Maintain a Robust Regional Infrastructure

- Strategy: Improve, expand, and promote transportation access for the region.

	Achieved	Ongoing	Notes
Facilitate the Rural Planning Organization and Mobility Manager.	Yes		Continue to provide access to transportation for medical purposes to county residents.
Submit transportation projects across various modes that rank high in the NCDOT's future Prioritization funding process to maximize community and economic development.	Yes		In July 2020, the KTRPO submitted a total of 21 projects across various transportation modes to the NCDOT for evaluation and scoring.
Implement bicycle projects identified in the NCDOT approved NC Lakes District Regional Bike Routes Plan.		Yes	The RPO is continuously working with East Coast Greenways staff on submitting a competitive bicycle grant for consideration by US DOT. The proposed route would be located throughout portions of Granville County.

- Strategy: Enhance Broadband Infrastructure and Connectivity Options.

	Achieved	Ongoing	Notes
Develop and implement a Demand Aggregation Study for residents, educational institutions, and businesses throughout the region.		Yes	Through an RFP process for Broadband released in 2018, surveys were conducted among residential and commercial residents within three counties in the Kerr-Tar region.
Conduct and compile a Broadband Asset Inventory throughout the region.	Yes		Through an RFP process for Broadband released in 2018, a listing of Broadband Asset Inventory was conducted within three counties in the Kerr-Tar region.
Educate local government officials and managers on relevant topics regarding Broadband such as: <i>legal and regulatory matters, new neutrality, policies, and administrative</i>	Yes		Next steps and strategies for local governments were outlined in the RFP process.

<i>procedures for local governments, and types of public-private partnership models.</i>			
Develop a RFP process to solicit Broadband Service Providers for unserved and underserved areas of the region.	Yes		Initially released in 2018, with follow-up meetings regarding deployment be scheduled in 2020.

- Establish Water Resources Management and regional collaboration to ensure long-term water supply and quantity.

	Achieved	Ongoing	Notes
Facilitate in the development of Watershed Plans and Watershed Restoration Plans.		Yes	In March 2020, intended to host a training featuring NCDEQ, Division of Water Infrastructure staff on municipal water quality training as it relates to Water & Watershed Planning. <i>Note: Training was cancelled due to COVID-19.</i>
Provide Technical Assistance for Water Resource Planning		Yes	Once training with NCDEQ is completed, the COG plans to assist municipalities further with Water Resource Planning.

Note: The Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments in conjunction with Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments will be hosting a **Resiliency Workshop** in November 2019 in Wilson. This workshop will be facilitated by staff with the NC Department of Environmental Quality. The purpose of the workshop is to convene governmental, private, and non-profit partners with experts to help shape priorities of the State’s Climate Risk Assessment and Resiliency Plan. This workshop will help the Department share information about impacts and solutions as well as learn from communities about their greatest resiliency challenges in order to guide future state resiliency planning and investments. The workshop will help the Department share information about impacts and solutions from communities about their greatest resilience challenges in order to guide future state resiliency planning and investments.

GOAL 3: Create Revitalized, Healthy, and Resilient Communities*

- Raise awareness of Aging in Place for communities.

	Achieved	Ongoing	Notes
Create County Aging Plans and Regional Aging Plans to identify current activities and programs supporting “aging in place.”	Yes		In June 2020, the AAA presented to the Board of Directors for approved a 2020-2024 Aging Plan.

- Establish a local food network in the region.

	Achieved	Ongoing	Notes
Create an inventory of local farmers and their products and market opportunities for capacity building to those farmers.	Yes		The Council of Governments is continuously promoting the VisitNC Farms mobile app. To date, the region has 83 total assets.
Invest in model programs that encourage growers and link them to local Farmers' Markets.	Yes		The Council of Governments' Board approved a Regional Food Policy for the Kerr-Tar region in September 2020. This Food Policy was drafted after receiving feedback from Community Input Meetings in all five counties held during November 2019.
Support agribusiness through planning and convening training opportunities.	Yes		The Council of Governments continuously sends out webinar notices to all Visit NC Farms assets received from the NC Dept. of Agriculture and Agriculture Extension Offices on a variety of topics.

- Foster and support future civic and community leaders.

	Achieved	Ongoing	Notes
Work with community organizations to determine outreach efforts for under-represented populations as community leaders.	Yes		In August 2020, the Council of Governments through the Region K CAC, applied for a Duke Energy Foundation State Strategic Impact Grant focused of social justice and racial equity. It is the intent to use the funds received to offer trainings and workshop among elected officials and citizen advisory boards/councils. In October, we received notification our grant application was selected.
Encourage local governments to strive for diversity on local appointed boards.	Yes		In August 2020, the Council of Governments through the Region K CAC, applied for a Duke Energy Foundation State Strategic Impact Grant focused of social justice and racial equity. It is the intent to use the funds received to offer trainings and workshop among elected officials and citizen advisory boards/councils. In October, we received notification our grant application was selected.

***COVID-19 Response:** Our region's local governments applied for assistance through the submission of County Plans to the NC Pandemic Recovery Office. The County Plans submitted included funding for medical, public health, and economic support expenses, and additional funds for the County's municipalities.

GOAL 4: Develop Talented and Innovative People

- Strategy: Align workforce initiatives with training and education opportunities to meet business and industry needs.

	Achieved	Ongoing	Notes
Promote our region's existing Certified Career Pathways in Advanced Manufacturing, Health and Life Sciences, and Information Technology.		Yes	The existing Career Pathways has allowed our region to identify the current and future workforce needs within the Kerr-Tar region. Workgroups and discussions are used to formulate career advising and training activities to better prepare job seekers in the area.
Identify new Pathways as needed to increase future opportunities for in-demand careers.		Yes	Through workgroups and discussions, Career Pathways are introduced, evaluated and re-evaluated.
Increase collaboration with K-12, community colleges, economic development organizations, businesses and industries to better prepare youth, unemployed and underemployed for in demand jobs.		Yes	The Kerr-Tar WDB and local NC Works Career Ctrs., in collaboration with Granville County Public Schools has a Parent University Program. The program is designed to help promote career awareness and visibility for local employers to parents and students.
Organize local teams consisting of: educators, workforce development, economic development, and industry partners to property match work training to existing employers in the region.			Kerr-Tar NC Works Career Ctrs. host weekly Talent Connect information sessions designed to assist job seekers with career awareness and job search assistance. These sessions include discussions on local companies with immediate hiring needs and the application process.

Opportunity Zones:

Through the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-97), Qualified Opportunity Zones (QOZ's) were introduced to potential investors in the Internal Revenue Code. The five county region has identified QOZ's within each county. While to region has tried to market its QOZ's to potential investors, one county in the Kerr-Tar region intents to submit for consideration a project located within the boundaries of a QOZ for an EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance Program Grant.

Other Noteworthy Accomplishments:

Effective July 31, 2020, the City of Henderson was designated a *Main Street Community* by the North Carolina Main Street & Rural Planning Center. This special designation gives the City much needed recognition along with tools and resources needed to revitalize its downtown. This designation will provide Henderson access to technical assistance and place the City in a position to apply for additional grants through the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

Throughout FY 2020, the EDD through both electronic and print promoted the 2020 Census and NC MOVES 2050. The Census ended on October 15, 2020. The NC MOVES Committee received resident feedback via surveys on the future of transportation in North Carolina, with a final plan scheduled to be approved and adopted by the NC Department of Transportation in December 2020.

Looking Ahead:

Throughout FFY's 2021-2022, the EDD plans to complete the following:

- Conducting business roundtable discussions with regional EDC Directors
- Assess and study existing industries, trends, and target select businesses
- Establish Business Retention & Expansion Committees within each County
- Implement and monitor a regional Business Retention and Expansion program
- Conduct a Business Services Amenities & Needs Assessment in each County
- Develop an Entrepreneur Mentorship Program
- Create a vacant land and building inventory database
- Increase the number of EDPNC Certified Sites in the region
- Assist civic organizations and other community groups in the development of downtown events and festivals
- Provide Technical Assistance for the establishment of Dementia-friendly Communities
- Implement and provide trainings for evidence-based health promotion programs for area seniors and retirees
- Assist Veterans in obtaining employment
- Promote and increase awareness of STEAM (*science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics*) disciplines

**This list of priorities may be altered at the discretion of the Board to complete additional initiatives related to regional economic development.*