

September 11, 2017

Fresno County Board of Supervisors
2281 Tulare Street, Room 301
Fresno, CA 93721

Re: Agenda Item #12 (September 12, 2017): Approve formation of County of Fresno Economic Development Action Team (EDAT) Standing Committee with Structure, Objectives and Composition.

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors:

Let's remind ourselves of the origin of the County's Economic Development Element.

When the General Plan was last updated in 2000, *"Fresno County stipulated in its General Plan RFP that the consultant team begin the process by preparing an Economic Development Strategy [CEDS] to guide the drafting of the revised General Plan."* (Fresno County 2000 Economic Development Strategy, p 11.)

As a result, the development of the 2000 CEDS preceded the development of the 2000 Economic Development Element. And more to the point, nearly all of the policies in the 2000 Economic Development Element were taken directly from the 2000 CEDS. In other words, the economic strategies from the CEDS became the economic policies for the Economic Development Element.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the description of the form and purpose of the Economic Development Action Team (**EDAT**) is found not in the 2000 General Plan but in the original 2000 CEDS.

According to the County's 2000 CEDS, membership on the EDAT is to include the Agricultural Commission, city representatives and regional organizations engaged in various facets of economic development in the county – such as business organizations, educational organizations and organizations providing support services for the unemployed.

And, according to the 2000 CEDS, the EDAT is charged with these four tasks:

- Reviewing the economic foundations identified in the 2000 CEDS and developing specific initiatives to address the requirements of the targeted industries through redirection and/or increase in the resources currently available to participating institutions.
- Creating initiatives in land use, infrastructure, quality of life, labor force preparedness, capital availability and access to technology necessary to provide the economic foundations for job growth.
- Ensuring that the benefits of growth are gained by local workers through workforce development activities.
- Overseeing the process for evaluating indicators to determine levels of achievement.

Citations from the 2000 CEDS that describe the form and purpose of the EDAT are presented in Exhibit 1 below.

It is absolutely clear that the standing committee proposed by the County is nothing like the EDAT required by the General Plan. **Therefore, I ask that the County choose a name other than "EDAT" for the standing committee.** Otherwise, there will be enduring confusion and a false impression that the County is complying with the requirements of the General Plan as written in the program and policy shown below.

GP Program ED-A.B *The County shall create, support, and staff an Action Team to coordinate countywide economic development.*

GP Policy ED-A.3 *The County shall support and staff an Economic Development Action Team composed of County departments, including the Agricultural Commissioner, city representatives, and regional organizations engaged in the various facets of economic development in the county.*

In addition to requesting that the County choose a name other than EDAT for the standing committee, I would like staff and the Board to provide the following information to the public at the hearing scheduled for September 12, 2017.

Clarify whether the committee to be a pilot project. If it is to be a pilot project, what recordkeeping will be set up to record the activities of the committee so that at the end of one year, the County can evaluate the success of the pilot project?

Since more than 30 individuals may participate on the committee (4 from the County of Fresno, 3 from the City of Fresno, 28 from the County's 14 cities, and additional city representatives that may be impacted by a particular issue or project the committee is discussing), and since a purpose of the committee is to assist in the review of the Economic Development Element (for possible revision, I assume) would it not be proper to publicize the meetings of the committee and to allow members of the public to observe the proceedings?

Since one of the purposes of the committee is to provide direction to County staff regarding economic development projects in the unincorporated areas of Fresno County, explain why has the County has chosen to include on the committee members of the various city governments no representatives from the County's 10 unincorporated communities?

And if this committee is really an EDAT, explain why the County is making no attempt to include individuals on the committee as per the requirements of General Plan Policy ED-A.3 (printed above) and as per the explanation provided in the 2000 CEDS (See Exhibit 1).

Sincerely,



Radley Reep
radleyreep@netzero.com
(559) 326-6227

Exhibit 1

Citations from the 2000 CEDS that describe the form and purpose of the EDAT

2000 CEDS, p 2

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

The intent of the Economic Development Strategy is to change the course of business development in the county, even while building on many of the county's existing economic strengths. The main emphasis of the strategy is to forge a new role for the County, to provide regional leadership in economic development and coordination of economic development resources. While the State Trade and Commerce Agency has designated the Fresno Economic Development Corporation (EDC) as the lead agency for business marketing, there are many agencies and organizations involved with economic development in Fresno County. Yet the resources available are very limited in relation to the difficulty of reducing long term unemployment. The strategy calls for the County to allocate additional staff resources to economic development and to organize a countywide Economic Development Action Team, composed of a wide range of implementation partners. The Action Team would be charged with the responsibility of creating the initiatives necessary to provide the economic foundations for job growth and to ensure that the benefits of growth are gained by local workers through workforce development activities.

2000 CEDS, p 37

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK: Countywide Action Team

The process for realignment of program resources to match the requirements of the businesses targeted for attraction, expansion and new enterprise development by the economic development strategy will be conducted by an Action Team appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Action Team will be made up of the organizations that are currently responsible for the allocation of resources critical for meeting the requirements of the businesses targeted for business development. The Action Team will review all economic foundations identified in the economic strategy and develop specific initiatives to address the requirements of the targeted industries through redirection and/ or increase in the resources currently available to participating institutions.

2000 CEDS, p 39

Implementation Partners

Implementation of the Economic Development Strategy recommended for Fresno County will require the participation of organizations in the county that have resources essential to achieving its goals and objectives. These organizations will serve on an Action Team appointed by the Board of Supervisors. Their responsibility will be to develop supporting initiatives in land use, infrastructure, quality of life, labor force preparedness, capital availability and access to technology.

2000 CEDS, pp 40, 41 **Business Organizations**

It is essential that business organizations play a major role in the preparation of initiatives that address the requirements of businesses located, or interested in locating, in Fresno County. Representatives of the business community are the most knowledgeable about the impediments of businesses that reduce their competitive advantage and can bring these insights to the deliberations of the Action Team. They can also network with other members of the business community to build support for the initiatives once they are developed. The following are examples of the type of business groups that should be included on the Action Team: the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation; the Fresno Business Council; the Fresno Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce; the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; the Fresno County Farm Bureau; the Building Industry Association of the San Joaquin Valley; the 1-5 Business Development Corridor; Five Cities Consortium.

2000 CEDS, pp 42, 43 **Education & Training Organizations**

The number one requirement of businesses considering expansion or location in Fresno County is the availability of a quality labor force. Low cost, while sometimes important, is being replaced by concerns about the ability of the labor force to be productive. Both educational and training organizations must be a part of the Action Team so that appropriate initiatives can be developed to insure that the Fresno County labor force is job ready when employment opportunities become available. The following are some of the key educational and training organizations that should be a part of the Action Team: the Business Center (CSU Fresno); the Training Institute (Fresno City College); West Hills College; Fresno County Superintendent of Education; Fresno County Workforce Development Board; Fresno Works.

2000 CEDS, pp 43, 44 **Support Services**

A full range of support services to be successful must complement the education and training organizations described above. The availability of support services for individuals and families seeking to improve their ability to gain and hold jobs requires that their individual needs be met by organizations experienced in the provision of those services. To complement the education and training initiatives developed by the Action Team there must be discussion of the needs of individuals and families and initiatives developed to meet their requirements. The following organizations illustrate the type that must be included on the Action Team: the Fresno County New United Way; the Fresno County Human Services System; the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission.

2000 CEDS, p 56 **Review and Evaluation: Process**

Process benchmarks would be milestones that you expect to reach on an annual basis for each business development initiative. Indicators would be selected for each initiative and monitored for level of achievement. For example, the number of contacts made with prospective businesses might be selected as a process indicator for evaluating the accomplishments of the Economic Development Strategy on an annual basis. This evaluation would be used to make management decisions regarding this initiative on an on-going basis. The Economic Development Action Team will conduct the process evaluation.