



GOLDEN TRIANGLE
Planning and Development District, Inc.

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Robert E. Boykin
President

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Rupert L. "Rudy" Johnson
Executive Director

January 8, 2021

Ms. Priscilla Kittles
U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration
Atlanta Regional Office
401 West Peachtree Street, N.W., Suite 1820
Atlanta, Georgia 30308-3510

Dear Ms. Kittles:

The Golden Triangle Planning and Development District has completed the CEDS Annual Update for 2020. This update was presented to the GTPDD Board of Directors on December 17, 2020 and was approved by a resolution. This update and resolution can be found on the Golden Triangle Planning and Development District website at www.gtpdd.com/publications.

Thank you for your continued support through the EDA Planning Partnership Grant Program.

Sincerely,

Rupert L. "Rudy" Johnson
Executive Director

RESOLUTION
Of
The Golden Triangle Planning and Development District, Inc.
Board of Directors
Approving the 2020 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Annual Update
For Submission to the Economic Development Administration

WHEREAS, the Golden Triangle Planning and Development District has been designated an Economic Development District by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, and

WHEREAS, the Golden Triangle Planning and Development District, Inc. has developed a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) for the years 2018-2021 in order to remain eligible for funding programs under the Economic Development Administration (EDA), and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Golden Triangle Planning and Development District has been updated for the year, 2020;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Golden Triangle Planning and Development District Board of Directors, after reviewing the 2020 CEDs ANNUAL UPDATE document, hereby approves the report and authorizes its submittal to the Economic Development Administration.

SO ORDERED THIS the 17th day of December 2020, by the Golden Triangle Planning and Development District Board of Directors in a regularly scheduled meeting.



Robert E. Boykin, President





Jimmie Oliver, Sec. /Treasurer

CEDS ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT

Date: December 17, 2020

Grant Recipient: Golden Triangle Planning and Development District, Inc.

Grant Number: ED18ATL3020018

Report Number: Annual Update

Grant Report Period: 1/1/2020 – 12/31/2020

Recipient Contact: George Crawford

Project Director: Rudy Johnson

The Golden Triangle Planning and Development District, Inc. (GTPDD) was organized under the Appalachian Development Act of 1965 and began operation on July 1, 1970. The GTPDD was formed for the purpose of improving and enlarging economic development and civic improvements in Choctaw, Clay, Lowndes, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Webster and Winston counties in northeast Mississippi. The GTPDD has also been designated an official Economic Development District (EDD) under the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. As a part of the contract obligations, the GTPDD provides an annual update to EDA concerning the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This year there are no changes to the technical components of the CEDS as a part of the yearly update. The following is presented as an overview of information as related to the implementation of the CEDS for the Golden Triangle Planning and Development District, Inc. from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020.

This year, the economic health and social implications of a global pandemic have exacerbated the challenges communities face. The GTPDD, Inc. received CARES ACT Recovery Assistance funding through the Economic Development Administration and plans to respond to the economic injury of the corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic and set a plan of preparedness in place for future occurrences and economic resilience. Specific areas of focus are as follows:

- Short-term and long-term economic development planning and coordination to include a focus on pandemic recovery and/or resiliency based on the existing and anticipated COVID-19 impact, general needs and capacities of the Golden Triangle's seven-county region.
- Technical assistance and capacity building for member organizations and local businesses impacted by corona virus.
- Organizational capacity support for corona virus response. This will include the acquisition of equipment to facilitate safe "working from a distance" to protect PDD staff and the population being served.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has swept the nation, causing devastating economic injury, the counties, municipalities and businesses of the Golden Triangle area have not been spared. Major

industrial leaders have announced plant closings, governmental entities have furloughed or permanently laid off employees and many rural businesses have closed entirely. A slow economic recovery is certain. From October 2019 to September 2020, the labor force in the GTPDD only decreased from 75,590 to 75,200 but the unemployment rate went up from 5.6 to 7.5%. This represents an increase in the number of unemployed individuals of 5,660 in September 2020 from 4240 in October 2019. Mississippi's unemployment rate only increased from 5.1 to 7.0% during this same period.

The devastation from the corona virus pandemic is being felt by individuals throughout the region. During these troubling times of uncharted territory, some businesses are finding resiliency and innovative ways to adjust and stay in business, however some may never come back fully and many will close permanently or find a way to do with fewer employees. The state of Mississippi, through the network of the ten planning and development districts, has provided continuous support by providing funding mechanisms and programs to solve problems that need attention. With many years of experience, the Golden Triangle planning and Development District staff, is prepared to be responsive to economic development needs of the region's shareholders to help them survive. The GTPDD is prepared to provide technical assistance in the form of grant applications, revolving loan funds (RLF) assistance and other information that will help municipalities, counties and businesses to recover from this overwhelmingly destructive pandemic. The goal for these trying times is to help grow a strong and healthy economy, essential to fiscal recovery and survival and maintain a lasting resilience that will support new economic development and growth.

The following list represents significant economic development projects that the staff of the GTPDD has worked to develop in cooperation with local cities and counties that should help for the recovery from the pandemic, once they have been completed:

- (1) Choctaw County Industrial Building Roof Replacement;
- (2) Clay County West Church Hill Road Improvements (Industrial Access Road);
- (3) Clay County Prairie Belt Power Site Sewer Improvements;
- (4) East Mississippi Power Initiative (Workforce Training);
- (5) Eupora West Industrial Park Water and Sewer Improvements;
- (6) Louisville East Lagoon Wastewater Pump Station;
- (7) Louisville Rail Park Development;
- (8) Lowndes County Rail Access Improvements (Golden Triangle Industrial Park);
- (9) Lowndes County Charleigh D. Ford Access Road Improvements (GT Ind. Park);
- (10) Starkville-Oktibbeha County Industrial Park Infrastructure Improvements.

Upon receipt of an EPA Brownfield Coalition grant, Golden Triangle Planning and Development District has been able to complete Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments in the counties of Clay, Lowndes, Noxubee, Oktibbeha and Webster Counties.