

TOP OF ALABAMA REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



2020 ANNUAL UPDATE

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



5075 Research Drive NW, Huntsville, AL 35805

www.tarcog.us

ABOUT TARCOG

Established by a local initiative in 1968, the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG) aims to identify and address the common regional issues, opportunities, and challenges of Northeast Alabama. TARCOG serves a five-county region which includes DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, and Marshall counties and the local municipalities and residents therein. As Sub-State Planning District Twelve, TARCOG serves as the region's U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) designated Economic Development District, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) designated Local Development District (LDD), the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) designated Rural Planning Organization (RPO) and the State of Alabama designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA). TARCOG serves the Northeast Alabama region by obtaining funding for local government assistance, coordinating local governments' responses to regional issues, and providing a wide range of technical community and economic development services to the region's governments and residents. This document was prepared and designed by the TARCOG Department of Economic Development and Planning with the guidance and support of the TARCOG CEDS Advisory Committee.

2020 TARCOG Economic Development & Planning Department

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INTRODUCTION

This document serves as the 2020 Annual Update for the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments' Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The current five-year CEDS was adopted in 2017 and provides a strategic vision for the five-county TARCOG region's economic development efforts for 2018 – 2022. This document includes a brief, but comprehensive, examination of the work currently underway implementing the goals and objectives identified in the five-year plan.

The 5-year (2018-2022) TARCOG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was the result of a broad regional economic development planning process that assessed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing our regional economy. As a result of that assessment, goals and strategies were identified to address our region's weaknesses and leverage our strengths as we work collectively towards furthering the economic prosperity of the Northeast Alabama region.

The annual update to the CEDS provides an opportunity to examine the work underway towards implementing identified strategies and accomplishing stated goals. This update allows us a brief "check-in" on the progress made towards the implementation of the TARCOG CEDS action plan in FY 2020. All other sections of the 5-year CEDS, not specifically included or referred to in this annual update, still stand. The 5-year CEDS continues to be a guiding vision and foundational reference for economic development activities undertaken by the TARCOG EDD's five counties and 46 municipalities as well as Northeast Alabama's workforce developers, businesses and industries, institutions of higher education, and numerous other economic development stakeholders.

CEDS Annual Update Process

The development and implementation of the CEDS is an ongoing process. The process used in the preparation of the annual update to TARCOG EDD's 5-year CEDS is typical of a planning process used for most types of comprehensive or strategic planning. The process is aligned with the guidelines published by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). As TARCOG's Board of Directors also serves as the EDD's CEDS Advisory Committee, any updates to economic development activities in the region were addressed at each monthly Board Meeting throughout FY 2020. In addition, other key regional stakeholders provided updates to implementation efforts underway to TARCOG board members and staff periodically throughout the fiscal year. Additionally, other stakeholders have been surveyed throughout the year in order to ensure a comprehensive discussion of CEDS activities currently underway in the TARCOG region.

Community and Private Sector Participation

The TARCOG Board of Directors & CEDS Strategy Committee consists of thirty members representing all five counties within the District. The members represent a wide range of community interests including local governments, area colleges, chambers of commerce, private sector businesses and industries, and engaged citizens. The Board was actively involved in CEDS implementation and provided relevant updates and project information throughout FY 2020.

For the preparation of the 5-year CEDS, a special ad hoc advisory group was assembled to obtain additional insight into the EDD's current economic development landscape. This CEDS Advisory Group included persons from the fields of agriculture, commerce, education and workforce development, local government, industrial development, science and technology, transportation, and communications, and met regularly through the summer of 2017. Those serving on the advisory group remained actively engaged in CEDS implementation efforts throughout FY 2020 and frequently interacted with TARCOG staff and board members to provide updates or insight into relevant implementation projects.

Organizing and Staffing for Economic Development

TARCOG economic development and planning staff continues to provide leadership for the preparation of the region's annual CEDS update as required by EDA to qualify for its assistance programs. The TARCOG Board of Directors / CEDS Advisory Committee relies upon TARCOG EDD staff to develop implementation projects, convene stakeholders and build partnerships, apply for funding opportunities, and administer economic development projects that align with CEDS priorities and, ultimately, work towards CEDS implementation objectives.

FY 2020 was a year of transition for the TARCOG EDD. With significant staff changes and the unanticipated impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, FY2020 required a reevaluation and rebuilding of the EDD's work program. The EDD successfully met the challenges of a global pandemic which required a transition to a remote work environment, connecting with member governments and regional stakeholders virtually, rather than in person, and revising our normal organizational operations in nontraditional ways. This year the EDD was able to hire two new planners who are responsible for working towards the goals and objectives of the CEDS and both have brought innovative ideas to modernize the EDD and expand our areas of focus.

Due to the pandemic, TARCOG was unable to conduct our traditional CEDS advisory group meetings or host our CEDS Strategy Committee in person but work towards the CEDS goals and objectives has carried on and EDD staff kept in frequent contact with regional stakeholders to document the progress being made throughout the year. With a vaccine on the horizon, EDD staff and our board of directors are eager to return to normal operations in FY2021. We remain hopeful and are planning to bring our CEDS stakeholders together for an in-depth check-in on the CEDS at the mid-point of the five-year plan next year. It is the EDD's goal that this in-depth meeting will also allow for a reexamination of the goals considering the impacts the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our regional economy.

Vision: Where Do We Want to Be?

2018 - 2022 Vision Statement

The TARCOG region envisions an inclusive community where every citizen enjoys an exceptional quality of life via the provision of a seamless education system, high quality employment availability, recreational and cultural activities and a myriad of housing choices. Our goal will be achieved by way of an innovative economy that creatively capitalizes on, and develops, available resources while fostering our natural environment. TARCOG will be an innovative regional partner with our member governments in an effort to develop and deliver services to improve the quality of life of the people and communities of Northeast Alabama.

This vision statement was formulated during the 5-year CEDS process. It was intended to answer the question, "where do we want to be in the next five to ten years?" and "what are our goals?" and was formulated on the region's development potential and existing challenges. It also provides a framework for public and private decision-making and serves as the basis for the implementation of the CEDS Action Plan.

As the TARCOG EDD and CEDS Committee examines its work towards implementing the CEDS plan throughout FY2020 it is important to review the vision statement and ensure our actions are still aligned to TARCOG's long range economic development vision. The 5-year CEDS' visioning process identified many "ideal" qualities and attributes of the Northeast Alabama region which included the following:

- **The development of a highly skilled workforce and the ability to re-tool the existing regional workforce as necessary to address the ever-changing global economy.**
 - 2020 Reflection: Development of a highly skilled workforce that is flexible to meet the necessary demands of our regional economy remains an essential priority. With the continued expansion of Redstone Arsenal and increases in the automotive manufacturing biotechnology, and defense industries, regional institutions of higher education are committed to ensuring the workforce pipeline can meet the forecasted demand.
- **Stronger regional workforce and economic development agency collaboration and communication to meet goals.**
 - 2020 Reflection: Workforce and economic development collaboration and communication is at an all-time high given the current challenge of filling positions across industry sectors in the Northeast Alabama region. Regional stakeholders have convened, and will continue to collaborate, on efforts to address the attraction and cultivation of talented, skilled workforce to the region in order to support our expanding industry sectors. There has also been a recognition that this issue goes beyond our five-county region and Northeast Alabama stakeholders are working closely with partners across North Alabama to assess ways in which to best align our workforce and economic development efforts.
- **Development of a state-of-the-art multi-modal transportation system (water / air / highway / rail).**

- 2020 Reflection: The TARCOG EDD has continued its transportation planning activities throughout FY 2020 and works very collaboratively with transportation planning stakeholders throughout the Northeast Alabama region. Although many strides have been made to develop multi-modal opportunities throughout the region, including bike-ped trail development, transit coordination, and other related efforts, work remains, especially in the region's rural places, to truly develop a state-of-the-art multi-modal system. Additionally, FY 2020 has been a year of strengthening the district's Rural Planning Organization (RPO). EDD staff is working diligently to re-engage with regional transportation officials through the RPO process and to evaluate opportunities to align our transportation planning efforts with the Huntsville area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).
- **Quality essential infrastructure (water / sewer / roads / bridges / broadband).**
 - 2020 Reflection: The installation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of quality essential infrastructure remains a core objective of the TARCOG EDD. FY 2020 marked the successful completion of several critical infrastructure projects as well as the beginning of new projects that will serve beneficiaries throughout the Northeast Alabama region. From small town sewer feasibility studies to large-scale grade separation projects, TARCOG EDD remains committed to developing, supporting, and administering critical infrastructure projects in partnership with our member governments throughout the region.
- **Comprehensive plans for all cities that can be rolled into a regional plan.**
 - 2020 Reflection: Comprehensive planning is critical for municipalities to be able to think strategically about their development, create strong economic development projects, and apply for implementation funding. Throughout FY 2020, the TARCOG EDD continued to support member governments in the development or refinement of local comprehensive plans. Although funding for planning activities is often hard to come by, TARCOG has found innovative ways to incorporate comprehensive planning into other project activities and will continue to find opportunities to provide this service with the goal that all member governments will have a current local comprehensive plan.

ACTION PLAN: HOW ARE WE DOING?

In furtherance of the foregoing mission statement, and for the accomplishment of the strategic projects, programs, and activities contained in this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments, operating as the Economic Development District for Sub-State District 12 of the State of Alabama, will undertake the following activities.

Goals & Strategies

ADVANCE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION.

Regional Priority: The vitality of the TARCOG region is predicated upon the skills and productivity of its workforce. Therefore, continued growth in the region requires an expansion of employment opportunities and the creation of more pathways for advancement for all TARCOG region residents. Efforts to develop a skilled workforce throughout the region and across the entire wage spectrum will be a core contribution to the region's ongoing economic competitiveness. Workforce needs vary widely across the region, particularly along rural and urban lines, but key priorities for the entire region do exist. Specifically, important strategic directions in regional workforce development include:

- Identify and address gaps in educational support to match students to appropriate programs and improve educational attainment outcomes, with a particular focus on increasing attainment in fields aligned with employment needs throughout the region;
- Increase the capacity of programs that credential students for career skills at the secondary and post-secondary level, and support educational institutions in the implementation of curriculum driven in part by employment opportunities;
- Communicate to citizens, businesses and leaders that education and lifelong learning are important drivers of economic development and will be a fundamental requirement for the long-term success of the region, its citizens and its businesses;
- Coordinate between educational institutions and the private sector to align post-secondary program offerings and expand accessibility of programs oriented toward meeting labor needs at the local and regional level; and
- Support the sharing and distribution of labor market and career knowledge to inform TARCOG region residents as they make decisions related to their own skills development and workforce competitiveness.
- Develop partnerships or consortia among organizations that focus on training and development for business and industry.

2020 Update: Workforce development issues remain at the forefront of all economic development discussions in Northeast Alabama. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the five-county TARCOG region was experiencing some of the lowest unemployment in history with most counties hovering at or below 2.1 percent. Developing a sustainable pipeline of highly-skilled workforce across industry sectors has been a significant need for the region for the past few years and while great strides have been made, more remains to be done. Throughout FY2020 collaboration among economic development entities, regional institutions of higher education, and workforce development agencies has catalyzed many new ideas on ways to continue to build out that pipeline. Specific examples of workforce development objectives underway in the TARCOG region this year are provided below:

- With increases in automotive manufacturing and a significant need for automotive technicians in the region, Calhoun Community College (Limestone County) developed an Automotive Technology Center on its campus. The Advanced Automotive Technology (AAT) program is a comprehensive four-semester program that prepares students for employment as automotive technicians. TARCOG EDD supported the construction of this facility and administered a \$1.58 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The building officially opened this summer and students are excited to have access to this state-of-the-art facility.
- TARCOG EDD also works closely with Northeast Alabama Community College (Jackson County) to help find opportunities to expand their successful apprenticeship programs. In 2020, NACC applied to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) for POWER Initiative funds to support the expansion of their Tri-State Apprenticeship Consortium but were ultimately not selected for funding. Despite not receiving ARC funds, NACC continues to find other opportunities to expand its apprenticeship and cooperative training programs to better support regional industrial development.
- In the spring of 2020, TARCOG partnered with the Mountain Lakes Chamber of Commerce, the economic development authorities of Jackson, DeKalb, and Marshall counties, and North Alabama Works to develop a comprehensive Rural Workforce Outreach Event. The event was to be hosted on April 1 at NACC but had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated shut downs. While the event has been put on hold for the time being, the workforce/economic development partnership is evolving and expanding its focus and planning more outreach activities for FY2021.



Cutting the ribbon on Calhoun Community College's Automotive Technology Center and an AAT student working inside the new facility. (Images: Calhoun.edu)

PROMOTE ENTREPRENEURSHIP & GROWTH ACCELERATION.

Regional Priority: Support economic growth via biotech, research & development, manufacturing, and other small businesses. With a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem and advanced R&D capabilities in the region's businesses and universities, TARCOG is a well-positioned launch point for entrepreneurs looking to compete in the global innovation economy. Likewise, facilitating the growth of the region's existing businesses is critical to retaining the pillars of the local ecosystem. TARCOG must be a region where businesses are constantly being started and being re-invented to remain economically competitive.

The Huntsville area has a rich Science, Technology, and Defense heritage that is expected to grow stronger in the future. Among the emerging industries to advance in the District will be the biosciences and biotechnology. These existing and emerging sectors represent one of the major employment clusters in North Alabama and tend

to generate high paying jobs. Activities associated with science, technology, and defense often locate in office and technology parks near and within Redstone Arsenal.

Science, technology, and defense is included as a foundation sector because of its strong presence in the area, because of the opportunity for sector growth due to both the attraction of new employment and the creation of new employment through entrepreneurial activity. It is also included because it is primarily a traded cluster which is important because of the tendency of traded clusters to bring new wealth to a community.

Specific objectives for supporting entrepreneurship and accelerating growth among the region's existing firms include:

- Raising the reach, scale, and accessibility of programs in the region that support and encourage prospective entrepreneurs to start a business.
- Fostering collaborative working spaces where ideas can be commercialized, and innovative businesses can grow.
- Supporting the development of place-specific and innovation-based industry clusters throughout the region that creates desirable jobs.
- Having dialogue with public and private stakeholders in order to identify and alleviate growth constraints for existing businesses.
- Supporting growth and development of the life science cluster, specifically the HudsonAlpha Institute of Biotechnology's efforts to support innovative research and development for the commercial and scientific arenas.
- Promote Industrial/Institutional Collaboration. Promote industrial and institutional collaboration to connect education and research activities to local industry and to explore strategies to further capitalize on the commercialization of technology and life science research.
- Strengthen Education and Research. Support the continued development and strengthening of higher education and research activities among area colleges, universities, and not-for-profit research institutions.
- Leverage Competitive Advantages. Facilitate organizational networks.
- Promote the local Innovation Cluster to leverage the District's unique competitive advantages, i.e., its inherent social, environmental, economic, and cultural assets.
- Position for Base Realignment and Closure. Support continuous activity that strengthens the area's position relating to Base Realignment and Closure and general military support.
- Foster a Culture of Funding. Develop a "funding culture" for business and industry startups by fostering entrepreneurial connectivity and supporting business incubators.

2020 Update: TARCOG EDD continues to support entrepreneurship and growth acceleration activities underway throughout the region and has identified opportunities to expand these efforts to underserved areas of the region. Some example of notable entrepreneurial support efforts from FY2020 include:

- In the summer of 2020, TARCOG EDD partnered with Neighborhood Concepts, Inc. (NCI) which oversees the North Alabama Revolving Loan Fund to expand the management and expertise behind TARCOG's EDA-funded Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The EDD sees this as an innovative partnership to leverage NCI's fund management expertise and their in-depth technical assistance and resources for borrowers. Both TARCOG and NCI are confident that this "Stronger Together" partnership will expedite getting RLF funds in the hands of small businesses that need them for economic recovery and expansion efforts throughout the Northeast Alabama region. The EDD is also hopeful that this new partnership will provide additional opportunities to expand the RLF program and portfolio moving forward.
- In addition to this exciting new partnership, TARCOG EDD also announced a special commitment of \$100,000 of RLF funds to support businesses that locate along the Singing River Trail in Madison and Limestone counties (more information about the Singing River Trail is provided later in this Update). EDD staff has worked closely on the development of the Singing River Trail from its inception and are pleased to be able to expand TARCOG's partnership with the Singing River Trail in this critical way.
- Opportunity zones have been a big part of FY2020 for the TARCOG region. This year, two cities in the TARCOG region were selected to participate in Opportunity Alabama's Rural Recovery Accelerator (RAA) program. The Cities of Athens and Scottsboro were selected to take part in the intensive 6-8-week program to help build the economic resiliency strategies needed to capitalize on their opportunity zones and to survive the current COVID-19 economic crisis. The community-oriented technical assistance program included strategy development, data analysis, network development, marketing materials, and investment opportunities to build out a community recovery profile and a recovery roadmap. Having completed the program, TARCOG EDD is now working with the stakeholder groups in both Athens and Scottsboro to continue the momentum and develop critical projects focused on the growth of their opportunity zones. Many plans for opportunity zone development have included entrepreneurial ecosystem expansion including, but not limited to, accelerators, business incubators, and/or maker spaces as well as shared space for emerging businesses to sell locally-made products.

STRONGER TOGETHER

REVOLVING LOAN FUND PARTNERSHIP

The Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG) and Neighborhood Concepts, Inc. are joining forces to provide revolving loan funds to strengthen small businesses throughout TARCOG's five-county region (DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, and Marshall counties).

Please join us as we announce our "Stronger Together" Revolving Loan Fund Partnership.

10:00 A.M. WEDNESDAY AUGUST 26, 2020

TARCOG | 5075 Research Drive NW, Huntsville, AL 35805

This will be an outdoor media event – masks are required.



Singing River Trail Executive Director, Dr. John Kvach, speaks at the Stronger Together Revolving Loan Fund Partnership announcement with TARCOG and NCI leadership. (Image: Singing River Trail)

INVEST IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE.

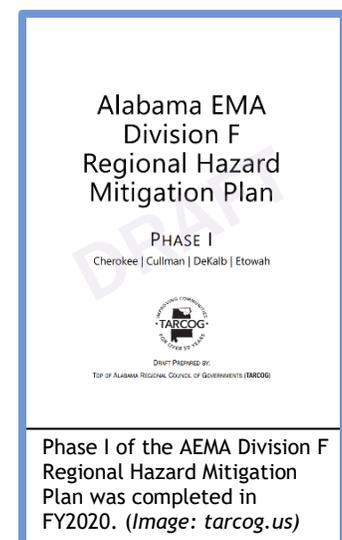
Regional Priority: Resilience encompasses the notion that the TARCOG region must be prepared to respond and recover from a disaster. TARCOG is focused on developing the region's economic resilience, which includes working to reduce the region's vulnerabilities to economic shocks, enhancing the regional economy's ability to

recover from a shock, and supporting innovation in the region so that industry clusters in the TARCOG region remain competitive as industries evolve. The region's economic resilience would be bolstered by:

- The formation and growth of businesses that export goods and services from the TARCOG region to broaden the potential customer base of industries in the region, thereby minimizing the impact of a shock affecting any one prominent trading partner;
- The continued development of new industry clusters in sectors adjacent to the region's existing industrial base, thereby minimizing the region's reliance on any one single industry;
- Employing a regional approach to resource development and management, namely coordination and collaboration for water planning and management, air quality emission reduction, accessibility of broadband, future power demands and transportation capacity; and
- Maintaining a database of establishments in the TARCOG that is searchable by sector, thereby strengthening the ability to respond to individual establishments affected by a disaster affecting any one sector.
- Involving Business in Hazard Mitigation. Involve the business community more fully in planning for hazard mitigation and disaster recovery in the interest of better preparedness both of the community and of the businesses themselves.
- Integrating Urban and Rural Economies. Use agriculture and forestry initiatives to better integrate urban and rural economies and to provide economic diversity, resiliency, and educational opportunities.
- Promoting Economic Diversification. Promote the diversification of local and regional economic clusters in order to create and retain jobs.

2020 Update: The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated mandated closures to slow the spread of the virus only further enforced the need for local communities to build their resilience to economic downturns. The TARCOG region has worked diligently over the past few years to better incorporate resilience into community and economic development efforts. While resilience building permeates all regional economic development efforts (such as our work in opportunity zones, workforce development efforts aligned to the diversifying regional economy, and our focus on building quality places where health, wellness, and quality of life are integral to business attraction and retention) below are a few additional examples of ways in which the Northeast Alabama region is strengthening its economic resilience:

- This year, TARCOG EDD received funding from the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) to lead a regional approach to hazard mitigation planning. Serving nine counties in the AEMA Division F Region, the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan updates county-specific information and aligns hazard mitigation goals, objectives, and priorities for the Northeast Alabama region. The first phase of the plan covering Cherokee, Cullman, DeKalb, and Etowah counties was completed and submitted to AEMA and FEMA for review in July. The second phase which will incorporate Blount, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, and Morgan counties and culminate in one plan serving all nine counties, is currently under development and will be finalized in FY2021.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, TARCOG EDD applied for, and received, supplemental funding from the U.S. Economic Development



Administration (EDA) through the CARES Act to provide immediate response and recovery assistance to our region. This two-year funding will assist the EDD in carrying out critical actions to help our local governments identify, develop, and fund essential economic development projects geared toward building resilience to economic shocks such as pandemics, natural disasters, and other downturns. This funding will also enable TARCOG to assist communities in need of local plans to move forward from the economic impact of COVID-19. TARCOG EDD planning staff has developed the Blueprint Program to help communities with identified economic need, create action-oriented, resilience-focused plans to set the vision for the future of their community. COVID-19 has provided communities with an opportunity to take stock of current needs, gaps, and issue areas and work towards building a foundation for the future. These Blueprint Plans will result in action plans that the communities can use to build a more resilient community and economy. The themes and findings from these local planning efforts will also directly inform the five-year update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy in FY2022.

- TARCOG EDD stands ready to assist its member governments in continued COVID-19 response and recovery efforts – all with an eye toward being more resilient to future downturns. At the time of writing this update, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) had announced the availability of CARES Act funding from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. TARCOG provided comment on critical needs for CDBG funding in our region earlier in 2020 and will support our counties as they develop CARES Act CDBG proposals in FY2021.

PROMOTE PLACE-BUILDING.

The TARCOG region is growing rapidly, and it is incumbent on those shaping that development to guide it in a sustainable, efficient, and distinct direction. Place-building encompasses the notion that local businesses, residents, and developers can craft development scenarios that are both locally-driven and advantageous for future growth.

The desire of the District for its future is that its commercial places will be bustling centers of activity that are aesthetically pleasing and architecturally distinct. They are appropriately sized and conveniently located in accordance with their function and the community they serve, providing an extensive variety of local goods, services, and entertainment. They are attractive, comfortable, and safe. They are walkable and have an appropriate human scale and dimension. People enjoy being there and using these gathering places to meet friends, attend events, and conduct business. TARCOG can advance this objective by:

- Acknowledge and preserve the distinct sense of place in local communities and incorporating that sense into future growth strategies.
- Cultivate new “places” by developing sustainable, fiscally efficient, and resilient communities and neighborhoods.
- Work to alleviate the region’s traffic issues by supporting the transformation of commuter communities into communities with a stronger base of local employment.
- Explore the use of corridor-based alternatives analysis and traffic shed analysis that fully considers land use and commercial impacts in transportation planning.
- Leverage TARCOG’s regional perspective to provide information, data, and consultation to support the growth and diversification of industries in the region’s communities.

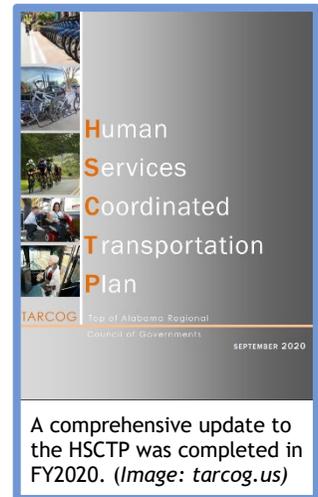
- Assist in the development of infrastructure and facilities throughout the region to provide capacity for desired economic growth.
- Improve TARCOG region infrastructure at current and future job creation sites; Industrial parks and potential sites in each county should have adequate utility service and capacity and transportation access.
- Assist local governments in industrial site planning and development.
- Support Complete Neighborhoods. Use the development and redevelopment of commercial centers and corridors as an integral, structural component of more complete and livable neighborhoods and communities. Locate and design community facilities to support livable, walkable places for every sector of the community, especially in regard to providing the elderly greater ease and access to perform daily activities.
- Protect Rural Character and the Urban/Rural Interface. Preserve the environmental integrity and rural character of communities developed on previous farmland. Use preservation strategies on the fringe of cities and towns to provide identity and quality of life to the entire region. Protect communities from natural disasters and protect vital wetlands and migratory corridors to preserve the ecological integrity of the natural infrastructure.

2020 Update: With continued regional growth, distinct and intentional place-building remains an essential objective of the region's economic development strategy. TARCOG EDD has worked with regional stakeholders on place-building efforts in the following ways during FY2020:

- The City of Boaz completed and adopted its Alabama Community of Excellence (ACE) Comprehensive Plan in summer 2020. Boaz formally received the designation of an ACE community and is currently working toward implementing key aspects of their comprehensive plan including, but not limited to, updated zoning and a focus on revitalizing the city's historic downtown. TARCOG EDD will continue to support Boaz in its implementation efforts and remains engaged in the efforts of other ACE communities in the region: Arab, Guntersville, and Rainsville.
- In FY2020, the City of Scottsboro received CDBG funding to demolish 25 blighted structures throughout the City. The project is underway, and the City is eager to demolish and clear these sites in order to improve the quality of life and livability of neighborhoods throughout Scottsboro. In addition, the City of Scottsboro partnered with TARCOG and the Jackson County Economic Development Authority to submit an application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields program for a Coalition Brownfields Assessment grant. If awarded, the grant will enable the partnership to identify and address brownfields in and around Scottsboro in need of assessment as well as plan for future redevelopment of the sites.



- The TARCOG EDD updated the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan (HSCTP) in FY2020. The plan documents the existing resources and current needs for the provision of transit services within the TARCOG region. Through agency coordination, the existing transportation system may be enhanced through the identification of unmet needs, service overlap, and leverage of resources. This plan describes the existing conditions in the five-county region related to transportation services, discusses coordination of service and other alternatives for meeting needs into the future, identifies the barriers – both perceived and real – for successfully coordinating resources, and identifies areas of overlap and gaps to be addressed.
- Updated and implemented zoning also plays a critical role in place-building. TARCOG EDD supported multiple localities with zoning ordinance review and updates, zoning map revisions, and comprehensive plans during FY2020.



PROMOTE FURTHER ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

The District has long history of a broad base of manufacturing. In many cases, the manufacturing base has been undergoing a transition from the more traditional industries, such as textiles, to industries utilizing advanced manufacturing that involve higher technology and robotics. Activities associated with manufacturing, distribution, and logistics share many of the same characteristics. Heavy manufacturing and distribution tend to locate in close proximity to major transportation facilities on the fringe of populated areas. Small manufacturing tends to be scattered among smaller cities and towns.

Manufacturing is a traded cluster economically that tends to add wealth to a community, particularly when headquarters are co-located with production facilities. Manufacturing, distribution and logistics is included as a foundation sector because manufacturing maintains its importance as the mainstay of the economy of smaller communities while advanced manufacturing associated with science and technology promises great potential for the area. It is also included because the location within the District of the navigable Tennessee River and the intermodal connections of rail and air give the District outstanding opportunities for effective and efficient transportation, distribution, and logistics.

The desire of the District for its future is that it has not only maintained its position in manufacturing, but has significantly gained employment within the sector, successfully transitioning to those industries synergistically associated with the science and technology clusters. Not only can you find a well-trained workforce, but from this District you can easily ship your goods, economically, anywhere in the world. TARCOG will strive to support the raising of standards of living through the increase in employment opportunities by:

- Support of local economic development entities in their on-going job recruitment and retention efforts.
- Support of the expansion and development of industrial parks in each county and across the region.
- Entrepreneur Support - Assist business start-ups and existing businesses in finding the services and support they require to create and maintain jobs.
- Leverage resources to put in place the proper infrastructure throughout the District to facilitate the transportation of goods and services locally, regionally and globally, particularly intermodal

transportation networks that support manufacturing and distribution. Also provide for expanded utility infrastructure and broadband communication capabilities.

- Support workforce development and education activities that facilitate the retraining of workers displaced by industries that are diminishing in importance, particularly retraining that prepares workers for employment in advanced manufacturing industries.
- Assist communities with economic development preparedness programs that involve community strategic planning, infrastructure development, site preparation, and general community livability.
- Promote the diversification of local and regional economic clusters in order to create and retain jobs.
- Explore the creation and expansion of financial offerings available to new and expanding business and industry.
- Promote the use of technology in economic development by assisting TARCOG member governments in providing the latest technology to citizens and job creators.
- Coordinate and synchronize economic/community development activities with applicable workforce investment strategies.
- Ensure that all regional development is in partnership with existing priorities.
- Expand Financing Alternatives; Explore the creation and expansion of financial offerings available to new and expanding business and industry.

2020 Update: The TARCOG region remains committed to promoting traditional community and economic development objectives and has worked throughout FY2020 to ensure that all active projects remain on track despite the setbacks of the COVID-19 pandemic. Significant progress has been made on several federally funded projects to expand critical infrastructure and provide increased capacity to key industries throughout the region:

- The City of Huntsville's \$4.1 million EDA project to provide grade separation and related transportation improvements to the Mazda Toyota Manufacturing USA, Inc. automobile assembly plant got underway in FY2020. The entire project is anticipated to be completed by December 2020. These improvements will enable improved rail access to the automotive manufacturing facility to enable more efficient transportation and logistics for the automotive assembly site.



Construction underway on a grade separation project which will improve rail and road transportation serving the new Mazda Toyota Manufacturing US site in the City of Huntsville (Limestone County). (Image: TARCOG EDD)

- The Town of Sylvania received 2019 CDBG-ED funding to provide water system upgrades to Alabama Wholesale Socks, Inc. This \$167,000 water system and roadway improvement project began construction in FY2020 and will result in the hiring of 15 additional employees at the sock manufacturing facility.
- The City of Bridgeport completed a CDBG-funded drainage improvement project in 2020. The project, which alleviates stormwater runoff issues in a neighborhood near the City's downtown, will serve 426 beneficiaries.
- The City of Guntersville was awarded CDBG funding in FY2020 to make road and drainage improvements to the low-moderate income East Lake Community. The proposed improvements will benefit 182 residents and reduce flooding to households and businesses caused by stormwater runoff.
- Work was completed on a CDBG-funded project to renovate the Town of Triana's community center and gymnasium this year. The building, previously in significant disrepair, serves 465 residents, but more importantly, provides a safe space for Triana's youth population to gather, be active, and grow.
- Work was also completed on a CDBG roadway and drainage improvement project serving the Town of Woodville. The \$395,000 project benefited 122 residents of a neighborhood just southeast of the Woodville Town Hall with improved drainage and roads which will alleviate the routine flooding issues the area has previously experienced.
- In addition, TARCOG EDD applied for, and received, funding from the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) to implement key findings identified in the Redstone Arsenal Joint Land Use Study (JLUS). Completed in 2019, the JLUS was a regional stakeholder-driven effort led by the City of Huntsville to assess and identify potential compatibility issues between the essential military uses on the Arsenal and the municipal land use along its perimeter. TARCOG will lead the effort to implement key aspects of the JLUS including, but not limited to, enhanced mapping and 3-D modeling of the space around Redstone Army Airfield to identify/prevent any potential hazards, coordination of better communication and outreach among all stakeholders to ensure the Arsenal and its neighboring jurisdictions are aligning their efforts and keeping each other informed of potential development impacts; and assessment of land use and development regulations within specific military compatibility areas. The project will kick-off in FY2021 by convening a stakeholder committee to develop necessary RFPs for the technical aspects of this implementation project.



Work underway on CDBG-funded critical infrastructure projects in Sylvania (DeKalb County) above and Woodville (Jackson County) below. (Images: TARCOG EDD)

ENCOURAGE & SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL ARTS TOURISM CENTERS & CORRIDORS THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

The desire of the District for its future is that the area has realized much of the economic potential of its tourism and recreational resources without degrading the characteristics that made them attractive in the first place. The watersheds, mountains, streams, lakes, and wetlands are not only noted for their pristine and untouched beauty but are home to one of the most unique and diverse ecosystems on the planet. The District's towns, cities,

countryside, and wilderness areas offer unmatched beauty and recreational opportunities. Specifically, important strategic directions in regional tourism development include:

- Encourage tourism development as a job creator for rural areas.
- Support rural tourism initiatives throughout the five-county region.
- Protect the natural infrastructure of the District, including the resources and natural beauty that serve as the infrastructure for many of the District's tourism, travel, and recreational opportunities.
- Support efforts that educate the public and stakeholder communities about the economic value of natural infrastructure and environmental resources.
- Create and promote a cohesive, regional identity to be used for district-wide place marketing, promoting our unique Appalachian arts and cultural heritage.
- Foster a sense of connection and loyalty to the community and its places by protecting and preserving our natural resources as well as our towns, cities, neighborhoods, and country-sides.
- Promote local arts and cultural activity that is unique only to the Tennessee Valley and the Southern Appalachian region. At the same time, utilize arts and cultural festivals to celebrate diversity and create a positive image for the State.

2020 Update: With committed partners and strong collaborative efforts dedicated to promoting tourism, recreation, and the arts, the TARCOG region continues to make great strides in the development and expansion of our tourism centers and corridors. With the impact COVID-19 has had on traditional tourism and traveling, outdoor recreation-based tourism saw a huge increase in interest as it is safe, socially distant, affordable, and provides ample opportunities for relaxation and mental health and wellness. With the outdoor recreation-based tourism assets the Northeast Alabama region possesses, local and regional businesses are in an advantageous position to take full advantage of this increased interest in outdoor recreation. Provided below are a few exciting tourism developments that have taken place throughout FY2020:

- In the summer of 2020, the Singing River Trail formally became a non-profit entity and hired a full-time executive director tasked with making the 72-mile master planned trail a reality. Dr. John Kvach has hit the ground running and is working with stakeholders across North Alabama on trail development and expansion. TARCOG EDD has been a longstanding partner of the Singing River Trail initiative and supported Dr. Kvach in applying for EDA CARES Act funding for a digital trail geared at marketing the trail to businesses and visitors. TARCOG looks forward to continuing to support Singing River Trail as more implementation gets underway in FY2021.
- The City of Albertville (Marshall County) is nearing completion on its Sand Mountain Park and Amphitheater. This 130-acre park represents the newest evolution in sports travel destinations, hosting events from all over the nation in the state-of-the-art facility. The park includes a 2-story fitness center with four hardwood basketball/volleyball courts, 8-lane indoor competition pool, outdoor water park, nine turf baseball/softball fields, five turf multi-sport fields, 16-court tennis center, an outdoor amphitheater with 7,600 seat capacity, an RV park, dog park, and 3.5 miles



Sand Mountain Park and Amphitheater nearing completion. (Image: City of Albertville)

of outdoor walking/running trail. Marshall County and the City of Albertville have already felt the positive impact of hosting sporting events at this venue and look forward to the park being completed in FY2021.

- TARCOG EDD has also been working closely with County Tourism and Convention Bureaus throughout the region to develop tourism focused projects including, but not limited to, a mobile visitor center for the Marshall County Convention and Visitors Bureau, potential trail development and expansion in DeKalb and Jackson counties, and workforce development initiatives to fill existing gaps in the tourism and hospitality industries.
- TARCOG partnered with the other North Alabama Councils of Government to support Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association (AMLTA) with the development of the "Second Helping" program which works with individuals in recovery from substance abuse disorder to provide training and other support needed to reenter the workforce in the tourism/hospitality industry. AMLTA submitted an application to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)'s new INSPIRE Initiative to expand the Second Helpings program across North Alabama and TARCOG remains committed to the program and stands ready to assist AMLTA moving forward.
- Finally, the TARCOG region is blessed with multiple state parks and the EDD has developed a strong partnership with Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the State Park system to work on expanding and improving available campgrounds. The EDD is currently administering an ARC-funded campground expansion project at Cathedral Caverns State Park and submitted an application to ARC for a similar endeavor at Lake Guntersville State Park to improve camp sites that were devastated by recent tornados.

COVID-19 IMPACTS

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic impacting the State of Alabama, the Northeast Alabama region was experiencing some of the lowest unemployment rates in recent history with three of our five counties below 2.5 percent. April 2020 unemployment numbers, however, displayed all TARCOG county rates increasing dramatically with Jackson County accounting for the highest current unemployment rate in the region at 13.3 percent. While these numbers have somewhat stabilized in recent months, the significant economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the region remains.

Northeast Alabama Unemployment Rates (2020)

	February	March	April
DeKalb	2.7	2.9	11.7
Jackson	3.3	3.4	13.3
Limestone	2.4	2.6	11.4
Madison	2.3	2.5	10.4
Marshall	2.4	2.5	11.0

Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division, *Interactive Local Area Unemployment Statistics*
<http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/LAUS/LAUSTab.aspx>.

As the toll of the State mandated “Stay at Home” orders took effect, TARCOG EDD surveyed regional leaders to better understand local impacts, how they were continuing to serve their communities during the pandemic, and to identify resources needed to face these unprecedented challenges. Responses received universally spoke of the loss of relied upon tax revenue and the fear for small businesses that were already struggling to survive. Although it was far too early to begin to identify development projects, and many municipalities were hesitant to discuss grant funding given their inability to meet match requirements, nearly all survey respondents requested TARCOG support in identifying potential resources that would foster economic recovery and support to small businesses.

For these reasons, TARCOG received supplemental EDA funding to catalyze the Northeast Alabama region’s economic recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Specific COVID-19 response and recovery project objectives include:

- TARCOG is hiring a Disaster Recovery Coordinator (Economic Development Specialist) who will work directly with regional leaders to identify economic development grant-eligible projects to ensure impacted communities are able to take full advantage of available funding opportunities; serve as a liaison between local, state, and federal partners in order to speed the recovery process through strategic technical assistance and local capacity development for highly impacted communities; identify and foster private and non-profit partnership opportunities especially with Chambers of Commerce, local employers, and existing training programs; and facilitate the implementation of locally-generated disaster recovery projects.
- In addition to hiring a Disaster Recovery Coordinator, current TARCOG planning staff will also work to strengthen resiliency and recovery objectives in the CEDS and other local and regional plans to include a particular focus on pandemic recovery and resiliency; assist in local, state, and federally led coronavirus recovery planning efforts; and implement economic recovery and resilience plans throughout the region.

- As a result of the pandemic, TARCOG EDD discovered many areas in need of improvement regarding our own organizational capacity to continue to serve our region from a telework environment. Considerable technological upgrades are needed including, but not limited to, additional laptops to enable economic development and planning staff can work effectively remotely; improvements to the EDD's phone system to ensure calls can be forwarded and responded to more efficiently; improved the EDD's web presence (website, electronic newsletter, social media improvements) to be able to keep in better communication with regional stakeholders and get important messaging distributed to constituents.

All project activities described above will generate robust improvements to the EDD's technical assistance and capacity building provided to our member governments, regional partners, local businesses, and other stakeholders impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These improvements will enable TARCOG to be more adaptable to potential closures due to future pandemics and other disaster events and will allow EDD staff to be equipped with necessary resources to work effectively remotely and as they travel throughout the region.

The supplemental CARES Act funding allows the EDD to increase our capacity to work directly with our local leaders on economic recovery. As the EDD is currently staffed and with our existing programmatic requirements, it would be extremely difficult to find the time and resources necessary to focus on these important and wide-ranging issues and the immediate recovery needs of the region. The hiring of a Disaster Recovery Coordinator, who will be fully devoted to economic recovery efforts, will be an invaluable resource for our member governments and other regional partners. Increasing our technical capacity to work and communicate with our stakeholders remotely and providing additional staff time for our planning staff to dig in on recovery and resiliency planning will set our organization and our region on a more sustainable and resilient path moving forward.

APPENDICES

- 2020 CEDS Update Certification Letter & Resolution
- 2020 TARCOG Board of Directors Documents



TOP OF ALABAMA REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Area Agency on Aging • Economic Development District • Regional Planning Agency

Thornton Stanley, Jr.
President

Nancy Griggs
Vice President

Mike Ashburn
Secretary

Larry Chesser
Treasurer

Mary Caudle
Ex-Officio

Michelle G. Jordan, FAICP – Executive Director

September 30, 2020

Mr. H. Philip Paradice, Jr., Regional Director
U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration
Suite 1820, 401 West Peachtree Street, N. W.
Atlanta, GA 30308-3510

Re: Annual 2020 CEDS Update and CEDS Certification

Attn: Lee Mertins

Dear Mr. Paradice:

The Board of Directors of The Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG) and Economic Development District (EDD,) representing the Counties of DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, and Marshall, have met in session and passed a resolution (copy attached) authorizing its President to act on their behalf in endorsing the District's attached 2020 update and ongoing evaluation of changing issues, and progress towards achieving the objectives of our 2018-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS.)

The five County Commissions, member governments, the private sector, and special interest groups have been, and are, active members of TARCOG, its EDD, and as such, support its CEDS. The present CEDS, and its 2020 update represent a well prepared program for the TARCOG area and is representative of the diversity of our district.

The CEDS, as currently updated, reflects a dynamic process, based on the long term development potentials, goals and guidelines for the five member EDD counties. On behalf of DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, and Marshall Counties, we herewith endorse and support the CEDS and its process as a vital planning tool and action guideline for the TARCOG EDD.

If I may be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Thornton Stanley, Jr., Board President
Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments
and Economic Development District

Enclosure

CEDS/Strategy Committee & Board Structure Certification

The Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG) Economic Development District was formally established May 1, 1973. The TARCOG Board of Directors has been actively involved in setting the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the five county service area including DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison and Marshall Counties. The TARCOG Board is the Economic Development District (EDD) Board that represents the counties, municipalities and citizens therein. This Board which represents a 2017 estimated 674,522 citizens, is composed of a maximum of 30 individuals. This body also serves as the TARCOG CEDS Committee.

Beginning in 2001/02, TARCOG provided annual updates to the CEDS as a part of its annual reporting requirements. In September 2007, the Agency submitted a fully revised 2008-2012 CEDS, designed to meet the new 005-06 §303-7 CEDS Requirements. This new CEDS document was updated to reflect 2002-2007 socio-economic indicator changes, Census information; and, a full set of revised Strategies and performance and evaluation criteria was included. Additionally, each year from 2008, an Annual CEDS Update report/evaluation, of which this certification is a part, has been made. In a similar manner, when the 2018-22 revised CEDS was initially promulgated in 2017, it also contained a provision for Annual Updates. This is the first Annual Update, under the 2018-2022 CEDS.

To ensure that the CEDS continues as an accurate measure of the effectiveness of the District in meeting the goals of the strategy, the District was a prime player in the state's AARC developed multi-regional Strategic Plan and the resultant State CEDS, issued June 2011. This EDA supported Plan developed uniform data measures, updated public participation/stakeholder input, and generated an initial state project inventory, prioritized by Districts and categorical needs. Participants in the original CEDS (and the current CEDS Committee) include representatives of local governments, academic professionals, as well as representatives of minority populations, the elderly, and concerned citizens groups. The mix is structured to meet EDA requirements for an increased representation of the private sector and its business leaders. The TARCOG Board of Directors (listing Attached) serves as the Agency's CEDS/Strategy Committee.

During TARCOG'S FY/CY 2020, some membership adjustments were made to the Board due to elected officials' changes, Agency Board Elections, and other events necessary to insure that it continued to meet EDA CEDS requirements, and incorporate a wide spectrum of participation in the CEDS process. TARCOG certifies that the EDD's current, FY2019/20 board is in compliance with the above cited, current EDA Regulations.


Thornton Stanley, Jr., President

ATTEST:


Michelle G. Jordan, Executive Director

TARCOG Board/CEDS Committee

FY 2020

Actions/Status

The TARCOG Board of Directors and the CEDS Committee are one in the same. Participants in the original CEDS (and its current CEDS Committee) still include representatives of local governments, academic professionals, as well as representatives of minority populations, the elderly, and concerned citizens groups. The mix has been modified to meet current EDA requirements for an increased representation of the private sector and its business leaders. *The TARCOG Board of Directors (listing Attached) serves as the Agency's CEDS/Strategy Committee.*

During TARCOG's FY 2020, some membership adjustments were made to the Board, due to local elections/other actions. These changes were made in response to both local conditions and needs and to insure the continued incorporation of public and private sector representation in proportions that meet EDA's CEDS participation guidelines/requirements..

CEDS Committee-Board/Administration:

During 2020, the membership adjustments listed below were made to the Board, and its structure. Changes were made both due to natural turnover, area elections, and the Agency's Annual Election of Officers. As the board serves as the Agency's EDA CEDS Committee, all efforts were made to insure to continue to maintain public and private sector representation in proportions that meet local needs, and conformed to EDA's CEDS participation guidelines/requirements.

Board composition changes/actions during TARCOG FY 2020 included the following:

2020 BOARD UPDATE ACTIONS

- *New Board members replacing outgoing members included*
(A new slate of 2019-20 Officers was selected/installed at the September 2019 Meeting)
 - Huntsville City Council Member Frances Akridge replaced Bill Kling
 - Madison City Administrator Marc Jacobson replaced Councilman Steve Smith
 - Douglas Smith added
 - Ken Baldwin resigned

- Number of Board members remains at 30

TARCOG 2019/20 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(10/1/19 Listing by Association/Sector Representation)

Officers

President	Thornton Stanley Jr. *, Citizen, Stanley Construction Company, City of Huntsville, Treasurer (Madison County)
Vice-President	Nancy Griggs, Mountain Lakes Chamber of Commerce (Jackson County)
Secretary	Mike Ashburn, Councilman, Scottsboro City Council (Jackson County)
Treasurer	Larry Chesser, Mayor, City of Fort Payne (DeKalb County)
Ex-officio	Mary Caudle*, Mayor, Town of Triana (Madison County)

Members

Mr. Mike Kirkland	Vulcan Construction Materials, LP; & Greater Jackson County Chamber of Commerce (Jackson County)
Paula Phillips	Peoples Independent Bank (Marshall County)
Collin Daly	Chairman, Limestone County Commission
Will Culver*	Councilman, City of Huntsville (Madison County)
Frances Akridge	Councilwoman, City of Huntsville (Madison County)
Phillip Kelley	Councilman, City of Guntersville (Marshall County)
Philip Anderson	First National Bank of Scottsboro & Greater Jackson County CoC
Steve Turner	Commissioner, Limestone County Commission
Paul Cagle	Mayor, Town of Fyffe (DeKalb County)
Tracy Honea	Mayor, City of Albertville (Marshall County)
Steve Haraway	Commissioner, Madison County Commission
Robin Shelton	Mayor City of Scottsboro (Jackson County)
Tommy Battle	Mayor, City of Huntsville (Madison County)
Craig Hill	Commissioner, Madison County Commission
Frank Travis*	Councilman, City of Athens (Limestone County)
James Lucas*	Athens Board of Education (Limestone County)
Bob Joslin	Mayor, City of Arab (Marshall County)
Kenneth Baldwin*	SEI Group (Madison County)
David Kelley	Commissioner, Marshall County Commission
Marc Jacobson	Administrator, City of Madison (Madison County)
Chuck Ables	Mayor, Town of Geraldine (DeKalb County)
Ricky Harcrow	Chairman, DeKalb County Commission (DeKalb County)
James O'Neal, Jr.	O'Neal's Mfg. Inc. (Jackson County)
Lester Black	Commissioner, DeKalb County Commission
Helen Carter	Fullscope, Inc. (Limestone County)

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* Denotes Minority Members

<u>30</u>	<u>Total Members</u>	
6	Minority Members	= 20.00%
5	Female Members	= 17.00%
22	Elected Officials	= 73.00%
8	Private Sector	= 27.00%

**Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments
2019/20 Board of Directors by County**

DeKalb County:

- Mr. Larry Chesser – Mayor, City Fort Payne
- Mr. Chuck Ables – Mayor, Town of Geraldine
- Mr. Ricky Harcrow – President, DeKalb County Commission
- Mr. Paul Cagle – Mayor, Town of Fyffe
- Mr. Lester Black – County Commission

Jackson County:

- Mr. Philip Anderson – Board Member, Jackson County Chamber of Commerce
(First National Bank of Scottsboro)
- Mr. Robin Shelton – Mayor, City of Scottsboro
- Mr. Mike Kirkland – private enterprise
- Mr. James O’Neal – private enterprise
- Mr. Mike Ashburn – Councilman, Scottsboro City Council

Limestone County:

- Ms. Helen Carter – private enterprise
- Mr. Frank Travis – Councilman, City of Athens
- Mr. Steve Turner – County Commission
- Mr. Collin Daly – Chairman, Limestone County Commission
- Mr. James Lucas – Athens Board of Education

Madison County:

- Mr. Kenneth Baldwin – private enterprise
- Mr. Steve Haraway – County Commission
- Ms. Mary Caudle – Mayor, Town of Triana
- Mr. Will Culver – Councilman, City of Huntsville
- Ms. Frances Akridge – Councilwoman, City of Huntsville
- Mr. Tommy Battle – Mayor, City of Huntsville
- Mr. Thornton Stanley – private enterprise
- Ms. Nancy Griggs – private enterprise
- Mr. Marc Jacobson – Administrator, City of Madison
- Mr. Craig Hill – County Commission

Marshall County:

- Ms. Paula Phillips – private enterprise
- Mr. Phillip Kelley – Mayor, City of Guntersville
- Mr. Tracy Honea – Mayor, City of Albertville
- Mr. Bob Joslin – Mayor, City of Arab
- Mr. David Kelley – County Commission

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By-Law Requirements 2019-2020

Elected Officials

1. Mary Caudle (Mayor, City of Triana)
2. Collin Daly (Chairman, Limestone County Commission)
3. Will Culver (Councilman, City of Huntsville)
4. Phillip Kelley (Councilman, City of Guntersville)
5. Steve Turner (Commissioner, Limestone County Commission)
6. Mike Ashburn (Councilman, Scottsboro City Council)
7. Ricky Harcrow (President, DeKalb County Commission) represented by Emily McCamy (DeKalb County Council on Aging Director)
8. Tracy Honea (Mayor, City of Albertville) represented by Jill Oakley (Albertville City Council)
9. Steve Haraway (Commissioner, Madison County Commission)
10. Robin Shelton (Mayor, City of Scottsboro)
11. Tommy Battle (Mayor, City of Huntsville) represented by Dennis Madsen (Urban & Long Range Planning)
12. Frances Akridge (Councilwoman, City of Huntsville)
13. Frank Travis (Councilman, City of Athens)
14. James Lucas (Athens Board of Education)
15. Bob Joslin (Mayor, City of Arab)
16. David Kelley (Commissioner, Marshall County Commission)
17. Chuck Ables (Mayor, Town of Geraldine)
18. Craig Hill (Commissioner, Madison County)
19. James Larry Chesser (Mayor, City of Ft Payne)
20. Paul Cagle (Mayor, Town of Fyffe)
21. Lester Black (Commissioner, DeKalb County)

Non-elected Officials

1. Philip Anderson (First National Bank of Scottsboro)
2. James O'Neal (O'Neals Manufacturing)
3. Helen Carter (Full Scope, Inc.)
4. Thornton Stanley, Jr. (Stanley Construction Company)
5. Paula Phillips (Peoples Independent Bank)
6. Nancy Griggs (Mountain Lakes Chamber of Commerce)
7. Kenneth Baldwin (Volunteer for North Alabama Veterans Mental Health Council)
8. Mike Kirkland (Vulcan Materials)
9. Marc Jacobson (Administrator, City of Madison)

By-Law Requirements
By County
2019-2020

DeKalb County: (4)

Mr. Larry Chesser – Mayor, City of Fort Payne
Mr. Chuck Ables – Mayor, Town of Geraldine
Mr. Ricky Harcrow – President, DeKalb County Commission
Mr. Paul Cagle – Mayor, Town of Fyffe
Mr. Lester Black – County Commission

Jackson County: (4)

Mr. Philip Anderson – Board Member, Jackson County Chamber of Commerce
(First National Bank of Scottsboro)
Mr. Robin Shelton – Mayor, City of Scottsboro
Mr. Mike Kirkland – private enterprise
Mr. James O’Neal – private enterprise
Mr. Mike Ashburn – Councilman, Scottsboro City Council

Limestone County: (4)

Ms. Helen Carter – private enterprise
Mr. Frank Travis – Councilman, City of Athens
Mr. Steve Turner – County Commission
Mr. Collin Daly – Chairman, Limestone County Commission
Mr. James Lucas – Athens Board of Education

Marshall County: (4)

Ms. Paula Phillips – private enterprise
Mr. Phillip Kelley – Councilman, City of Guntersville
Mr. Tracy Honea – Mayor, City of Albertville
Mr. Bob Joslin – Mayor, City of Arab
Mr. David Kelley – County Commission

Madison County: (8, City of Hsv-4 & City of Madison-2)

Mr. Kenneth Baldwin – private enterprise
Mr. Steve Haraway – County Commission
Ms. Mary Caudle – Mayor, Town of Triana
Ms. Will Culver – Councilman, City of Huntsville
Ms. Frances Akridge – Councilwoman, City of Huntsville
Mr. Tommy Battle – Mayor, City of Huntsville
Mr. Thornton Stanley – private enterprise
Mr. Marc Jacobson – Administrator, City of Madison
Mr. Craig Hill – County Commission
Ms. Nancy Griggs – private enterprise