

strategy for growth



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2008

Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

an Economic Development Administration designated
Economic Development District for
Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker Counties
of the State of Alabama



Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2008

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INTRODUCTION

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPC) was established in the 1960's as an advisory planning agency for Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, Saint Clair, and Walker Counties, and their resident municipalities. RPC has since expanded its role as a regional service provider and continues to do so in order to best serve its member governments. The array of services offered by RPC include: transportation planning, community planning, technical assistance and grant-writing, project management, customized studies, plans and implementation tools, historic preservation and revitalization, geographic information systems, demographics, and economic development assistance. RPC also houses several programs such as the Alabama Partnership for Clean Air (APCA), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Senior Services America, Inc. (SSAI), and a revolving loan fund (RLF).

Through its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document, the RPC seeks to better serve its member governments by identifying and offering implementation strategies for the projects that each community feels would best assist them in development on the municipal, county, and regional levels. RPC is designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the Economic Development Administration (EDA). EDA requires the CEDS to qualify for its assistance programs.

In the summer of 2008, the CEDS Strategy Committee met once a month and maintained a constant channel of communication. The committee provided guidance, oversight and input into the CEDS planning process and final report. The processes undertaken in these meetings included a visioning exercise, goal setting, and a project review and update. Input from these meetings was included in this 2008 CEDS document which was then submitted for a 30-day public review and comment period.

Mission, Vision, & Goals

RPC CEDS Mission

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham seeks to assist its communities in the production of an adaptive, emergent workforce and to foster an environment of cooperation, connectivity, and sustainability.

CEDS 2018 Vision

A well-marketed region with an atmosphere of pervasive cooperation, premier educational facilities and staff, an ample, employment-ready workforce, heavily-invested leadership, and an infrastructure network that is both highly connective and accessible.

CEDS 2008-2013 Goals

1. To foster regional cooperation.
2. To develop and maintain a strong, competitive workforce.
3. To promote relationships among the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.
4. To establish a well-connected, accessible, multi-modal highway, freight and public transportation network.
5. To provide optimal infrastructure in order to support current industries as well as attract new industries.
6. To market and improve regional assets.
7. To cultivate a competitive, attractive quality of life.

PEOPLE

Population

The population of the region grew 6 percent from 2000 to 2008 from 1,031,412 to 1,091,952. Jefferson and Walker Counties experienced 1 percent decreases in population during this same period (1 percent) and Shelby County had the highest population increase (31 percent). See Table 1.

In 2008, 12.9 percent of the region's population was 65 years of age and over. The largest portion of the population within the region fell in the age range of 18 to 44 years (36.2 percent). See Table 2.

In 2008, the male to female ratio was 1:1.07, down only slightly from 2000's ratio of 1:1.09. See Table 3.

The largest concentration of black population is in Jefferson County. In 2000, the black population comprised 39.3 percent of Jefferson County's population; in 2008, that number was up to 41.7 percent. In both 2000 and 2008, the smallest minority populations can be found in Blount County. Blount County's 2008 black population was 1.6 percent of the total population. See Table 4.

Poverty and Median Income Estimates

There were an estimated 144,193 people in poverty in the region in 2005, a 6 percent increase from 135,750 in 2000. In 2005, 13.4 percent of the region's population was in poverty, increasing slightly from 13.1 percent in 2000. See Table 5.

From 2000 to 2008, there was a 13.7 percent increase in the number of children under the age of 18 years in poverty. This increase is most likely reflective of the 13 percent population increase. By far the highest concentration of children under the age of 18 years was in Jefferson County; 72 percent of all children under the age of 18 years in poverty in the region could be found in Jefferson County. See Table 6.

The total number of families in poverty in the region in 2008 went up only by 0.4 percent from 2007 and a total of 3.7 percent from 2000. Jefferson County holds the largest concentration of families in poverty having 64.8 percent in 2008. See Table 7.

The national median household income was \$46,242 in 2005. The State of Alabama falls 20 percent short of this at \$36,936. Each of the region's counties is above the State median household income except Walker County, which is only 91 percent of the State median. Shelby County significantly exceeds both the State and national median household incomes; Shelby County's median is 33 percent greater than the national median and 66 percent greater than the State median. See Table 8.

Educational Attainment – High School

Of the region's population, 78.45 percent were high school graduates in 2008, up nearly 0.5 percent over 2000. Approximately 6.36 percent had less than a ninth-grade education and 13.81 percent finished over 9th grade but did not have a high school diploma. Both figures represent a slight decrease from 2000 of less than a fraction of a percent. See Tables 9 and 10.

Educational Attainment – College

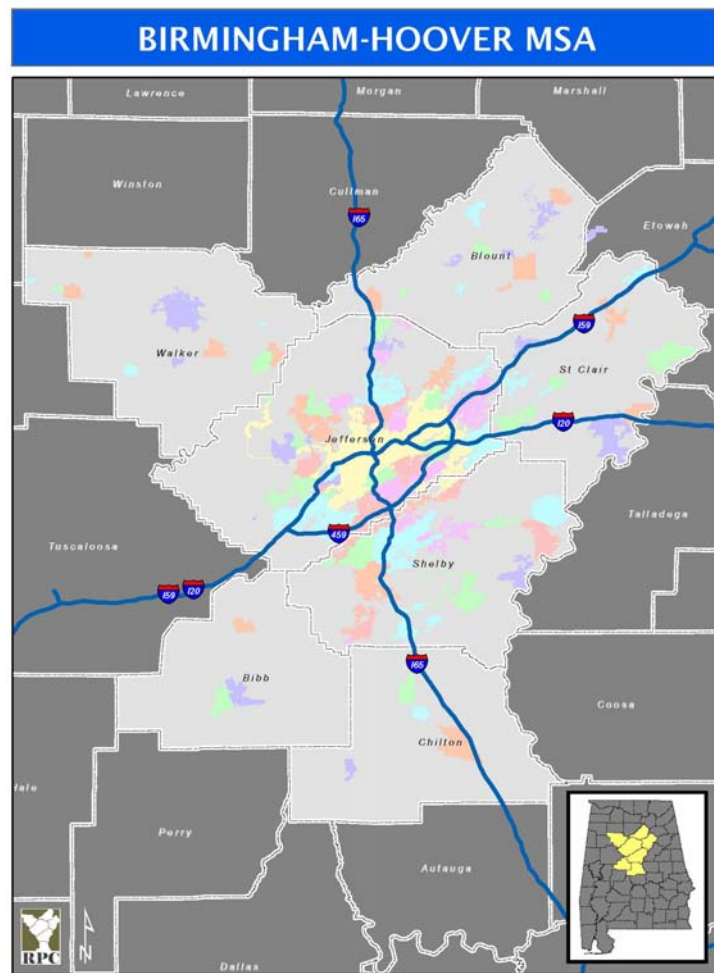
Nearly 22 percent have had some college but no degree and nearly 5.5 percent have an associate degree, both about the same as 2000. Those with a bachelor degree were up 0.23 percent over 2000 to 15.29 percent; those with a master's degree decreased to 5.21 percent. For the most part, the percentage of the population with a bachelor or master degree has been either stagnant or declining since 2000. The notable county with a strong educational attainment is Shelby; it maintains a 25 percent attainment rate for those with a bachelor degree. See Tables 12, 13, 14, 15.

Public School Enrollment

Enrollment in the region's city and county school systems (K-12) was 3 percent higher in the 2006-2007 school year than in the 1999-2000 school year. Total enrollment was 172,273 in 2006-2007. Dropout rates in the region's school systems declined 31.5 percent from 16.4 in 2000 to 11.26 in 2004. See Tables 16 and 17.

PLACES

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham is geographically located in a six-county area in north central Alabama situated at the base of the Appalachian Mountain Range. It is made up of six of the seven counties in the Birmingham-Hoover metropolitan statistical area – Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker (all but Bibb). The region is highly diverse in terms of both natural and built environments and encompasses segments of diverse physiographic formations including: The Cumberland Plateau, Alabama Ridge and Valley, Piedmont Uplands, and The Coastal Plains. The topographical variety indicates comparable diversity of forests, woodlands, soils, and wildlife habitats. In addition, the region also contains three major river basins: Sipse/Warrior, Coosa/Tallapoosa, and Alabama/Cahaba.



Housing

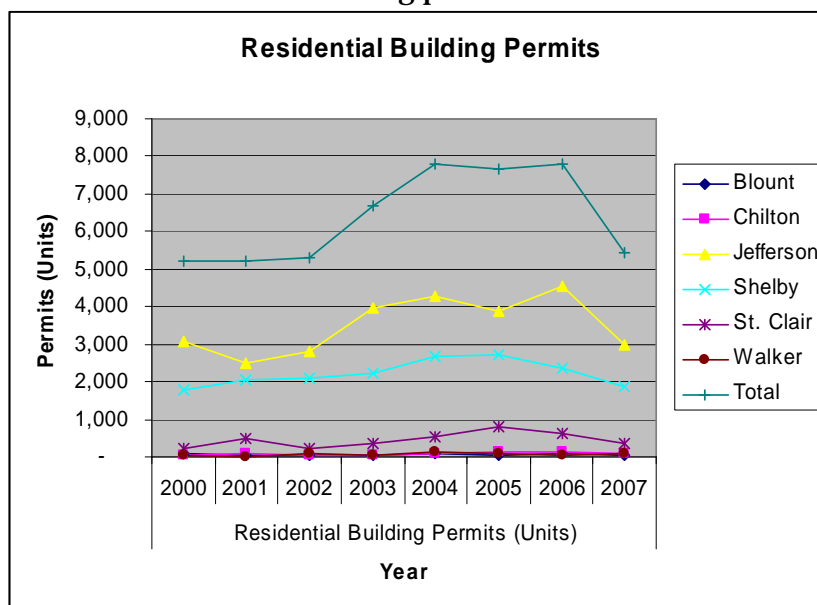
The number of households in the region increased from 404,955 in 2000 to 436,656 in 2008 (7.8 percent increase). Family households increased by 8 percent between 2000 and 2008. Married couple households increase almost 11 percent between 2000 and 2008. Family households with no husband made an insignificant increase of less than one (1) percent. See Tables 18, 19, 20, and 21.

The total number of housing units in the region increased by 8.9 percent to 485,802 units from the year 2000 to 2008, according to Claritas 2008 estimates. The increase from 1990 to 2006 for the region was 23 percent. Shelby County had the largest increase (32.3 percent) in housing units from 2000 to 2008 followed by St. Clair with a 19.2 percent increase in the same time period. Walker County experienced the smallest increase (2.6 percent) from 2000 to 2008 followed by Jefferson County with a 3.9 percent increase. See Table 22.

The median housing age in the region in 2007 was 26 years with houses in Shelby County having the lowest median age (15 years) to Jefferson County having the highest median age (37 years). The average owner-occupancy rate for the region in 2008 was 80 percent with Jefferson County having the lowest owner-occupancy rate (67 percent) and St. Clair County having the highest owner-occupancy rate (84 percent). See Table 23.

Of the total occupied housing units in the region, 98.4 percent had landline telephone connections in 2005. (Reference 2007 *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*).

As indicated by the graph below, Jefferson County has consistently had the greatest number of residential building permits. Walker and Chilton Counties have consistently had the least number of residential building permits since 2000.



Infrastructure

Water & Sewer

The six counties are located within four drainage basins - the Black Warrior, Coosa, Cahaba and Alabama rivers – that provide an average stream flow of 6,980 MGD. Of the 52 to 57 inches of annual rainfall, 5 inches contribute to groundwater recharge and over half becomes surface runoff entering streams and rivers. Alabama Power Company is a major controlling force over the region's water resources. It controls the water on the Black Warrior River with a hydropower dam on the Sipse Fork. It also owns four major reservoirs on the Coosa River.

The Cahaba River originates in western St. Clair County and extends through the region to Dallas County. The river, along with the reservoir Lake Purdy, provides raw water to the Shades Mountain filter plant.

There are over 70 water systems in the six-county region ranging from 32 systems using groundwater to 6 systems using surface water. These systems have a total water treatment capacity of 305 MGD; the Water Works and Sewer Board for the City of Birmingham is the largest area provider with a treatment capacity of 188 MGD (62 percent).

There are numerous public and private sewer collection and treatment systems. Jefferson County has over 2,600 miles of sewer lines and 140 pumping stations. There is increasing demand in the five remaining counties for expanded sewage collection and treatment systems to accommodate growth and system maintenance requirements.

*Note that water and sewer data is from the 2004 Malcolm Pirnie *Regional Water Resource Assessment* and may not represent the most recent data.

Electricity & Gas

Electric power is provided throughout the region predominately by Alabama Power Company. Other providers include the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Central Alabama Electric Cooperative. Natural gas can be provided in firm or interruptible service in large quantities. Alabama Gas Corporation is the region's largest natural gas distribution company and supplies most of the region; however, there are also municipal and private gas distribution systems serving communities throughout the region.

Transportation

There were 1,235 miles of state system roads and 6,931 miles of county system roads in 2000, down from 1,238 miles and 6,984 miles in 1992, respectively. However, vehicles per road mile increased from 536 to 636. The state system road mileage includes 273 miles of built interstate and 914 miles of state highway. Highways may sometimes share the same roadbed resulting in a double-count of road mileage. For example I-20 and I-59 overlap west of Birmingham. There were 7,700 highway road miles in 2003, down from 8,169 in 2000 (6 percent) and 8,164 in 1993.

The region is served by three Class 1 railroads (Burlington Northern, CSX and Norfolk Southern), over 100 trucking companies, over fifteen air cargo shippers and seven barge lines. Two of the railroad carriers offer Intermodal services. There are 7 airports throughout the region including the Birmingham International Airport, Bessemer Airport, Walker County Airport, Robbins Airport (Oneonta), Shelby County Airport, St. Clair County Airport (Pell City) and Gragg-Wade Airport (Clanton).

Environment

Topography

The region has four major geographical areas characterized by similar topography, soils, and land use. The *Cumberland Plateau's* topography varies from mountainous in the north to moderately broken with little variation in the west. Wide, gently rolling valleys and steep, rough ridges characterize the topography of the *Southern Appalachian Ridge and Valley*. Rolling hills, swamps and wetlands make up the *Upper Coastal Plain*. The *Ashland Plateau of the Piedmont Upland* consists of various metamorphic rocks such as slate, phyllite and marble.

Natural Resources

Alabama is known for its large forests, with over 22 million acres scattered throughout the state. These forests are valuable resources that provide wildlife habitats, recreation and outdoor opportunities and raw materials for industry. Ownership of the region's forest is primarily private landholders (81.8 percent) and private industry (14.2 percent); the remainder (4 percent) is public land. The region's forest base includes yellow pine (41.2 percent) and over 200 native species of hardwoods (58.7 percent).

The region contains an abundance of minerals including coal, limestone, sand, shale, and clay. Most of the coal reserves are concentrated in Jefferson and Walker but coal deposits are also found in Blount, St. Clair and Shelby Counties. In Jefferson County, commercially extracted coal is mined from the Warrior and Cahaba Coalfields which produce high-grade bituminous coal for coke, gas, steam and domestic uses. Coal along the eastern side of the Warrior Field is superb coking coal. In Walker County, coal is found in the Warrior and Plateau Coal Basins.

Clay and shale, suitable for the manufacture of brick and tile, are present and mined throughout the region. Fire clay, which is mined in Blount and Walker Counties, lies beneath coal seams and can be mined in conjunction with coal.

Sand and gravel deposits which are ideal for construction and industrial use occur in Blount, Chilton and Jefferson Counties. Limestone is used in construction aggregates, in the manufacture of Portland cement, and for the production of agricultural limestone. There are also many stone quarries located near the fringe of urban areas to minimize the distance required for hauling quarried materials to construction and other sites.

Water Resources

The region has abundant surface water and ground water resources. Water in area streams and groundwater reservoirs is derived primarily from precipitation, which

averages from 52 to 57 inches per year. Much of the water either evaporates, enters the soil zone where it is retained as soil moisture, is taken up and transpired by plants, or enters the groundwater system.

The greatest supply of surface water for the region comes from the Coosa, Warrior and Cahaba Rivers. The Cahaba River watershed, which drains an area of approximately 1,825 square miles in central Alabama, is the primary water source for Birmingham. Wastewater discharges, siltation (dirt), pesticides, and herbicide residues have degraded water quality in this river. Many of the region's highly developed areas are located in areas containing low yielding aquifers. The Pottsville Aquifer, which forms a part of the Cumberland Plateau and the Alabama Valley and Ridge ground water provinces, is a low-yielding aquifer that underlies all of Walker and part of Blount, Jefferson, St. Clair and Shelby counties. A higher yielding aquifer, the Valley and Ridge Aquifer, is found in parts of the same counties, excluding Walker. Gordo and Coker Aquifers, located in Chilton County, are in the Coastal Plain groundwater province and are moderate to high yielding.

During 2007, the region, as well as the State, suffered exceptional drought conditions. In the mid-summer of 2007, the Cahaba River was down 80 percent of its normal flow. Through the winter and spring, the State recovered for the most part. However, in July of 2008, over 90 percent of the State was in abnormally dry, moderate drought, or severe drought conditions; in early August 2008, some portions of the state returned to extreme drought condition.

Climate

The region's climate is humid and subtropical with mild winters and long, hot summers. The annual average mean temperature for the region is around 64 degrees Fahrenheit. Rainfall is usually abundant and distributed throughout the year. The annual rainfall in Birmingham is 52 inches. Mild winters rarely produce temperatures low enough to cause freeze penetrations to depths greater than six inches. This makes subsurface construction for foundations, roadways, and underground utilities more practical and affordable than in harsher climates. Primary tornado season is in March, April and with a secondary tornado season in November and December.

Pollutant Standards Index

According to the Alabama Partners for Clean Air, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has officially acknowledged that Jefferson and Shelby counties have met the national air quality standard for ozone, based on monitored data from the period 2003-2005. The area met the stringent 8-hour standard just two years after achieving compliance with the old 1-hour standard. Particle pollution (PM2.5) remains a major challenge for Jefferson and Shelby counties; a small part of southern Walker County is included in the PM2.5 nonattainment area.

Table 24: Air Quality Index (AQI) Criteria Pollutants

Category	2005		2006		2006	
	Days	%	Days	%	Days	%
Good	69	18.9%	67	18.3%	110	30.1%
Moderate	260	71.2%	272	74.3%	212	58.1%
USG	35	9.6%	25	6.8%	42	11.5%
Unhealthy	1	0.3%	1	0.3%	1	0.3%
Total	365	100%	365	100%	365	100%

Source: Jefferson County Department of Health



PROSPERITY

Economy

In 2007, the Birmingham region boasted the lowest unemployment rate of all cities of comparable size (population of over 1 million) in the United States. Highest levels of job growth were seen in the professional and business services, hospitality, education, government, and health sectors.

Labor Force Size and Unemployment

The region's labor force was 528,507 strong in 2007, increasing by 6 percent from 496,265 in 2000. Unemployment was at 3.1 percent in 2007, down from 3.4 in 2005 and from 4.7 in 2004, but up from 2.6 in 2000. See Tables 25 and 26.

Employment

Total employment in 2005 (full-time and part-time) stood at 644,377, up by 3.7 percent from the 2000 level of 621,380. Those private sectors showing a decline in employment include: agriculture services, mining, forestry, fishing; manufacturing; transportation and public utilities; wholesale trade; and retail trade. The region's employment by economic sector continues to shift towards service producing sectors, with significant increases in services sector (27 percent) and finance, insurance and real estate sector (13 percent). (Reference 2007 *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*).

Average Wage per Job

Average wage per job in the region was up four (4) percent to \$32,552 in 2006 from \$31,246 in 2005. The 2006 regional average was 88 percent of the state's average. See Table 27.

Per Capita Income

Average per capita income (PCI) for the region was \$24,492 in 2000 and \$31,754 in 2006, an increase of 29 percent. Blount County had the lowest PCI in 2006 (\$24,079) and Shelby County had the highest (\$41,612). (Reference 2007 *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*).

Manufacturing Firms

In 2000, there were 1,373 manufacturing firms in the region with foreign ownership of 37. In 2006 there were 53 firms under foreign ownership. See Table 28.

Business Growth

Business growth, measured by the total number of business establishments, grew throughout the region by 0.14 percent from 2000 to 2007 according to the US Census Bureau's County Business Patterns. Shelby County experienced the largest increase in its rate of business growth during the same period (41.11 percent) followed by St. Clair County at 20.52 percent. Blount, Chilton and Walker Counties all experienced an increase in business growth from 2000 to 2007; this contrasts their decline in 2005. See Table 29.

Retail Sales

Retail sales for the six-county region totaled \$12.3 billion in 2005 which translates into a projected \$11,500 per person. The top categories of sales include automotive (\$3.2 billion), general merchandise (\$1.7 billion), food (\$1.7 billion), and eating places (\$1.1 billion). (Source: W&P, 2005).

Employment by Sector

The largest employment sector in 2007 was “Wholesale & Retail Trade”; this sector made up 18% of the industry employment. The county with the largest concentration of “Wholesale & Retail Trade” employees was Jefferson County (74%). In each of the counties except Shelby, the largest sector was “Wholesale & Retail Trade”; in Shelby County, the largest employment sector was “Professional, Technological, and Business Services”. Jefferson had the overwhelmingly largest workforce of federal government employees with almost 4,000, where none of the other counties had more than 35. See Table 30.

Economic Clusters

Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector has been declining in the region for decades which also reflects the national trend. The region continues to experience a countering shift to a service and retail-based economy. However, the burgeoning automotive industry in central Alabama continues to spin off Tier 1 and Tier 2 automotive suppliers, warehousing and other support industries. Within a 200 mile radius of the City of Birmingham, the geographical center of the region, there are nine (9) automotive plants: Hyundai (AL), Honda (AL), Mercedes (AL), Saturn (TN), Nissan (TN), Nissan (MS), Toyota (MS), GM (KY), and Kia (GA). Additionally, some growth is expected as a result of the future addition of the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In 2006, automobiles were 35% of Alabama’s exports.

Yachiyo Manufacturing in Steele, Alabama, plans on expanding its facilities which will result in the creation of 50 new jobs. US Pipe announced its plans to build another plant in Bessemer that will result in the creation of 100 jobs. Global Industrial Components will create 25 new jobs with its relocation to a larger space in Blountsville. BAE Systems will construct a plant Cordova, Alabama, that will employ approximately 40 people. *Source: Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce*

Tourism, Culture & Arts

The region is experiencing rapid growth in tourism and is rapidly becoming a tourist, recreation and cultural destination. There are abundant hospitality, cultural, historical, sports and recreational attractions including world-class Robert Trent Jones golf courses, NASCAR, Barber Motorsports Park, the Birmingham Museum of Art (the largest publicly owned museum in the Southeast), Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, American Village, McWane Center, Minooka Off-Road Vehicle Park, Five Mile Creek, Oak Mountain State Park, Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve, Sloss Furnaces, Rickwood Field (the oldest baseball park in the nation), Vulcan Park, fishing and

birding sites, and the Cahaba River which has more species of fish per mile than any river in North America and is one of eight significant “hotspots of freshwater biodiversity” in the continental U.S. according to the Nature Conservancy. In fall of 2008, the Bass Pro Shop will open in Leeds, Alabama. As one portion of the Grand River master-planned community, the site will support a variety of retail as well as a 35-acre nature park. The Grand River community, which also contains Barber Motorsports Park, is expected to draw over three (3) million visitors each year upon completion.

According to the Americans for the Arts publication “Arts and Economic Prosperity III” and the Cultural Alliance of Greater Birmingham, there is “compelling new evidence that the nonprofit arts and culture are a significant industry in Greater Birmingham—one that generates \$136.45 million in local economic activity. This spending—\$68.14 million by nonprofit arts and culture organizations and an additional \$68.31 million in event-related spending by their audiences—supports 4,397 full-time equivalent jobs, generates \$87.03 million in household income to local residents, and delivers \$13.26 million in local and state government revenue.

Movies, Music, & Television

The Birmingham-Jefferson Film Office was established by the Metropolitan Development Board in order to provide the entertainment industry with a single point-of-contact for their needs. The office provides logistical assistance and permit processing. Additionally, the area offers an array of film and video production companies. In 2007, the largest of those companies was Crosscreek Television Productions with approximately 30 full-time employees. The region also hosts over forty (40) audio entertainment/production companies.

Non-profit Organizations

In 2007, United Way reported that there were over 3,000 non-profit organizations in the region. The largest of these was the Southern Research Institute, which conducts applied research in a variety of fields and employs over 600 people; in fiscal year 2005 the Institute had \$79 million in agency revenue. Southern Research Institute was followed by the United Way of Central Alabama with \$44.3 million in revenue. *Source: Birmingham Business Journal*

Publishing

The Greater Birmingham Region is host to many publishing companies. The two most notable are EBSCO and Southern Progress. EBSCO is a Birmingham-based firm that employs more than 6,200 people throughout its locations. EBSCO provides subscriptions to over 300,000 publications. *Forbes* put EBSCO in its Top 200 Privately Held Corporations list based on revenues and the number of employees. Additionally, EBSCO has diversified its services to include things like the manufacturing of fishing lures and steel joists. Southern Progress is the nation’s largest publisher of lifestyle-based magazines. It employs over 1,000 people and is known for nationally recognized magazines like *Southern Living*, widely distributed books, and its online resource *myrecipes*.

Environmental

Rice Oil announced its plans of Allied Energy Corporation – a plant in Birmingham that will produce 20 million gallons of biodiesel each year and create approximately 20 new jobs. Xenerga will also construct a plant that produces 5 million gallons a year of biodiesel. W&B Trading Company of Tuskegee will build a biodiesel plant in Pinson, Alabama that will generate 25 million gallons each year and create 35 new jobs. *Source: Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce*

Healthcare

The region is well-known for its quality healthcare facilities. The most prominent of these is University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Health System; this system includes The Kirklin Clinic (two locations), Callahan Eye Foundation Hospital, Spain Rehabilitation Center, UAB Highlands, Medical West Hospital in Bessemer, various satellite health centers, and UAB Hospital in downtown Birmingham. *US News* has ranked UAB Hospital as one of “America’s Best Hospitals” for seventeen years. Additionally, UAB Health System is affiliated with Baptist Health of Montgomery.

There are many other well-known, quality providers in the region. Children’s Hospital of Alabama is the primary pediatric teaching hospital for UAB School of Medicine. It is home to one of the nation’s leading pediatric hematology/oncology centers, a cystic fibrosis center, and the State of Alabama’s only pediatric burn center. Also, the hospital offers a variety of support services such as the International Adoption Clinic, Ronald McDonald House, and the Sunshine School.

St. Vincent’s Health System is a part of the Ascension Health group, the nation’s largest Catholic, non-profit health system. St. Vincent’s has locations in Birmingham, Blount County, East Birmingham, St. Clair County, and the One Nineteen Health and Wellness Center just off the Highway 280 corridor.

Brookwood Medical Center is a part of Tenet Health System and is known for its Women’s Medical Center and MedPlex Surgery Center.

Additionally, there are a variety of other hospitals throughout the region such as Walker Regional Medical Center, Shelby Baptist Medical Center, and Trinity Medical Center (formerly known as Montclair).

Research/Academic

Biotechnology and medical research industries are primarily linked to UAB which is the largest employer in the region. According to the National Institute for Health (NIH), Birmingham ranks fourth in the Southeast and 25th in the nation for medical and behavioral research allocations. Biomedical and health care research focuses on AIDS, cancer and heart research. UAB is a world-renowned academic health center with 80 interdisciplinary research centers. Its research dollars stimulate econometric local spending of about \$12 to \$13 dollars per every \$1 brought in. The region’s increase in the number of adults with bachelors and graduate degrees and can be attributable to UAB graduates, faculty and research staff.

Southern Research Institute, a center for scientific discovery and technology development, is a leading research facility for pharmaceutical, engineering, environmental and energy industries.

Business Incubators

The newly created Innovation Depot is sponsored by the City of Birmingham, Jefferson County and the private business community. In 2007, the Office for the Advancement of Developing Industries (OADI) and its Entrepreneurial Center merged into a single facility with 140,000 square feet of space. There were 52 client companies; 8 graduated; 19 new clients were taken in. There were 98 firms who applied for residence in the Innovation Depot in 2007.

The Bessemer Business Incubation System (BBIS) houses light manufacturing, light industrial, and information technology firms. BBIS was the first facility in the state with the specific purpose of business incubation. Between its two locations, BBIS currently houses 22 businesses.

Technology

Technology is a rapidly growing industry sector. There are over 400 technology companies in the Birmingham area alone and Birmingham ranks among the top ten largest Southeastern technology centers. TechBirmingham works with existing economic development and business retention organizations to attract new technology companies and to grow existing technology businesses. As a current and prospective location for technology-based business and investment, the Birmingham area provides resources for the industry including proximity to leading-edge technology and generators of leading-edge technology, well-managed and successful incubators, a well-trained technology workforce, low operating costs, geography, and community culture.

Resources and Assets

Education and Training Locations

Bevill State Community College

1411 Indiana Avenue, Jasper, 35501

www.bscc.edu

Two-year, community college

Birmingham School of Law

205 20th Street North, 35203

www.bsol.edu

Law school, offers evening courses

Birmingham-Southern College

900 Arkadelphia Road, 35254

www.bsc.edu

Four-year, private liberal arts college

Herzing College

280 West Valley Avenue, 35209

www.herzing.edu

Career college

Jefferson State Community College

2601 Carson Road, 35215

www.jeffstateonline.com

Two-year, community college

Lawson State Community College

3060 Wilson Road, 35221

www.lawsonstate.edu

Two-year, community college

Training Locations

Athena – The Training Professionals
New Horizons Computer Learning
Center

Jeff State Center for Community and
Corporate Education

The Moser Group

Nonprofit Resource Center of Alabama

Dale Carnegie Training

Lee Hecht Harrison

Samford after Sundown

Miles College

5500 Myron Massey Boulevard, 35064

www.miles.edu

Four-year, liberal arts, church-related
college

Samford University

800 Lakeshore Drive, 35229

www.samford.edu

Private, national doctoral research
university

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

1530 3rd Avenue South, 35294

www.uab.edu

Public university and academic medical
center

The University of Montevallo

Station 6001, Montevallo, 35115

www.montevallo.edu

Public, liberal arts college

Virginia College at Birmingham

65 Bagby Drive, 35209

www.vc.edu

Career college

Dyson Leadership Institute

Central Alabama Women's Business
Center

Spaulding Protocol

Professional Speech Services of Alabama

Strategic Visions Inc.

Capstone Development International

The Gulas Group

Construction Education Foundation of
Alabama

Needs and Opportunities

Hispanic Population Growth: Increases in Hispanic population will increase the demand for bilingual employees in the workplace, schools, businesses, and services. Estimates of the Hispanic population for the region were about 33,057 in the year 2008, an increase of 80 percent from 2000.

Table 32: Hispanic Population

<i>Hispanic population - region</i>	
2000	18,357
2004	25,572
2007	29,804
2008	33,057
2000 - 2008	80%

Migration Trends: In-migration from outside the region is occurring primarily in Shelby County and suburban Jefferson County. More significantly are the in-migration changes within the region, particularly movement from the city of Birmingham to suburban Jefferson County and from existing suburban areas in Jefferson to surrounding counties such as southern Blount, all of Shelby County, and western St. Clair. According to the 2005 Census Bureau's 2005 Population Estimates, the population of the City of Birmingham has declined by nearly 15 percent from 265,968 in 1990 to 231,483 in 2005. Walker County is expected to experience growth along the new I-22 (Corridor X) corridor. Factors that influence migration the most include perceptions of local public school systems, rising median household and disposable income, and the increased availability of retail conveniences. The implications of these migration trends include continued sprawl, the rising need of urban redevelopment, and the much-needed improvement - both real and perceived - of urban public school systems.

Employment: Employment opportunities are on the increase in the region while the unemployment rate has been relatively stable over the past several years. Major employment sectors include healthcare, education, utilities, government and financial services. Major employers include the following:

University of Alabama at Birmingham	Bruno's Supermarkets Incorporated
AT&T	Children's Health System
Regions Financial Corporation	Wachovia Bank
City of Birmingham	Alabama Power Company
Honda Manufacturing of Alabama	BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama
Baptist Health System Incorporated	St. Vincent's Hospital
Mercedes-Benz US International Incorporated	United States Postal Service
	EBSCO Industries Incorporated
	Southern Companies

Greenspace: The Birmingham area is currently positioned to have the largest urban public Greenspace and parks in the country. There are numerous efforts and initiatives throughout the region to address the potential and opportunities for expansion and linking new and existing Greenspace. Much of this effort is being organized through the development of a regional greenspace master plan initiative. In Birmingham, effort is underway to build two major urban parks - the Railroad Reservation Park and the Red Mountain Park - and to significantly expand the Ruffner Mountain Nature Center.

Northern Beltline: The region's existing interstate transportation system centers on the City of Birmingham which is the economic center of the region. The interstate system is being expanded to accommodate increased vehicular and truck traffic. The Northern Beltline, which is the northern segment of I-459, is scheduled for construction in the 2030 Projections. The segment from I-59 near St. Clair County to I-65 in Gardendale is expected to be completed first; however, right-of-way acquisition and preliminary engineering is underway for the entire project.

Corridor X (I-22): The long-awaited completion of Corridor X is scheduled to be completed in the 2010. Designated to become I-22, this interstate will connect Birmingham to Memphis.

Highway 280: This is the major connector between Jefferson and Shelby Counties and is one of the highest capacity transportation corridors in the state. Highway 280 is a constant and chronic issue in terms of congestion, and mitigation efforts are continuous in addressing this problem.

Sewer: Aging infrastructure and expanding infrastructure continue to challenge the sewer capacity of the region leading to rapidly increasing sewer rates and a significant number of houses on septic tanks.

PROGRESS

Projects

Through the examination of the mission, vision, and goals, projects and strategies were developed to achieve each of those goals.

Regional Cooperation

Cooperation throughout the region is an under-emphasized priority for the most part. RPC seeks to bring regional cooperation forward through its daily efforts. More specifically, however, RPC will assist the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce in conducting a “gap” analysis of economic development service providers. This analysis would identify what each provider does and what their service areas are; ultimately, the analysis would highlight what agencies are duplicating services and what services are not being provided or are under-provided.

Another mechanism for regional cooperation will be the RPC’s participation in the Alabama Rural Action Commission (ARAC). This commission was created by Governor Bob Riley in 2007 with the goal of improving statewide quality of life. RPC’s executive director, Charles Ball, is deputy co-chair of the Region 3 committee. Currently, ARAC focuses on economic development, education, health, and workforce development.

Workforce Development

The Governor’s Office of Workforce Development guides ten regional workforce development councils; the RPCGB region falls under the Region 4 Workforce Development Council. The *State Workforce Development Council Operating Guidelines* designate that the purpose of the councils is

“To facilitate establishment and implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated seamless workforce development system for the region that supports economic and job development activities to include needs of existing businesses and industries.”

The *Guidelines* also state that the councils should be “business-led and business-driven”.

The Region 4 Workforce Development Council meets on a monthly basis in rotating locations throughout the region. In the summer of 2008 the Council established a strategic plan to further explore its vision and goals. The RPCGB supports the vision and the goals and strategies established by the Council (reference *Region 4 Workforce Development Council: 2018 Strategic Plan*). For specific projects identified for workforce development, see Goal 2 in the appended project listing.

Public, Private, & Non-Profit Cooperation

In order to facilitate relationships among the public, private, and non-profit sectors, The EDD is actively seeking to assist in the establishment of a state chapter of the Urban Land Institute, a non-profit education and research organization focused on responsible and sustainable land use and development.

Also, RPC will continue working with the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce in order to link itself with private interests. RPC will further utilize resources available through other public agencies and market those resources to its members. Finally, RPC will offer its assistance in non-profit-led initiatives throughout the region.

Transportation Improvements

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (Jefferson and Shelby Counties) and the Heart of Alabama Rural Planning Organization (Blount, Chilton, St. Clair, and Walker Counties) are the primary avenue for identifying and implementing transportation projects in conjunction with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). These two organizations are housed within the Regional Planning Commission and organized by its staff. The RPCGB supports the projects identified in the *Birmingham 2030 Long-range Transportation Plan* and the *State Transportation Improvement Program* as projects whose implementation would support economic development (reference *Birmingham 2030 Long-range Transportation Plan* and the *State Transportation Improvement Program*). For additional transportation improvement projects, see Goal 4 in the appended project listing.

Infrastructure

One of the forefront needs of the region is adequate infrastructure to support growth. RPC, in an effort to assist its member communities, will offer support in identifying funding sources and administering projects to improve infrastructure throughout the region. Additionally, RPC will seek to identify a funding mechanism to insert business incubators throughout the region. Infrastructure improvements that have already been identified can be seen under Goal 5 of Appendix B.

Marketing Regional Assets

In order To market and improve regional assets, RPC has scoped the creation of a website that will maintain a database of available sites and buildings throughout the region. RPC will collaborate with various agencies and organizations in order to successfully and flawlessly implement this tool. Such a tool would provide a comprehensive site to which economic developers could link their websites.

Quality of Life

In addition to supporting the ARAC initiative to improve the State's quality of life, RPC will engage a variety of other initiatives to improve the region's quality of life. The EDD will seek to develop the principals of sustainable growth for the region and promote those principals as the uniform definition of sustainability for the EDD. The EDD will also continue its efforts with the Alabama Partnership for Clean Air (APCA) in order to improve air quality. The EDD will develop relationships with healthcare-based groups in order to assist in the marketing of local research products in order to inject strength healthcare business ventures. Finally, RPC will support efforts to retain residents – especially young professionals.

Performance Measures

In order to best assess the EDD’s progress on its strategies, a variety of performance measures will be used.

<i>Performance Measure</i>	<i>Base Year (2008-2009)</i>	<i>Year 2009-2010</i>
Jobs Retained		
Jobs Created		
Total Jobs		

<i>Performance Measure</i>	<i>Base Year (2008-2009)</i>	<i>Year 2009-2010</i>
Public Investment		
Private Investment		
Total Investment		

Additionally, the EDD will assess changes in the economic environment of the region and the number and types of projects it implements each year.

<i>Performance Measure</i>	<i>Base Year (2008-2009)</i>	<i>Year 2009-2010</i>
New Businesses		
New Industries		
Largest Employer		
Largest Sector of Employment		

Partners & Resources for Economic Development

There are a host of federal, state, regional and local government, nonprofit and private organizations that provide resources, support and partnerships for economic development. For potential funding information and funding availability, contact the economic development partners: RPC, MDB, Birmingham Chamber and respective economic development organizations within each community and county. The following lists provide ***examples*** of these invaluable resources and relationships.

Economic Development Organizations & Chambers of Commerce, including:

- Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Blount Co. Chamber of Commerce
- Chilton Co. Chamber of Commerce
- Shelby Co. Chamber of Commerce
- St. Clair Co. Chamber of Commerce
- Walker Co. Chamber of Commerce
- Local and regional chambers
- Metropolitan Development Board (MDB)
- Operation New Birmingham (ONB)
- Economic Development Partnership of Alabama (EDPA)
- Jefferson County Economic and Industrial Development Authority
- Blount Co. Industrial Development Board (IDB)
- Chilton County IDB
- Shelby Co. Economic and Industrial Development Authority
- St. Clair Co. Economic Development Council
- Walker Co. Economic and Industrial Development Authority
- Local and regional development organizations and authorities

Regional Partners & Resources, including:

- Region 2020
- Biotechnology Assoc. of Alabama
- Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association
- Alabama Information Technology Association
- Alabama Association of Regional Councils
- Economic Development Association of Alabama
- University of Alabama Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER)
- Cultural Alliance of Greater Birmingham

State & Federal Agencies, including:

- Alabama Dept. of Econ. and Comm. Development (ADECA)
- Alabama Dev't Office (ADO)
- Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel
- Office of the Governor

Corporate Partners, including:

- Alabama Power Company
- Alagasco
- TechBirmingham
- AT&T
- USX Real Estate
- Daniel Corporation
- Compass
- Wachovia
- Graham & Company
- Regions
- First Commercial

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: TABLES

1. Population
2. Population by Age
3. Population by Gender
4. Population by Race by County
5. Poverty by County by Year
6. Children in Poverty under the Age of 18 Years
7. Families in Poverty
8. Median Household Income (2005)
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10. Educational Attainment (less than 9th grade)
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Table 1: Population

	<i>Population</i>				<i>% change</i>	
	1990	2000	2005	2008	1990-2000	2000-2008
Blount	39,248	51,024	55,725	57,631	30%	13%
Chilton	32,458	39,593	41,744	42,469	22%	7%
Jefferson	651,525	662,047	657,229	656,391	2%	-1%
Shelby	99,358	143,293	171,465	187,030	29%	31%
St. Clair	50,009	64,742	72,330	78,418	44%	21%
Walker	67,670	70,713	70,117	70,013	4%	-1%
Total	940,268	1,031,412	1,068,610	1,091,952	10%	6%

Source: US Census Bureau/ Claritas Demographics

Table 2: Population by Age

	<i>Under 18 Yrs</i>		<i>18 to 44 Yrs</i>		<i>45 to 64 Yrs</i>		<i>65 Yrs & Over</i>	
	2000	2008	2000	2008	2000	2008	2000	2008
Blount	12,948	13,415	19,198	21,611	12,320	14,548	6,558	8,057
Chilton	10,165	10,138	15,081	16,029	9,250	10,742	5,097	5,560
Jefferson	164,240	159,141	260,109	230,865	147,413	177,051	90,285	89,334
Shelby	37,620	47,767	59,978	72,344	33,516	49,706	12,179	17,213
St. Clair	16,417	18,025	25,033	30,429	15,714	20,095	7,578	9,869
Walker	16,636	15,803	25,905	24,481	17,719	18,564	10,453	11,165
Total	258,026	264,289	405,304	395,759	235,932	290,706	132,150	141,198

Source: US Census Bureau/ Claritas Demographics

Table 3: Population by Gender

	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>	
	2000	2008	2000	2008
Blount	25,476	28,651	25,548	28,980
Chilton	19,581	20,961	20,012	21,508
Jefferson	312,089	311,442	349,958	344,949
Shelby	70,257	92,254	73,036	94,776
St. Clair	32,652	39,371	32,090	39,047
Walker	34,117	33,867	36,596	36,146
Total	494,172	526,546	537,240	565,406

Source: US Census Bureau/ Claritas Demographics

Table 4: Population by Race by County

	<i>Blount</i>		<i>Chilton</i>		<i>Jefferson</i>	
	2000	2008	2000	2008	2000	2008
White	48,512	54,096	34,330	36,458	384,639	358,921
Black	606	937	4,200	4,510	260,608	273,448
AIAN	250	281	111	125	1,408	1,866
Asian	71	143	72	135	5,971	7,999
NHPI	12	15	6	8	188	382
Other	1,054	1,534	599	876	3,907	6,761
Two or more races	519	625	275	357	5,326	7,014
Total	51,024	57,631	39,593	42,469	662,047	656,391

	<i>St. Clair</i>		<i>Shelby</i>		<i>Walker</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	2000	2008	2000	2008	2000	2008	2000	2008
White	58,288	69,896	128,671	160,639	65,163	63,921	719,603	743,931
Black	5,263	6,646	10,606	18,867	4,364	4,553	285,647	308,961
AIAN	242	289	473	566	201	244	2,685	3,371
Asian	112	262	1,477	2,729	141	192	7,844	11,460
NHPI	17	17	26	32	14	16	263	470
Other	267	438	1,013	2,267	220	348	7,060	12,224
Two or more races	553	870	1,027	1,930	610	739	8,310	11,535
Total	64,742	78,418	143,293	187,030	70,713	70,013	1,031,412	1,091,952

Source: US Census Bureau/ Claritas Demographics

Table 5: Poverty by County by Year

	1990	2000	2003	2004	2005
Blount	5,938	5,930	6,511	6,844	6248
Chilton	5,495	6,152	6,138	6,137	6627
Jefferson	102,276	95,674	93,507	99,413	100709
Shelby	8,922	8,932	8,981	11,854	10653
St. Clair	7,146	7,584	11,282	9,264	9242
Walker	11,572	11,478	10,227	11,206	10714
Total	141,349	135,750	136,646	144,718	144,193

Source: Census/ASDC

Table 6: Children in Poverty under the Age of 18 Years

	1990	2000	2003	2004	2005
Blount	1,807	1,748	2,265	2,207	2,160
Chilton	1,658	2,001	2,240	2,232	2,227
Jefferson	35,664	33,096	31,981	32,300	37,317
Shelby	2,839	2,743	3,201	3,941	3,352
St. Clair	2,297	2,533	3,292	3,112	3,276
Walker	3,873	3,471	3,460	3,523	3,525
Total	48,138	45,592	46,439	47,315	51,857

Source: Census/ASDC

Table 7: Families in Poverty

	1990	2000	2005	2007	2008
Blount	1,329	1,271	1,430	1,472	1,507
Chilton	1,225	1,438	1,548	1,598	1,615
Jefferson	22,523	20,639	20,235	20,179	19,986
Shelby	1,981	1,892	2,334	2,476	2,638
St. Clair	1,704	1,780	2,044	2,199	2,299
Walker	2,806	2,715	2,767	2,762	2,780
Total	31,568	29,735	30,358	30,686	30,825

Source: Census/Claritas

Table 8: Median Household Income (2005)

Area	Median Household Income
United States	\$ 46,242
Alabama	\$ 36,936
Blount	\$ 40,588
Chilton	\$ 36,098
Jefferson	\$ 41,821
St. Clair	\$ 45,416
Shelby	\$ 61,563
Walker	\$ 33,666
Total / Average	\$ 43,192

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Estimates Branch. Release date: 01.2008

Table 9: Educational Attainment (% High School Graduate)

	1990	2000	2005	2007	2008
Blount	60.54%	70.45%	70.36%	70.46%	70.39%
Chilton	56.58%	66.19%	66.09%	66.08%	66.06%
Jefferson	73.85%	80.89%	81.25%	81.48%	81.55%
Shelby	78.19%	86.85%	86.78%	86.81%	86.69%
St. Clair	61.00%	71.34%	71.57%	71.69%	71.75%
Walker	56.04%	67.21%	67.34%	67.48%	67.51%
Total	71.19%	79.07%	79.35%	79.55%	78.45%

Source: US Census/Claritas

Table 10: Educational Attainment (Less than 9th Grade)

	1990	2000	2005	2007	2008
Blount	17.15%	11.06%	11.03%	10.98%	10.96%
Chilton	19.14%	12.14%	12.14%	12.16%	12.15%
Jefferson	9.10%	5.60%	5.49%	5.42%	5.39%
Shelby	8.10%	4.11%	4.16%	4.15%	4.18%
St. Clair	16.50%	9.29%	9.17%	9.19%	7.70%
Walker	19.43%	11.69%	11.65%	11.60%	11.59%
Total	10.81%	6.58%	6.49%	6.46%	6.36%

Source: US Census/Claritas

Table 11: Educational Attainment (9th through 12th Grade)

	1990	2000	2005	2007	2008
Blount	22.30%	18.50%	18.61%	18.56%	18.65%
Chilton	24.28%	21.67%	21.77%	21.76%	21.79%
Jefferson	17.05%	13.51%	13.26%	13.09%	13.05%
Shelby	13.71%	9.04%	9.06%	9.05%	9.13%
St. Clair	22.51%	19.37%	19.26%	19.12%	16.02%
Walker	24.52%	21.10%	21.01%	20.93%	20.90%
Total	18.00%	14.36%	14.15%	14.01%	13.81%

Source: US Census/Claritas

Table 12: Educational Attainment (Some College)

	1990	2000	2005	2007	2008
Blount	14.46%	18.62%	18.62%	18.63%	18.63%
Chilton	13.12%	16.38%	16.37%	16.32%	16.32%
Jefferson	20.13%	22.70%	22.81%	22.83%	22.83%
Shelby	18.89%	22.08%	22.10%	22.15%	22.15%
St. Clair	15.39%	20.31%	20.47%	20.55%	20.55%
Walker	12.44%	17.74%	17.72%	17.77%	17.77%
Total	18.72%	21.67%	21.72%	21.74%	21.74%

Source: US Census/Claritas

Table 13: Educational Attainment (Associate Degree)

	1990	2000	2005	2007	2008
Blount	4.34%	6.22%	6.17%	6.15%	6.16%
Chilton	3.43%	4.11%	4.12%	4.11%	4.10%
Jefferson	5.54%	5.67%	5.70%	5.70%	5.70%
Shelby	4.63%	4.97%	5.01%	5.00%	4.96%
St. Clair	4.26%	5.30%	5.39%	5.34%	4.47%
Walker	4.45%	5.60%	5.66%	5.67%	5.68%
Total	5.18%	5.51%	5.53%	5.52%	5.43%

Source: US Census/Claritas

Table 14: Educational Attainment (Bachelor Degree)

	1990	2000	2005	2007	2008
Blount	4.56%	5.85%	5.83%	5.84%	5.85%
Chilton	4.16%	5.91%	5.80%	5.82%	5.83%
Jefferson	13.05%	15.86%	16.07%	16.24%	16.29%
Shelby	20.28%	25.57%	25.59%	25.55%	25.43%
St. Clair	5.37%	7.54%	7.69%	7.73%	6.53%
Walker	4.10%	5.35%	5.34%	5.43%	5.44%
Total	12.08%	15.06%	15.32%	15.47%	15.29%

Source: US Census/Claritas

Table 15: Educational Attainment (Master Degree or Higher)

	1990	2000	2005	2007	2008
Blount	2.46%	3.75%	3.73%	3.75%	2.68%
Chilton	3.30%	4.03%	3.96%	3.94%	2.72%
Jefferson	6.85%	8.74%	8.90%	8.97%	5.63%
Shelby	8.75%	11.22%	11.18%	11.16%	7.60%
St. Clair	3.11%	3.57%	3.55%	3.53%	2.18%
Walker	3.07%	3.78%	3.79%	3.86%	2.94%
Total	6.27%	7.98%	8.10%	8.14%	5.21%

Source: US Census/Claritas

Table 16: Public School Enrollment

	2000	2007	Change '00-'07	% Change
Blount	8,499	9,393	894	10.5%
Chilton	6,804	7,460	656	9.6%
Jefferson	109,851	100,902	(8,949)	-8.1%
Shelby	20,243	31,213	10,970	54.2%
St. Clair	10,975	12,307	1,332	12.1%
Walker	10,870	10,998	128	1.2%
Total	167,242	172,273	5,031	3.0%

Source: Alabama State Department of Education and RPC Estimates

Table 17: Public School Drop-out Rate (Projected)

	2000	2007	Change	% Change
Blount	19.90	10	-9.90	-49.7%
Chilton	23.42	10.41	-13.01	-55.6%
Jefferson	10.70	11.2	0.50	4.7%
Shelby	15.16	5.83	-9.33	-61.5%
St. Clair	20.46	15.4	-5.06	-24.7%
Walker	8.90	14.7	5.80	65.2%
Total	16.42	11.26	-5.17	-31.5%

Source: Alabama State Department of Education and RPC Estimates

Table 18: Households

	1990	2000	2005	2008
Blount	14,644	19,265	21,123	22,025
Chilton	12,114	15,287	16,197	16,734
Jefferson	251,479	263,265	263,555	265,826
Shelby	35,985	54,631	64,643	73,275
St. Clair	17,666	24,143	26,736	29,983
Walker	25,554	28,364	28,537	28,813
Total	357,442	404,955	420,791	436,656

Source: Census/Claritas

Table 19: Family Households

	1990	2000	2005	2008
Blount	11,654	14,807	16,131	16,929
Chilton	9,352	11,339	11,937	12,412
Jefferson	176,573	175,950	175,015	177,662
Shelby	27,767	40,617	47,753	54,478
St. Clair	14,094	18,437	20,286	22,897
Walker	19,534	20,469	20,462	20,793
Total	258,974	281,619	291,584	305,171

Source: Census/Claritas

Table 20: Married Couple Households

	1990	2000	2005	2008
Blount	10,315	12,616	13,752	14,433
Chilton	8,000	9,185	9,679	10,062
Jefferson	132,510	121,478	122,444	125,440
Shelby	24,449	34,769	40,896	46,704
St. Clair	12,258	15,166	16,716	18,872
Walker	16,562	15,979	16,011	16,305
Total	204,094	209,193	219,498	231,816

Source: Census/Claritas

Table 21: Family Households No Husband

	1990	2000	2005	2008
Blount	1,054	1,514	1,648	1,727
Chilton	1,037	1,598	1,673	1,745
Jefferson	38,520	45,205	43,532	43,195
Shelby	2,786	4,422	5,190	5,879
St. Clair	1,444	2,403	2,623	2,958
Walker	2,519	3,364	3,335	3,364
Total	47,360	58,506	58,001	58,868

Source: Census/Claritas

Table 22: Housing Units

	Housing Units				Change 2000-2008	
	1990	2000	2007	2008	#	%
Blount	15,790	21,158	22,808	23,107	1,949	9.2%
Chilton	13,883	17,651	18,823	18,983	1,332	7.5%
Jefferson	273,097	288,162	299,010	299,463	11,301	3.9%
Shelby	39,201	59,302	75,318	78,456	19,154	32.3%
St. Clair	20,382	27,303	31,391	32,544	5,241	19.2%
Walker	28,427	32,417	32,944	33,249	832	2.6%
Total	390,780	445,993	480,294	485,802	39,809	8.9%

Source: Census/Claritas

Table 23: Median Housing Age (years)

	1990	2000	2005	2007	2008
Blount	18	21	23	25	25
Chilton	19	23	26	28	29
Jefferson	26	32	35	37	37
Shelby	11	13	14	15	15
St. Clair	16	18	20	20	20
Walker	20	24	28	30	30
Total	18	22	24	26	26

Source: Census/Claritas

Table 24: Air Quality Index (AQI) Criteria Pollutants

Category	2005		2006		2006	
	Days	%	Days	%	Days	%
Good	69	18.9%	67	18.3%	110	30.1%
Moderate	260	71.2%	272	74.3%	212	58.1%
USG	35	9.6%	25	6.8%	42	11.5%
Unhealthy	1	0.3%	1	0.3%	1	0.3%
Total	365	100%	365	100%	365	100%

Source: Jefferson County Department of Health

Table 25: Labor Force Size

	2000	2007
Blount	23,896	26,909
Chilton	18,240	19,836
Jefferson	317,658	317,707
Shelby	77,111	98,921
St. Clair	29,492	35,220
Walker	29,868	29,914
Total	496,265	528,507

Source: ADIR

Table 26: Unemployment

	2000	2007
Blount	2.9	2.8
Chilton	2.6	3.0
Jefferson	3.9	3.4
Shelby	2.1	2.3
St. Clair	2.4	3.1
Walker	3.4	3.8
Total	2.9	3.1

Source: ADIR

Table 27: Average Wage per Job

	1990	2000	2006	Change '00-'06	% Change
Blount	10,168	19,966	24,079	4,113	21%
Chilton	9,826	19,654	24,893	5,239	27%
Jefferson	13,277	30,407	40,581	10,174	33%
Shelby	16,237	32,912	41,612	8,700	26%
St. Clair	10,596	21,305	28,132	6,827	32%
Walker	10,105	20,709	28,140	7,431	36%
Total	12,033	24,492	31,574	7,082	29%

Source: CBER

Table 28: Foreign Ownership

	1990	2000	2005	2006
Blount	0	0	0	0
Chilton	0	2	2	2
Jefferson	19	25	33	34
Shelby	3	5	5	5
St. Clair	3	5	7	9
Walker	0	0	1	3
Total	25	37	48	53

Source: ADO

Table 29: Business Growth (Number of Establishments)

	2001	2007*	Growth
Blount	787	805	2.29%
Chilton	783	821	4.85%
Jefferson	18,591	18855	1.42%
St. Clair	1,155	1392	20.52%
Shelby	3,413	4816	41.11%
Walker	1,411	1490	5.60%
Region Total	28,141	28,179	0.14%

Source: BLS

Table 30: Employment by Sector

<i>INDUSTRY DIVISION</i>	<i>BLOUNT</i>	<i>CHILTON</i>	<i>JEFFERSON</i>	<i>ST. CLAIR</i>	<i>SHELBY</i>	<i>WALKER</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Mining	NA	NA	1,693	NA	359	476	2,528.0
Construction	688	817	21,252	1,703	7,037	618	32,115.0
Manufacturing	1,605	1,680	29,607	2,151	6,359	1,945	43,347.0
Wholesale & Retail Trade	1,615	1,717	65,210	3,546	11,843	3,978	87,909.0
Transportation & Warehousing	NA	NA	9,226	314	735	582	10,857.0
Utilities & Information	80	82	14,238	221	2,537	554	17,712.0
Finance & Insurance	307	332	27,492	581	7,909	823	37,444.0
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	59	67	5,128	140	1,023	138	6,555.0
Healthcare & Education	969	763	48,859	1,567	6,386	3,259	61,803.0
Accommodation & Food Services	542	819	28,197	1,532	5,256	1,776	38,122.0
Prof., Tech., & Business Services	429	348	48,065	1,240	12,713	903	63,698.0
Leisure & Hospitality	863	838	31,431	2,027	6,855	2,046	44,060.0
Federal Government*	34	2	3,999	5	31	27	4,098.0
State & Local Government	393	648	14,100	1,083	2,276	665	19,165.0
Other	195	197	10379	461	2290	458	13,980.0
Total	7,779.0	8,310.0	358,876.0	16,571.0	73,609.0	18,248.0	483,393.0

Source: BLS-CES

APPENDIX B: PROJECTS

The projects identified below are a result of the evaluation of previously identified projects as well as a call to all member municipalities in the Economic Development District for new projects. Projects are classified according to the goal that they best fulfill.

Goal 1: To foster regional cooperation.

Economic Development Service Gap Analysis (Region)

Cost Estimate: unknown

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: in kind

Performance Measures:

Responsible Agency: RPC, Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, Metropolitan Development Board, Region 2020, Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau, Operation New Birmingham

Small Business Development Center (Region)

The region would like to reinstate and support the UAB Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Due to the SBDC's closing in fiscal year 2009, the region will have lost a vital small business counseling asset as well as an extremely beneficial procurement program.

Cost Estimate: unknown

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: RPC match

Performance Measures:

Responsible Agency: RPC

Goal 2: To develop and maintain a strong, competitive workforce.

Workforce Analysis (Region)

The EDD seeks to develop a mechanism for the analysis of the region's workforce.

Cost Estimate: unknown

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: State

Performance Measures:

Responsible Agency: RPC, Region 4 Workforce Development Council

ERISS Job System (Region)

This technology is an information system for identifying needs and linking interested parties up with labor and workforce information.

Cost Estimate: \$100,000

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: USDL

Performance Measures:

Responsible Agency: WIB, UW

Workforce Development (Regional)

Cost Estimate: unknown

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: unknown

Performance Measures: job creation, job retention, public investments, private investments

Responsible Agency: RPCGB

Five Mile Creek Greenway Youth Corp (Jefferson County)

The goal of the Five Mile Creek Greenway Youth Corps Summer Program is to provide employment opportunities and environmental education to hard-working high school students in Jefferson County who are interested in building the parks and trails of the Five Mile Creek Greenway.

Cost Estimate: \$200,000

EDA Assistance Sought: \$100,000

Additional Funding Sources: pending public and private funds

Performance Measures: job creation, public investments, private investments

Responsible Agency: Cawaco RC&D Council

Lincoln Theater Artist in Residence Program (Bessemer)

The City of Bessemer Department of Community Development seeks assistance in the purchase and renovation of the historic Lincoln Theater building in downtown Bessemer and the building adjacent to it. These buildings will house the City's Artist in Residence Program, provide a working movie theater where there is currently only one theater in the City, provide a stage, and house the office of the program. The facility will also host art galleries, studios, and retail shops for artists.

Cost Estimate: \$350,000

EDA Assistance Sought: \$100,000

Additional Funding Sources: \$125,000 in CDBG funds; \$125,000 from the City's general fund

Performance Measures: job creation, public investments, private investments, preservation and renovation of a National Historic site

Responsible Agency: City of Bessemer Department of Community Development

Goal 3: To promote relationships among the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Regional Existing Business Assistance Program (Region)

This program would seek to improve the retention rates of existing businesses and survey business needs.

Cost Estimate: \$25,000

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: ADO, MDB, EDPA, CCAA
Performance Measures: job creation, job retention, private investment
Responsible Agency: EBT, ONB

ULI Support (Region)

The RPC wishes to establish a chapter of the Urban Land Institute for the State of Alabama. This is an education and research non-profit geared towards responsible and sustainable growth and development.

Cost Estimate: unknown
EDA Assistance Sought: unknown
Additional Funding Sources: ULI, AARC
Performance Measures:
Responsible Agency: RPC, ULI, AARC

Goal 4: To establish a well-connected, accessible, multi-modal highway, freight and public transportation network.

Birmingham 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (Region)

All projects that fall under this plan as well as its subsequent Transportation Improvement Program are supported as projects of the CEDS.

State Transportation Improvement Program (Region)

All projects that fall under this plan are supported as projects of the CEDS.

Northern Beltline (Region)

Cost Estimate: \$1 billion
EDA Assistance Sought: unknown
Additional Funding Sources: federal, state
Performance measures:
Responsible Agency: ALDOT, MPO, FHWA

Birmingham Airport Improvements (Region)

Cost Estimate: unknown
EDA Assistance Sought: unknown
Additional Funding Sources: FAA, City of Birmingham
Performance measures:
Responsible Agency: Birmingham Airport Authority

Highway 280 Improvements (Region)

Cost Estimate: \$10 million
EDA Assistance Sought: unknown
Additional Funding Sources: ALDOT, FHWA, MPO
Performance measures:
Responsible Agency: Counties, MPO, State

Intersecting Roadways (Region)

Cost Estimate:

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: unknown

Performance Measures: job creation, job retention, public investments, private investments

Responsible Agency: RPCGB

Road Improvements (Town of Susan Moore)

The Town of Susan Moore seeks assistance in the upgrade and improvement of its road infrastructure.

Cost Estimate: \$450,000

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: unknown

Performance Measures: job creation, job retention, new subdivisions

Responsible Agency: Town of Susan Moore

Highway 79 widening (Blount County)

Widen Hwy 79 to four (4) lanes from Cleveland to Jefferson County

Cost Estimate: \$42,000,000

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: ALDOT; federal funds; City

Performance Measures: job retention, public investments, private investments

Responsible Agency: Blount County, ALDOT

Rail Crossing Safety Improvements (Chilton County)

Improvements in Jemison and Thorsby

Cost Estimate: unknown

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: ALDOT; federal funds; city, county

Performance Measures: unknown

Responsible Agency: Jemison, Thorsby, Chilton County

Jefferson County Transportation Improvements (Jefferson County)

New sidewalks, Fairfield

Resurface US 75 from north of Five Mile Creek to County Courthouse, Center Point

US and State Route sidewalks, Hoover, Vestavia

Road and site development for economic development projects, Hoover

Forest Road widening, Hueytown

Birmingham Comprehensive Plan & Focus Area Plans (Birmingham)

The City of Birmingham seeks to update its comprehensive plan as well as develop focused plans for neighborhoods.

Cost Estimate: \$500,000

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: Federal; city

Performance Measures: public involvement
Responsible Agency: City of Birmingham

US 31 Overhead Crosswalks (Vestavia Hills)

The City of Vestavia Hills seeks support in the construction of safe crossings for school children, those visiting the library, those visiting the athletic fields, and residents.
Cost Estimate: \$6,000,000
EDA Assistance Sought: unknown
Additional Funding Sources: ALDOT; federal funds; City
Performance Measures: job retention, public investments, private investments
Responsible Agency: City of Vestavia Hills

Shelby County Transportation Improvements (Shelby County)

SR-25, Wilsonville
Valleydale Road, Hoover
US 280 Resurfacing
SR-145 Bridge Replacement
American Village

St. Clair County Transportation Improvements (St. Clair County)

New sidewalks, Ragland

Walker County Transportation Improvements (Walker County)

Land Use Management and Development Plan, Corridor X
Jasper I-22 interchange lighting
Jasper Industrial Park Access Road

Goal 5: To provide optimal infrastructure in order to support current industries as well as attract new industries.

Regional Water and Sewer Plan (Region)

This plan seeks to update the 2004 Regional Water Resource Assessment as well as develop a long-range plan for regional water needs.
Cost Estimate: \$150,000
EDA Assistance Sought: unknown
Additional Funding Sources: ADECA, USDA, Rural Development, ARC, ADEM
Performance Measures: creation of a plan
Responsible Agency: RPC, Region 2020

Brownfields Redevelopment Program (Region)

Cost Estimate: unknown
EDA Assistance Sought: unknown
Additional Funding Sources: EPA, ARC, ADECA
Performance measures:

Responsible Agency: Brownfields Task Force

Business Incubator Program (Region)

Cost Estimate: unknown

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: EPA, ARC, ADECA

Performance measures:

Responsible Agency: RPC

Present & Potential Incubator Locations: Bessemer, Birmingham, Fairfield, Park Place Culinary, Hueytown, Pell City, Shelby County

Industrial Parks & Improvements (Blount County)

Oneonta Industrial Park utility improvements

West Blount County Industrial Park in Smokerise

Water & Sewer Improvements (Blount County)

Surface water filtration plant and transmission main, County

Sanitary sewer extension, County

Rehabilitation of sewer lines, County

Upgrade machinery & equipment for sewer, County

Sewer extensions, County

New water line installation and refurbish Mount High Tank, County

Sanitary sewer, Hayden, Locust Fork, Smokerise, Allgood

Water system improvements, Locust Fork, Nectar, Blountsville, Allgood, Snead

Interconnection of water with Oneonta, Cleveland

New raw water intake, Oneonta

Sewer infiltration correction, Oneonta

Sewer extension, Oneonta

Industrial Parks & Improvements (Chilton County)

Chilton County seeks to place industrial parks in Clanton and Jemison inclusive of water and sewer infrastructure.

Cost Estimate: unknown

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: ARC, USDA, EPA, ADECA

Performance Measures: business creation, job creation

Responsible Agency: Jemison, Clanton, Chilton County

Water & Sewer Improvements (Chilton County)

Sanitary sewer, Maplesville

Improvements to water treatment system, Clanton

Industrial Parks & Improvements (Jefferson County)

Bessemer Industrial Park improvements

Fairfield Industrial Park development

Hueytown Industrial Park development at old Koppers site

Jefferson County Industrial Park Improvements

Water & Sewer Improvements (Jefferson County)

New water filtration plan and transmission main for Birmingham Water Works and Sewer Board

Water and sewer at Corridor X interchanges with Adamsville, Graysville, Brookside, and Birmingham

Sewer, Graysville

Water system improvements, Irondale, Mulga, Brookside, Graysville, Trussville, West Jefferson, Warrior River Water Authority

Pavilion for Festivals and Farmers' Market (Bessemer)

The City of Bessemer Department of Community Development seeks assistance in the purchase of property and the construction of a pavilion on the old site of Frolic Theater on 1st Avenue North in Bessemer's Historic District. The pavilion would be designed to provide seating, tables, and limited kitchen facilities. The primary use of the facility would be for lunch time activities in conjunction with the farmers' market and street vendors to provide for the anticipated demand created by the new Jefferson County Courthouse Annex and the new Department of Human Resources facility within walking distance.

Cost Estimate: \$165,000

EDA Assistance Sought: \$75,000

Additional Funding Sources: CDBG - \$85,000

Performance Measures: job creation, public investments, private investments

Responsible Agency: City of Bessemer Department of Community Development

Historic Business Façade Program (City of Bessemer)

The City of Bessemer Department of Community Development seeks assistance in the provision of loans to businesses to help restore the historic facades of buildings and violations of building code. The program will create facilities for business, improve the look of the district and generally improve the business climate. Its primary focus will be to create jobs for low-to-moderate income individuals.

Cost Estimate: \$4,000,000

EDA Assistance Sought: \$100,000

Additional Funding Sources: CDBG - \$350,000; private funding - \$3,500,000

Performance Measures: job creation, public investments, private investments

Responsible Agency: City of Bessemer Department of Community Development

Shelby West Corporate Park (Shelby County)

Cost Estimate: \$5,000,000

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: unknown

Performance Measures: job creation, public investment, private investment

Responsible Agency: County, SCEIDA, MDB

Water & Sewer Improvements (Shelby County)

Sewer treatment plant improvements, Columbiana
Sewer system extension, Columbiana

Cooperative District (Alabaster)

The Alabaster Industrial Development Board, the City of Alabaster, and the Water Works Board seek to create a cooperative district charged with installing new infrastructure for industrial parks looking to locate within the city.

Cost Estimate: \$200,000-400,000

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: short-term bond issues by the Alabaster IDB

Performance Measures: business creation, job creation

Responsible Agency: Alabaster IDB

Industrial Parks & Improvements (St. Clair County)

Pell City Industrial Park
Ashville Industrial Park
Springville Industrial Park

Water & Sewer Improvements (St. Clair County)

Sewer, Ragland, Pell City, Riverside
New water tank, Ragland, Ashville
Coosa Valley Water Supply District

Industrial Parks & Improvements (Walker County)

Tom Bevill Industrial Park, Jasper
Jasper Industrial Park

Water & Sewer Improvements (Walker County)

Sewer, Carbon Hill, Cordova, Dora, Jasper
Wastewater treatment capacity, Dora, Sipse, Sumiton

Goal 6: To market and improve regional assets.

Regional Economic Development Recruitment Initiative (Region)

This initiative would consist of various activities to recruit businesses to the EDD's service area. Such activities would include, but not be limited to: inventory of available buildings and developable sites and properties, the redevelopment of brownfield sites, assistance to start-up businesses, and the production of a quality of life report card.

Cost Estimate: unknown

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: ADO, MDB, EDPA

Performance Measures: job creation, job retention, public investment, private investment

Responsible Agency: RPC, MDB, ONB, Birmingham Regional Chamber

Regional Tourism Plan (Region)

This plan would inventory regional tourism resources, conduct a tourism economic impact analysis, and provide a marketing plan for the region.

Cost Estimate: \$75,000

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: Alabama Bureau of Tourism & Travel, ADECA, RSA, AHC

Performance Measures:

Responsible Agency: BCVB, Region 2020, Birmingham Regional Chamber, RPC

Birmingham-Jefferson Film Office (Region)

This office seeks to market the region to production and entertainment firms and act as a one-stop resource for the industry.

Cost Estimate: unknown

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: BJFO, AFC, City of Birmingham, Jefferson County

Performance measures:

Responsible Agency: Counties, MDB, BJFO

Buildings and Sites Website (Region)

Cost Estimate: unknown

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: ARC, ADECA

Performance measures:

Responsible Agency: RPC, EDPA, MDB

Redevelopment and Revitalization (Region)

Stockham Property Redevelopment, Birmingham

Trinity Site Redevelopment, Birmingham

Koppers Site Redevelopment, Hueytown

Downtown Revitalization, Birmingham, Fairfield

Fiber Optic Network (Region)

Bessemer Utilities Board

Fairfield

Tarrant

Lending Programs (Region)

Fairfield

Bessemer Industrial Development Board

Chilton County Resource Inventory (Chilton County)

Cost Estimate: \$30,000

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: ADO, County

Performance measures:

Responsible Agency: Chilton County

Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center (Birmingham, Jefferson County)

Expansion and improvements

Cost Estimate: unknown

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: City, County

Performance Measures: job retention, public investments, private investments

Responsible Agency: City of Birmingham, Jefferson County, Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center

Center Point is Everybody's Business (Center Point)

The City of Center Point and its Chamber of Commerce seek assistance in various chamber of commerce programs.

Cost Estimate: \$132,775

EDA Assistance Sought: \$47,875

Additional Funding Sources: City of Center Point; Jefferson County Sheriff's Department; Center Point Chamber of Commerce

Performance Measures: job creation, job retention, public investments, private investments, average income, home value

Responsible Agency: City of Center Point; Center Point Chamber of Commerce

Goal 7: To cultivate a competitive, attractive quality of life.

Sustainable Growth Principals (Region)

The RPC wishes to establish the principals of sustainable growth as they apply to the EDD.

Cost Estimate: unknown

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: ARC, ADECA

Performance measures:

Responsible Agency: Brownfields Task Force

Town Halls (Region)

Allgood, Blount County

Oneonta, Blount County

Steele, St. Clair County

Margaret, St. Clair County

Argo, St. Clair County

Parks (Region)

Allgood

Five Mile Creek River Walk, Graysville

Trail development along streams and in parks, Hoover

Acquisition of land in wetlands, floodplains, and floodways, Hoover

Hueytown Park improvements, Hueytown

Red Mountain Park, Jefferson County

Airport Improvements (Region)

Birmingham International Airport
Oneonta, Blount County
Shelby County Airport
Bessemer Airport

Civic and Community Centers (Region)

Chilton County Civic Center
Fairfield Civic Center, Jefferson County
Steele Community Center, St. Clair County
Margaret Community Center, St. Clair County
Argo Community Center, St. Clair County
Oakman Senior Center, Walker County

Railroad Reservation Park (Jefferson County)

Cost Estimate: \$50,000,000
EDA Assistance Sought: unknown
Additional Funding Sources: private, public
Performance Measures: job creation, public investments, private investments
Responsible Agency: Railroad Park Foundation

Patchwork Farm (Vestavia Hills)

The City of Vestavia Hills seeks support in the construction of a multi-use facility that will contain four multi-sport fields, trails, concessions, pavilions, restrooms, parking and a maintenance facility.

Cost Estimate: \$60,000,000
EDA Assistance Sought: \$450,000
Additional Funding Sources: Private firms - \$55,000,000; City - \$2,000,000
Performance Measures: job creation, public investments, private investments
Responsible Agency: City of Vestavia Hills

Vestavia Hills Library (Vestavia Hills)

The City of Vestavia Hills seeks support in the construction of its library in the woods. Funds would support materials, facility construction, and LEED certification.

Cost Estimate: \$12,000,000
EDA Assistance Sought: unknown
Additional Funding Sources: City; private donors
Performance Measures: job creation, job retention, public investments, private investments
Responsible Agency: City of Vestavia Hills

Sicard Hollow Fields (Vestavia Hills)

The City of Vestavia Hills seeks support in the construction of a soccer field facility (13 fields).

Cost Estimate: \$12,000,000

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: City; private donors

Performance Measures: job retention, public investments, private investments

Responsible Agency: City of Vestavia Hills

Fairfield Projects (Fairfield)

Historic, Tourism Plan

Economic Development Recruitment Initiative

Fairfield Technology Initiative

Imagineering Learning Center (St. Clair County)

Cost Estimate: \$2,000,000

EDA Assistance Sought: unknown

Additional Funding Sources: county; city; AWFC

Performance Measures: public investments, private investments

Responsible Agency: St. Clair County