



**A New State Government Approach
to Economic Growth**



A New Operating Model for NYS Government

to stimulate

Real Regional Economic Development





New Government Operating Model

- Agency silos will be replaced with a single point of contact
- Establish a community-driven rather than a top-down approach to economic development
- Produce comprehensive, sustainable development that addresses needs in a holistic fashion

to achieve:



Real Regional Economic Development

- Build partnerships between the State and the private sector and higher education
- Develop strategies for regional growth
- Provide competitive state funding grants
- Ensure that state funding aligns with local priorities



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I: INTRODUCTION: A NEW OPERATING MODEL



From Long Island Sound up through the Hudson Valley, to the Adirondacks and west beyond the Finger Lakes, New York State comprises distinct regions that enjoy unique economic strengths and face individual challenges. Yet for too long, Albany has imposed economic development strategies on these regions rather than empowering them to chart their own courses for economic growth. Worse yet, State agencies have operated as separate silos, lacking a coordinated, comprehensive strategy for regional and statewide development.

As a result, New York State has been ill-equipped and slow to respond to the changing realities of our 21st century economy. The recent economic downturn has left more than 800,000 New Yorkers without jobs. Businesses are leaving the state, and people are following. The industries that once built the Empire State into a capital of commerce are no longer leading us into the future.

It's time for a new operating model for State government in order to stimulate real economic development statewide. Governor Andrew Cuomo has proposed a new regional approach that is holistic, targeted, and comprehensive, addressing regional needs based on the input and guidance of those who know each region best.

To lead this new regional approach, Governor Cuomo is launching ten Regional Economic Development Councils that will serve as single points of contact for economic activity in each region. These Councils will include members who live and work in the region and know the opportunities that exist for growth and job creation. Membership will reflect the broad interests of each community, including major industries, small business, higher education, community organizations and labor.



“We are the greatest state in the nation. No other state has what we have in New York – our history, our diversity, our universities, our workforce and our people. We just need a government that is as good as the people of this state. And that’s what this entire effort is all about.”

*Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
February 2, 2011*

Rather than creating a new layer of bureaucracy, the Regional Councils will bring all economic development functions to the table in each region and collaborate with State agencies in order to maximize the State’s limited resources. State agencies will help identify and overcome obstacles to specific development projects and address statutory, regulatory and other bureaucratic hurdles to economic growth. Further, agencies will revise funding guidelines and procedures to prioritize and accelerate projects identified by the Regional Councils.

State agencies will help identify and overcome obstacles to specific development projects and also address statutory, regulatory, and other bureaucratic hurdles to economic growth. Many of these State agency representatives live and work in the region, giving them additional interest in the success of these efforts.

The Regional Councils will help drive regional and local development across the State for years to come. In order to lay the proper groundwork, the Councils will focus on two key tasks in the first year:

- **Develop and adopt an initial five-year Strategic Plan that will include:**
 - a comprehensive vision for economic development
 - regional strategies to help achieve that vision
 - specific priority projects that are significant, regionally-supported and capable of stimulating economic investment and job creation
 - a road map to implement these strategies for future growth
- **Begin implementation of Strategic Plans and evaluate their performance**
The Councils will establish the means to continuously evaluate and guide public, private and non-profit investment in the region.

The initial Regional Council five-year Strategic Plans will compete for allocations of \$200 million in Regional Economic Competitive Grants and tax credits. This initial competition will incentivize thoughtful Strategic Plans that maximize the State's limited resources. These plans will be updated and enhanced as the Councils continue to identify new projects and resources and learn what works and what does not.

By changing the way the State operates, the Regional Councils will make investing in New York more attractive to businesses that have been deterred by the maze of regulatory and administrative processes in State government. The Regional Councils will provide a central point of contact for businesses, streamlining the process and making it easier for companies to create jobs and flourish in New York State

While the Regional Councils will be primarily concerned with the issues of their individual regions, there will be an emphasis on collaboration, communication and conflict resolution across borders. A Chairman's Committee with representation from every Council will ensure that effective strategies and ideas can be shared easily from Montauk and Massena to Buffalo and Brooklyn. When systemic and statewide barriers to development are identified, the Chairman's Committee will work to address them.

As with all of Governor Cuomo's programs, performance of the Councils will be monitored closely to ensure success. Strategic Plans will include methods to evaluate their effectiveness. At the end of each year, each Council will report on progress in its region, and Empire State Development will provide an annual report to the Governor.

By empowering each region to find effective strategies and solutions to local challenges, we can move forward as one State and declare that New York is once again "Open for Business".

This Guidebook will serve as a blueprint for members of the Regional Councils and a comprehensive resource for those who seek a better understanding of the program's background, goals and structure.



The Regional Approach Works

Empowerment Zone Program as a Model for Success

“Empowerment changed the mission of government. It holds that governments are more like hardware stores than master builders. We don’t tell people what they must build and force them to do so according to our rigid, one-size-fits-all blueprint. We simply give people the tools to do it themselves.”

*Former Vice President Al Gore
U.S. Conference of Mayors,
June 19, 1997*

Regional Councils are modeled after the federal Empowerment Zone program that began under President Bill Clinton in 1994. The Empowerment Zone program encouraged comprehensive, public-private planning and targeted investment to foster sustainable economic, physical and social development in the neediest urban and rural areas in the United States. The Empowerment Zones were the centerpiece of the Clinton Administration’s community revitalization strategy – a bold, hands-on approach that empowered residents to have a stake in the future prosperity of their own communities.

The Empowerment Zone program promoted a bottom-up, community-driven planning process through which regions identified their own redevelopment goals and designed plans for achieving those goals. The federal government then helped regions implement their plans by providing direct programmatic funds, technical expertise and regulatory assistance.

At the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Governor Cuomo led the implementation of the Empowerment Zone program in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As Secretary of HUD, he witnessed first-hand the power of the regional approach to affect change and produce tangible results in the nation’s most distressed communities. By the end of his tenure, HUD’s economic development programs had created or maintained hundreds of thousands of private-sector jobs across the country and provided an effective framework for future community-based planning efforts.



The Empowerment Zone program proved that the regional approach works. The federal government continues to implement regional economic development strategies to help spur innovation, create jobs, and empower communities.

The success of the Empowerment Zone program was based on three critical elements:

A broad, community-based planning process that facilitated public-private partnerships

The alignment of public resources with regional plans through a competitive process

Performance monitoring to maintain accountability

Regional Strategies at the Federal Level

The federal government has increasingly aligned public programs and resources with regional strategies. The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) has adopted regional collaboration as the foundation of the nation's economic agenda and prioritizes regional innovation in its competitive funding process. Many other federal agencies, including HUD, the Small Business Administration (SBA), the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Energy, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Transportation are also supporting regional initiatives.

This broader adoption of regional policies has led to increased federal investments in regional economic programs, including:

- EDA's Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge – a \$33 million competitive grant and technical assistance program to assist regional innovation clusters, announced in May 2011
- The i6 Green Challenge – a \$12 million, multi-agency competition to drive regional commercialization and innovation in green technology, announced in March 2011
- SBA's Regional Cluster Initiative – an \$11 million effort to support economic development through an "Innovative Economies" program, awarded in FY 2010



The Regional Councils will position New York State to benefit from this federal emphasis on regional strategies. The State will help Councils identify federal resources that can support their economic visions. Additionally, the Councils' experience with strategic planning, collaboration and cooperation will make regions more attractive candidates for federal awards that are based on strategic plans and the strength of a region's networks.

By adopting the regional approach, New York will be a stronger competitor nationwide and around the world for public and private investment.



II. RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Until now, New York State has lacked a cohesive and coordinated strategy for allocating funding and resources for economic development. Funding has been supported by several different agencies and sources across State government, without any mechanism to coordinate allocations. The regional approach will mark a shift in the way the State allocates its resources, replacing agency silos with a comprehensive sustainable development model that will ensure the entire spectrum of State economic development funding fulfills local needs. Although final funding decisions will be made by the agencies, the Regional Councils will serve in an advisory role to help State agencies better target their resources and assistance.

Competitive Regional Economic Development Resources

To incentivize the strategic planning process, the State will award \$200 million in capital funds and tax credits to regions based on their Strategic Plans:

- \$130 million from the Regional Economic Development Projects capital fund
- \$70 million in tax credits from the enhanced Excelsior Jobs Program

\$130
million

The four regions with the top Strategic Plans, as ranked by a Strategic Plan Review Committee, will each receive up to \$40 million in funding: \$25 million in capital grants and \$15 million in Excelsior tax credits. The balance of the incentives will be divided among the six remaining regions.

Capital funding will support regional capital projects that show potential for significant job creation or investment. The Excelsior tax credits will be awarded to businesses and other projects that are most closely aligned with regional goals and objectives.

\$70
million

Systemic Changes

Beyond the Regional Economic Development grants and tax credits, the Regional Councils will benefit from long-term, systemic changes to the way State agencies review and allocate funding in the future.



Available Resources for Regional Councils Beginning in 2011-12

Approximate resources available through the Consolidated Funding Application process:

Empire State Development

- \$130 million in capital funding through the Regional Council Capital Fund
- \$70 million in tax credits from the enhanced Excelsior Jobs Program
- Up to \$19.2 million in Economic Development Purposes Grants
- Up to \$1 million from the Environmental Investment Program
- Economic Transformation Program capital funds and/or tax credits to support communities affected by closures of correctional and juvenile justice facilities
 - \$50 million in capital funding
 - Five fully-refundable tax credits over five years

Energy Research and Development Authority

- Up to \$75 million from energy efficiency and renewable energy projects and programs
- Up to \$9.6 million for Cleaner, Greener Communities Program (\$100 million total available over 3 years)

Homes and Community Renewal

- Up to \$44 million from the Community Development Block Grant Program
- Up to \$125 million in housing grants, low-interest loans & tax credit programs

Department of Transportation

- Up to \$43.4 million in Transportation Bond Act, Aviation, Rail & Port Funds
- Up to \$6.9 million in Multi-Modal Funds

Environmental Facilities Corporation

- Up to \$20 million from the Green Innovation Grant Program

Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

- Up to \$13 million for Municipal Parks and Historic Preservation Projects

Department of State

- Up to \$10.875 million from the Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

Department of Labor

- Up to \$3 million is available for Workforce Investment Act related training and workforce development activities

NYS Canal Corporation

- Up to \$1.5 million from the Canalway Grant Program

Private Activity Bond Cap (Industrial Development Bond Cap)

- Up to \$350 million from the Federal IDB Cap allocation will be available for State and local government issuers to sell tax exempt bonds for private projects that demonstrate a public purpose.

Additional allocations available:

ReCharge NY

- Provides up to 910 Megawatts from NYPA in 7-year energy contracts to eligible businesses

NYS Consolidated Funding Application

In addition to the \$200 million described earlier, State agencies participating in the Councils have identified additional economic development resources that can be used to support regional growth strategies.

As part of Governor Cuomo's transformative plan to improve the State's economic development model, a NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) has been created that will streamline and expedite the grant application process. The CFA process marks a fundamental shift in the way State resources are allocated, ensuring less bureaucracy and greater efficiency to fulfill local economic development needs.

To access these resources, the project applicant will use the CFA, a threshold application for multiple State funding sources. Through this process, an applicant can fill out one application per project to access the multiple funding sources associated with the CFA. The largest sources of available economic development funding have been identified, and the programs that are committed to the CFA process are listed on the opposite page.

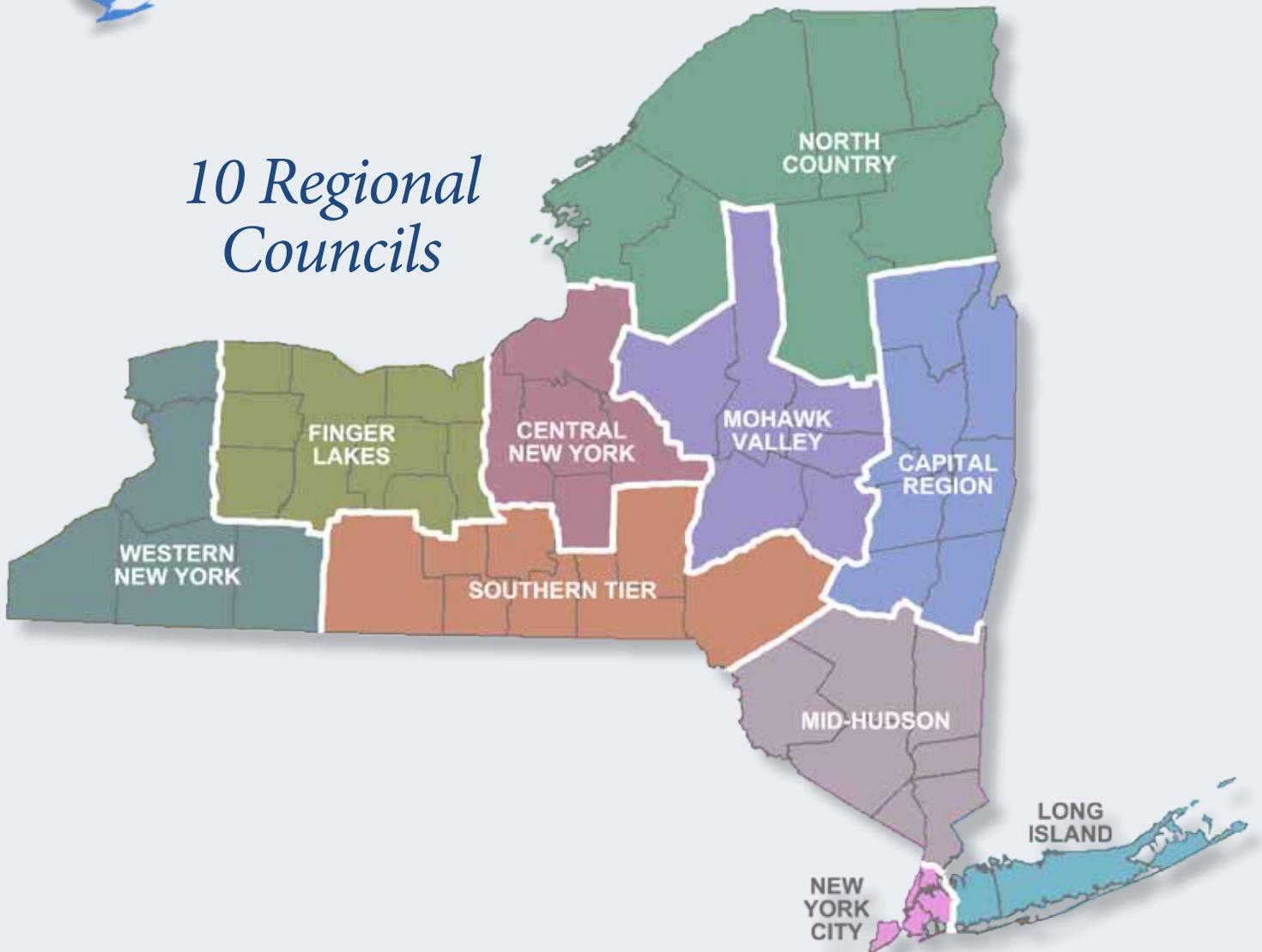
As part of the strategic planning process, the local Regional Council will review and rank CFA application submissions to identify priority project seeking the up to \$1 billion in economic development funding. By November 14th, the Regional Council will identify CFA projects that are consistent with the strategic plan and will submit a list of final CFA project endorsements.

Alignment of Regulations and Guidelines

In addition to the Consolidated Funding Application, New York State agencies are realigning regulations, guidelines and internal procedures for economic development loan and grant programs with the priorities and goals of the Regional Councils.

Internal regulations and guidelines are undergoing review and revisions. To date, over 13 State agencies have amended over 40 guidelines, procedures or regulations for over 55 loan and grant programs to account for Regional Councils' plans and priorities. Additional changes to regulations will continue as the Regional Councils begin their work and develop their Strategic Plans.

10 Regional Councils



Western New York: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara

Finger Lakes: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates

Southern Tier: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins

Central New York: Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego

Mohawk Valley: Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie

North Country: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence

Capital Region: Albany, Columbia, Greene, Saratoga, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington

Mid-Hudson: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester

New York City: Bronx, Kings, New York, Richmond, Queens

Long Island: Nassau, Suffolk

III. ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

Mission

The mission of the Regional Economic Development Councils is to create a new operating model for New York State government that will stimulate economic development in every region and improve the business climate statewide. The Regional Council approach will be community-driven, comprehensive, and holistic. The Councils will partner with stakeholders from higher education to the private sector, align our State funding with regionally developed growth strategies, build synergies across regions, eliminate unnecessary barriers to growth, and streamline the delivery of State government services and programs.

Boundaries

The boundaries of the ten Councils will be aligned with existing Empire State Development and Department of Labor regions to maximize efficiency and capitalize on existing programs, synergies and relationships.

Leadership

Lieutenant Governor Robert Duffy will serve as the Chair of each Regional Council and lead a statewide Chairman's Committee. The Governor will appoint two Regional Co-Chairs in each region, a representative from the business community and a representative of the academic community. Other officers may be appointed by the Governor as needed.





Membership

In addition to the Regional Co-Chairs, the Regional Councils' membership is drawn from a broad spectrum of regional stakeholders. Members will bring diversity in perspective, represent a variety of interests and ensure a holistic approach to the strategic planning process. Councils may bring additional stakeholders and economic development experts into the strategic planning process through issue-specific work groups on an as-needed basis. More information about work groups can be found on page 18.

No one knows each region's unique strengths and assets better than the people who live and work there. The strategic planning process will be driven by major stakeholders from each region who contribute to economic activity: private business, including small businesses; minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBES); non-profit economic development organizations; chambers of commerce and trade organizations; organized labor; higher education; community-based organizations; and the agricultural community.

Members will ensure that the interests of their broader constituency are integrated into the strategic planning process. Members will serve an initial term of two years.

Public Involvement

The public will be invited to provide feedback and input throughout the strategic planning process. Each Council will develop a plan to ensure public participation through outreach and community forums, as well as online.

Regional Councils will only be effective when everyone comes together – residents, public and private stakeholders, local organizations, businesses and universities – to work towards a shared vision for a stronger community.

Local Government

County and local officials are important decision-makers and drivers of economic development in their regions, and will have a seat at every Regional Council table. These officials will serve in an ex-officio basis and will participate in discussions and the planning process.

In regions composed of more than two counties (except for the New York City region), members will include:

- The chief executive or supervisor of each county, or his or her representative; and
- The chief executive or supervisor of the three municipalities with the largest population, or his or her representative (limit one municipal representative per county).

In the New York City region:

- The president of each borough, or his or her representative; and
- One representative appointed by the Mayor of the City of New York.

In Long Island (regions containing two or fewer counties):

- The chief executive of each county, or his or her representative; and
- The chief executive of the two largest towns within each county, or his or her representative.



State Agencies

State agencies will participate in and provide support to Regional Councils in four main ways:

1. **Identifying existing funding and resources available to support the implementation of Strategic Plans.** The Regional Council Resource Guide contains a list of existing resources that can be utilized for economic development, including ongoing programs and grants administered by State agencies. The Guide also includes examples of innovative and successful ways resources have been utilized in the past.
2. **Supporting the new economic development funding process by conducting a due diligence review of the CFA submissions to the Regional Councils for relevant legal issues and potential disqualifying concerns.** The process – NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) – is explained in further detail on pages 10 and 11.
3. **Working with Regional Councils to address obstacles that impede long-term economic growth statewide.** This may include simplifying regulatory and administrative processes that have made it difficult to establish a new business or expanding existing businesses in New York State. The Regional Councils will work with the State to protect public health, safety and the environment while improving the State's business climate.
4. **Revising State guidelines and internal processes to expedite Regional Council projects across State government.** An inventory of existing State economic development loan and grant programs is underway to identify regulations, guidelines and internal procedures to align review criteria with the Regional Council Plans and priorities. This is discussed on more detail on page 11.

ESD Regional Directors will serve as executive directors of each respective Regional Council. Other State agencies and authorities will be represented on each Regional Council including:

agencies

- Department of Agriculture & Markets
- Department of Environmental Conservation
- Department of Health
- Department of Labor
- Department of State
- Department of Taxation and Finance
- Department of Transportation
- Dormitory Authority of the State of New York
- Environmental Facilities Corporation
- New York Power Authority
- New York State Energy Research & Development Authority
- New York State Homes & Community Renewal
- Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
- State Education Department

Additional agencies and authorities with regional significance may also be included, such as the Adirondack Park Agency, the Long Island Power Authority, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the Niagara Greenway Committee, Hudson River Park Trust, the Hudson River Greenway Communities, and regional transit authorities.



The Regional Councils have five primary responsibilities:

1. Develop and maintain an initial five-year Strategic Plan for long-term, sustainable regional economic growth
2. Coordinate economic development efforts within the region
3. Leverage public and private resources
4. Identify and eliminate obstacles to growth
5. Implement performance measures to ensure long-term success

Meetings

Each Regional Council will meet as often as necessary to ensure that the completed initial five-year Strategic Plan is submitted by November 14, 2011. After submission, the Councils will meet as often as necessary to implement and update their Strategic Plans. All actions will require approval by a majority of the membership of the Regional Council.

Work Groups

In addition to these meetings, Regional Councils may choose to organize work groups in order to explore various opportunities and issues in more depth. These work groups may address a range of issues from industry clusters to regional resources.

Individuals and stakeholders who are not members of the Council are nonetheless encouraged to provide substantive input by participating on work groups. Ultimately, the goal is to provide as many opportunities as possible for stakeholders and members of the public to offer comment and give feedback at every step of the process.

Chairman's Committee

An effective regional economic development approach emphasizes not only the empowerment of individual regions, but communication and collaboration among these regions. These connections help capitalize on and cultivate synergies across regions and sectors and ensure that ideas can be shared throughout the State.

To facilitate inter-regional cooperation, the Lieutenant Governor will convene a Chairman's Committee to evaluate and advise on issues that affect multiple regions, advise on how statewide assistance programs can be aligned with Regional Councils' Strategic Plans, and strengthen communications between the State and the Regional Councils themselves. By aggregating feedback from each of the Councils, the Chairman's Committee will have the ability to identify and resolve barriers to growth statewide.

The Chairman's Committee will include the Regional Co-Chairs from each Council, statewide stakeholders, State agency and authority heads involved with each Council. State agencies will actively participate in the Committee to identify public resources, reduce bureaucratic red tape and, as appropriate, consult on individual projects in the State.

The Chairman's Committee will meet at least quarterly, with the ability to organize topic-specific work groups of Council members as needed.

The responsibilities of the Chairman's Committee will be:

- Resolve any statewide or inter-regional conflicts
- Identify and eliminate barriers to economic growth common across regions
- Promote coordination among regions and between the State and the Regional Councils
- Provide guidance on projects that impact multiple regions or the entire state



Conflicts of Interest

Transparency and accountability are a top priority of the Regional Councils. Because members are chosen based on their interest and involvement in regional economic development, conflicts may arise between members' interests and their advisory role on the Council. To confront these issues, a Code of Conduct has been established to ensure no conflict interferes with any member acting in the best interest of all New Yorkers. In addition, members will be required to participate in ethics training and recuse themselves from deliberations regarding any project or matter on which they have an actual or potential conflict.

The Code of Conduct is included in this Guidebook as an Appendix.

Statewide Performance Measurement

Once the Strategic Plans have been adopted, the state will measure and track the performance of the Regional Council initiative using available metrics that are valid, reliable, and replicable.

ESD shall produce an Annual Economic Report to the Governor, beginning December 31, 2012. This Annual Economic Report shall include two sections: a statewide business climate report as well as a progress report on the work of the Regional Councils.

Business Climate Report

ESD will develop and track a series of business climate factors and economic indicators. These indicators will be developed in consultation with the Governor's Office, the Chairman's Committee, the Spending and Government Efficiency Commission (SAGE), and other lead agencies involved in the Regional Council initiative. Categories of indicators may include:

- Jobs & firm growth (numbers of jobs, productivity, exports, industry concentration)
- Taxes & fees (overall level, industry-specific)
- Regulatory burden (time and cost of compliance)
- Workforce & demographics (education level, in-migration)
- Infrastructure & utilities (cost, availability, reliability)
- Reputation (surveys of local businesses & residents, national indices)
- Innovation & entrepreneurship (patents, new business starts, commercialization)

Regional Council Progress Report

The progress report will be submitted annually beginning November 1, 2012 and will track two sets of metrics by region.

The first is a set of standard economic and demographic elements that will be measured and benchmarked across all regions. These will include labor force indicators, educational measures, business starts, and MWBE certifications.

The second set of metrics will be specific to each Regional Council. Each Council will develop performance metrics linked to its unique set of goals that will record progress in implementing the strategies outlined in its Strategic Plan. Comparing this progress to that of other regions will highlight successes and best practices, as well as identify those regions where additional assistance may be needed.



Components of a Strategic Plan:

- 1. Historic Overview & Current Conditions*

- 2. Vision*

- 3. Strategies & Action Plans*

- 4. Means to Monitor, Update and Evaluate*

IV. STRATEGIC PLANNING

By **November 14, 2011**, each Regional Council will submit an initial Strategic Plan with clear metrics to measure progress and success. These plans will establish the region's priorities for growth, guide the deployment of State and other resources, and create a road map for the region to achieve its vision for the future.

While the initial plan will be reviewed for allocation of \$200 million in capital funds and tax credits, the planning process does not end with the first round of allocations. Economic and community development is a long-term process, and the Regional Councils will continue to advise on the allocation of State resources and update and strengthen their Strategic Plans.

The Strategic Plan will:

- **Establish** an economic vision for the region's future.
- **Involve** diverse stakeholders including businesses, community groups, academia and local government.
- **Generate** effective, realistic strategies to capitalize on key industries and assets.
- **Build** a framework to continually identify, prioritize and implement catalytic projects.
- **Leverage** private, federal, local and nonprofit resources.
- **Connect** program evaluation and monitoring to continually improve the strategies.

The Regional Councils will begin by identifying projects that are ready for investment, have momentum and can catalyze further investments in and benefits to their communities. These projects will be prioritized based on how readily they can be completed and begin producing results including job creation, further investment and community renewal. This first stage of work will lay the foundation for a long-term process by which the Councils can continually identify, prioritize and implement projects.

The development of effective Strategic Plans is fundamental to the success of the Regional Councils. Strategic planning defines economic goals and trade-offs, coordinates actions to achieve goals, and encourages systematic communication. Smart strategic planning also reflects current economic circumstances and existing economic development resources. When done effectively, strategic planning contributes to policy and programmatic insights and improvements, creates consistency in selecting investments and projects, captures feedback to adjust strategies in response to changing conditions, builds constituencies for implementation, and leverages limited resources.



Strategic planning focuses on answering these four questions:

1. Where are we now?

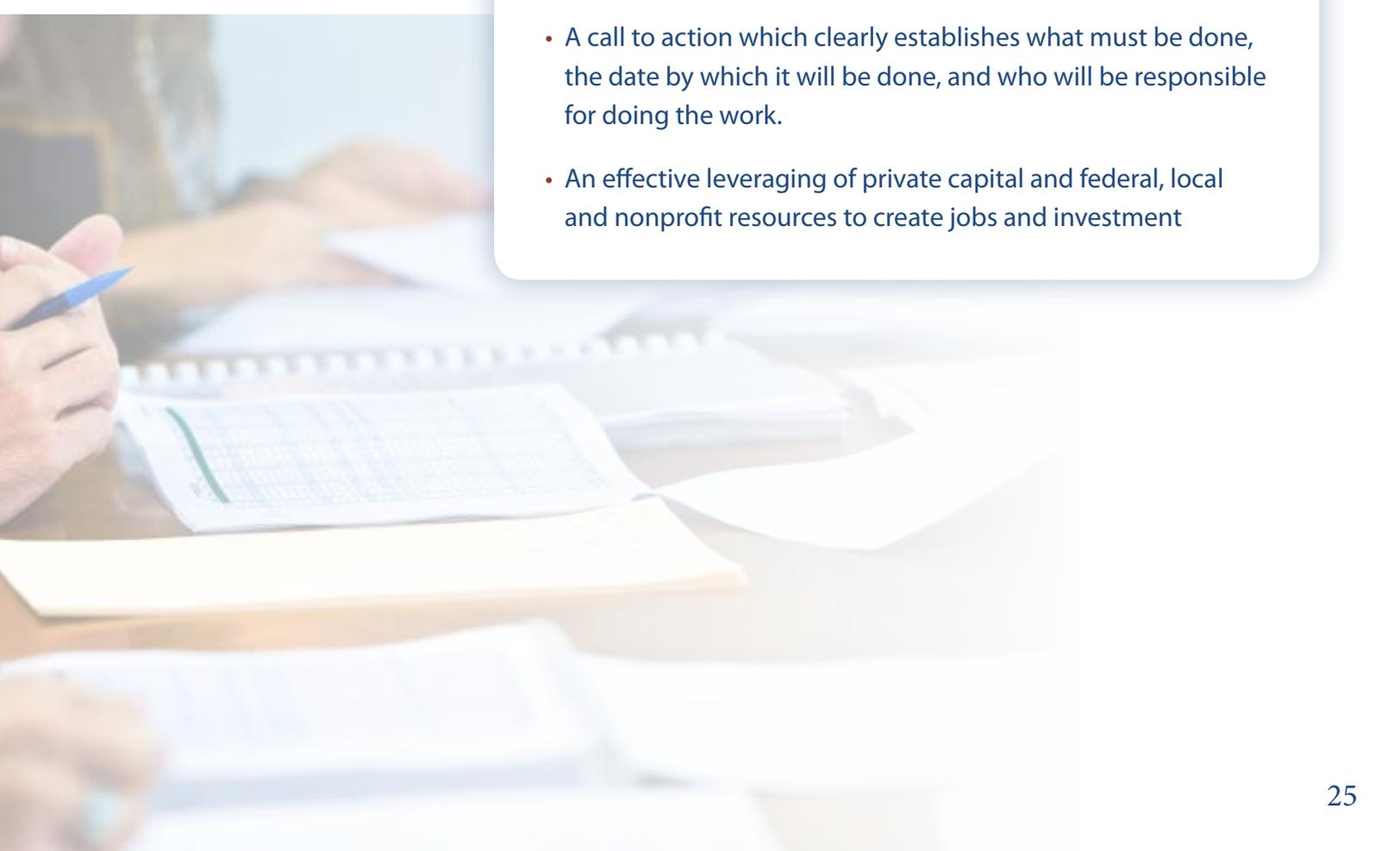
2. Where do we want to be?

3. How do we get there?

4. How are we doing?

A Successful Strategic Plan is:

- A product of a truly community-based effort that fully engages the region's public and private partners and that demonstrates a vision for the region's future.
- A coordinated short-term and long-term strategy that links economic, human, physical, and community development.
- A creative road map based on growing strategic industry clusters to cultivate innovation and entrepreneurship.
- A means for building on a region's key assets and competitive industries.
- A presentation of effective and realistic economic development strategies with built-in mechanisms to measure progress and success.
- A call to action which clearly establishes what must be done, the date by which it will be done, and who will be responsible for doing the work.
- An effective leveraging of private capital and federal, local and nonprofit resources to create jobs and investment





Strategic Plan Adoption



Once completed, the initial Strategic Plan must be adopted by a majority of the members of the Regional Council and be submitted to the Strategic Plan Review Committee by **November 14, 2011**. The Strategic Plan Review Committee membership will be selected by the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor, and will consist of leaders from independent, non-partisan and widely respected public policy, economic development, academic, and other organizations.

In order to ensure transparency, Strategic Plans will be made available to the public, along with reports and evaluations of their programs and initiatives online.

Work Plan

Although the Regional Councils will operate for years to come, smart, thoughtful and thorough planning in the first few months is essential to their long-term success. The following work plan outlines the tasks and steps each Regional Council could follow to complete vital tasks in the first four months, including the creation of its initial five-year Strategic Plan.

The work plan presented is intended to be flexible, and each Regional Council should determine the course of action that will best facilitate the development of its initial Strategic Plan. This assessment may lead to adjustments, facilitate public comment and stakeholder involvement, and ensure efficient production of the initial Strategic Plan.

The initial Strategic Plan will be enhanced and updated by the Council over time to ensure it is consistently addressing the most critical issues affecting the region's economic future.





Task 1: Review purpose, work plan and timelines of the Council.

Product: Shared understanding of Council purpose, work and timelines.

Suggested time frame: Through August 10, 2011

Task 2: Implement public participation strategy to aid in development of the initial Strategic Plan.

- **Step One:** Develop an approach to public involvement that will efficiently and effectively engage the public and solicit ideas as well as feedback to inform the Council's work. Innovative civic engagement approaches are encouraged. The **Open for Business** website is one forum to solicit and receive feedback and comment from the public.
- **Step Two:** At least two public forums, in addition to Council meetings, will be held. As early in the process as practical, conduct a public forum to solicit stakeholder ideas to help inform the Council of the critical issues and opportunities to be addressed in the Strategic Plan. Later, conduct another forum to solicit stakeholder feedback on the draft plan products including the regional economic vision statement, associated goals, if desired, existing or emerging economic drivers, project selection criteria to identify catalytic, transformative projects and actions, and strategies to address critical issues and opportunities to advance desired economic development. Make necessary modifications in response to feedback.

Other means for public participation may include work groups, existing and ongoing outreach efforts of various agencies, the use of local networks, surveys and interviews.

Product: A public participation strategy for the Council to use to aid development of the initial Strategic Plan.

Suggested time frame: Adoption of public participation plan: August 2 – August 24, 2011
Execution of public participation plan: August 2 – November 9, 2011

This time frame is to implement the public participation strategy for preparation of the initial Strategic Plan over the course of four months from July to November 2011.

Task 3: Assess existing regional conditions and economic development issues and opportunities.

- **Step One:** Provide opportunities to receive additional local knowledge of the issues and opportunities. Solicit input from additional stakeholders, as needed, to improve descriptions and understanding of regional assets, strengths, challenges and opportunities.
- **Step Two:** Provide a baseline description of existing conditions and critical issues and opportunities that require detailed exploration.

- **Step Three:** Create small work groups of Council members and other stakeholders to augment Council knowledge and generate further understanding of key geographic areas, core assets, strengths and critical issues and barriers related to economic opportunities which may be the focus of the initial Strategic Plan. Information may be drawn from:
 - Local knowledge
 - Existing plans, studies, reports, or strategies
 - Assessment of regional profile and historic analysis
 - SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis
- **Step Four:** Work groups meet to develop materials to inform and guide the Council's work in developing the Strategic Plan. The work groups will produce recommendations for the full Regional Council to consider. Written materials from each work group will feed into the Strategic Plan.

Product: *Regional assessment of existing conditions and the identification of strategic economic development opportunities and critical issues. Work groups are formed to enhance knowledge about existing conditions and how to best address critical issues and opportunities for consideration by the Council and inclusion in the Strategic Plan.*

Suggested time frame: August 2 – August 24, 2011

Tasks 1, 2, and 3 address the question: “Where are we now?”





- ✓ **Task 4: Develop a regional economic development vision statement.**
- **Step One:** Draft a regional economic development vision statement.
 - **Step Two:** Based on the previous tasks, refine the critical issues that must be overcome and the opportunities, including the principal regional economic drivers (e.g. industry clusters, higher education, agriculture, tourism, waterfronts) that must be addressed in detailed strategies to advance the region's economic growth and to achieve the region's vision.
 - **Step Three:** Develop goals that are consistent with the regional economic vision statement.

Product: *A regional economic vision statement and refined description of critical issues and opportunities*

Suggested time frame: *August 2 - October 5, 2011*

Tasks 2, 3, and 4 address the question: *Where do we want to be?*

- ✓ **Task 5: Determine strategies to advance priority economic development projects and to address critical issues.**
- **Step One:** Develop criteria for selecting priority, transformative projects and actions to achieve desired economic growth.
 - **Step Two:** Based on the previous tasks, assemble detailed strategies to capitalize on the identified principal regional economic drivers and other opportunities and to address critical descriptions of catalytic, transformative, community-supported projects, necessary actions and changes in policies.
- The projects, actions and policy changes are to result in improved business climate, community vitality and quality of life, workforce development, infrastructure and other factors needed to resolve critical issues impeding growth, and advance critical economic development opportunities.

Product: *Criteria for selecting priority, transformative projects. Determine strategies to capitalize on the identified principal regional economic drivers and other associated opportunities, and to address critical issues.*

Suggested time frame: *August 24 - October 26, 2011*





Task 6: Develop draft regional Strategic Plan.

Assemble a draft of the initial Strategic Plan consistent with the Strategic Plan outline for public review and comment. The draft five-year Plan shall include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- Regional assessment of existing conditions, issues and opportunities
- A regional economic vision statement and refined list of issues and opportunities, including the principal economic drivers that must be addressed in detailed strategies and goals
- Criteria for identification of priority projects and actions to achieve desired economic growth
- Detailed strategies to capitalize on principal regional economic drivers and other opportunities, and to resolve critical issues
- Public participation and stakeholder involvement

Product: Draft regional Strategic Plan for public review and comment.

Suggested time frame: August 11 – October 11, 2011



Task 7: Generate regional implementation agenda.

- **Step One:** Generate a regional implementation agenda to ensure timely progress. Include and describe:

- A schedule with target dates to advance or implement significant, transformative economic development projects over a five-year period
- A description of public and private actions, resources and next steps that are needed to advance the five-year Strategic Plan
- Other actions needed to implement the strategies.

The Council will develop the process for instituting commitments to action, next steps to advance projects and target dates for tasks to be undertaken and completed by involved partners and agencies. A project implementation matrix will be developed to track progress.

Additional recommended actions, external and ancillary to project development, may also include:

- Modification to government operations
 - Changes to educational and workforce training programs
 - Re-assessment of public funding priorities and objectives
- **Step Two:** Describe the organizational structure and operational arrangements to be put in place that will ensure Strategic Plan implementation and meaningful and timely public participation continues.



- **Step Three:** Include mechanisms and measurements to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Strategic Plan. Performance measures should be accessible, realistic and structured in a way that will drive decision-making and enhance transparency. Each measure must identify:
 - Data needed for each measure
 - The benchmarks that will be used to measure progress
 - How the data and performance measures will be made available for public review
 - The process for monitoring and changing performance measures

Product: *A regional implementation agenda to ensure progress and timely implementation. A description of the organizational structure and operational arrangements to ensure plan implementation and ongoing meaningful public participation. Specific performance measures to monitor and evaluate effectiveness of plan implementation.*

Suggested time frame: *October 6 - November 9, 2011*

Tasks 5, 6 and 7 address the question: “How do we get there?”



Task 8: Complete initial five-year regional Strategic Plan.

- **Step One:** Solicit stakeholder comment on the draft initial five-year regional Strategic Plan and implementation agenda.
- **Step Two:** Revise draft Strategic Plan and implementation agenda based on feedback and complete the final Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed and evaluated against defined criteria.

Product: *Initial five-Year Regional Strategic Plan.*

Suggested time frame: *October 11, 2011 - November 9, 2011*

-  **Task 9:** *Encourage and Review the NYS Consolidated Funding Applications (CFAs).*
- **Step One:** Identify projects from the priority projects and actions included in the Strategic Plan that require funding.
 - **Step Two:** Encourage eligible applicants to submit CFAs for those identified priority projects and actions.
 - **Step Three:** Check with State agencies for relevant legal issues and potential disqualifying concerns.
 - **Step Four:** Complete scoring CFAs for Council review and prepare list of CFA endorsements.

Product: *Completed endorsements of applications for priority projects that need funding.*

Suggested time frame: *September 15 - November 11, 2011*

Task 10: *Submit the completed Strategic Plan and list of CFA endorsements.*

The Strategic Plan must be submitted in a format consistent with the Strategic Plan Outline.

Product: *Strategic Plan submitted to the Strategic Plan Review Committee.*

Deadline: *November 14, 2011*





NYS Regional Economic Development Initial Strategic Plan Outline

Each region will have unique approaches to the development of its initial Strategic Plan. The plan must include the broad sections contained herein, but others may be added as needed. These guidelines may be interpreted in the manner that best articulates the substance and spirit of each region's effort.

I. Executive Summary

This section presents a concise summary of the initial five-year Strategic Plan consistent with the sections below.

II. Regional Assessment of Existing Conditions and Economic Opportunities

This section is based on work plan Tasks 1, 2, and 3 and addresses the question: Where are we now?

This section will assess existing conditions including primary assets, economic development opportunities, and any obstacles impeding economic growth.

III. Economic Development Vision

This section is based on work plan Task 4 and addresses the question: "Where do we want to be?"

This section presents the regional economic development vision statement, list of goals (if desired), an explanation of the critical issues to be resolved and the critical opportunities to advance in order to achieve the vision. This section also presents the public and stakeholder engagement process that was used to inform and shape the regional vision and strategies.

IV. Economic Development Strategy and Components

This section is based on work plan Tasks 5 and 6 and addresses the question: "How do we get there?"

This section presents detailed strategies on how to best utilize regional assets, capitalize on opportunities and resolve critical issues impeding growth. These strategies should include descriptions of the projects,

actions and policy changes required.

V. Regional Implementation Agenda

This section is based on work plan Task 7 and further addresses the question: “How do we get there?”

This section presents the implementation agenda to be followed to ensure tangible progress over the next five years. This section presents the specific steps to be taken, a schedule with target dates for the advancement of projects, actions, and policy changes. It also includes a description of the organizational structure and operational arrangements needed for timely implementation and public engagement.

VI. Performance Measurement

This section is also based on work plan Task 7 and addresses the question: “How are we doing?”

This section presents performance measures and the process for evaluation and updating the Strategic Plan to respond to progress.

FINAL PRODUCT:

An initial five-year Strategic Plan that is a culmination of four months of work, consistent with the outline and ready to be presented to the





Suggested Strategic Plan Time Frames

TASK	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV
1. Review purpose, work plan and timelines of the Council				
2. Implement public participation strategy				
3. Assess existing regional conditions, issues and opportunities				
4. Develop a regional economic development mission statement				
5. Complete strategies to advance priority projects & address issues				
6. Develop draft regional plan				
7. Generate regional implementation agenda				
8. Complete initial 5 year regional strategic plan				
9. Complete grant applications for priority projects				

Strategic Plan Scoring Criteria

A Strategic Plan Review Committee will be established with members selected by the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor. The Strategic Plan Review Committee will analyze, score, and rank each region's Strategic Plan based on scoring criteria summarized below.

5%

1. Regional Economic Development Vision – 5%

How well does the vision capitalize on the region's assets? How well does the vision drive an economically sustainable future for the region? Is the vision feasible? Does the vision represent the region broadly?

10%

2. Process – 10%

To what extent were the public and stakeholders engaged in the development of the Strategic Plan and the identification of strategic economic development opportunities and critical issues? To what extent did members of the Regional Council contribute and participate?

35%

3. Strategies – 35%

How effectively does the Strategic Plan articulate the issues and opportunities identified as critical, and the reasons why those issues and opportunities were chosen?

How well did the Regional Council identify the assets and resources needed to address the strategic economic development opportunities and critical issues identified in the Strategic Plan?

How well would the proposed actions, policy changes and projects address the critical issues and opportunities identified in the Strategic Plan?

15%

4. Implementation – 15%

How well does the Strategic Plan identify necessary steps, timeframes and allocate resources and responsibilities for implementation?

How well does the Strategic Plan set forth meaningful organizational structure and operational arrangements to ensure implementation?

15%

5. Leverage Resources – 15%

How well are other public, private and non-profit funds and investments leveraged?

How well do those leveraged funds advance the region's highest priorities?

20%

6. Performance Measures – 20%

To what extent will the performance monitoring mechanisms and measurements be realistic in evaluating the effectiveness of the Strategic Plan?





V. CONCLUSION

Governor Cuomo's ten Regional Economic Development Councils will transform the way the State does business for years to come. By encouraging community-driven strategies in place of top-down mandates, the State will ensure that funding and resources fulfill local needs. Through smart, thoughtful strategic planning, Regional Council members will develop and implement regional plans and priorities that comprehensively and holistically address their individual needs and opportunities.

These new models for sustainable development will yield more jobs, more investment, stronger industries, and more vibrant communities for all New Yorkers. We can only achieve this by working across regional boundaries and sectors, together as one New York.

New York State was once the jobs capital of the nation, a center for commerce, and an economic powerhouse. With Governor Cuomo's new, bold vision for economic development, we can make this State the Empire State once again, and declare ourselves "Open for Business."





Q&A

VI. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Membership and Organization

Q: What will the role of Regional Co-Chairs be?

A: *The Governor has selected two Regional Co-Chairs for each region – one from the business community and one from the academic community. The Regional Co-Chairs are responsible for driving the process of developing the initial five-year Strategic Plan for submission on November 14th. That initial five-year Strategic Plan will serve as the basis of the initial allocation of \$200 million. In addition, Regional Co-Chairs will engage the State agency representatives to identify resources and funding opportunities for the Council's priority projects. Regional Co-Chairs will assist the Councils and State agencies in identifying and addressing obstacles and other hurdles to economic development within the region and statewide. Finally, each Vice Chair will serve on the statewide Chairman's Committee, which will address issues that affect multiple regions and hinder growth statewide.*

Q: Will there be bipartisan representation on the Council?

A: *Members are selected based on their leadership role in the region, not their political affiliation.*

Q: What role does higher education play in the Regional Councils?

A: *Our public and private higher education institutions are essential components of the State's economic engine, serving as centers of innovation and research, teaching the business leaders of tomorrow, anchoring our communities, and creating jobs. Accordingly, each Regional Council will include members affiliated with higher education institutions located within that region and meetings will be held at higher education institutions. As part of the newly created NYSUNY 2020 program, SUNY university centers will also submit plans outlining how these institutions will support the work and priorities of the Regional Councils.*

Q: What staff support from State agencies is available to the Regional Councils?

A: *Empire State Development (ESD) will serve as the lead agency managing the Regional Councils. ESD Regional Directors will act as the executive directors of each Regional Council, and regional ESD offices will provide administrative and research support. Other State agencies, authorities and departments will be active participants on the Councils and provide necessary resources. In addition, academic institutions, think tanks and other independent organizations may be invited by the Regional Councils, as appropriate, to contribute to the development of the Strategic Plans.*



Q&A

Q: What role do elected officials have in the Regional Councils?

A: *The Regional Councils will include elected officials in an advisory, ex-officio capacity. On Long Island, the membership will include the chief executive of each county and the chief executive of the two largest towns within each county. In New York City, membership will include one representative appointed by the Mayor of the City of New York and the borough president of each county. In every other region, membership will include the chief executive or supervisor of each county, and the chief executive or supervisor of the three municipalities with the largest population, with a limit of one municipal representative per county. These elected officials will act in an advisory capacity and participate in discussions and the planning process.*

Q: How will Regional Council members avoid conflicts of interest?

A: *To ensure transparency and accountability, a Code of Conduct has been established to ensure there are no real or perceived conflicts of interest that would interfere with any member acting in the best interest of all New Yorkers. In addition, members will be required to participate in ethics training and recuse themselves from deliberations regarding any project or matter which poses an actual or potential conflict.*

Q: Will members be compensated for their time or receive any extra benefits?

A: *No, members will serve at will and pro bono to ensure all members are working only in the best interest of their regions.*

Q: Can additional members be added to the Council?

A: *The Regional Councils' initial membership has been selected based on a process that has now come to a close. Work groups will play an active role in the development of the Strategic Plans and will provide opportunities for substantive involvement in the Councils by other stakeholders in the region.*

Q: How much will Regional Councils cost taxpayers?

A: *Regional Councils will be supported by existing resources and personnel that are currently dedicated to economic development efforts. By marshaling the State's existing resources, the Regional Councils will actually maximize taxpayer money by streamlining and coordinating the economic development and planning process, cutting waste, and reducing duplication.*

Regional Competition

Q: How were regional boundaries drawn?

A: *Regional boundaries are based on existing Empire State Development and Department of Labor regional boundaries. This will allow the Councils to maximize efficiency and capitalize on existing programs, synergies and relationships.*

Q: How will conflicts between regions be resolved?

A: *Inter-regional or statewide conflicts will be resolved by the Chairman's Committee, led by the Lieutenant Governor. In general, the Chairman's Committee will address issues that affect multiple regions, such as barriers to economic growth, and facilitate communication between the State and the Councils.*

Q: Will the Regional Councils receive assistance in preparing their Strategic Plans?

A: *There will be State agency staff assigned and available to assist the Regional Councils throughout the planning process. Council members will be asked to contribute expertise, experience, and available resources to the strategic planning effort and will ultimately be responsible for writing the Strategic Plan in accordance with the work plan outlined in this guide.*

Q: What happens after the first round of allocations are made – will there be further contests for funding or will allocations be based on the Strategic Plan?

A: *There will be ongoing opportunities for the Regional Councils to identify priority projects and apply for future State funding on an expedited basis.*



Q&A

Citizen Participation

Q: How will the Councils maintain transparency? Are meetings open to the public?

A: To ensure a transparent process, Regional Councils will host public sessions. Regional Councils are also encouraged to design innovative ways for stakeholders and the public to actively participate in the planning process. Meeting dates and locations will be available online. In addition, Strategic Plans and progress reports will be posted online.

Q: Where can I find membership and contact information for my Regional Council?

A: All information about the Regional Councils will be available online.

Q: How can a project be submitted to the Regional Council for consideration and review?

A: Any project may be submitted for consideration to the Regional Council Executive Director. The project will be submitted to the appropriate work group for review and recommendation by the full Council.

Executive Involvement

Q: What will be Governor Cuomo's role in the Regional Councils?

A: Economic development is a top priority of Governor Cuomo's administration, and the Regional Councils are the cornerstone of his economic development agenda. Governor Cuomo and Lieutenant Governor Duffy will guide the Regional Council program to achieve economic growth, create jobs and reinforce the message that New York State is Open For Business.

Q: What will be Lieutenant Governor Duffy's role in the Regional Councils?

A: Economic development efforts are more likely to succeed when championed by a prominent leader. Lieutenant Governor Duffy is a former Upstate Mayor with a record of improving the Rochester and Western New York economy. He will chair each Regional Council and will convene a statewide Chairman's Committee to address issues that affect multiple regions.

Resource Allocation

Q: What funds will be available through the Regional Councils next year and beyond?

A: *The 2011-12 Budget provides for \$130 million in capital funds to be available immediately. Additionally, \$70 million in Excelsior Tax Credits are available beginning in the 2012 tax year to be disbursed over the course of ten years.*

Q: Will the Regional Councils be disbursing funds directly?

A: *No. The Regional Councils will play an advisory role in the allocation of State resources. Each Council's Strategic Plan will help to guide and prioritize the State's deployment of economic development funds.*

Q: Who decides how resources are allocated?

A: *State agencies will continue to make all final decisions about how resources are allocated. For the initial competition, however, a Strategic Plan Review Committee will analyze and compare each region's Strategic Plan. Based upon this review, four regions will be awarded \$40 million each in capital funding and tax credits to be applied toward the priority capital projects identified in their Plans. The remaining allocations will be divided among the other six regions.*

Q: Who will participate in the Strategic Plan Review Committee?

A: *The Strategic Plan Review Committee membership will be selected by the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor, and will consist of State agency leaders and leaders from independent, non-partisan, and widely respected public policy, economic development, academic, and other organizations.*

Q: What kind of projects might the Councils identify and prioritize?

A: *The Regional Council program recognizes that no two regions are identical – and that no one knows their regions better than the people who live there. Strengths, assets, and priorities vary from region to region, and the projects identified by each region will vary accordingly. Each Regional Council will conduct a community-based strategic planning process to identify regionally significant projects that are ready for investment and capable of stimulating economic growth and community development.*



Q&A

NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA)

Q: What is a NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA)?

A: *As part of the Governor's Regional Economic Development Council initiative, the CFA is a modern and easy-to-use online application to access up to \$1 billion in economic development resources currently available from multiple New York State agencies and authorities. Through it, applicants can access multiple State funding sources through one application. Application materials can be accessed through <http://nyworks.ny.gov>.*

Q: Why should a grant applicant apply for funding through the CFA process?

A: *The CFA is a more efficient and effective process for applicants, and is the only way to apply for the \$1 billion currently available in economic development funding. In the past, applicants had to navigate multiple agencies and applications without any mechanism for coordination. Under the new process, the CFA will serve as the single entry point for access to economic development funding. The CFA can be submitted by an applicant for single or multiple sources of funding through one application, making it quicker and easier for economic development projects to receive funding.*

Q: What agencies offer funding through the CFA?

A: *Nine State agencies have made funding available through the CFA process, including: Empire State Development; NYS Canal Corporation; Energy Research and Development Authority; Environmental Facilities Corporation; Homes and Community Renewal; Department of Labor; Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; Department of State; and Department of Transportation.*

Q: What resources are available to Regional Councils through the CFA?

A: *Up to \$1 billion in State resources will be accessible through the CFA to support the priorities and goals identified by each of the Regional Councils' strategic planning process. See the list of resources available beginning in 2011-12 for the Regional Councils on page 10 of the Guidebook.*

As the CFA process is revised and improved, additional resources will become available.

Q: What if a project is eligible for funding that is not accessible through the CFA process? How do Regional Councils support applicants in obtaining these resources?

A: *Regional Councils are about making State government work better for businesses to create an environment that will put New Yorkers back to work. Each Council is staffed by representatives from a broad spectrum of State agencies*

who will help identify priority projects and potential funding sources within their agencies and then directly assist applicants throughout every step of the process.

In addition, relevant agencies are continuing to work to ensure that regulations, guidelines, and internal procedures for economic development loan and grant programs take into account each region's strengths to create lasting economic opportunities.

Q: What happens to the application once it is submitted?

A: Once the CFA is submitted by the applicant, it goes to the local Regional Council(s) to be reviewed and ranked as part of its strategic planning process. Once a project is endorsed through the CFA process by the Regional Council, the agencies that administer the economic development program will exercise due diligence to determine relevant legal issues and potential disqualifying concerns. By November 14, the Regional Councils will submit its list of endorsements of all CFAs received.

Q: What if an applicant has already submitted an application for a CFA resource with the relevant agency?

A: For applications that have already been submitted to an agency for a program that is part of the CFA process, but has not yet announced funding awards, the applicant does not need to submit a new application. That application will be considered in the normal course of business. Under this process, if the applicant applies directly to the agency, the agency will submit the applications to the Regional Councils for their recommendation as to whether or not the project is consistent with the strategic priorities of the region. The agency will take that advice into account when awarding projects. However, going forward, if there are additional grants made available for these programs, the applicant would have to complete a CFA.



Q&A

Continuous Review & Reporting Requirements

Q: How will the progress and success of Regional Councils be measured and reported?

A: Each Regional Council will prepare an annual report listing the Council's activities and the status of funded projects. The first such report will be due on December 31, 2012. Additionally, Empire State Development will prepare an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the Regional Councils, including the direct impact made on economic conditions, businesses, and projects in the region and recommendations for improvements to make the program more effective.

Q: How will the State measure the overall success of the regional approach?

A: Governor Cuomo is focused on performance and results. To ensure that the Councils are successful in spurring economic growth, performance measurement will be a key component of the Regional Councils program. The ultimate indicator of success will be jobs created, amount of new investment, and other economic indicators. Statewide, the success of the regional approach will be measured by improvement in the business climate and overall economy.

Regional Planning

Q: Are the Regional Councils another layer of government? Won't they make it more difficult to conduct business in New York State?

A: To the contrary, Regional Councils will make it easier to conduct business in New York State by serving as a single point of contact to help businesses navigate State government regulations and resources. Regional Councils will also work with businesses and State agencies to identify and mitigate regulatory burdens that impede economic growth.

Q: How is the regional approach better than the current approach?

A: The Regional Council approach is a fundamental departure from New York's traditional economic development approach, which has been top-down and State-directed. The Governor's vision is that the State will rely on regional expertise to identify and prioritize significant projects that would maximize the State's return on investment.

Q: This sounds like it will take a long time to bear fruit. We need jobs now. How will the Regional Councils help in the short-term?

A: *By empowering those who know their regions best, the Regional Councils will identify opportunities and projects that are best positioned to create jobs now. The expedited review at the agency level will ensure these opportunities and projects are advanced as quickly as possible to yield returns in the short-term, while laying groundwork for growth in the long-term.*

The statewide Chairman's Committee will provide an opportunity for the Regional Co-Chairs of each Regional Council to provide information and feedback from the regions directly to the leaders of State agencies.



APPENDIX:

Regional Council Code of Conduct

SECTION 1. CODE OF ETHICS.

Members of each Regional Economic Council (“Council”) should exercise their duties and responsibilities as members in the public interest of the inhabitants of the State, regardless of their affiliation with, or relationship to, any business, agency or program, or interest group. The principles which should guide the conduct of members include, but are not limited to the following:

- (a) A member should endeavor to pursue a course of conduct which will not raise suspicion among the public that he or she is likely to be engaged in acts that are in violation of his or her trust as a member.
- (b) No member should permit his or her employment or relationship with any entity that might be benefited from the decisions made by the council to impair his or her independence of judgment in the exercise of his or her duties as a member.
- (c) No member should disclose confidential information acquired by him or her in the course of his or her duties as a member or by reason of his or her position as a member or use such information to further his or her personal interests.
- (d) No member should use or attempt to use his or her position as a member to secure unwarranted privileges or exemptions for him or herself or others, except that a member that receives an “incidental benefit,” as that term is defined below, shall not be in violation of this provision as a result.
- (e) No member should engage in any transaction as a representative or agent of the State with any business entity in which he or she has a direct or indirect financial interest that might reasonably tend to conflict with the proper discharge of his or her duties as a member, except that a member that receives an “incidental benefit,” as that term is defined below, shall not be in violation of this provision as a result.
- (f) A member should refrain from making personal investments in enterprises which he or she has reason to believe may be directly involved in decisions to be made by him or her as a Council member or which will otherwise create substantial conflict between his or her duty as a Council member to act in the public interest and his or her private interest, except that a member that receives an “incidental benefit,” as that term is defined below, shall not be in violation of this provision as a result.

SECTION 2. STATEMENT OF INTEREST.

Within 30 days of appointment to the Council, each member shall submit to the Chair of the Council a written statement identifying any business entity or enterprise in which he or she, or a member of his or her family, has an ownership interest, whether as an owner, officer, director, fiduciary employee, or consultant. For purpose of this code, “family” shall include spouse, domestic partner, unemancipated children under 21 years of age, and any other relative living in the member’s household.

Section 3. Disclosure and Disqualification from Proceeding on a Matter

- (a) **Absolute Disqualification from Proceeding on a Matter.** When a member or his or her family has an ownership interest in, or is an officer, director, fiduciary employee, or consultant to a business or enterprise which would receive a special benefit not shared by other similarly situated businesses or enterprises or individuals in the State from a proposed course of action before the Council (an “Impermissible Conflict”), that member shall:



- (i) refrain from discussing such matter with any member at any time before or at any meeting when the matter is to be considered in a manner that could reasonably be interpreted as an attempt to influence the vote of any member;
 - (ii) identify such interest to the Council at any meeting when the matter is considered;
 - (iii) absent himself or herself from any portion of any meeting when such matter is considered; and
 - (iv) not participate in any vote of the Council on that matter. A member who has, or whose family has, an ownership interest in, or is an officer, director, fiduciary employee, or consultant to a business or enterprise which would receive a benefit from a proposed course of action before the Council shall not have an Impermissible Conflict where the benefit in question would be received also by similarly situated businesses or enterprises or individuals in the State (an "Incidental Benefit"). A member shall not be disqualified from any proceedings or consideration regarding a matter before the Council solely because the member or his or her family may receive an Incidental Benefit from a course of action taken by the Council.
- (b) **Disclosure and Possible Disqualification from Proceeding on a Matter.** When a member or his or her family, has any of the above noted interests in a business entity or enterprise which might reasonably be affected by another business or enterprise which is the subject of a proposed course of action before the Council, or when a member has an interest or association which might reasonably be construed as tending to embarrass the Council or elicit public suspicion that he or she might be engaged in acts in violation of his trust as a member, he or she shall, at the time of formal consideration of such matter by the Council, disclose such interest or association so that the Chair and, if necessary, the Council can then determine whether his or her participation in the discussion of such matter or the vote of the Council would be proper.
- (c) **Procedure.** After a motion is made concerning a recommendation or a proposed course of action and prior to discussion or vote, and at the request of the Chair, the members shall disclose all actual or potential conflicts and, when appropriate, explain the conflicts. When a member does not disclose an actual or potential conflict, the Chair may remind such member of such actual or potential conflict. In the case of conflicts constituting Absolute Disqualification, the members with such conflicts shall immediately leave the meeting and remain absent during the period when the matter in question is under consideration. In the case of conflicts constituting possible disqualification, the Chair shall rule upon such conflicts subject to appeal by motion to the Council which may override the Chair's decision but the affirmative vote of a majority of those members present, excluding those members who are the subject of the vote. In making such determination, the Chair and the Council shall consider, among other factors, whether the member appears to have an Impermissible Conflict or instead may receive only an Incidental Benefit as a result of action by the Council.
- (d) **Chair Request.** Before any discussion or vote on a matter under review, the Chair may, at his or her discretion, request members to disclose any conversation or correspondence they have had with any business entity or enterprises, any Council members, any official of the State of New York regarding the matter in question.

Section 4. Ethics Officer.

The Executive Chamber shall designate an ethics officer for each Council.



