

FORT ORD REUSE AUTHORITY BOARD REPORT

CONSENT AGENDA

Subject: Economic Development Progress Report

Meeting Date: October 9, 2015

Agenda Number: 7e

INFORMATION

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Receive Economic Development (ED) Progress Report.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

The 2012 Base Reuse Plan Reassessment process revealed public concern that the employment and other economic goals of the Base Reuse Plan were lagging behind and required attention. In response, staff proposed a new Economic Development Specialist position. The FORA Finance and Executive Committees reviewed the proposal during the FY 14-15 budget process, and the Board approved the position on June 20, 2014. Staff completed a recruitment, but was ultimately unsuccessful in retaining a qualified candidate under the approved terms of employment.

The Board then authorized the Executive Officer to enter into an agreement for service with the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) to provide comparable economic development services, but the agreement was withdrawn. During the March 13, 2015 meeting the Board authorized staff to hire an Economic Development Coordinator. Following a successful recruitment process, FORA Senior Planner Josh Metz assumed new duties as the FORA Economic Development Coordinator, and made an initial presentation to the Board at the July 10 meeting.

Since assuming the new position in July, Mr. Metz has actively engaged a wide variety of stakeholders including FORA jurisdictions, Monterey County Economic Development Department, California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) and University of California Santa Cruz, and regional business and financial interests. He has also participated in regional economic development strategic planning processes, represented FORA to internal and external groups, worked with member jurisdictions to energize development projects, and worked with the Executive Officer to refine input and best practices into the following key points building towards a FORA Economic Development Strategic Action Plan:

- **Build on Regional Economic Strengths:** The strategic focus of FORA economic development initiatives is to build on Monterey Bay regional economic strengths including agriculture, tourism/hospitality/recreation, higher education, healthcare and the military mission. An overarching premise is leveraging/connecting former Fort Ord real estate with opportunities arising from institutional/organizational partnerships, emerging businesses, and new communities to enhance economic development/job creation for member jurisdictions and the Monterey Bay region.
- **Engage Internal & External Stakeholders:** FORA plays a unique role as a stakeholder convener on Monterey Bay regional issues. In order to be effective, the FORA Economic Development initiatives must be well integrated with on-going regional and local efforts, and reflect the dynamics of the market at multiple levels. These outcomes will be enhanced through active/ongoing outreach and engagement with key stakeholders, such as the

Monterey County Economic Development Committee, the Monterey County Business Council, CSUMB, MBEP, member jurisdictions, financial institutions, and the regional business community and Chambers of Commerce.

- **Develop and Maintain Information Resources:** Another important component of FORA ED initiatives will be to establish a dynamic information hub to enable community connections and information access. This will be achieved through a combination of local and national datasets and systems to be organized under a single website, and will include curated social media content, links to partner efforts and other information resources for member jurisdictions, interested businesses, and the public. As a major step in this direction, FORA has established an annual use contract with Chumra Economics for the JobsEQ data system. This resource provides depth and breadth of local, regional and national datasets important for site selection and business growth interests.
- **Pursue New Business Opportunities:** As the economy continues to improve increased/renewed interest in development and business opportunities grow. The new Economic Development Coordinator staff position provides a go-to point of contact to respond to inquiries and pursue new opportunities as they emerge. Since July FORA has fielded inquiries from a wholesale building materials supplier looking to establish a west coast hub, wineries looking to expand, and other small businesses looking for new and expanded facilities. While business growth and relocation decisions are dynamic and time consuming to close, being prepared and able to respond effectively to these inquiries is a key value proposition of FORA economic development efforts.
- **Engage with Regional/Partner Efforts:** Critical conversations are underway throughout the region including efforts to enhance/retain the military mission, workforce development, tech ecosystem enhancement, a focus on agtech innovation and entrepreneurship, water supply enhancement, groundwater management, transportation and urban planning. Participation and representation in these conversations with an eye on FORA's economic development interests will improve ensure opportunities are identified and pursued. In addition, engagement with local/national economic development organizations including California Association of Local Economic Development, and International Economic Development Council will increase FORA's visibility and opportunity access.
- **Report Success Metrics:** Clear success metrics will provide the framework to evaluate economic development progress. The annual FORA Jobs Survey will provide the foundation metric, with additional metrics relating to strategic action plan priorities to be included as part of the plan concept and presentation.

Staff is prepared to present a concise ED progress report at the October Board meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Reviewed by FORA Controller _____

Funding for staff time and ED program activities is included in the approved FORA budget.

COORDINATION:

Administrative and Executive Committees

Prepared by _____ Approved by _____
Josh Metz Michael A. Houlemard, Jr.