



Board Policy #9

TITLE: Use of GO Virginia Funds for Site Development Investments

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/10/2019, amended 12/7/2020

AUTHORITY: § 2.2-2486 - §2.2-2489 of the Code of Virginia

POLICY STATEMENT: It is the policy of the Virginia Growth and Opportunity Board that per capita and statewide competitive funds may be used for site development activities that increase the number of business ready sites available to accommodate the expansion or attraction of businesses in the regions' targeted industry sectors.

Activities must advance sites towards becoming a Tier 4 site using the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program tier descriptions for site readiness for sites of at least 25 contiguous acres. Applicants may request a waiver of the 25-acre minimum if they can demonstrate the site is of significant regional importance. GO Virginia investments will support regions in advancing priority sites in Tiers 1-3. Sites that have been certified as a Tier 4 or 5 may be considered for funding if the applicant can demonstrate that the investment will significantly increase the marketability of the site. The Virginia Economic Development Partnership staff will be consulted in the review of all site-related applications.

Applications must describe activities that lead to the development of regionally significant sites - those identified by regional councils as priority and aligned to support industry sectors in their Growth and Diversification Plans. All projects must include collaboration of at least two localities with efforts to jointly contribute to the project through cost/revenue sharing, joint workforce development efforts and/or other partnerships or agreements, such as Regional Industrial Facility Authorities (RIFAs).

Applicants are encouraged to consider how the Virginia Collaborative Economic Development Act could be leveraged to advance the development of the site(s) in the future.

Funds may not be used for property acquisition, construction of speculative buildings, or any site developments that benefit only a single, known end user. Funds may be used for activities such as site characterization and prioritization, site due diligence, infrastructure enhancements, and the development of cost/revenue sharing agreements, such as a RIFA.

Per Capita Funds

Regional Councils must demonstrate that they have considered VEDP site characterization and prioritization analysis and are focused on funding a limited number of sites within their region with the most potential to advance their Growth and Diversification plan, that enhance regional collaboration, and are most likely to be attract private sector investment. Regions are encouraged to consider sites' developability, location competitiveness, as well as sector suitability for their

targeted sectors. Project activities should advance site readiness for future economic development opportunities. Applicants must describe their strategy to market and promote the site to targeted end users.

Project applications that include both planning and implementation activities will be considered and reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Planning Activities - Examples of fundable activities include site characterization and prioritization (for sites not previously fully characterized by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership) and activities to develop collaborative cost/revenue sharing agreements. Planning projects should be designed to include recommendations for future investments that would advance a site's business-readiness.

For site related funding requests for planning of less than \$100,000, the application may be submitted as an Enhanced Capacity Building (ECB) grant request.

The Board will require a 1:1 match with no local match requirement and funds awarded will count towards a region's \$250,000 annual limit for Enhanced Capacity Building activities.

Implementation – Examples of fundable activities include necessary due diligence (soft costs) and infrastructure enhancements (hard costs) that advance a site's readiness for development.

For site implementation projects that exceed \$100,000 and are using regular per capita funds, the Board will require a 1:1 match with a local match requirement of 20% or \$50,000 of the project cost, whichever is greater.

Statewide Competitive Funds

Competitive funds may be used to advance regionally-significant sites of 25 acres or more that will help grow the regions' targeted industry sectors as described in their Growth and Diversification plan while supporting the state's economic development objectives. The results of VEDP's site characterization and prioritization process will play a key role in awarding competitive funds for site development but additional elements such as regional impact will be considered.

Competitive funds will be considered for projects that have a significant regional and statewide impact. Applicants must incorporate collaborative cost/revenue sharing agreements, such as Regional Industrial Facility Authorities (RIFAs), or demonstrate joint funding commitments in workforce development, transportation, or other collaborative partnerships that demonstrates significant involvement of two or more localities.

Sites with high location competitiveness for target industries and high developability will be prioritized; however, sites not meeting these criteria will be considered but will require significant justification. Applicants must describe their strategy to market and promote the site to targeted end users.

Fundable activities include those that have the participation of two or more localities would advance the site towards a Tier 4 status and/or improve its marketability and investment potential.

For site implementation projects using competitive funds, the Board will require a 1:1 match with a local match requirement of 20% or \$50,000 of the project cost, whichever is greater.

Privately Owned Sites

GO Virginia funds may be used to provide public infrastructure investments in privately owned sites under guidelines developed by DHCD. The guidance shall establish eligibility requirements, relevant agreements with subgrantee/locality, and a grant repayment mechanism should the site cease to be used for an eligible GO Virginia use.

Changes to Projects Post-Board Approval

For sites projects that have one or more sites that are sold or have pending sales prior to the execution of a contract, the Board will allow DHCD staff to administratively approve changes to the approved sites if the overall cost does not exceed the previously approved budget. The applicant must show that the new sites to be included in the project have been prioritized and meet all of the requirements as presented in the GO Virginia Regional Site Project Guidance.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW: This Board policy was approved on 12/9/2019, and amended on 12/7/2020 and 9/23/2021.

SUPERSESION: N/A

DHCD DIRECTOR: Erik Johnston