

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2020-2025



Photos courtesy of Gary Halvorson, Oregon State Archives

December 2020

Executive Summary

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CWEDD | ECONOMIC
CASCADES WEST | DEVELOPMENT
DISTRICT



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About the Institute for Policy Research and Engagement



**School of Planning, Public
Policy and Management
Institute for Policy
Research and Engagement**

The Institute for Policy Research & Engagement (IPRE) is a research center affiliated with the School of Planning, Public Policy, and Management at the University of Oregon. It is an interdisciplinary organization that assists Oregon communities by providing planning and technical assistance to help solve local issues and improve the quality of life for Oregon residents. The role of IPRE is to link the skills, expertise, and innovation of higher education with the transportation, economic development, and environmental needs of communities and regions in the State of Oregon, thereby providing service to Oregon and learning opportunities to the students involved.

Special Thanks

We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations who provided input and feedback throughout the 2020 CEDS update process.

Cascades West Economic Development District Board Members

Pat Malone	County Commissioner	Benton County
Biff Traber	Mayor	City of Corvallis
Claire Hall	County Commissioner	Lincoln County
Jim Lepin	Mayor	City of Millersburg
Karun Virtue	City Councilor	City of Waldport
Sharon Konopa	Mayor	City of Albany
Paul Schuytema	Executive Director	Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln Co
Chris Workman	City Manager	City of Philomath
Kelly Hart	Community Development Director	City of Lebanon
John Pascone	President	Albany-Millersburg Economic Development Corp
Pam Barlow-Lind	Tribal Planner	Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
Kate Porsche	Economic Development	City of Corvallis
Chris Pryor	City Councilor	City of Eugene
Greg James,	Board Member	Willamalane Parks and Recreation District
Heather Buch	County Commissioner	Lane County
Mary Walston	Board Member	Eugene 4J School District
Sonya Carlson	Board Member	Eugene Water and Electric Board
Tom Cotter	City Councilor	City of Veneta
Greg Ervin	City Councilor	City of Cottage Grove
Matt Michael	City Manager	City of Veneta

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Overview

CWEDD is designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) to work on economic development efforts in, Benton, Lane, Lincoln, and Linn Counties. CWEDD advocates for, supports, and coordinates regionally significant economic development activities in the region.

This regional CEDS will benefit the Cascades West region in two primary ways:

- 1 The CEDS highlights key priorities for the region in the next five years.
- 2 The CEDS identifies strategic priorities that have regional significance.

What is a CEDS?

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) contributes to effective economic development in America's communities and regions through a locally-based, regionally-driven economic development planning process.

The CEDS provides the capacity-building foundation by which the public sector, working in conjunction with other economic actors (individuals, firms, industries), creates the environment for regional economic prosperity.

-US Economic Development Administration

Spotlight on Economic Resilience

What is Economic Resilience?

- ✓ The ability to recover quickly from a shock
- ✓ The ability to withstand a shock
- ✓ The ability to avoid the shock altogether

The challenges we've confronted in 2020 have prompted rapid change and adaptation. Resilience is woven throughout this CEDS in the hopes that the next time we face wide-ranging shocks like those experienced in 2020, we'll have better tools and systems for avoiding, withstanding, and quickly recovering from disruption.

Six principles have guided decisions about CWEDD's 2020 CEDS strategic priorities, implementation structure, and performance indicators.

Principles of Economic Resilience

- 1 Diversification of industries & economic sectors
- 2 Workforce flexibility
- 3 Infrastructure redundancy and resiliency
- 4 Equitable access
- 5 Pre-disaster planning for response, continuity, & recovery
- 6 Internal coordination and external communication

District Profile



Historically, the ocean, agricultural lands, and forest lands provided a variety of harvesting, processing, and secondary processing opportunities for the region. During the 1980s, many of the region's natural resource-based businesses faced significant structural changes and began contracting. This shift in the region's employment opportunities has particularly impacted our rural areas.

Employment by Sector
(All Counties 2019)

19%

Health Care

17%

Government

15%

Retail

13%

Food & Lodging

12%

Manufacturing

12%

Business Services

Benton County

Population¹ 94,665

Area 676 sq. mi.

Median Household Income² \$58,655

County Seat Corvallis



Lane County

Population¹ 381,365

Area 4,554 sq. mi.

Median Household Income² \$49,958

County Seat Eugene



Lincoln County

Population¹ 48,305

Area 980 sq. mi.

Median Household Income² \$46,061

County Seat Newport



Linn County

Population¹ 127,320

Area 2,291 sq. mi.

Median Household Income² \$52,097

County Seat Albany



¹ Portland State University Population Research Center. (2020) "Population Estimates for Oregon and Counties as of July 1, 2020." Retrieved from: <https://www.pdx.edu/population-research/population-estimate-reports>

² US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates. "Median household income (in 2018 dollars), 2014-2018."

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Infrastructure Connectivity North-South</p> 	<p>Infrastructure Connectivity East-West and in Rural Areas</p> 	<p>Economic Resilience</p> 	<p>Natural Hazards and Disaster Events</p> 
<p>Supportive Business Climate</p> 	<p>Changing Demographics</p> 	<p>Connections to Existing Resources</p> 	<p>Socio-political Factors</p> 
<p>Culture of Innovation</p> 	<p>Infrastructure Quality and Availability</p> 	<p>Equity</p> 	<p>Tax Structure and Access to Funding</p> 
<p>Growing and Diverse Regional Industries</p> 	<p>Workforce Access to Essential Services</p> 	<p>New and Expanding Regional Industries</p> 	<p>Industry Shift and Adaptability</p> 
<p>Livability factors</p> 	<p>Institutional Barriers</p> 		<p>Unexpected Events and Other Unknowns</p> 
	<p>Complex Boundaries for Regional Collaboration</p> 		

Strategic Priorities

Vision

The District's preferred future includes a growing diversified and resilient economy with a range of employment opportunities that provide stable family wage jobs, lifelong learning and training opportunities, sustainable natural resources, an integrated infrastructure, and coordination among economic development efforts throughout the region.



Priority Area 1

Regional Collaboration & Partnerships



Priority Area 2

Sector Diversification through Business Development



Priority Area 3

Infrastructure Resilience



Priority Area 4

Workforce Support



Priority Area 5

Rural Vitality

- ✓ Each Priority Area contains several ideas for approaches and implementation. These *options* are a jumping off point rather than a checklist.
- ✓ Economic development practitioners and their partners, with support from CWEDD staff as capacity allows, will implement the CEDS – implementation will be a collaborative effort across many organizations.
- ✓ It is not expected that economic development practitioners will pursue all the ideas captured in this CEDS.
- ✓ Instead, economic development practitioners and their partners should work together during annual convenings organized by CWEDD to **identify which approaches they want to pursue based on the assets and strengths they are able to contribute.**





Priority Area 1: Regional Collaboration & Partnerships

Description: A regional economic development strategy is most effective when it considers and incorporates the interests and strengths of all jurisdictions in the region. By leveraging the strengths and capabilities of each county towards a wider economic strategy, the region can become more prosperous, resilient, and cohesive.

CWEDD's Role: As a regional coordinating body, the District is well positioned to facilitate collaboration. **Over the next five years,** the District will foster cross-regional relationships and seek to align efforts around regionally significant projects.



Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff across the region
- ❖ CWEDD Board
- ❖ Business Oregon
- ❖ Regional Solutions
- ❖ University of Oregon EDA University Center

Indicators

Collaboration: Presence of cross- and multi-jurisdictional economic development projects

Equity & Inclusion: Representativeness of CWEDD Board & Working Groups

Resilience: Incorporation of resilience considerations into regional and local economic development strategies



Priority Area 2: Sector Diversification Through Business Development

Description: Our region's businesses are the beating heart of our economy. To thrive, the region must support and retain existing businesses while also cultivating new businesses that will help diversify our economy and generate job growth. With macro-level economic changes – from globalization to shifting market structures – the regional economy will require a continued influx of fresh energy from new and existing businesses.

CWEDD's Role: The District has an opportunity to offer resources and coordination that will support local-level business retention and expansion efforts and entrepreneurial ecosystems builders. **Over the next five years,** the District will provide research capacity, serve as an information hub, and facilitate important connections between business support providers.



Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Small Business Development Centers
- ❖ Oregon RAIN
- ❖ Chambers and other business associations

Indicators

Collaboration: Presence of referrals between business support providers

Equity & Inclusion: Representativeness of business owner demographics

Resilience: Presence of continuity of operations plans



Priority Area 3: Infrastructure Resilience

Description: Large infrastructure projects, particularly those of regional significance, often exceed the capacity and technical expertise of local municipalities. Further, they often involve multiple partners, public-private partnerships, complex regulatory systems, and strategic stakeholder engagement. To effectively achieve needed infrastructure improvements in the region, technical support will be required.

CWEDD's Role: The District is uniquely positioned to support regional infrastructure projects. **Over the next five years**, the District will provide technical assistance and connect specific projects with other resources (e.g., Regional Solutions Teams, University-based programs, state and federal agency partners, etc.).



Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Business Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority
- ❖ Local & county emergency managers

Indicators

Collaboration: Presence of cross- or multi-jurisdictional infrastructure projects

Equity & Inclusion: Presence of projects explicitly considering equity

Resilience: Presence of projects explicitly considering resilience and redundancy



Priority Area 4: Workforce Support

Description: Many businesses in the region report that they are struggling to find qualified employees for a range of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled positions, in part because of training, and in part because of livability factors like lack of affordable housing options. There is also an ongoing need to support existing workforce training efforts and to coordinate and align the efforts of the various Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) in the region.

CWEDD's Role: Over the next five years, the District will help link education, training, apprenticeships, and career planning to the employment needs of existing and emerging business sectors. The District will also advocate for policies that will help enhance workers' quality of life.

FORD ALUMNI CENTER



Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Workforce Investment Boards
- ❖ K-12 & higher education representatives
- ❖ Local & county planning staff

Indicators

Collaboration: Level of coordination between EDOs and WIBs

Equity & Inclusion: Percentage of cost-burdened households

Resilience: Level of coordination between education/worker-training programs and businesses



Priority Area 5: Rural Vitality

Description: Rural communities have unique economic strengths and challenges. While training and educational opportunities exist in the region, distance and other challenges can prevent rural communities from accessing those services. Lack of basic services can make rural areas less attractive to prospective residents and employers. Therefore, ensuring equitable access to basic services for residents and businesses in rural areas is a critical strategic opportunity.

CWEDD's Role: As a regional body that can work with Counties and other districts that cover unincorporated areas and smaller towns, the District plays an important role in directing resources towards rural areas. **Over the next five years**, the District will advocate for high-quality service provision to rural areas and support projects that enhance economic opportunity and resilience in rural communities.



Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Regional tourism staff
- ❖ Rural school districts and education service districts
- ❖ Health care providers
- ❖ Local & county emergency managers

Indicators

Collaboration: Presence of multi-jurisdictional projects in rural areas

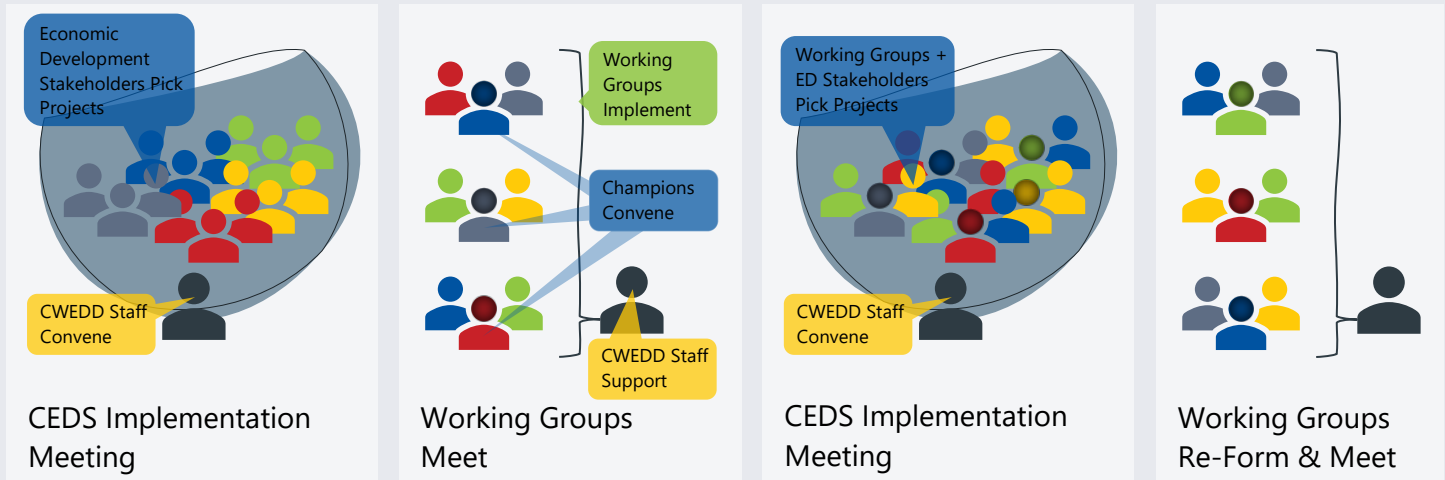
Equity & Inclusion: Access to health and education services

Resilience: Presence of rural infrastructure projects explicitly considering self-sufficiency

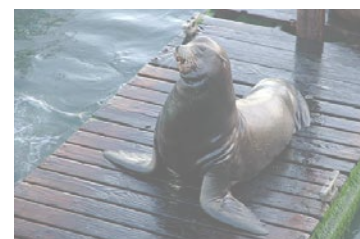
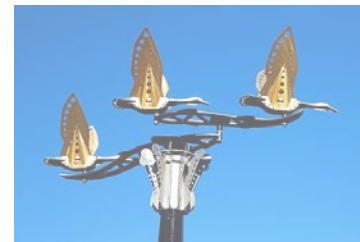
Implementation

Who Implements the CEDs & How? Key Roles & Descriptions		
CWEDD Organization		
Decision-making	CWEDD Board Decision-making body that approves regional priorities through adoption of CEDS. The CWEDD Board will provide direction to CWEDD staff as appropriate.	
Convening & Support	CWEDD Staff Conduit between decision-makers (the Board) and economic development staff. CWEDD staff will convene regional and local stakeholders through CEDS implementation meetings and provide support through outreach, facilitation aid, and relevant economic development opportunities to the region.	
Regional and Local Economic Development Stakeholders		
Advisory	QUARTERLY/SEMI-ANNUAL CEDS IMPLEMENTATION MEETINGS	Benton, Lincoln, and Linn County Economic Development Group Benton, Lincoln, and Linn County Economic Development group serves the local priorities of Benton, Lincoln, and Linn Counties. They will provide local updates during CEDS implementation meetings to support local alignment with regional priorities.
		Lane Economic Committee Lane Economic Committee (LEC) serves as an economic development advisory group to LCOG. This group will provide local updates during CEDS implementation meetings to support local alignment with regional priorities.
		Additional Practitioners and Stakeholders Additional regional and local practitioners and stakeholders may include representatives from statewide organizations, economic development organizations, business leaders, and entrepreneurs, among others. In response to the Pandemic, important cross-region coordinating groups emerged that should be leveraged in CEDS implementation. Groups like these and other individuals should provide updates on their work and add their perspective to CEDS implementation meetings.
Working Groups		
Action	Working Groups Working Groups will be formed during CEDS implementation meetings and be the action-oriented and project-focused groups that carry out regional priorities. They will be convened by a Project Champion identified from within the group. If no Champion emerges, the project should be tabled.	

Implementation Process



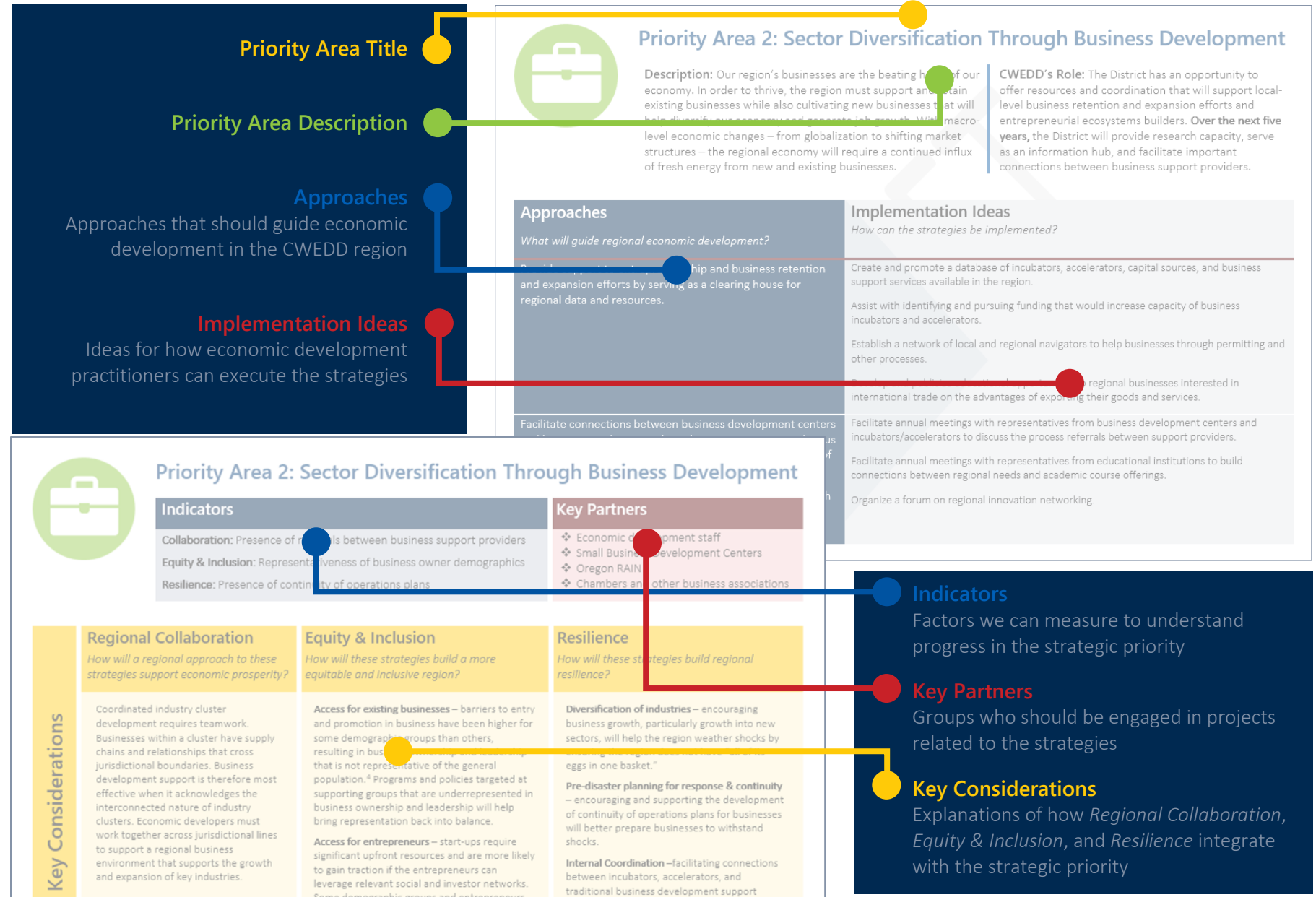
Timeline	Meeting Topics and Tasks
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CWEDD Board will adopt the updated CEDS ✓ CWEDD staff will convene CEDS implementation meetings ✓ Working Groups will be formed during CEDS implementation meetings ✓ Working Groups will set a schedule for meeting and implementation ✓ CWEDD staff will provide support as requested from Working Groups ✓ CWEDD staff will produce an end-of-year report of CEDS implementation activities, including gathering data on indicators
Years 2-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CWEDD staff will continue to organize quarterly to semi-annual CEDS implementation meetings ✓ New Working Groups will be formed as necessary during CEDS implementation meetings ✓ CWEDD staff and Working Groups will record successes and challenges ✓ CWEDD staff will produce end-of-year reports of CEDS implementation activities, including gathering data on indicators
Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CWEDD staff will convene CEDS implementation meetings as appropriate ✓ New Working Groups will be formed as necessary during CEDS implementation meetings ✓ CWEDD staff and Working Groups will record successes and challenges ✓ CWEDD staff will engage appropriate stakeholders in the CEDS review and plan update process (reserve a full year for the 2025 update) ✓ CWEDD staff will produce an end-of-year report of CEDS implementation activities, including gathering data on indicators



Reference: Strategic Priority Details



Priority Area Layout





Priority Area 1: Regional Collaboration & Partnerships

Description: A regional economic development strategy is most effective when it considers and incorporates the interests and strengths of all jurisdictions in the region. By leveraging the strengths and capabilities of each county towards a wider economic strategy, the region can become more prosperous, resilient, and cohesive.

CWEDD's Role: As a regional coordinating body, the District is well positioned to facilitate collaboration. **Over the next five years,** the District will foster cross-regional relationships and seek to align efforts around regionally significant projects.

Approaches <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Implementation Ideas <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>
Build relationships and collaboration through project-based regional initiatives.	Convene economic development practitioners from across the region quarterly or semi-annually to brainstorm, revise, and prioritize a list of regionally significant projects.
Integrate the priorities captured in the CEDS into existing local- and regional-scale initiatives.	Economic development practitioners who are familiar with the CEDS should engage economic development practitioners who are new to the region or the CEDS in a CEDS overview/onboarding process. City and County economic development staff should deliver an annual CEDS overview and update to elected officials.
Increase CWEDD's staff capacity so CWEDD can provide more support to regional initiatives.	Seek funding to add at least 1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff support position to CWEDD. Create a regional economic development organization chart that clearly identifies the linkages and roles of all economic development agencies in the CWEDD region (house on CWEDD website).
Increase representation of currently underrepresented business, workforce, and education interests on the CWEDD Board and CEDS project working groups by including more perspectives from Tribes, Latino/a/x communities, Black communities, immigrant communities, rural communities, and low-income communities.	Review CWEDD Board representation and recruit new members that can speak to the perspectives of underrepresented groups, including but not limited to: Tribes, Latino/a/x communities, Black communities, immigrant communities, rural communities, and low-income communities.



Priority Area 1: Regional Collaboration & Partnerships, cont.

Approaches, cont.

What will guide regional economic development?

Invest in continuity of operations planning for all economic development support providers so these entities can continue providing response and recovery assistance post-shock.

Foster a coordinated approach to economic resilience and recovery planning efforts across the region.

Implementation Ideas, cont.

How can the strategies be implemented?

Work with emergency managers to create inventories of local businesses capable of providing services, material, equipment, and workforce in the event of a disaster. Then develop pre-approved contracting with these businesses to allow for immediate access post-shock.

Ensure representation for business interests emergency preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery planning processes by requesting space on planning committees for economic development practitioners and business representatives.

Form economic recovery teams that include business representatives and convene regularly to create regional economic recovery plans.

Develop local recovery ordinance model language that jurisdictions can adopt.



Priority Area 1: Regional Collaboration & Partnerships, cont.

Indicators

Collaboration: Presence of cross- and multi-jurisdictional economic development projects

Equity & Inclusion: Representativeness of CWEDD Board & Working Groups

Resilience: Incorporation of resilience considerations into regional and local economic development strategies

Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff across the region
- ❖ CWEDD Board
- ❖ Business Oregon
- ❖ Regional Solutions
- ❖ University of Oregon EDA University Center

Key Considerations

Equity & Inclusion

How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?

Representation – by including and involving a more representative set of perspectives from the communities served by CWEDD in CWEDD committees and initiatives, economic development projects have a better chance of meeting the needs of everyone in our region, not just those who traditionally held the most power and influence over decision-making and resource allocation.

Resilience

How will these strategies build regional resilience?

Internal Coordination –economic development efforts in the CWEDD region have not been well coordinated in the past, leading to missed opportunities for collective impact. When we begin to align our efforts, collaborating around resources rather than competing over them, we can spread the benefits of economic development more broadly, building a region that is less vulnerable to economic downturns.

External Communication – lack of internal coordination leads to confusing, ineffective communication to businesses and workers. Increasing collaboration among economic development supporters will foster a more unified, streamlined message to the business community and our workforce, aiding our ability to respond quickly and effectively to economic crises.



Priority Area 2: Sector Diversification Through Business Development

Description: Our region's businesses are the beating heart of our economy. In order to thrive, the region must support and retain existing businesses while also cultivating new businesses that will help diversify our economy and generate job growth. With macro-level economic changes – from globalization to shifting market structures – the regional economy will require a continued influx of fresh energy from new and existing businesses.

CWEDD's Role: The District has an opportunity to offer resources and coordination that will support local-level business retention and expansion efforts and entrepreneurial ecosystems builders. **Over the next five years,** the District will provide research capacity, serve as an information hub, and facilitate important connections between business support providers.

Approaches

What will guide regional economic development?

Provide support to entrepreneurship and business retention and expansion efforts by serving as a clearing house for regional data and resources.

Facilitate connections between business development centers and business incubators and accelerators to create an obvious bridge of support between the start-up and growth phases of new businesses.

Facilitate connections between educational institutions (both K-12 and higher education) and business incubators and accelerators to foster a culture of entrepreneurship.

Implementation Ideas

How can the strategies be implemented?

Create and promote a database of incubators, accelerators, capital sources, and business support services available in the region.

Assist with identifying and pursuing funding that would increase capacity of business incubators and accelerators.

Develop a business registration or tracking system that will allow the collection of more and better data about businesses' needs.

Establish a network of local and regional staff who can help businesses navigate through permitting and other processes.

Develop and publicize educational opportunities about the advantages of international trade for regional businesses that are interested in expanding into new markets.

Facilitate annual meetings with representatives from business development centers and incubators/accelerators to discuss the process referrals between support providers.

Facilitate annual meetings with representatives from educational institutions to build connections between regional needs and academic course offerings.

Organize a forum on regional innovation networking.



Priority Area 2: Sector Diversification Through Business Development, cont.

Approaches, cont.

What will guide regional economic development?

Work to ensure that the demographics of business owners and entrepreneurs are representative of the race and gender distributions in the region.

Provide start-ups and existing businesses with resources and incentives to develop, test, and implement continuity of operations plans.

Develop emergency recovery revolving loan funds and other creative financing options before shocks so that businesses can immediately access financial assistance post-shock.

Implementation Ideas, cont.

How can the strategies be implemented?

Assess the demographic distribution of business owners and entrepreneurs who are accessing services and develop or support programs specifically targeted to demographic groups that are underrepresented. Intentionally seek out grassroots efforts that may already be occurring to support these businesses and offer to collaborate.

Work with Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), incubators, and accelerators to develop low-effort business continuity of operations planning resources.

Discuss potential shocks, threats, disasters and risk reduction strategies at local chamber or business association “Lunch and Learn” events to encourage businesses to create continuity of operations plans.

Incentivize investments in business resilience for businesses that have business continuity plans (e.g. reduce business license fees; 1% reduction in property taxes (or other tax) for businesses that have an employee preparedness training program; expedite plan review for hazard retrofit/mitigation projects).

Utilize external funding (such as the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Community Development Block Grants) to leverage local funds for business-related mitigation activities.



Priority Area 2: Sector Diversification Through Business Development

Indicators

Collaboration: Presence of referrals between business support providers

Equity & Inclusion: Representativeness of business owner demographics

Resilience: Presence of continuity of operations plans

Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Small Business Development Centers
- ❖ Oregon RAIN
- ❖ Chambers and other business associations

Key Considerations

Regional Collaboration

How will a regional approach to these strategies support economic prosperity?

Coordinated industry cluster development requires teamwork. Businesses within a cluster have supply chains and relationships that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Business development support is therefore most effective when it acknowledges the interconnected nature of industry clusters. Economic developers must work together across jurisdictional lines to support a regional business environment that supports the growth and expansion of key industries.

Equity & Inclusion

How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?

Access for existing businesses – barriers to entry and promotion in business have been higher for some demographic groups than others, resulting in business ownership and leadership that is not representative of the general population.³ Programs and policies targeted at supporting groups that are underrepresented in business ownership and leadership will help bring representation back into balance.

Access for entrepreneurs – start-ups require significant upfront resources and are more likely to gain traction if the entrepreneurs can leverage relevant social and investor networks. Some demographic groups and entrepreneurs in rural areas may have more limited access to resources and networks. When economic developers work specifically to assist underrepresented groups, they create a more representative pipeline of new business owners.

Resilience

How will these strategies build regional resilience?

Diversification of industries – encouraging business growth, particularly growth into new sectors, will help the region weather shocks by ensuring the region does not have “all of its eggs in one basket.”

Pre-disaster planning for response & continuity – encouraging and supporting the development of continuity of operations plans for businesses will better prepare businesses to withstand shocks.

Internal Coordination –facilitating connections between incubators, accelerators, and traditional business development support providers will lead to a better alignment of resources.

³ In 2018, 11% of Oregon’s small businesses (businesses with fewer than 500 employees, which make up 99.4% of all Oregon businesses) were minority-owned, according to the [2018 Small Business Profile](#) from the US Small Business Administration. In 2019, 25% of Oregon’s population was not white alone and not Hispanic or Latino (American Community Survey, 2019: ACS 1-Year Estimates Data, Table DP05).



Priority Area 3: Infrastructure Resilience

Description: Large infrastructure projects, particularly those of regional significance, often exceed the capacity and technical expertise of local municipalities. Further, they often involve multiple partners, public-private partnerships, complex regulatory systems, and strategic stakeholder engagement. In order to effectively achieve needed infrastructure improvements in the region, technical support will be required.

CWEDD's Role: The District is uniquely positioned to support regional infrastructure projects. **Over the next five years**, the District will provide technical assistance and connect specific projects with other resources (e.g. Regional Solutions Teams, University-based programs, state and federal agency partners, etc.).

Approaches <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Implementation Ideas <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>
Identify and prioritize projects of regional importance that will (1) improve quality of place for residents and (2) increase diversity and redundancy in the region's infrastructure (particularly critical infrastructure related to transportation, energy, communications, and fuel).	<p>Survey regional partners annually to develop a project list and convene a conversation about how to ensure these projects support resilience and are coordinated across the region.</p> <p>Work with property owners and businesses located within hazard zones to develop strategies to harden, elevate, re-locate or otherwise mitigate / prevent damage from natural hazards.</p> <p>Encourage local practitioners to support the update of the economic development sections of comprehensive plans by encouraging resilience considerations for employment land.</p>
Coordinate regional efforts to expand broadband availability in areas with the least access.	Increase collaboration around broadband development by convening regional economic development practitioners to discuss efforts and share resources.
Incorporate equity assessments during infrastructure planning to ensure the benefits and potential negative impacts of development are equitably distributed across the population.	Develop an equity checklist to apply during project planning; the checklist can help identify project shortcomings and encourage modifications that will lead to a more equitable distribution of impacts.
Promote available services and funding sources that can be accessed via CWEDD to support infrastructure development.	Create a section on the CWEDD Website to list current funding opportunities for local jurisdictions that includes grant deadlines, eligibility information, and connections to current and planned projects.
Increase the capacity and resources available to support grant writing and technical project development for infrastructure projects.	<p>Create a section on the CWEDD Website to serve as a library of past funding applications that be used as a resource for developing successful new funding applications.</p> <p>Increase staff time at COGs dedicated to helping with preparing funding applications and providing technical assistance on infrastructure project development.</p>



Priority Area 3: Infrastructure Resilience, cont.

Indicators

Collaboration: Presence of cross- or multi-jurisdictional infrastructure projects

Equity & Inclusion: Presence of projects explicitly considering equity

Resilience: Presence of projects explicitly considering resilience and redundancy

Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Business Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority
- ❖ Local & county emergency managers

Key Considerations

Regional Collaboration

How will a regional approach to these strategies support economic prosperity?

Although many infrastructure projects occur at a local scale, it is always important to consider regional connections, particularly when planning for diversity and redundancy. By keeping a finger on the pulse of many local projects, economic development practitioners can encourage regional considerations during conversations about infrastructure development.

Equity & Inclusion

How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?

Access – research shows that lower-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately impacted by the negative externalities of infrastructure development (like pollution from industrial development and displacement by highway construction), while these same communities don't always see the full benefits of projects.⁴ Considering equity during the planning process for infrastructure projects can help mitigate these trends. It is also important to remember that equitable benefit is different than equal benefit – to address past discrimination and lack of access, some projects will require more investment in some communities compared to others.

Resilience

How will these strategies build regional resilience?

Infrastructure redundancy and resiliency – focusing on projects that create redundant infrastructure (back-up systems that will take over if the primary system fails) and resilient infrastructure (systems that can withstand disruption for either natural or human-created incidents) will put CWEDD in a strong position to bounce back quickly from disruption.

Equitable access – developing broadband and other critical infrastructure in underserved communities will uplift areas that have suffered economically because they lacked access to high-quality essential services.

Internal Coordination –working collectively across the region to identify important projects will ensure a more coordinated and collaborative approach to seeking funding.

⁴ Glover Blackwell, Angela and Anita Cozart. "How Smart, Targeted Infrastructure Investment Can Pave the Way for an Equitable Nation." Urban Institute, 1/23/18. <https://www.urban.org/infrastructure/how-smart-targeted-infrastructure-investment-can-pave-way-equitable-nation>



Priority Area 4: Workforce Support

Description: Many businesses in the region report that they are struggling to find qualified employees for a range of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled positions, in part because of training, and in part because of livability factors like lack of affordable housing options. There is also an ongoing need to support existing workforce training efforts and to coordinate and align the efforts of the various Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) in the region.

CWEDD's Role: Over the next five years, the District will help link education, training, apprenticeships, and career planning to the employment needs of existing and emerging business sectors. The District will also advocate for policies that will help enhance workers' quality of life.

Approaches

What will guide regional economic development?

Support deliberate coordination between businesses, Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), and educational institutions to help identify and provide for current employer needs.

Attract and retain younger talent by promoting the region's livability and access to exceptional nature and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Investigate and support policies and projects that will increase the availability of affordable housing, affordable transportation options, the quality and accessibility of recreation, access to broadband, access to healthcare, and other factors that enhance quality of life.

Implementation Ideas

How can the strategies be implemented?

Facilitate annual meetings between representatives from educational institutions, WIBs, and key business sectors to (1) identify current and predicted workforce skill needs and (2) consider curriculum changes that will support the development of these skills.

Partner with local workforce development programs, including WIBs, to increase participation of local businesses in apprenticeships, internships and On-The-Job-Training programs, in order to build pathways to employment for persons entering the workforce.

Work with Destination Marketing Organizations to prepare marketing material specifically geared towards attracting new workers to the area and demonstrating the region's benefits to recent graduates.

Encourage practitioners to participate in discussions at the local and county levels related to affordable housing, transportation, recreation, and healthcare access – ask to have representation for economic development practitioners and business representatives on committees and working groups.

Work with statewide economic development groups like the Oregon Economic Development Association (OEDA) and Oregon's Economic Development Districts (OEDD) to have a state and national lobbying presence advocating for policies that will increase the availability of and access to affordable housing, transportation, recreation, health care, and broadband.



Priority Area 4: Workforce Support, cont.

Indicators

Collaboration: Level of coordination between EDOs and WIBs

Equity & Inclusion: Percentage of cost-burdened households

Resilience: Level of coordination between education/worker-training programs and businesses

Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Workforce Investment Boards
- ❖ K-12 & higher education representatives
- ❖ Local & county planning staff

Key Considerations

Regional Collaboration

How will a regional approach to these strategies support economic prosperity?

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) are critical economic development partners. The CWEDD region overlaps with three different WIBs, making regional coordination particularly important. CWEDD can play a role in aligning the efforts of our region's WIBs with the needs of our businesses and the capacity of our educational institutions.

Equity & Inclusion

How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?

Access – many residents in the CWEDD region struggle to stay afloat amid high living costs. With economic inequality on the rise,⁵ CWEDD must support efforts to ensure residents have options for earning a living wage and affordable access to housing, transportation, recreation, broadband, and health care. Making headway on these issues will play a key role in reducing economic inequality.

Resilience

How will these strategies build regional resilience?

Workforce flexibility – pushing for more strategic connections between our workforce development sector and our educational institutions will help better align the skills of our workers with the needs of our businesses. By better aligning efforts, we give our workforce an appropriate and transferrable skill that will allow the region to pivot quickly into new sectors as our economy adapts to new technology and consumer demands.

Equitable access – supporting policies that ensure basic needs are met (like access to affordable housing and high-speed internet) removes stressors from the lives of our workers, allowing them to focus their energy on contributing to our region's businesses.

Internal Coordination – in part because of the mis-aligned geographies of WIBs and EDDs, our region has sometimes struggled to coordinate efforts related to workforce development. By intentionally focusing on building stronger coordination between WIBs and other economic development practitioners, we can create a more coherent system of support for our region's workforce.

⁵ Hauser, Daniel and Juan Carlos Ordóñez. "Income Inequality in Oregon Notched New Record Prior to COVID-19 Crisis." Oregon Center for Public Policy, 10/1/20. <https://www.ocpp.org/2020/10/01/income-inequality-oregon-new-record/>



Priority Area 5: Rural Vitality

Description: Rural communities have unique economic strengths and challenges. While training and educational opportunities exist in the region, distance and other challenges can prevent rural communities from accessing those services. Lack of basic services can make rural areas less attractive to prospective residents and employers. Therefore, ensuring equitable access to basic services for residents and businesses in rural areas is a critical strategic opportunity.

CWEDD's Role: As a regional body that can work with Counties and other districts that cover unincorporated areas and smaller towns, the District plays an important role in directing resources towards rural areas. **Over the next five years,** the District will advocate for high-quality service provision to rural areas and support projects that enhance economic opportunity and resilience in rural communities.

Approaches <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Implementation Ideas <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>
Prioritize strategies that support the growth of tourism and value-added natural resource industries (including ecotourism, marine-related activities, sustainable farming, and local food and beverage production) to enhance economic opportunities in rural areas.	<p>Work with local Main Street programs to identify and secure funding for downtown revitalization projects.</p> <p>Work with Destination Marketing Organizations and the Willamette Valley Visitors Association to develop and market local value-added products.</p> <p>Develop/sustain business retention and expansion programs in rural communities with a particular emphasis on succession planning for businesses at risk of closing.</p>
Support efforts to provide high-quality K-12 education in rural areas.	Meet regularly with K-12 school administrators and Education Service District representatives to understand students' needs and lend support to projects aimed at meeting these needs.
Support efforts to increase health care and telehealth care access in rural areas.	Meet regularly with health care providers and public health officials to understand rural patients' needs and lend support to projects aimed at meeting these needs.
Emphasize infrastructure self-sufficiency in rural areas to ensure communities can sustain themselves in the event a disaster cuts off access to transportation systems and urban centers.	Develop a self-sufficiency checklist to apply during project planning; the checklist can help identify project shortcomings and encourage modifications that will ensure rural areas can sustain themselves without outside help.



Priority Area 5: Rural Vitality, cont.

Indicators

Collaboration: Presence of multi-jurisdictional projects in rural areas

Equity & Inclusion: Access to health and education services

Resilience: Presence of rural infrastructure projects explicitly considering self-sufficiency

Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Regional tourism staff
- ❖ Rural school districts and education service districts
- ❖ Health care providers
- ❖ Local & county emergency managers

Key Considerations

Regional Collaboration

How will a regional approach to these strategies support economic prosperity?

Our region's rural areas must work together to increase access to basic services and cultivate promising new economic sectors. While each community has unique needs and identities, far more unites our rural areas than divides them. County and other regional economic development practitioners should facilitate collaboration and sharing among rural communities. This will help coalesce multiple communities behind funding proposals and projects, increasing the likelihood of their success.

Equity & Inclusion

How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?

Access — many public services are concentrated in urban areas, making them difficult to access for residents of rural areas who do not have reliable transportation or high-speed internet connections. By highlighting the needs of rural residents and advocating for systems of service provision that are accessible in rural areas, economic developers can bring attention and resources to an underserved population.

Resilience

How will these strategies build regional resilience?

Diversification of industries/economic sectors — Oregon's rural economies have experienced significant decline in part because they lacked economic diversity. Encouraging the diversification of the industries that support our rural areas will increase rural areas' ability to withstand and bounce back from future economic shocks.

Infrastructure redundancy and resiliency — building out self-sufficient infrastructure in rural places will decrease dependency on far-away support systems. Since many disasters may cut off access to these support systems, self-sufficient and back-up infrastructure will be critical to survival.

Internal Coordination —coalescing rural communities around specific funding proposals will increase competitiveness since many funders prioritize collaborative efforts. While a single community on its own may have trouble competing with the comparatively vast resources available in urban areas, pooling rural communities' resources and voices will increase their likelihood of gaining attention and traction.