Our second Stronger Economies Together session gathered 59 participants to discuss the Mid-Columbia’s economic development assets and challenges. After a welcome from Klickitat County Commissioner David Sauter highlighting the collaborative nature of our region, participants started our activity for the day.

Dr. Susan Wolff, Chief Academic Officer at Columbia Gorge Community College, gave context for our activity by sharing her experience updating the College’s Academic Master Plan and highlighting social characteristics and information about the quality of life, natural resources and geography of the Mid-Columbia. After providing this basis for discussion, Dr. Wolff led the group in exercises designed to identify and prioritize regional assets and challenges. These are listed in the table below.

For Stronger Economies Together, we will build on these priorities with our future discussions and use them as a foundation for the regional vision, goals and actions to be developed in later sessions. For Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, these regional assets and challenges will be built into our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy’s efforts.

After the session, many participants stayed for a panel on the technology cluster. Panelists included Jeff Nicol (Privacy Ready and Gorge Technology Alliance President), Nancy White (Custom Interface), John Hardham (Lightwave), and Jessica Metta (MCEDD Project Manager and Gorge Technology Alliance Executive Director). Each addressed the role of technology in our economy, their experiences working in this region, and the Gorge Technology Alliance’s efforts to provide an arena for networking, training, and promoting the tech cluster both within and outside of our region.

For materials, presentations and more information please visit MCEDD’s Stronger Economies Together website: