

**MID-COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
CEDS STEERING COMMITTEE**

AGENDA

**Tuesday, June 8, 2021
3:30 PM**

Via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/91668157381?pwd=Qm9qbEx4QVlqYVBQMkFTS0hiNXdyUT09>

AGENDA

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Estimated Time</u>	<u>Item</u>
Call to Order/Introductions	5 minutes	Discussion
Public Comment	5 minutes	Information
Approval of the Minutes <i>May 11, 2021</i>	2 minutes	Approval
May 26 Meeting Debrief <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What went well?</i>• <i>What should we adjust for future meetings?</i>• <i>Review breakout group discussions.</i>	30 minutes	Discussion
June CEDS Meeting Preparation <i>Feedback on breakout process: see small group notes to mimic 2017 process and Asset Mapping tool</i>	15 minutes	Discussion
Discussion Items <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Online Survey</i>• <i>Meeting in Person</i>		
Adjournment		

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. If you have a disability that requires any special materials, services or assistance, please contact Lauren Hernandez at 541-296-2266 (TTY 711) at least 48 hours before the meeting.

MCEDD is an equal opportunity lender, employer and provider.

**MID-COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
CEDS STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES
May 11th, 2021, 3:30 P.M.
Via Zoom**

Committee Attendance: Austin Evans; Carrie Pipinich; Genevieve Scholl; Richard Foster; Buck Jones; Liliana Justo-Bello; Jonathan Lewis; Maui Meyer; Hannah Brause; Kevin Waters
Staff: Jessica Metta, Jane Allen

Introductions

Jessica Metta started the meeting with a round of introductions for committee members.

Public Comment

Jessica Metta asked if there was any public comment. There was not.

Steering Committee Minutes

Genevieve Scholl motioned to approve the April 2021 CEDS steering committee meeting minutes as presented. Carrie Pipinich seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

April 28th Meeting Debrief.

Jessica reminded the group that steering committee members are tasked with facilitating the breakout discussions for their group, along with assistance from a MCEDD staff member, who will help to take notes. If no staff member is available, it is recommended that the facilitator ask one of the group participants to help keep track of comments made during the discussion.

Jessica asked the group to share their thoughts from the April 28th meeting and to give feedback about how meetings could improve in the future.

Discussion: Maui Meyer commented that he thought the time allotted for breakout discussions was beneficial. He also shared that it was helpful to have a notetaker and that his group had great conversations. Genevieve Scholl commended MCEDD staff for coordinating the meeting and keeping technical complications to a minimum. Austin Evans commented that the April meeting went smoother with one breakout session compared to the first meeting, which had two breakout sessions. Richard Foster felt there should be more time for discussion at future meetings. Jonathan Lewis commented that he was surprised by the diversity of feedback and comments he heard in his breakout discussion.

Maui wondered about MCEDD's process for incorporating the diversity of suggestions heard during these meetings into the CEDS. Jessica shared that the strategy meeting will be broken up into specific topic areas such as housing and workforce, which will help organize the suggestions made. Carrie Pipinich added that the CEDS process is similar to the needs assessment process, where the CEDS is the guiding framework but the strategies can be more targeted and flexible.

Jessica shared that MCEDD staff will be working to update the format of the CEDS to make it more accessible and easier to digest.

Genevieve suggested that the group consider adding identified barriers to the strategies portion of the CEDS document. Jessica noted that a future meeting will be focused on strategy implementation, which will include a discussion of existing barriers. Maui emphasized that the CEDS will be coming out during a time of significant federal spending – and suggested that the strategy should be bold given these conditions. Jonathan and Genevieve seconded these thoughts. Richard suggested that MCEDD review the infrastructure project list for each county and see how it aligns with the proposed American Jobs Plan from the federal government. Jessica shared that MCEDD has been engaging with community partners to understand how to best prepare communities to access incoming federal funds but would welcome other thoughts of how to approach this.

Kevin Waters shared that Skamania County has been working with congressional aides to understand how to best position the County to access funding. Kevin also suggested that the CEDS should utilize a baseline approach for the entire region, rather than focusing on specific projects in each county. Hannah Brause supported the idea that people in her community are not always aware about federal, state, and local funding opportunities and suggested efforts be put into raising awareness about what funds are available for rural communities.

Jessica shared that MCEDD is working with The Next Door Inc. to help facilitate focus groups for underserved communities to discuss what economic development priorities they would like to see incorporated into the CEDS. Jessica also highlighted that regional partners would like to coordinate a discussion focused on transportation needs in the Gorge. Genevieve commented that One Gorge would be interested in participating but does not have the capacity to spearhead this effort.

Meeting Preparation

May and June

Jessica noted that the May meeting will feature a presentation by researchers from the Institute for Policy, Research and Engagement at the University of Oregon to see what sectors are growing in the region and how these sectors can become more resilient in the future. The June meeting will be focused on an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Allen, Project Coordinator

Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

May 26, 2021 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Session: Industry Clusters

Small Group Discussion Summary

Breakout question #1: Are these the sectors you expected? Are any missing?

- Expected more of a focus on agriculture
- Interested to learn more about impacts to the governmental sector over the years
- Energy sectors were not well reflected in the data
- Would like to see more representation of tourism east of HR/Skamania counties
- We need to focus on areas where we are strong and even distribution of industries across the Gorge
- Curious how outdoor gear/apparel fit into the industries
- Interesting to see where wage growth has or has not occurred
- Surprised by the automotive data in the innovation sector
- Professional services data did not show and this might be because it was combined in manufacturing
- Interested to learn what degree local manufacturers are exporting and how firms have been impacted
- Curious to know how childcare is reported and the implications of this
- Surprised to see how strong the wood products industry is
- It would be interesting to see age demographics overlaid with industry
- Level of people commuting out of the region is surprising to see
- Low wages in tourism sector are concerning

Breakout question #2: What tools do you see to help these sectors grow and become more resilient?

Energy

- Need to build out micro energy infrastructure so that it can handle distributed energy
- Electrical grid needs to be modernized to improve resilience to wildfires and storms
- Support for co-located solar and storage at critical facilities

Housing

- Zoning changes and regulations to decrease housing prices
- More housing units reintroduced into downtown. Provide market share for people to live and work, support growth in downtown
- Address the impacts from second homes and air bnbs
- Housing for hospitality, tourism, and recreation workforce
- Balancing short-term rentals with community housing needs
- Explore community land trust model to help maintain workforce housing

Agriculture

- Employment insurance for agriculture workers is needed
- Tools to diversify the agriculture sector and add value locally

Tourism

- Expansion of recreational facilities across public lands – campgrounds, parks, trail systems, facilities, restrooms
- Branding/marketing to boost tourism in other destinations in the region

Small Business

- Expedite the permit process for small businesses i.e. vendors at Farmers markets
- Incubator spaces, small industrial spaces for companies to get started
- Better connect businesses to resources such as the Gorge Tech Alliance, Oregon Manufacturing Partnership, BO export assistance, SBDC
- Support transition to online marketplaces

Food

- Infrastructure for small food businesses like commercial kitchen space, cold storage, cannery, etc.
- More resilient system to supply food to the region in times of crisis – food hub development
- Improved wastewater capacity to address continued growth

Workforce

- Improved childcare access/affordability
- Upskilling workforce to find higher wage jobs
- Pathways for younger people to grow into local jobs

Other

- Help give property owners the skills to rent out their extra space
- Resources to help unincorporated communities incorporate
- Sharing of lessons learned from wildfires so unincorporated areas see benefits to incorporating
- Better communications about resources and opportunities available
- Investments in infrastructure such as broadband, water, waste, transportation
- Support for forest health – making forest cleanup viable
- Prepare smaller communities for incoming funds
- Collaboration between governments to reduce barriers to issues like housing
- Need more skilled workforce in the construction sector
- Improved transportation access to support local workforce
- Opportunities to strengthen beverage manufacturing supply chains



Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

Columbia River Gorge Regional Economic Development Strategy

Wednesday, June 30, 2021

Via Zoom:

AGENDA: Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Time	Agenda Item	Who
8:30	Welcome and Overview of Regional Strategy Process	Jessica Metta
8:45	County Welcome and Overview: Sherman County	Judge Joe Dabulskis
9:05	Review of Prior Sessions: COVID-19, Data/ Demographics, Key Sectors	???
9:15	Breakout Group Discussion <i>Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats</i>	Strategy Committee
10:15	Breakout Group Report Out	Strategy Committee
10:35	Today's Connection to Regional Strategy	Jessica Metta
10:45	Adjourn	

Thank You to Our Strategy Sponsors:



NW Natural®

SWOT Session- Instructions

Small Group Facilitator: _____

Small Group Breakouts

Instructions for small group facilitators:

- 1) Encourage your group to introduce themselves.
- 2) A SWOT analysis matrix is provided for each table.
 - Groups will have 30 minutes to brainstorm and fill out their own strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats chart. Encourage thinking *regionally*. Encourage your group to embrace all ideas and discuss them at this stage in the process- refinement will come later.
 - Spend about 10 minutes on refinement to the top five to ten points that will be reported to the large group (*Note:* ideas recorded on the jamboards and matrixes [sent out before?] will be collected and used)

****Short Break****

Reconvene/Report Out

- Jessica will reconvene the groups to share results. MCEDD staff will record and collect the information shared.
- Each small group reporter will be asked to share their group's results. We will proceed with requests for all group reporters to highlight their top tier strengths first. Repeats will be starred rather than verbally repeated and will help in defining first level for consensus. Group leads will be asked to follow the same format for weaknesses, followed by opportunities and finally threats. [using jamboard?]
- As time allows, we will provide an opportunity for further discussion to support additional consensus about important items in each category.

Small Group Facilitators Supplemental

If needed, you can prompt your group with broad questions.

Strengths

- What are the advantages available in the region that do not exist for other regions?
- What is the state of skilled workforce for the region?
- What are the strong industries?
- What is the capability to be flexible and adapt to changes?

Weaknesses

- What are the areas in which other regions possess an overwhelming edge?
- What are the essential workforce resources that are essentially required but not available?
- What are common issues/complaints? Key vulnerabilities?

Opportunities

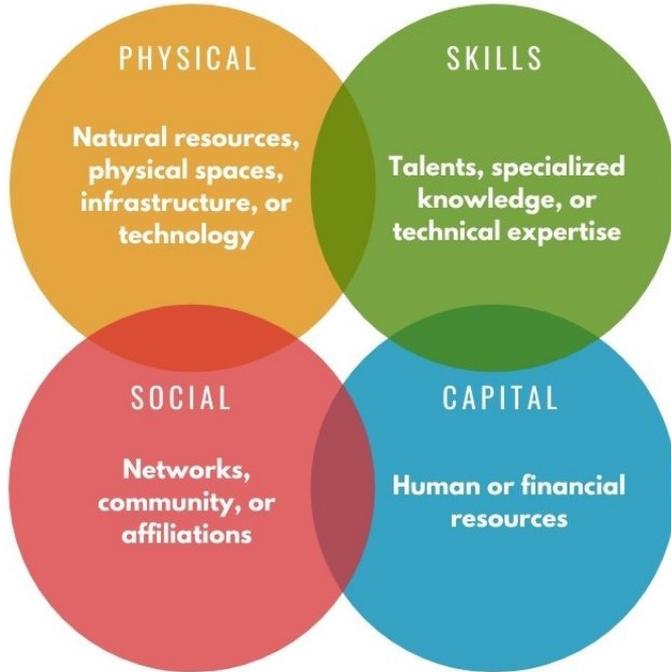
- What are emerging market trends the region may be positioned to capitalize upon/ that are in accordance with strengths of the region?
- Are there new markets that can be examined?
- What are the national and international changes that are favorable for the region?

Threats

- What are the obstacles to regional growth?
- How will emerging industries affect the region's weaknesses?
- Do other regions have a better reputation or conditions for supporting entrepreneurs, job growth, recruitment, ...?



Asset Mapping & SWOT Analysis



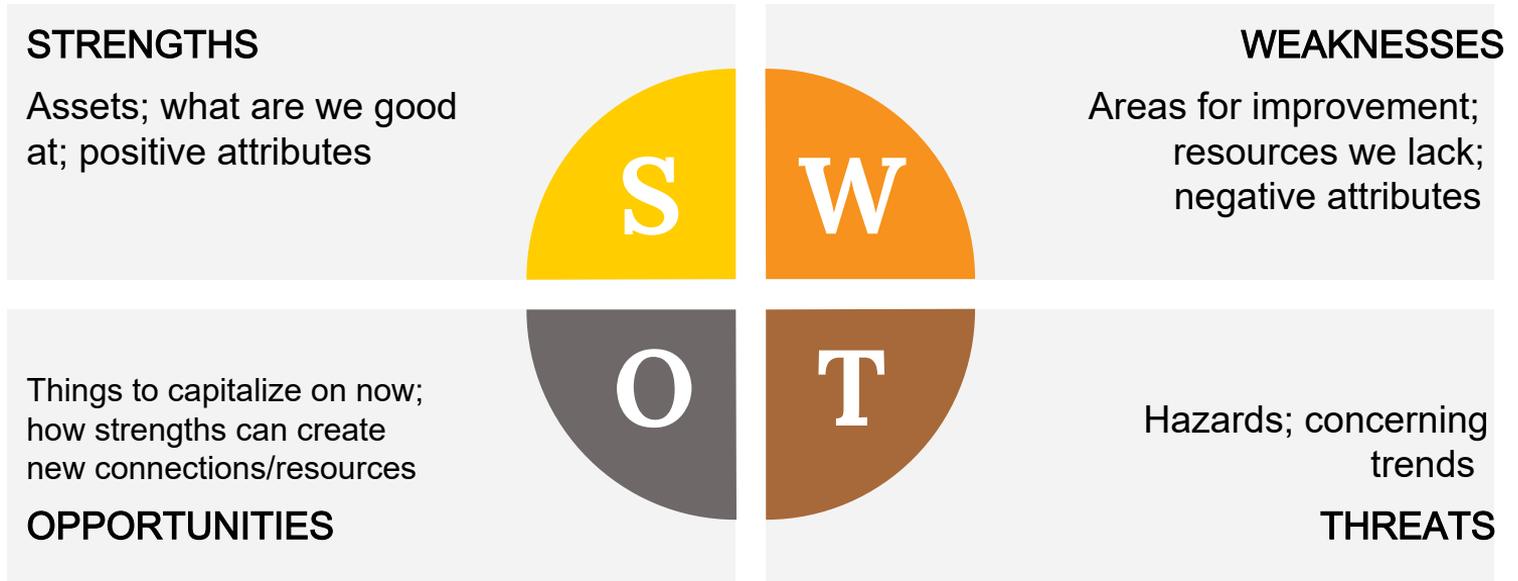
The value of Asset Mapping

Uncovering and leveraging the unique resources we already have now to make change.

How is each asset actionable? How can we *link and leverage* these assets to achieve our vision?



SWOT Analysis





Now what?

- How can we utilize our assets to have the most impactful outcome with the least amount of effort?
- What could we do? What should we do?