

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

AGENDA

**Tuesday, July 13, 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>June 8, 2021</i>	2 minutes	Approval
June 30 Meeting Debrief <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What went well?</i>• <i>What should we adjust for future meetings?</i>• <i>Review SWOT Summary.</i>	30 minutes	Discussion
July CEDS Meeting Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Review of 2017 Vision and Goals for suggested edits</i>	20 minutes	Discussion
Discussion Items <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>September 1 Session in Person: location, speakers, post-event tour</i>	10 minutes	Discussion
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.

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**MID-COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
CEDS STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES
June 8th, 2021, 3:30 P.M.
Via Zoom**

Committee Attendance: Austin Evans; Genevieve Scholl; Buck Jones; Greg Davis; Jonathan Lewis; Kevin Waters

Staff: Jessica Metta, Jane Allen

Public Comment

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

Steering Committee Minutes

Genevieve Scholl motioned to approve the May 2021 CEDS steering committee meeting minutes as presented. Buck Jones seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

May 26th Meeting Debrief

Jessica asked the group to share their feedback from the May 26th meeting.

Discussion: Greg and Kevin shared that they did not have much to talk about in their groups and that their group size was small. Austin shared that he was having internet issues, but that Alice did a great job facilitating in his place. Genevieve commented that her group had a discussion around small-scale agriculture versus large-scale agriculture, and the possibility of treating locally produced value-added agriculture as a different sector. Her group also discussed tourism and its impacts on housing costs. Jonathan shared that his group noted that the energy sector was not well-reflected in the data. Greg said it was hard to map a mental model of the region with the way the data was displayed. Greg also added that it was difficult to not have the material to reference for breakout discussions. Genevieve said it might be helpful to have a different way to display all the issues brought up during the discussions. Jessica asked the group if they felt giving report out summaries from their group discussion was beneficial. Greg shared that he thought these report outs were valuable and that every group has something different to offer in terms of what they chose to discuss and the suggestions they offered.

June CEDS Meeting Preparation – SWOT Analysis

Jessica shared that the next CEDS meeting will be focused on a SWOT analysis. She provided guidelines in the packet that was used for the 2017 CEDS SWOT analysis and asked the group what they thought would be the best approach to do this virtually. Jane gave an overview of using an asset-based approach to accompany the SWOT, which looks at the social, physical, knowledge, and capital assets that already exist within the region and how to leverage those to promote economic development. Jessica explained that in the last CEDS update, there was 30 minutes allotted for participants to do the SWOT analysis and 10 minutes to prioritize those for each group. Each group would then report out the priority areas they identified to the rest of the participants. Jessica asked the group if they thought asset mapping would be a helpful addition to the process.

Discussion: Genevieve commented that she thought asset mapping would be a beneficial exercise to do with the CEDS participants and may result in a more fruitful discussion of potential opportunities as opposed to just needs and barriers. Jessica asked the group if it would be helpful to send the questions to participants prior to the meeting to encourage a more engaging discussion. She also asked if it would be helpful to share the previous SWOT analysis list from 2017 or if this would stifle creativity from participants. Jonathan said it would be helpful to both

share the discussion questions prior and the 2017 SWOT analysis but explain to participants that they are not limited to this list. Austin agreed that this would be a beneficial strategy. Jessica noted that she is thinking about how to modify the discussion questions asked in the 2017 CEDS to incorporate the themes of equitable outcomes and resilience. Jessica said MCEDD previously distributed a survey to participants and would consider doing the same for this year's CEDS. The group supported sending out a survey after the meeting to gather input from others. Jessica asked the group if they felt an hour would be enough time to do the SWOT analysis. Greg shared that it will be important to have a decent group size to balance the conversations. Genevieve wondered if along with the review of prior sessions, it might be helpful to highlight issues that have persisted throughout several CEDS updates, such as housing, to provide context for participants. Jessica agreed this would be a helpful strategy. Jessica asked the group for feedback on the timing allotted for discussions. Greg shared that it might be useful to ask the participants if there are any lingering questions or gaps in the data they would like to see addressed.

Meeting in Person

Jessica asked the group if they had any feedback for when to start in-person meetings.

Discussion: Greg commented that he would feel comfortable gathering in-person for the CEDS meetings. Buck shared that CRITFC is only allowing gatherings of ten people or less, so he would not be able to participate until those rules change. Kevin shared that Washington State rules are changing June 30th and recommended the group meet in person after the rules in both Oregon and Washington change. He added that he personally has a venue space in Stevenson that he could offer to the CEDS participants. The group agreed to wait and see what the guidance changes are to make a final decision.

Meeting adjourned at 4:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Allen, MCEDD Project Coordinator

CEDS June 30th SWOT Analysis Meeting Discussion

The following points listed are *priority areas*, or areas where there was consensus from the groups. Underneath each section we have included other thoughts and ideas that were discussed during the meeting but not prioritized.

Assets

- Scenic beauty, natural resources, outdoor recreation
- Transportation corridors
- Strong agriculture sector
- Strong collaboration across region
- Columbia Gorge Community College (CGCC)
- Renewable energy sources (wind, solar, water, open spaces)
- Natural environment's diversity
- Bi-state cross regional human networks, bi-state community agencies
- Collective applications for federal funding
- Hospitals/healthcare industry
- Diverse sector mix
- Rich history/Native culture

Other considerations:

- Dallesport airport
- Q-Life – intergovernmental group that improves access to broadband
- Local expertise – efficient resource use
- Indigenous knowledge – preservation of skills and knowledge; relationship with the land
- CGCC Aircraft maintenance program
- Technology companies/expertise (Google, Insitu, etc); education and outreach opportunities
- CGCC new skills center and on-campus housing
- OIB/WIB grant and loan programs
- Local government collaboration
- Compassion and care for local farmworkers (Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Taskforce)
- Agriculture workers becoming permanent residents, which adds to the social sector and culture of region
- Renewal Workshop
- Food trails, agritourism
- Local ports
- Lions and rotary clubs
- Civic organizations, school connections and sports activities
- Multitude of banking options
- Fermentation cluster

- Agriculture support through university extension programs
- Regional resiliency team
- SBDC
- Food industry expansion (Latinx grocery stores, food carts, Tofurkey)
- The Next Door Inc.
- Gorge Tech Alliance (GTA)
- The Dalles Readiness Center (CGCC)
- Chamber of commerce networks
- Gorge Translink Alliance
- GorgeGrown – Bi-state agriculture collaborative
- Disaster response networks
- Specialty agriculture crops grown in region
- High quality of life
- The Dalles Dam
- Celilo Transfer Station

Strengths

- Regionwide collaboration and advocacy, strong social fabric
- Natural beauty, resource diversity
- Wide range of microclimates
- National and global reliance on the Gorge as a transportation corridor
- CGCC
- Availability of renewable energy resources
- Diverse industries
- Geographical location
- Strong physical assets – college, industries, “future proof”

Other considerations:

- Cultural/physical history
- Cruise ship facilities, new dock in The Dalles
- Bonneville Dam and its flood protection
- News/media operations with regional focus
- MCEDD loan program
- Cascade Locks – available land for industrial development
- Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance
- Unique small businesses
- Low-cost, reliable power
- Low crime rates
- Minimal traffic

Weaknesses

- Availability of affordable and attainable housing, available land

- Aging bridges and infrastructure, broadband, water, sewer
- Income inequality
- Childcare availability and affordability
- Bi-state regulations
- Federal and state lands not providing taxable base
- Resilience, emergency preparedness
- Low wages when compared to cost of living

Other considerations:

- Transmission capability of new renewables
- Public transit network
- Long commutes for employees to reach affordable housing – impacts to community, personal livelihoods, increased GHG emissions
- Lack of capital
- National Forests – harvests are below allowable cut which impacts jobs, raw materials, allocated funds for FS to maintain recreation areas
- Infrastructure cannot handle tourism demands
- The Gorge does not have many higher-education opportunities
- Capacity challenges
- Land fills
- Lacking infrastructure for smaller diversified agriculture
- Lack of training for elected officials
- Low education attainment
- Loss of local newspapers
- Not prepared for temporary growth (ex. Influx of construction workers for projects)
- Communication in other languages
- Highway 14 needs repair
- Lack of support for multicultural communities
- Brain drain
- Lack of resources in schools

Opportunities

- Diversity of renewable energy options throughout the region
- Region as a great candidate for infrastructure investments – high impact, high return
- Federal broadband investments
- Building skills connection between industry and local workers
- Strong agricultural and tech knowledge > opportunities for cross of these sectors
- Continued and more region-wide discussions on the opportunities and build local support
- Arts sector
- Equitable access – lens for all opportunities, to bring everyone up, focus on transit opportunities
- Upskilling local workforce and higher wage industries
- Reset ideas of what is healthy community (how much growth, quality of life objectives)

- Locally developing our workforce, focus on youth opportunities
- Innovation in the Gorge with support for entrepreneurs
- Tradition of innovation that can be passed to next generation, with intentional changing of the guard
- Ability to see things have changed – mourn for the past but then note region’s future is on a different path with new opportunities

Other considerations:

- Zoom/remote work encourages wider citizen engagement
- Diversify commuter opportunities – railroads, river, freeways, bike paths
- Cascadia earthquake resiliency and potential to be a recovery/rescue staging area – can boost investment in preparation
- Future investments in passenger rail
- Import a lot of unmanned-aircraft systems (UAS) technical expertise – create jobs for local workforce and training opportunities
- East Cascades, CGCC, Early Learning Hub to develop childcare apprenticeships
- Revisit zoning laws
- Columbia Gorge Career Connect – upcoming program to increase career awareness and preparation – partner with regional businesses, schools, STEM Hub
- Additional funding for National Scenic Area economic development projects
- Transportation plan that coordinates around threats – work with DOTs, counties, etc.
- Completion of the historic highway – cycling, hiking tourism
- In-home child care, co-op models for child care services
- Transit system expansion
- Underdeveloped commercial properties in many communities
- Major transmission lines cross near The Dalles, creating opportunity for energy storage facilities
- Electrification of transportation
- Hood River Energy Plan – paving the way energy resilience and cost savings
- Bigger businesses could add resilience and provide career growth opportunities
- Expansion of key clusters eastward
- Small business training resources
- Food hub/storage development
- Redevelopment of historic buildings into housing and business space
- Investments into diversified agriculture infrastructure
- Remote work can bring talent to the area
- Encourage regional education initiatives to address the wealth gap

Threats

- Climate change and resulting catastrophic events (drought, wildfire, severe storms)

- Over reliance on single hub for essential supplies (food, fuel, internet from West – need access from East)
- How much growth should be occurring and where
- Housing supply shortage
- Over-reliance on tourism industry – low-paying, seasonal jobs without benefits and income to support housing
- Gentrification squeezing out diversity
- Ever changing regulations, especially for businesses
- Lack of skilled workforce in trades to support growth and replacing retiring workers
- Misallocation of priorities – parts of the economy at the expense of the rest of the economy
- Loss of control over local decision making
- Eviction moratorium reduces investment in rental properties

Other considerations:

- Over-reliance on tourism industry – low-paying, seasonal jobs without benefits and income to support housing
- Few jobs at data centers compared to the amount of industrial land they take up
- Lack of population density disadvantages the area for federal and state funds
- Construction costs
- Lack of alternative transportation routes – especially during natural disasters
- Lack of infrastructure to support green transportation options
- Poverty and homelessness
- Aging population
- Significant vacation home presence
- Increase in remote work – challenges with labor market for local services
- Water shortages
- Agriculture businesses at risk for power failures (costs \$1M for a 2-day outage)
- Ever changing regulations that disproportionately affect local small businesses
- Urban growth boundary restrictions
- Lack of funding for schools



Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

Columbia River Gorge Regional Economic Development Strategy

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

Via Zoom: **XXX**

AGENDA: Vision and Goals

Time	Agenda Item	Who
8:30	Welcome and Overview of Regional Strategy Process	Jessica Metta
8:35	County Welcome and Overview: Klickitat County	Dave Sauter
8:55	Review of Prior Sessions: COVID-19, Data/ Demographics, Key Sectors, SWOT	Jessica Metta
9:05	Regional Vision and Goals <i>2017 Vision Highlights; Proposed Vision Modifications</i> <i>Primary Goal Areas</i>	Strategy Committee
9:15	Breakout Group Discussion <i>Regional Goal Setting</i>	Strategy Committee
10:00	Breakout Group Report Out	Strategy Committee
10:30	Adjourn	

Thank You to Our Strategy Sponsors:



DRAFT

2017 Vision

The region envisions a thriving economy supporting diverse business opportunities that act in harmony with the area's rural qualities, values, and natural resources.

2017 Priority Goals

- Housing
- Financial Capital and Entrepreneurial Environment
- Workforce
- Infrastructure
- Regulatory Environment

Example Pages from 2017 Session

Financial Capital and Entrepreneurial Environment

Small business development services, mentorship programs, access to banking services, access to debt and equity capital, venture capital

2012 Goal: Enhance the retention and expansion of businesses in the region. Achieve an increase in new business to the region that will continue to diversify the economy and create sustainable opportunities, including family wage jobs, over the next ten years.

Current State: What organizations, leadership capacities, business supports, financial resources, unique programs, networks and other assets already exist in the region? What other existing plans should be connected to this goal area? Where do significant gaps exist?	Aspirations: What will have changed over the next 5, 10, 20 years?

2017 Goal: _____

SWOT Elements: Financial Capital and Entrepreneurial Environment

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <p>Regional Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-State cooperation • Spirit of collaboration • Strong sense of community • Strong local leadership and regional entities • Active Industry Alliances <p>Diverse Industry Sectors and Growing Business Sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse industries • Growing industry Sectors (unmanned systems, value added agriculture, manufacturing, fermentation, wearables, healthcare) • Strong agricultural base <p>Additional Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Climate • Access to Capital • Business Incentives 	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <p>Growth of Value-Added Ag and Ag Tech Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value-Add Sector Coordination • New Food Processing • New Specialty Crops • Ag Tech and Research <p>Synergy Across State Lines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination Between Business Sectors • Enhance Industry Associations • Support Effective Regional Teams <p>High Tech; Unmanned Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued Increase in High Tech Businesses • Support for Unmanned systems Applications • Supply Chain Development <p>Leverage Natural Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood and Forestry Products Innovation • Renewable Energy • Fishing Industry <p>Focus on Local</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development of the locally based economy • Buy local education and programs <p>Business Attraction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage Gorge brand to attract aligned businesses
<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <p>High Poverty Rate/Economic Disparity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High poverty rate • Disparities between communities • Inequities <p>Additional Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and Capacity • Scale of Economy 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <p>Industry Diversification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of any major employer • Concentration risk <p>Additional Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty; wage stagnation • Commodity prices • Need for more incentives/packages to entice business development