

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

**AGENDA**

**Tuesday, May 11, 2021  
3:30 PM**

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

**AGENDA**

<b><u>Topic</u></b>	<b><u>Estimated Time</u></b>	<b><u>Item</u></b>
Call to Order/Introductions	5 minutes	Discussion
Public Comment	5 minutes	Information
Approval of the Minutes <i>April 13, 2021</i>	2 minutes	Approval
April 28 Meeting Debrief <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>What went well?</i></li><li>• <i>What should we adjust for future meetings?</i></li><li>• <i>Review breakout group discussions.</i></li></ul>	30 minutes	Discussion
Meeting Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>May</i></li><li>• <i>June</i></li></ul>	10 minutes	Discussion
Adjournment		

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**MID-COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**  
**CEDS STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**April 13th, 2021, 3:30 P.M.**  
**Via Zoom**

**Committee Attendance:** Kevin Waters; Austin Evans; Carrie Pipinich; Genevieve Scholl; Richard Foster; Buck Jones; Liliana Justo-Bello; Greg Davis

**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**

Kevin Waters motioned to approve the February 2021 CEDS steering committee meeting minutes as presented. Genevieve Scholl seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**March 31 Meeting Debrief**

Jessica asked the group to share their thoughts from the March 31<sup>st</sup> meeting and to give feedback about how the meeting could be improved in the future.

*Discussion: Kevin Waters enjoyed the breakout rooms and commented that he was surprised to learn that many stakeholders across the region shared similar concerns. Greg Davis thought the session was well done and found the breakout groups helpful. He added that the duration was too long for ideas, but too short to thoroughly discuss those ideas. Austin echoed Greg's comments and thought that longer breakout times would be beneficial. Buck added that there should be time to report back from the second breakout discussion. Genevieve echoed those comments and added that it was hard to take notes and summarize the discussion at the same time.*

Jessica asked the group to share a report out from the second breakout discussion.

*Discussion: Genevieve shared that there was a consensus among her group that the recovery approach should be to address the hardest hit communities, businesses, and individuals first, with a focus on traditionally underrepresented groups. Greg shared that there were counter-perspectives in his group – the overall sentiment being that the region should not encourage government support. Austin commented that his group focused on infrastructure challenges, especially as they would relate to a Cascadia subduction event. Genevieve also noted that her group discussed communication challenges and the value of modeling communications after incident command systems set up by emergency management agencies in the wake of a disaster. Kevin shared that a participant in his group highlighted the reliance of bridges to transport supplies to critical organizations such as food banks that would be vulnerable during a disaster. Jessica shared that her group discussed continuing to work together to address these challenges. Greg shared that the Cascadia event came up in his group as well, in addition to the natural gas outage in Hood River. Liliana shared that she felt safe to talk about regional needs in her*

*group and that her group was respectful and engaged. Buck added that improved communications would be beneficial for the region and added that the region has been greatly impacted when there has been a power outage in the past. Genevieve noted that when the State of Oregon did their Cascadia subduction study, they found that freight ships may be blocked by collapsed bridges. Greg commented that another topic of discussion during the meeting was the importance of diversifying industries to make the region more resilient to economic disruptions.*

## **Meeting Outreach Review**

Jessica asked the group to share their thoughts on who else should be participating in the CEDS public meetings.

*Discussion: Carrie Pipinich noted that the attendee list did not show many representatives from smaller towns in the region and added that she will reach out to smaller communities in South Wasco and Sherman County. Kevin commented that smaller businesses in the region should be participating, as well as people who would be critical during an emergency, such as managers from stores like Walmart and Fred Meyer.*

## **Meeting Preparation**

### ***April***

Jessica shared the agenda for the April 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. Jessica asked the group if they had any feedback for economist presenters, Scott Bailey, or Dallas Fridley, on what they would like to see included.

*Discussion: Genevieve said she has enjoyed their presentations in the past. She recommended they compare their data to any trends seen throughout different stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Carrie noted the economists usually compare year over year and suggested they look at the previous CEDS to identify any trends that have changed since then. Genevieve added that it would be nice to see if there are any changes in employment for healthcare and education jobs due to the pandemic. Buck echoed those comments – it would be helpful to know if public service jobs are losing employees due to the pandemic. Kevin noted that it would be beneficial to learn more about current unemployment trends and what may be causing them. He added that restaurants, grocery stores, and front facing jobs in Skamania County are having a difficult time hiring. Genevieve commented that it would be helpful to know the number of women who have dropped out of the workforce due to childcare needs.*

### ***May***

Jessica summarized the agenda for the May meeting, which will include a deep dive into the region's key industry sectors. Jessica noted that the list of industry sectors could take a broad or narrow view. Questions will be centered around how industry data should inform the region's goals and strategies for the coming five years.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Jane Allen, Project Coordinator*

April 28<sup>th</sup> CEDS meeting – Demographics and Data Breakout Discussion Summary

**Question #1: Were there any trends that you expected to see in the data that were not there? Did any trends surprise you?**

#### Hazards/Climate change

- Impacts from wildfire and other emergencies on different industry sectors
- How will in-migration related to natural hazards impact unincorporated regions

#### Housing

- Would like to see more data on how remote work is impacting the region
- Housing market seems less dependent on jobs available – income disparities and developer investment play a role
- Rents increasing in Sherman County due to growth in Hood River/The Dalles
- Expected to see higher renter population
- Focus on traded sector to alleviate housing issues
- Data on the rent burden for residents
- More info about mobile/manufactured homes as an investment opportunity – they are hard to finance with traditional lending for home ownership
- Community college housing will benefit the region and may increase college enrollment
- Many people are buying homes as second homes/vacation homes

#### Employment

- Seeing new entrepreneurship coming out of the pandemic
- SNAP data is a helpful economic indicator
- High number of Skamania County residents working in other counties
- Surprised to see job loss for K-12 education
- Low job growth for Wasco County
- High job loss and UI claims for indigenous population – How can we address this?

#### Population

- Permanent mailing address change data would help to reflect migration trends
- Low fertility rates were surprising
- Growth mainly attributed to in-migration
- Would like to know proportion of young residents that stay or return to the region
- Movement from Hood River to other local counties due to high costs of living

**Question #2: Does the information presented show the regional economy moving where we want it to go? What areas would you like to see changed?**

#### Housing

- Houselessness is a huge issue
- Can the region as a whole address housing instead of it being an issue for cities to tackle?
- Density is a concern for many communities

- Many newly displaced residents in RVs, tiny homes, and other non-traditional units
- There is a lack of skilled developers and financing to develop multifamily housing
- Housing for moderate income is a private sector issue – government mostly assists with low-income housing

#### Industry

- Concerns about sustainability of industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism
- Concerned about long term impacts on industry from high-school/college dropouts due to COVID-19
- Cost-benefit of focusing on hospitality industry – opportunities for retraining?
- Need support for better wage jobs that are sustainable
- Difficulty finding employees for service/hospitality industries
- Job growth in aerospace industry – how do we spread this industry in different communities across the region

#### Broadband

- Broadband across the region continues to be a challenge

#### Infrastructure

- What will happen to the economy if the Hood River bridge is not replaced?
- Old infrastructure can make available land hard to develop. How do we make room for influx of high-earners and meet infrastructure needs without burdening existing residents?

#### Unincorporated areas

- Unincorporated areas are not prepared for population growth

#### Employment

- How to balance remote work with needs for local tax revenue
- Losing jobs to innovation
- Wages are not high enough to support living in the region
- Youth have been pushed out of entry-level positions – opportunities for youth workforce development
- Manufacturing industry is having a hard time hiring in Klickitat County

#### Transportation

- How will non-vehicular travel (biking) impact commutes
- Need for public transit options that are toll free



*Mid-Columbia Economic Development District*

## Columbia River Gorge Regional Economic Development Strategy

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

Via Zoom:

### AGENDA: Key Industry Sectors, Resilience

Time	Agenda Item	Who
8:30	Welcome Remarks	Jessica Metta
8:35	Overview of Regional Strategy Process	Jessica Metta
8:50	County Welcome and Overview: <b>Skamania County</b>	Kevin Waters, Pat Albaugh
9:20	Key Industry Sectors	Bob Parker, Tim Duy
10:00	Breakout Group Discussion <i>(Add questions here -Are these sectors you expected? Are any missing? What tools do you see to help these grow and/or be more resilient?)</i>	Strategy Committee
10:25	Breakout Group Report Out	Strategy Committee
10:45	Today's Connection to Regional Strategy	Jessica Metta
10:50	Adjourn	

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## 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 Remarks	Jessica Metta
8:35	Overview of Regional Strategy Process	Jessica Metta
8:45	County Welcome and Overview: <b>Sherman County</b>	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	

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