

Mid-Columbia

MCEDD



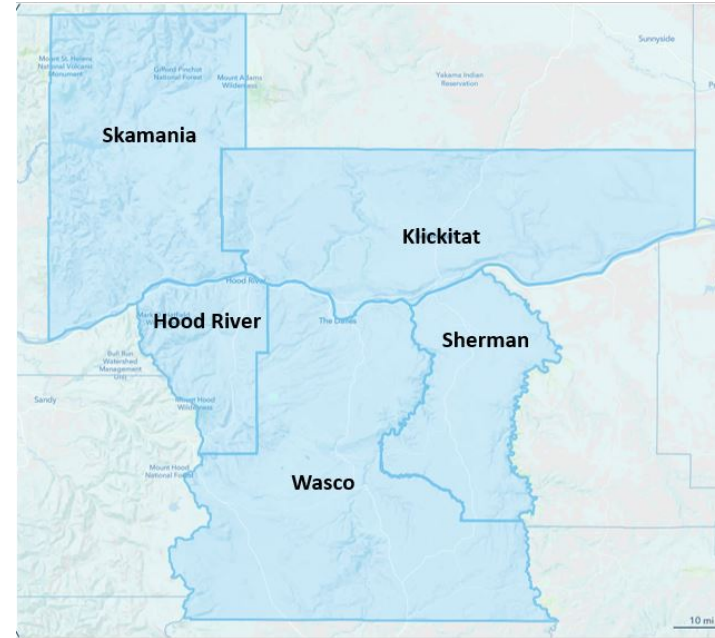
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

**Presentation of the Draft
2022-2027 Comprehensive Economic
Development Strategy (CEDs)**

Regional Strategy Process

What is the strategy?

Every five years the region develops the comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) as a guide to understanding the regional economy and crafting goals, strategies and actions to create jobs, raise income levels, diversify the economy, and improve the quality of life.



Map: MCEDD region

Regional Strategy Process

- March 31, 2021: COVID-19 Impacts and Resiliency
- April 28, 2021: Demographics and Data
- May 26, 2021: Sector Focus Areas
- June 30, 2021: Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
- July 28, 2021: Vision and Goals
- September 1, 2021: Strategies
- October 6, 2021: Measuring Success, and Implementation
- **November 5, 2021: Annual Gorge Economic Symposium, Draft Presentation.**



You Are Here

Thanks to Our Steering Committee

- Hannah Brause, Washington State Extension
- Greg Davis, business (high tech) in Hood River County
- Austin Evans, business (restaurant, hospitality) in Sherman County
- Richard Foster, Klickitat County Economic Development Department
- Buck Jones, Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission
- Liliana Justo Bello, The Next Door Inc.
- Maui Meyer, business (hospitality, real estate) in Hood River and Wasco Counties
- Carrie Pipinich, Wasco County Economic Development Commission/
Sherman County Economic Development
- Genevieve Scholl, Port of Hood River and One Gorge
- Jonathan Lewis, Klickitat Valley Health
- Kevin Waters, Skamania Economic Development Council

Vision

A bi-state Mid-Columbia region with a resilient, thriving, sustainable, rural economy that supports equitable access to diverse business opportunities that act in harmony with the area's unique qualities, values, cultural and natural resources.

SWOT Analysis & Asset Mapping

Strengths/ Assets

- Scenic Beauty, Recreation, Brand and Tourism Industry
- Central Location
- Availability of Transportation Systems/ Modes
- Natural Resources
- Culture & History
- Diverse Industry Sectors
- Growing Business Sectors
- Human Capital
- Entrepreneurial Spirit
- Infrastructure

Weaknesses

- Insufficient Housing Stock
- Education and Skilled Workforce
- Transportation
- Regulatory Environment
- Infrastructure
- Disparities Between States
- Preparedness
- Lack of Business Expansion Space
- High Poverty Rate/ Economic Disparity

SWOT Analysis & Asset Mapping

Opportunities

- Growth of Value-Added Ag and Ag Tech Businesses
- Expanding Tourism/ Arts/ Culture
- Synergy Across State Lines
- Quality of Life
- Leverage Natural Assets
- Connectivity
- Workforce Development
- Public Transportation
- Businesses/ Talent Attraction

Threats

- Housing Shortage Impacts
- Education and Workforce
- Regulations
- Impacts of Population Growth
- Hazards/ Climate Change/ Resilience
- Water Access, Regulations
- Infrastructure Limitations
- Industry Diversification

Priority Goals

- **Strong Businesses**
- **Robust Workforce**
- **Resilient Infrastructure**
- **Powerful Regional Collaboration**



Strong Businesses

Goal Statement: Enhance business innovation, retention and expansion, and entrepreneurship through equitable access to support services and capital, diversifying our industry mix, and enhanced coordination to address barriers to growth and sustainability.

Strong Businesses

Action Strategies

Strategy 1: Coordinate marketing efforts to increase awareness of existing business resources, including spaces, lending, technical assistance, and others.

Strategy 2: Develop and enhance access to business space.

Strategy 3: Build and advocate for a local Business Support Network to support local businesses with accessible opportunities to develop skills and access resources, particularly around innovation and retention.

Strategy 4: Identify and address barriers and opportunities at the industry-sector level to support industry cluster development with specific focus on target industries listed in the plan.

Strategy 5: Attract new businesses.

Strategy 6: Ensure that community services/ infrastructure are able to keep up with business growth. Recognize the connections to infrastructure and quality of life as key supports for growing a business.

Strategy 7: Increase locally-available access to capital for entrepreneurs.

Strategy 8: Increase the ease of navigating the financial system.

Strategy 9: Increase opportunities for businesses to export products.

Robust Workforce

Goal Statement: Cultivate a talented, multicultural workforce through diverse, family-wage career training aligned with industry needs while providing essential infrastructure supports for workforce participation in each community.

Robust Workforce

Action Strategies

Strategy 1: Enhance tools to support area employers.

Strategy 2: Enhance training opportunities to connect residents with local job opportunities.

Strategy 3: Provide career training and services that specifically assist bilingual and indigenous workforce needs.

Strategy 4: Address childcare needs of employers and workers.

Strategy 5: Support strong pre-K-12 programs throughout the region.

Strategy 6: Improve incumbent worker skills; support retooling and upgrading skills.

Resilient Infrastructure

Goal Statement: Ensure communities and businesses of the Gorge have reliable, resilient access to infrastructure, including attainable housing, high-capacity broadband, sustainable sources of energy, and emergency services, among others, to support future population demands and economic opportunities.

Resilient Infrastructure

Water/Wastewater Action Strategies

Strategy 1: Plan for and facilitate investment in key infrastructure areas that enhance the Gorge community, economy, resiliency, and address growing demand.

Strategy 2: Support innovative products and practices in the region to support continued access to water resources as snow melt and precipitation reduces.

Strategy 3: Increase access to state and federal resources to support infrastructure development.

Housing Action Strategies

Strategy 1: Increase awareness and understanding of housing market conditions in the Gorge.

Strategy 2: Develop innovative strategies to support increasing attainable housing production in the Gorge.

Strategy 3: Enhance communication and coordination across the region to support housing development.

Resilient Infrastructure

Broadband Action Strategies

Strategy 1: Support addressing middle and last mile telecommunications infrastructure gaps.

Strategy 2: Support investments into a fully redundant network.

Strategy 3: Advocate for and pursue funding through federal and state funding programs.

Strategy 4: Increase adoption and use of existing broadband infrastructure.

Energy Action Strategies

Strategy 1: Leverage state requirements for 100% renewable energy generation to support investment in our region and increase resiliency of our local energy system.

Strategy 2: Support investments that keep critical facilities and communities powered during disruptive events.

Strategy 3: Invest in energy conservation (residential, commercial, industrial) to reduce costs and increase efficiency.

Strategy 4: Support the needs of the Native American community to connect the in-lieu sites to electricity and/or supplies of propane for heat.

Transportation

Action Strategies

Strategy 1: Coordinate transportation priorities and investments and align planning efforts among regional partners to support the Mid-Columbia's economies and communities.

Strategy 2: Support enhancements to regional air, water and rail infrastructure for cargo and passenger transport (locals and visitors).

Strategy 3: Improve safety for all users of regional and local transportation networks.

Strategy 4: Increase capacity of regional transportation network with efficient and accessible bi-state transit options.

Strategy 5: Increase equitable access to transit options among underserved populations, including to Native American in-lieu sites.

Strategy 6: Provide safe and complete facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Strategy 7: Invest in resiliency for the region to mitigate, adapt and plan for extreme weather, natural and human-caused disasters.

Powerful Regional Collaboration

Goal Statement: Effectively collaborate and advocate as a bi-state region to leverage the economic assets of the Columbia River Gorge to facilitate strong businesses, robust workforce and resilient infrastructure.

Powerful Regional Collaboration

Action Strategies

Strategy 1: Strengthen information sharing and gathering.

Strategy 2: Build on existing collaborative groups.

Strategy 3: Collaborate and advocate for community projects.

Strategy 4: Increase capacity for a regional advocacy role.

A photograph of a sunset over a body of water, with the sun low on the horizon and its light reflecting on the water's surface. The sky is filled with colorful clouds in shades of orange, yellow, and red. The water is dark, and the reflection of the sun is a bright, shimmering path.

Next Steps

1. Finalize draft
2. Notice when open for public comment
3. Graphic design to improve usability
4. Collect regional project priorities
5. Approval by MCEDD Board in March 2022
6. Submission to US Economic Development Administration

Many Thank Yous!

All Participants
Steering Committee
MCEDD Board
MCEDD Staff
The Next Door Inc.
Process Sponsors:



NW Natural[®]

