

## LANE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

### AGENDA

February 12, 2024

(LEC meetings are held on the **2<sup>nd</sup> Monday** of each month)

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82530343954?pwd=DV9ss5C3c2fPbpbznWISb3raLsMEH9d.1>

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Meeting ID: 825 3034 3954

Passcode: 193365

*All individuals are expected to observe respectful behavior and decorum during this public meeting. Please be courteous and respectful.*

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|---|-------|
| <b>1. Welcome / Introductions / Changes to the Agenda</b>   | 11:30 |
| Presenter: Greg Ervin   |       |
| <b>2. Public Comment</b>  | 11:35 |
| Presenter: Greg Ervin   |       |
| <b>3. Comments from Members, Chair, and Staff</b>   | 11:40 |
| Presenter: Greg Ervin   |       |
| <b>4. Review Minutes from January 8, 2024</b>   | 11:45 |
| Presenter: Greg Ervin   |       |
| <b>Action Item:</b> Approve minutes.  |       |
| <b>5. Lane County Regional Broadband Update</b>   | 11:50 |
| Presenters: Jacob Callister   |       |
| CEDS Priority(ies): 1 – Regional Collaboration and Partnerships, 3 – Infrastructure Resilience, 4 – Workforce Support, 5 – Rural Vitality |       |
| <b>6. LCOG Loan Program Overview</b>  | 12:20 |
| Presenter(s): Sandra Easdale  |       |
| CEDS Priorities: 2- Sector Diversification Through Business Development, 5 – Rural Vitality   |       |

#### Next Meeting Dates:

- March 11, 2024
- April 8, 2024

**February 12, 2024**  
**Lane Economic Committee (LEC)**  
**Agenda Item Summaries**

**ITEM 5: Lane County Regional Broadband Update**

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As many of you know the federal government is making significant funding available to expand internet access. This item provides an update on how partners across Lane County are coordinating on a strategic vision and approach to secure some of these federal funds as well as improve services and access throughout Lane County.

**ITEM 6: Lane Council of Governments Business Loan Program**

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An overview of the different loans offered, their overall utilization, and businesses accessing the loans.

Lane Economic Committee (LEC)  
Lane Council of Governments (LCOG), Fifth Floor Conference Room  
859 Willamette Street -- Eugene (Hybrid meeting via Zoom)

January 8, 2024  
11:30 AM

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Greg Ervin; Chair (City of Cottage Grove / Government), Anne Fifield; Vice Chair (City of Eugene), Ashley Espinoza (Lane Workforce Partnership), Kari Westlund (Travel Lane County), Allie Camp (City of Springfield / Government), Jake Clifton (Business), Mike Eyster; (LCC), Mark Bodie; (Business/Finance), Paul Berger; (Business), Jenna Cusimano; (Lane County / Government), Larissa Ennis (University of Oregon), Faye Stewart; (Public Works / Cottage Grove), Matt Michel; (City of Veneta / Government),

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Chantelle Meyer; (Economic Development, Jeremy Caudle; (City of Lowell / Government), Government)

**STAFF:** Sandra Easdale (LCOG Staff) Denise Walters (LCOG Staff), Diana Pamir Tisdale (minutes).

**GUESTS:** Cindy Perry (Lane Workforce Partnership), Shawna Heurgue (Springfield / Eugene Tenant Association), Justin Peterson (Oregon Cascades West), Dana Siebert (University of Oregon), Matt Sayre; (Collaborative Economic Development Oregon), Caitlin Vargas; (Collaborative Economic Development Oregon).

**1. Welcome/Introductions / Changes to the Agenda**

Chair Ervin called the LEC meeting to order at 11:30 AM. Introductions were made, and a quorum was established. There were no changes made to the agenda.

**2. Public Comment**

No public comments were made.

**3. Comments from the Members, Chair, & Staff**

Ms. Walters asked members if there were any particular items of interest regarding the Oregon Legislative Short Session for 2024.

Vice Chair Fifield said the City of Eugene was focused on to topics relating to housing.

Mr. Stewart said the City of Cottage Grove presented grant funding opportunities related to housing to the League of Oregon Cities. Mr. Stewart would hopefully be collaborating with elected officials to educate them about those opportunities in the attempt to receive some grant funding for Cottage Grove.

Ms. Espinoza said the Oregon Workforce Partnership was interested in becoming more aware of the legislators in general since more than half of legislative members were newly elected.

Mr. Berger asked if this committee or LCOG would partake in advocating for local need with legislatures.

Ms. Walters said she would inquire with the LCOG Executive Director to see if members of LCOG and the LEC could collaborate together on topics of interest.

Mr. Berger suggested that it may be worthwhile to assemble a legislative group who could advocate with legislators directly.

Ms. Espinoza said members of the Oregon Workforce Partnership took members of legislature on a walking tour of downtown Eugene in the past, and noted it was a good way to build relationships with them.

Vice Chair Fifield said the City of Eugene had submitted requests for infrastructure on land that was ready for housing in the last legislative session. Unfortunately, it did not go through.

Chair Ervin expressed interest in being part of the group that would meet with legislatures.

Mr. Peterson said he was not sure if the Oregon Cascades West Economic Development District had done much advocating to state legislatures but noted that he would suggest it to their Executive Director.

#### **4. Review Minutes from December 11, 2023**

**MOTION:** Mr. Berger moved, seconded by Ms. Perry to approve the December 11, 2023, LEC meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **5. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update**

Ms. Walters said a comprehensive development strategy would be developed this year.

Mr. Peterson said Oregon Cascades West was working on a scope of work for the CEDS update. The scope of work would span five years between 2025 to 2030. Background data for each county needed to be updated, a new SWAT analysis would be developed, and an assessment of the previous CEDS would be conducted to build the framework for the new CEDS document.

Vice Chair Fifield asked what the timeframe was to update the CEDS.

Mr. Peterson said the goal was to have the draft CEDS ready by the end of 2024 and adopt the new CEDS at the start of 2025.

#### **6. 2023 CEDS Progress from LEC Member Perspectives**

Ms. Walters said in the past, a survey was conducted to determine if the CEDS was serving member organizations well. The survey showed that most people were happy with the CEDS. However, she suggested that now would be a good time for members to share their critiques, so they could be taken into consideration while the draft CEDS was being developed.

Ms. Espinoza asked how implementation of the CEDS was measured.

Ms. Walters said in her experience the process was more anecdotal than quantitative on her part.

Ms. Espinoza said the CEDS could be more than just a document that was created to meet requirements. She was once told that the CEDS document was more of a required procedure than it was purposeful.

Chair Ervin said he recalled a discussion about how to measure the implementation of the CEDS. At the time of the discussion, it was too late to initiate a change in the draft CEDS. He was glad Ms. Espinoza brought this up. There was not really a way to determine how effective the CEDS was.

Mr. Berger said in his opinion, what Ms. Espinoza was told about the CEDS was probably 98 percent true. There had been a few attempts over the years to try to make the CEDS more relevant, dynamic, and meaningful, but it had not happened yet.

Ms. Westlund said the process had transitioned over time. About ten years ago, a formal review of submissions from each city took place to align what each city wanted with what was written in the CEDS. Perhaps the reason for the disconnection was because Cascades West took more of a leadership role in creating the document. It used to be a formal part of receiving appropriations. She noted there was an earnest effort to make it relevant for industry sectors. Maybe this group needed to work harder to feel more connected to it.

Vice Chair Fifield noted that the CEDS did not really identify specific projects. Rather, it was goal oriented and categorized, which seemed like the right approach. That way, if an opportunity emerged that wasn't explicitly written in the CEDS, it allows for jurisdictions to take advantage of those opportunities. Her understanding was that the CEDS only affected EDA grants.

Mr. Peterson confirmed that to be true.

Vice Chair Fifield suggested keeping the high-level categories in the CEDS. There was a lot of university-based innovation happening and this region should lean into that because it could potentially leverage federal dollars.

Mr. Michel said he played a part in the development of a previous CEDS. He recalled that 98 percent of the process was making sure the CEDS was aligned with the EDA requirements in order to access funding from them. Regarding the implementation of it, there was a lot of emphasis on staying at a high level. He referenced the progress that had been made in the childcare sector and said that was an example of a working group that formed from an organic issue.

Mr. Berger said it was a matter of driving the process. The CEDS should be high-level, but a group should assemble and be involved with making regionally meaningful things happen.

Mr. Michel said page 36 of the current CEDS talked about working groups.

Mr. Siebert said the work was happening, and organic working groups had come together, but there was not a metric tying the CEDS to those initiatives.

Ms. Cusimano said Lane County submitted the Recompete application, which supported regional childcare. Unfortunately, funding was not awarded. On a high level, the CEDS was aligned with the regional needs, but she would like to see more emphasis on infrastructure installation to allow for more business sector diversity.

Mr. Peterson said the feedback was helpful and would be taken into consideration. He noted that broadband and childcare were two examples of working groups that had been created in the last five years. Infrastructure resilience was listed as the third priority area in the CEDS, but the language needed to be broader to include infrastructure installation.

Ms. Perry said it would be helpful if the CEDS were reviewed more frequently to ensure that the work being done was in alignment with the document.

Mr. Berger said he was working about 60 hours per week, which left little time to partake in other activities. He asked if the LEC could apply for small grant funds, i.e., 15,000 to 20,000 dollars, for LCOG staff time to work on particular initiatives of LEC interest.

Ms. Walters said that could potentially be possible. Supplemental funding was recognized in the current CEDS.

Mr. Peterson noted that the EDA grant was a three-year grant that does not increase.

## **7. 2024 Member and Stakeholder Presentations**

Ms. Walters said LEC stakeholders were invited to present the work that their organizations had been doing. She asked LEC members to let her know if they were not interested in those types of presentations.

## **7. Collaborative Economic Development Oregon (CEDO)**

Chair Ervin welcomed Matt Sayre and Caitlin Vargas from CEDO.

Mr. Sayre introduced himself as the Executive Director of CEDO, a county-wide economic development organization. His discussion focused on CEDO Priority One; Regional Collaboration, Priority Two; Sector Diversification, and Priority Four; CEDO / Lane Workforce Partnership Collaboration. CEDO worked collaboratively with regional partners to accelerate the creation on new high-wage jobs across Lane County. Their vision entailed growing Lane County's targeted industries, which was in alignment with the CEDS.

CEDO was focused on the following three initiatives:

- Welcome – Attract High-wage Employers to the Region
- Innovate – Help Entrepreneurs in the Region
- Thrive – Help Existing Companies in the Region

In April 2023, CEDO answered the community's call for a regional economic development organization that would serve all urban and rural areas of Lane County. The regional EDO model was not new, but it had been proven in other areas throughout the country to be very effective. The CEDO team collectively embodied over ten years of economic development experience. CEDO was not a member-based organization, which made partnerships with member-based organizations across the state easier.

In June 2023, CEDO became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. In August 2023, the CEDO Board of Directors was expanded to include 12 people. Lane County was represented on the board, in addition to three major industry trade associations in Oregon. In September 2023, CEDO was a co-host at the World Class Industries Tailgate. This event brought over 200 people together including new companies visiting the area from out-of-state. In October 2023, CEDO moved into an official office space and announced the three initiatives listed above. In December 2023, CEDO co-hosted the final Pub Talk event at the University of Oregon (UO).

The wage gap in Lane County began widening in the 1980's, a trend that had become more apparent in present day. Many problems have emerged as a result of the low wages, i.e., unaffordable housing, unaffordable food, and the inaccessibility of childcare. Such problems would become exacerbated as the wage gap widened.

CEDO's core strategy to increase economic prosperity in Lane County was to boost targeted sectors with a higher percentage of occupations that paid more than the current median wage in Lane County. In 2016, Lane County Sector Strategies gained traction and local organizations came together in support of a single

sector in the technology industry. Lane Workforce Partnership was the convenor of this effort and helped encourage the Technology Association of Oregon to be more invested in Lane County. Efforts paid off and Lane County doubled the number of tech companies it had in 2015. CEDO and Lane Workforce Partnership currently co-convene to strategize each targeted industry sector. CEDO was also focused on recruitment for supply chain companies in Lane County. This was an effective strategy because it leveraged the influence and strength of existing companies.

Ms. Vargas introduced herself as the CEDO Vice President of the Community Impact and Partnerships Division. She said CEDO worked to make sure that women were represented in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. CEDO also provided mentor matching to help guide new business start-ups.

Ms. Desch introduced herself as the CEDO Vice President of the Business and Workforce Development Division. In her role, she worked to connect existing businesses to resources. Since July 2023, CEDO had helped over 177 businesses connect to viable resources. CEDO frequently hosted resource events to help businesses learn about the variety of programs available to them. CEDO collaborated with Lane Workforce Partnership, Lane Educational School District, Lane Community College (LCC), and the UO Career Center to ensure that the next generation of employees had the skills they needed to be successful. The CEDO Career Tours Program connected college students with local companies, which helped ensure local talent stayed in the region.

Mr. Berger asked if CEDO was focused on sub-sectors.

Mr. Sayre said within the technology sector, there was a small level of sub-sector focus, but resources were not available to go too deep. However, there was a recent big push on the semi-conductor industry, and CEDO worked diligently to connect CHIPS Act funding to supply chain partners in the region. There was also some focus on sub-sectors of bioscience, but again, the resources were limited. He noted CEDO was a team of three and soon-to-be four.

Ms. Espinoza said Lane Workforce Partnership had seen the benefit of collaborating with CEDO regarding the development of human capital.

Ms. Walters asked what CEDO had learned from their efforts to support under-represented people in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Ms. Vargas said it was apparent that the large metro areas surrounding Lane County had been very successful in their support of under-represented entrepreneurs. In the attempt to be as successful in their efforts, CEDO would begin providing pitch coaching for entrepreneurs in 2024. Continued collaboration with the Oregon Venture Fund and other partners would be ongoing in 2024 to engage more angel investors in Lane County. Grant writing would continue to bring more funding to this area, and efforts would be made to encourage venture capital firms to invest in local start-ups.

Mr. Eyster said LCC was producing many graduates who staff high-wage employers. He noted that the LCC Drone Program produces graduates who moved on to high paying careers. He asked about the connection between LCC and CEDO and how both organizations supported high-wage employers in the community.

Mr. Sayre said all the trade sectors agree, that the top area of growth was talent. CEDO had a good connection with many facets of LCC and appreciated them as a strong partner.

## **9. Adjournment**

Chair Ervin said the next LEC meeting would take place on February 12, 2023. He adjourned the meeting at 1:30 PM.

*(Minutes recorded by Diana Pamir Tisdale)*





## Priority Area 1: Regional Collaboration & Partnerships

**Description:** A regional economic development strategy is most effective when it considers and incorporates the interests and strengths of all jurisdictions in the region. By leveraging the strengths and capabilities of each county towards a wider economic strategy, the region can become more prosperous, resilient, and cohesive.

**CWEDD's Role:** As a regional coordinating body, the District is well positioned to facilitate collaboration. **Over the next five years,** the District will foster cross-regional relationships and seek to align efforts around regionally significant projects.

Approaches <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Implementation Ideas <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>
Build relationships and collaboration through project-based regional initiatives.	Convene economic development practitioners from across the region quarterly or semi-annually to brainstorm, revise, and prioritize a list of regionally significant projects.
Integrate the priorities captured in the CEDS into existing local- and regional-scale initiatives.	Economic development practitioners who are familiar with the CEDS should engage economic development practitioners who are new to the region or the CEDS in a CEDS overview/onboarding process.  City and County economic development staff should deliver an annual CEDS overview and update to elected officials.
Increase CWEDD's staff capacity so CWEDD can provide more support to regional initiatives.	Seek funding to add at least 1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff support position to CWEDD.  Create a regional economic development organization chart that clearly identifies the linkages and roles of all economic development agencies in the CWEDD region (house on CWEDD website).
Increase representation of currently underrepresented business, workforce, and education interests on the CWEDD Board and CEDS project working groups by including more perspectives from Tribes, Latino/a/x communities, Black communities, immigrant communities, rural communities, and low-income communities.	Review CWEDD Board representation and recruit new members that can speak to the perspectives of underrepresented groups, including but not limited to: Tribes, Latino/a/x communities, Black communities, immigrant communities, rural communities, and low-income communities.



## Priority Area 1: Regional Collaboration & Partnerships, cont.

### Approaches, cont.

*What will guide regional economic development?*

Invest in continuity of operations planning for all economic development support providers so these entities can continue providing response and recovery assistance post-shock.

Foster a coordinated approach to economic resilience and recovery planning efforts across the region.

### Implementation Ideas, cont.

*How can the strategies be implemented?*

Work with emergency managers to create inventories of local businesses capable of providing services, material, equipment, and workforce in the event of a disaster. Then develop pre-approved contracting with these businesses to allow for immediate access post-shock.

Ensure representation for business interests emergency preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery planning processes by requesting space on planning committees for economic development practitioners and business representatives.

Form economic recovery teams that include business representatives and convene regularly to create regional economic recovery plans.

Develop local recovery ordinance model language that jurisdictions can adopt.



## Priority Area 1: Regional Collaboration & Partnerships, cont.

### Indicators

**Collaboration:** Presence of cross- and multi-jurisdictional economic development projects

**Equity & Inclusion:** Representativeness of CWEDD Board & Working Groups

**Resilience:** Incorporation of resilience considerations into regional and local economic development strategies

### Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff across the region
- ❖ CWEDD Board
- ❖ Business Oregon
- ❖ Regional Solutions
- ❖ University of Oregon EDA University Center

### Key Considerations

#### Equity & Inclusion

*How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?*

**Representation** – by including and involving a more representative set of perspectives from the communities served by CWEDD in CWEDD committees and initiatives, economic development projects have a better chance of meeting the needs of everyone in our region, not just those who traditionally held the most power and influence over decision-making and resource allocation.

#### Resilience

*How will these strategies build regional resilience?*

**Internal Coordination** –economic development efforts in the CWEDD region have not been well coordinated in the past, leading to missed opportunities for collective impact. When we begin to align our efforts, collaborating around resources rather than competing over them, we can spread the benefits of economic development more broadly, building a region that is less vulnerable to economic downturns.

**External Communication** – lack of internal coordination leads to confusing, ineffective communication to businesses and workers. Increasing collaboration among economic development supporters will foster a more unified, streamlined message to the business community and our workforce, aiding our ability to respond quickly and effectively to economic crises.



## Priority Area 2: Sector Diversification Through Business Development

**Description:** Our region's businesses are the beating heart of our economy. In order to thrive, the region must support and retain existing businesses while also cultivating new businesses that will help diversify our economy and generate job growth. With macro-level economic changes – from globalization to shifting market structures – the regional economy will require a continued influx of fresh energy from new and existing businesses.

**CWEDD's Role:** The District has an opportunity to offer resources and coordination that will support local-level business retention and expansion efforts and entrepreneurial ecosystems builders. **Over the next five years,** the District will provide research capacity, serve as an information hub, and facilitate important connections between business support providers.

### Approaches

*What will guide regional economic development?*

Provide support to entrepreneurship and business retention and expansion efforts by serving as a clearing house for regional data and resources.

Facilitate connections between business development centers and business incubators and accelerators to create an obvious bridge of support between the start-up and growth phases of new businesses.

Facilitate connections between educational institutions (both K-12 and higher education) and business incubators and accelerators to foster a culture of entrepreneurship.

### Implementation Ideas

*How can the strategies be implemented?*

Create and promote a database of incubators, accelerators, capital sources, and business support services available in the region.

Assist with identifying and pursuing funding that would increase capacity of business incubators and accelerators.

Develop a business registration or tracking system that will allow the collection of more and better data about businesses' needs.

Establish a network of local and regional staff who can help businesses navigate through permitting and other processes.

Develop and publicize educational opportunities about the advantages of international trade for regional businesses that are interested in expanding into new markets.

Facilitate annual meetings with representatives from business development centers and incubators/accelerators to discuss the process referrals between support providers.

Facilitate annual meetings with representatives from educational institutions to build connections between regional needs and academic course offerings.

Organize a forum on regional innovation networking.



## Priority Area 2: Sector Diversification Through Business Development, cont.

<b>Approaches, cont.</b> <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	<b>Implementation Ideas, cont.</b> <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>
<p>Work to ensure that the demographics of business owners and entrepreneurs are representative of the race and gender distributions in the region.</p>	<p>Assess the demographic distribution of business owners and entrepreneurs who are accessing services and develop or support programs specifically targeted to demographic groups that are underrepresented. Intentionally seek out grassroots efforts that may already be occurring to support these businesses and offer to collaborate.</p>
<p>Provide start-ups and existing businesses with resources and incentives to develop, test, and implement continuity of operations plans.</p>	<p>Work with Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), incubators, and accelerators to develop low-effort business continuity of operations planning resources.</p> <p>Discuss potential shocks, threats, disasters and risk reduction strategies at local chamber or business association “Lunch and Learn” events to encourage businesses to create continuity of operations plans.</p> <p>Incentivize investments in business resilience for businesses that have business continuity plans (e.g. reduce business license fees; 1% reduction in property taxes (or other tax) for businesses that have an employee preparedness training program; expedite plan review for hazard retrofit/mitigation projects).</p>
<p>Develop emergency recovery revolving loan funds and other creative financing options before shocks so that businesses can immediately access financial assistance post-shock.</p>	<p>Utilize external funding (such as the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Community Development Block Grants) to leverage local funds for business-related mitigation activities.</p>



## Priority Area 2: Sector Diversification Through Business Development

### Indicators

**Collaboration:** Presence of referrals between business support providers

**Equity & Inclusion:** Representativeness of business owner demographics

**Resilience:** Presence of continuity of operations plans

### Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Small Business Development Centers
- ❖ Oregon RAIN
- ❖ Chambers and other business associations

### Key Considerations

#### Regional Collaboration

*How will a regional approach to these strategies support economic prosperity?*

Coordinated industry cluster development requires teamwork. Businesses within a cluster have supply chains and relationships that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Business development support is therefore most effective when it acknowledges the interconnected nature of industry clusters. Economic developers must work together across jurisdictional lines to support a regional business environment that supports the growth and expansion of key industries.

#### Equity & Inclusion

*How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?*

**Access for existing businesses** – barriers to entry and promotion in business have been higher for some demographic groups than others, resulting in business ownership and leadership that is not representative of the general population.<sup>9</sup> Programs and policies targeted at supporting groups that are underrepresented in business ownership and leadership will help bring representation back into balance.

**Access for entrepreneurs** – start-ups require significant upfront resources and are more likely to gain traction if the entrepreneurs can leverage relevant social and investor networks. Some demographic groups and entrepreneurs in rural areas may have more limited access to resources and networks. When economic developers work specifically to assist underrepresented groups, they create a more representative pipeline of new business owners.

#### Resilience

*How will these strategies build regional resilience?*

**Diversification of industries** – encouraging business growth, particularly growth into new sectors, will help the region weather shocks by ensuring the region does not have “all of its eggs in one basket.”

**Pre-disaster planning for response & continuity** – encouraging and supporting the development of continuity of operations plans for businesses will better prepare businesses to withstand shocks.

**Internal Coordination** –facilitating connections between incubators, accelerators, and traditional business development support providers will lead to a better alignment of resources.

<sup>9</sup> In 2018, 11% of Oregon’s small businesses (businesses with fewer than 500 employees, which make up 99.4% of all Oregon businesses) were minority-owned, according to the [2018 Small Business Profile](#) from the US Small Business Administration. In 2019, 25% of Oregon’s population was not white alone and not Hispanic or Latino (American Community Survey, 2019: ACS 1-Year Estimates Data, Table DP05).



## Priority Area 3: Infrastructure Resilience

**Description:** Large infrastructure projects, particularly those of regional significance, often exceed the capacity and technical expertise of local municipalities. Further, they often involve multiple partners, public-private partnerships, complex regulatory systems, and strategic stakeholder engagement. In order to effectively achieve needed infrastructure improvements in the region, technical support will be required.

**CWEDD's Role:** The District is uniquely positioned to support regional infrastructure projects. **Over the next five years**, the District will provide technical assistance and connect specific projects with other resources (e.g. Regional Solutions Teams, University-based programs, state and federal agency partners, etc.).

Approaches <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Implementation Ideas <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>
Identify and prioritize projects of regional importance that will (1) improve quality of place for residents and (2) increase diversity and redundancy in the region's infrastructure (particularly critical infrastructure related to transportation, energy, communications, and fuel).	<p>Survey regional partners annually to develop a project list and convene a conversation about how to ensure these projects support resilience and are coordinated across the region.</p> <p>Work with property owners and businesses located within hazard zones to develop strategies to harden, elevate, re-locate or otherwise mitigate / prevent damage from natural hazards.</p> <p>Encourage local practitioners to support the update of the economic development sections of comprehensive plans by encouraging resilience considerations for employment land.</p>
Coordinate regional efforts to expand broadband availability in areas with the least access.	Increase collaboration around broadband development by convening regional economic development practitioners to discuss efforts and share resources.
Incorporate equity assessments during infrastructure planning to ensure the benefits and potential negative impacts of development are equitably distributed across the population.	Develop an equity checklist to apply during project planning; the checklist can help identify project shortcomings and encourage modifications that will lead to a more equitable distribution of impacts.
Promote available services and funding sources that can be accessed via CWEDD to support infrastructure development.	Create a section on the CWEDD Website to list current funding opportunities for local jurisdictions that includes grant deadlines, eligibility information, and connections to current and planned projects.
Increase the capacity and resources available to support grant writing and technical project development for infrastructure projects.	<p>Create a section on the CWEDD Website to serve as a library of past funding applications that be used as a resource for developing successful new funding applications.</p> <p>Increase staff time at COGs dedicated to helping with preparing funding applications and providing technical assistance on infrastructure project development.</p>



## Priority Area 3: Infrastructure Resilience, cont.

### Indicators

**Collaboration:** Presence of cross- or multi-jurisdictional infrastructure projects

**Equity & Inclusion:** Presence of projects explicitly considering equity

**Resilience:** Presence of projects explicitly considering resilience and redundancy

### Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Business Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority
- ❖ Local & county emergency managers

### Key Considerations

#### Regional Collaboration

*How will a regional approach to these strategies support economic prosperity?*

Although many infrastructure projects occur at a local scale, it is always important to consider regional connections, particularly when planning for diversity and redundancy. By keeping a finger on the pulse of many local projects, economic development practitioners can encourage regional considerations during conversations about infrastructure development.

#### Equity & Inclusion

*How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?*

**Access** – research shows that lower-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately impacted by the negative externalities of infrastructure development (like pollution from industrial development and displacement by highway construction), while these same communities don't always see the full benefits of projects.<sup>10</sup> Considering equity during the planning process for infrastructure projects can help mitigate these trends. It is also important to remember that equitable benefit is different than equal benefit – to address past discrimination and lack of access, some projects will require more investment in some communities compared to others.

#### Resilience

*How will these strategies build regional resilience?*

**Infrastructure redundancy and resiliency** – focusing on projects that create redundant infrastructure (back-up systems that will take over if the primary system fails) and resilient infrastructure (systems that can withstand disruption for either natural or human-created incidents) will put CWEDD in a strong position to bounce back quickly from disruption.

**Equitable access** – developing broadband and other critical infrastructure in underserved communities will uplift areas that have suffered economically because they lacked access to high-quality essential services.

**Internal Coordination** – working collectively across the region to identify important projects will ensure a more coordinated and collaborative approach to seeking funding.

<sup>10</sup> Glover Blackwell, Angela and Anita Cozart. "How Smart, Targeted Infrastructure Investment Can Pave the Way for an Equitable Nation." Urban Institute, 1/23/18.  
<https://www.urban.org/infrastructure/how-smart-targeted-infrastructure-investment-can-pave-way-equitable-nation>





## Priority Area 4: Workforce Support

**Description:** Many businesses in the region report that they are struggling to find qualified employees for a range of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled positions, in part because of training, and in part because of livability factors like lack of affordable housing options. There is also an ongoing need to support existing workforce training efforts and to coordinate and align the efforts of the various Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) in the region.

**CWEDD's Role:** Over the next five years, the District will help link education, training, apprenticeships, and career planning to the employment needs of existing and emerging business sectors. The District will also advocate for policies that will help enhance workers' quality of life.

Approaches <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Implementation Ideas <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>
Support deliberate coordination between businesses, Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), and educational institutions to help identify and provide for current employer needs.	Facilitate annual meetings between representatives from educational institutions, WIBs, and key business sectors to (1) identify current and predicted workforce skill needs and (2) consider curriculum changes that will support the development of these skills.  Partner with local workforce development programs, including WIBs, to increase participation of local businesses in apprenticeships, internships and On-The-Job-Training programs, in order to build pathways to employment for persons entering the workforce.
Attract and retain younger talent by promoting the region's livability and access to exceptional nature and outdoor recreation opportunities.	Work with Destination Marketing Organizations to prepare marketing material specifically geared towards attracting new workers to the area and demonstrating the region's benefits to recent graduates.
Investigate and support policies and projects that will increase the availability of affordable housing, affordable transportation options, the quality and accessibility of recreation, access to broadband, access to healthcare, and other factors that enhance quality of life.	Encourage practitioners to participate in discussions at the local and county levels related to affordable housing, transportation, recreation, and healthcare access – ask to have representation for economic development practitioners and business representatives on committees and working groups.  Work with statewide economic development groups like the Oregon Economic Development Association (OEDA) and Oregon's Economic Development Districts (OEDD) to have a state and national lobbying presence advocating for policies that will increase the availability of and access to affordable housing, transportation, recreation, health care, and broadband.



## Priority Area 4: Workforce Support, cont.

### Indicators

**Collaboration:** Level of coordination between EDOs and WIBs

**Equity & Inclusion:** Percentage of cost-burdened households

**Resilience:** Level of coordination between education/worker-training programs and businesses

### Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Workforce Investment Boards
- ❖ K-12 & higher education representatives
- ❖ Local & county planning staff

### Key Considerations

#### Regional Collaboration

*How will a regional approach to these strategies support economic prosperity?*

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) are critical economic development partners. The CWEDD region overlaps with three different WIBs, making regional coordination particularly important. CWEDD can play a role in aligning the efforts of our region's WIBs with the needs of our businesses and the capacity of our educational institutions.

#### Equity & Inclusion

*How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?*

**Access** – many residents in the CWEDD region struggle to stay afloat amid high living costs. With economic inequality on the rise,<sup>11</sup> CWEDD must support efforts to ensure residents have options for earning a living wage and affordable access to housing, transportation, recreation, broadband, and health care. Making headway on these issues will play a key role in reducing economic inequality.

#### Resilience

*How will these strategies build regional resilience?*

**Workforce flexibility** – pushing for more strategic connections between our workforce development sector and our educational institutions will help better align the skills of our workers with the needs of our businesses. By better aligning efforts, we give our workforce an appropriate and transferrable skill that will allow the region to pivot quickly into new sectors as our economy adapts to new technology and consumer demands.

**Equitable access** – supporting policies that ensure basic needs are met (like access to affordable housing and high-speed internet) removes stressors from the lives of our workers, allowing them to focus their energy on contributing to our region's businesses.

**Internal Coordination** – in part because of the mis-aligned geographies of WIBs and EDDs, our region has sometimes struggled to coordinate efforts related to workforce development. By intentionally focusing on building stronger coordination between WIBs and other economic development practitioners, we can create a more coherent system of support for our region's workforce.

<sup>11</sup> Hauser, Daniel and Juan Carlos Ordóñez. "Income Inequality in Oregon Notched New Record Prior to COVID-19 Crisis." Oregon Center for Public Policy, 10/1/20. <https://www.ocpp.org/2020/10/01/income-inequality-oregon-new-record/>



## Priority Area 5: Rural Vitality

**Description:** Rural communities have unique economic strengths and challenges. While training and educational opportunities exist in the region, distance and other challenges can prevent rural communities from accessing those services. Lack of basic services can make rural areas less attractive to prospective residents and employers. Therefore, ensuring equitable access to basic services for residents and businesses in rural areas is a critical strategic opportunity.

**CWEDD's Role:** As a regional body that can work with Counties and other districts that cover unincorporated areas and smaller towns, the District plays an important role in directing resources towards rural areas. **Over the next five years,** the District will advocate for high-quality service provision to rural areas and support projects that enhance economic opportunity and resilience in rural communities.

Approaches <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Implementation Ideas <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>
Prioritize strategies that support the growth of tourism and value-added natural resource industries (including ecotourism, marine-related activities, sustainable farming, and local food and beverage production) to enhance economic opportunities in rural areas.	<p>Work with local Main Street programs to identify and secure funding for downtown revitalization projects.</p> <p>Work with Destination Marketing Organizations and the Willamette Valley Visitors Association to develop and market local value-added products.</p> <p>Develop/sustain business retention and expansion programs in rural communities with a particular emphasis on succession planning for businesses at risk of closing.</p>
Support efforts to provide high-quality K-12 education in rural areas.	Meet regularly with K-12 school administrators and Education Service District representatives to understand students' needs and lend support to projects aimed at meeting these needs.
Support efforts to increase health care and telehealth care access in rural areas.	Meet regularly with health care providers and public health officials to understand rural patients' needs and lend support to projects aimed at meeting these needs.
Emphasize infrastructure self-sufficiency in rural areas to ensure communities can sustain themselves in the event a disaster cuts off access to transportation systems and urban centers.	Develop a self-sufficiency checklist to apply during project planning; the checklist can help identify project shortcomings and encourage modifications that will ensure rural areas can sustain themselves without outside help.



## Priority Area 5: Rural Vitality, cont.

### Indicators

**Collaboration:** Presence of multi-jurisdictional projects in rural areas

**Equity & Inclusion:** Access to health and education services

**Resilience:** Presence of rural infrastructure projects explicitly considering self-sufficiency

### Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Regional tourism staff
- ❖ Rural school districts and education service districts
- ❖ Health care providers
- ❖ Local & county emergency managers

### Key Considerations

#### Regional Collaboration

*How will a regional approach to these strategies support economic prosperity?*

Our region's rural areas must work together to increase access to basic services and cultivate promising new economic sectors. While each community has unique needs and identities, far more unites our rural areas than divides them. County and other regional economic development practitioners should facilitate collaboration and sharing among rural communities. This will help coalesce multiple communities behind funding proposals and projects, increasing the likelihood of their success.

#### Equity & Inclusion

*How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?*

**Access** — many public services are concentrated in urban areas, making them difficult to access for residents of rural areas who do not have reliable transportation or high-speed internet connections. By highlighting the needs of rural residents and advocating for systems of service provision that are accessible in rural areas, economic developers can bring attention and resources to an underserved population.

#### Resilience

*How will these strategies build regional resilience?*

**Diversification of industries/economic sectors** — Oregon's rural economies have experienced significant decline in part because they lacked economic diversity. Encouraging the diversification of the industries that support our rural areas will increase rural areas' ability to withstand and bounce back from future economic shocks.

**Infrastructure redundancy and resiliency** — building out self-sufficient infrastructure in rural places will decrease dependency on far-away support systems. Since many disasters may cut off access to these support systems, self-sufficient and back-up infrastructure will be critical to survival.

**Internal Coordination** —coalescing rural communities around specific funding proposals will increase competitiveness since many funders prioritize collaborative efforts. While a single community on its own may have trouble competing with the comparatively vast resources available in urban areas, pooling rural communities' resources and voices will increase their likelihood of gaining attention and traction.