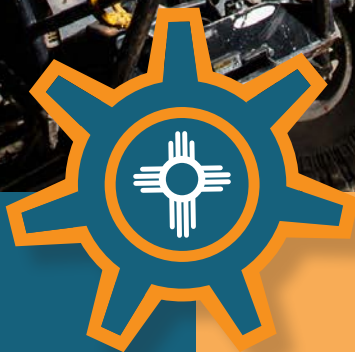




LA RISTRA NORTHWEST

Build Enterprise. Grow Communities. Empower People.



March
2021

2020-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments

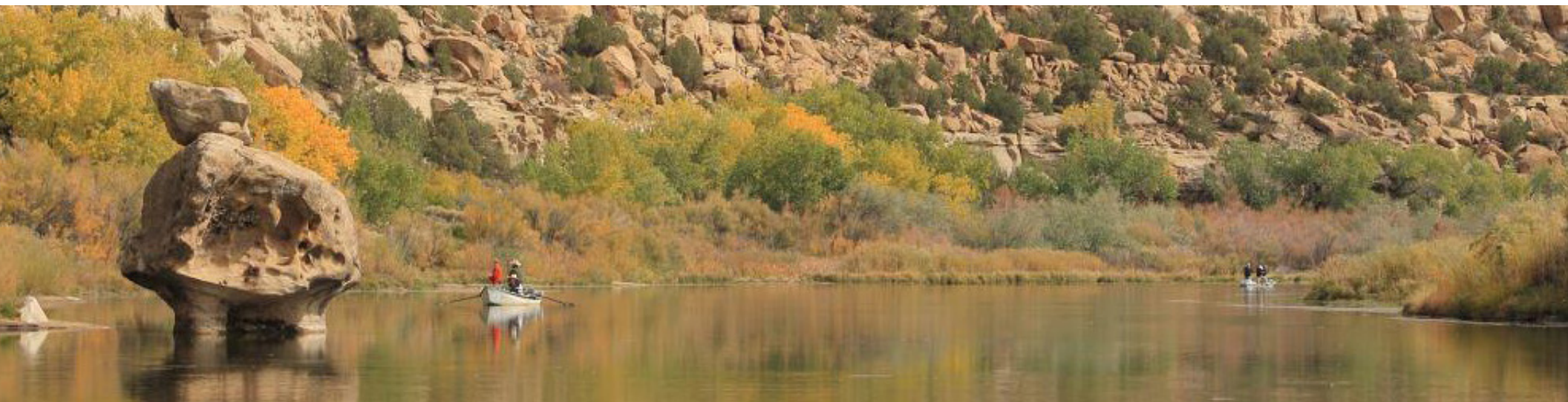


Vision

Northwest New Mexico will have robust and diverse enterprise to sustain and grow our great places to live, work, play, and stay, while empowering people to expand household assets and prosperity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Welcome & Overview	1
II.	Executive Summary	3
III.	Background: Summary Assessment of the Economic Landscape	5
IV.	Strategy	11
V.	Industry Clusters	31
VI.	Resiliency	35
VII.	Evaluation Framework	39
	Resources & Reference	41
	Appendix	43



THE HIGH COUNTRY PLATEAU

Northwest, New Mexico

Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments

106 West Aztec Avenue
Gallup, NM 87301

505.722.4327

nwnmcog.com

Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments

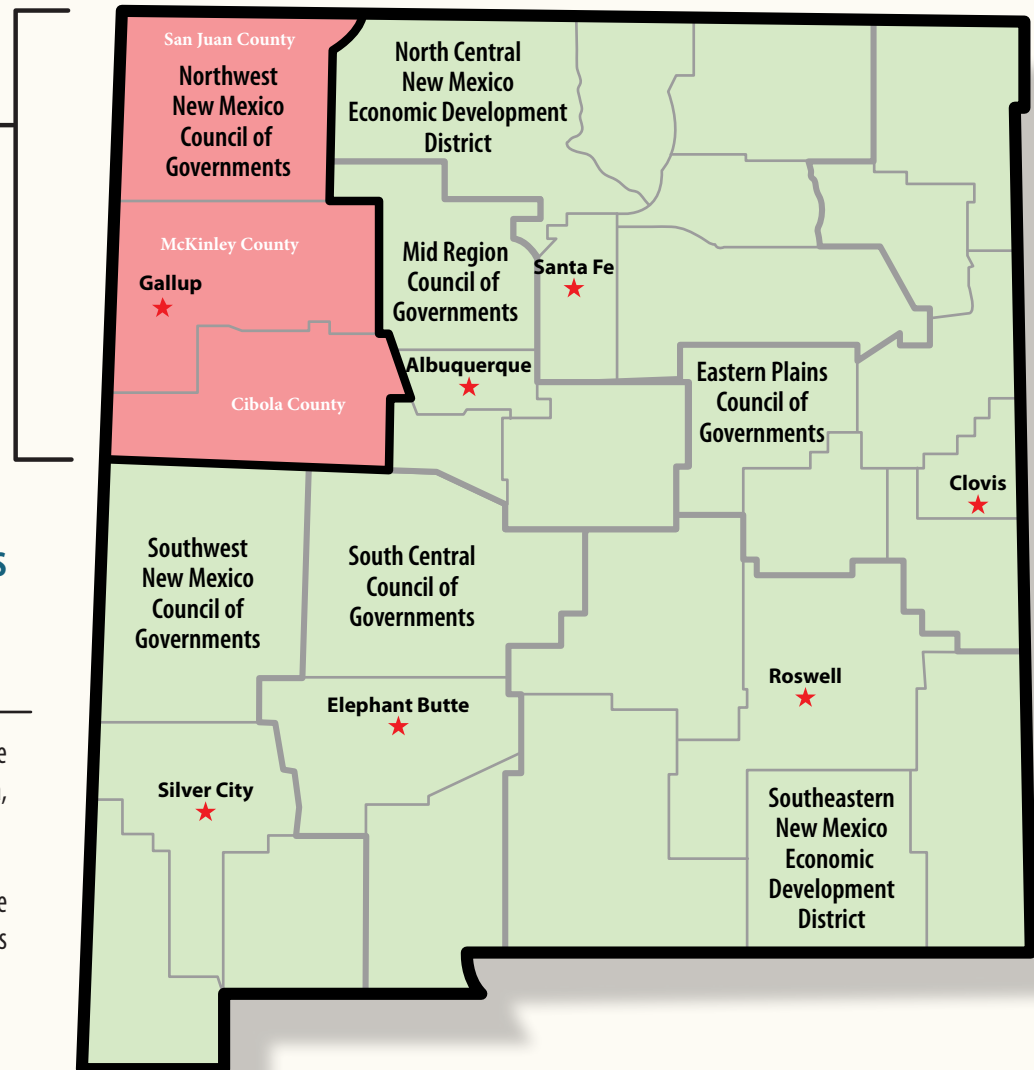


New Mexico Association of Regional Councils

The 7 Districts of The New Mexico Association of Regional Councils (NewMARC)

The Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments is designated by the State of New Mexico as "State Planning & Development District 1," serving Cibola, McKinley and San Juan Counties.

The state's 6 remaining Districts join together with the Northwest COG in the statewide trade group, the New Mexico Association of Regional Councils (NewMARC).



I. WELCOME & OVERVIEW

Welcome to La Ristra Northwest, our region's comprehensive economic development strategies (CEDS) to guide growth and prosperity in the communities and counties of San Juan, McKinley, and Cibola. La Ristra is a symbol of New Mexico and our history, culture, and resiliency. In this plan, the Ristra represents that homegrown economic and community development does not happen in silos and that our impact is strengthened by the sum of our parts not the strength or power of one individually.

The question is always **Red or Green**, but the answer is **stronger together**.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated, accelerated, and under covered underlying economic trends, the interdependence of community and need for regional resiliency. La Ristra Northwest builds from a foundation of integrated and strategic economic planning and providing a guide to leaders and economic development practitioners to advance their roles in facilitating and initiating economic development in their communities as follows:

- ✦ **Advocate:** collect and transform strategic data into information on which to make decisions and base strategies, theaters, and targets.
- ✦ **Catalyst:** focused strategies that elicit engagement, enthusiasm, action, and move the needle.
- ✦ **Gap Filler:** provides an understanding of key gaps in the factors of production and identifies collaboration and partnership opportunities that can help them improve.
- ✦ **Advocate:** provides a policy framework for a business-friendly environment that balances community-led smart growth, resource protection, and family-based wealth creation.
- ✦ **Educator:** provides a common playbook with terms, concepts, and key themes to assist all readers and stakeholders with the goal of unifying and strengthening collective action.
- ✦ **Visionary:** sets a bold vision for the future that builds from assets; predicts key trends and builds towards a more equitable and inclusionary economy that provides opportunities and builds wealth where people are rooted.

La Ristra Northwest tries to be the integrator of locally-driven strategies, tactics, and projects and informer of Statewide, multi-State, and National planning, investment criteria, policy, and program development.

- ✦ **Integrator:**
 - Rolls-up local comprehensive, growth management master plans, economic studies, and land use plans to pull and aggregate strategies.
 - Integrates and builds from EDO strategic plans and tribal CEDS plans.

- Ties in other regional plans such as the Stronger Economies Together (SET) plan, Regional Recovery Plan, Regional Economic Assessment & Strategy for the Coal-Impacted Four Corners Region, and other regional plans such as Transportation, Water, Broadband, etc.

✦ **Informer:**

- Provides a framework that mirrors the six (6) other regional CEDS plans,
- Informs the Statewide CEDS and economic development planning,
- Provides information for Four Corners, multi-State, and National strategies.
- Meets guidance and compliance from the US Economic Development Administration regarding a "Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies" (CEDS), along with a portfolio of emerging tools and resources for us in informing and energizing economic development efforts across the nation.

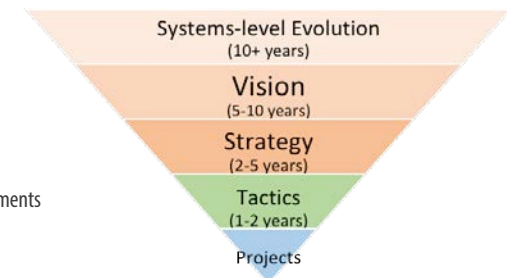
La Ristra Northwest focuses on the long-term rugs of economic planning in terms of strategy, vision, and systems level, and depending on local and tribal Economic Development Organizations (EDOs) and strategic partners to set and work on the tactical and project implementation. The Council of Governments (COG) assists on the regional level but is available to support EDO's and partners on tactical and project delivery as economic development is truly a team sport that takes collaboration and partnership to achieve results and lasting impacts. While accounting for the profound diversity of economies, cultures and resources across the region, La Ristra-Northwest provides a unified framework for collaborative action. In implementing this Strategy, stakeholders throughout the region will be engaged in the framework and the integrative communications involved in giving our priorities and initiatives the best chance for success. We encourage you to explore La Ristra New Mexico in detail.

Special thanks to Michael Sage, CEcD, Regional Economic Development Program Manager, for his leadership in producing this document and his fortitude in carrying it forward with our region.

To a Prosperous Future,

Evan Williams

Executive Director, CEcD
Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments





BUILD ENTERPRISE



GROW COMMUNITIES



EMPOWER PEOPLE

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our regional strategy – *La Ristra Northwest* – puts forth a vision addressing Enterprise, Community, and People, identifies challenges and opportunities to address for our future development, and sets forth key strategies for moving the region forward.

Our vision challenges us to reach higher:

*Northwest New Mexico
will be restored, sustained and transformed
by growing individual, household and community prosperity,
by creating great places to live, work, play and stay,
and by putting the region's workforce to work.*

Our launch-point provides a mix of (a) serious chronic and cyclical challenges to a sustainable economy and (b) unique cultural, geographic, natural resource and infrastructural assets on which to build new capacity and growth.

Our challenges are most starkly represented in economic statistics that place our region in the bottom percentiles of the nation, with respect to poverty and economic competitiveness. The population of the region has remained flat reflecting increases in tribal populations being offset by population loss in urban areas. Brain flight continues as young adults and families leave the region providing the region a remaining population which is older with less educational attainment. Proprietors income and wages as percentage of the region's total income has been steadily eroding. Transformative declines in the energy sector have resulted in the regions employment being concentrated a few sectors like retail, government, and service - sectors which are currently experiencing transformative pressures as well.

With over half of the region's population and land base on American Indian reservations, multiple jurisdictional and economic frameworks overseeing land or people must be navigated creating a barrier in the flow of private investment and job creation.

Our assets are also considerable – though often less than optimally leveraged to maximize the economic output of the region. Our people are the most important resource, but need support and opportunity in order to achieve their desired economic well-being.

The global tourism market maintains an attraction to and fascination with our indigenous art and culture, and combined with a growing market for outdoor recreation and experiences, the Four Corners region, in which we inhabit the New Mexico quadrant, is poised to become an international destination.

The energy economy has been a very big deal in northwest New Mexico, serving as a primary economic driver in the 20th century. The region's experience in mining (uranium, coal, oil and gas) and power generation may be seen as providing foundational industrial and human resource assets that can translate into newly diversified economic activity. The region will need continued support as it works to re-purpose legacy infrastructure and transfer and train workforce skill sets.

The goals and strategies of *La Ristra Northwest* represent a major “stretch” for the leaders, stakeholders and citizens of the northwest New Mexico region. We see that it will require a powerful synergy of actions taken along a number of different, but inter-related, strategic pathways. In this framework, we seek to align community development investments (in workforce, broadband and quality-of-life amenities, for example) with economic development objectives (new commerce, new employment, new infrastructure, and new investment in the regional community).

In carrying out, and continuously refining and updating the strategy, we look to achieve breakthroughs and reach important milestones through implementation of strategic projects and initiatives, while at the same time tracking the arc of our progress against big picture indicators, such as poverty alleviation, educational achievement and career pathways, entrepreneurship and business creation, and asset attainment.

A full-page background image showing a film crew in a field at sunset. On the left, a person wearing headphones holds a boom microphone. In the center, a person operates a professional video camera. On the right, a man in a cowboy hat stands looking towards the camera. The scene is silhouetted against a bright, low sun, creating a warm, golden glow across the sky and the field of tall grass.

Enterprise in Northwest NM

“ Our region is a place where business is still done with handshakes and hard work. The beauty of our landscape is only surpassed by the imagination and creativity of our people. Some are drawn by enchantment, while others are tied to its land. We all survive by its water and make our way by the sweat of our brow. Our region is guided by footprints, made fertile by the cultures that continue, and driven to leave things better for the next. Contribute your chapter to our storied history, today!

Billy Moore, Commissioner
McKinley County Commission
Thoreau, New Mexico

Chairman
COG Board of Directors

III. Background

A Summary of the Economic Landscape

Overview

The communities of Northwest New Mexico occupy a unique place in the American economy – geographically, historically, industrially and culturally. As such, they represent unique sets of assets, challenges and opportunities.

Approximately 225,000 people inhabit 15,000 square miles of high plateau lands across three counties – Cibola, McKinley and San Juan – in the Four Corners quadrant of New Mexico, dispersed among 7 incorporated and 77 rural communities. One-half of the population and one-half of the land base are Native American, representing five tribal nations – Acoma Pueblo, Laguna Pueblo, Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and Zuni Pueblo.

In broad strokes, the Northwest New Mexico region is a fragmented economy reflecting strong economic activity in some sectors while at the same time showing chronically high levels of poverty across the region – particularly in rural communities on American Indian reservations. High wage sectors found across the region such as mining are in decline while relatively low wage paying sectors like retail are increasing. Stackable credentials represents an opportunity to provide career pathways into high wage sector employment.

The region boasts abundant natural resources and a 20th century legacy of robust mining and power production activity, as well as high levels of governmental employment and income and an outsized “hub retail” sector capitalizing on a far-flung rural market. We are also rich in cultural diversity, in high quality indigenous arts and crafts, and in world-class geographic, archaeological and recreational assets. Interstate 40 and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad provide major transportation and logistical assets, running east-west across the region’s southern corridor, supplemented by north-south state and national highways, like US Hwy 491 & NM 371, extending into the Four Corners region.



Demographic statistics, however, place the northwest New Mexico region near the bottom of many state and national indicators of social and economic well-being, with unemployment rates soaring above 50 percent in many rural tribal communities and disproportionate levels of social distress reflected in such factors as alcohol abuse and addiction, domestic violence and low educational attainment.

Our **La Ristra-Northwest** strategy addresses the region's assets and challenges, while putting forth key elements for a strategic path forward for the region. These are the economic challenges and strategic opportunities facing Northwest New Mexico in the run-up to 2020:

Restore. The past decade has seen economic stress from the "great recession," deepened by substantial cutbacks in all areas of federal discretionary funding in response to ballooning federal debt, placing downward stresses on state, municipal, county and tribal budgets, and producing an overall decline in economic well-being by increasing numbers of Northwest New Mexico families.

During the great recession alone, the region lost nearly 3,400 jobs between 2007 and 2009. In proceeding years to now, the region has lost an additional 6,500 jobs as regulatory and market forces produced a new wave of cutbacks and layoffs. Recent regulatory changes are not anticipated to result in increased levels of employment, and the challenge remains to restore economic viability in the face of these trends.

In rural communities, including many governed by our region's Tribal nations, economic challenges have grown and household incomes have suffered. The economic "tsunami" of Federal cutbacks and downward pressure on the mining and power generation industry conspire to further threaten economic opportunity and quality of life for thousands of our families. Our challenge is to restore momentum of progress and economic foundations that were eroded by recession and other economic forces.

Sustain. Our communities can claim many important assets, and our challenge will be to keep these assets in play as we forge our economic strategy for the next five years.

We have workforce - many of whom are unemployed or under-employed - that needs to be better trained through stackable credentials and put to work through career pathways. We have critical infrastructure (rail lines; interstate and highways; airports; and broadband fiber); shovel-ready industrial parks (green or brownfield); and water lines (including the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project). We have institutional power in our city, county and tribal governments, schools and colleges, economic development organizations and chambers of commerce, and private sector players. How will we collaborate to sustain these important regional assets?

Transform. The next challenge is to inaugurate collaborative actions that take the region to new levels of economic prosperity and well-being. If a tenth of our workforce is out of work (higher in rural), how will we create the 500 new jobs per year that will move us closer to full employment? How many economic-base jobs will get us there (i.e., in industries that export goods and services and import dollars into the economy)?

It is acknowledged that it's the private sector that creates jobs, but the role of the public sector (governments, schools, colleges) cannot be minimized. Our philosophy is that sustainable economic development occurs in combination and in partnership:

- ✦ The **private sector** invests in and establishes business and industry, produces goods and services to meet market demand, hires qualified people, and contributes tax dollars to the local and state economy;
- ✦ The **public sector** sets community vision, provides essential infrastructure, educates the workforce, and administers appropriate policy and regulation to provide for quality of life, promote justice and opportunity, protect the environment and secure broad public benefit.

In building up the economy and creating jobs for the population, community leaders are challenged to:

- ✦ Set the **vision**;
- ✦ Attract and put in place supportive **means** (infrastructure, policy guidance and financial resources); and
- ✦ Proactively focus on a **plan of action** that will lead to positive results - otherwise not achievable without such planning and collaboration.

In many communities, this public commitment includes people and organizations who specifically focus on the core economic development activities of

- ✦ Business attraction and recruitment;
- ✦ Local business retention and expansion;
- ✦ New business start-up; and
- ✦ Entrepreneurship.

However, for these core activities to be successful, a broad spectrum of needs and capacities must be addressed at the local, regional and state levels. Conditions that must be in place for business activity to start, grow and prosper.

Reflection:

A Look Back at the 2018 Northwest New Mexico CEDS

It is a challenge to accurately measure capacity and output for Northwest New Mexico, especially when different parameters, data and approaches are being utilized by regional partners. In 2018, the Northwest New Mexico *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* identified five benchmarks to monitor regional growth and prosperity. These goals – to be impacted by a combination of economic development activities across the region and over a five-year span – included: 1) Increase household income; 2) Increase per capita income; 3) Decrease percent of people living in poverty; 4) Increase educational attainment; and 5) Create a net gain of 5,000 jobs. The following summary provides a brief assessment of goal attainment by the region.

INCOME:

With regard to Median Household Income (MHI), the data reveal positive change for the period, 2015-2019. Over the entire 5-year span covered by the data:

- ✍ Cibola County MHI improved over 14% from \$34,565 to \$39,413;
- ✍ McKinley County MHI improved over 17%, from \$28,772 to \$33,834;
- ✍ San Juan County MHI improved over 3%, from \$48,671 to \$50,518.

This reveals a significant spread across the three counties, with the regional average of \$41,255 lagging the statewide average for New Mexico of \$51,945. On this measure, **the 2018 CEDS goal was partially attained, but with overall gains falling behind annual inflation rates.**

In terms of Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI), from a baseline of \$31,865 (2015), Regional PCPI in 2019 was \$33,183. This showed an increase of about 4.1% over the 5 year period, though 23% below the 2019 New Mexico state average of \$43,326. In this category of income growth, **the 2018 CEDS goal was partially attained, but again, with overall gains lagging behind inflation.**

POVERTY:

County-level data for poverty show poverty levels climbing faster in each county and for the region than for the state as a whole:

- In McKinley County, poverty went down from 34% in 2015 to 30.1% in 2019;
- In Cibola County, a 12% decrease from 29% in 2015 to 25.5% in 2019;

- In San Juan County, a 4.7% increase from 19% in 2015 to 19.9% in 2019.

For the regional as a whole, the poverty level remained flat from 25.5% in 2015 to 25.2% in 2019, which was 31% higher than the statewide average poverty level of 17.5% (a 4% increase in poverty levels compared with 2015). **The 2018 CEDS goal was not attained.**

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT:

Educational attainment in the region was mixed. In the period 2007 to 2014, the region's rates for high school graduation and beyond dropped, from a 78% rate in 2007 to 73% in 2014. In this respect, **the 2018 CEDS goal was not met.** In 2007, region's college attainment rates of 11% were 130% below New Mexico statewide, at 25%. By 2014, the region's rate of bachelor's degree attainment had improved by one-third to 15%, while New Mexico's rates increased by one-sixth, to 29%, or nearly double the region's average. **The 2018 CEDS goal was partially met.**

EMPLOYMENT:

Drawing from Custom Region-Builder on the StatsAmerica website, trend lines show 4.5% net job loss, or 3,539 fewer jobs, between 2009 and 2019, i.e., from 78,789 to 75,250. The number of unemployed residents are 5,230; the unemployment rate decreased from 8.3% in 2016 to 6.3% in 2019. In that period, there were interim periods of pronounced fluctuation, as reflected in net loss of about 5,000 jobs between 2008 and 2010 in the San Juan Basin related to contractions in the oil and gas industry. Net job losses were seen across all three counties – Cibola, McKinley, and San Juan Counties. Overall, the employment goal in the 2018 CEDS was not met.

THE INNOVATION INDEX

The *Innovation Index* was created by the US Economic Development Administration to support strategic economic development planning in rural regions. The Innovation Index provides a set of analytic tools that can help regional leaders reach a strong consensus on strategic direction. The data can also be used to see and understand a region's weaknesses, strengths and potential. In this way, data and analysis can inform stakeholders' collective action toward a common vision and can guide complex decision-making by analyzing a region's assets or liabilities in detail.

Innovation Headline —the one, high-level summary index—is comprised of five major categorical indexes organized thematically. Those five major indexes are built up from several core indexes defined below.



Community in Northwest NM

“Our organizing principle is to bring the region together in the belief that what is good for one is good for all. We believe that we are stronger together and only united can we transform our economy from boom-bust to robust. We need to create opportunities that have staying power, build based on our assets, and provide our people with livelihoods to continue to reside and prosper where they are rooted.

Martha Garcia, Commissioner
Cibola County Commission
Pinehill, New Mexico

Vice-Chair
COG Board of Directors

The “SWOT”:

Demographic and socio-economic analysis conducted for each of the three counties produced rich data points identifying the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats inherent in each county community. From these analyses, as well as other inputs over time, a regional “SWOT” analysis emerged, which can be summarized in the following:

INTERNAL: CAPACITY FACTORS

Strengths

- 1 LOCATION** – The region is a unique crossroads of cultures blessed with abundant natural resources, geotourism assets, transcontinental transportation systems, and proximity to fast-growing markets in the southwestern United States – major locational assets at the foundation of the regional economy. The region is known for its unique high-desert environment, featuring vast open spaces punctuated by remarkable buttes, mesas and red-rock cliffs and hosting world-class fly fishing, mountain biking and other recreational spaces.
- 2 PEOPLE** – The region is a Native-American majority population consisting of nearly a quarter million residents from diverse indigenous and immigrant backgrounds, with unique cultural assets and skill sets – a rich asset that can be uplifted through collaboration and a commitment to human resource development.
- 3 COMMUNITY** – In an era when people are seeking to leave urban centers, the region boasts some of the shortest mean travel times to work which translates into highly accessible communities. Shorter travel times translates into higher productivity rates as people are less likely to experience induced stress from traffic congestion and corresponding higher rates of cost and maintenance.
- 4 CREATIVE INDUSTRY** – Northwest New Mexico serves as a regional epicenter for wholesale and retail trade in world-class indigenous arts and crafts, featuring the work of Navajo, Zuni artisans and other artisans; there is also an upswell of broader interest in and commitment to arts and culture, as shown in new initiatives in downtown revitalization.
- 5 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** – Efforts are underway to expand rapid workforce training programs which are developed in concert with industry participation. These programs with a focus on industry recognized stackable credentials provide a condensed and compressed curriculum with the goal of providing graduates with a broad base of skill sets which can be expanded through additional investment in training.
- 6 LEADERSHIP** – The region’s governmental and civic leaders represent uniquely tested governing and professional skills, now being increasingly committed to socioeconomic innovation through downtown revitalization and economic development organizations operating in each county.

Weaknesses

- 1 INFRASTRUCTURE** – The lack of available shovel ready sites (land, building, and utilities) for development prevents communities from capitalizing on opportunities when presented. Additionally, while there are strong transportation assets (rail and interstate) traversing the region’s southern tier, the energy and agricultural fields of the San Juan Basin lack both interstate and rail infrastructure to facilitate the transport of goods to markets.
- 2 INDUSTRY CONCENTRATION** – Recent market changes affecting the region’s main economic sector – mining & energy – have resulted in widespread job losses driving further concentration into the few remaining sectors for employment, i.e., government, retail and hospitality. Sector concentration can lead to additional stress on the economy, particularly if remaining sectors are vulnerable and experiencing sector pressures as well.
- 3 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT** – While leaders uphold the belief in the region’s people as its most valuable asset, we lag behind in education, training, and talent retention. In particular, our workforce has been seen as unprepared to meet the requirements of economic-base jobs.
- 4 WIDESPREAD POVERTY** – Chronic structural poverty is reflected in low per capita income and high unemployment in our rural communities, a phenomenon that historically has not yielded to decades of government investment. The population registers high rates of underemployment.
- 5 POPULATION LOSS** – The region has experienced a decline in the ‘35-44 yr’ age group along with the ‘Under 18’ age group indicating young workers and families are leaving the region.
- 6 BROADBAND** – The region suffers in last mile delivery of broadband services resulting in low broadband penetration rates for homes and businesses. For those fortunate to have broadband services, inadequate capacity limits and data caps strangle education and business innovation.
- 7 LACK OF ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE** – For a range of historical and economic reasons – predominant among them a relative lack of entrepreneurial knowledge & experience, limited access to capital, and prohibitive regulatory barriers to business permitting and development – small business development has lagged state and national averages. Across the region, proprietor income as a percentage of the total labor earnings has declined.

INTERNAL: CAPACITY FACTORS

Opportunities

- 1 ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION** – The region's economic development organizations are tapping new opportunities for leveraging economic growth through re-purposing or developing new community assets. This movement, supported by significant private and public investment, is creating opportunities for communities to reposition their economy and diversify into new high growth employment sectors.
- 2 BABY-BOOMERS** – People born between 1946-1964 have entered or are nearing retirement, presenting opportunity to leverage their skill sets, education and wealth to drive economic growth. The region has benefited from an increase in the '65 year and older' age category along with a corresponding increase in age-related transfer payments (SSI). A regional strategy to recruit additional baby boomers may benefit from further evaluation.
- 3 AIRPORTS** – Each county in the region hosts local municipally owned and operated airports with varying degrees of capacity to serve both passenger and cargo traffic. Regular scheduled service for commercial air passenger flights continues to remain elusive and recent efforts at accessing federal and state funding have produced mixed results.
- 4 TOURISM** – Based on the region's considerable cultural, archaeological, recreational and geographical assets, but in light of changing trends in global tourism, there is opportunity to reinvent and reinvigorate regional tourism, including capitalizing on recent launch of the Outdoor Recreation Industry Initiative region and focus on the world-class geotourism assets of the Four Corners Region.
- 5 AGRICULTURE** – Productive agriculture constitutes a small proportion of the region's cash economy, but there is an upsurge of interest and activity in restoring community agriculture and its role in developing and managing local and regional food systems and providing new pathways to livelihood for rural families and entrepreneurs.
- 6 DOWNTOWNS** – Lying at the heart of our villages and towns, our downtowns represent an important venue for economic revitalization and diversification, and there is a strong and growing interest and investment in downtown redevelopment, including in the country's first Native American MainStreet community, the Pueblo of Zuni.
- 7 MANUFACTURING** – Leveraging significant investment in regional infrastructure in recent years, notably the \$1 billion Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project and the upgrading of the north-south US 491 corridor with 4-laning, the region has increased its capacity to support a revival of manufacturing. **Each county has a burgeoning manufacturing which with support could be targeted for expansion.**

Threats

- 1 POPULATION GROWTH** – The region has experienced a decade of stagnant population growth. Population loss in Cibola and San Juan County have been offset by an increase of McKinley County's population. The lack of local amenities and job opportunities may continue to depress population growth in the region, thus depriving our communities of vital energy and our workforce of young talent. Population growth is generally an indication of a healthy economy. No growth or long-term decline generally occur when an area is struggling.
- 2 AGE OF POPULATION** – Each of the three counties in the region registered increases in the median age of their populations. San Juan County registered the largest percentage increase reaching a median age of 35 years old while Cibola County has the highest median age at 36.8 years old. The change in the median age indicates the population of the region has gotten older. Outmigration is the largest contributor to the increase in median age.
- 3 LACK OF PROPRIETORS** – The number of proprietors in the region has remained relatively flat. Accordingly, proprietors' income as a percentage of total labor earning has steadily declined. A high level of growth in proprietors and employment could be interpreted as a sign of entrepreneurial activity, which is an indicator of economic health. Flat or declining levels of proprietors may indicate a lack of opportunity.
- 4 INCOME GROWTH** – Despite the construction of the \$1 billion Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, featuring a water pipeline that will serve over 40 communities in the region with sustainable surface water supply, extended drought and other climate factors may stress water resources and limit growth opportunities.
- 5 POVERTY** – In consultation with the State's Jobs Council, planners have noted the adverse trend of a growing Dependent class and a shrinking Producer class, which may threaten the region's economic stability, vitality and viability.
- 6 HEALTH CARE ACCESS** – Since the recent recession, planners and leaders have noted the intensification of the crisis in federal, state and local budgets, with compounded consequences for government services, the "opportunity ecosystem" and social and economic well-being in rural communities.
- 7 FRAGMENTED COORDINATION** – Public agencies and private entities have long championed for greater inclusion in the community and economic development planning process. This desire for greater horizontal and vertical integration recognizes a fragmented response unnecessarily expends critical time and resources, which ultimately results in no real capacity to drive economic growth to the detriment of the region.

IV. STRATEGY

The Framework

The *La Ristra Northwest* Strategy draws from the *La Ristra New Mexico* framework adopted by New Mexico's seven Economic Development Districts (also known as Councils of Governments or "COGs"), who banded together under the umbrella of the New Mexico Association of Regional Councils (NewMARC) to fashion a Statewide strategy. The statewide initiative sets the template for and draws from the seven regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS), as well as from other economic development initiatives and strategies across the State. Planning work has been supported and funded, in part, by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA), and has followed EDA's newly published CEDS Guidelines.

Three core objectives have driven this statewide and regional planning effort:

- ✦ **STRATEGIC VISION** – Forging a unified vision for development
- ✦ **CLEAR TARGETS** – Creating bold goals and strategies, and
- ✦ **COLLABORATIVE PROCESS** – Developing a simplified planning and collaboration process to better plan, manage and measure economic performance and prosperity.

Drawing from robust research into best practices across the nation, and adapting them to the New Mexico cultural and economic landscape, NewMARC created an overall framework that it named "La Ristra" – reflecting the New Mexico symbol of the bundles of red and green chile's that hang in kitchens and on porticos for use in the state's iconic regional cuisine but representing the ability of La Ristra to tie together and harness regional resources for growth and prosperity. The strategies, then, are represented by chile's, organized into three primary "bundles" or visions:



Enterprise – putting the region's workforce to work



Community – creating great places to live, work, play and stay



People – growing individual and household prosperity

The *La Ristra* framework identifies 7 top-level goals and 19 related strategies. A summary chart illustrating the *La Ristra Strategic Vision* is displayed below. We then proceed to tie our strategies to the "SWOT" Analysis summarized in the above section, followed by a detailing of those strategies, as well as major projects and programs with high promise and potential to move the region's economy forward.

La Ristra Northwest is now a "living document," designed to be updated on a regular basis and to enable users to make informed decisions based on real-time data and feedback on regional accomplishments, results and shortfalls.

A Strategic Path for Growth and P

VISION: Enterprise

Increasing the Region's Economic Competitiveness

VISION: C

Making the Region a Great Pl



GOAL 1

Entrepreneurial Promotion & Support

Establish an ecosystem for generating entrepreneurs and robustly support new business in the region



GOAL 2

Economic Infrastructure

Develop catalytic, strategic physical and financial infrastructure to meet needs of targeted employment sectors



GOAL 3

Workforce & Talent Supply

Create a robustly effective talent development system linked to future economic opportunity



GOAL 4

Direct Job Cre

Target support to growing bus clusters to produce new jobs f

Strategy 1.1: Entrepreneurship & Startup

Invest in programs and services that foster and support new entrepreneurship, through developing, commercializing and adapting new technologies responsive to both the global marketplace and the unique needs and challenges of the region's population

Strategy 2.1: Broadband Infrastructure

Invest in the deployment of broadband infrastructure to increase regional connectivity to enhance opportunities for economic growth, education and quality of life

Strategy 3.1: Educational Excellence

Support on-going efforts to achieve state funding equity and promote inter-institutional collaborations in the region that target and strengthen the connection between school and centers of employment

Strategy 4.1: Business Retention &

Invest in programs and services t through working directly with lo solve problems, access capital, pr support, and generally increase b

Strategy 1.2: Business Policy and Climate

Promote a business climate and environment needed to attract and retain high-quality businesses and jobs

Strategy 2.2: Business Infrastructure

Prioritize and invest in the development of shovel-ready infrastructure assets needed to attract and retain high-quality businesses and job including warehouse, office space, and master-planned parcels complete with utility installation already complete

Strategy 3.2: Workforce Development & Deployment

Improve the collaboration between public workforce development infrastructure and local and regional employers with training based on career ladder pathways

Strategy 4.2: Economic-Base Recru

Invest in activities that resolve fa target the creation of jobs in eco and clusters with the greatest po

Strategy 1.3: Financing Capital

Expand access to financial resources and instruments responsive to the characteristics, needs and opportunities of entrepreneurs

Strategy 2.3: Innovative Financing

Develop innovative financial resources and instruments to increase available funding to support infrastrucutre development

Strategy 3.3: Youth Retention

Create incentives, amenities and career opportunities for the region's youth, encouraging them to remain in or return to the community to apply their education and training in the regional economy

Strategy 4.3: Targeted Labor-Drive

Identify and create employment sets of the existing region-wide v

Strategic Vision

Prosperity in Northwest New Mexico

Community Place to Live, Work, Play & Stay

Creation

Businesses and industrial
for the region's workforce



GOAL 5

Quality of Life & Place

Promote stewardship of cultural, physical, natural, recreational, residential and visitor assets that attract and keep people and businesses in the region

Expansion

that retain and create jobs
locally-owned businesses to
provide coaching and technical
business success

Strategy 5.1:

Live-Work-Play-Stay

Promote and invest in physical, cultural, social and other assets that create attractive, safe and vibrant communities

Strategy 5.2:

Local Reinvestment

Support and invest in "wealth that sticks" through growing assets that are locally owned, controlled and reinvested and through reducing resource leakage by promoting statewide food and energy systems and "grow/sell/buy local" initiatives

Investment

sector-of-production gaps and
economic-base industrial sectors
potential to grow in the region

Strategy 5.3:

Resiliency

Build local and regional resiliency through economic diversification, regional problem solving and the application of sustainability principles and practices

Job Employment

opportunities that tap the skill
workforce

VISION: People

Growing Individual & Regional Prosperity



GOAL 6

Participation in Prosperity

Empower individuals and families to build economic assets and participate more fully as beneficiaries and contributors in the region's economy

Strategy 6.1:

Asset-Building

Increase investments in programs and services that empower individuals and families to reduce debt, increase savings, manage personal, family and business finances, acquire property, and improve access to quality education and healthcare

Strategy 6.2:

Technical & Policy Support

Examine creation of a regional nonprofit corporation designed to create an Empowerment Fund and promote public policy initiatives that increase asset opportunities for individuals and households and reduce barriers to prosperity

Strategy 6.3:

Solo/Location-Neutral Work

Identify and capitalize on opportunities to support, attract and retain independent, self-employed workers



GOAL 7

Regional Integration

Promote a regional mindset, and seek innovative and collaborative outcomes

Strategy 7.1:

Institutional Leadership

Provide transparent, proactive, coordinated, sustained and accountable leadership of the comprehensive regionwide strategy

Strategy 7.2:

Social Capital

Develop, support and expand activities and initiatives that build bridges between communities, sectors and agencies and that strengthen collaborative partnerships at the local and regional levels

Strategy 7.3:

Training & Development

Expand upon and customize programs and initiatives to develop local and regional economic leadership

La Ristra Strategic Vision

A Strategic Path for Growth and Prosperity

VISION: Enterprise

Increasing the Region's Economic Competitiveness



GOAL 1

Entrepreneurial Promotion & Support

Establish an ecosystem for generating entrepreneurs and robustly support new business in the region



GOAL 2

Economic Infrastructure

Develop catalytic, strategic physical and financial infrastructure to meet needs of targeted employment sectors

Enterprise

Northwest New Mexico will be sustained and transformed by bold and courageous residents willing to undertake new projects and ventures to create exciting companies, businesses, and organizations.



Strategy 1.1:

Entrepreneurship & Startup

Invest in programs and services that foster and support new entrepreneurship, through developing, commercializing and adapting new technologies responsive to both the global marketplace and the unique needs and challenges of the region's population

Strategy 2.1:

Broadband Infrastructure

Invest in the deployment of broadband infrastructure to increase regional connectivity to enhance opportunities for economic growth, education and quality of life

Strategy 1.2:

Business Policy and Climate

Promote a business climate and environment needed to attract and retain high-quality businesses and jobs

Strategy 2.2:

Business Infrastructure

Prioritize and invest in the development of shovel-ready infrastructure assets needed to attract and retain high-quality businesses and jobs including warehouse, office space, and master-planned parcels complete with utility installation already complete

Strategy 1.3:

Financing Capital

Expand access to financial resources and instruments responsive to the characteristics, needs and opportunities of entrepreneurs

Strategy 2.3:

Innovative Financing

Develop innovative financial resources and instruments to increase available funding to support infrastructure development

La Ristra Strategic Vision

A Strategic Path for Growth and Prosperity

VISION: Community

Making the Region a Great Place to Live, Work, Play & Stay



GOAL 3

Workforce & Talent Supply

Create a robustly effective talent development system linked to future economic opportunity



GOAL 4

Direct Job Creation

Target support to growing businesses and industrial clusters to produce new jobs for the region's workforce



GOAL 5

Quality of Life & Place

Promote stewardship of cultural, physical, natural, recreational, residential and visitor assets that attract and keep people and businesses in the region

Strategy 3.1:

Educational Excellence

Support on-going efforts to achieve state funding equity and promote inter-institutional collaborations in the region that target and strengthen the connection between school and centers of employment

Strategy 3.2:

Workforce Development & Deployment

Improve the collaboration between public workforce development infrastructure and local and regional employers with training based on career ladder pathways

Strategy 3.3:

Youth Retention

Create incentives, amenities and career opportunities for the region's youth, encouraging them to remain in or return to the community to apply their education and training in the regional economy

Strategy 4.1:

Business Retention & Expansion

Invest in programs and services that retain and create jobs through working directly with locally-owned businesses to solve problems, access capital, provide coaching and technical support, and generally increase business success

Strategy 4.2:

Economic-Base Recruitment

Invest in activities that resolve factor-of-production gaps and target the creation of jobs in economic-base industrial sectors and clusters with the greatest potential to grow in the region

Strategy 4.3:

Targeted Labor-Driven Employment

Identify and create employment opportunities that tap the skill sets of the existing region-wide workforce

Strategy 5.1:

Live-Work-Play-Stay

Promote and invest in physical, cultural, social and other assets that create attractive, safe and vibrant communities

Strategy 5.2:

Local Reinvestment

Support and invest in "wealth that sticks" through growing assets that are locally owned, controlled and reinvested and through reducing resource leakage by promoting statewide food and energy systems and "grow/sell/buy local" initiatives

Strategy 5.3:

Resiliency

Build local and regional resiliency through economic diversification, regional problem solving and the application of sustainability principles and practices

Community

Northwest New Mexico is more than a group of people living in the same place, it's a particular area that together with its inhabitants creates a proud and unique identity and joint ownership is fortified through common attitudes, interests and goals.

La Ristra Strategic Vision

A Strategic Path for Growth and Prosperity

VISION: People

Growing Individual & Regional Prosperity



GOAL 6

Participation in Prosperity

Empower individuals and families to build economic assets and participate more fully as beneficiaries and contributors in the region's economy

Strategy 6.1: **Asset-Building**

Increase investments in programs and services that empower individuals and families to reduce debt, increase savings, manage personal, family and business finances, acquire property, and improve access to quality education and healthcare

Strategy 6.2: **Technical & Policy Support**

Examine creation of a regional nonprofit corporation designed to create an Empowerment Fund and promote public policy initiatives that increase asset opportunities for individuals and households and reduce barriers to prosperity

Strategy 6.3: **Solo/Location-Neutral Work**

Identify and capitalize on opportunities to support, attract and retain independent, self-employed workers



GOAL 7

Regional Integration

Promote a regional mindset, and seek innovative and collaborative outcomes

Strategy 7.1: **Institutional Leadership**

Provide transparent, proactive, coordinated, sustained and accountable leadership of the comprehensive regionwide strategy

Strategy 7.2: **Social Capital**

Develop, support and expand activities and initiatives that build bridges between communities, sectors and agencies and that strengthen collaborative partnerships at the local and regional levels

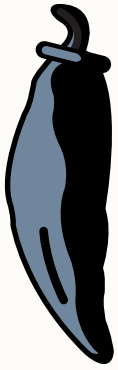
Strategy 7.3: **Training & Development**

Expand upon and customize programs and initiatives to develop local and regional economic leadership

People

Northwest New Mexico will be transformed through growth in household and community prosperity, made possible through strong leadership and the embrace of the striking and unique character of the region's populace.





CREATE ENTREPRENEURS Increasing the Region's Economic Competitiveness

Success Factor 1 / Entrepreneurial Promotion & Support

To build competitiveness in the global economy, we need to differentiate ourselves from other regions. A major challenge is to create a stronger entrepreneurial culture, which must include broad-based support for starting, retaining and expanding businesses in the community – including continued reform of regulations that impede business development, especially on Native American reservations.

Legacy industries, such as in natural resource extraction or the arts & crafts trade, are witnessing erosion or transformation, as global markets change and new industries emerge. Regionally and locally, technology can be applied toward meeting basic economic needs. For example, many rural households are without basic utilities, and innovative work will need to be done to apply solar, water reuse and other technologies to the well-being and sustainable development of rural communities.

For private business to serve as a productive source of employment, we must address factors of importance to entrepreneurs, such as tax policy, regulation, business incentives, technical and financial support for businesses, and a hospitable reception and support for businesses and their employees.

It can be intimidating for rural and small-town communities to compete for investments in technological innovation and commercialization, or to get attention from industrial site locators. At the same time, our region can boast unique asset values, as well as opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship. Our high plateau country, home for example to the *Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway* and the *Four Corners Geotourism Initiative* and their cultural and archaeological treasures, has many qualities to attract and sustain business, including quality of life amenities of value to workers and families. We are also taking advantage of major regional infrastructure (e.g., an interstate and rail corridor, expanded highway capacity, and a \$1 billion water pipeline), as well as assets inherent in the region's natural, constructed and human resources in tourism and in energy-related industries.

CHALLENGES

Northwest New Mexico ranks below the state on most measures related to entrepreneurship and business formation, and near the bottom of the list in proprietorship.

The number of proprietors in the region estimated at 20,000 has remained relatively flat since 2004. Wages and salaries for proprietors has declined over the same time frame. In 2018, 4% of the region's labor earning came from proprietors, down from 11% in 1970.

Absent a dedicated focus to retain and grow entrepreneurs and proprietors, the region will see further erosion in its capacity to support business innovation and growth.

Based on input from our regional stakeholders, several factors stand out as gaps and barriers related to entrepreneurship and innovation, most prominently:

- Insufficient entrepreneurial training and development;
- Inadequate broadband connectivity;
- Limited access to business capital;
- Lack of suitable land and building inventory for new enterprise;
- Lack of collaboration among public agencies, and poor communication generally among entrepreneurial groups;
- Multi-jurisdictional and regulatory complexity

In recent years, access to capital for locally-owned businesses has tightened up and new mechanisms are needed to assist entrepreneurs to access the capital needed to grow their businesses.

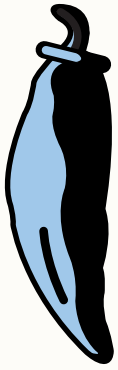
OPPORTUNITIES

Regional stakeholders identified a number of community strengths and assets to build on as related to the growth of entrepreneurship in the region, including:

- Large regional youth (under 18 yr) population;
- STEM-based Navajo Technical University;
- Strong region legacy in entrepreneurship;
- Proximity to Sandia and Los Alamos National Lab for internships, training, and support;
- Quality-of-life features, including temperate and disaster-free climate, abundant geographic spaces and landscapes, natural beauty and open spaces, diverse cultural resources, and low cost of living;
- Significant legacy of natural resource-based industry and employment;
- World class indigenous arts and crafts industry;
- Locational assets: transportation and logistics corridors; geotourism sites; recreational venues; proximity to four neighboring states;
- Legacy businesses and wealth centers that could be tapped for new investment and support of new enterprise;
- Strong retail sector, providing a cohort of employees with skills that can take them to next-level employment and careers;
- Commitment and support for revitalization of our downtowns as core economic units in our communities;
- An available and under-tapped workforce.

Goal 1: Establish an attractive environment for business and robustly support new and sustained business in the region.

Strategy	Objectives	Tactics	Contributors & Stakeholders	Outputs	Outcomes
1.1 Entrepreneurship & Start-Up	Invest in programs and services that foster and support new entrepreneurship, with particular attention to moving the region into the global innovation economy through developing, commercializing & adapting new technologies responsive to both the global marketplace & the unique needs & challenges of the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Strengthen business-education partnerships to grow interest in entrepreneurship b) Provide business financing and training resources c) Expand capacity of region's incubators to support entrepreneurship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Development Centers • Universities / Colleges • Chambers of Commerce • National Laboratories • Local EDOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New programs to grow and incubate enterprise in applied technologies 	
1.2 Business Policy & Climate	Promote the design and shaping of a local and regional regulatory environment that proactively supports the attraction, start-up & growth of enterprise in the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Engage local, state & federal stakeholders in regulatory analysis & reformulation to improve support for growing & sustaining profitable business in the region's communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Development Centers • Business Incubators • Local Economic Development Organizations • Higher education institutions • Council of Governments • Local nonprofit agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New business-friendly local, state & federal regulation, in balance with environmental protection objectives 	
1.3 Financing Capital	Expand access to financial resources and instruments responsive to the characteristics, needs and opportunities of entrepreneurs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increase capacity of regional organizations to serve as finance cohort for federal and state entrepreneurship funding b) Examine creation of regional fund to provide seed funding for entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Development Centers • Business Incubators • Local Economic Development Organizations • Higher education institutions • Council of Governments • Local nonprofit agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of entrepreneurs provided financial counseling • # of regional non-profits providing financing and funding • New programs to provide start-up financing 	



BUILD TALENT Increasing the Region's Economic Competitiveness

Success Factor 2 / Economic Infrastructure

As in the state and nation, infrastructure is a critical factor in the attraction, development and sustainability of business and industry in our region. Investments in transportation, communications, energy, water, housing, utilities and strategic land use fundamentally contribute to the economic vibrancy of a region.

In the economic development context, infrastructure is made strategic by its clear relationship to job creation objectives across the region's highest-yield industrial sectors and clusters. It is made sustainable by solid planning, coordination and commitment to long-term management and stewardship of our built capital assets, along with ensuring the provision of the financial capital necessary to initiate and sustain development.

In addressing infrastructure investments for such long-term value, the *La Ristra Northwest* Strategy provides for both (a) general, systemic infrastructure development – community facilities, capacities, capital resources and amenities as a foundation for growth and development, and (b) cluster-specific or project-specific development, which creates infrastructural capacity directly such as land, building, and equipment tied to the successful location, startup and/or retention and expansion of specific types of business operations.

In alignment with local community comprehensive plans, this strategy is alert to investments needed to help communities across the region reach their goals related to economic recruitment and job growth. To support this focus, we will vet projects and programs, and track their progress, according to economic factors and criteria.

CHALLENGES

In our regional conversations, a common complaint is that our communities' infrastructure needs outweigh the resources available; in rural communities, even basic public infrastructure is lacking. A similar gap is reflected in infrastructure capital improvement plans updated each year by cities, counties and tribes for use by State agencies in allocating funds. Without replacement of inadequate or the improvement of deteriorating infrastructure, the region is unable to participate in the economic growth of the country.

The link between infrastructure and economic growth is apparent when examining the availability of broadband in the region. The lack of sufficient broadband access across the region stifles growth of existing businesses and inhibits innovation and creation of new opportunities and businesses. The digitization of existing businesses lags both state and national averages.

Extending beyond broadband and digital infrastructure, communities face gaps in fixed assets. In the national recruitment and retention of industry, many communities in the region lack competitive infrastructure sought by site selectors such as available buildings for locating business operations. Business sites for development with all major utilities available remains an additional barrier.

The challenge is to set infrastructure priorities according to critical needs and strategic objectives, and to bring forward highly competitive projects that rise to the top of the list. Unfortunately, many communities have the disadvantage of lacking the developmental expertise and resources to fully "projecteer" initiatives from "need stage" to investability.

OPPORTUNITIES

Across the region, communities have begun investment into their downtowns focusing on place making and quality of place. Revitalization has brought with it opportunities to replace inadequate utility infrastructure, address deteriorating buildings, and install new broadband capacity.

The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project pipeline is being constructed to run parallel to US Highway 491 and will join other modern utility infrastructure installations along that corridor, thus setting that corridor up for significant potential economic development. Construction of the main laterals is anticipated to be complete within this CEDS time-frame but challenges in last mile delivery will remain.

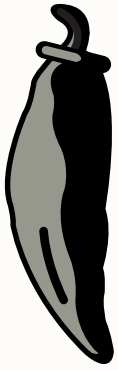
In recent years, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad has increased interactions with communities strategically located along its corridor. In our region, the cities of Grants and Gallup continue to make investments for industrial development. The Gallup Energy Logistics Park is a BNSF Railway Certified Site and the Milan Industrial Park is poised to attract a cluster of businesses associated with the community's rail assets.

Related to this rail, in more of a planning vein, Farmington and its neighbors in San Juan County are actively exploring construction of a rail line northward from the BNSF Transcon line into the San Juan Basin, as a long-term investment in moving economic resources into global markets.

Broadband deployment will generate business and private investment and is needed to ensure community growth and prosperity.

Goal 2: Develop catalytic, strategic physical and financial infrastructure that is based on sound and coordinated planning and that creates capacity for long-term, multi-sector development.

Strategy	Objectives	Tactics	Contributors & Stakeholders	Outputs	Outcomes
2.1 Broadband Infrastructure	Prioritize and invest in the development of regional and local broadband networks focused on last mile delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increase and expand public broadband networks in the region b) Develop community broadband plans to outline phase development c) Engage NM Federal delegation to increase support for last mile delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local governments • Telecomms • Electric cooperatives • Public-owned utilities • School Districts • State Agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of Broadband projects on infrastructure capital improvement plans • County broadband penetration rates • Regional broadband upload/download speeds 	
2.2 Business Infrastructure	Prioritize and invest in the development and long-term sustainability of infrastructure assets that solve gaps in the factors of production needed to attract and retain high-quality businesses and jobs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increase basic capacity of the region's infrastructure to help attract industries b) Increase and expand the broadband network of the region c) Develop an initiative or agreement to increase the collaboration between Federal, State, Local, and Tribal Governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local economic development organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cibola Communities EDF • Greater Gallup EDC; • Four Corners Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of infrastructure projects in the region (by type) • Dedicated infrastructure funding (by type) • # of ROW acquisitions and average length of time to complete • Broadband capacity Data • # of industries recruited to the region 	
2.3 Innovative Financing	Develop, innovate and expand access to financial resources and instruments responsive to the characteristics, needs and opportunities of regional businesses, communities, downtowns and entrepreneurs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Convene regional lenders forums b) Consult with tribal agencies to remove barriers to lending and investment in Native American communities c) Establish a regional business lending collaborative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local EDOs • Chamber of Commerce • Electric cooperatives • Non-profits organizations • Financial Institutions • Council of Governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dollars loaned to small business • Dollars in the business lending pool 	



EMPOWER PEOPLE Growing Individual & Household Prosperity

Success Factor 3 / Education & Talent Supply

Shared with most of New Mexico and the nation, we face a “crisis in human capital” – a growing unmet need for a skilled and educated workforce. We know that the labor asset has replaced physical infrastructure as the top demand of companies seeking to site-locate their operations. Our challenge is especially steep, due to low student performance in our schools and the shortage of skill sets required by our employers. We can point to some examples of educational excellence, and there is now a momentum of progress, but overall we lag behind on many achievement indicators. The response must include and coordinate all educational efforts from early childhood through adulthood.

Business and industry demand rapid turn-around training of local workers to feed the labor needs of those companies. Post-secondary institutions also have an urgent call on pre-K to 12 school systems to produce graduates with higher skill levels and readiness to pursue work and career. And all, in turn, have a call on our families and communities. The need for collaboration between education, business, community and family has never been greater.

Most alarming, we have experienced increased “youth flight” as younger generations seek out places that offer more opportunities for education, employment, and modern quality-of-life amenities. The challenge is to create economic and social conditions that attract the return of young people to their home communities, where they can contribute to and enjoy new prosperity.

CHALLENGES

The region wrestles with unique educational challenges. For many schools, attaining student performance standards has proven difficult, and many remain ranked at the bottom of the list. Educational shortfalls are found at the K-12, adult education and postsecondary levels, and early childhood education in the region is limited and expensive. Many single parents or young families cannot afford the tuition.

As a result of community conditions, the region is challenged by an exodus of middle-aged families which creates a condition in which the skill sets of the parent are removed from the workforce and any children from the workforce pipeline. Many of these issues are a direct cause of poverty, rurality and unemployment. Our skilled residents often flee to metropolitan areas of the state and in neighboring states, seeking higher wages, better quality of life, and career opportunities.

A major challenge is the need to more effectively link employers and educators, accompanied by a more agile and responsive system of training for employability in high-demand and economic-base jobs.

A major challenge is navigating the complex and multi-layered workforce development apparatus found in New Mexico for both employers and employees.

Linking education and business through internships and work study to develop hard and soft skills remains elusive.

Availability of reliable transportation to access education and workforce development opportunities presents a unique challenge for a largely rural and expansive area.

OPPORTUNITIES

The region has a sizable population which is of the education and workforce age that can be trained and skilled up to lead and participate in the new economy. Communities, institutions, parents and students are demonstrating higher awareness of the value of education, and more of us are seeking to ensure pathways to workforce development opportunities.

There is an abundance of artistic talent in the population, which can support an asset-based approach to education and training for the creative economy. Retirement of baby boomers present opportunity to transfer skill set through conversion to workforce instructors or advisors.

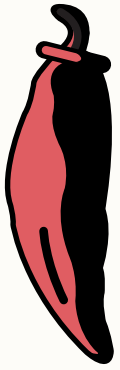
The region's educational facilities are becoming better equipped to encompass all facets of 21st century education, offering classrooms that allow alternative approaches to teaching and learning. Incorporating broadband infrastructure as educational facilities are replaced presents a unique opportunity to continue investments into strengthening education.

Our colleges in collaboration with local high schools are creating dual credit courses that are designed to lead to degrees and certificates tailored to the region's economy. Given the vital role played by the region's educational institutions, their contributions to new breakthroughs in human resource development will be critical to the achievement of a sustainable economy.

The recent launch of the Greater Gallup Industrial Workforce Program in McKinley County joins the School of Energy at San Juan College as workforce development assets in the region providing capacity to draw employer participation to understand workforce skill set needs leading to curriculum providing stackable credentials and recognized certifications.

Goal 3: Create a robustly effective talent development system linked to future economic opportunity.

Strategy	Objectives	Tactics	Contributors & Stakeholders	Outputs	Outcomes
3.1 Educational Excellence	Support inter-institutional collaborations in the region that target dramatic systemic improvements in educational processes and outcomes, and strengthen the connection between school and economic livelihood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Research and implement alternative types of educational models (b) Strengthen Leadership and Policy (c) Stabilize Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Board Districts • Education Institutions (K-12, Secondary/Post-Secondary) & Educators • Policy Officials • Regional Communities/Parents & Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School Graduation Rates • Schools overall grade through NM PED • Grade 8 Math, Reading & Science Performance • STEM Talent • Kindergarten Readiness • Certifications 	
3.2 Workforce	Improve the quality, flexibility, employability and placement of the regional workforce in relation to employers' labor needs and opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Connect opportunities with students outside of school (b) Alternative Job Training Approaches (c) Improve & Expand Existing Job Training Programs (d) Implement the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board strategic plan to build a collaborative regional workforce system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Board Districts • Education Institutions & Educators • Policy Officials • NM Workforce Connection agencies and offices • Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board • Regional Industries with Demand • Existing & Upcoming Regional Workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Attainment • High School Graduation Rates • Schools overall grade through NM PED • # of students receiving local scholarships • # of regional jobs filled by regional citizens 	
3.3 Youth Retention	Create incentives, amenities and career opportunities for the region's youth, encouraging them to remain in or return to the community to apply their education and training in the regional economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Deployment & Placement Programs (b) Cultivate youth leadership and participation in local Quality of Life improvement initiatives (c) Target Educated Youth with employment opportunities, including specific assistance to certified and degreed youth still out of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Institutions & Places of Service • NM Workforce Connection agencies and offices • Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board • High occupational demand Regional Industries • Upcoming Entrepreneurs (to cater to the younger generations) • Regional & Local Economic Development Organizations • Downtown Districts • Local Government Agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Attainment • Employment per Sector • Labor Force Data; Unemployment Rates • Diversity of the Economy • Migration and Out-Migration 	



CREATE JOBS & ENTERPRISE Putting the Region's Workforce to Work

Success Factor 4 / Direct Job Creation

The Northwest region and its communities are aware that the professional tasks and processes associated with job creation -- e.g., via the disciplines of industrial recruitment, business retention & expansion, and business startups -- require solving critical gaps in the success factors (or "factors of production") that would be needed to support the job creation enterprise. The Northwest New Mexico "La Ristra" model provides for the coordinated consideration of, and potential investment in, all of these factors in support of direct job creation activities.

The professional job creation enterprise itself has gone underfunded for years, allowing neighboring and other states to far outpace New Mexico -- Northwest New Mexico included -- in achieving economic growth. The Northwest New Mexico "La Ristra" framework calls for significant new investment in the economic development enterprise, thus increasing the cohort of trained, certified and capable economic development professionals throughout the Region, along with the provision of tools that can be leveraged to increase recruitment success -- such as supportive local and state policies and procedures, closing funds, in-plant training and other incentives.

Although the emphasis is on "economic-base" jobs, there remains a strong need and opportunity to retain and grow existing businesses by tapping the skill sets of the workforce and providing support for further skill development.

Additionally, an entire sector has emerged characterized by the recruitment of international companies, known variously as "foreign direct investment". Work must be done to attract and support this budding but promising venture.

CHALLENGES

The ongoing transformation in the national energy landscape continues to a cyclical downturn in the local energy economy. The impacts of down-sizing at coal mines and power plants are strongly felt across all three counties. For every economic-base job lost, at least one service-sector job was also lost.

Employment opportunities throughout the region are spotty at best. It has become clear that it will be very difficult -- often impossible -- to "replace" the high-paying jobs that were lost in the coal, oil & gas, and power industries with equivalent wages in other occupations. High paying jobs once lost are irreplaceable instead jobs created or filled tend to be lower skill and wage.

Sector declines have resulted in employment now being concentrated to a few key sectors most notably government and retail/hospitality, sectors which themselves are vulnerable to shocks to the economy.

More chronically, in most of the region's 77 rural and unincorporated communities -- the majority of them on Native American lands -- unemployment rates continue at much higher rates than in the urbanized communities, often exceeding 50% of the workforce. In many cases, the most able and enterprising community members migrate away from home for education and work -- a pattern reflected, for example, in the negative population growth in the regions urban areas like Farmington, NM.

OPPORTUNITIES

The region's county-based economic development organizations have been proactive in rising to the job creation challenge.

In San Juan County, Four Corners Economic Development Corporation is undertaking a comprehensive feasibility analysis examining the creation of a spur line to provide rail service. The launch of the Outdoor Recreation Industry Initiative (ORII) seeks to a leveraging of recreational, cultural, and historical assets to drive economic growth.

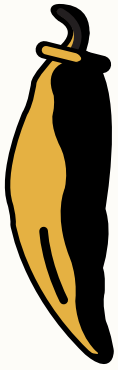
In McKinley County, Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation, Inc. continues the push to diversify into logistics, health care, and manufacturing. The Gallup Energy Logistics Park and Prewitt Industrial Park represent new infrastructure helping to drive the diversification efforts.

In Cibola County, the Cibola Communities Economic Development Foundation has been active in leading the development of the Milan Industrial Park. Efforts have produced a design for a 120,000 sq. ft. building as well master planning of the park including extension of utility and road corridors.

Across all region, significant efforts are also being mobilized for downtown redevelopment, with a focus on creating live-walk-play ecosystems. Further, communities are looking to support local airports to provide residents with options for commercial air service.

Goal 4: Establish an attractive environment for business and robustly support new and sustained business in the region.

Strategy	Objectives	Tactics	Contributors & Stakeholders	Metrics & Performance Measures	
4.1 Business Retention & Expansion	Develop, support and expand activities and initiatives that build bridges between communities, sectors and agencies and that strengthen collaborative partnerships at the local and regional levels.	a) Expand local business R&E initiatives through broader partnerships, to attract resources & implement strategies that support local business activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local EDO's • Universities / Colleges • Chambers of Commerce • State EDO's • Local Governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded partnerships in support of local business R&E • Number of locally-owned businesses retained & expanded 	
4.2 Economic-Base Jobs	Invest in activities that resolve factor-of-production gaps and target the creation of jobs in economic-base industrial sectors and clusters with the greatest potential to grow in the region.	a) Focus recruitment efforts on job-creation program theaters with highest potential, i.e.: Local Business; Energy; Tourism; & Agriculture b) Expand civic leadership in targeting & attracting economic-base industry into the region c) Implement programs to support transformation of workforce development systems & their connection with business & industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Development Centers • Business Incubators • Local Economic Development Organizations • Higher education institutions • Council of Governments • Local nonprofit agencies • Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Economic-Base Jobs • # of LEDA applications • # Economic-Base Jobs created in targeted sector • Average starting salary 	
4.3 Local-Driven Employment	Identify & create employment opportunities that tap the skills sets of the existing regional workforce.	a) Utilize workforce skill assessment studies to identify existing skill sets & job experience of in the region, and to identify & recruit employment opportunities to match those skill sets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Development Centers • Business Incubators • Local Economic Development Organizations • Higher education institutions • Council of Governments • Local nonprofit agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Jobs created in all industrial sectors • # new businesses created in all industrial sectors • # skills assessment given 	



BUILD COMMUNITY Creating Great Places to Live, Work, Play & Stay

Success Factor 5 / Quality of Life & Place

Recent economic development research has uplifted the importance of “place” as an integral component of prosperity, noting the shift from generations that once chased “the job” first, wherever it took them, to the current generation that tends to select “place” first and job second.

Our future depends on preserving and enhancing a wide range of integrated elements that together express the robustness of our culture and the positive perceptions of those things that make us healthy, safe, comfortable, secure and involved.

The cultural, historical, recreational amenities of the region complement the aesthetics of the local community. Infrastructure assets whether it be a hiking or biking trail, or a community square contribute to the growth of the community and help to strengthen its ability to attract and retain talent. Bringing together the right mix of amenities and aesthetics creates a thriving community and a competitive economy.

CHALLENGES

Our high plateau country offers a unique palette of life-enhancing places and opportunities for residents and visitors, but overall quality of life is stressed by the undertow of broadly experienced, endemic poverty and under-developed amenities and modern infrastructure. For example, the region's *Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway* features many geographical, archaeological and cultural treasures, but was unable to gain Federal designation due to the lack of supportive facilities and amenities on large portions of the byway.

Many rural residents in the region continue to live in what is sometimes referred to as “Third World” conditions. Case in point: the federally authorized, \$1 billion Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project was given top priority when Congress learned that 40% of rural households in the service area had never had public water supply.

While most rural residents are attached to their homelands, their quality of life often suffers from lack of local opportunity for employment and services. Younger generations increasingly seek livelihood and opportunity away from their home communities, as reflected in the region's stagnant population growth in the last 15 years.

As new economic development initiatives are pursued, we find that site selectors look to several quality-of-life factors as part of the screen for placement of industry, such as quality of education, aesthetic townscapes, cultural events, clean and safe streets and spaces, recreational opportunities and quality health care. While we measure up in some ways, and in some communities, we are often not competitive.

Do not have the right mix of housing in the right location to meet the needs of the population. Downtowns, high walk ability, and proximity to amenities, and updated home construction are some of the most sought after items.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Four Corners region can boast numerous cultural, economic and geographical assets, on which improvements in quality of life and place can be based. Our freedom from catastrophic weather events renders the region a haven for people seeking to avoid the extremes of heat and cold, as well as the dangers of hurricanes, earthquakes and tornadoes.

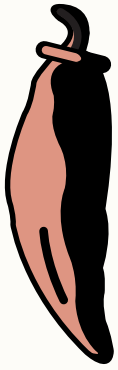
The region's indigenous peoples are tied to the sacredness and continuity of their Place in the world, and many of their neighbors consider the region's cultural diversity a major reason for making this their home. Emerging from this milieu is the production of world-class fine arts and crafts bearing the distinctive artistry and materials of the Navajo, Zuni and other native artisans. The power of this diversity and cultural expression can also serve as a basis for cooperative efforts to uplift our quality of place.

The Navajo Nation continues to emerge as a major institutional and economic player in the region, and strengthened partnerships with America's largest indigenous tribe will benefit all our populations. The same is true for our neighbors in the Four Corners states, who share the commonality of being isolated from the states' metropolitan centers.

Our community colleges provide affordable access to postsecondary education, collectively serving more Native American students than any other region, and providing a gateway to careers and further education. Our region is also home to a resurgence in the redevelopment of our downtowns at the heart of our communities, building on our historic past while catering to modern interests and opportunities – including the fashioning of live-work-play-stay environments, walkable streets, arts and entertainment spaces, and local business venues.

Goal 5: Promote stewardship of cultural, physical, natural, recreational, residential and visitor assets that attract and keep people and businesses in the region.

Strategy	Objectives	Tactics	Contributors & Stakeholders	Outputs	Outcomes
5.1 <i>Live-Work-Play-Stay</i>	Promote and invest in physical, cultural, social and other assets that create attractive, safe and vibrant communities.	a) Promote the downtown redevelopment movement in the region's small towns b) Re-vision and energize regional tourism through cooperation & new investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Development Centers • Business Incubators • Local Economic Development Organizations • Higher education institutions • Council of Governments • Local nonprofit agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased occupancy by small business in downtown properties • Increased tourism business & revenues 	
5.2 <i>Local Reinvestment</i>	Reduce economic leakage by stimulating business start-ups and expansions that provide goods and services within the region that were formerly supplied from outside the region.	a) Develop recruitment and R&E strategies based on leakage, target industry & supply / value chain studies in sub-regional development areas to increase in-region goods & services for local industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Development Centers • Local Economic Development Organizations • Council of Governments • Chambers of Commerce • Local Governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New recruitment & business development targets based on the research • Number of new businesses tied to existing local business clusters 	
5.3 <i>Resiliency</i>	Build local and regional resiliency through economic diversification, natural resource stewardship and the application of sustainability principles and practices.	a) Expand the local entrepreneurship base through increased investment in business incubation, access to capital and other supports b) Increase investment in economic-base enterprise & industry c) Increase in-region manufacturing and deployment of alternative energy technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Development Centers • Business Incubators • Local Economic Development Organizations • Higher education institutions • Council of Governments • Local nonprofit agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public & private investment in small business incubation • Increased lending activity to local entrepreneurs • Number of new economic-base businesses & jobs 	



EMPOWER PEOPLE Growing Individual & Household Prosperity

Success Factor 6 / Participation in Prosperity

Decades of battles in the war on poverty have failed to produce breakthroughs or sustained progress in the economic well-being of large numbers of families and individuals in the Northwest New Mexico region. The provision of housing, welfare and other social programs has alleviated the depth of the struggle for many, but has not succeeded in altering the structure of the economy in terms of universal participation by citizens as beneficiaries of and contributors to the economy. Although cash often flows through our communities to support consumer spending on life's basic provisions, many families lack the assets necessary to improve their life condition or to access opportunities and resources that lift them out of poverty.

The *La Ristra Northwest* strategy, then, sets a priority on empowering individuals and family households to acquire the assets—such as in the form of savings accounts, homeownership, automobiles, education and training, business startups and access to healthcare—that reflect economic well-being and set a foundation for further opportunity.

CHALLENGES

There are many structural barriers in the region to full participation by the generality of the population in the wealth and opportunities represented in the broader economy.

Decades of federal regulation and control over tribal lands and businesses have served to suppress economic opportunity on Native reservations, and most tribal communities do not generate the economic revenues necessary for local self-governance and development. In the absence of local financial resources, communities remain dependent on outside funding from federal and state governments, and such resources tend to meet only a fraction of local demand for basic infrastructure and community development. With few job opportunities and without a tribal banking system, many families scramble to make ends meet, becoming vulnerable to high-interest predatory lending.

Educational attainment across the region continues to lag behind state and national averages, and low employability skill levels render access to jobs extremely difficult.

Conclusions from a 25-year-old study of the region by the Corporation for Enterprise Development remain essentially true today, namely, that cash is not the problem; rather, the chronic issue is very low asset acquisition, such as in property ownership, family savings, and access to higher education and training.

Local political subdivisions tasked with providing critical infrastructure and services related to health, fire, and safety are in largely governed by boards comprised of volunteer community residents.

OPPORTUNITIES

Dating back 25 years to the CFED report on the region's household assets profile, several efforts have been initiated to introduce asset-building opportunities for individuals and families, including small business loan funds and individual development accounts. Some work continues in that arena, with asset-building programs primarily administered by nonprofits corporations from outside the region.

Financial literacy training opportunities have substantially increased in recent years, led by the First Financial Credit Union.

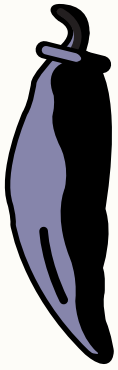
The ACT WorkKeys and KeyTrain programs have begun to be institutionalized in our postsecondary and workforce training centers, thus providing more specific pathways for career development and job acquisition for local citizens. The City of Farmington has achieved certification as a "Work Ready Community," with both employers and training institutions engaged in a partnership to get the local workforce qualified for available jobs.

The Northwest New Mexico COG and its partners have undertaken microenterprise and local micro-agriculture initiatives in rural corridors, geared toward assisting local arts and farm producers to formalize their work and increase income from their production.

The Greater Gallup Industrial Workforce Program has introduced rapid skills development training using the CORE curriculum from the National Center for Construction & Education Research (NCCER), leading to stackable credentials providing career pathways for residents and workers.

Goal 6: Empower individuals and families to build economic assets and participate more fully as beneficiaries and contributors of the region's economy.

Strategy	Objectives	Tactics	Contributors & Stakeholders	Outputs	Outcomes
6.1 Asset-Building	Increase investments in programs and services that empower individuals and families to reduce debt, increase savings, manage personal, family and business finances, acquire property, and improve access to quality education and healthcare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Identify existing programs, services, agencies and funding streams serving the asset-building mission in the region (b) Convene a regional asset-building conference to share information and build momentum in the implementation of asset-building in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ProsperityWorks • State Human Services offices in the region • State Workforce Connection offices in the region • Community-based nonprofit organizations identified in regional survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of individuals enrolled in Individual Development Accounts • Numbers of individuals enrolled in Children's Savings Accounts • Numbers of financial literacy courses offered in the region; numbers enrolled • New bank accounts opened • Changes in total savings 	
6.2 Technical & Policy Support	Create a regional nonprofit corporation designed to create an Empowerment Fund and promote public policy initiatives that increase asset opportunities for individuals and households and reduce barriers to prosperity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) <u>Empowerment Fund</u> Create a regional nonprofit corporation designed to establish an Empowerment Fund and promote public policy initiatives that increase asset opportunities for individuals and families and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northwest New Mexico COG, in consultation with North Central New Mexico EDD • Northwest New Mexico Enterprise Loan Fund and community lending partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of an Empowerment Fund in support of asset-building investments 	
6.3 SoloWork	Identify and capitalize on opportunities to support, attract and retain independent, self employed workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Support, expand on & replicate the Cibola SoloWorks Job Creation Center initiative b) Develop recruitment & support systems to attract & sustain location-neutral business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local economic development organizations • Small Business Development Centers • State agencies • Local non profits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New investments in SoloWork support in the region's communities • # of SoloWorks graduates employed by out-of-state employers. 	



EMPOWER PEOPLE Growing Individual & Household Prosperity

Success Factor 7 / Regional Integration

Economic development is not only the traditional disciplines of business recruitment, retention & expansion, and startups, but also investment in a range of success factors that create an environment where those core job creation activities can be most productive. It involves a “full circle” of stakeholders and partners, from business and industrial leadership to financial, educational and healthcare institutions to local government to community-based organizations, and others.

To elevate our competitiveness and economic progress, a broad-based plan is needed, reflecting the unique diversity of the region's economies and populations. At the same time, we need to move into collaborative relationships – unifying the conversation and focusing resources where positive impact can be greatest.

We see that sustainable prosperity will largely depend on the ability to implement the collaborative plan in our communities and region. This includes quality leadership that can set a compelling vision, bring together diverse interests and constituencies, and invest resources aligned with prosperity goals and sustainable public benefit. Community leadership also includes public engagement with local citizens on how communities work to build prosperity.

New leaders, drawn from the ranks of the youth and entrepreneurs, are needed to replace current leaders nearing retirement. The need for mentoring and communication between these cohorts will be critical to ensure a smooth and painless transition, but will also lay the foundation for the launch of potential catalytic projects reflecting the priorities of new leaders.

CHALLENGES

While there are positive examples of visionary leadership in our region, barriers remain to creating unified direction across the diverse cultures, jurisdictions and geographies of the region. Local leadership is often constrained by political and bureaucratic forces, and in rural communities, by lack of access to flexible resources that are responsive to local needs.

Our stakeholders note a lack of collaboration between institutions and sectors, citing a complex web of jurisdictions comprising the regional community, as well as a legacy of inter-community competition and mistrust that limits cooperative efforts that could scale up to benefit all citizens. Educational institutions show low graduation rates, reflecting the challenge of producing a workforce qualified for a knowledge-based economy. School-business partnerships have been insufficient to build a workforce ready to meet employers' demands.

Stakeholders also note the difficulty arising from the cyclical changes in political leadership and its impact of catalytic initiatives. There is a tendency to focus on short-term achievements and local issues, with less commitment to longer-term, more regional strategies and partnerships. Funders, however, encourage regional approaches and sustainability of initiatives over time.

We see a need for greater investment in our social and political capital – groups and processes demonstrating ability to collaborate for common benefit. Real challenges exist when attempting to communicate and collaborate across vast distances. Emphasis for success is to include investing in a cadre of “boots on the ground” to grow and provide community facilitators.

OPPORTUNITIES

Despite unique challenges, stakeholders note the strong sense of community and cultural identity that is nurtured in most of our cultures, households and communities. Residents have strong ties to the region and generally prefer to stay close to home for long-term residence and work. This sense of community appears to be a strong social asset that leaders can call upon to address the challenges of the future. In modern times, even in rural outposts, there is growing access to Internet and social media, presenting new opportunities for connecting residents with each other and with the digitization of the global economy.

Our region's five higher education institutions provide a significant human resource development asset that can be increasingly tapped to cultivate the next generation of community leaders across the many disciplines of community development. They can also increase their outreach and relationship with local business and industry, thereby forging effective career pathways for the 21st century workforce.

There is an opportunity to achieve new breakthroughs in support of sustainable development in communities along our rural corridors – including most prominently the US Highway 491 corridor now hosting construction of the \$1 billion Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, which in coming years will join other modern infrastructure to support new economic development. Success in that endeavor will require new approaches, investments and partnerships aligned with the collaborative vision of multiple leaders and stakeholders.

Goal 7: Grow the region's social and political capital to produce broad-based, informed and cooperative economic leadership into the future.

Strategy	Objectives	Tactics	Contributors & Stakeholders	Outputs	Outcomes
7.1 Institutional Leadership	Provide transparent, proactive, coordinated, sustained and accountable leadership of the comprehensive regional strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Invest and recruit strategic partners that actively contribute to a collaborative approach to leadership development and training for internships, professional development, apprenticeship, etc. (b) Institutional collaboration and leaders addressing local economies as a system, rather than as individual jurisdictions and political mandates (c) Strategic coordination, proactive planning, efficient/targeted investments, and systemic implementation of regional projects that support and sustain regional economic development over the long-term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal, State, & Tribal Governmental Institutions • Colleges & Universities • Local Businesses & Regional Industries • Community leaders and community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School Graduation Rates • Schools overall grade through NM PED • Grade 8 Math, Reading & Science Performance • STEM Talent • Kindergarten Readiness • Certifications 	
7.2 Social Capital	Develop, support and expand activities and initiatives that build bridges between communities, sectors and agencies and that strengthen collaborative partnerships at the local and regional levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Connecting communities with valuable resources throughout the region via networking, professional training, workshops, etc. as to build capacity (b) Provide more opportunities for collaboration, inclusive roundtable discussions, idea-sharing, etc. (build trust with rural communities and thus, better cooperation and confidence in participating) (c) Involve more community members into the decision-making process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal, State, & Tribal Governmental Institutions • Local Community Members • Community Leaders • Community Organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of neighborhood/ community associations, community organizations, charitable clubs, churches. • Voter participation numbers • Number of community volunteers / active community groups • Attendance numbers at local government & community meetings, & public participation 	
7.3 Leadership Training & Development	Expand upon and customize programs and initiatives to develop local and regional economic leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Invest in programs that align with emerging industries preparing qualified workforce (b) Collaborate with educational institutions and local businesses to design curriculum that will help train and develop competent workforce (c) Connect regional residents with professional development workshops, training opportunities and educational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal, State, & Tribal Governmental Institutions • Colleges & Universities • Regional business & industry • Community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and frequency of leadership development workshops, conferences, & training sessions • # of internships & apprenticeships available; how many people these programs recruit and graduate • Number of educational programs that are geared towards local emerging industries 	

V. INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Regional Industry Cluster

Industry clusters are used to quantify and illustrate how concentrated a particular industry is in a region compared to a larger geographic area. These analyses reveal important information about the regional economy :

- It helps determine which industries make the regional economy unique.
- It helps identify “export-orientation” of an industry and identify the most export-oriented industries in the region.
- It helps identify emerging export industries beginning to bring money into the region.
- It helps identify endangered export industries that could erode the region’s economic base.

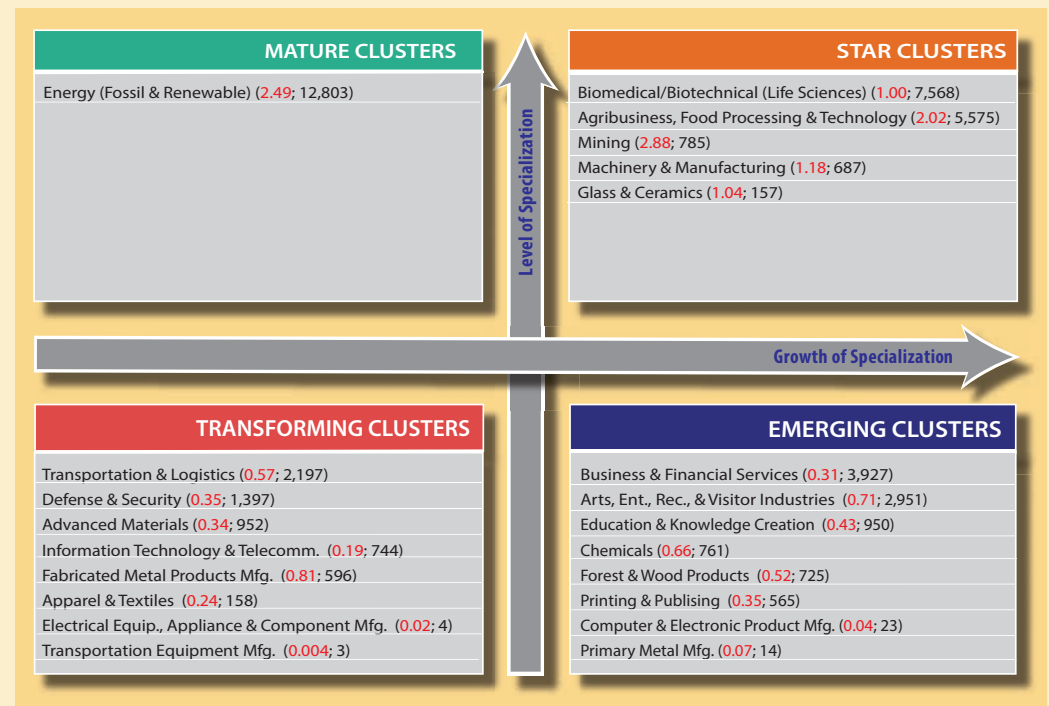
Special attention should be given to industries with higher Location Quotients (LQ) since they typically bring money into the region and form a strong economic base for the region. These industries generally produce a multiplier effect for the region by creating jobs in other dependent industries such as retail trade, food service, hospitality, etc.

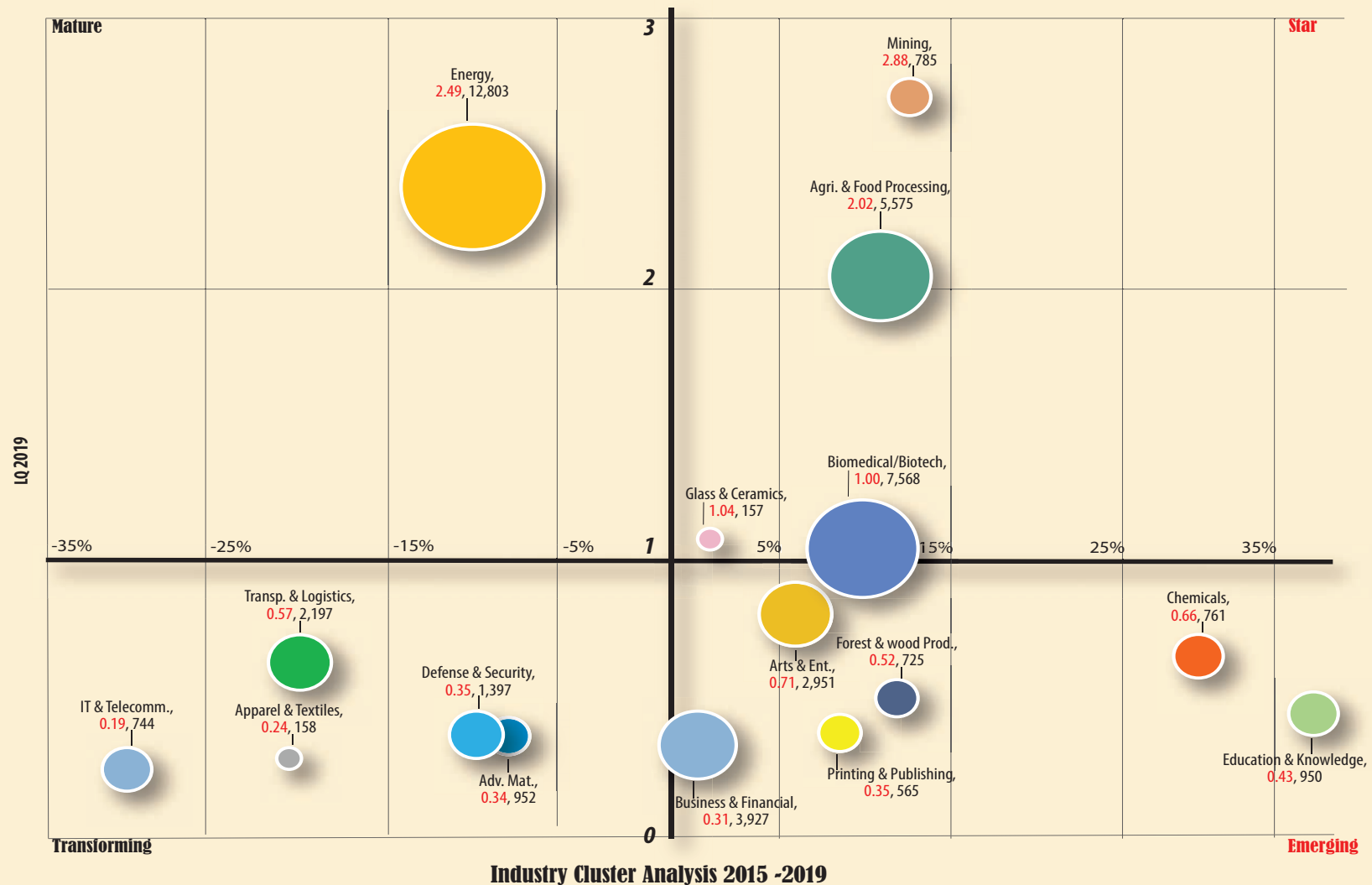
However, a high LQ industry with a small number of jobs may be an export-oriented industry but may not be a vital driver for employment in the region’s economy. A large, high-LQ industry with declining LQ over time represents a dangerous trend in the regional economy.

The goal of cluster initiatives is to develop one or more economic sectors in a geographic region that will attract new businesses or to revitalize an industry. Regional clusters depend on reliable and efficient networks of transportation to establish and sustain competitive advantage.

Industry clusters that often benefit greatly from rail transportation are mining, agriculture, and manufacturing industries, which can generate significant economic-base revenues from the export of regional products.

It is also important to create policies and processes that can optimize competitive performance and retain the high multipliers generated by these clusters.





Location Quotient

"Industry Cluster Analysis 2015-2019", illustrates the current economic base of the northwest region of New Mexico.

The region's two industry staples, energy, and mining, continue to represent a large share of the regional economic base. The energy sector is now a "mature" industry and has continued to showcase negative trends including a decrease in employment, and a reduction in its share of the regional economic base. The mining industry has assumed a larger share of the regional economic base due to the reductions in the energy sector. Both industries still reflect higher

concentrations than national averages, which indicates reductions at the regional level and shifting away from traditional energy production and extractive industries at the national level. One of the more noticeable change in the regional economy is the rise in agriculture & food processing industry. This sector was previously categorized as "transforming" and has since grown to represent a large share in the regional economy and now has "star" characteristics.

Lastly, the biomedical/biotechnical industry did not reach anticipated projections and has remained an emerging industry but still has the potential to become a key contributor to the economy.

Strategic Clusters | Focal Points for Development

Our greatest opportunities for development lie within a few economic clusters, customized for their relevance to the Northwest New Mexico economy. In the diverse conversations informing this regional framework, these clusters have been identified on the basis of:

- ✦ *Location Quotient* – the relative prominence of that cluster in the economic activity of the region, as compared with other regions of the country; i.e., does this cluster represent a higher or lesser portion of the regional economy than the national norm?
- ✦ *Retrospect and Prospect* – the extent to which a cluster of economic activities has played a significant role in the regional economy, as well as the extent to which that cluster may continue to be a driver in the future – although in different form. Do our regional assets – human skill base, location, infrastructure, market position, etc. – align with continued growth in this sector? Does it represent a synergy of inter-related economic activities?
- ✦ *Commitment & Interest* – has the regional community expressed interest, passion and commitment to an economic cluster, even if it falls short of other measures of prospective success? Did it emerge as a priority? Can it be re-kindled, re-positioned, and re-energized to create new economic opportunity for the region's citizens and communities? Might it uniquely reach and benefit sectors of the regional population? Does it have a champion to lead the initiative?

Emerging from the planning process, the following Synergistic Clusters have risen up for targeted research, development, investment and action:

Transportation & Logistics

Economic initiatives to grow economic-base industry and employment through building on the strong asset-base of the region, including: major transportation facilities running east-west and northward to the San Juan Basin; 100+ years of history in energy-related industries; continued natural resource availability, including renewables, for development and contribution to the national and regional energy portfolio; and a workforce ready for retraining and deployment in new E-L-M employment opportunities.

Agribusiness & Food Processing and Technology

Leverage NAPI, San Juan River and NGSWP to launch new economic initiatives to renew and expand the historical agricultural activity of the region as a means of building new regional and local food systems that stimulate and support agricultural production and distribution in communities, eliminate food deserts, empower local and family-based self-sustenance and livelihood, and increase the economic viability of cooperative agricultural enterprise.

Tourism, The Arts & Outdoor Recreation

Economic initiatives related to stimulating new enterprise and employment through re-positioning and re-branding the region as a destination for uniquely authentic, culturally rich, robust and transformative tourism experiences, including targeted work in adventure tourism (including the outdoor recreation industry), artisan trade & entrepreneurship, regional marketing & customer experience, and geotourism inter-connected with attractions in the broader Four Corners region.

Downtown Revitalization

Economic initiatives organized around the revitalization and redevelopment of downtown centers in our urban and rural communities by uplifting the townscape through progressive design and physical improvements, restoring economic and cultural viability at the “heart” of these communities, attracting new enterprise and magnetizing investment and the flow of people and activities into these vital centers.

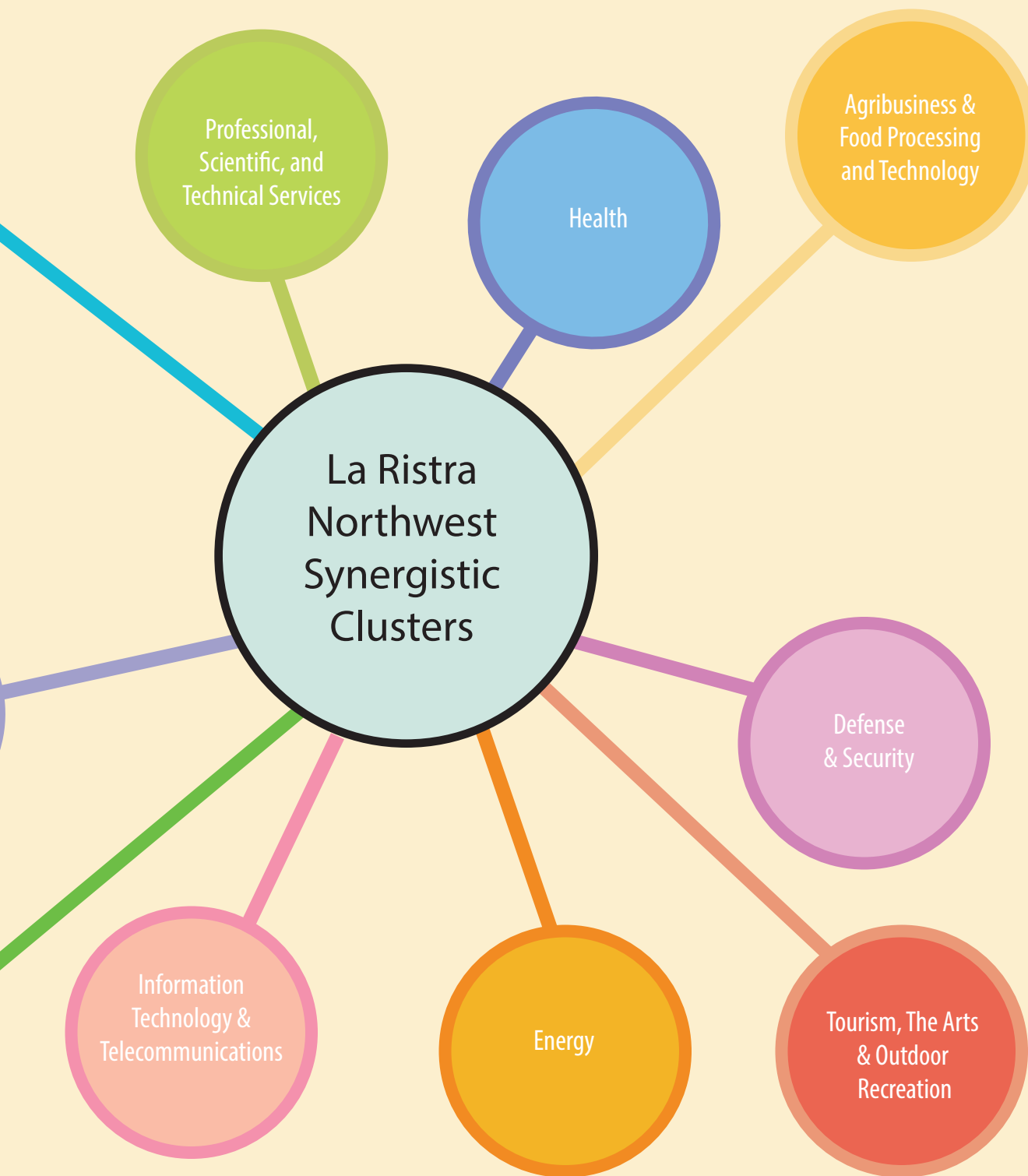
Manufacturing

Economic initiatives to grow economic-base industry and employment through building on the strong asset-base of the region, including major transportation facilities running east-west and northward to the San Juan Basin, 100+ years of history in energy-related industries, continued natural resource availability, including renewables, and a workforce ready for retraining and deployment to target domestic and foreign direct manufacturing.

Transportation
& Logistics

Downtown
Revitalization

Manufacturing



Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

Economic initiatives to grow an expansive sector comprising establishments that specialize in performing professional, scientific and technical services for others. These activities require a high degree of expertise and training. The establishments in this sector specialize according to expertise and provide these services to clients in a variety of industries, and in some cases, households. The sector will be critical to the growth and diversification of the regional economy.

Health

The healthcare sector consists of businesses that provide medical services, manufacture medical equipment or drugs, provide medical insurance, or otherwise facilitate the provision of healthcare to patients. Sector operators include among others medical equipment makers, back-office managed healthcare support, and third party laboratories to perform tests and analysis.

Defense & Security

Economic initiatives related to national security and defense with a focus on technology integration in “space” - outer space or cyberspace. The biggest opportunities will be to support development of new technologies including artificial intelligence, virtual/augmentative reality, and process robotics. Additional areas of focus include data gathering, processing and analysis.

Energy

Economic initiatives organized around the power sector transformation, the energy assets of the region including natural gas, solar, and battery storage, and the remediation activities for past development present areas of focus for future development.

Information Technology & Telecommunications

Economic initiatives to grow a sector comprised of companies that support or produce software, hardware, or semiconductor equipments, or companies that provide Internet or related telecommunication services. The roll out of broadband networks will drive long term growth in this sector.

V. RESILIENCY

Regional Recovery Strategy

The purpose of the Regional Recovery Standard is to provide a framework in which the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments and its partner communities can respond to the immediate demands of recovery efforts and mitigate the impacts of future disaster events. This Recovery Strategy establishes responsibilities for communities and recovery partners during the immediate and intermediate stages of recovery.

This framework was developed from NWNMCOG's experience with the recovery efforts that followed the multiple disaster events of the past decade. It addresses many of the obstacles that NWNMCOG and other regional partners faced, and builds on the successes of those recovery efforts as well. This strategy is intended to be a 'living document' – one in which the included action steps and enumerated responsibilities are reconsidered on a regular basis. A regular review schedule for this strategy and the associated documents will allow information about new programs to be incorporated into the strategy, and address any salient issues that arise.

The following strategy is outlined at two levels: an overarching regional strategy and strategies for individual communities.

Regional Strategy

Immediate Regional Recovery Efforts and Coordination

1. Meet together with the existing member governments to address disaster issues on a community wide basis. This group will coordinate information to ensure that channels of communication between communities and recovery organizations are open.

Responsible Entities: NWNMCOG

2. Collect and manage disaster-related data. Create a data management system to identify needs and measure progress of the recovery effort. Data should be collected on housing needs, infrastructure failures, and damage to public property. This information is critical for future planning efforts and mitigation projects.

Responsible Entities: Local governments, Emergency Management Officials, non-profits, NWNMCOG

3. Incorporate disaster recovery and mitigation into planning activities. Identify disaster recovery and mitigation projects in long-term, regional strategies such as the Comprehensive Economic Development strategy and any broad infrastructure study that is completed in the future.

Responsible Entities: NWNMCOG, local governments, development corporations, Chambers of Commerce

Business & Industry

1. Provide affected businesses with list of available recovery resources. Utilize contacts made through the distribution of surveys and referrals from communities, chambers of commerce, development corporations, and other recovery partners.

Responsible Entities: NWNMCOG, Chambers of Commerce, Development Corporations, local governments

2. Recapitalize RLF to support economic growth in the regional economy. Revolving Loans Fund programs should be considered to provide assistance to disaster affected businesses and non-profits.

Responsible Entities: NWNMCOG, local financial institutions, Chambers of Commerce, local development corporations, EDA

Phase I: Pre-disaster Preparedness

NWNMCOG supports and encourages its communities to:

- Engage in pre-disaster recovery and mitigation planning
- Regularly assess the community's risks and vulnerabilities
- Inventory and organize the community's recovery resources
- Engage in business continuity planning
- Identify recovery partners, as well as the type of assistance and resources they can provide
- Establish a timeline for recovery activities (short-, intermediate, and long-term)
- Develop and disseminate a community evacuation plan

- Establish a communication chain
- Engage the community's residents in the planning and recovery process

Regional Risks and Vulnerabilities

The region is vulnerable to a wide variety of disasters including, but not limited to, fires, flooding, drought and extreme heat, snow and extreme cold, hazardous materials, vector-borne diseases, violence, and terrorism.

Recovery and Mitigation Planning

Through a Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP or Plan), local governments can collaboratively create a long-term recovery and redevelopment strategy in pursuit of a sustainable community. Plans identify policies, operational strategies, as well as roles and responsibilities for implementation that will guide decisions affecting long-term recovery and redevelopment of the community after a disaster.

There are Three (3) Principal Benefits to having a well-developed Plan:

1) Faster and More Efficient Recovery

Creating a process to make smart post-disaster decisions and prepare for long-term recovery requirements enables a community to do more than react, prompting post-disaster action rather than time-consuming debate. By identifying appropriate planning mechanisms, financial assistance, and agency roles and responsibilities beforehand, a community begins the road to recovery more quickly.

2) Opportunity to Build Back Better

Without a guiding vision, short-term decisions may inadvertently restrict long-term, sustainable redevelopment and overlook opportunities to surpass the status quo. A Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan strengthens the recovery process, and communities benefit from assessing their risk levels and crafting a long-term redevelopment plan under "blue skies." Careful thought and planning achieves a more sustainable and resilient outcome than decisions made under emergency circumstances, compromised budgets, and political pressures.

3) Local Control over Recovery

A Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan will show outside agencies and donors that the community is prepared to play an active role in the recovery process and promote its capabilities to wisely use donated and loaned resources.

CAN A DISASTER PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE YOUR COMMUNITY'S VISION?

All of the communities within the NWNMCOG service region have participated in this comprehensive planning process. A PDRP can identify disaster scenarios in which opportunities may be present to advance already-stated visions for these communities in a compressed timeframe.

Opportunities to Consider During Post-Disaster Redevelopment

- Disaster-resilient land use patterns
- Hazard mitigation construction techniques
- Energy-efficient buildings
- Healthy community design
- Affordable or workforce housing

- Alternative transportation networks
- Environmental preservation and habitat restoration
- Sustainable industry recruitment

Disaster Phases and Redevelopment

Disaster management is typically viewed as a cycle with overlapping phases: 1) pre-disaster mitigation and emergency management preparedness; 2) emergency response; 3) short-term recovery; and 4) long-term recovery and redevelopment.

- 1) Pre-Disaster Phase – Mitigation and recovery planning occurs during the pre-disaster phase (unless a community is struck by a disaster before planning is complete). Once a mitigation and recovery plan is adopted, preparatory activities should be implemented on an on-going basis during normal operations, which are sometimes referred to as "blue skies." Plans should be tested prior to a disaster event, so that all stakeholders with a post-disaster implementation role are familiar with their responsibilities.
- 2) Emergency Response Phase – Emergency response activities are specifically addressed in a community's EOP and include immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs. This is the shortest phase of the cycle, lasting only a few days in minor disaster conditions.
- 3) Short-Term Recovery Phase – The role of any plan during the short-term recovery phase is to begin organizing for long-term redevelopment activities and guiding short-term recovery decisions that may have long-term implications (e.g., placement of temporary housing or debris sites). The duration of the short-term recovery phase depends on the severity of the disaster and the level of community preparedness.
- 4) Long-Term Recovery and Redevelopment Phase – Long-term recovery and redevelopment includes efforts to reconstruct and enhance the built environment, as well as recover the economy, environment, and social systems. This phase begins as short-term recovery activities are accomplished and can last from a couple years for a minor disaster to five or more years for a major or catastrophic disaster.

Interaction with Other Plans

The objective of this "Resiliency Strategy" is to guide the redevelopment decision-making process following a disaster in a manner consistent with local comprehensive plans. Each of these plans has pre-existing policies or procedures that affect post-disaster redevelopment. For instance, local comprehensive plans include many policies that determine where and to what extent redevelopment can occur.

Phase II: Post-disaster Planning and Implementation

Disaster Assessment

In the days and weeks following a disaster, NWNMCOG will be available to assist counties and communities:

V. RESILIENCY (cont.)

- Assess the nature and magnitude of the disaster
- Assess the impact on both local and regional economies (business, industry sectors, labor market, etc.)
- Assess the impact on transportation and public infrastructure
- Assess the impact on housing, schools, and health care facilities

Develop and/or Implement Recovery Timeline

Based on the results of the disaster assessment, NWNMCOG will help regional partners and community leaders move forward with:

- Listing and prioritizing recovery activities to be performed
- Identifying resources (federal, state, local, and private sector) needed for each activity
- Determining the level and type of assistance needed
- Identifying roles and responsibilities
- Determining the timeframe for each recovery activity (immediate, short-term, intermediate, or long-term)
- Establishing recovery benchmarks

Implementing the Recovery Plan (long-term recovery)

In order to accomplish recovery activities quantified as part of long-term recovery, NWNMCOG is capable of:

- Identifying business, economic, and entrepreneurial rebuild initiatives
- Identifying and utilizing workforce initiatives to employ workers and rebuild the local economy
- Applying for funds from federal, state, and local programs
- Developing management plans to ensure the most effective use of funds

Prioritizing Areas to Focus Redevelopment

Communities may want to encourage redevelopment in areas that correspond to their vision for the future and those less vulnerable to disasters by prioritizing and incentivizing development in these areas. The best way to build resiliency to disasters is to direct future development to safe locations, while minimizing or mitigating highly vulnerable types of development in hazardous areas.

Historic Preservation and Restoration

The loss of historic resources due to a disaster can have a major impact on the community. Engaging state and local historic preservation organizations in the planning and implementation process can ensure that the unique considerations involved with preserving and restoring historic structures and archeological sites are included in a community's recovery plan.

Reducing Disaster Vulnerability through Land Use and Development Regulations

The best practice for post-disaster redevelopment is to restrict rebuilding in hazardous locations and require mitigation where vulnerable redevelopment cannot be precluded. There are many regulatory tools for increasing disaster resiliency that may be a possibility for the region, especially if pursued during the post-disaster "window of opportunity" for future reductions in disaster vulnerability. Potential regulatory methods could include reduced intensity or density of use, special permit requirements, increased setbacks from hazard sources (e.g., a waterway or building, etc.), hazard-specific site design requirements, and/or increased structural mitigation requirements.

ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT

The ability of a local economy to rebound after a disaster dictates the success of the community's long-term recovery. The return of jobs, tourism, capital investments, and other indicators of economic health are dependent upon housing recovery, infrastructure restoration, environmental restoration, and social service provision. The involvement of the private sector in the post-disaster planning process is imperative for determining the priorities and actions that will be beneficial to restoring the local economy. Consideration must be given to the different obstacles that could potentially hinder economic recovery, such as those that small businesses will face, decisions large employers will have to make about whether to relocate, opportunities for sustainable diversification of the economic base, and job training and workforce recruitment needed to meet altered market conditions after a major disaster.

Resumption and Retention of Major Employers

Rapid resumption of existing major employers is key to a community's economic recovery after a disaster, especially as employment provides a reason for most residents to return and rebuild quickly. Typically, the major employers in the region are already going to have business continuity plans and will not need the

basic disaster preparedness education necessary for smaller businesses. These companies are often able to work with local governments as partners in planning for post-disaster redevelopment and provide insight as to what government assistance they will need to ensure rapid resumption. Major employers may also have the means to assist in actions to support workforce retention if included in the planning process. While large company recovery assistance will vary, typically businesses located in hazardous areas or older structures may need assistance to reopen or relocate, temporarily or permanently, within the area.

Small Business Assistance

A “small business” is often perceived as a family-owned business that provides services solely to the local community. Small businesses comprise the majority of businesses in the NWNMCOG region. Small businesses are more likely than large businesses to either never reopen after a major disaster or fail shortly after reopening. Several factors may be involved in these failures, including the extent of damage to a community, timing of reopening, and lack of financial reserves.

Workforce Retention

While trying to retain existing businesses, efforts must also address retaining the workforce that supports those businesses. Workforce training programs are important to provide residents with appropriate skill sets to fill newly available positions due to recovery efforts and to adjust workforce skills to other industries that may take a more permanent hold in the community due to post-disaster business recruitment efforts. Providing locals with first preference for temporary recovery work is important for keeping workers from moving out of the area.

Physical Economic Redevelopment Projects

In some circumstances, opportunities may arise after a disaster to move forward with planned physical economic development projects or to create new projects that take advantage of post-disaster funding, available land, or public will. Economic development projects that are disaster-resilient and fill a need in the community after a disaster should be a priority for post-disaster funding.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

Restoration of infrastructure and critical public facilities after a disaster is a prerequisite for recovery – one that is addressed in local government and private utility and infrastructure companies’ emergency response and short- term recovery plans. There are long-term redevelopment considerations for infrastructure restoration, however, that must be weighed in conjunction with land use, environment, housing, and economic redevelopment issues.

There are many agencies, jurisdictions, and stakeholders involved in providing infrastructure, public facilities, and utility services. Before and after a disaster, these private and public entities need to establish communication and coordination procedures to ensure that long-term recovery and redevelopment occurs in an efficient and organized manner. Each agency or company should have its own recovery plan; however, if any opportunities for directing redevelopment are to be pursued then coordination and communication are critical.

Financing Infrastructure and Public Facilities Repair

When a community starts to make decisions about which structures to relocate after a disaster or which mitigation

projects it should invest in pre-disaster, they should consider funding availability. Knowing where to prioritize spending requires some basic knowledge of what is covered under insurance policies, which projects will be eligible for federal reimbursement through the Public Assistance Program, which projects can be funded through grant programs, and what financial reserves can be targeted for grant matching funds or local investment.

CONCLUSION

In the event of a disaster, NWNMCOG is committed to:

- Providing local officials, business leaders, and other community partners with access to regional demographic, economic, and hazard vulnerability data.
- Developing technical expertise and economic analysis tools for conducting initial disaster assessments and long-term economic impact analysis.
- Establishing collaborative relationships with local government officials and non-government organizations that may provide data, funding, technical expertise, and other resources essential to intermediate and long-term economic recovery following a disaster event.
- Offering grant writing expertise and technical assistance to regional and local entities, both for pre-disaster resiliency initiatives as well as post-disaster recovery efforts.
- Establishing familiarity with traditional economic and community recovery funding sources, including resources for business development assistance programs, such as EDA’s Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) programs as well as private, nonprofit, and philanthropic resources.
- Providing technical support to impacted businesses.
- Encouraging concepts and principles of economic resiliency strategies into the existing planning and development plans and activities within the region.
- Leveraging assets.
- Offering a neutral forum to convene diverse stakeholders and facilitate discussion and planning initiatives around the issues of economic resiliency preparedness and recovery.



VI. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The evaluation framework for *La Ristra Northwest* is embedded in the strategy.

- ✍ For each of the strategic goal areas, there is a summary plan that lays out objectives, tactics, stakeholders and metrics. All of these details are amenable to updating, modifying and replacing on an annual basis, but lend themselves to measurement and monitoring along the way.

Achievement of goals and objectives within this framework can be tracked as milestones are reached, captured as “outputs” from the system of tactics and activities undertaken by the region’s stakeholders.

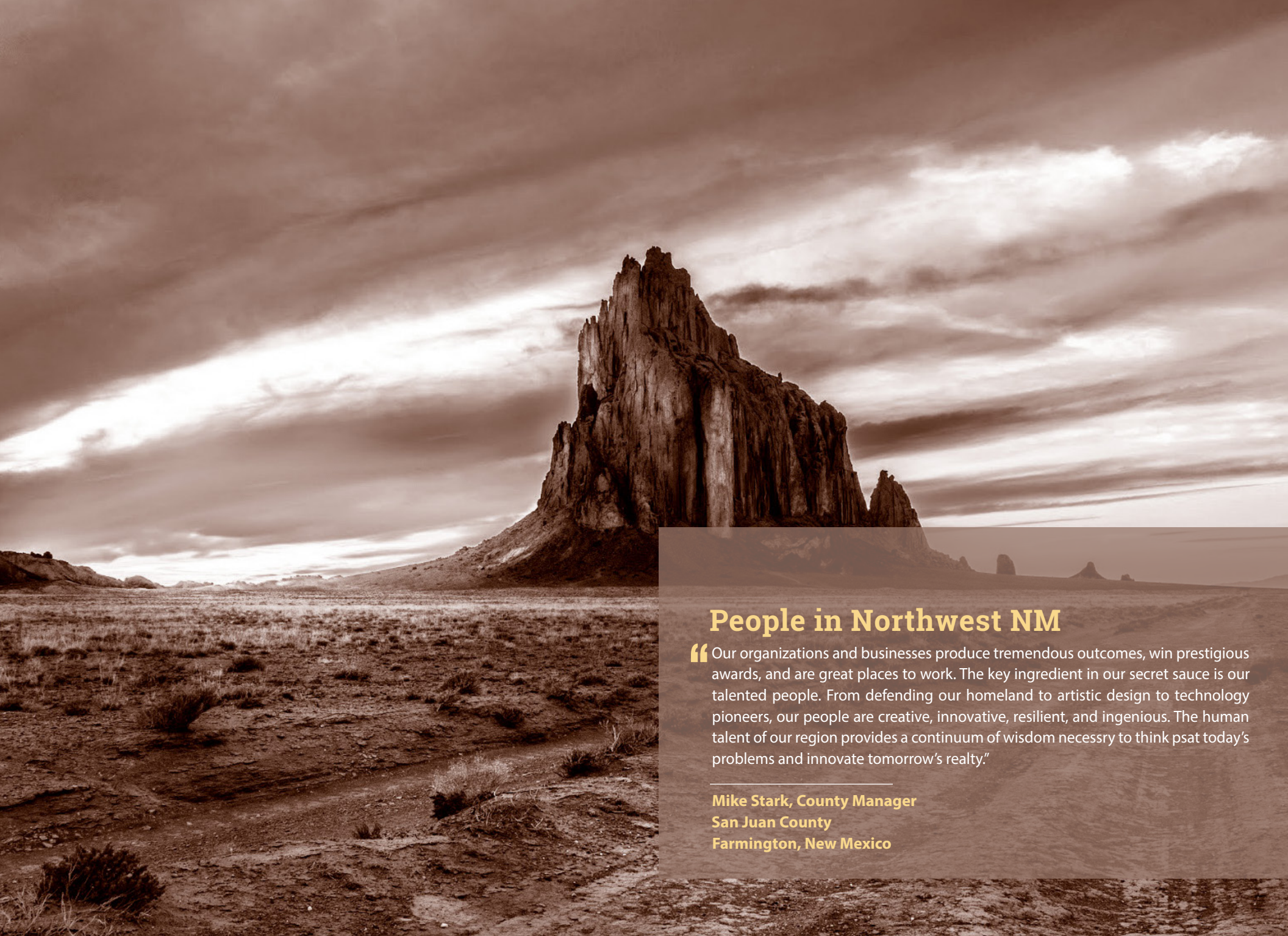
- ✍ For the Northwest New Mexico economy as a whole, baseline data for our region are summarized above in the Background section. These measures lend themselves to tracking and monitoring over time, in comparison with the region’s own past measures, as well as with the statistics showing up by county, by region across the state, and by district across the country. With consensus, additional measurements can be identified and tracked to ensure a full understanding of the regional background.

These metrics may be considered “synergistic,” as changes in their profiles result from a combination of factors, only some of which are under the control of stakeholders within the region. For example, positive change in educational attainment measures may result from asset-building programs in support of families, from curricular

breakthroughs in the schools, and/or from increased employment opportunities for breadwinners across the region. Positive change in the number of persons employed in high-tech jobs may result from the interplay of several concurrent initiatives, such as incubator support for new entrepreneurship, new housing for all levels in the residential market, targeted industrial recruitment and/or a newly funded program at the local community college. Nonetheless, the region should remain committed to tracking change where ever it may originate from.

The *La Ristra* strategy as currently summarized here needs to be further operationalized through collaborative assignment of specific roles and responsibilities, prioritization of work to be undertaken and establishment of accountability timelines for implementation of actions in service to the over-arching strategies. The *La Ristra* is a living document and should be updated as goals and objectives are achieved or as the needs of communities and the region shift.

The Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments is champion and implementor of the CEDS for the region. As the region’s federally-designated Economic Development District, the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, will serve as overall facilitator and coordinator of the *La Ristra* Strategy, with work to be accomplished and tracked via numerous partnerships – existing and new – throughout the region.



People in Northwest NM

“Our organizations and businesses produce tremendous outcomes, win prestigious awards, and are great places to work. The key ingredient in our secret sauce is our talented people. From defending our homeland to artistic design to technology pioneers, our people are creative, innovative, resilient, and ingenious. The human talent of our region provides a continuum of wisdom necessary to think psat today’s problems and innovate tomorrow’s realty.”

Mike Stark, County Manager
San Juan County
Farmington, New Mexico

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Name

Link

NWNMCOG Member Organizations

City of Aztec

<http://www.aztecnm.gov>

City of Bloomfield

<http://www.bloomfieldnm.gov>

City of Farmington

<https://www.fmtn.org>

City of Gallup

<https://www.gallupnm.gov>

City of Grants

<https://www.cityofgrants.net>

Village of Milan

<http://www.villageofmilan.com>

Cibola County

<http://www.cibolacountynm.com>

McKinley County

<https://www.co.mckinley.nm.us/>

San Juan County

<https://www.sjcounty.net>

Name

Link

NewMARC Membership

Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments	http://www.nwnmcog.com/
North Central New Mexico Economic Development District	https://www.ncnmedd.com/
Mid-Region Council of Governments	https://www.mrcog-nm.gov/
Eastern Plains Council of Governments	http://www.epcog.org/
Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments	http://www.swnmcog.org/
Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District	http://snmedd.com/
South Central New Mexico Council of Governments	https://www.sccog-nm.com/
New Mexico Economic Development Department	https://gonm.biz

NWNM Economic Development Organizations

Acoma Economic Development Office	http://www.puebloofacoma.org/Economic_Development_Office.aspx
Cibola Communities Economic Development Foundation	http://www.cibolaedc.com
Four Corners Economic Development	https://4cornersed.com
Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation	https://www.gallupedc.com
Laguna Development Corporation	https://www.lagunadevcorp.com
Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development	https://navajoeconomy.org
Zuni Pueblo Mainstreet	https://zunipueblomainstreet.org

APPENDIX A

CEDS Committee

APPENDIX A: CEDS COMMITTEE

Below is a depiction of how the La Ristra Northwest CEDS Committee works to incorporate a diverse and broad-base of grassroots leaders in the public, private, and tribal sectors. This approach is not hierarchical but seeking a new form of partnership that seeks to have thousands of conversations to mold lasting actions and to join others at their tables rather than forming yet another. This builds from a duality of “thinking regionally, acting locally and thinking locally, acting regionally” as we have three district economic regions according to the US Cluster Mapping Project. Yet we still have many strategies in common, for example, outdoor recreation and downtown development. Ultimately, the COG depends on the review and input from various economic development organizations (EDO's) and the official adoption lies with the COG Board of Directors.



CEDS Committee

The following CEDS Committee members participated through various processes including meetings, forums, local plans, research, and were involved in providing content and comments, reviewing strategies, and/or final approval of the plan. Members highlighted in orange represent the public sector, green are private, blue are both, and staff in white and those that have been through IEDC Basic Economic Development Course are indicated by "**".

<i>Leadership</i>		<i>Technical Team</i>	
<i>Name</i>	<i>Organization(s)</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Name</i>
Billy Moore, Chairman	NWNMCOG, McKinley County, Utility	Patty Lundstrom, CEcD, Director*	Patty Lundstrom, CEcD, Director*
Martha Garcia, Vice-Chairman	NWNMCOG, Cibola County	John Largo, Director	John Largo, Director
Louie Bonaguidi, Treasurer	City of Gallup, City Electric Shoe Shop	Warren Unsicker, CEcD, Director*	Warren Unsicker, CEcD, Director*
Linda Rogers, Councilor	City of Farmington	Jim Hooper, Jr., Director	Jim Hooper, Jr., Director
Julie Baird, Assistant Manager	City of Farmington	Kelly Noble, Director	Kelly Noble, Director
Fran Palochak, Councilor*	City of Gallup	Dave Deutsawe, Director	Dave Deutsawe, Director
Michael Schaaf, Councilor	City of Gallup	Eileen Yarborough, Director*	Eileen Yarborough, Director*
Maryann Ustick, Manager	City of Gallup	Arvin Trujillo, Director*	Arvin Trujillo, Director*
Modey Hicks, Mayor	City of Grants	Michael Patrick, Director	Michael Patrick, Director
Erik Garcia, Councilor	City of Grants	Mike Hyatt, Superintendent	Mike Hyatt, Superintendent
Vanessa Chavez, Manager	City of Grants	Dr. James Malm, Chancellor	Dr. James Malm, Chancellor
Mike Padilla, Commissioner	City of Aztec	Kara Q. Smith, Director	Kara Q. Smith, Director
Austin Randall, Commissioner	City of Aztec	Rose Eason, Director	Rose Eason, Director
Jason Thomas, Public Works Director	City of Bloomfield	Tommy Haws, Chairman	Tommy Haws, Chairman
Donica Sharpe, Former Manager*	City of Bloomfield	Robert Castillo, Chairman	Robert Castillo, Chairman
Dr. Christine Lowery, Commissioner	Cibola County	Steve Grey, Chairman	Steve Grey, Chairman
Judy Horacek, Special Projects Coordinator	Cibola County	Chris Roybal, Marketing Director*	Chris Roybal, Marketing Director*
Daniel Torrez, Commissioner	Cibola County	Anna Larsen, Planning Director*	Anna Larsen, Planning Director*
Kate Fletcher, Manager	Cibola County	Harry Garcia, Representative*	Harry Garcia, Representative*
Anthony Dimas, Manager	McKinley County	Anthony Allison, Representative*	Anthony Allison, Representative*
Robert Baca, Commissioner	McKinley County	Doug Decker, Attorney	Doug Decker, Attorney
Genevieve Jackson, Commissioner	McKinley County	Jim Cox, CPA, Manager	Jim Cox, CPA, Manager
Jim Cox, CPA, Manager	San Juan County	Evan Williams, CEcD, Director	Evan Williams, CEcD, Director
Mike Stark, Manager	San Juan County	Michael Sage, CEcD, Manager	Michael Sage, CEcD, Manager

APPENDIX B

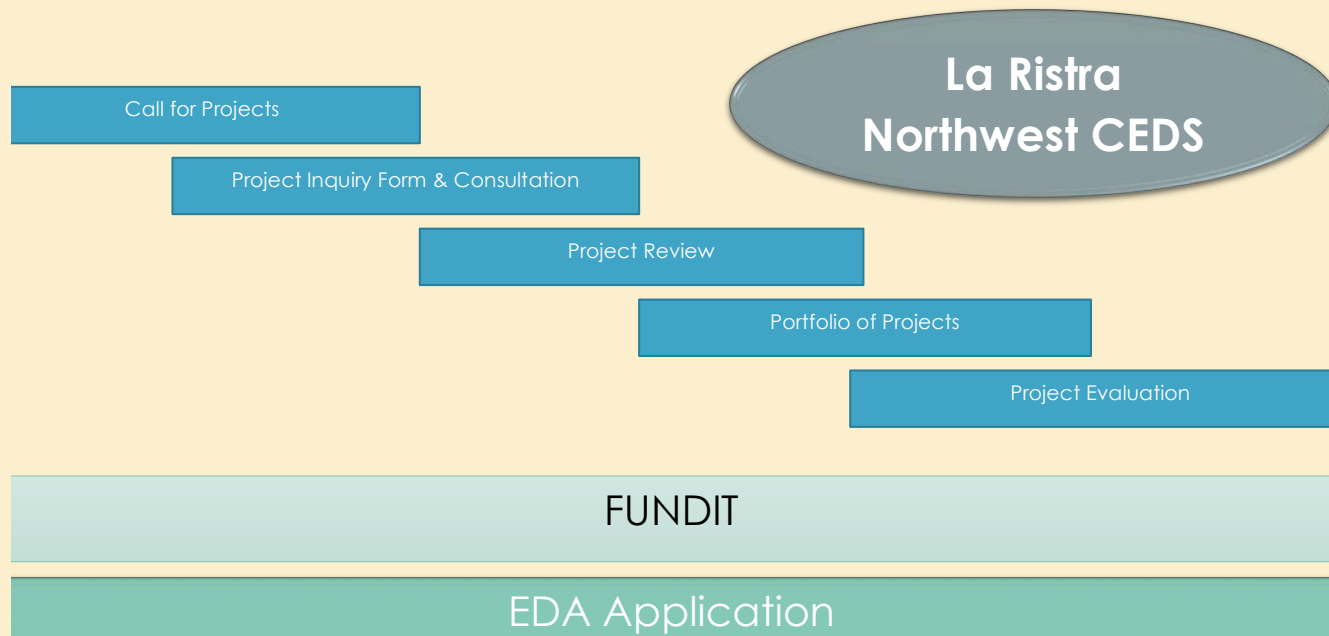
Call for Projects

APPENDIX B: CALL FOR PROJECTS

The CEDS sets forth the global regional strategies to be flexible and adaptable. With its adoption, the Northwest NM Council of Governments (COG) will hold an official Call for Projects aimed to advance these economic development strategies. These market-driven projects may require public sector investment from US EDA and/or other State and Federal funding to support job creation businesses and private investment that without which would not be feasible. These projects should make the distinction of being primarily economic development projects instead of community development projects. COG staff will promote project proponents using FUNDIT, the State's one-stop shop for economic development funding as well as looking to attract a full circle of project funding.

The initial Call will be crafted around funding available from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 directed to US EDA, but after that the COG will accept project submissions via a simple online application on annual ongoing basis.

EDA Project Inquiry Forms: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z6JYWCD>

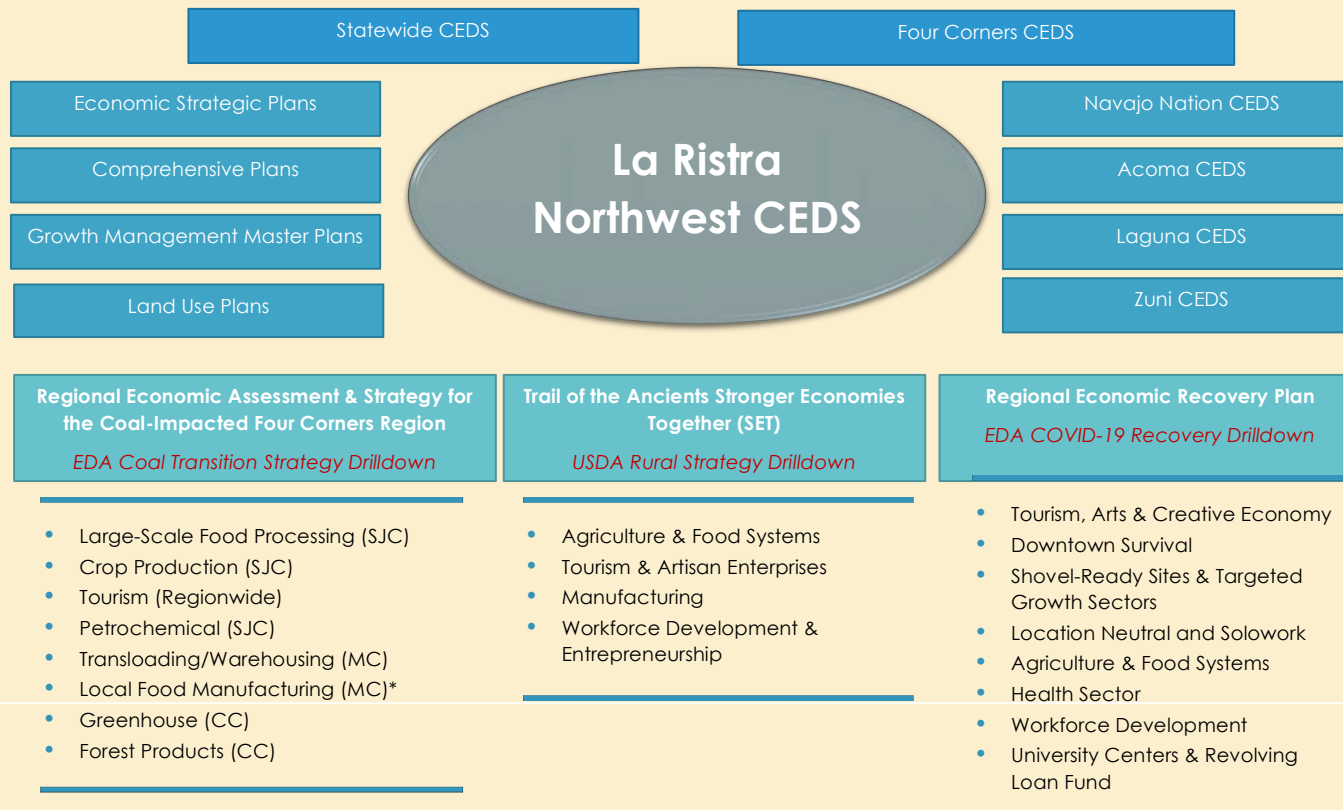


APPENDIX C

Planning Integration

APPENDIX C: PLANNING INTEGRATION

The CEDS was developed as the region's global strategy, which rolls up other regional plans as well as local and tribal plans including other CEDS, Strategic Economic plans, and other documents. It also is produced in a way that is similar and comparable to the other six (6) CEDS in the State of New Mexico with the ability to roll-up into Statewide plans and multi-State plans.



APPENDIX D

EDO Review

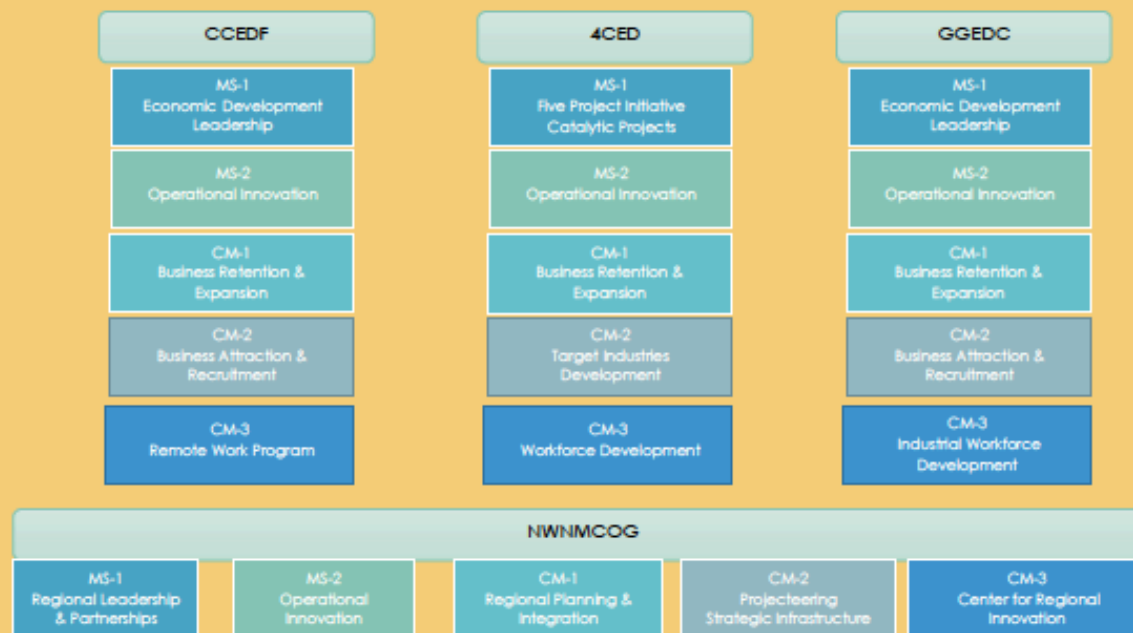
Item	Four Corners Economic Development	Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation	Cibola Communities Economic Development Foundation	Northwest NM Council of Governments
Structure	501 (c) 3	501 (c) 3	501 (c) 6	Quasi-Governmental
Funding	Membership, Local, Private, Foundation	Local, Private, Foundation	Membership, Local, Private, Foundation	Local, State, Federal, Private
Staffing	4	5	2	7
Board Size	26	7	13	16
Website	Golden Shovel	Golden Shovel	Golden Shovel	Weebly
Real Estate & Building Database	ZoomProspector	ZoomProspector	ZoomProspector	No
Demographic & Data	GPS Planning	GPS Planning	GPS Planning	Factbook
BRE/Contact Relationship Database	University of Minnesota	Executive Pulse	Researching	Executive Pulse
Social Media	Facebook Twitter YouTube	Facebook Twitter	Facebook Twitter YouTube	Facebook Twitter YouTube
Newsletters	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Annual Reports	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Marketing Outlets		NM Economic Development Magazine; Gallup Visitor's Guide	NM Economic Development Magazine;	None
Trade Shows		Energy Council; Calgary Oil & Gas Show	AirVenture, OshKosh WI; IMTS Manufacturing	None
LEADS	No	Yes	Yes	No
Strategic Plan	2021	2021	2021	2010
Target Industry Analysis	No	2018*	2018	No
Business Attraction	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
National Development Council	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lead Generation	NM Partnership	NM Partnership; Internal; Targeted Associations (IEDC, TBDC)	NM Partnership	NM Partnership
Software & Analytics		Piggyback on NMEDD	Piggyback on NMEDD	Power BI; ArcGIS
Business Recruitment	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Business Retention & Expansion	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

APPENDIX E

EDO Chart

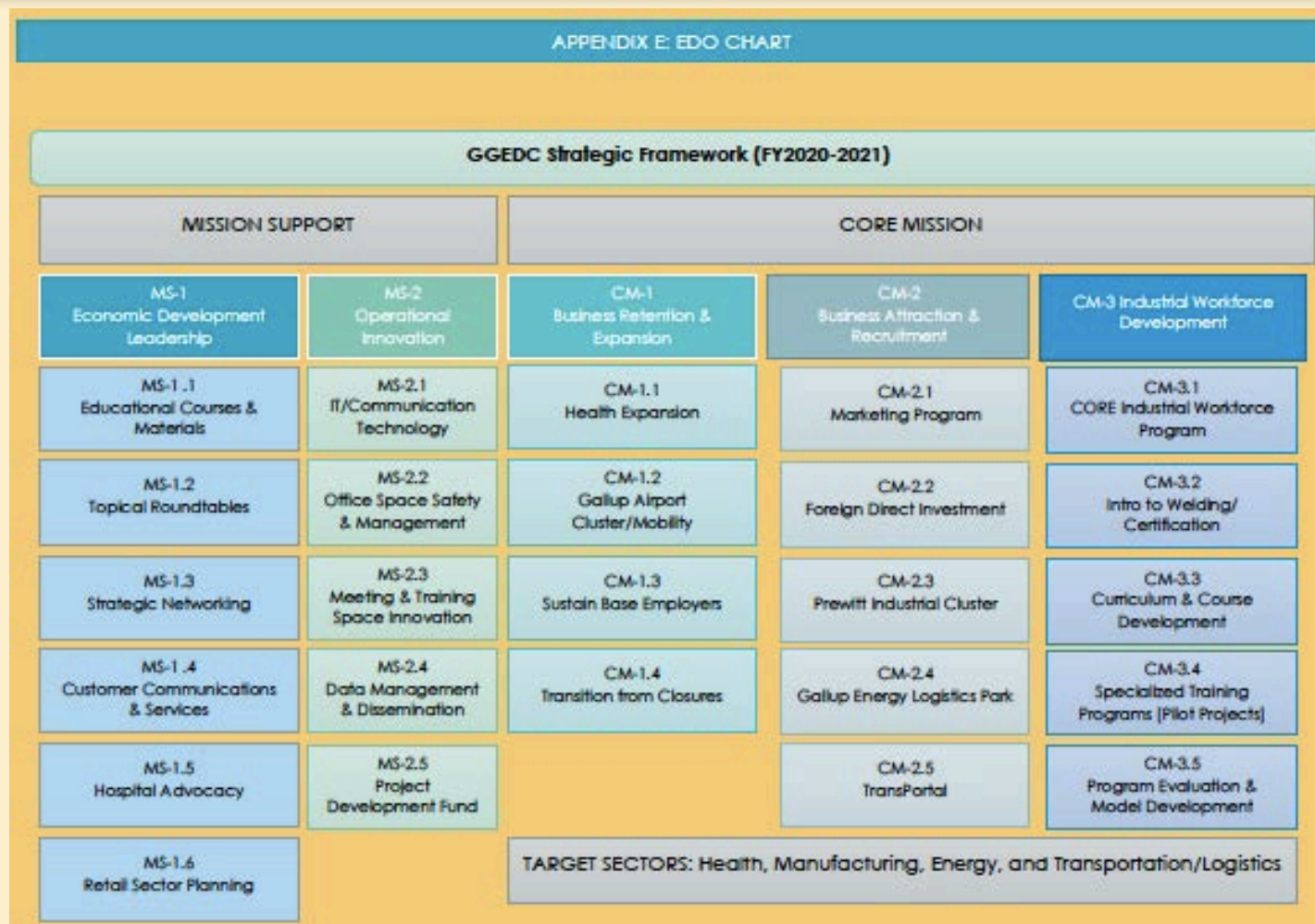
APPENDIX E: EDO CHART

It is important to understand how to maximize economic development efforts, create economies of scale, and similarities and differences in the types of programs, services, and tools. All EDO's maintain general organization functions such as fundraising, organization management, human resources, financial management, reporting, networking, marketing, training, and providing education opportunities, forums, and presentations. The EDO's and the COG have a natural and symbiotic relationship whereby EDO's shape and inform the CEDS that provides the global strategy that the COG is responsible to maintain for the whole region. EDO's develop projects that the COG can help support through strategic infrastructure development and finance by attracting public sector resources through various sources. The COG can also identify regional initiatives, fill gaps, and look for ways to grow capacity to support this economic development work across the region. The COG understands that there are many more economic development organizations, business support service centers, and tribal and public sector led entities that a role in economic development. We offer to update this section and facilitate charting a more formal and fuller representation of the constellations of primary, secondary, and supportive organizations, including those that contribute to the factors of production like behavioral health, public safety, education, etc.



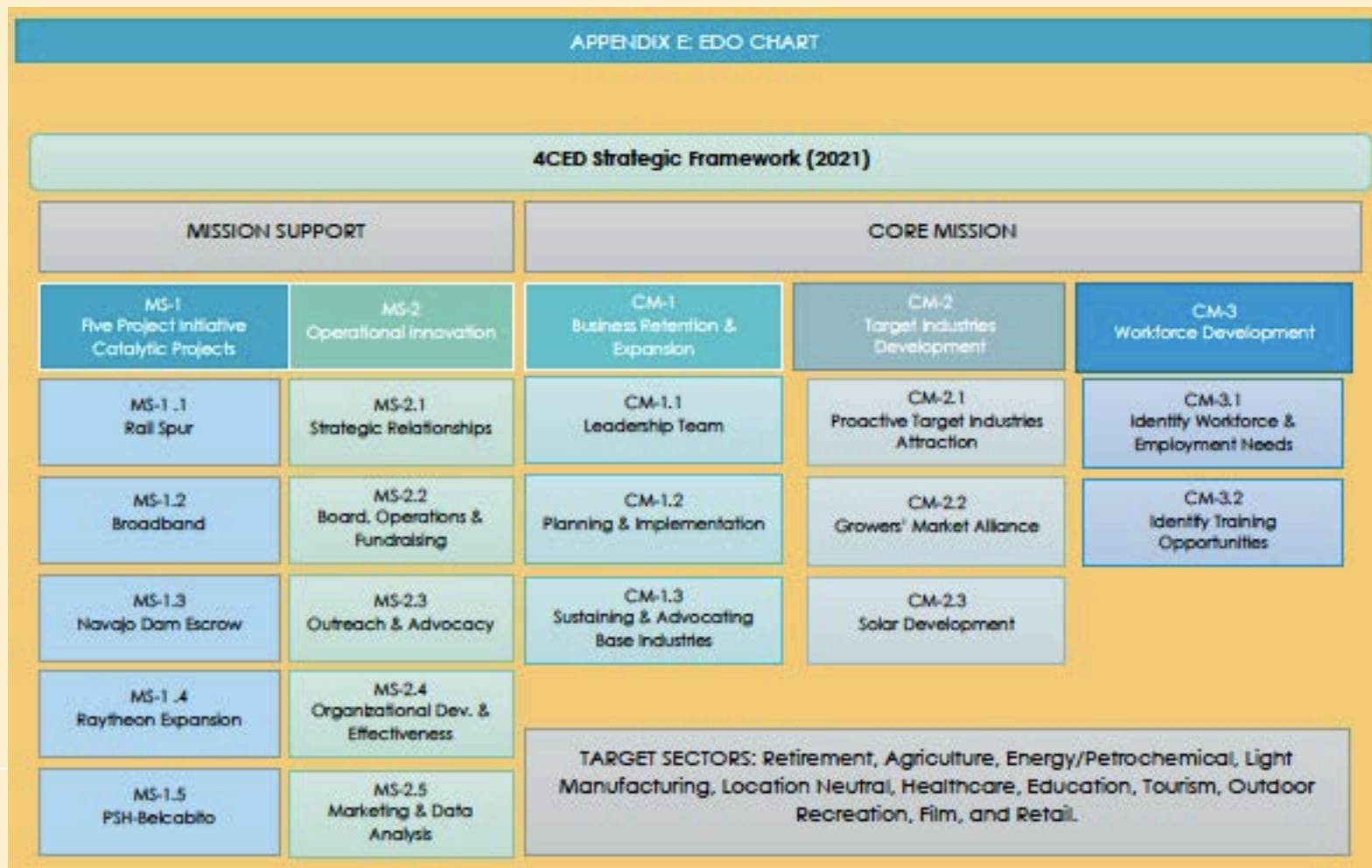
APPENDIX E

EDO Chart



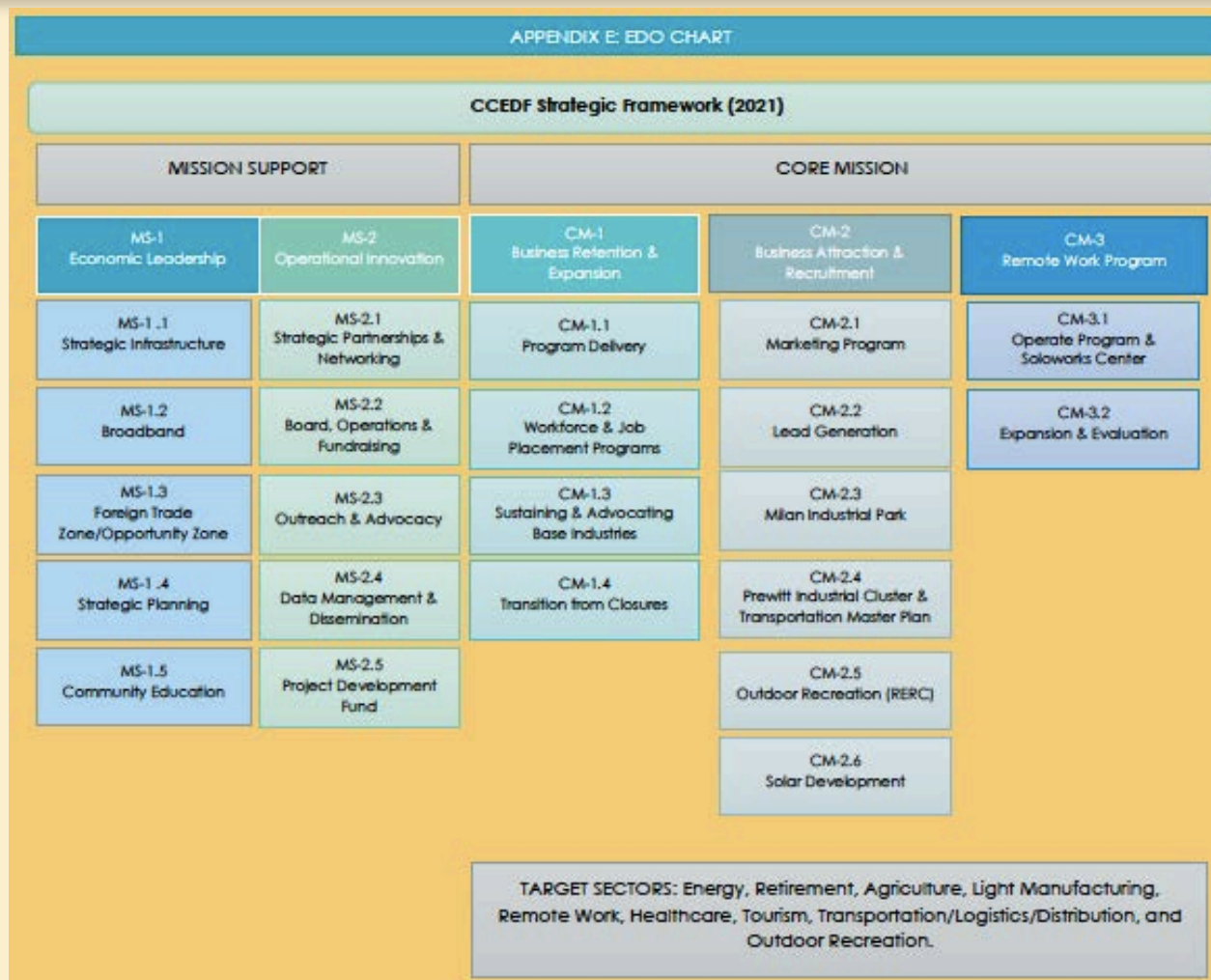
APPENDIX E

EDO Chart



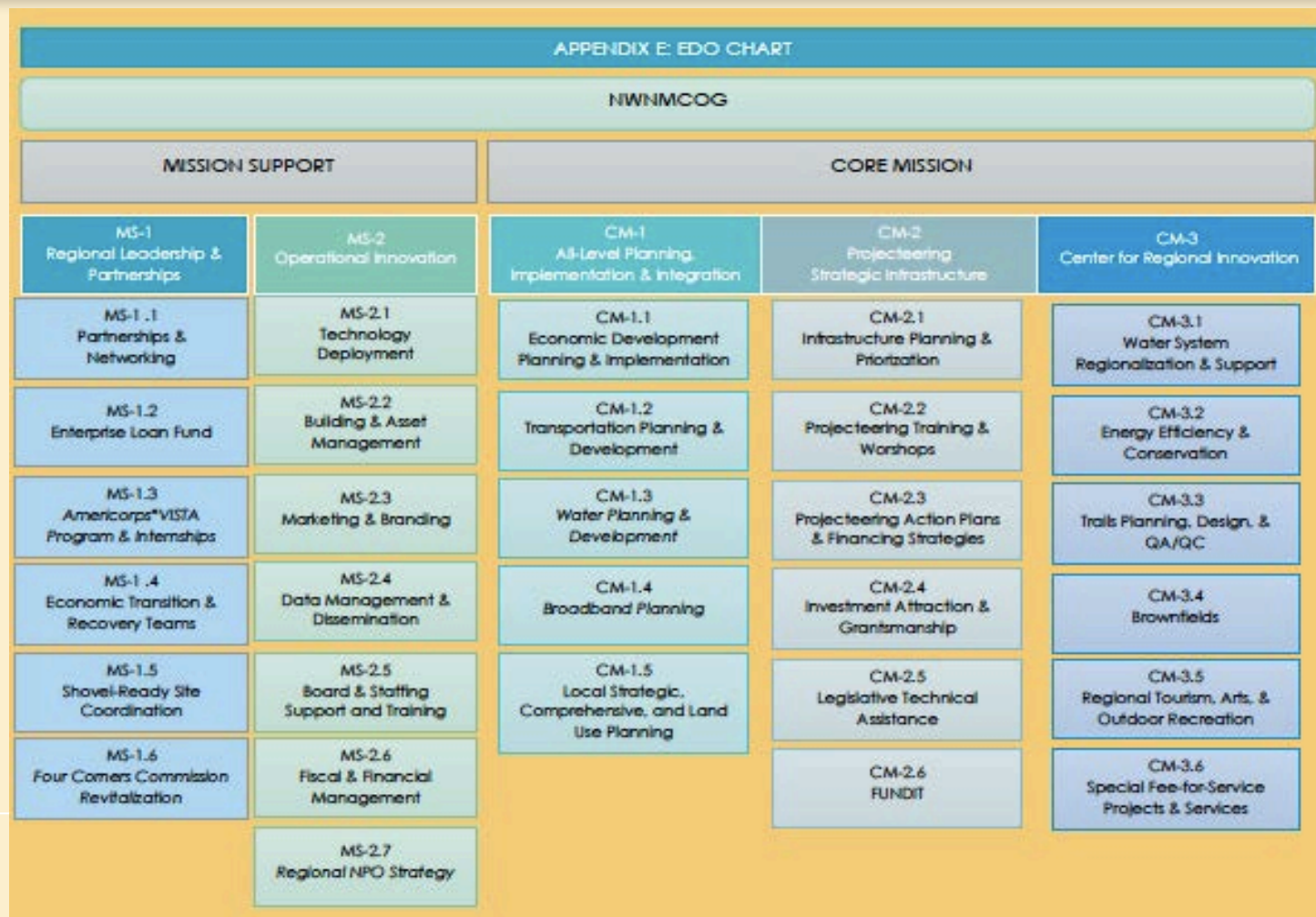
APPENDIX E

EDO Chart



APPENDIX E

EDO Chart



APPENDIX F

Public Comment Process

APPENDIX F: PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

The CEDS included a public engagement process that including a public comment from November to March 2021 from which the COG received several comments and suggestions:

- (1) Comment: The document needs more incremental analysis of these declines with some economic context that may explain the negatives. You did mention the 2008-2010 increment. Action: This additional analysis is being completed in a separate analysis.
 - (2) National Development Council Findings and Recommendations:
 - a. The COG is funded by the EDA to maintain a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and an Economic Development District (EDD). However, it has no active economic development programs or staffing to support regional economic development. This is unlike the majority of EDA funded EDDs that are focused on developing, maintaining, and implementing a regional comprehensive economic plan with stakeholders. A review of the literature shows rural regional economic development works most efficiently and effectively when resources and programs are centralized into an EDD that local development organizations can access. The alternative is to have local economic development organizations seek to establish and operate the needed but missing tools, resources, and services. This scenario most frequently results in intra-regional competition, duplication of effort, lack of communication/coordination, unnecessary expenses, and limited, if any, achievement of CEDS goals and objectives.
 - b. The COG is funded by the EDA to maintain a CEDS and EDD. Maintenance of the CEDS is not an economic development activity. It is a planning function. A CEDS for a region must be inclusive, dynamic and come from the ground up if it is to be implemented successfully. A review of the documents and feedback as well as a survey of area stakeholders demonstrates the current CEDS was drafted to meet the needs of a funding agency not the economic development needs of the region. There is very limited buy in from stakeholders and the public. Therefore, the COG has historically produced a CEDS for others to implement without their feedback and support. Without stakeholder buy-in, the lack of achievement of CEDS goals and objectives is the outcome. Also the COG has very limited financial resources to assist stakeholders implement the activities required to make progress on achieving CEDS goals.
- Action: These comments were part of an organizational review and COG is taking them very serious including Strategic Sessions with Executive Committee and full Board of Directors in Fall 2021.
- (3) Gallup BID
 - a. Comment: CEDS does not include/present the regional economic development effort that we are working on. Action: This should be reviewed and added in next update process.
 - b. Comment: To attract business and/or industries that will generate new employment opportunities and bring new wealth into the region. Action: This is very much a part of business attraction and should be reviewed and added in next update process.
 - c. Comment: Sustain existing business and industries and protect existing jobs in the region. Action: This is very much a part of business retention & expansion and should be reviewed and added in next update process.



APPENDIX F

Public Comment Process

APPENDIX F: PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

- d. Comment: Provide comprehensive technical assistance in areas such as business, natural resource development, commercial properties, and community revitalization. Action: Need more direction who provides or if they currently exist for example New Mexico MainStreet but should be reviewed and added in next update process.
- e. Comment: The creation promotion, and management of public and private revolving loan funds to support capital formation for micro and small business development. Action: This is very much a part of COG's RLF strategy and should be reviewed and added in next update process.
- f. Comment: Improve and develop each community's infrastructure to sustain long-term growth. Action: Plan does outline more specifically strategic infrastructure strategies.
- g. Other direction and comments that were not acted on:
 - i. Items c, d, and 3 could be merged into existing CEDS goals language in Goals 1 and 4
 - ii. Item e must be in the CEDS someplace
 - iii. I did see some (vague) references to these items in the EDA COVID Relief application plan. Of course, that document is separate from the CEDS in intent and duration over time.
 - iv. Goal number 7 is soft and vague.
 - v. Goal number 4 is also vague.
 - vi. Within this CEDS, NWNM COG is not espousing regional collaboration among the counties, regions, cities, towns, villages, economic and business development organizations.
 - vii. No mention of retention of existing businesses and jobs? The pillars of economic development are:
 1. Business retention and expansion (cheapest),
 2. Small business development (creation and expansion of existing businesses),
 3. Economic development finance programs (one key to success in 1 and 2 and helpful in 4 and 5),
 4. Real Estate Development and redevelopment (read – the industrial park!)
 5. Business recruiting and attraction (most expensive).

(4) Other Examples recommended for CEDS improvements including Project Lists, Action Plan, etc. that COG will evaluate and include in update.

a. The [MBAC/GEDD Tri-County Region CEDS](#) example shows how a tri-county regional plan can be formatted in a CEDS document

b. The Action Plan example shows the general way of listing planned activities

CEDS Strategic Priority	Objective	Lead Agency	Time Frame	Current Status	Comments
Job Growth	Develop and implement a comprehensive economic development strategy	COG	2015-2020	Developed and implemented a comprehensive economic development strategy	Updated 2015 CEDS with new data, added new strategies
Small Business Development	Develop and implement a comprehensive small business development strategy	COG	2015-2020	Developed and implemented a comprehensive small business development strategy	Updated 2015 CEDS with new data, added new strategies
Real Estate Development	Develop and implement a comprehensive real estate development strategy	COG	2015-2020	Developed and implemented a comprehensive real estate development strategy	Updated 2015 CEDS with new data, added new strategies
Infrastructure Development	Develop and implement a comprehensive infrastructure development strategy	COG	2015-2020	Developed and implemented a comprehensive infrastructure development strategy	Updated 2015 CEDS with new data, added new strategies
Community Development	Develop and implement a comprehensive community development strategy	COG	2015-2020	Developed and implemented a comprehensive community development strategy	Updated 2015 CEDS with new data, added new strategies
Health and Human Services	Develop and implement a comprehensive health and human services strategy	COG	2015-2020	Developed and implemented a comprehensive health and human services strategy	Updated 2015 CEDS with new data, added new strategies
Education	Develop and implement a comprehensive education strategy	COG	2015-2020	Developed and implemented a comprehensive education strategy	Updated 2015 CEDS with new data, added new strategies
Environment	Develop and implement a comprehensive environment strategy	COG	2015-2020	Developed and implemented a comprehensive environment strategy	Updated 2015 CEDS with new data, added new strategies
Transportation	Develop and implement a comprehensive transportation strategy	COG	2015-2020	Developed and implemented a comprehensive transportation strategy	Updated 2015 CEDS with new data, added new strategies

APPENDIX F

Public Comment Process

APPENDIX F: PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

c. The SEMDC CEDS 2016 report shows an example of reporting the plans and progress made on planned efforts for multiple EDO entities.

Scoring For the 2017 Year: 0=Not Addressed/Adequately, 3=Project began but not completed during the period, 75=Significant progress made toward completion of project, 1=Project completed										
EDA Implementation and Evaluation Report 1/1/17 through 12/31/17										
Regional Planning Efforts										
County	Objective	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Funding Source	Expected Results	Performance Measures	Schedule	Priority	Jobs Created	Status for 2017
Poudre River		Strategy - Schedule loan meeting in conjunction with Poudre River Area Chamber of Commerce		EDA, MT, OPDC and SEMDC	Obtain valuable input for update of CEDS	Completion of Meeting, Analysis of input, Update CEDS	Sept. & Oct. of each Year	High	TBD	
Clear		Missa City - schedule loan meeting in conjunction with Missa City Area Economic Development		EDA, MT, OPDC and SEMDC	Obtain valuable input for update of CEDS	Completion of Meeting, Analysis of input, Update CEDS	Sept. & Oct. of each Year	High	TBD	
	Continue to maintain and improve the SEMDC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) by holding annual public input "open meeting" with the CEDS and communicate the input results and opportunities with the appropriate stakeholders throughout the year.	Forayle - Schedule loan meeting in conjunction with Chamber of Commerce Chattahoochee - Schedule loan meeting with assistance of key community leaders. Lane - Schedule loan meeting with assistance of key community leaders. Laurens - Schedule loan meeting with assistance of key community leaders.	County Staff	EDA, MT, OPDC and SEMDC	Obtain valuable input for update of CEDS	Completion of Meeting, Analysis of input, Update CEDS	Sept. & Oct. of each Year	High	TBD	
Rockwall		Waynes - Schedule loan meeting in conjunction with assistance of key community leaders		EDA, MT, OPDC and SEMDC	Obtain valuable input for update of CEDS	Completion of Meeting, Analysis of input, Update CEDS	Sept. & Oct. of each Year	High	TBD	
Treasure		Adair - Schedule loan meeting in conjunction with assistance of key community leaders		EDA, MT, OPDC and SEMDC	Obtain valuable input for update of CEDS	Completion of Meeting, Analysis of input, Update CEDS	Sept. & Oct. of each Year	High	TBD	
AI	Adair participate in numerous Coalitions: Eastern Montana Impact Coalition, Coal Country, Southern Montana Development	Coordinate with other economic development groups in Eastern Montana to address input changes associated with future economic development and other economic development strategies	County Staff	EDA, MT, Dept of Commerce, Private Sector and SEMDC	Identify resources and strategically address development needs	Development of strategic plan and identification of resources	On-Going	High	TBD	
AI	Complete the planning process for submitting the Updated/Revised CEDS that will be due to EDA	Finalize the CEDS Document and provide reports and data necessary to meet EDA requirements	County Staff	EDA and SEMDC	Completion of updated 5 year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for County, Treasure, Poudre River and Spaulding Counties	Final approval from EDA, printing of finished product and distribution	4th Quarter 2017	Medium	TBD	
Pennington	Implementation of County Economic Diversification Strategy	Obtain funding for implementation of County Economic Diversification Strategy	County Staff	POWER, AGC, Coal Board, DOT	Implement strategies of Economic Diversification Strategy	Begin implementation of Strategy and develop 3-5 year plan for implementation	3rd and 4th Quarters 2017	High	TBD	
Technical and Financial Assistance to the Public Sector										
County	Objective	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Funding Source	Expected Results	Performance Measures	Schedule	Priority	Jobs Created	Status for 2017
AI	Continue to assist in determining the feasibility and financing of community infrastructure projects as outlined in each community's growth plan, the CEDS, and other planning documents to include state and federal financial assistance opportunities, encourage development of CO for each County and Community	Work in determining the feasibility and financing of community infrastructure projects as outlined in each community's growth plan, the CEDS, and other planning documents to include state and federal financial assistance opportunities, encourage development of CO for each County and Community	County Staff, County Office, City Office, Poudre River, Spaulding County	SEMDC, MT, OPDC, City Office, Coal Board, DOT & Counties	Provide technical assistance and grant writing assistance to project	Coordination of project, attendance at meetings, completion of grant applications	Quarterly	High	TBD	
AI		Write, submit and receive a minimum of 50 letters of grants to be distributed between Poudre River, Treasure, Rockwall and Clear Counties	County Staff	SEMDC	Secure funding for 50 million of projects between the 4 counties in the SEMDC	CEDEI to read 50 million of grants between the 4 SEMDC Counties	Annual	High	TBD	
Technical and Financial Assistance to the Private Sector										
County	Objective	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Funding Source	Expected Results	Performance Measures	Schedule	Priority	Jobs Created	Status for 2017
AI	Continue to market the benefits of the numerous SEMDC Revolving Loan Fund opportunities to the existing community and assist in developing strategies, develop loan packages and provide capital formation to include and assist in	Schedule outreach with lenders, provide information to potential clients, provide, email marketing, and other means	County Staff	Funds generated by SEMDC, Loan Interest (Poudre River) and Private Sector partnerships	Write a RLF Loan Officer and provide 500 hours of SEMDC	Close three (3) loans in 2017	On-Going	High	TBD	



Northwest New Mexico

“ If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. NWNMCOG is leading the field to empower communities and move the region. ”

**Evan Williams, Executive Director
NWNMCOG**



Northwest New Mexico
Council of Governments

106 West Aztec Avenue
Gallup, NM 87301
505-722-4327

nwnmcog.com

