

PART III: IMPLEMENTATION/NEXT STEPS

A Coordinated Regional Effort

1. The CEDS Strategy Committee should be reconvened within 3 months of the CEDS adoption and Economic Development Administration (EDA) approval to discuss CEDS findings and recommendations and develop a plan, with timelines, to successfully implement recommended strategies, including improving cooperation among government, Tribal and business leaders throughout Humboldt County.
2. The Strategy Committee should be expanded to include individuals that represent each of the Target and emerging industries. These cluster representatives should actively engage industry peers and work to represent shared interests. This will allow the Committee to work on cross-cluster goals (such as improving transportation infrastructure) while also addressing cluster-specific priorities like site location/zoning solutions. It should be noted that similar efforts are occurring in many industries (e.g. health care), with much success.
3. Stakeholders also recommended that representatives from County senior economic development staff, cities and Tribes form a working group that meets regularly to discuss and proactively work to develop strategies to meet the on-going needs of business. This group will communicate and coordinate with the Strategy Committee and report back to their respective elected officials.
4. Representatives should identify funding streams that can be used to implement recommended strategies, as well as metrics to measure project success and return on investment.
5. The Strategy Committee should also evaluate stakeholders' recommendation to develop and maintain a regional inventory of usable buildings and spaces. This is recognized as a long term project and would assist elected officials in projecting future demand and assessing the need for zoning changes.

Throughout the CEDS process, it was recognized that problems and concerns that affect one industry generally affect all industries throughout the County. Communication is essential in reducing and eventually eliminating information silos and increasing cooperation and collaboration throughout the region. The County, cities, Tribes and other jurisdictions can serve as key collaborators in facilitating partnerships across sectors and jurisdictions for the community of Humboldt as a whole.

Evaluation Plan

The CEDS Strategy Committee will guide the annual process of evaluating progress towards achieving the vision of building a collaborative regional economy and implementing supporting strategies. The Committee will collect and analyze the necessary data and submit a report to the EDA. This is a requirement of funding and necessary to qualify for further EDA assistance. The update is also a prerequisite for designation as an Economic Development District (EDD) by EDA, should the Strategy Committee and jurisdictions pursue this option.

External data will provide information on the direction of the overall economy, spotlight potential opportunities and offer notice of potential disruptions (shocks) in domestic and foreign markets. It will be useful in identifying activities

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and trends that may affect the local economy. For example, changes in the rate of new construction nationally can impact our region, which depends significantly on the export of forest products.

Examples of data to include:

- Consumer Price Index
- Purchasing Manager's Index
- US Census Bureau Business & Industry (USCB-B&I) data sets Retail e-commerce Sales
- USCB-B&I Export and Import Statistics
- US Department of Commerce-Bureau of Economic Analysis
- US Trade & Development Agency links to export opportunities for US companies

Local economic data will provide a greater sense of how the Region is performing relative to the greater economy and may identify economic opportunities. Internal data may include:

- The number of business startups/new business licenses issued
- Building permit issuances, residential and commercial
- Business expansions
- Business recruitments (successful or not, and if not-why)
- Disposable income
- Job creation
- Numbers of persons trained by local educational institutions
- New programs designed and implemented at CR and HSU
- SBDC training program participation numbers
- Alternative Agriculture specific industry performance measures
- Average income
- Population increases/decreases by area in the County of Humboldt
- Sales tax revenue
- Property tax revenue
- Economic index published by Humboldt State University

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Additional factors to consider may include social data such as:

- Crime rates
- Recidivism rates
- Numbers of homeless persons
- Funding dedicated to social programming

While comparing local economic performance to that of the state, national and global economies can provide a guide for answering “How are we doing?” The County’s limited population, geographic isolation and somewhat unique economy must also be considered in the evaluation process.

Annual Report

The Strategy Committee will present a draft annual report for public comment. Community feedback will be incorporated into the draft and a final report submitted to the County of Humboldt Board of Supervisors for review and approval. The report will then be disseminated electronically and made available in hard copy.

The annual report will help guide policy making, investment decisions in infrastructure, and the pursuit of grants to support desired outcomes. The report will also track and assess the need for improvements in responding to:

- Legislative changes
- Changes in the greater economy
- Industries specific changes
- Technological changes
- Being ready to take advantage of unplanned opportunities when they arise

This CEDS is designed to support efforts that capitalizes on the county’s strengths and opportunities while mitigating, as much as possible, identified weaknesses and threats; a region where mutual support and collaboration between individuals, businesses, agencies and communities is fostered to create a resilient economy and prosperity for all.

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