



September 17, 2020

To CWEDD CEDS Update Committee
From University of Oregon Institute for Policy Research & Engagement (IPRE) Team
SUBJECT ACTION FRAMEWORK UPDATE FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS

The following describes the feedback the UO IPRE team has received on the action framework to date. This includes findings from CEDS Update Meetings, feedback from CWEDD staff, and feedback provided in CEDS Update questionnaires.

- **CEDS actions were not completed.** Zero of the 30 actions listed in the 2015 CEDS were completed. Of the 30 actions, three are in progress, three have stalled, and 24 were never started. Of the 21 resilience strategies proposed in the Resilience Appendix, one was started and 20 were not started on a regional level.
- **The CEDS is our region's primary source of a collective economic vision.** Despite the lack of progress on specific actions since 2015, economic development practitioners and elected officials recognize the CEDS as an important guiding vision for the CWEDD region. While recent events like the COVID-19 Pandemic and wildfire destruction have highlighted vulnerabilities in the CWEDD region that may require new strategies in the CEDS, the primary goals identified in 2015 remain relevant today.
- **Flexible guiding strategies are more useful than specific, prescriptive actions.** Local and regional economic development practitioners are the primary users of the CEDS and use the document primarily when discussing or seeking federal funding. Economic development practitioners are typically familiar with the goals in the CEDS, but rarely interact with the document. While the high-level goals, objectives, and strategies in the 2015 CEDS provide useful vision for the region, the specific actions listed in the 2015 CEDS were mostly ignored. The level of specificity of many CEDS actions was not particularly useful to local and regional economic development practitioners since specific projects flow from their elected officials' priorities, not the CEDS. Unless there is pre-existing momentum around specific actions or a clear leader who can rally buy-in and momentum, it is unrealistic to think that specific CEDS actions will be accomplished in the next five years. It therefore might be more useful to revise the CEDS to emphasize flexible guiding strategies that can be easily adapted by local and regional economic development practitioners to meet the specific needs of their communities. Where possible, the CEDS should also highlight opportunities for regional collaboration.
- **Attach metrics to goals/strategies to allow for clear evaluation of progress.** Rather than measuring progress on the CEDS by actions completed, it may be more productive to attach clear metrics to goals and strategies included in the document. Metrics create a clear target but do not prescribe how to reach that target. This allows flexibility to local and regional economic development practitioners to implement projects appropriate to their contexts, while still working towards the targets identified in the CEDS.

- **The current CEDS Strategic Action Plan and Action Item Forms are cumbersome.** The Strategic Action Plan includes some unnecessary redundancies between objectives, strategies, and actions. The main action plan also doesn't identify leads for actions, making it difficult to quickly understand roles and responsibilities. Simplifying and clarifying the action plan through updated formatting may increase usability. Specific formatting feedback includes:
 - Clearly assign roles and responsibilities to strategies/actions
 - Attach timeframes to strategies
 - Create an action plan format that is visually attractive and easy to interpret

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on feedback, the IPRE team suggests the following changes to the action framework of the CEDS. Some of these factors will be incorporated into the Strategic Action Plan chapter of the CEDS and others will be used within an updated executive summary.

Goals

- Simplify goal statements into broad topic areas
- Include an additional goal focused on resilience (so that the strategies proposed in the Resilience Appendix are incorporated into the main action plan)
- Update the information included under each goal in the Strategic Action Plan chapter to include:
 - How the goal supports economic resilience
 - How the goal supports equity and inclusion
 - Opportunities for regional collaboration
 - Desired outcomes, metrics, or targets for the goal

Strategies

- Merge the objective, strategy, and action statements into a concise strategy statement that can guide regional goals and be applicable to different localities within the region
- Include specific suggestions for how to accomplish the strategies, but do not frame these suggestions as required actions, merely ideas that can be adapted to meet the region's needs

General Formatting

- Incorporate call-out boxes to draw attention to important elements or quick references
- Incorporate a Gantt style chart as a timeline, including important milestones

EXAMPLE REVISION OF GOAL 2

Goal 2: Branding & Business Development

Local and regional businesses are the primary contributors to employment and economic activity. In order to thrive, the region must both support and retain existing businesses and industries. In addition, the region must be prepared to take strategic advantage of new opportunities that have regional economic significance or impact. By creating a culture of entrepreneurship, community members will seek out opportunities to improve their skills, access existing job opportunities, or start their own businesses.

<p>Key Partners</p> <p>[List primary players who will help implement strategies]</p>	<p>Targets</p> <p>[List desired outcomes/metrics for this goal]</p>
<p>Strategies</p> <p><i>What will guide regional economic development?</i></p>	<p>Branding Develop internal (within Cascades West Region) and external branding and marketing plan.</p> <p>Align tourism promotion with regional marketing strategy.</p> <p>Business Development Support the development of existing and new business.</p> <p>Adopt a business development strategy for businesses in target clusters.</p> <p>Encourage businesses to develop, test and implement continuity of operations plans.</p>
<p>Regional Collaboration</p> <p><i>Opportunities for regional collaboration</i></p>	<p>Coalesce efforts around the following industry sections: software/technology, food and beverage, education technology/research, advanced manufacturing, value-added forest products, university-related spinoffs, health, marine, agriculture, bioscience, and natural textiles</p>
<p>Resilience</p> <p><i>How will these strategies build regional resilience?</i></p>	<p>Diversification of industries – encouraging new business growth, particularly growth into new sectors, will help the region weather shocks by ensuring the region does not have “all of its eggs in one basket”</p> <p>Pre-disaster planning for response & continuity – encouraging and supporting the development of continuity of operations plans for businesses will better prepare businesses to withstand shocks</p>
<p>Equity & Inclusion</p> <p><i>How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?</i></p>	<p>Focus support on women- and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color-owned businesses – developing specific programs to support these traditionally disenfranchised groups will build a more equitable demographic distribution in business ownership</p>

Implementation Ideas

How can the strategies be implemented?

Branding

Convene a group of economic developers from across the region to develop the branding and marketing plan

Develop branding materials to share with County and City economic development department that can be easily incorporated into their marketing efforts

Business Development

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

Establish a network of local and regional navigators to help entrepreneurs through permitting and other processes

Increase the availability of educational opportunities to regional businesses interested in international trade on the advantages of exporting their goods and services

Work with Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) to develop low-effort business continuity of operations planning resources

Incentivize investments in business resilience for businesses that have business continuity plans (e.g. reduce business license fees; 1% reduction in property taxes (or other tax) for businesses that have an employee preparedness training program; expedite plan review for hazard retrofit/mitigation projects)

Develop programs specifically targeted to support women- and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color-owned businesses

Timeline

Goal 2: Branding & Business Development	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Target 1					
Target 2					
Target 3					