



Strategic Sonoma

Sonoma County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Report 2 – Target Cluster Report



Prepared for the Sonoma County EDB July 10, 2018



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Executive Summary

Following completion of the 2016 Sonoma-Mendocino CEDS, the Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB) identified a need for a Sonoma County-specific Action Plan. The EDB partnered with the Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board and Santa Rosa Junior College to hire Avalanche Consulting, Inc to assist in developing this Action Plan, titled Strategic Sonoma.

Strategic Sonoma began in June 2017, and midway through Phase 1, the October wildfires occurred. Recognizing the importance of focusing on the immediate needs of county residents and businesses, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors extended the contract with Avalanche Consulting to assist in developing an Economic Recovery Plan. Focused on the first 12 months after the fires, the Economic Recovery Plan is designed as the first year of Strategic Sonoma.

Inclusive Economic Development was a primary theme of the 2016 Sonoma-Mendocino CEDS, and Strategic Sonoma has worked towards inclusion from initiation. Through the planning process, the consulting team spoke directly to nearly 200 individuals representing more than 140 organizations from across the county. Continued efforts towards inclusion will be necessary throughout implementation of Strategic Sonoma. Developing Strategic Sonoma occurred in three phases:

Phase 1 – Competitive Assessment

During this phase, Avalanche Consulting and the EDB engaged with stakeholders throughout Sonoma County to hear their stories; conducted an extensive data and benchmarking analysis; examined national and international trends to monitor; refined the 2016 CEDS SWOT analysis; and developed a prioritized list of strategic issues facing Sonoma County. The following strategic priorities were identified:

- **Housing** - Before the fires, pricing and availability of housing were a top concern in Sonoma County, and after the fires, this has become a crisis. Addressing housing needs is a top strategic economic priority that, if left unaddressed, will constrain future growth and create social and economic instabilities.
- **Workforce & Education** - Sonoma County has an incredibly tight labor market, and employers across industries face challenges hiring new workers. Sonoma County must work to ensure residents have access to the education, skills, and career pathways necessary to provide rewarding careers and support the local economy.
- **Business Diversification** - Sonoma County's economy is more diverse than many realize, but it is still heavily weighted towards tourism. Too much weight towards one sector makes the economy vulnerable to disruption, as seen during the October fires, and continued diversification will be necessary to build resilience.
- **Sustainability** - Natural resources and climate are two of Sonoma County's greatest assets – drawing residents, businesses, and visitors alike. As climate change continues to affect the globe, Sonoma County is positioning itself as a leader in sustainable practices, products, and business development.
- **Transportation** - With its population spread across a diverse geographic landscape, connecting Sonoma County's residents to services, education, and employment centers is a challenge. With intensifying traffic, a rapidly aging population, and many disconnected residents, the County must develop creative transportation solutions.
- **Fire Recovery** - The October 2017 fires made a significant mark on Sonoma County – destroying 5,300 homes, numerous businesses, and impacting thousands of lives. Rebuilding a stronger, better, and more sustainable community will take years of coordinated effort from the public and private sectors.



Executive Summary

Phase 2 – Target Clusters

Phase 2 presented a more detailed Sonoma County industry cluster analysis; recommended target clusters of opportunity for local economic and workforce development; presented profiles of those clusters; and offered an inventory of supportive resources. The following Sonoma County target clusters and niche sectors were identified:

Advanced Technology

- Additive Manufacturing
- Aerospace
- Medical Technology

Healthcare

- Healthcare Providers
- Performance Medicine
- Wellness

Outdoor Products & Craft Goods

- Cycling Products
- Locally-Made Products
- Outdoor Apparel & Equipment

Agriculture & Food

- Agriculture Technology
- Cannabis
- Local Food
- Specialty Food
- Wine & Beverages

Hospitality & Recreation

- Athletic Training
- Creative Arts
- Outdoor Recreation & Environmental Education

Professional Services & IT

- B-Corps & Non-Profits
- Banking & Personal Finance
- Freelancers & Entrepreneurs
- Software / IT

Phase 3 – Strategic Sonoma Action Plan

The Strategic Sonoma Action Plan represents the conclusion of Phase 3 and includes a vision statement, strategic goals, and recommended projects to address Sonoma County's strategic priorities and create a more resilient, vibrant economy. Utilizing a collaborative framework, the Action Plan includes a discussion on implementation, suggests partner organizations to be involved with each goal, and offers metrics to track progress and provide accountability.

The Action Plan is focused on a shared vision for the future that says, **Sonoma County is a resilient, inclusive, and economically diverse community.** Achieving this vision will require Sonoma County partners focus on six goals:

- **Recover from the October 2017 fires.**
- **Build necessary housing.**
- **Educate and support our workforce.**
- **Diversify existing business clusters.**
- **Be a leader in environmentally-sustainable practices.**
- **Improve mobility and access to services.**



Executive Summary

The Strategic Sonoma Action Plan coordinates a range of projects and partners under each goal with related metrics to help track success moving forward. A high level summary of projects is included below and on the following page:

	PROJECTS	METRICS
RECOVERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete debris removal and address environmental health and safety.• Implement capital improvement plans.• Assist local businesses with capital programs and assistance.• Establish a Marketing Task Force.• Align recovery efforts and organizations.• Develop an online portal that provides real time tracking of recovery progress.• Develop an active communication plan around fire recovery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Debris Cleared○ Number of Rebuilt Homes○ Number of Businesses Assisted○ Value of SBA Loans○ Value of HUD Loans○ Capital Investment in Infrastructure
HOUSING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a permanent Sonoma County Employer Housing Council.• Develop local housing bonds to support strategic objectives.• Explore solutions for short-term workforce housing.• Establish a “30K by 2025” communications campaign.• Inventory priority sites for new housing development.• Lobby the State of California to ease state regulatory burdens.• Establish an advisory group that can guide others through development processes.• Update public policies to expedite the development of new housing options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Building Permits○ Housing Units Created○ Retained Working Age Residents○ Population Density
TALENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a Talent Alignment Council.• Establish a construction skills training center.• Create a Sonoma County Cooperative Education Program.• Develop industry sector partnerships around Sonoma County’s target clusters.• Expand the WIB’s Dislocated and Incumbent Worker Training programs.• Expand scholarship offerings and provide support programs for students.• Engage retirees as volunteer mentors, educators, and career coaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Education Attainment Disparities○ Student Testing○ High School Graduation○ Post-Secondary Enrollment○ Post-Secondary Awards○ Students Qualifying for Free Lunch○ Labor Force Participation



Executive Summary

The Strategic Sonoma Action Plan coordinates a range of projects and partners under each goal with related metrics to help track success moving forward. A high level summary of projects is included below and on the following page:

DIVERSIFICATION

PROJECTS

- Create Sonoma County AgTech Innovation and Manufacturing Alliance initiatives.
- Develop an annual, county-wide Business Retention & Expansion report.
- Explore a revolving loan fund focused on specific strategic objectives.
- Proactively market the availability of existing financial resources.
- Explore feasibility of a R&D center for applied technologies in target clusters.
- Facilitate a gap analysis of commercial real estate in Sonoma County.
- Prepare businesses for the future through topics such as adoption of new technologies, utilization of eCommerce tools to sell products online, and upskilling of existing workers to increase productivity.

METRICS

- Target Cluster Employment
- Small Business Startups
- Woman- & Minority-Owned Businesses
- County Average Wage
- Income Disparities
- Exports
- eCommerce Sales
- Capital Investment

SUSTAINABILITY

- Explore developing a public crowdfunding platform for sustainable businesses.
- Develop incentives that encourage environmentally-sustainable building practices.
- Support the “30K by 2025” communications campaign by engaging environmental organizations to proactively engage, listen, and educate the public.
- Continue efforts to convert all government fleets to electric vehicles.
- Meet with research universities to explore opportunities for local field research.
- Begin planning to host a global conference focused on green technologies, practices, and services.
- Work with local employers to develop incentive programs to reduce vehicle usage.

- Water Quality
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Electric Vehicle Adoption
- Renewable Energy Adoption
- Open-Space Preservation
- Environmental-Business Employment

MOBILITY

- Support Access Sonoma Broadband’s efforts to close the digital divide.
- Collaborate with the regional planning organizations to ensure Sonoma County is leveraging regional transportation networks and resources.
- Continue to review and update comprehensive transportation plans and explore creative Last Mile solutions.
- Work with private employers, non-profits, & educators to establish shuttle services.
- Explore public-private partnerships to create affordable transportation solutions.
- Ensure transportation and capital improvement plans include efforts to make transit stops safer and more attractive.

- Commute Times
- Population Served by Public Transit
- Public Transit Ridership
- Hike/Bike Trail Mileage
- Transit-Oriented Development Square Footage
- Infrastructure Capital Investment



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Introduction

Introduction

In 2016, Sonoma and Mendocino Counties formed the Sonoma-Mendocino Economic Development District (SMEDD). Following guidelines from the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA), the two Counties created a multi-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). By forming the SMEDD and developing a CEDS according to EDA guidelines, Sonoma and Mendocino are now eligible for certain programs and resources offered by the Federal government. This collaborative effort was an important step in strategizing for Sonoma County's future.

Following completion of the 2016 Sonoma-Mendocino CEDS, the Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB) identified a need for a Sonoma County-specific Action Plan. This Action Plan is to provide a foundation for making decisions related to economic development in Sonoma County. In partnership with the Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board and Santa Rosa Junior College, the EDB issued a request for proposal for assistance with the strategy. Through a national search and competitive bidding process, the EDB selected Avalanche Consulting, Inc. to assist in developing this Action Plan, titled **Strategic Sonoma**.

Strategic Sonoma builds on the 2016 Sonoma-Mendocino CEDS and expands the analysis of Sonoma County's specific competitive position. Across three reports, Strategic Sonoma includes an assessment of the economic development issues most relevant to Sonoma County; prioritizes needs and new opportunities; evaluates business clusters of opportunity that best match Sonoma County's assets, values, and goals; and provides a five-year collaborative Action Plan tailored specifically to Sonoma County.

Developing Strategic Sonoma occurred in three phases, with each phase concluding with a report of findings.

Phase 1 – Refine and Expand the CEDS and Prioritize Economic Development Issues

During this phase, Avalanche Consulting and the EDB engaged with stakeholders throughout Sonoma County to hear their stories; conducted an extensive data and benchmarking analysis; examined national and international trends to monitor; refined the 2016 CEDS SWOT analysis; and developed a prioritized list of strategic issues facing Sonoma County. The results of this phase are presented in the *Competitive Assessment Report*.

Phase 2 – Evaluate Clusters of Opportunity

Phase 2 presented a more detailed Sonoma County industry cluster analysis; recommended target clusters of opportunity for local economic and workforce development; presented profiles of those clusters; and offered an inventory of supportive resources. Phase 2 findings are available in the *Target Cluster Report*.

Phase 3 – Develop Strategic Sonoma Action Plan

In the final phase of Strategic Sonoma, the consulting team crafted an actionable plan to address strategic priorities. This report, Strategic Sonoma Action Plan, represents the conclusion of Phase 3 and includes a vision statement, strategic goals, and specific recommendations aimed at creating a more resilient, vibrant economy. This Action Plan includes a discussion on implementation, suggests lead and partner organizations to be involved with each goal, and offers metrics to track progress and provide accountability.



Introduction, continued

Strategic Sonoma began in June 2017, and midway through Phase 1, the October wildfires occurred. Recognizing the importance of focusing on the immediate needs of county residents and businesses, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors extended the contract with Avalanche Consulting to assist in developing an Economic Recovery Plan. Focused on the first 12 months after the fires, the Economic Recovery Plan is designed as the first year of Strategic Sonoma. Recommendations in the Plan are seamlessly integrated into this longer-range, five-year Strategic Sonoma Action Plan.



Inclusive Economic Development

Economic development activities in a community are intended to serve the needs of local residents and businesses. To achieve this goal, the strategic planning process must be inclusive and directly listen to the stories of as diverse a group of stakeholders as possible. These Sonoma County voices will play a critical role in identifying their needs and the creative solutions to meet those needs.

Inclusive Economic Development was a primary theme of the 2016 Sonoma-Mendocino CEDS, and Strategic Sonoma has worked towards inclusion from initiation. Avalanche Consulting and the Sonoma County EDB engaged residents and businesses through a variety of avenues – workshops, focus groups, tours, in-person and telephone interviews, surveys, and conversations in every district of Sonoma County. Throughout this process, the team strove to include a broad diversity of perspectives. The strategic planning team could not reach every individual in the county, but Strategic Sonoma emphasizes the importance of inclusion throughout implementation and everyday activities. Planning decisions should be made in an open and transparent manner, and implementation organizations should continue efforts to meet with and include organizations and individuals across Sonoma County – especially among Latinos, disabled, elderly, and other groups not reached in this initial process.

Through the planning process, the consulting team spoke directly to nearly 200 individuals representing more than 140 organizations from across the county, including:

- Access Sonoma Broadband
- Amy's Kitchen
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Sonoma County
- Burbank Housing
- CamelBak
- Cartograph Wines
- Charles Schultz Airport
- City of Cloverdale
- City of Petaluma
- City of Santa Rosa
- Community Action Partnership
- Community Development Commission
- Community Foundation of Sonoma County
- Costeaux French Bakery
- Cotati Chamber of Commerce
- Cowgirl Creamery
- Creative Sonoma
- CTE Foundation
- Exchange Bank
- Go Local Coop
- Goodwill
- Habitat for Humanity
- Healdsburg Chamber
- Healthcare Foundation
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- John Jordan Foundation
- Kaiser Permanente
- Keysight Technologies
- La Luz Center
- Labcon
- North Bay Leadership Council
- North Coast Builders Exchange
- Petaluma Chamber
- Petaluma People Services Center
- Preserve Farm Kitchens
- Redwood Credit Union
- Regional Climate Protection Agency
- Rohnert Park Chamber of Commerce
- Santa Rosa Chamber
- Santa Rosa Junior College
- Santa Rosa Press Democrat
- Sebastopol Chamber
- Sonoma Brands
- Sonoma Clean Power
- Sonoma County Alliance
- Sonoma County Office of Education
- Sonoma County Transportation Authority
- Sonoma County Water Agency
- Sonoma County Wine Growers
- Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board
- Sonoma Land Trust
- Sonoma State University
- Sonoma Valley Chamber
- Sonoma Valley Education Foundation
- Sonoma Valley Small Business Development Center
- Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau
- St. Joseph Health
- Strauss Family Creamery
- Sutter Health
- The Family Coppola
- West County Health Center
- Windsor Chamber
- YMCA



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Ben Stone, Executive Director

Al Lerma, Director of Business Development & Innovation

Ethan Brown, Program Manager, Business Retention & Expansion

Jack Percival, Project Coordinator, Strategic Initiatives

Funding for Strategic Sonoma and critical input also came from the **Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board**, **Santa Rosa Junior College**, and the **Morgan Family Foundation**. The EDB staff and consulting team would like to thank:

Jerry Miller, Senior Dean, Career & Technical Education and Economic Development, Santa Rosa Junior College

Katie Greaves, Director, Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board

And special thanks to members of the Strategic Sonoma Advisory Group, who have given their time and expertise to provide guidance for the strategy. The Advisory Group includes:

- **Brett Martinez** (Strategic Sonoma Co-Chair), Redwood Credit Union
- **Pam Chanter** (Strategic Sonoma Co-Chair), Vantreo Insurance
- **Bill Angeloni**, Tenzing Consulting
- **Blair Kellison**, Traditional Medicinals
- **Brian Elliot**, Fire & Emergency Services Consulting
- **Brian Ling**, Sonoma County Alliance
- **Chris Denny**, The Engine is Red
- **Chris Snyder**, Operating Engineers #3
- **Cindy Gillespie**, Amy's Kitchen
- **Craig Nelson**, Nelson Staffing
- **Cynthia Murray**, North Bay Leadership Council
- **David Guhin**, City of Santa Rosa
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- **Frank Chong**, Santa Rosa Junior College
- **Herman G. Hernandez**, Youth Connections – Community Action Partnership
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- **Karissa Kruse**, Sonoma County Winegrowers
- **Kathy Goodacre**, CTE Foundation
- **Larry Florin**, Burbank Housing
- **Lisa Wittke Schaffner**, John Jordan Foundation
- **Margaret VanVliet**, Community Development Commission
- **Mia Bowler**, Friedemann Goldberg LLP
- **Oscar Chavez**, County of Sonoma – Human Services
- **Patricia Shults**, Sonoma Valley Chamber
- **Patrick Harper**, Keysight Technologies
- **Percey Brandon**, Vintners Inn
- **Rick Toyota**, The Family Coppola
- **Suzanne Smith**, Sonoma County Transportation Authority
- **Tom Scott**, Oliver's Markets



About Avalanche Consulting

Avalanche is the nation's premier economic development strategic planning firm. Avalanche is deeply driven to make a positive impact and seek clients who are equally inspired to energize their economies. Established in 2005, Avalanche and its team have assisted more than 200 communities across the US and abroad. Led by economic development strategist Amy Holloway, Avalanche guides client partners through economic analyses and development strategies—small towns and major metros, entire states, chambers of commerce, community foundations, and regional economic development corporations.

We believe that modern economic development must be holistic, inclusive of every opportunity to make your community a more prosperous place for all residents and businesses. Traditional job attraction strategies cannot be the only area of focus for economic developers today, especially when topics of affordability, social equity, and mobility are top of mind.

Avalanche's support of Strategic Sonoma was led by President Amy Holloway and Vice President Tony DeLisi.

Amy Holloway, President – Amy Holloway is the energetic leader of Avalanche Consulting, Inc., one of the nation's leading economic development strategy firms. Avalanche provides targeted economic development plans, custom research, workforce analyses, and communications platforms for the most dynamic communities in the country. In her 23 years of experience as a consultant, Amy has authored strategies for more than 100 communities across the US and abroad, including the Atlanta Regional Commission, Charleston Regional Development Alliance, Charlotte Regional Partnership and Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, Columbus 2020, Greater Houston Partnership, Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, JAXUSA Partnership, Miami-Dade County's Beacon Council, and Provo City Utah, just to name a few. Amy received BBA and MS degrees in Environmental Economics from Baylor University.

Tony DeLisi, Vice President – Tony DeLisi is Avalanche Consulting's Vice Presidents, where he focuses on workforce and economic development strategies, project management, research, and client support. He is passionate about helping communities build on their competitive strengths to address challenges, inspire innovation, and grow in an inclusive manner. Most recently, he led a workforce strategic for Troup County, GA and comprehensive economic development strategies for Amarillo, TX; Pflugerville, TX; Frisco, TX; and Paducah, KY. He also completed target industry studies for Georgetown, TX and Sandoval County, NM. Tony received a BS in Earth Systems with a focus on Land Management from Stanford University and a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. Before his economic development career, Tony worked on energy infrastructure planning and permitting in California.



Holistic Approach

The practice of economic development continuously evolves along with the overall economy and the needs of communities. Communities must increasingly address more issues with fewer resources. For many communities today, pressing topics include affordability, equity, infrastructure, technology adoption, environmental change, and education. Their broad implications on the economy mean that these interconnected issues are increasingly part of economic development conversations, and subsequently part of economic development strategy.

Strategic Sonoma is an economic development strategy for Sonoma County, but it does not separate itself from these diverse issues. Instead, Strategic Sonoma examines Sonoma County from numerous angles – shining a light on the most pressing issues, assets, and stories and how they influence each other. The *Competitive Assessment* and *Target Cluster Analysis* reports draw from extensive data analysis and stakeholder input to understand these dynamics.

On the surface, Sonoma County is a naturally beautiful, thriving region, but success brings challenges. Affordability, education gaps, equity concerns infrastructure, and other issues present distinct challenges for residents, businesses, and the long-term resiliency of the economy.

Addressing these issues will also require a holistic approach. Although initiated by the Sonoma County EDB, Santa Rosa Junior College, and the Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board, this Action Plan is for the entire community to implement – public sector, private businesses, educators, community-based organizations, and residents.

To be effective, communities must think holistically about the interconnectivity among issues.



Strategic Priorities & Target Clusters

This Action Plan draws from extensive research and stakeholder engagement conducted throughout both Strategic Sonoma and the 2016 Sonoma-Mendocino Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The data and stories uncovered through this process are discussed in detail in previous reports – which form the foundation for recommendations in this Action Plan.

The priority issues identified in Strategic Sonoma's Phase 1 report, *Competitive Assessment*, are:

Fire Recovery

Housing

Workforce & Education

Business Diversification

Sustainability

Transportation

Each issue is addressed in the framework of this Action Plan.

Business Diversification efforts will additionally focus on six target clusters and supportive niche sectors. These target clusters present the greatest opportunities for diversification among existing industries, based on existing local strengths and realistic new investments and programs. The Sonoma County Target Clusters are displayed in the graphic to the right and discussed in detail in the *Target Cluster Report*.

Sonoma County Target Clusters

Advanced
Technology



Agriculture
& Food



Healthcare



Hospitality &
Recreation



Outdoor Products &
Craft Goods



Professional
Services & IT



About this Report

This Action Plan provides an overview of the strategic framework for Strategic Sonoma, a detailed outline of recommended actions and metrics for partner organizations, and a discussion of how to best implement the strategy moving forward. Throughout this report are best practice examples of how similar projects have effectively addressed similar issues in other communities.

The Action Plan is divided into three sections:

Strategic Framework

This section outlines the overall Strategic Sonoma vision and goals based on strategic priorities. It also discusses the collective impact model and how it is utilized to frame the recommendations and implement the Action Plan.

Action Plan

The primary body of this report, the Action Plan provides a detailed explanation of each goal, the metrics used to track progress towards the goal, and the prioritized projects that will help move Sonoma County forward. For each goal, the Action Plan also identifies the lead and partner organizations that could be responsible for implementing recommended projects.

Implementation

The final section describes how to translate this Action Plan into actual, measurable accomplishments. Addressing Sonoma County's priority issues will require aligning the efforts of diverse organizations into a collaborative approach. Ensuring effective implementation will require leadership, accountability, and communication. This section includes practical steps and a timeline for implementation of projects.



02

**Strategic
Framework**

Background: 2016 CEDS Framework

In 2015, Sonoma County and Mendocino County signed a joint powers agreement to create the Sonoma-Mendocino Economic Development District (EDD). The formation of an EDD allowed the counties to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and apply for designation as a federally-funded EDD through the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). This designation allows the district to qualify for funding and assistance programs available from the EDA to support strategic projects. The Sonoma-Mendocino EDD engaged consulting firm Civic Analytics to assist them in developing the Sonoma-Mendocino Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which was completed in November 2016.

The Sonoma-Mendocino CEDS built a clear vision statement for the district – ***Sonoma-Mendocino is a sustainable, inclusive, and diverse economy.***

To support this vision, the CEDS was built around four themes and supportive goals:

Theme – Economic Diversification (Resilience)

- Goal – Expand the non-tourism/real estate share of regional GDP to bolster Sonoma-Mendocino’s resilience to economic downturns.
- Goal – Grow the region’s green economy – renewable energy, clean tech, and related enterprises – to become a national leader in sustainability.

Theme – Human Capital

- Goal – Exceed the U.S. rate of population growth in the primary working age cohort (25-64) to achieve sustainable expansion of the Sonoma-Mendocino labor force.
- Goal – Raise the postsecondary completion rate for the 25-64 age cohort until Sonoma-Mendocino again exceeds the U.S. rate.
- Goal – Close the postsecondary completion gap between Sonoma County and Mendocino County in the age 25-64 cohort.

Theme – Innovation & Entrepreneurship

- Goal – Continue to exceed the U.S. average of the Kauffman Foundation’s core measures of entrepreneurial activity.

Theme – Inclusive Economic Development

- Goal – Reduce the number of economically distressed communities in the region, as defined by EDA investment eligibility criteria.
- Goal – Close the gaps in earnings by race/ethnicity to ensure that all workers can compete for living wage jobs that make housing affordable.
- Achieve parity with U.S. average earnings.

Strategic Sonoma builds on the Sonoma-Mendocino CEDS by diving deeper into each theme to understand specific priorities in Sonoma County and align local organizations and projects in an Action Plan to move the county forward.



Strategic Sonoma Vision

After hearing the stories of Sonoma County residents and businesses and witnessing changing conditions even while this Action Plan was under development, the consulting team updated the Sonoma-Mendocino CEDS vision statement to match Sonoma County while keeping the key themes alive. The Strategic Sonoma vision statement follows:

Sonoma County is a resilient, inclusive, and economically diverse community.

Since the Sonoma-Mendocino CEDs was completed and during the development of Strategic Sonoma, the October 2017 wildfires struck Northern California. The fires were some of the deadliest in California history and destroyed more than 5,300 homes in Sonoma County, disrupted hundreds of businesses, and impacted the lives of countless residents – especially those most economically and socially vulnerable. The fires drew Sonoma County together. Residents and businesses across the county, state, and U.S. generously gave what they could to help those in need and begin the process of rebuilding.

The fires also brought some perennial issues into sharp focus. Particularly, a pre-existing lack of housing to support residents was severely compounded by the significant loss of homes to the fires. In February 2018, Avalanche Consulting assisted the Sonoma County EDB in preparing an Economic Recovery Plan in response to the fires. That Plan focuses on immediate needs to help existing residents and businesses recuperate in Sonoma County. The greatest immediate need remains constructing housing – both rebuilding homes destroyed by the fires and creating enough housing to match additional unmet need. All told, this number totals 30,000 or more housing units. Until this challenge is met, Sonoma County remains at risk of losing residents who cannot find or afford a place to live. In turn, it will be difficult for businesses and other organizations to operate – from manufacturers and growers to nonprofits, hospitals, government agencies, and schools.

Fire recovery and housing are the most immediate priorities for Strategic Sonoma. Without new housing, many residents, especially middle- and lower-income residents, will be forced to leave Sonoma County. Rebuilding during fire recovery offers Sonoma County leaders an opportunity to rethink and restructure how housing and other development takes place. And it must if the county is to meet its goal of 30,000+ new housing units. The City of Santa Rosa's current updates to zoning and development processes, openness to utilizing City-owned downtown sites for multi-family housing, creation of online tools to monitor permitting and construction, and incentives for clean, green building practices is a positive example of how recovery can lead to a more resilient, long-term future.

As Sonoma County leaders continue to address housing and fire recovery, they must also make other community investments that help residents and businesses stay competitive – including more **strategic programs focused on workforce training and development**. Not all residents of Sonoma County have benefitted from its economic growth of recent years. There are significant income, education, and other opportunity gaps among residents, especially between White and Latino residents, that must be addressed. **High quality, equitable, and economically-aligned workforce development and education** are critical to long-term success.



Strategic Sonoma Vision, continued

In addition to creating more potential for residents to attain a quality life in Sonoma County, **Strategic Sonoma also aims to help local businesses thrive** in a changing economy. In fact, Strategic Sonoma's focus is on creating an environment in which residents can attain a high standard of living and local businesses and entrepreneurs have the support they need to succeed. Rather than attracting new businesses into the county, this means ensuring access to resources, making investments in technological advancement, developing R&D partnerships, and providing entrepreneurial support – alongside addressing clear needs such as improving local skills training and infrastructure.

Achieving the Strategic Sonoma vision will require collective action – bringing together public agencies, non-profits, educators, private businesses, and individual residents to work together to achieve specific, measurable goals. **As Sonoma County partners move forward on this journey, communication will be key – listening to residents, telling the Strategic Sonoma story, and holding each other accountable to the shared vision and goals.**



Strategic Sonoma Goals

To achieve the Strategic Sonoma vision, Sonoma County must take care of its residents, support local businesses, and protect the natural environment.

Focusing on the strategic priorities set forth in the *Competitive Assessment* report, this requires action allowing Sonoma County to:

Recover from the October 2017 fires.

Build necessary housing.

Educate and support our workforce.

Diversify existing business clusters.

Be a leader in environmentally-sustainable practices.

Improve mobility and access to services.

The following Action Plan provides a strategic framework that most effectively leverages existing organizations, initiatives, and resources to reach each of these goals.

The Action Plan details specific projects, partnerships, and measures of success to help track implementation and maintain accountability moving forward.



Collective Impact Framework

First described by John Kania and Mark Kramer in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Collective Impact is a framework for addressing complex social and economic issues. The framework provides a comprehensive structure to focus diverse organizations on a shared vision and strategic goals. It is not intended to be rigidly set in stone but instead remain flexible to changing conditions and new opportunities while still holding partners accountable. Collective Impact has five key elements:

1. **Common Agenda** – The participants have a shared vision, clearly defined objectives, and a joint approach to achieving them through agreed upon actions.
2. **Common Progress Measures** – All participants share common and consistently measured metrics of success to ensure alignment and accountability.
3. **Mutually Reinforcing Activities** – Participants agree to a coordinated plan of action with complementary and supportive roles for all.
4. **Communications** – Participants engage in transparent and continuous communication with themselves and the public to build trust and maintain focus.
5. **Backbone Organization** – A lead organization with staff and skills is required to support the entire framework, track progress, coordinate organizations and activities, and report regularly to the community.

Strategic Sonoma is designed to be implemented through a collective impact approach.

It is critical that implementation activities cut across geographic divisions. Also, nimble project teams should be formed to accomplish specific objectives and then disband once the objectives are met. This fluidity will reinforce the collective impact model and allow for a more organic evolution of Strategic Sonoma over time.

Strategic Sonoma must utilize the extensive capabilities of existing partners and jurisdictions and remain aligned through the oversight of a lead accountability organization. More detail on this approach is provided in the Implementation section of this Plan.

SHARED VISION



MEASURABLE RESULTS



Action Plan Summary

The Strategic Sonoma Action Plan coordinates a range of projects and partners. Projects are included under specific goals, but many address more than one goal area – with all working towards the overall vision. The table below summarizes the primary projects and metrics of success for each goal.

	PROJECTS	METRICS	
RECOVERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete debris removal and address environmental health and safety. • Implement capital improvement plans. • Assist local businesses with capital programs and assistance. • Establish a Marketing Task Force. • Align recovery efforts and organizations. • Develop an online portal that provides real time tracking of recovery progress. • Develop an active communication plan around fire recovery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Debris Cleared ○ Number of Rebuilt Homes ○ Number of Businesses Assisted ○ Value of SBA and HUD Loans ○ Insurance Claims Filed & Awarded ○ Capital Investment in Infrastructure ○ Tourism Activity 	
HOUSING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a permanent Sonoma County Employer Housing Council. • Engage in a campaign to vote yes to the proposed \$300 million housing bond. • Explore solutions for short-term workforce housing. • Establish a “30K by 2025” communications campaign. • Inventory priority sites for new housing development. • Lobby the State of California to ease state regulatory burdens. • Establish an advisory group that can guide others through development processes. • Update public policies to expedite the development of new housing options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building Permits ○ Housing Units Created ○ Retained Working Age Residents ○ Population Density 	
TALENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Talent Alignment Council. • Establish a construction skills training center. • Create a Sonoma County Cooperative Education Program. • Develop industry sector partnerships around Sonoma County’s target clusters. • Expand the WIB’s Dislocated and Incumbent Worker Training programs. • Expand scholarship offerings and provide support programs for students. • Engage retirees as volunteer mentors, educators, and career coaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education Attainment Disparities ○ Student Testing ○ High School Graduation ○ Post-Secondary Enrollment ○ Post-Secondary Awards ○ Students Qualifying for Free Lunch ○ Labor Force Participation 	



Action Plan Summary

PROJECTS

DIVERSIFICATION

- Create Sonoma County AgTech Innovation and Manufacturing Alliance initiatives.
- Develop an annual, county-wide Business Retention & Expansion report.
- Explore a revolving loan fund focused on specific strategic objectives.
- Proactively market the availability of existing financial resources.
- Explore feasibility of a R&D center for applied technologies in target clusters.
- Facilitate a gap analysis of commercial real estate in Sonoma County.
- Prepare businesses for the future through topics such as adoption of new technologies, utilization of eCommerce tools to sell products online, and upskilling of existing workers to increase productivity.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Explore developing a public crowdfunding platform for sustainable businesses.
- Develop incentives that encourage environmentally-sustainable building practices.
- Support the “30K by 2025” communications campaign by engaging environmental organizations to proactively engage, listen, and educate the public.
- Continue efforts to convert all government fleets to electric vehicles.
- Meet with research universities to explore opportunities for local field research.
- Begin planning to host a global conference focused on green technologies, practices, and services.
- Work with local employers to develop incentive programs to reduce vehicle usage.

MOBILITY

- Support Access Sonoma Broadband’s efforts to close the digital divide.
- Collaborate with the regional planning organizations to ensure Sonoma County is leveraging regional transportation networks and resources.
- Continue to review and update comprehensive transportation plans and explore creative Last Mile solutions.
- Work with private employers, non-profits, & educators to establish shuttle services.
- Explore public-private partnerships to create affordable transportation solutions.
- Ensure transportation and capital improvement plans include efforts to make transit stops safer and more attractive.

METRICS

- Target Cluster Employment
- Small Business Startups
- Woman- & Minority-Owned Businesses
- County Average Wage
- Income Disparities
- Exports
- eCommerce Sales
- Capital Investment



- Water Quality
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Electric Vehicle Adoption
- Renewable Energy Adoption
- Open-Space Preservation
- Environmental-Business Employment



- Commute Times
- Population Served by Public Transit
- Public Transit Ridership
- Hike/Bike Trail Mileage
- Transit-Oriented Development Square Footage
- Infrastructure Capital Investment



03

Action Plan

Introduction

This section of the report provides a clear Action Plan that aligns with each of Strategic Sonoma's six goals –

Recover from the October 2017 fires.

Build necessary housing.

Educate and support our workforce.

Diversify our business clusters.

Be a leader in environmentally-sustainable practices.

Improve mobility and access to services.

For each goal, the Action Plan includes a vision statement and call to action that explains why the goal is important for Sonoma County. This is followed by a prioritized list of ongoing, proposed, and new projects that will help move the county forward.

The first sidebar list suggests primary measures of success. These are tangible, statistical metrics that should be utilized to track progress towards the goal. Partner organizations should collaboratively set specific goals for each metric and agree to work towards these goals. Regular reporting of metric progress will help collective impact partners and the public understand whether projects are working or need adjustment as well as inspire identification of new projects in the future.

The second list includes a sample of partner organizations responsible for projects that support the goal. Many projects will require multiple organizations to implement, while others will be the sole responsibility of one organization. Successful implementation relies on continuous, transparent communication between these partners and alignment of their efforts to avoid duplication and keep the focus on the vision, goals, and metrics.

Best practice examples from communities that have successfully implemented similar projects are included at the end of each goal. Sonoma County has its own unique circumstances, but best practices offer useful lessons. They should also inspire hope and creativity – demonstrating that seemingly insurmountable challenges can be overcome through collective impact.

The following section of the report includes more detail on how to effectively implement the Action Plan, including discussion of accountability reporting and a timeline for projects.





Goal: Recover from the October 2017 fires.



Goal: Recover from the October 2017 fires.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Debris Cleared
 Number of Rebuilt Homes
 Number of Businesses Assisted
 Value of SBA & HUD Loans
 Insurance Claims Filed & Awarded
 Capital Investment in Infrastructure
 Tourism Activity

COLLECTIVE IMPACT PARTNERS

Joint Ad-Hoc Recovery Task Force
 Sonoma County Office of Recovery & Resiliency
 Sonoma County EDB & Other Departments
 City of Santa Rosa
 North Bay Forward
 North Coast Builders Exchange
 Rebuild North Bay
 Rebuild Sonoma County
 Sonoma County Rises
 Non-Profits

Objective: Through public-private partnerships, Sonoma County businesses and residents emerge from the October 2017 fires with an increased capacity to address persistent local challenges and resilience to face future disruptors.

The Sonoma County Economic Recovery Plan provides a framework to support businesses and residents as they rebound from the fires and recover to a position of even greater long-term strength and resiliency. Sonoma County will continue to face challenges created by the fires for years to come, and organizations focused on recovery cannot take their feet off the gas pedal – this requires a consistent, sustained effort. The short-term (6-12 month) actions described in the Economic Recovery Plan provide a foundation for Strategic Sonoma. This Action Plan recommends continuing these projects and reinforcing their impact through the other goals focused on housing, business diversification, education, and mobility.

PROJECTS

- Complete removing all debris and addressing remaining environmental health and safety concerns related to toxicity and erosion.
- Implement capital improvement plans to repair damaged infrastructure and track progress towards completion of projects.
- Assist local businesses with capital programs and assistance. Track the number and value of loans received from the Small Business Administration and Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grants.
- Establish a Marketing Task Force to synchronize a campaign encouraging residents and non-residents to spend money in Sonoma County. Implement their strategic actions and track progress. Coordinate with tourism organizations to encourage visitors to return to Sonoma County.
- Align recovery efforts and organizations to avoid duplication of programs and maximize resource usage.
- Improve communication of fire recovery progress. Sonoma County should develop an online portal similar to the City of Santa Rosa that provides real time tracking of debris removal, building permitting, and construction progress.
- Develop an active communication plan to share personal recovery stories with the public, raise awareness of resources available to residents and businesses, and encourage new investment.



A photograph of a modern residential building with a courtyard. The building features light-colored horizontal siding and large windows with white frames. A balcony with a metal railing is visible on the upper floor. The courtyard in the foreground has a paved area and a small lawn. The text "Goal: Build necessary housing." is overlaid in a teal color.

Goal: Build necessary housing.

Goal: Build necessary housing.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Building Permits
Housing Units Created
Retained Working Age Residents
Population Density

COLLECTIVE IMPACT PARTNERS

Sonoma County Employer Housing Council
County of Sonoma
City of Cloverdale
City of Cotati
City of Healdsburg
City of Petaluma
City of Rohnert Park
City of Santa Rosa
City of Sebastopol
City of Sonoma
Town of Windsor
Community Development Commission
Burbank Housing
North Coast Builders Exchange
Private Developers & Land Owners
Association of Bay Area Governments
Metropolitan Transportation Commission

Objective: Sonoma County has enough housing to support residents at all income levels and is a model for addressing California's housing crisis.

Before the October 2017 fires, Sonoma County did not have enough housing to support existing residents. Many middle-class and lower-income families are unable to afford housing and live in overcrowded units. The fires destroyed 5,300 homes – making the need for housing even more acute. A Housing and Fiscal Impact Report prepared by Beacon Economics estimated that Sonoma County needs to construct at least 30,000 housing units over the next five years to account for employment growth, fire losses, and overcrowding. This number appears daunting considering only 2,680 units were permitted in Sonoma County between 2011 and 2016, but the entire state of California is estimated to need another 1.8 to 3.5 million new housing units by 2025 to absorb existing demand and population growth. In this context, Sonoma County's housing challenge appears more manageable, if still no easy task. Building sufficient housing in Sonoma County will require coordinated and creative action from the County, all local Cities, the State, developers, construction firms, educators, and residents. If partners are able to mobilize to achieve this ambitious goal, Sonoma County could position itself as a model for addressing this pressing need in other California communities.

PROJECTS

- Establish a permanent Sonoma County Employer Housing Council led by private business leaders and including representatives from every City, the County, non-profits, the North Coast Builders Exchange, and other relevant organizations. The Housing Council will provide a forum for communication and resources. They must work with each City to set specific goals for new housing unit construction over the next five years – ensuring that the goals of all Cities and the County collectively reach the 30,000 necessary units by 2025.
- Continue efforts to pass countywide and city housing bonds to address a variety of housing needs. General obligation bonds can be utilized to support new housing construction in a variety of ways. Other California communities have used similar bonds to invest in infrastructure to support housing, acquire land, incentivize affordable housing, assist with redevelopment, directly develop new housing, and much more. Passing bonds will help the County and Cities receive matching investments from the State of California.
- Explore flexible solutions for short-term workforce housing to accommodate construction workers through the rebuild process – for example, adjusting codes to temporarily allow trailers on and near construction sites.



Goal: Build necessary housing.

PROJECTS (CONTINUED)

- The Housing Council should establish a “30K by 2025” communications campaign. Part of this campaign should be focused on “Building Housing for All,” by educating residents about the urgent need for new housing and showing examples of how new housing could look. Without a robust, proactive communications campaign, reactionary voices can easily shape a narrative of fear (e.g., new housing will change the character of the county and its communities, traffic will be worse, and that the environment will be negatively impacted). These concerns are understandable but must be addressed by consistently telling the positive story – that new housing will allow young people and families to live in the county, that denser development will reduce environmental impacts and protect open space, that transit-oriented development will increase transit ridership and reduce traffic, and that new housing can be beautiful, green, and enhance community character.
 - The communications campaign should include external marketing to home builders and developers across California and the United States. Government can only do so much to address housing needs. Addressing barriers to new development and incentivizing construction that matches strategic goals is a critical step, but local governments cannot build the housing themselves. These policy changes must be combined with efforts to let home builders know about new opportunities within Sonoma County. Marketing development opportunities will help the Housing Council and local governments find private sector partners who share their vision and are capable of building the actual units.
 - The City of Santa Rosa has established a fire recovery website that provides real time updates on debris removal and home rebuilding efforts. The County and other Cities should follow this example and expand the model to provide real-time tracking of on-going housing permitting and construction.
 - As the campaign leader, the Housing Council should provide regular progress reports and communication to the public about the “30k by 2025” goal. These progress reports should benchmark the County and City’s progress towards their specific housing goals within the campaign and overall progress countywide.
 - The Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority, Sonoma Clean Power, Sonoma County Water Agency, Pacific Gas & Electric, and other public and private environmental organizations should meet with the Housing Council, EDB, and local chambers of commerce to discuss Strategic Sonoma and support the communications campaign from an environmental perspective. This support could include public meetings, press releases, op-eds and other media pieces that lead a discussion with Sonoma County residents. Discussions should be inclusive and cover Strategic Sonoma topics – helping educate the public on the necessity of housing construction and business diversification while showing examples of how denser, transit-oriented development and other projects can protect the environment and the character of communities. This communications campaign also presents an opportunity to listen to the concerns of residents and identify new ways of mitigating negative impacts of change.
- The County and each City should conduct an inventory of priority sites for new housing development. These should include underutilized publicly and privately-owned properties. For publicly-owned sites, local governments should explore opportunities for public-private partnerships to construct housing and redevelop in a profitable manner that also addresses strategic goals and maintains community character. For privately owned sites, the Housing Council and local governments should work with land owners and private developers to identify and address barriers to new housing construction. The Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) presents a prime example site, and the County and partners should continue working with the State to explore options to utilize the SDC for multifamily housing, outdoor recreation, and other related purposes.



Goal: Build necessary housing.

PROJECTS (CONTINUED)

- Local leadership and the Housing Council should lobby the State of California to ease state regulatory burdens on new housing construction – including exploring targeted exemptions within the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), condominium insurance laws, and state building codes that limit the use of new construction materials and technology. Lobbying efforts should include representatives from the business community, non-profits, citizen groups, and elected leaders. The state legislature must understand the critical need for new regulations that allow the County and Cities to build necessary housing while continuing to protect the environment and public welfare. The Housing Council should coordinate with Bay Area planning organizations to amplify the power of lobbying efforts and identify resources available to support Sonoma County housing construction efforts.
- Establish an experienced advisory group within the Housing Council that can guide individuals, businesses, and home builders through local development processes. Members of this advisory group would act as volunteer mentors to share their experiences and help others navigate the Sonoma County development landscape. The County and Cities should also produce their own matching guidebooks and websites to clearly explain their development process, share resources, and maintain transparency.
- Review and update public policies in the County and each City to expedite the development of new housing options and ease burdens on construction. Allowing for more Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and reducing ADU fees are ways to create new housing units without new sites. Other efforts to ease the regulatory burden on development include adjusting acreage limits, height limits, permitting fees, and parking requirements. Reduced fees and other easements should be tied to strategic goals such as increased density, inclusion of affordable housing, transit-oriented development, and construction in targeted geographic areas. Cities and the County should explore ways to expand existing building codes to allow for new construction materials, technology, and design standards that reduce construction costs while maintaining environmental and other public safety considerations. Where possible, the County and Cities should create expedited permitting processes for projects that match strategic criteria.
- To address concerns related to mobility, affordability, and aging, new housing plans must encourage inclusion of affordable, workforce, and homeless housing units; mixed-income developments; senior living options; and transit-oriented development. Increased density will have the additional benefit of making transit options more cost effective. To ensure new housing serves all residents, these initiatives should support the Sonoma County Department of Human Services and other organizational efforts to meet with Latinos, seniors, disabled individuals, homeless residents, and other groups that have special needs. Their voices should be heard and perspective integrated into planning processes.
- Protecting open space and the character of Sonoma County and its Cities are important priorities for residents. Addressing these priorities while also constructing necessary housing units will require exploring opportunities for in-fill, redevelopment, reduced acreage limits, increased height limitations in urban cores, and other means of increasing residential density in appropriate locations. By building denser and higher, new housing development will have a smaller footprint and environmental impact.
- Collaborate with the Association of Bay Area Governments and Metropolitan Transportation Commission to ensure Sonoma County fits regional housing plans and can utilize available financial and other resources.



Best Practice – Housing

DOWNTOWN SACRAMENTO PARTNERSHIP – DOWNTOWN HOUSING

Since 2014 the Downtown Sacramento Partnership (DSP) has taken big steps to incentivize greater density of businesses and housing in the downtown area. The DSP is working on several projects to increase housing and local business development downtown. Projects include streamlining the permitting process and exploring ways to ease transportation congestion.

Since 2014 DSP has been leading a program called Calling All Dreamers – a Shark Tank-like competition that has local entrepreneurs submit business plans, and the winners receive a startup business package worth over \$100,000. Many of these entrepreneurs either open a new business or expand an existing business in the downtown area.

In 2015 the Sacramento mayor announced a goal to build 10,000 new housing units in the downtown core by 2025. The City created a number of incentives to encourage this housing, including reduced fees and expedited permitting. Progress is being made on several mixed-use projects and apartment complexes.

In addition to encouraging development, the City of Sacramento is making land development easier by supporting two bills in the California legislature that will keep more money in cities that can be used to develop affordable housing in the urban core. DSP has also taken steps to improve transportation in the downtown area by expanding regional public transportation and putting in a streetcar service in downtown Sacramento that will begin construction in mid-2018.

All of Sacramento's downtown development efforts are being touted under the brand, "Think Downtown," which has been sharing news about Sacramento's downtown improvements and marketing Sacramento as THE place to live in the region.



Best Practice – Housing

TINY HOUSES IN ROCKLEDGE, FL

Rockledge, FL has been identified by the American Tiny House Association as a best practice for zoning laws related to tiny house development. Residents of Rockledge wanted more affordable living options for a range of incomes and asked the City to consider developing a tiny house ordinance. In 2015, the Rockledge City Council unanimously voted to pass zoning for a tiny houses community. The zoning regulations cover aspects of the tiny home such as minimum ceiling height, sleeping space, number of homes per pocket neighborhood, and building standards. These regulations ensure that tiny homes will be as safe and comfortable as their traditional counterparts.

NEW STORY AND ICON – 3D PRINTED HOUSES

At the 2018 South by Southwest Festival, New Story, a non-profit, and Icon, a robotics construction company, unveiled the first structurally-sound 3D printed house. The houses are approximately 800 square feet and cost around \$10,000. The companies hope to bring costs down to near \$4,000 soon. Homes are built in under 24 hours using a custom concrete mix that is as strong as cinderblocks. New Story and Icon hope to begin testing their 3D printed homes in countries like El Salvador and Haiti in the next few years.

NEW MATERIAL MANUFACTURED HOMES

The rising cost of traditional construction materials is compounding affordability issues around the country. Manufactured homes can often be more affordable, but cultural and consumer preferences have made these less attractive to buyers. New materials and manufacturing process, however, are making these homes more attractive, affordable, and customizable. More Americans are being exposed to these options as cities allow them within their zoning, and they like what they see. Manufactured home communities like East Bay in Brentwood, CA are drawing in new residents because the homes are attractive and thousands of dollars less expensive than neighboring communities.



Addressing Homelessness

Communities with limited availability and high cost of housing often face challenges housing all their residents, and Sonoma County is no exception. According to the 2017 Sonoma County Homeless Point-In-Time Census & Survey, there were 2,835 homeless individuals in Sonoma County on one point in time in January. At the time of the census, 35% of these individuals were located in temporary shelter with the remainder living in unsheltered conditions – 32% on the street, 2% in abandoned buildings, 18% in automotive, and 13% in encampments. Among this population, there were 111 homeless families with children.

These numbers are only a snapshot and do not reflect all of families and individuals who experience homelessness in Sonoma County every year. According to the Sonoma County Continuum of Care 10-Year Homeless Action Plan 2014 Update, over 9,700 residents experience homelessness every year – 2% of the county’s population and four times the national rate.

Sonoma County Continuum of Care and their partners have been tackling this challenge for over a decade – collaboratively following their action plan. The 2014 Update identified three key goals and projects to support them: Increase permanent affordable housing to meet the need, Ensure access to integrated health care, and Increase incomes. Additionally in 2015, The Sonoma County Community Development Commission published Building HOMES: A Policy Maker’s Toolbox for Ending Homelessness. The Toolbox provides detailed examples of policies, land use options, incentives, and other government measures to help address homelessness.

Strategic Sonoma encourages continued implementation of the Homeless Action Plan and integration of tools to City and County policies. Strategic Sonoma additionally provides direct support to two key goals – Increasing permanent affordable housing and Increasing incomes. Strategic Sonoma presents a variety of measures to increase the housing stock in Sonoma County and encourages local governments to integrate affordable, workforce, and homeless housing measures throughout the “30k by 2025” efforts. A fundamental goal of all business diversification and all economic development efforts is to create more high-paying local jobs and provide residents with the skills and resources they need to achieve.

It is important to remember that numbers around homelessness do not tell the full story. These discussions focus on individuals and families facing significant challenges – financial insecurity, serious mental illness, substance abuse disorders, disease, domestic violence, and more. This should remind us of the human element to this perennial challenge.





Goal: Educate and support our workforce.



Goal: Educate and support our workforce.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Education Attainment Disparities
 Student Testing
 High School Graduation
 Post-Secondary Enrollment
 Post-Secondary Awards
 Students Qualifying for Free Lunch
 Labor Force Participation

COLLECTIVE IMPACT PARTNERS

Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board
 Sonoma County EDB
 Sonoma County Office of Education
 K-12 Schools
 Santa Rosa Junior College
 Sonoma State University
 Empire College
 Sonoma Corps
 Sonoma County CTE Foundation
 North Coast Builders Exchange
 Private Employers
 North Bay Leadership Council
 North Bay Business Sector Alliance
 Northern California Career Pathways Alliance

Objective: Sonoma County residents have the skills and support they need to find gainful employment across local business clusters.

Finding skilled talent is one of the greatest challenges facing employers in Sonoma County and across the United States. In recent years, Sonoma County's active labor force under 65 years old shrank, making it harder for businesses to find employees. At the same time, employment in the modern economy increasingly requires some form of post-secondary education – whether a certificate, associate degree, bachelor's degree, or professional degree. Currently, many students and adults in Sonoma County lack the skills and accreditation required by local employers. This limits their prospects of finding well-paying career opportunities that allow them to afford living and raising families locally. The education disparities are especially glaring for Sonoma County's Latino residents who make up 26% of the total population and nearly 50% of the children in local schools.

Improving education outcomes for students and re-training adults will be critical to ensure that residents are able to find gainful employment and that employers are able to find workers in the future. If these needs are not addressed, many employers will face even greater challenges maintaining operations. This threat impacts all organizations, including fundamental services like hospitals and schools in addition to manufacturers, agricultural operations, and professional businesses. Until a significant amount of new housing is constructed, attracting new workers to Sonoma County is not an option. Instead, efforts must focus on retraining adult workers, educating students, and providing families with support that allows disengaged residents to reenter the active labor force. In general, Strategic Sonoma partners must also continue supporting and expanding inclusive, county-wide programs focused on STEM, Career and Technical Education, and soft skills development.

PROJECTS

- Establish a Talent Alignment Council that brings together private employers, government bodies, Santa Rosa Junior College, Sonoma State University, and other key organizations to discuss employer workforce needs and better align training programs to match those needs. The Talent Alignment Council would be organized and staffed by the Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and EDB and should meet on a regular basis to check in on training needs and track the success of programs.



Goal: Educate and support our workforce.

PROJECTS (CONTINUED)

- Create a Sonoma County Cooperative Education Program. This co-op program should bring together local high schools, Santa Rosa Junior College, Sonoma State University, Sonoma Corps in partnership with local employers to develop a pipeline of skilled graduates into local firms. Cooperative education programs combine classroom-based learning with practical, structured work experience. Students often alternate between a school term and a term spent working. Students are generally paid while working. At the same time, local employers should work with high schools, Santa Rosa Junior College, and Sonoma State University to expand apprenticeship and internship programs to give students practical experience and raise awareness of local career opportunities.
- The destruction of the October wildfires exacerbated an existing shortage of construction workers, and Sonoma County partners must continue to collaborate and leverage resources to meet the need for workers, support rebuilding efforts, and prepare student and adult residents for rewarding local careers in construction and the trades. Santa Rosa Junior College offers relevant certificate training programs for adults. The WIB received a grant from the California Employment Development Department to help train residents for in-demand construction jobs after the October wildfires. And before the fires, the North Bay Construction Corps (NBCC) was established through a partnership of the North Coast Builders Exchange, CTE Foundation of Sonoma County, Sonoma County Office of Education. The NBCC is a five-month after school training program for high school seniors interested in construction and the trades. These education partners should consider establishing a formal construction skills training center to support their programming.
- The WIB recently convened industry sector partnerships in Manufacturing and Health Care. These partnerships should be refined and additional partnerships created around each of the Sonoma County target clusters. These should be coordinated with the North Bay Business Sector Alliance's efforts to use the SlingShot grant to create more partnerships. These partnerships allow local employers to utilize support services offered by the WIB, EDB, educational institutions, and other non-profits – including talent retention programs, customized employee training, and specialized hiring events. These partnerships can be utilized to strengthen career pathways, better tailor training programs, and provide additional marketing to students regarding high-demand occupations. These efforts will raise awareness of rewarding career pathways made available by certificate programs in addition to two- and four-year degrees. Utilizing sector partnerships, the WIB should conduct a talent alignment analysis study and develop career maps to more easily assist students and their families understand pathways.
- The WIB should continue to expand its Dislocated and Incumbent Worker Training programs. These program leaders should regularly meet with target cluster partnerships to identify specific training needs for existing workers. Monthly job fairs continue to offer opportunities to connect with individuals looking for new opportunities. By increasing marketing for these job fairs, the WIB may be able to reach more dislocated individuals and others no longer actively participating in the labor force. The WIB, EDB, and sector partnerships could consider developing an active outreach program focused on inclusion – upskilling adults to expand their career opportunities and bringing others back into the workforce. The local chambers, Cities, and minority-serving non-profits can provide access and credibility within underserved populations. Many small business lack the time, resources, and knowledge to provide training themselves. Whenever possible, the WIB should work with employers to develop their own internal training capacity and programs.



Goal: Educate and support our workforce.

PROJECTS (CONTINUED)

- Tuition costs continue to rise, but they are only one barrier to individuals receiving necessary education. The costs of transportation, childcare, tools, books, and housing all make it difficult for many individuals to attend school. Community Foundation Sonoma County, 10,000 Degrees Sonoma County, Career Technical Education Scholarship Fund, the Rotary Club of the Valley of the Moon, and many other philanthropic individuals and organizations currently offer scholarships to help Sonoma County students afford tuition. These scholarships offer vital relief for low-income and middle-class students. Where possible, scholarship programs should be expanded and new offerings created to provide a range of support and funding – not only for tuition. For example, through the American’s Job Center of California (AJCC), the WIB offers a variety of services and funding. Additional state, federal, and private philanthropic programs may be leveraged to expand local resources to support students. Recognizing the importance of education, a number of communities across the country have even committed to paying community college tuition for any residents who meet specific criteria.
- Sonoma County has an active retiree population – many of whom have experience as executives, innovators, educators, and more. These retirees are a significant asset to the county. Volunteers could be better utilized as mentors, educators, childcare providers, and career coaches through a new program focused on engaging them and connecting those in need with their services. Think of it like a Thumbtack.com for retirees, for example, but with mentoring, coaching, and other services.



Best Practice – Education

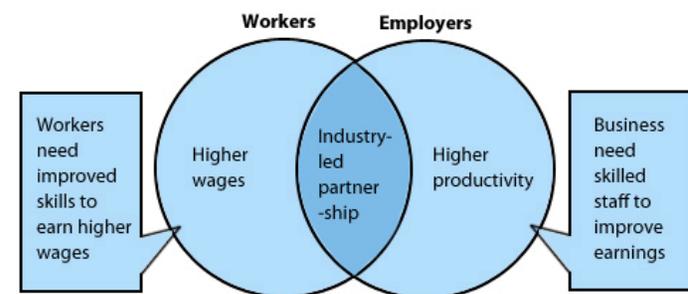
JOB OPPORTUNITY INVESTMENT NETWORK (JOIN), PHILADELPHIA – SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS & TRAINING

JOIN, which stands for Job Opportunity Investment Network, is a Philadelphia-based public-private partnership whose goal is to increase the number of Philadelphians earning family-sustaining wages by investing in industry-supported partnerships that train low-wage workers for high-demand, mid-skilled positions.

JOIN does not connect Philadelphia residents to jobs, but rather invests in workforce partnerships, career pathways, and skills training that will provide residents the training they need to secure employment. JOIN's investment is split into three categories – workforce partnerships (70% of investment), evaluation (10%), and tools & collaboration management (20%). This means that JOIN not only helps create workforce training programs but also evaluates their effectiveness.

JOIN brings in community partners and best practices to ensure they are continuously improving their programs. Besides job training, JOIN has created a program to establish themselves as thought leaders on sector partnerships in Philadelphia through a program called JOIN(T) Action, which is a collaborative network of over 100 community leaders who create and implement best practices for workforce development.

JOIN has been successful for partners, job-seekers, and the community. JOIN has helped over 100 Philadelphia-based employers hire or train workers and has created or improved 13 workforce sector partnerships. JOIN has taught nearly 4,300 low-skilled adults and helped 1,350 low-skilled adults gain degrees or industry-recognized credentials for a Philadelphia target industry. Overall, JOIN has facilitated a 717% return on investment for the community.



Best Practice – Education

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY, MA – COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

As many colleges and universities across the United States explore new ways to connect students with real world experience and better support local employers, Northeastern University in Boston has done exactly that for over one hundred years through its Department of Cooperative Education & Career Development. Through Northeastern's Cooperative Education (Co-op) program, students alternate between classroom studies and full-time work in career-related jobs for six months.

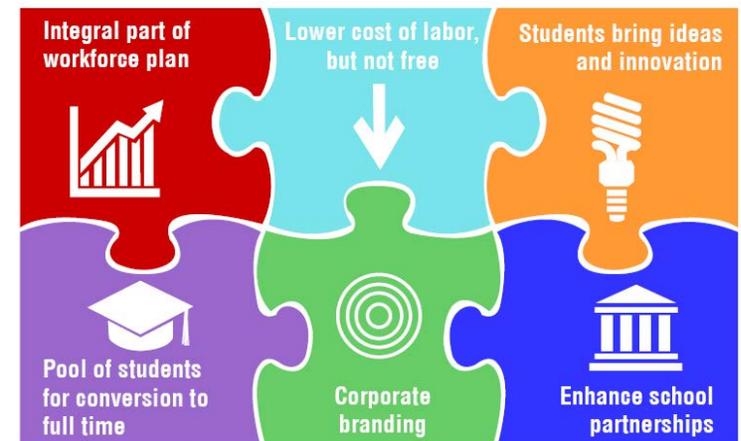
While receiving practical experience and skills, students are also paid by their employers, which allows them to offset their education costs. Employers in turn are able to evaluate potential future employees while getting necessary work done. The system has been tremendously successful in preparing students for careers and finding gainful employment upon graduation while also providing employers with a cost-effective way to find, train, and hire quality new employees.

Before they graduate, approximately 94% of Northeastern students complete at least one six-month co-op assignment. As they continue to learn and explore careers, many students will complete two or three co-ops while attending Northeastern. Students are currently in companies spread across 136 countries. According to the university, upon graduation over 50% of students get job offers from an employer where they spent a six-month co-op and 89% had full-time employment in their desired field within 9 months of graduation.

The success has been noted, and Northeastern continues to receive high rankings for the services it provides to students and employers, and applications for limited freshman spots become more and more competitive.



Why Hire a Co-op Student?



Best Practice – Education

THE TENNESSEE PROMISE – FREE COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR ADULTS

In May 2017, lawmakers in Tennessee approved legislation that would make community college free for all adults starting in the fall semester of 2018. This was an expansion of a preexisting program, the Tennessee Promise, that made tuition and fees free for recent high school graduates pursuing a degree at a Tennessee community college.

Now the Tennessee Promise is also open to all adults without a degree or GED. Students in the Tennessee Promise program must have been a state resident for one year before applying, keep at least a 2.0 GPA, apply for the FAFSA, and enroll in enough classes to be considered a part-time student in order to remain eligible for the program. Community college students in the program will save around \$3,700 each year, and even if they already receive financial assistance, the Tennessee Promise program will cover the rest of their costs.

Expansion of the program was proposed by Governor Bill Haslam and was a major part of his initiative to increase the number of Tennessee residents with college educations to 55% by 2025. When the expansion was announced in 2017, fewer than 39% of Tennessee residents had a college degree.

The Tennessee Promise program will cost around \$10 million each year – funded by money from the state’s lottery. In the first two years of the program, more than 33,000 students benefited, and Tennessee saw its enrollment rate of first time freshmen rise by 30%.

Since implementing free community college for adults in Tennessee, other communities have followed suit. Oregon, San Francisco, New York, and Amarillo, TX have implemented some form of free or reduced cost community college.





Goal: Diversify our business clusters.



Goal: Diversify our business clusters.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Target Cluster Employment
 Small Business Startups
 Woman- & Minority-Owned Businesses
 County Average Wage
 Income Disparities
 Exports
 eCommerce Sales
 Capital Investment

COLLECTIVE IMPACT PARTNERS

Sonoma County EDB
 Local Cities
 Local Chambers of Commerce
 Private Employers
 Napa-Sonoma Small Business Development
 Center
 Local Banks & Credit Unions
 Workforce Investment Board
 Sonoma State University
 Santa Rosa Junior College
 Public & Private California Universities

Objective: Sonoma County's economy is resilient – with support for small businesses, a diverse industry base, and career opportunities for all residents.

Since the recession, Sonoma County employers created jobs faster than the United States and nearly all Strategic Sonoma benchmarks. Growth occurred across industries and revealed strong existing clusters in agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, and hospitality. With unemployment now below 3% and housing unavailable, growing employment will be an increasing challenge for many local employers. To stay competitive in the current environment, businesses must instead focus on growing their operations through innovation, adoption of new technologies, and diversification of their service and product offerings.

Strategic Sonoma identified six target clusters for Sonoma County. These targets include existing business operations and those with potential for increased diversification – taking advantage of new opportunities created by technological advancement, consumer preferences, demographic change, and new legislation. Some of these business clusters will grow naturally, but through collective action, Sonoma County partners can support existing businesses as they adapt to the modern economy and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship.

PROJECTS

- The EDB currently operates initiatives focused on a number of industry clusters like Agriculture, Cannabis, Craft Beverages, Creative Sonoma, Outdoor Recreation, and Specialty Food. The EDB should create at least two additional industry groups to facilitate local businesses as they work to address common issues around workforce, innovation, and adoption of technology. A Sonoma County AgTech Innovation Cluster would be a county-wide, multi-agency program to connect farmers with grants, technology, and other assistance in adopting precision agriculture practices. A Sonoma County Manufacturing Alliance would similarly bring together local manufacturers to pinpoint shared needs and exchange ideas.
- The EDB should continue to conduct regular Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) activities through a systematic approach that meets with local businesses and discusses their operations and needs. Meeting with local businesses should be used to help identify resources to support their needs, celebrate their success, and connect them with strategic initiatives. Local Cities and chambers of commerce that conduct similar BRE meetings should be encouraged to share their reports with the EDB on a regular basis so that the EDB can prepare an annual report on all BRE activity in the county.



Goal: Diversify our business clusters.

PROJECTS (CONTINUED)

- Through the EDB, Napa-Sonoma Small Business Development Center (SBDC), and local banks and credit unions, Sonoma County should continue to facilitate financing and entrepreneurial support programs, including the Sonoma County Impact Loan Fund, Small Business Administration (SBA) loans, and other resources. These partners and local leaders should explore the feasibility of creating a revolving fund focused on specific strategic objectives, such as assisting businesses with purchasing and adopting new technology. Partners should proactively market the availability of financial resources – especially to minorities, women, and disadvantaged groups and geographies.
- The EDB should conduct a feasibility study for a research and development (R&D) center focused on sustainable applied technologies in target clusters. This could be a collaborative R&D center that includes private employers, regional public and private university system researchers, and entrepreneurial leaders. The goal would be to provide a proving ground to test new technologies in areas like AgTech, Outdoor Products, Additive Manufacturing, Healthcare, and more.
- As Sonoma County focuses on critical housing needs, commercial space cannot be forgotten. Local businesses need modern, utility-served warehouse, office, and flex space to expand as they modernize and grow their operations. The EDB should facilitate a gap analysis of commercial real estate in Sonoma County – seeking to develop an inventory of constructed properties and land zoned for commercial use while surveying existing businesses to understand their needs. This analysis would benefit County and City planners as they review comprehensive plans in the future and prioritize certain areas for commercial construction and redevelopment. New commercial corridors should be planned in areas with minimal environmental impact that are near transportation and mixed-income housing to support related goals around mobility.
- The WIB, Sonoma State University, Santa Rosa Junior College, Empire College, and the EDB should work with local businesses to develop programs that prepare businesses for the future. The partners can use the BRE program and surveys to identify specific needs of the business community and develop tailored training sessions that focus on priority topics such as adoption of new technologies, utilization of eCommerce tools to sell products online, and upskilling of existing workers to increase productivity.



Best Practice – Business Diversification

GEORGIA MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP – HELPING COMPANIES EMBRACE AUTOMATION

The Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (GaMEP) is part of Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute and has locations in nine regions across the state. GaMEP is a federally funded organization, making it more cost effective for small manufacturing businesses compared to traditional consulting, and uses resources from Georgia Tech to assist companies.

The purpose of GaMEP is to coach and educate manufacturing companies in order to reduce bottom line costs and increase productivity. Part of their coaching includes helping companies adapt to and embrace automation in the manufacturing industry.

GaMEP has been outspoken about the benefits of automation – pointing out that technology can help ease labor challenges faced by businesses and that as jobs are displaced by automation, new jobs are created. A recent study by Deloitte found that while automation eliminated 800,000 jobs, it created 3,500,000 new positions that paid on average \$13,000 more than those they replaced. The Director of GaMEP recently led a panel at an economic development conference about automation and explained that automation has been instrumental to the growth and success of manufacturing companies in Georgia.

GaMEP helped several companies across the state embrace automation – including Shaw, Helena Industries, and Fondarific. All of these companies are reaping the benefits of automation, including increased revenue, lower labor costs, and a decrease in inventory. Representatives from these companies are being nominated for awards such as the Top 10 Faces of Manufacturing and Georgia Small Business Person of the Year.

Overall, GaMEP is helping combat negative stereotypes about automation in manufacturing, and helping companies become more productive.



GaMEP Director, Karen Fite, moderates the Automation Panel at the 51st Annual Basic Economic Development Course.



Best Practice – Business Diversification

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA – EXPANDING INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

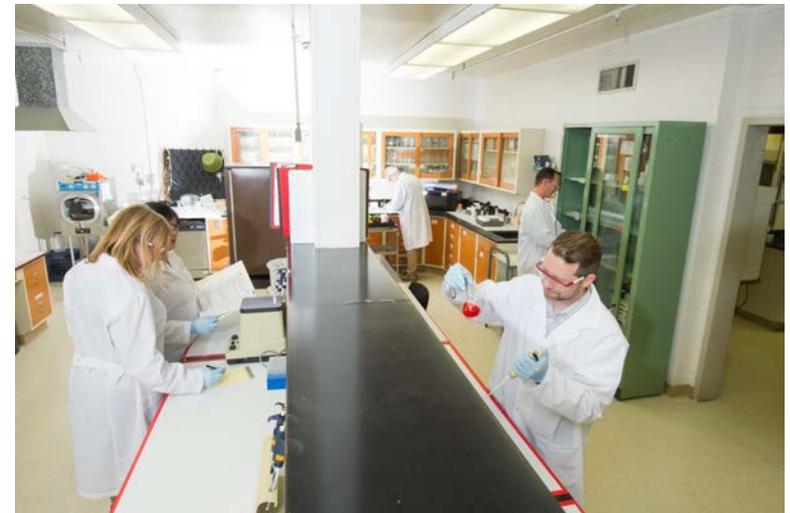
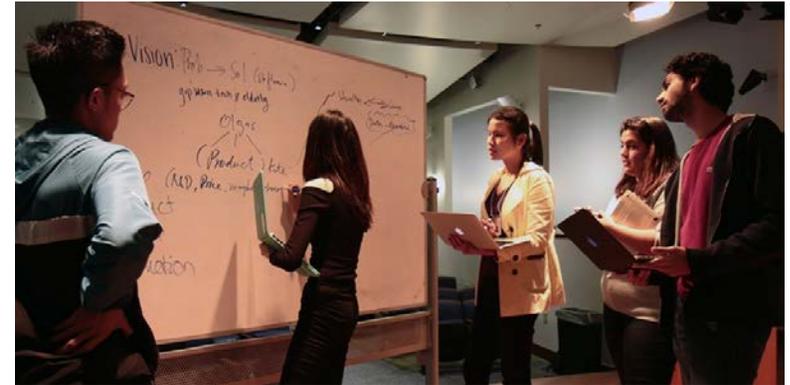
In January 2017, the California legislature passed Assembly Bill 2664, which granted the University of California system a one time award of \$22 million to expand innovation and entrepreneurship among its campuses. Each of the 10 University of California campuses was given \$2.2 million to promote innovation and entrepreneurship throughout their community. Each campus is expected to leverage public-private partnerships in order to use the \$2.2 million in a way that is most beneficial for their community.

The funding is intended to:

- Encourage greater outreach to women, minorities and veterans in entrepreneurship,
- Increase seed and proof-of-concept funding,
- Expand lab and incubator capacity,
- Support deployment of successful programs across multiple campuses,
- Accelerate startup launch and growth,
- And create networking, mentoring, internship, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

The government support that the University of California received was unprecedented and is expected to have economic effects that reach far beyond their campuses.

Allowing each campus to use the funds at their discretion will enable them to address community-specific issues, improve the learning experience of their students, and promote innovation and entrepreneurship across the entire state.



Best Practice – Business Diversification

THE COUNCIL FOR SUPPLIER DIVERSITY, SAN DIEGO – ASSISTANCE FOR MINORITY, WOMEN, AND SERVICE DISABLED BUSINESSES

The Council for Supplier Diversity has a long history of supporting minority, women, and service disabled-owned businesses in San Diego. Founded in 1999, the Council's mission is to use Supplier Diversity Initiatives as an engine for economic development in underrepresented communities, which adds value to the supply chain, increases opportunity for diverse businesses, and reduces poverty. The Council offers Member and Supplier Services.

Member Services are for companies interested in expanding their own diversity programs, and for an annual membership fee the Council assists the company in engaging in more proactive diversity efforts. Supplier services give minority, women, and service disabled business owners access to resources like networking events with potential clients, certification services, and access to the Business Development Center.

The Business Development Center opened in 2012, and includes three main resources – office suites for suppliers in need of office space, professional meeting and training space for suppliers, and professional training and seminars. The Council's main goal is to provide suppliers with opportunities to expand their businesses, and connect them with supportive members who might not have otherwise turned to a minority, women, or service disabled-owned supplier business.

The Council for Supplier Diversity is funded through renting out their office spaces in the Diverse Business Development Center, annual membership fees, and donations. The Council's members include high-profile businesses like the San Diego Zoo Safari Park and San Diego Unified School District.

The San Diego Economic Development Department is also partnering with the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation and Connect, a startup support company, to create Connect All – an accelerator focused on entrepreneurs in low-income and minority neighborhoods left out of the city's recent growth.





Goal: Be a leader in environmentally-sustainable practices.



Goal: Be a leader in environmentally-sustainable practices.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Water Quality
Greenhouse Gas Emissions
Electric Vehicle Adoption
Renewable Energy Adoption
Open-Space Preservation
Environmental-Business Employment

COLLECTIVE IMPACT PARTNERS

Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority
Sonoma County Water Agency
Sonoma Clean Power
Pacific Gas & Electric
Sonoma County Climate Action
Local Cities
Local Chambers of Commerce and Trade Organizations
Sustainable North Bay
Environmental Non-Profits
Russian River Watershed Association
Public & Private California Research Universities
Private Employers
Sustainable Enterprise Conference

Objective: Sonoma County is a global leader in addressing climate change and a recognized center for sustainable practices and businesses.

The natural environment is Sonoma County's greatest asset. The fertile landscape has long made it an agricultural center. Residents and businesses consistently cite the climate and outdoor lifestyle as primary reasons for living and working in Sonoma County, and they have put environmental protection at the core of Sonoma County's cultural identity. For many years, Sonoma County has explored new ways of addressing climate change and being more sustainable through the work of public agencies like the Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority, Sonoma Clean Power, Sonoma County Water Agency, and private organizations like Sonoma County Climate Action and Sustainable North Bay. From its inception, Strategic Sonoma has viewed economic development through an environmental lens. It prioritizes projects that do not harm the natural environment, and it explores ways to leverage Sonoma County's natural environment to create sustainable jobs and practices.

Conservation begins at home. Local communities are able to adopt new technologies and practices more easily than state or national governments. As California and the rest of the world struggle to balance the need for more housing and infrastructure with efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve natural resources, Sonoma County is well-positioned to be a global leader in adopting environmentally-sustainable practices. These practices include building smarter, denser, and greener to preserve open space and reduce impacts, pioneering land stewardship systems that leave forests and watersheds cleaner and less prone to natural disaster, and exploring ways to take cars off the road and convert to electrical vehicle fleets. Many environmentally-sustainable practices have yet to be developed, and Sonoma County must continue to be a leading center for research, innovation, and pioneering of new practices and technology.

Climate change continues to drive unpredictable and extreme weather around the world. Recent years have seen extended drought conditions across California and Sonoma County – which partially contributed to the 2017 wildfires. With growing population, agriculture, business, and recreation demands on limited water resources, it is essential that Sonoma County invest in water infrastructure, management, conservation, storage, and other programs that protect and revitalize water systems.



Goal: Be a leader in environmentally-sustainable practices.

PROJECTS

- Sonoma County should explore developing a public crowdfunding platform for sustainable businesses – following the example of Basque Country, Spain. The County could identify green companies and entrepreneurs within the Strategic Sonoma target clusters and provide them with a public, crowdfunding platform to share their ideas and raise money for their businesses.
- As Sonoma County tackles the housing challenge, the County and Cities should develop incentives that encourage environmentally-sustainable building and energy practices. Fee reductions, expedited permitting, height variances, and other tools could be utilized to encourage zero-net building construction, incentivize the triple bottom line, and encourage implementation of solar and other renewables. These incentives should complement other strategic goals that build denser and greener, such as redevelopment of underutilized properties and transit-oriented development.
- Support the “30K by 2025” communications campaign by aligning environmental organizations to proactively engage, listen, and educate the public around Strategic Sonoma. Show example of how denser, transit-oriented development and other strategic projects can protect the environment and the character of local communities.
- Sonoma County should continue efforts to convert to a fleet of electric vehicles. If possible, this effort should be expanded to all City and government agency vehicle fleets. To facilitate this process and encourage residents to adopt electric vehicles, the County could develop a capital improvement plan to build more charging stations in accessible locations across the county.
- As part of efforts to develop a permanent R&D center for sustainable applied technologies, local businesses, leadership, the EDB, and appropriate public agencies should meet with public and private research universities to explore opportunities to conduct more field research in Sonoma County. Sonoma County’s natural resources and large agricultural sector in close proximity to major urban areas present unique opportunities for research focused on forestry, agriculture, and oceans. R&D activities could be further tied to environmental education programs at the K-12 and post-secondary level. Sonoma County should develop a strong focus on environmental education in local schools and work with more urban Bay Area school systems to bring in students for environmental education programs.
- Host a global conference focused on green technology, practices, and services. This would be an opportunity to convene statewide, national, and global leaders in sustainability while highlighting local businesses, practices, and opportunities.
- Local chambers of commerce and trade groups should work with local employers to develop private incentive programs to reduce vehicle usage. Programs could include subsidized transit passes, carpool bonuses, flexible work hours, and telecommuting.



Best Practice – Sustainability

GEORGETOWN, TEXAS – GREEN ENERGY COMMITMENT

The City of Georgetown, TX, located 35 miles outside of Austin, TX, is leading the nation in renewable energy. Despite being located in Texas, a state known for its oil and gas industry, Georgetown has made a commitment to green energy. In 2015, Georgetown made the decision to power the city with entirely renewable energy sources. In order to accommodate the needs of the city, Georgetown struck deals with SunEdison and EDF Renewables to power the city and is working on creating its own solar farm in West Texas.

Georgetown is already powered by 100% renewable energy and is the largest U.S. city doing so. Republican mayor, Dale Ross, has said that Georgetown adopted renewable energy not only to be sustainable, but also because it made financial sense. He believes in the long run it will be cheaper to power their city through solar and wind energy, rather than rely on the volatile fossil fuels industry.

In addition to less pollution and lower energy costs, Georgetown has received an enormous amount of positive publicity regarding its decision to go green. The Georgetown mayor has appeared in multiple television programs about renewable energy, and the community has been featured in publications like the Guardian, NBC News, Huffington Post, and NPR.

In 2018, the City continued to push its green boundaries. They were one of 35 winners of Bloomberg Philanthropies 2018 Mayors Challenge – receiving \$100,000 to plan and refine a new solar panel initiative.

This initiative mapped each property in the city and cataloged the amount of sun the property received. Georgetown hopes to compensate property owners that allow the City-owned utility install solar panels on the roofs of homes that receive the most sun.



Best Practice – Sustainability

BASQUE COUNTRY, SPAIN – GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED CROWDFUNDING

In the Basque Country of Spain, the government is utilizing a new tool to help startups in the community – a government supported crowdfunding website called Crowdfunding Bizkaia.

Even though many crowdfunding websites already exist, Crowdfunding Bizkaia is the first in the world to be government-led. Involving government offers several perks – like providing investors with more confidence, mitigating risk, and screening candidates for crowdfunding.

Unlike other crowdfunding websites where users submit their own information, at Crowdfunding Bizkaia the government accepts applications and screens potential candidates. The government chooses companies based on several criteria: whether or not they are headquartered in Biscay (or willing to relocate), their financial health, whether or not the company already has investors (they need at least 4-5), and if the company occupies a unique market space.

Companies that are selected for crowdfunding receive other benefits like a year of free business coaching and possibly a government match of their crowdfunding up to €30,000.

Involving the government in crowdfunding is a unique way to minimize risk for investors, encourage entrepreneurship in a community, and show support for local priorities. Crowdfunding Bizkaia currently has 4 startups lined up to receive funding, with 4 more in the pipeline. Crowdfunding Bizkaia hopes to work with 10 – 12 companies each year.





Goal: Improve mobility and access to services.



Goal: Improve mobility and access to services.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Commuter Times
 Population Served by Public Transit
 Public Transit Ridership
 Hike/Bike Trail Mileage
 Transit-Oriented Development Square Footage
 Infrastructure Capital Investment

COLLECTIVE IMPACT PARTNERS

Sonoma County Transit
 Sonoma County Transportation & Public Works
 Santa Rosa CityBus
 Sonoma County Local Cities
 Association of Bay Area Governments
 Metropolitan Transportation Commission
 Educational Institutions
 Private employers
 Ride-share companies

Objective: Sonoma County residents have access to affordable and safe multi-modal transit options within the county and connecting to the Bay Area.

Transportation mobility is a fundamental need – allowing individuals to conduct a range of affairs outside the home, including commuting to work, shopping for groceries, accessing healthcare, attending school, and engaging in leisure activities. Psychological research shows additional links between mobility and well-being. People of all ages face mobility challenges, but younger and older people are often the most disadvantaged due to cost, access, and physical constraints. Addressing these challenges takes a number of forms such as reducing commute times for drivers, improving public transportation options, creating “Last Mile” solutions, and securing broadband internet connections to facilitate access to mobile services. Currently, 93% of employed Sonoma County residents commute to work – many facing long drives across and out of the county. Another 49% of residents are not working but require transportation – including students and retirees. Nearly one-fifth of Sonoma County residents are over 65-years-old. This is the fastest growing cohort in the county, and more than 5% of residents – 5,000 people – over 65 do not have access to a vehicle. These individuals require access to healthcare, shopping, and other many services.

It is important to remember that tackling mobility serves more than just improving commutes and assisting with aging in place. It also reduces the environmental impacts of fossil fuel car traffic and makes Sonoma County more attractive and easier to navigate for visitors - a major economic driver. There are no easy or inexpensive solutions, but Sonoma County must collectively invest in mobility or face ever-growing challenges connecting residents to jobs, education, and services. When focused on mobility, Strategic Sonoma efforts should integrate with existing community health initiatives.

The “Last Mile” is a term used to describe the challenge of getting people from transportation hubs to their final destinations – often their homes, places of work, hospitals, schools, or shopping centers. Bus and train stations are often located far from these locations, making it challenging for people to walk. Instead of utilizing public transit, most will drive cars. Many residents of Sonoma County are spread across a large geographic area, which makes the challenge even more acute. These challenges will not be solved immediately, but will require a variety of investments and approaches over the next five to ten years.



Goal: Improve mobility and access to services.

PROJECTS

- Experts agree that better systems design and land use planning are critical to improving mobility and addressing the Last Mile challenge. Sonoma County and local Cities should continue to review and update their comprehensive transportation plans – identifying populations most in need of transit service and most likely to ride systems, and routing bus systems to better serve these residents. Additionally, future land use plans and development incentives should highly encourage transit-oriented development. New residential, commercial, and healthcare centers should be encouraged to locate close to existing transit systems, such as SMART. Creative Last Mile Solutions often come from the private sector – including bike and scooter share, ride sharing, and other endeavors. The County and Cities must remain flexible and willing to work with transit system entrepreneurs to develop code and planning systems that allow for creative solutions. Additionally, transit-oriented development should include affordable housing and senior living options whenever possible.
- If comprehensive transportation plans identify significant service gaps that cannot be immediately addressed, Sonoma County should work with private employers, non-profits, and educators to fund and establish shuttle services. An important use for shuttles would be connecting low-income residents in underserved geographies to classes at Santa Rosa Junior College and Sonoma State University at convenient times. Connecting senior residents to essential services would be another priority role for shuttles.
- Sonoma County and local Cities should continue to build bicycle lanes, improve sidewalks, and expand trail systems to connect to transit stations – making it safer and more convenient to walk and bike. Bike sharing systems are an increasingly popular way to encourage people to get out of their cars and would benefit residents and visitors.
- Ride sharing services offer another option to provide Last Mile transportation at little to no public cost – while also employing residents. When Uber and Lyft recently left Austin, Texas, RideAustin was created. RideAustin is a non-profit ride sharing organization focused on providing a valuable service to residents, empowering drivers, and increasing safety. Sonoma County could explore establishing a similar program to meet the public need for additional transportation. In general, Sonoma County should explore public-private partnerships (P3s) to create affordable transportation solutions. If well established, P3s can shift the cost burden away from the public, encourage creative entrepreneurial ideas, and protect public interests.
- Embracing new technologies may also present solutions to the Last Mile. Many experts predict that autonomous vehicles will solve public transportation options by providing low-cost, safe car sharing services that can serve a dispersed population. Other communities are exploring "pod" cars and personal rapid transit systems. Elon Musk and other companies are developing practical hyperloop technology. Technology alone will not solve mobility issues, but as new systems are developed, Sonoma County must be open to new options and willing to explore practical technology.
- County and City transportation and capital improvement plans should include efforts to make transit stops safer and more attractive. Local artists and designers could be engaged to produce public art that makes stops more attractive and unique to Sonoma County.
- Access Sonoma Broadband must continue to close the digital divide. Broadband may not initially appear to serve mobility, but technology continues to change how we access services. Increasingly, many individuals are able to telecommute, have groceries delivered, and even receive medical care and monitoring remotely. To ensure all residents are able to participate in the digital economy and use technology to age in place, expanding broadband infrastructure across the county must be a priority.
- Continue to collaborate with the Association of Bay Area Governments and Metropolitan Transportation Commission to ensure Sonoma County is included in and leveraging regional transportation networks and resources.



Best Practice – Mobility

DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS – METRO VISION REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) created the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan (MV RTP) to establish the region's vision for a multimodal transportation system needed to respond to future growth and demographic trends in the Denver region. The plan was adopted in April of 2017 and addresses transportation challenges in Denver with strategies meant to improve the region's multimodal transportation system in the future.

The MV RTP covers roadways, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian travel, aviation, and new transportation technologies (like autonomous vehicles). Part of the challenges identified include environmental concerns related to air and water quality. The plan includes strategies to mitigate potentially negative effects from transportation. Their mitigation strategy includes three main tenets: avoidance of negative environmental effects, minimization of negative effects, and mitigation to alleviate negative effects.

The MV RTP includes strategies meant to sustain the region until 2040. The strategies will be implemented by DRCOG and key community partners, including the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Regional Transportation District, and local governments.

The Denver Metro saw a pressing need and made significant investments in transportation over the past decade. The resulting transit systems have been regularly hailed as a mobility success story. The MV RTP shows their commitment to continuing to build their network, serve all residents, and protect the natural environment.



Best Practice – Mobility

SILVERRIDE – MOBILITY FOR SENIORS

In 2007, SilverRide was founded in San Francisco to provide mobility options for seniors – enabling them to continue living fulfilling and enriching lives as they age. SilverRide was created to provide seniors with safe, easy-to-access transportation options that would allow them to not only complete every day tasks like go to the grocery store or attend medical appointments, but also attend family events, cultural activities, and recreate.

SilverRide allows seniors to reserve a car with a SilverRide Travel Concierge. A driver in a branded car will arrive to pick up and drive the senior to his or her location. While reserving a ride, seniors are able to specify their needs, so the drivers can assist them despite any physical or cognitive limitations the rider might have. Riders can request one-way, roundtrip, or multi-stop trips.

All of SilverRide’s drivers are background checked, fingerprinted, and drug tested. Riders are charged based on the distance, time of day, and assistance preferences of their ride, and SilverRide offers half-price rides if the driver is more than 15 minutes late.

SilverRide also makes it fun. According to them, their “driver companions are singers, songwriters, inventors, photographers, students, and interesting people who love engaging with seniors.”

SilverRide helps seniors remain mobile even if they no longer have access to a car, are too far away from their destination to walk, or cannot use public transportation. SilverRide ensures that all of its customers are safe and comfortable throughout their ride and, more importantly, helps seniors in San Francisco regain their independence through mobility.

SilverRide™
GET THERE WITH CARE



04

Implementation

Overview

Implementing Strategic Sonoma will require a team effort. **As the strategic planning process was intentionally inclusive, so should the Strategy's implementation.** It is imperative that economic development in Sonoma County be executed in a highly interactive manner. A holistic perspective of the County's economic health, such as the one recommended in this Strategy, includes a broad array of organizations with roles to play. In fact, future economic development in Sonoma County should be viewed in a connected context – **to achieve economic health requires the natural environment, the community fabric, residents, and local businesses to be vitally healthy. "Economic development" for Sonoma County means taking care of Sonoma County first.** The increasing vibrancy of the community will inspire additional investment, energize innovation, and appeal to people who are committed to sustaining a healthy Sonoma County for generations to come.

Today, **the most dynamic economic development initiatives are built on a collective impact approach.** Collective impact brings together a broad diversity of perspectives to work collaboratively on a shared objective. Strategic Sonoma embraces a collective impact approach. Tactics associated with each of Strategic Sonoma's six goals are organized as discrete projects that lend themselves to assembling groups of community stakeholders to accomplish a single objective within a predetermined timeframe. Once the project objective is complete, project teams can disband and members can join other project teams. Through a series of projects supporting each Strategic Sonoma goal, the community will move toward accomplishing its overall vision.

A collective impact project approach also has the flexibility for new projects to form over time that are not specified in this Strategy. As advances are made and new circumstances arise, groups of stakeholders may be inspired to create projects that are not stated in this Strategy but clearly reinforce its goals and vision. These can be encouraged as long as they (1) can directly relate their activity to a goal of Strategic Sonoma and (2) meet the criteria for a collective impact model (see next page for those criteria).

Effectively embracing **this approach requires strong accountability and ongoing, transparent communication.** The EDB should not only provide administrative and organizational support to the project teams, but it should also track and report performance metrics on an ongoing basis. Frequent communication to the community at large and an annual Strategic Sonoma Scorecard is recommended. More details on the concept and examples are provided in the following pages.



Collective Action Essentials

The shared vision is the foundation of Strategic Sonoma:

Sonoma County is a resilient, inclusive, and economically diverse community.

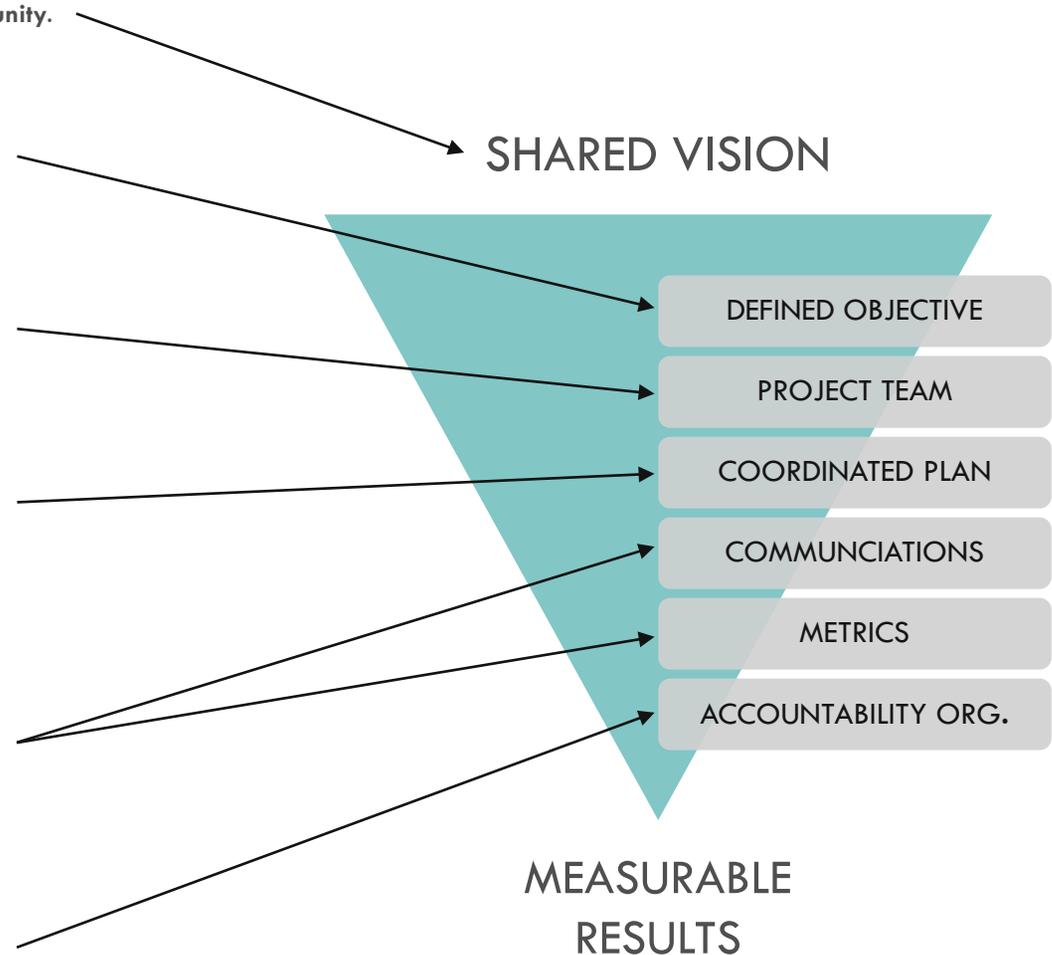
The **defined objective** is a project concept that is described in this Strategy. There are multiple project concepts provided for each goal of Strategic Sonoma. Or, over time, new project concepts with discrete defined objectives may emerge.

Project teams should be formed for each defined objective / project that are inclusive of the array of organizations with strong interest in the objective being accomplished.

As teams form, their first responsibility will be to create a **coordinated project plan**, including milestones and task assignments. Project plans should be realistically accomplished in 12-18 months. Assign project team chairs to lead the task of setting plans.

Metrics are measurable outcomes of activities that advance Sonoma County toward its goals and vision. This Strategy includes metrics for each of the six goals. It is recommended that the accountability organization not only track these metrics, but also **report** them to the entire community through **ongoing public relations and an annual Strategic Sonoma Scorecard**.

The essential foundation of success will be an **organization that is given the stature and resources needed to support and monitor Strategic Sonoma's implementation**. The nature of this accountability organization for Sonoma County is recommended in the following pages.



Leadership & Accountability

Strategic Sonoma's success depends on having an accountability organization that is empowered to support and report on implementation. This entity should be independent in nature so that its perspective is objective and nonpartisan.

Examples

Communities that have embraced a collective impact approach to economic development – Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul and Charleston, South Carolina, for example – have approached accountability in similar, yet scaled, ways. Greater Minneapolis formed The Itasca Project, an entirely volunteer-run, virtual organization that comprises primarily corporate executives from the region. It has no staff and volunteers meet only four to five times a year. Supported administratively by a third-party consultancy and driven by data, members of The Itasca Project establish 3-5 priorities and task forces for each. When they meet as a body, it is to report on the task forces' progress and set new priorities as warranted. The Itasca Project regularly produces progress reports and white papers on their priority topics as well as an annual scorecard, MSP Indicators.

Charleston, South Carolina, completed its "One Region" five-year economic development strategy in 2016. Because One Region includes topics like housing affordability, transportation, and economic inclusion alongside more standard economic development activities, the community rallied behind a collective impact approach to implementation. To oversee and support implementation, the Charleston Regional Development Alliance (CRDA) and partner Metro Charleston Chamber of Commerce invited 12 community leaders representing the priorities of One Region to form a One Region Executive Committee. In addition, they raised funds to hire a full-time One Region Director responsible for supporting the Executive Committee and project teams. The Executive Committee establishes annual priority projects, draws in volunteers to serve on project teams, and meets regularly to report progress. The One Region Director provides hands-on assistance to project teams and services as a One Region liaison and communicator with the broader community. The CRDA, a public-private organization, and Chamber also produce an annual scorecard report benchmarking the region's performance against others', and they widely distribute the scorecard at an annual event and online.

Recommended Accountability Structure for Strategic Sonoma

We recommend that Sonoma County follow guidance from the best practices mentioned above.

- Form a **Strategic Sonoma Executive Committee** comprising two private sector co-chairs and one community leader representing each of the Strategic Sonoma goals.
- Raise funding to pay for a **support staff** or seek a donated staff to assist with **hands-on coordination, metrics tracking, and communication**. This could be a single person responsible for everything, or a part-time person plus an outsourced communications agency. As needed, seek sponsors to fund specific Strategic Sonoma initiatives.
- Establish the **Economic Development Board** as the overarching Strategic Sonoma accountability organization responsible for providing staff for applicable initiatives, tracking progress, and coordinating partners.
- Charge the Executive Committee with selecting which projects to activate **each** year (e.g., 2-3 per year), and identifying and inviting volunteers to serve on project teams.
- Establish **bylaws** for the Executive Committee that specify terms of service, governance, the process for selecting projects, and the method for forming project teams.



Communication

In addition to establishing the EDB as the accountability organization – ongoing, transparent communication is essential to successfully implementing Strategic Sonoma. As recommended on the previous page, there should be a dedicated person or outsourced agency responsible for regularly distributing information about Strategic Sonoma to the public at-large. This will entail outreach to the press, social media campaigns, and an annual Strategic Sonoma Scorecard, to name a few.

- To begin, engage a person or agency to lead Strategic Sonoma outbound communications and serve as the liaison for inbound information requests and other inquiries.
- Charge that individual(s) with creating an **annual Strategic Sonoma communications plan**. The communications plan should include an array of channels to ensure broad access to information by all residents, for example: proactive press relations, social media campaigns, a Strategic Sonoma website, speaking events and presentations, participation in local events, and printed materials placed in public spaces such as libraries and community centers.
- **Refresh the Strategic Sonoma logo and project website** to better serve long-term implementation.
- Consider inviting people to serve as **Strategic Sonoma ambassadors** to help share information (and enthusiasm) about the strategy. Ambassadors should be armed with talking points and a brief Strategic Sonoma presentation that they can use to spread the news among their own networks.
- Produce an **annual Strategic Sonoma Scorecard** in which metrics for each goal are indexed and benchmarked against a handful of other communities, the state, and the U.S. The Scorecard can be a printed publication and/or an interactive, online dashboard. It should be widely distributed to the public at-large through, for example, an annual community event, the local media, a dedicated Strategic Sonoma / dashboard website, and partners' websites.
- If needed, engage a third party firm to create the index and benchmarks for the annual Strategic Sonoma Scorecard. Ask that firm to analyze data and produce the Strategic Sonoma Scorecard each year and/or maintain a current dashboard website that is updated as new data becomes available.
- Produce content related to Strategic Sonoma in the form of white papers, blog posts, best practice write ups, and research, for example. Distribute this content as it becomes available through partner networks, social media, and traditional media channels.
- **Brand initiatives as “Strategic Sonoma.”** As in the Miami case study (provided in the following pages), make sure that the name Strategic Sonoma is visible and accredited in project team activities and wins related to its strategic goals. If good news or initiatives arise that were not in this strategy but directly support one of its goals, communicate how it relates to Strategic Sonoma. Keep Strategic Sonoma top of mind!



Best Practice – Implementation

THE ITASCA PROJECT – INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Itasca Project is an employer-led civic alliance that focuses on improving the quality of life and economy of the Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul region. The Itasca Project is unique in that it is an entirely volunteer-run, virtual organization. It has no staff and volunteers meet only four to five times per year to discuss priorities and the progress of their task forces.

The volunteers that run the Itasca Project are industry leaders in the area, and CEOs of area companies will often volunteer to lead a task force for the project. Task forces focus on a priority that has been identified by the Itasca Project leader, and they form partnerships with other organizations to accomplish goals related to that priority.

Current priorities include career and college readiness, measuring regional progress, and closing socioeconomic employment gaps. The Itasca Project regularly releases reports about important regional issues and their chosen priorities.

The unique structure of the group and ability to attract industry leaders makes it ideal for providing independent oversight on the region's economy. The Itasca Project encourages collaboration, provides a third party perspective on the economic progress of the region, and holds itself and key partners accountable for enacting change.

ITASCAproject



Best Practice – Implementation

SA2020, SAN ANTONIO – TRACKING METRICS & ACCOUNTABILITY

SA2020 is a nonprofit in San Antonio, Texas, whose goal is to drive progress toward a shared vision of San Antonio by reporting on community indicators, informing and activating the public, and aligning efforts toward the community's goals.

The purpose of the nonprofit is to ask “Where do we want San Antonio to be in 2020?” and continually measure San Antonio's progress in achieving its goals via a variety of economic and social causes.

Much of SA2020's work is data focused – they conduct research and create reports to better understand the San Antonio economy. SA2020's research and data is available to the public in an easy-to-understand and highly visual online data dashboard. Users can select a cause like downtown development, health and fitness, arts and culture, or transportation, and view statistics about that cause. All the statistics are under the header of an aspirational statement about San Antonio like “In 2020, San Antonio residents are among the healthiest in the country” or “In 2020, San Antonio is recognized as a respectful steward of its natural resources and a model for responsible resource management.”

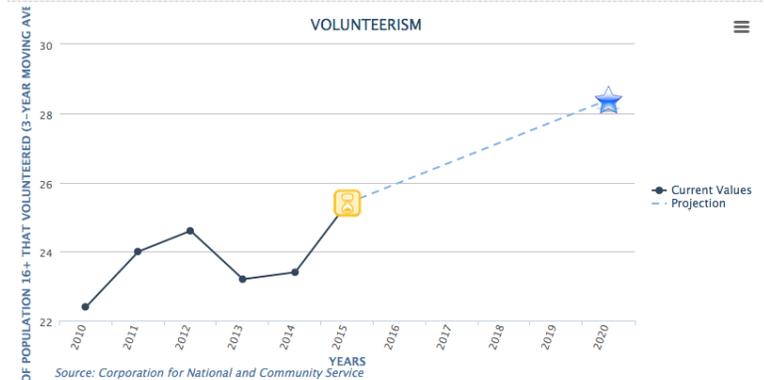
Each dashboard provides several data points that indicate San Antonio's progress in making that aspirational statement become reality, including where they are currently and where they'd like to be in 2020. For example, the Health and Fitness dashboard measures obesity rates, and shows that obesity rates need to decrease to reach their 2020 goal. Each dashboard also explains why each topic is important to San Antonio, and why improvements must be made in that area.

By pairing a community goal with measurable data, SA2020 is keeping the community accountable for striving to reach its goals, and actively measuring positive changes in the community.

SA2020[®]

DATA DASHBOARD

OUR GOAL FOR 2020 IS 28.399999618530273 % OF POPULATION 16+ THAT VOLUNTEERED (3-YEAR MOVING AVERAGE)



Best Practice – Communication

THE BEACON COUNCIL, MIAMI – ONE COMMUNITY ONE GOAL BRANDING

Since its creation in 2012, Miami-Dade County's One Community One Goal (OCOG) economic development strategy has evolved into much more than a strategy. Facilitated by the county's economic development organization, The Beacon Council, and its consulting team, OCOG's development involved more than 6,000 residents.

From the beginning, OCOG was branded and widely communicated as being the community's overarching, go-to vision for all activities related to the county's economy. Even today, OCOG is highly visible in Miami-Dade, and its initiatives include annual OCOG events and awards, OCOG breakfast series, OCOG education partnerships, an OCOG young leaders organization, and monthly OCOG updates in the Beacon Council's newsletter.

OCOG implementation has been especially successful due to widespread community involvement in accomplishing its goals, both in terms of volunteer commitment and financial investment. Prominent community members have volunteered to serve on the One Community One Goal Leadership Team, and the heads of academic institutions from K-12 to post-secondary volunteer to serve on OCOG's Academic Leader's Council.

The Beacon Council has also secured a significant amount of investment for OCOG, and ongoing sponsors include prominent public and private organizations like American Airlines, the Miami Foundation, Wells Fargo, the Knight Foundation, the Miami Community Foundation, and the JP Morgan Chase Foundation. In addition to annual sponsors, the Beacon Council also uses funds from the Beacon Council Foundation to finance OCOG's efforts.

The OCOG buzz is palpable six years after the strategy's completion. It has organically morphed over time to also include new activities that were not part of the original strategy but are highly relevant to achieving OCOG's vision and goals. Last year, for example, more people attended the annual OCOG event than attended in the first year after its launch – a testament to the power of an inclusive initiative with strong ongoing communications and branding.



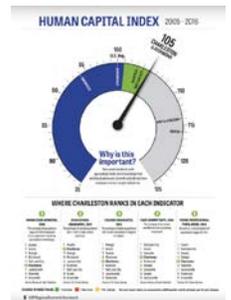
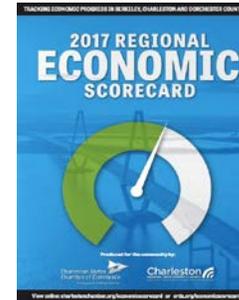
Best Practice – Communication

CHARLESTON METRO CHAMBER & CHARLESTON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE – ANNUAL ECONOMIC FORECAST AND ANNUAL SCORECARD

Every year, the Charleston Metro Chamber releases an Annual Economic Forecast, and has done so for over 25 years. The Economic Forecast is a combination of historical data trends coupled with qualitative analysis by the Economic Outlook Board. It provides a brief summary of economic and demographic trends from the previous year and a forecast of employment and industry trends for the upcoming year. Data is collected by the Chamber's Center for Business Research and Charleston College's School of Business.

The Economic Forecast has been an important tool for the Chamber because it increases transparency of the Chamber's activities and makes information about economic progress easily available to the entire community. The Chamber is better able to understand if they're doing worse, as well, or better than the previous year, which leads them to ask what they can do to improve. The Economic Forecast also holds them accountable for achieving economic goals.

In addition to the Forecast, the Charleston Regional Development Alliance and Metro Chamber partner to produce an annual [Regional Economic Scorecard](#). The Scorecard is based on an index of metrics associated with the region's five-year economic development strategy and includes topics such as human capital, entrepreneurship, quality of place, and equity. The Scorecard report and corresponding event also features highlights from the year – initiatives, rankings, and news – related to the region's strategic priorities. By benchmarking against six competitor regions, the Scorecard also puts the data into context and doesn't shy away from showing regional weaknesses.



Project Timeline & Implementation

The tables on the following pages provide a chronological view of anticipated project implementation. For each project, the tables include a summary of key implementation partners, metrics for success, and a projected start and end year. Most projects will require collaboration among multiple partners, but the first listed partner is the suggested lead organization. Partners and timelines may change as work plans are established and adjusted by partners moving forward.

It is worth noting that all projects are currently expected to initiate in the first three years of Strategic Sonoma. This does not mean there will be no activity in years four and five, but rather, many projects will carry over into the final years of the plan or require ongoing work into the future. This structure also provides flexibility for the Strategic Sonoma Executive Committee to add and adjust projects and metrics as necessary going forward. Strategic Sonoma is also very front loaded, because there are many immediate projects that require attention related to Recovery, Housing, and Talent.



Project Timeline & Implementation

GOAL	DEFINED PROJECT	PROJECT TEAM	SCORECARD METRICS	START	END	STATUS
Recovery	Complete debris removal and address environmental health and safety.	Sonoma County Office of Recovery & Resiliency, City of Santa Rosa	Debris Cleared	2018	2018	
Recovery	Implement capital improvement plans.	Sonoma County Office of Recovery & Resiliency, City of Santa Rosa	Infrastructure Investment, CIP Progress	2018	2020	
Recovery	Assist local businesses with capital programs and assistance.	Sonoma County EDB, City of Santa Rosa, SBDC	Value of SBA Loans, Value of HUD Loans	2018	2019	
Recovery	Establish a Marketing Task Force.	Sonoma County EDB, Sonoma County Tourism, Visitors Bureaus	Visitor Traffic, Retail Spending	2018	2018	
Recovery	Align recovery efforts and organizations.	Sonoma County Office of Recovery & Resiliency, City of Santa Rosa	-	2018	Ongoing	
Recovery	Develop an online portal that provides real time tracking of recovery progress.	County of Sonoma, City of Santa Rosa	Debris Cleared, Number of Rebuilt Homes, Infrastructure Fixed	2018	2018	
Recovery	Develop an active communication plan around fire recovery.	Sonoma County Office of Recovery & Resiliency, "Rebuild" Groups, Non-Profits	All Recovery Metrics	2018	2018	
Housing	Establish a permanent Sonoma County Employer Housing Council.	Sonoma County EDB, CDC, Burbank Housing, City of Santa Rosa	Building Permits, Housing Units Created, Retained Working Age Residents, Population Density	2018	2018	
Housing	Develop County and City housing bonds.	CDC, EDB, Burbank Housing, City of Santa Rosa	Housing Bond Approval & Ongoing Allocation of Funds	2018	2018	
Housing	Explore solutions for short-term workforce housing.	Employer Housing Council, EDB, CDC, County of Sonoma, Cities	Short-Term Housing Units Established	2018	2018	
Housing	Establish a "30K by 2025" communications campaign.	Employer Housing Council, EDB, County of Sonoma, CDC, Burbank Housing, Cities	Building Permits, Housing Units Created, Retained Working Age Residents, Population Density	2018	2018	
Housing	Inventory priority sites for new housing development.	CDC, County of Sonoma, Cities	Number of Sites & Acreage, Mapping	2018	2019	
Talent	Establish a Talent Alignment Council.	Sonoma County EDB & WIB	Post-Secondary Enrollment, Post-Secondary Awards, Labor Force Participation	2018	2018	
Talent	Establish a construction skills training center.	Sonoma County EDB, SRJC, CTE Foundation, North Coast Builders Exchange, Private Employers	Participation Numbers, Degrees Awarded	2018	2019	
Diversification	Create Sonoma County AgTech Innovation and Manufacturing Alliance initiatives.	Sonoma County EDB, Private Employers	Businesses Engaged, Target Cluster Employment, County Average Wage, Exports, Capital Investment	2018	2018	
Sustainability	Develop incentives that encourage environmentally-sustainable building practices.	Sonoma Clean Power, RCP	County Adoption, City Adoption	2018	2019	
Implementation	Form Strategic Sonoma Executive Committee.	Sonoma County EDB	-	2018	2018	
Implementation	Review annual performance, create scorecard, and refresh Strategic Sonoma as needed.	Sonoma County EDB	-	2018	2018	



Project Timeline & Implementation

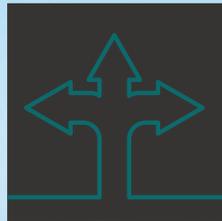
GOAL	DEFINED PROJECT	PROJECT TEAM	SCORECARD METRICS	START	END	STATUS
Housing	Lobby the State of California to ease state regulatory burdens.	Office of Recovery & Resiliency, Rebuild North Bay, Local Chambers & Trade Groups	-	2019	Ongoing	
Housing	Establish an advisory group that can guide others through development processes.	Employer Housing Council, Office of Recovery & Resiliency, CDC, City of Santa Rosa	Participation Numbers, Average Time for Plan Approval & Construction	2019	2019	
Housing	Update public policies to expedite the development of new housing options.	County of Sonoma, Cities, CDC	Number of City & County Agencies Engaged in Process	2019	2020	
Talent	Create a Sonoma County Cooperative Education Program.	Sonoma County EDB, CTE Foundation, SRJC, SSU, SCOE, Santa Rosa City Schools	Student Participation & Success	2019	2019	
Talent	Develop industry sector partnerships around Sonoma County's target clusters.	Sonoma County EDB & WIB	Partnerships Created, Career Maps Established, post-Secondary Enrollment, Post-Secondary Awards	2019	2019	
Talent	Expand the WIB's Dislocated and Incumbent Worker Training programs.	Sonoma County WIB & EDB	Workers Engaged Through Programs, Labor Force Participation	2019	2020	
Talent	Expand scholarship offerings and provide support programs for students.	CTE Foundation, Community Foundation, SRJC, SSU, SCOE, EDB, Private Employers	Scholarships Awarded, Support Programs Created & Awards, Education Attainment Disparities, Student Testing, High School Graduation, Students Qualifying for Free Lunch	2019	Ongoing	
Talent	Engage retirees as volunteer mentors, educators, and career coaches.	Sonoma County EDB, CTE Foundation, Non-Profits	Programs Created, Retirees Engaged, Businesses Assisted	2019	Ongoing	
Diversification	Develop an annual, county-wide Business Retention & Expansion report.	Sonoma County EDB, City of Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa Metro Chamber, Other Cities and Chambers	BRE Visits, Survey Results, Trend Monitoring, County Average Wage, Capital Investment, Sales	2019	2019	
Diversification	Explore a revolving loan fund focused on specific strategic objectives.	Sonoma County EDB, City of Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa Metro Chamber, Other Cities and Chambers	Loan Amounts, Businesses Assisted, Woman- & Minority-Owned Businesses	2019	2021	
Diversification	Proactively market the availability of existing financial resources.	Sonoma County EDB, SBDC, City of Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa Metro Chamber, Other Cities and Chambers	Loan Amounts, Businesses Assisted, Woman- & Minority-Owned Businesses	2019	Ongoing	
Sustainability	Explore developing a public crowdfunding platform for sustainable businesses.	Sonoma County EDB, Sonoma Clean Power, Water Agency	Platform Establishment, Funds Raised, Businesses Assisted, Environmental-Business Employment	2019	2020	
Sustainability	Support the "30K by 2025" communications campaign by engaging environmental organizations to proactively engage, listen, and educate the public.	Sonoma County EDB, CDC, Sonoma Clean Power	Open-Space Preservation, Water Quality, Population Density, Transit-Oriented Development Square Footage	2019	Ongoing	
Sustainability	Continue efforts to convert all government fleets to electric vehicles.	County of Sonoma, Cities, Sonoma Clean Power	Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Electric Vehicle Adoption, Electric Charging Stations Constructed	2019	Ongoing	
Mobility	Support Access Sonoma Broadband's efforts to close the digital divide.	Access Sonoma Broadband, Sonoma County EDB, County of Sonoma, City of Santa Rosa, Other Cities	Share of County Residents with Access to Broadband	2019	Ongoing	
Mobility	Collaborate with the regional planning organizations to ensure Sonoma County is leveraging regional transportation networks and resources.	Sonoma County Transportation Agency	Population Served by Public Transit, Public Transit Ridership	2019	Ongoing	
Implementation	Review annual performance, create scorecard, and refresh Strategic Sonoma as needed.	Sonoma County EDB	-	2019	2019	



Project Timeline & Implementation

GOAL	DEFINED PROJECT	PROJECT TEAM	SCORECARD METRICS	START	END	STATUS
Diversification	Explore feasibility of a R&D center for applied technologies in target clusters.	Sonoma County EDB, SSU	University R&D Expenditures	2020	2022	
Diversification	Facilitate a gap analysis of commercial real estate in Sonoma County.	Sonoma County EDB, Commercial Real Estate Brokers, CDC, Private Landowners	Commercial Real Estate Statistics	2020	2021	
Diversification	Prepare businesses for the future through topics such as adoption of new technologies, utilization of eCommerce tools to sell products online, and upskilling of existing workers to increase productivity.	Sonoma County EDB, NBLC	Training Statistics, eCommerce Sales, Exports	2020	Ongoing	
Sustainability	Meet with research universities to explore opportunities for local field research.	Sonoma County EDB, RCPA, SCTA, Sustainable North Bay	University R&D Expenditures	2020	2022	
Sustainability	Begin planning to host a global conference focused on green technologies, practices, and services.	Sustainable North Bay, SSU, RCPA, Sonoma Clean Power, Water Agency	Conference Attendees	2020	2022	
Sustainability	Work with local employers to develop incentive programs to reduce vehicle usage.	Sonoma Clean Power, RCPA, SCTB	Commute Times, Public Transit Ridership, Greenhouse Gas Emissions	2020	2021	
Mobility	Continue to review and update comprehensive transportation plans and exploring creative Last Mile solutions.	SCTA, SMART Board of Directors	Commute Times, Population Served by Public Transit, Public Transit Ridership, Hike/Bike Trail Mileage, Transit-Oriented Development Square Footage, Infrastructure Capital Investment	2020	Ongoing	
Mobility	Work with private employers, non-profits, & educators to establish shuttle services.	SCTA, SMART	Shuttle Service Ridership	2020	2021	
Mobility	Explore public-private partnerships to create affordable transportation solutions.	SCTA, Cities	Commute Times, Public Transit Ridership	2020	Ongoing	
Mobility	Ensure transportation and capital improvement plans include efforts to make transit stops safer and more attractive.	SCTA, County of Sonoma, Cities	Infrastructure Capital Investment, Public Transit Ridership	2020	Ongoing	
Implementation	Review annual performance, create scorecard, and refresh Strategic Sonoma as needed.	Sonoma County EDB	-	2020	2020	
GOAL	DEFINED PROJECT	PROJECT TEAM	SCORECARD METRICS	START	END	STATUS
Implementation	Review annual performance, create scorecard, and refresh Strategic Sonoma as needed.	Sonoma County EDB	-	2021	2021	
GOAL	DEFINED PROJECT	PROJECT TEAM	SCORECARD METRICS	START	END	STATUS
Implementation	Review annual performance, create scorecard, and refresh Strategic Sonoma as needed.	Sonoma County EDB	-	2022	2022	





STRATEGIC
SONOMA



SANTA ROSA
JUNIOR COLLEGE

SONOMA COUNTY
WORKFORCE
INVESTMENT BOARD

