

# Aligning Strategies to Maximize Impact:

Case Studies on Transportation and Economic Development





## About the NADO Research Foundation

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) is a national membership organization for the national network of over 520 regional development organizations (RDOs) focused on strengthening local governments, communities, and economies through regional strategies, partnerships, and solutions.

Founded in 1988, the NADO Research Foundation is the nonprofit research affiliate of NADO. The NADO Research Foundation identifies, studies, and promotes regional solutions and approaches to improving local prosperity and services through the nationwide network of RDOs. The Research Foundation shares best practices and offers professional development training, analyzes the impact of federal policies and programs on RDOs and their local communities, and examines the latest developments and trends in small metropolitan and rural America. Most importantly, the Research Foundation is helping bridge the communications gap among practitioners, researchers, and policy makers.

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**T**his NADO Research Foundation report highlights case studies where transportation planning efforts are linked with economic development strategies in a regional context.

Projects from regional planning and development organizations (RDOs) across the United States demonstrate how these two fields can complement each other and create an environment for increased collaboration and aligning of resources. Achieving multiple goals with a single project offers significant benefits as budget concerns continue to impact regional planning.

In particular, this report examines transportation planning through the lens of economic development and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), a regional economic development plan. In 2011, the NADO Board of Directors adopted Peer Standards of Excellence for Economic Development Administration (EDA)-designated Economic Development Districts (EDDs). These principles, developed by NADO members, are intended to make the CEDS a more effective tool, beyond a compliance plan needed to access EDA funds. The Standards of Excellence promote a strategic planning and implementation framework that is results-oriented; focused on aligning and leveraging resources; inclusive of public, private, and nonprofit sector leaders; and emphasizes the importance of asset-based regional economic development.

The seven principles of CEDS Standards of Excellence are:

**1 Build resilient regions and capitalize on assets.**

Build more resilient economies and communities by focusing and targeting regional strategies on the existing and potential competitive advantages of each individual region.

**2 Align plans and investments.**

Foster a regional collaborative framework to strategically align public sector investments from federal, state, and local sources, as well as private, nonprofit, and philanthropic partners.

**3 Focus on data and analysis.**

Use modern scenario, data, and analysis tools and planning techniques that provide policy makers, stakeholders, and the public with evidence-based and factual based information.

**4 Link strategies and outcomes.**

Transform the CEDS process into a more strategy-driven planning process focused on regional visioning, priorities setting, and performance outcomes, rather than a broad-based encyclopedia or narrative of the region with a laundry list of random projects and programs.

**5 Increase collaboration among regions.**

Promote and support peer reviews and exchanges of Economic Development District planning professionals and policy officials with the goal of increasing collaboration across EDD boundaries, enhancing organizational resources, and positioning regional CEDS as more effective building blocks for statewide and local strategies.

**6 Adopt a communications strategy.**

Communicate in a compelling and modern communication style, including use of executive summaries, high quality print and online media, and social media.

**7 Collaborate on plans and implementation.**

Engage the public, private, nonprofit and educational sectors, along with the general public, in the development and implementation of the CEDS.

A previous NADO Research Foundation report from April 2009 examined another element of the interaction between transportation and the CEDS. *Role of Transportation Planning in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Process* presented the results of a national scan of EDDs to determine the extent to which transportation is incorporated into the CEDS. *Aligning Strategies to Maximize Impact* provides more detail on collaboration among organizations and implementation of projects that create opportunities for linking transportation investments with economic development objectives.

Although the seven core principles of the Standards of Excellence were created with regard to the development and implementation of the CEDS, they also apply to broader regional planning processes, including transportation planning. As the case studies in this report show, investments in transportation promote numerous other goals outside of mobility, notably economic development efforts. A safe, efficient, and reliable transportation network provides essential infrastructure for a robust regional economy.



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The most recent reauthorization of federal surface transportation funding reflects the increasing recognition of transportation as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21), signed into law in July 2012, emphasizes performance and outcome-based transportation planning that makes progress towards seven national goals, including freight movement and

economic vitality.<sup>1</sup> Performance goals for improving passenger mobility are also embedded in the restructuring of several national programs with increased support for multimodal investments.

This report features 10 case studies on diverse transportation and economic development topics such as freight movement, cluster development, ridesharing, and project prioritization. RDOs in these 11 states are implementing initiatives with regional impact. Each case also includes valuable takeaway lessons that can serve as a resource to others hoping to promote a stronger link between transportation and economic development strategies. Throughout the report, the best practice themes embodied in the CEDS Standards of Excellence are identified where they appear in these case studies as applied to transportation as well as economic development.



*Photo credit: Flickr user marjam*

## Connecting an Economic Region: The Sustainable Knowledge Corridor

### CEDS Standards of Excellence:

- 4 Link strategies and outcomes.
- 5 Increase collaboration among regions.

- > Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Springfield, Massachusetts
- > Other program designations: EDD; Pioneer Valley MPO
- > Service area: 43 municipalities; 1,200 square miles
- > Approximate population: 621,570
- > Capitol Region Council of Governments, Hartford, Connecticut
- > Other program designations: Hartford MPO
- > Service area: 30 municipalities; 800 square miles
- > Approximate population: 750,000
- > Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency, Bristol, Connecticut
- > Other program designations: Central Connecticut MPO
- > Service area: 7 municipalities; 166 square miles
- > Approximate population: 235,878

### Forming a Greater Region

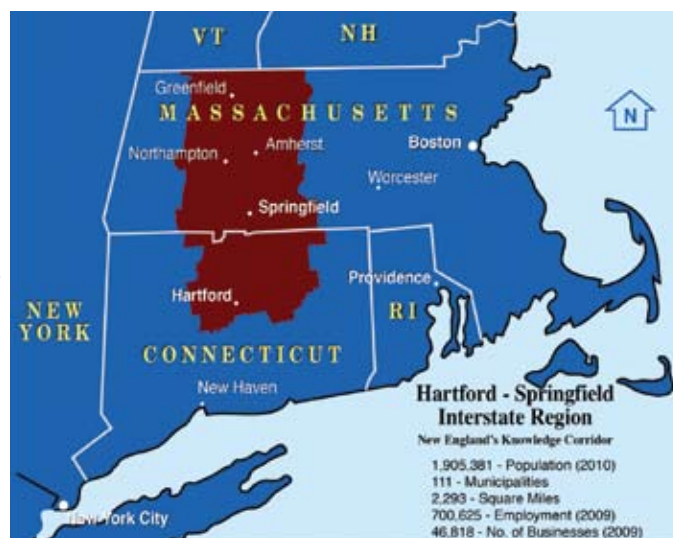
The Sustainable Knowledge Corridor is a partnership between three regional development organizations (RDOs) in the Hartford-Springfield Interstate Region: the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) in Massachusetts, and the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) and the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA) in Connecticut. In addition to sharing assets such as Interstate 91, intercity rail service, and the Connecticut River, the region is home to a significant concentration of educational institutions—34 colleges and universities, both public and private—that have more than 160,000 students.

The Knowledge Corridor began in 1999 when Northeast Utilities, the parent company of several regional utilities, initiated conversations about increasing interstate cooperation. The company convened a steering committee of stakeholders and leaders in the public, private, and civic sectors, with representatives from the three RDOs, private sector economic development groups, and universities. This cooperative effort led to the creation of the Hartford Springfield Economic Partnership (HSEP) in 2000. Northeast Utilities and HSEP guided the initiative through its first decade and continue to promote it with marketing and policy programs that support economic development in the region.

According to PVPC Executive Director Tim Brennan, the Knowledge Corridor dismisses political borders in favor of the economic geography that unites the bi-state region as one unit. “Bigger is better for achieving the critical mass” that facilitates comparisons with other economic regions and maximizes resources, he explains. “We recognized the opportunity to merge two companion metro areas [Hartford and Springfield] to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

### Gaining Traction

In 2011, PVPC and CRCOG applied for and received a \$4.2 million U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Sustainable Communities grant, with CCRPA as a sub-grantee. The dedicated funding helped propel the Knowledge Corridor into action after 10 years of discussions and planning among the founding leaders and groups. The first half of the grant, an 18-month period through the end of 2012, supported updates to the three regional plans to reflect HUD’s livability principles. The final 18 months will focus on developing an integrative action plan to solidify the initiative and implement projects.



Credit: Sustainable Knowledge Corridor.



Brennan referred to the HUD funding as “an opportunity from the public sector side to get content into the corridor and make it more than just a label.” Rather than being destined to a life on the shelf, he emphasized that “the project is about planning, doing, and measuring. We have to demonstrate projects on the ground that support this notion of a connected Knowledge Corridor as a powerhouse in the region.” The strategy calls for translating a lengthy visioning period into projects and programs with measurable results.

### *Connecting the Corridor*

According to CRCOG Executive Director Lyle Wray, the “bottom line [of the Knowledge Corridor] is to leverage transportation improvements after 50 years of little forward motion” without significant investment in the region’s infrastructure. “Transportation upgrades are the driver of the whole project,” he explains. Several rail and bus projects already underway will improve mobility and encourage more sustainable and efficient land use patterns.

*“Transportation upgrades are the driver of the whole project.”*

*– Lyle Wray, CRCOG*

Expanded rail service on the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield line is an integral part of the regional vision for a connected corridor. Additional Amtrak service and new regional trains, funded by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT), will increase the number of trains per day from six to 25 in each direction, linking communities throughout the corridor. The project also has impacts beyond the bi-state region and requires track upgrades to reduce conflicts between freight and passenger rail to accommodate increased service throughout the Northeast. As of 2012, \$161 million of federal funding and \$162 million of state funding have been secured for Phases 1 and 2. The total project cost, including Phase 3, is estimated at \$647 million and service is expected to begin in 2016.<sup>2</sup>

Another investment is in bus rapid transit (BRT) service between Hartford and New Britain, Connecticut. The CTfastrak system will operate on 9.4 miles of dedicated roadway between the two downtowns, looping into employment and shopping centers. The service is expected to reduce congestion on Interstate 84 and serve as the first segment of a regional BRT system, the first in Connecticut.



*A bike trail in Simsbury, CT, in the CRCOG region.*

*Credit: CRCOG*



*Amtrak's Northeast Regional service connects cities in the Knowledge Corridor to destinations throughout the Northeast.*

*Credit: Flickr user tracktwenty-nine.*



*CTfastrak groundbreaking ceremony in July 2012.*

*Credit: Connecticut DOT*

Tim Malone, an associate planner at CCRPA, noted how BRT service will promote downtown revitalization in New Britain, a strategy identified in the region's CEDS. Funding sources for the \$567 million project include the Federal Transit Administration (\$275 million) and the state (\$112 million). Service is expected to begin in 2014.<sup>3</sup>

### *BRT service will promote downtown revitalization in New Britain, a strategy identified in CCRPA's CEDS.*

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is a significant element of the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor. TOD involves creating compact communities around transit stops by putting many daily destinations within walking distance, generally a quarter-to half-mile radius. This kind of development, however, relies on the transportation investments outlined above; "You can't have TOD without the T," says Wray.

The Knowledge Corridor contracted with the Jonathan Rose Companies, a real estate firm based in New York, and the Center for Transit-Oriented Development to study the TOD market potential at 14 existing and proposed bus and rail transit stations. The analysis will identify opportunities for housing and commercial development that take advantage of each location's assets.

Six "catalytic" projects already underway leverage investments in transportation to promote economic development. For example, a rail stop in Holyoke will provide access to the new

Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center expected to open by the end of 2012 on an 8.6-acre former brownfield site. The \$165 million center is a joint project by several universities, including MIT, Harvard, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst, with support from the state and other private sector partners. Another significant investment is the redevelopment of Union Station in Springfield, Massachusetts. "The reintroduction of rail in our urban core cities will help revitalize them as places to work and live," says Brennan, citing nationwide trends moving toward more compact urban centers. The station will serve as one end of the rail corridor between Springfield and New Haven, Connecticut.<sup>4</sup>

### *Engaging Stakeholders: Visioning and Measuring Progress*

The Sustainable Knowledge Corridor uses several tools to communicate with stakeholders throughout the planning and implementation process. MetroQuest, available at [www.skc.metroquest.com](http://www.skc.metroquest.com), is an interactive scenario planning software program that allows users to set priorities for the region and provide feedback. Input received from this outreach effort contributes to visioning and planning—"this is the strategic framework," explains Wray.

The Knowledge Corridor website, [www.sustainableknowledgecorridor.com](http://www.sustainableknowledgecorridor.com), launched a new feature in July 2012. The dashboard tracks various sustainability indicators to show progress towards the established goals. In its earliest form, it provides gauges for 29 indicators in eight areas of environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Users can view the information in different ways, identifying individual communities or examining change over time. Brennan describes the dashboard as a way to "check on the Knowledge Corridor 'weather' and ask 'how are we doing?'"

In addition to providing information to the community, the indicators are important for guiding the plan's policies and implementation. If the performance measures show progress towards a goal, then planners can assume the strategy is working. If the numbers do not show progress, however, "it signals the need for a more assertive effort implementation-wise, or tells us the strategy isn't quite right," says Brennan. Either way, the information contained in the dashboard is a valuable resource for decision makers.





*Examples of indicators from the Knowledge Corridor dashboard as of September 2012: Average Commute Time (above) and Transit Riders (below). Both gauges display the most current annual change for the Knowledge Corridor.*

*Credit: Sustainable Knowledge Corridor.*



The steering committee continues to meet once or twice yearly to share “the state of the region” with interested community members. These regular updates serve as a forum to demonstrate “that the Knowledge Corridor is something that’s real, and that we’re driving substance into it,” Brennan explains. The projects that are underway “galvanize the notion that public sector investments will connect pieces of the Knowledge Corridor in a new geography.”

## TAKEAWAY #1:

**“The new measuring stick is not the high quality of plans”**

Both Wray and Brennan emphasized the importance of following planning with “strategic doing” and showing what is being done on the ground. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is “not always the implementer—often we’re the enabler or helper. But demonstrating results increases our relevance and levels of support,” Brennan says. Especially after such an extended planning and visioning phase over 10 years, moving into action and strategic doing was critical for implementing projects that will meet the region’s goals.

## TAKEAWAY #2:

**“Don’t run away”**

The performance metrics used by the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor show where the initiative has been successful, and perhaps more importantly, where it has not. “They allow us to answer a very simple question: how are we doing?” Brennan says of the metrics. “If we’re not meeting goals, we can’t run away from the process; we know we need to fix something.” Performance measurement is only effective if an organization is willing to be responsive to the feedback it provides. The next step is to address issues that surface and to do so in an effective way.

## Linking Employment Clusters and Ridesharing Options: Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

### CEDS Standards of Excellence:

1 Build resilient regions and capitalize on assets.

6 Adopt a communications strategy.

- > Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, The Dalles, Oregon
- > Service area: 5 counties (two in WA and three in OR); 7,289 square miles
- > Approximate population: 80,708

The Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) joined the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) *Stronger Economies Together* program in 2012 to increase ongoing communication and collaboration as it seeks input for its CEDS. According to MCEDD Executive Director Amanda Hoey, the program's value is in "continual conversation with counties, cities, ports, chambers of commerce, and private industry." Monthly meetings across the region create more engagement between communities and generate new ideas.

The high level of collaboration that contributes to the CEDS is also evident in two of MCEDD's initiatives that link economic development to transportation issues across the largely rural region.

The high level of collaboration that contributes to the CEDS is also evident in two of MCEDD's initiatives that link economic development to transportation issues across the largely rural region. The Rural Cluster Development program identifies and promotes industry clusters, supporting business opportunities and linkages. MCEDD's mobility programs encourage ridesharing and vanpooling by helping employers increase their employees' transportation choices. Although MCEDD administers these two programs separately, there are important connections between them: successful cluster development that brings more employers closer together facilitates ridesharing and the reduction of single occupancy vehicle use.

#### *Rural Cluster Development*

MCEDD defines industry clusters as "groups of companies and/or services and all of the public and private entities on which they depend. These relationships create efficiency and competitiveness."<sup>5</sup> EDA provided the primary funding for the initiative, with support from other local and private sources. The CEDS includes cluster strategies, and USDA Rural Enterprise Grants funded many of the marketing projects.



*The Hood River bridge over the Columbia River connects White Salmon, WA and Hood River, OR. Mt. Hood is in the background.*

*Credit: Flickr user dherrera\_96*





To establish clusters, in 2004 MCEDD analyzed data provided by regional employment offices to identify growing sectors and those already significant in size. The process was also an opportunity to “convene local groups to talk about what would be the value in forming a cluster,” says Hoey. A cluster must have a “private industry champion” to be included in MCEDD’s program. For example, while outdoor ecotourism was growing at the time of the analysis, its medium size and lack of private leadership to help it develop prevented it from receiving official designation and resources.

MCEDD and industry leaders identified five clusters: high tech, value-added agriculture (originally limited to wine), arts and culture, healthcare, and renewable energy. MCEDD staff worked with each cluster to develop five-year strategic work plans to advance associations and their member businesses. Many of the organizations that began with MCEDD support now operate independently. After completing one strategic planning cycle, the five clusters are currently engaged in their second round of planning. Recent cluster projects included a bi-state winegrowers map and support to establish the Gorge Artists Open Studios, an annual event that provides business training for artists.

The high tech cluster was one of the first established and has remained a strong presence in the region. The Gorge Tech Alliance, which now has over 100 members, was a driver in identifying technology as a cluster at the beginning of the initiative and remains an important forum for connecting companies. MCEDD still provides resources to the Alliance with staffing, networking, education, meetings, and workforce development programs. The new five-year work plan carries over some long-term items from the initial plan, such as creating research and development facilities.



*The Gorge Tech Alliance leads a successful cluster in the region.*

*Credit: Gorge Tech Alliance*



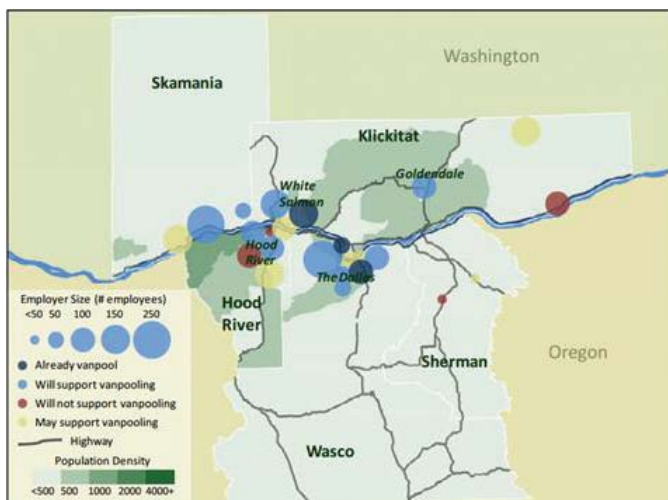
***Value-added agriculture and renewable energy are two of the clusters that MCEDD has developed.***

*Credit: MCEDD*

### *Linking Employment Centers and Clusters*

As MCEDD's mobility manager, Scott Turnoy's goal is to promote an efficient transportation system across the five counties. "As a rural region we're somewhat spread out, which creates significant transportation needs," he says. While the movement of goods is an important component of the system, his focus is on moving people, particularly employees. Ridesharing initiatives increase access between the workforce and worksites by partnering with employers and coordinating public transit providers.

A vanpooling feasibility study completed in June 2011 found a significant potential for vanpooling in the region for a limited percentage of commuters.<sup>6</sup> Results of an employer survey, completed with assistance from the University of Oregon Economic Development Center (an EDA-designated University Center), show a range of attitudes about vanpooling and willingness to support it. To reach his target audience for the initiative, Turnoy works directly with employers to learn about their unique needs and show where they might benefit from coordination with other sites.



*A map from the vanpooling feasibility study illustrates responses to an employer survey and shows the location of employment clusters in the region.*

Credit: MCEDD

The feasibility study recommended starting outreach efforts with the largest clusters of employers because they have more employees travelling to similar locations.<sup>7</sup> The existing industry clusters were an obvious starting point for Turnoy, who says that healthcare and technology employers have been the most receptive to MCEDD's efforts. For example, Turnoy arranged a meeting between Insitu, an unmanned aircraft provider, and CenturyLink, a telecommunications company, to encourage vanpooling at a common facility in Hood River, Oregon.

Maya Hooper, Insitu's senior sustainability coordinator, considers MCEDD a great resource for mobility issues and creating contacts with vanpool providers. Although sharing resources with other employers at the Hood River facility was not feasible for logistical reasons such as work schedules, Insitu promotes its own commuting programs. Approximately 100 of the company's 800 employees in the region take advantage of carpool incentives, and an internal ridesharing board connects employees with similar travel needs.

*Although formal clusters may facilitate networking and communication, ridesharing is increasingly important for other industries in the region.*

Although formal clusters may facilitate networking and communication, ridesharing is increasingly important for other industries in the region. For example, Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort, which has been a leader in providing transportation for its employees (up to 1,000 in the winter season) and visitors, is working with MCEDD to explore new ridesharing tools. According to Executive Director, Resort Operations Woody Hoyer, mobility programs are essential for supporting his industry: "The demand for our recreational facilities is increasing every year. Our resources, such as permit areas and traffic infrastructure, are finite, so we need to look at alternative means of transportation." The resort collaborates with other ski areas to brainstorm and share ideas of how to accommodate more visitors and promote recreational opportunities in the region.



### Public Transit

In addition to partnering with the region's employers, coordinating public transportation is also an important way to promote mobility. The Gorge TransLink Alliance is a partnership among rural transit providers in the same five county area served by MCEDD. Each county maintains its own transit service and participates in ridesharing programs. *Drive Less Connect* in Oregon and *Rideshare Online* in Washington are online tools for arranging trips, allowing employees and others to better connect with each other. The two websites share a user database and the program is currently available to users in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.



*Rideshare Online vehicles equipped to carry bicycles.*

*Credit: Washington State DOT*

A variety of funding sources support MCEDD's mobility initiatives, including local matching funds. The Washington and Oregon Departments of Transportation both administer federal public transportation grants, while ODOT has provided additional funding through the Transportation Options Sponsorship and Transportation Enhancement program. In addition, the National Center on Senior Transportation and Easter Seals Project Action offer grants that support mobility management programs.

### Sustaining Transportation and Investment

MCEDD's Rural Cluster Development and ridesharing initiatives are mutually supportive and contribute to a resilient economy and transportation network. The cluster initiative encourages regional diversification and focuses on Mid-Columbia's existing competitive advantages. Mobility programs promote economic development by providing better access to employment opportunities for the region's workforce of 44,000.

These programs are important for the retention of key industries, explains Hoey, as "many of the large employers have the capacity to go elsewhere." Ridesharing not only builds off of the existing assets identified in the cluster analysis, but connects them to make them stronger and enable their growth and development for a more sustainable region.

#### TAKEAWAY #1: "Maintain a primary point of contact"

*In partnering with employers, Turnoy tries to establish constant contact with a staff member at each site, often one involved with sustainability or employee benefits. He has found that employers are generally more willing to put out the message to their staff if they have an ongoing relationship. The inverse is also true: Hoey finds it helpful to maintain "a primary point of contact [at MCEDD] for the region to ensure continuity and promote the program using different avenues."*

#### TAKEAWAY #2: "Increase communication"

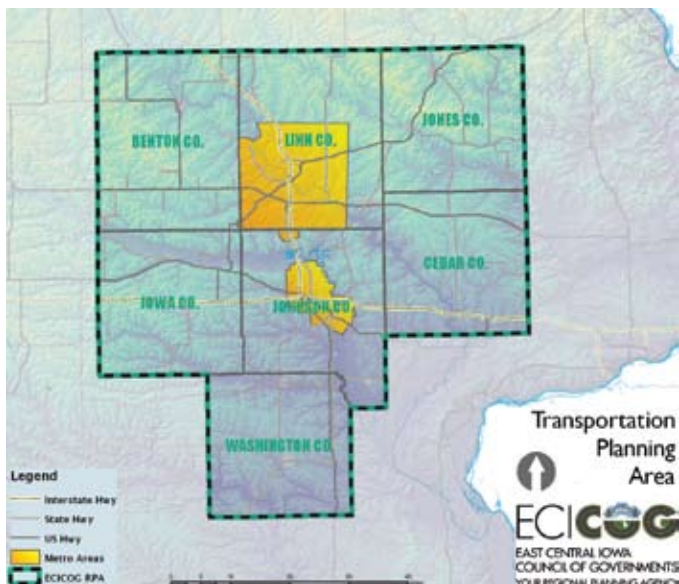
*The cluster and mobility programs, as well as the collaborative CEDS process, reflect Turnoy's belief that "the better communication you can establish among actors in the region, the more success you'll have." Engagement and partnerships are essential for working together in areas with smaller populations, says Turnoy, especially for generating new ideas.*

## Merging Transportation and Economic Development Plans: East Central Iowa Council of Governments

### CEDS Standards of Excellence:

- 2 Align plans and investments.
- 6 Adopt a communications strategy.

- > East Central Iowa Council of Governments, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- > Other program designations: EDD; Region 10 Regional Planning Affiliation (RPA)
- > Service area: 6 counties in EDD, 7 in RPA; 4,400 square miles (RPA)
- > Approximate population: 445,000 (RPA)
- > Note: 2 independent MPOs in region, Corridor MPO in Cedar Rapids and MPO of Johnson County in Iowa City



*The ECICOG/Region 10 Regional Planning Association service area. The EDD boundaries do not include Cedar County, but it was included in the CRDS.*

Credit: ECICOG

Following heavy flooding in 2008 and a period of population growth, the East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG) embarked on a new planning initiative in 2010. ECICOG combined its CEDS with the Region 10 Regional Planning Affiliation's (RPA) Rural Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) into a Comprehensive Regional Development Strategy (CRDS). The CRDS, notable for its outreach efforts and the active involvement of the private sector, helped form new relationships in the region and revealed new opportunities for aligning resources.

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### Renewed Regionalism

Prior to the collaborative effort of the CRDS, ECICOG was already accustomed to working with other agencies in the region. In an unusual arrangement for Iowa, ECICOG's service area also contains two externally-staffed metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). The overlap "requires us to ensure that we take steps to communicate more than in an area where the situation doesn't exist," says Mary Rump, ECICOG's transportation director. "Because we're in different policy bodies, coordination is both essential and more challenging."

The ECICOG region is also unique as the only region in Iowa that gained population in all of its counties from 2000 to 2010.<sup>8</sup> According to Hilary Copeland, geographic information systems (GIS) specialist and transportation planner, this growth helped to generate more interest in planning and a regional identity than in regions that did not experience growth. "It gave the region a more cohesive feel, that we're all growing together," she explains.

Severe flooding in June 2008 caused damage across eastern Iowa, concentrated in ECICOG's three most populous areas. Although the recovery process temporarily hampered regionalism as communities focused on local issues, it also raised awareness of ECICOG's status as an EDD and the availability of EDA funding. EDA assisted many flood-stricken jurisdictions that previously had little knowledge of the agency or its resources.





***Cedar Rapids during the 2008 flood.***

*Credit: Flickr user CR Artist.*

With a new recognition of the EDD and its funding, it was “an opportune time to engage the conversation” about collaborative planning, says ECICOG Executive Director Doug Elliott. “The timing was such that people were far enough in the recovery process to be willing to start looking at regionalism again.” This increased interest in cooperation, along with the region’s growth, led ECICOG to make a strategic decision to update its CEDS two years ahead of schedule and combine it with the LRTP.

### ***Private Partnerships***

The timing was also ideal for ECICOG to strengthen its relationship with the Corridor Business Alliance (CBA), a membership association concentrated in Iowa City and Cedar Rapids that supports business growth and workforce development. Dee Baird, now the President and CEO of the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, was a foundational leader for the CBA. Like Elliott, she also cited an increase in interest among the business community in working regionally following the floods, and the CBA began meeting in 2009.

One of the CBA’s early objectives was to complete its own regional economic development plan. Realizing the need for funding and public involvement and aware of ECICOG’s CEDS process, Baird recognized the value in working on a joint plan rather than pursuing separate parallel efforts. The two organizations negotiated the details of the hybrid public-private initiative, which, for example, included more transportation and housing elements than a private sector plan would. “At the end of the negotiation, the feeling was that doing it together was worth it,” says Baird. “We acknowledged each organization’s philosophy to make a more collaborative environment,” so that objectives and roles were clear from the outset of the project.

### ***Participation and Preparation Process***

ECICOG seized these new opportunities for collaboration and worked quickly to complete the plan in a period of only six months. Despite the accelerated timeframe, the agency maintained a high level of public participation in a variety of formats, including two informational meetings in each of the four non-metro counties and a regional economic development summit that attracted representatives from the private sector.



***A county meeting during the development of the CRDS.***

*Credit: ECICOG*



***The Regional Economic Development Summit featured a keynote address and opportunities to share information and ideas for the CRDS development process.***

*Credit: ECICOG*

ECICOG then formed a planning work group analogous to a CEDS committee. The work group's nine members represented both the public and private sectors and the metro and non-metro areas of the region. ECICOG staff facilitated meetings to condense the information gathered into defined goals and priority investment areas. The work group then drafted a document, which was circulated among the public to seek further input. The CBA hosted a meeting of board members, university representatives, business leaders, and other stakeholders to unveil the final version.

The CRDS planning process cost \$45,000, including expenses such as bringing a speaker to the regional economic development summit. ECICOG used funds that were not available to other private organizations, such as the CBA, including regular EDA and Iowa DOT planning appropriations. The public-private partnership allowed each organization to apply its strengths to the project, with ECICOG focusing on facilitation and planning and the CBA convening an extensive network of stakeholders.

### *The CRDS*

The CEDS and LRTP are both compliance documents, meaning that they must follow the requirements established by EDA and the Iowa DOT, respectively. While there are several overlaps in some areas, such as data needs and public participation, meeting both checklists in a single document was a manageable challenge. For example, the public meetings did not generate enough input on transportation issues to satisfy the LRTP's more prescriptive format, requiring an additional online survey specific to transportation.

As ECICOG's transportation director, Rump valued the broad participation process for generating input on transportation issues from stakeholders other than service providers and policy makers. This allowed the transportation portions of the CRDS to give "a true planning perspective and move beyond an emphasis on programming," she says.

Many of the differences between the CEDS and LRTP are procedural; "in planning themes, they're not completely dissimilar," explains Copeland. The planning work group mentioned above served as the CEDS committee. One of the biggest differences in requirements related to jurisdiction and the overlap of the six-county EDD and seven-county RPA service areas. Cedar County, which would not have normally been included in the CEDS, is part of the CRDS. ECICOG was able to address all timeframe requirements by identifying objectives as short, middle, or long range.

Overall, the "issues came together nicely," says Copeland. Both the CEDS and LRTP require data to support the objectives that ECICOG identified, so the joint planning process was integrated and efficient. Whereas an explicit relationship between transportation and economic development was missing in prior planning efforts, the CRDS established the link and, according to Rump, "moving forward can only enhance the relationship." The CRDS also uses a higher level regional perspective than the CEDS or LRTP alone, which "ties the elements together more so than at the local level," she says.



### *The Comprehensive Regional Development Strategy*

*Credit: ECICOG*

### *Using the Document and Implementation*

To help the whole region understand the content of the CRDS' 131 pages, ECICOG created a two-sided brochure with a condensed version of the vision to hand out at meetings that refers the reader to the full document available online. Members of the CBA have used the same brochure when talking about economic development planning across the region.

ECICOG has used the information collected in the planning process for other related purposes. When applying for grants, the agency is "able to provide a consumable base of information" that has already been collected and analyzed, explains Elliott. The CRDS also helps ECICOG be more "nimble in responding to Federal Funding Opportunities." Several large employers and other regional leaders have requested data from ECICOG, which helps to raise the agency's profile and build relationships.

The CRDS also encouraged ECICOG to diversify funding sources for specific projects. According to Rump, she and other staff previously focused only on traditional transportation funding that was available to them, without recognizing that "what we want to do doesn't need to be funded through transportation programs—there are other programs that could have a significant financial impact on transportation and economic development." For example, private corporations and employment training programs interested in ridesharing services can partner with ECICOG. These funding sources

require different groups to work together to create a larger scale project that has benefits for multiple groups. “These relationships weren’t there before” the CRDS, says Rump.

The CRDS does not assign any priorities, timelines, or responsible parties for the policies and actions it recommends. According to Elliott, this was a strategic decision because the plan was “built on relatively new relationships.” One year after the document’s completion, ECICOG challenged the nine-member work group to reconvene and prioritize actions in each policy area. Elliott expects the process will take three months, and encourages the group “to be bold and presumptive” about who will take responsibility for implementation. As these meetings continue, the work group will identify methods of measuring accomplishment and the viability of the plan’s objectives.

*“The success of the process itself has been more than anticipated.”*

*– Doug Elliott, ECICOG*

### **Looking Forward**

“The success of the process itself has been more than anticipated,” says Elliott. One of the most important outcomes is the strength of new relationships. For example, ECICOG joined the CBA, which Elliott believes would have been unlikely prior to the CRDS. ECICOG’s transportation planners now have a relationship with the Iowa Flood Center at the University of Iowa, moving towards the plan’s goal of promoting a more resilient region.

Aligning transportation and economic development planning has helped ECICOG also align resources to meet its policy and program objectives. The involvement of numerous public and private agencies in the CRDS laid the foundation for continued regional collaboration.

## **TAKEAWAY #1:** **“Put the good stuff up front”**

*The CRDS process challenged the ECICOG staff to combine different sets of requirements from the EDA and DOT with public input from a variety of stakeholders into a user-friendly document. Elliott’s goal in crafting the plan was to keep the most compelling portions up front and place the high quantity of data and other federal requirements in the back. This strategy keeps the document consumable and accessible. A simple brochure outlining the regional vision also helps to distill the content.*

## **TAKEAWAY #2:** **“Be flexible”**

*ECICOG experienced a learning curve in combining its CEDS and LRTP for the first time, which required the staff to be flexible throughout the process to respond to unexpected challenges. The staff met weekly to evaluate progress and adjust as necessary. For example, according to Copeland, the staff intended to use modeling software and other scenario planning tools, but found that the diversity of the region made this method too complex. They decided instead that a simpler approach to data collection and analysis would produce a higher quality product that could serve as the basis for policy recommendations.*

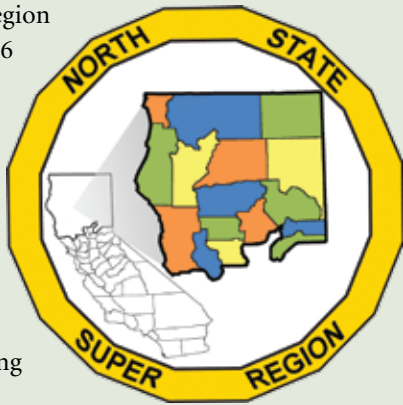


## FOCUS ON: Partnering for Resources: North State Super Region, Northern California

### CEDS Standards of Excellence:

#### 5 Increase collaboration among regions.

The North State Super Region (NSSR) is an alliance of 16 counties in Northern California, formed in 2010 with the goal of identifying “common transportation, growth, and land use issues, and formulating unified strategies that can be advocated to implementing agencies and the public.”<sup>9</sup> Given its large geography (42,620 square miles<sup>10</sup>) covering coastal, agricultural, and mountainous areas, the NSSR is mainly rural and economically diverse.



Credit: North State Super Region

While the many communities in the region may lack cohesion in some areas, “it’s really our transportation needs that unify the region,” says Dan Wayne, senior planner at the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency. California’s regional transportation planning agencies (RTPAs), similar in structure and responsibility to federally-designated MPOs, prepare regional transportation plans and work programs for a single county. Two of the RTPAs in the NSSR, including Shasta, are also MPOs.

Among such issues as high unemployment and population growth, limited funding for transportation infrastructure rose to the top of regional leaders’ list of topics to address. The allocation of transportation funding tends to favor populous regions with more economic activity and population centers. Rural areas like the NSSR in particular often have trouble competing for funding with highly urbanized areas when factors such as congestion are used. Other collaborative efforts

in California, particularly in the San Joaquin Valley, have been successful in bringing a large region together as a single grant recipient, explained Marilee Mortenson, senior environmental planner at the California DOT (Caltrans). In that example, several MPOs “organized to achieve joint benefits—public attention, community awareness, and political support and involvement” that helped the region attract more resources, she says.

NSSR’s first major project is the *Transportation for Economic Development Study*, supported by a \$225,000 grant from Caltrans. Rather than duplicating research on the connection between the two fields, the study aims to apply research to the local context and make the “business case” for justifying rural investment. In particular, the study will develop a set of metrics appropriate for measuring the impact of transportation investments in rural regions. “With the recession, the competition for transportation funding is putting a greater emphasis on economic development and quantitative performance measures—figures that we don’t have a clear handle on,” says Wayne. Using the study, planners in the NSSR will be able to collect and include this data in grant applications and other regional documents.

Because of the very large size of the NSSR, planners must work to maintain a focus on issues of a regional scale. Martha Martinez, a transportation planner at Caltrans, advises concentrating work on specific topics and being clear about expectations. For projects such as the NSSR’s study, she says planners “shouldn’t expect to solve all transportation and economic development issues. It’s important to raise ideas and new partnerships” around regional issues. Attempting to address local concerns at the same time can detract from the project’s goals and add to its challenges.

Overall, the study’s aim is to align investments from a transportation perspective with existing or planned economic development strategies and investments. According to Mortenson, “The study is moving these regional agencies into new conversations with economic development planners, which is a positive outcome in itself.” Wayne described how transportation planning can support other objectives: “We work to find the spot where our interests collide with economic development interests, and focus our energies there. We’re committed to providing the mobility required for economic development to happen and prosper.”

## Understanding Freight's Regional Impact: Southern Georgia Regional Commission

### CEDS Standards of Excellence:

- 3 Focus on data and analysis.
- 7 Collaborate on plans and implementation.

- > Southern Georgia Regional Commission, Valdosta, Georgia
- > Other program designations: Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization; EDD
- > Service area: 18 counties; 7,725 square miles
- > Approximate population: 406,583 (77,085 in urbanized area)

Lowndes County, located in Southern Georgia near the Florida border, has developed as a shipping hub due to its long history with rail and strategic location near major transportation corridors. Along with its main city, Valdosta, it was designated as an urbanized area after the 2000 Census. According to Corey Hull, the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization (VLMPO) Coordinator, the changing landscape prompted elected officials and city and county staff to increasingly consider the regional level beyond jurisdictional boundaries.

*Lowndes County, located in Southern Georgia near the Florida border, has developed as a shipping hub due to its long history with rail and strategic location near major transportation corridors.*

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC), which staffs the MPO covering one of the commission's 18 counties, took advantage of this increased sense of regionalism to study freight movement and its impact on economic development and job growth throughout the region. Local economic development leaders and elected officials use information from a series of reports, on topics such as emerging industries' transportation needs and the impact of rail on the local economy, to inform transportation planning and business recruitment.



*Warehousing and logistics is a growing industry in southern Georgia.*

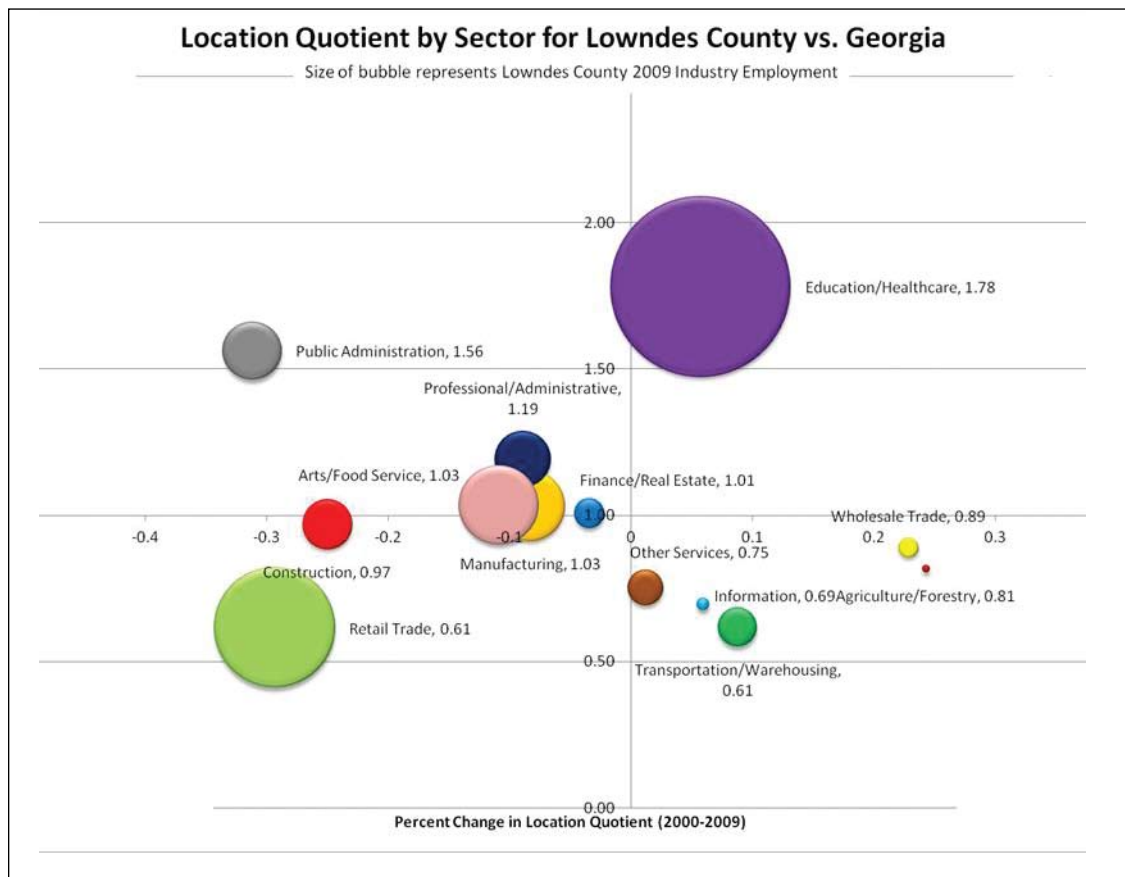
### *Southern Georgia and Freight Movement*

According to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority, "few locations in America can boast of better transportation assets" than the Valdosta area.<sup>11</sup> The region is a growing logistics and distribution center in the southeastern United States. Located near the intersection of Interstates 10 and 75 as well as two Class 1 railroads, Valdosta-Lowndes provides access to major east-west and north-south transportation corridors and next-day service to many states. The Port of Savannah, the fourth largest North American port by container traffic in 2011,<sup>12</sup> is four hours to the east. The county's transportation network supports a high volume of through-movement using multiple modes.

Observations of increased traffic through the county (particularly shipping containers), as well as estimates of large increases in freight movements,<sup>13</sup> motivated local officials to undertake a study to better understand the role of freight in the local economy and plan for the future. "We've got to be prepared to have the facilities in our community to ease congestion" if traffic continues to increase, explains Hull. "It was important to do more than say 'this is the existing state of transportation.'" The resulting Freight Movement Study and subsequent report series examined all modes of freight with the goal of identifying issues for transportation planning and strategies for taking advantage of the region's location.

### *Freight Movement Study*

The study, completed in July 2009, used several sources of information to understand freight in the context of the regional economy. SGRC convened a Freight Study Committee of private and public stakeholders to guide the process. The committee, as well as the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce, helped create and distribute a survey to the Chamber's 1,500 members and other freight-related companies about their freight needs and opinions. Of 118 respondents, 57 were freight-related companies, whose responses were analyzed separately. The results confirmed concerns about future congestion, delays at railroad crossings, and the importance of international ports.



*Location quotient chart comparing industries in Lowndes County to the State of Georgia. Emerging industries, such as wholesale trade, agriculture/forestry, and transportation/warehousing, are in the lower right quadrant.*

Credit: SGRC

Another major component of the study is an analysis of current and projected truck and rail freight movement, including routes, traffic, and crash data. Overall, the study “raised more questions than it answered,” says Hull. Input from the committee and the survey respondents revealed new and unexpected issues that the original study could not address. Without the resources or expertise to undertake a second large study, SGRC decided instead to focus on individual topics in a series of follow-up reports.

### *Follow-Up Report Series*

More so than in the original study, the report series examines how freight movement impacts economic development and job creation. The first follow-up report, released in January 2011, used location quotient and shift share analysis to focus on the region’s exports. These analyses use data on employment by industry to determine which industries are

locally concentrated relative to the larger economy (and therefore exporters), as well as how this competitiveness changes over time. Using these tools, SGRC placed Southern Georgia’s industries in one of four quadrants: stars, emerging, mature, or transforming.

The “emerging” industries, defined as being “more competitive regionally but less competitive nationally/statewide,”<sup>14</sup> include wholesale trade, agriculture/forestry, and transportation/warehousing. SGRC recognized that these industries are transportation dependent and require “an adequate and efficient transportation network to move goods to and from markets.”<sup>15</sup> Having knowledge of which sectors are likely to contribute to a growing economy helps SGRC direct investments that will support their development. Valdosta’s role as a retail and economic hub for the region also impacts the transportation system. In addition to the need to ship





***Downtown Valdosta is an economic hub that draws shoppers from around the region.***

*Credit: Flickr user faul*

goods, “we also need this infrastructure to bring people into the community,” says Hull, especially during the busy holiday season.

The second report in the series, released in March 2012, examined the impact of freight rail on the region. Valdosta has a long history with rail, dating back to its founding in 1860. Rail continues to play a substantial role in the local economy, especially in attracting industries. The report found that the total local impact of freight rail equals 7 percent of employment and 18 percent of annual sales in Lowndes County.<sup>16</sup> Hull explained SGRC’s aim to increase these figures, “not only because of more jobs, but also in many respects because rail allows for goods to be transported on dedicated infrastructure, rather than on trucks that add more congestion to highway infrastructure.”

Increasing rail could also positively impact other elements of the freight economy, according to Legget Lovan, the service center manager for a Southeastern Freight Lines facility in Valdosta. Additional rail containers or a port-like service would be “extremely beneficial and an added attraction to other distribution facilities” in the city and county, says Lovan. Although Southeastern is only a trucking company, the freight studies demonstrate the interconnectedness between modes and the impact on the larger region.

A third study released in August 2012 analyzed data from crashes involving commercial vehicles to recommend infrastructure projects that would improve freight movement throughout the region.

By breaking up a broad topic like freight movement into smaller reports, SGRC expects to complete the project using primarily existing resources. Traditional funding sources, such

as MPO funds, FHWA grants, and city and county government matches, supported the original study as well as the report series. SGRC relied on in-house staff to produce the first three reports, but may have to engage consultants for more technical topics later in the series.

***Future Studies***

SGRC plans to address four to six more topics in the report series, some of which will require the time and expertise of consultants to support SGRC staff. Upcoming topics include:

- > An evaluation of three proposals for bypasses around downtown Valdosta. Diverting truck traffic will help protect the historic character and promote economic development in downtown.
- > An assessment of existing truck stops and facilities to understand what amenities truck traffic needs. SGRC can use this information to attract private companies to meet those needs.
- > An analysis of how to use land surrounding Valdosta Regional Airport to promote air cargo.



***Truck traffic through downtown Valdosta. A future report will evaluate proposals to divert trucks around downtown.***

*Credit: SGRC*

***Supporting Transportation and Economic Development Planning***

SGRC distributes the freight study reports to transportation planners, economic development officials, and local elected officials to guide decision making in these areas. The information collected in the series will also contribute to



*The data in the freight studies showed that rail crossings in Lowndes County were safe, allowing the region to devote resources elsewhere.*

upcoming comprehensive plan updates. SGRC offers assistance to local governments throughout the region with these updates, which provides an opportunity to apply information from other projects such as the freight study series. VLMPO is exploring ways to combine work for updates to its long range transportation and comprehensive plans.

The crash data from both the original study and the second report focusing on rail will help prioritize transportation improvements in the long range transportation plan to increase safety. One unexpected finding, according to Hull, was the relatively low number of collisions between trains and vehicles at railroad crossings. Many of the crossings in the county that are privately owned or low volume are not signalized, while all of the high volume crossings have more safety mechanisms in place. “We may not need as many improvements as we thought, therefore we can focus limited resources on other identified projects,” he says.

The Industrial Authority relies on information from SGRC to recruit new industries to the region. Economic development planners can overlay GIS data from both agencies to show prospective or existing companies how infrastructure and industrial sites are laid out throughout the region, or incorporate other data into presentations. “The information SGRC has is very helpful to our projects, and we partner a great deal,” says Andrea Schruijer, executive director of the Industrial Authority. The location quotient and shift share report identified which sectors are growing, and where to guide future economic development and job growth.

*“The information SGRC has is very helpful to our projects, and we partner a great deal to make sure we have the right type of inventory in the correct location moving forward.”*

*— Andrea Schruijer  
Valdosta-Lowndes Industrial Authority*

One ongoing initiative aims to increase opportunities for future development, as existing rail lines are nearly at capacity and there is limited access to transportation infrastructure from existing industrial property. Schruijer wants to “make sure we have the right type of inventory in the correct location moving forward” to recruit industries. SGRC uses parameters provided by the Industrial Authority to perform a GIS-based site selection analysis to identify tracts of land in Lowndes County to purchase for later use as a distribution center or similar purpose. A previous ranking of sites by SGRC led the Industrial Authority to purchase two properties.

### *A Resource for Stakeholders*

SGRC’s series of freight studies provides not only an understanding of the increasing role of freight in the region, but information and tools to promote economic development. In this and other projects, SGRC is a valuable resource for local officials, policy makers, and private sector partners who use its data and analysis to support their work.

### **TAKEAWAY #1: “Find partnerships”**

*Hull emphasized the importance of cultivating relationships, especially with private companies. “We want to know their opinions and what they want to see happen to infrastructure,” he says. Given the importance of freight to the region’s economy, partnerships between freight companies and SGRC are critical. According to Lovan of Southeastern Freight, SGRC’s outreach efforts are “great—they solicit public information constantly.” As a representative for the Chamber of Commerce for the freight study, Lovan was an important link between the public and private sectors.*

### **TAKEAWAY #2: “Break it down”**

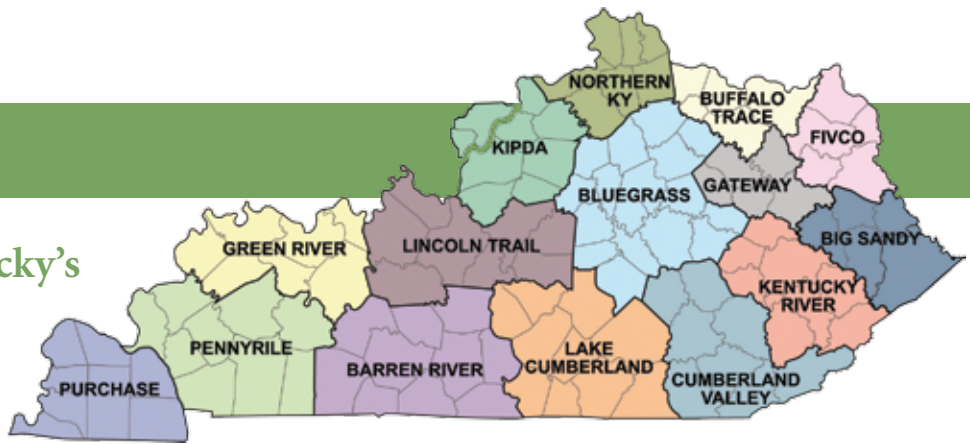
*SGRC realized that freight was too large of a topic to address in a single study, and proceeded with a series of smaller reports to look at different subcategories. By using staff time and existing resources, SGRC is able to “provide services to the community and information to economic development leaders and elected officials on a case-by-case basis without having to break the bank,” says Hull.*

## Locating Freight Users: Kentucky's Area Development Districts

### CEDS Standards of Excellence:

2 Align plans and investments.

3 Focus on data and analysis.



*Kentucky's Area Development Districts. The two separate counties in KIPDA are in Indiana, but are part of the Louisville KY-IN MPO.*

- > Barren River Area Development District, Bowling Green, Kentucky
- > Other program designations: EDD; Bowling Green/Warren County MPO; RTPPO
- > Service area: 10 counties; 3,974 square miles
- > Approximate population: 283,925
- > Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency, Louisville, Kentucky (ADD only)
- > Other program designations: Louisville KY-IN MPO; RTPPO
- > Service area: 7 counties; 1,920 square miles
- > Approximate population: 959,091
- > Note: KIPDA's transportation division provides planning services to the MPO (3 counties in KY and 2 in IN) and the ADD (7 counties in KY)

Located in the southeastern United States with access to the national highway system, railroads, major airports, navigable waterways, and river ports, Kentucky supports a large volume of freight mobility. Despite recognizing the overall importance of freight, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) "realized we didn't have a good idea of *where* freight was moving in the state—we wanted to find out what the generating facilities are," says Jeremy Edgeworth, freight coordinator at KYTC. To research such facilities and their use of transportation networks, KYTC enlisted the help of the state's 15 Area Development Districts (ADDs) to complete a Major Freight User Inventory in 2010. Information collected in this effort has been valuable for identifying needed transportation improvements and maintaining accurate data for economic development purposes.

### The Survey and Inventory

The Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development (KCED) provided a list of about 7,400 businesses throughout the state

as the basis for the data collection. To capture those businesses most likely to be major freight users, KYTC excluded those that did not move freight (such as call centers and hospitals) and further narrowed the data by including only those businesses with facilities of 100,000 square feet or larger or with 100 or more employees, which reduced the list to about 1,200 businesses. While the original database contained basic information about the businesses, it did not indicate the use of and capacity for freight. KYTC distributed the list to the ADDs to supplement the information and update the list by adding and removing businesses as necessary.

The ADDs collected information in several ways, including reaching out to companies directly with paper surveys and phone calls, performing internet research and site visits, and contacting local officials and planning staff. KYTC requested the following information:

- > Company name
- > Street address
- > Square footage of facility
- > Average number of employees
- > Number of truck bays
- > Average number of trucks per day
- > Total feet of rail siding
- > Number of rail doors
- > Average number of train cars per week

### Participation and Relationships

As with any voluntary survey, there was a range of willingness to participate among the companies contacted. While many returned the paper form or responded positively to follow-up phone calls, others were reluctant to divulge any information about their operations. Any information collected by the ADDs remains confidential and is only used for planning purposes.





The Barren River Area Development District (BRADD) and the Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency (KIPDA) both reported approximately 50 percent of surveys were returned by mail, with BRADD reaching 80 – 90 percent of companies after phone calls and site visits. The most helpful phone contacts, both agencies found, was someone involved in logistics, shipping, or receiving with knowledge of truck movements and volume.

KIPDA's Regional Transportation Council (RTC) was an important resource even before beginning to collect data. RTC members, which include elected officials and representatives from KYTC, provide input to the statewide planning process on transportation issues in the rural counties outside of the MPO. They provided the names of shipping and receiving managers to create a more direct point of contact for KIPDA staff. Randall Embry, a transportation planner, noted increased participation from freight contacts at public meetings since the survey outreach, particularly for the Louisville (KY-IN) MPO. "They give us a lot of good information," he says of freight users' contribution to understanding transportation planning issues.

According to Ashley Simpson, public administration specialist at BRADD, "The Major Freight Users Inventory has become the biggest link between private businesses and the ADD." Whereas freight representatives were often missing from RTC meetings, they now have another way to provide input and connect to planners interested in their concerns.

***"The Major Freight Users Inventory has become the biggest link between private businesses and the ADD."***

***– Ashley Simpson, BRADD***



***Large trucks use rural routes, such as KY100 in Allen County in BRADD's service area, to access the National Highway System.***

*Credit: BRADD*

### ***Analyzing and Using the Data***

In addition to the specific questions listed above, KYTC's survey also provided a space for companies to share their transportation needs, particularly regarding freight movement and impediments between the facility and the National Highway System. In many cases the issues identified were small, such as traffic lights or signage, and could be referred to the appropriate county road department. Communicating these minor maintenance and operations issues to other agencies was "another way to build credibility and trust" with the companies, says Simpson. If the ADD identified a major concern, it could submit a project identification form to KYTC to help the cabinet address needs and plan across the state.

The results of the main part of the survey were also useful in identifying transportation issues. BRADD used GIS to overlay the largest freight users over road adequacy ratings (a composite measure of pavement condition, crashes, and congestion) and current and future projects. Where roads used by freight-intensive companies also have an adequacy rating below 25 percent, BRADD ensures it has a project to address issues that are making the road unsafe. While there is value for the ADDs to have accurate information about companies, the inventory is also a tool for more in-depth analyses like these. "Beyond just a list of facilities, it is a mappable database," says Simpson.

## Kentucky's Project Identification Forms

Like many public agencies that face restricted budgets, KYTC must prioritize its transportation investments to meet as many needs as possible. The statewide planning process is shaped by federal legislation that requires KYTC to seek input from local governments and regional organizations. KYTC works closely with the state's 12 ADDs to analyze transportation systems and identify needs using a Project Identification Form (PIF), which provides consistency among many partners and projects across the state.

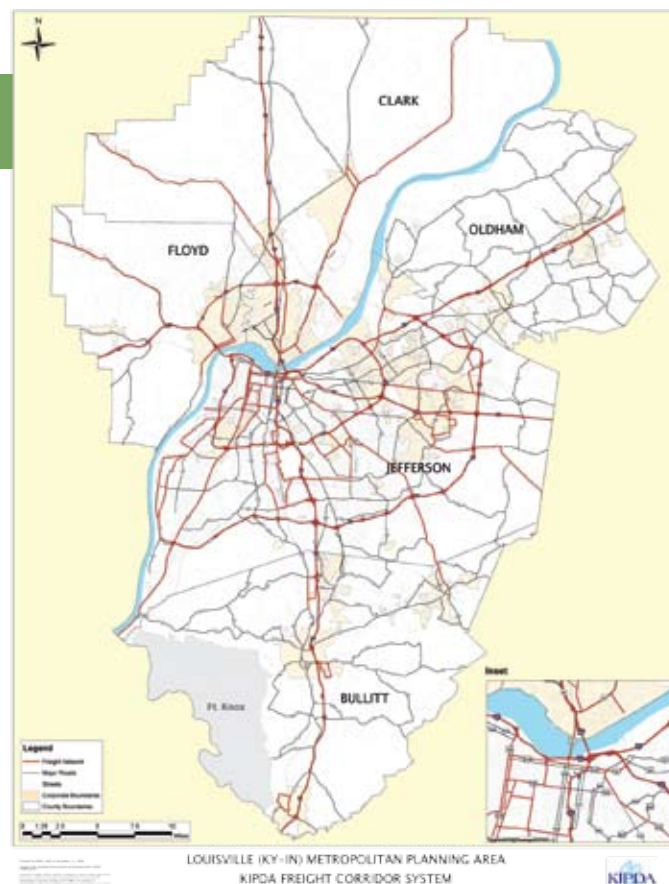
The PIF contains several elements that describe a project's context and need: a problem statement, a description of the existing conditions, the proposed solution and impacts, and a preliminary cost estimate. Attachments such as location maps, photographs, and detailed cost estimates may also be included. The ADDs submit PIFs to KYTC, which then selects projects for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program or places them on the Unscheduled Projects List (UPL).

While individual ADDs analyzed data in their own regions, they also submitted the results to KYTC to be examined at the state level. Scott Thomson, forecast and modeling team lead at KYTC, compiled the data provided by individual ADDs and overlaid it on Traffic Analysis Zone boundaries. Aggregating the number of trucks per day in a given zone allowed KYTC to develop trip ends and then analyze impacts on the road system while maintaining the privacy of the responding businesses. KYTC only shares the aggregated data with consultants working on cabinet projects.

### Kentucky Freight Focus Network

In an effort to identify routes that accommodate large freight movements throughout the state, KYTC created the Kentucky Freight Focus Network (KFFN), formerly the Freight Priority Network. Any kind of street or highway can be part of the network, giving planners "a true representation of freight mobility and volume," according to Edgeworth. "This allows us to identify exactly what is the situation" regarding the actual use of infrastructure, whether or not a route is nationally identified as being significant for freight.

After analyzing the results of the survey, BRADD identified and proposed two additions to the KFFN. BRADD planners refer to the network when talking to local officials about freight needs and the role of local and regional roads in the statewide system. Inclusion in the network makes projects eligible for greater state funding. KIPDA assigns a higher priority to



*The freight corridor system in KIPDA's MPO planning area.*

Credit: KIPDA

projects on the MPO's established freight corridor system (which largely overlaps the KFFN) when selecting projects for the transportation improvement program, which represents projects to be completed in the first four years of the longer term metropolitan transportation plan.

### Economic Development

The ADDs plan to use information from the inventory in their economic development efforts, in particular by increasing the role of freight in CEDS. As BRADD undertakes a major update of its document, Simpson says that "freight issues will be included more than in the past." Some of the projects identified using the inventory and GIS analysis will be included and highlighted along with other economic development projects. Similarly, KIPDA's next CEDS update will incorporate more transportation elements. The Public Administration Division, which prepares the document, sought input about transportation projects.

*The ADDs plan to use information from the inventory in their economic development efforts, in particular by increasing the role of freight in CEDS.*

Projects identified through the inventory and analysis will not only improve freight infrastructure and mobility throughout the state, but also, importantly, will improve access to sites. “We have a lot of freight facilities, and in many cases, they’re co-located. These projects will improve access to an entire commerce or industrial park, not just one company,” says Kelsey.

Once KYTC has compiled and cleaned the data submitted by individual ADDs, it will return the comprehensive database to KCED so the agency can integrate the updated information into its efforts. Accurate knowledge of new and closed facilities is crucial for understanding how businesses are changing across the state. The mutual benefits of cooperation are not always clear at first, explains Edgeworth. “It can be difficult for [KYTC] to get on the same page [with KCED] and find a unified reason for getting data,” he says. “We hope that when the data is finalized and passed back, we’ll all see the value.”

KIPDA, however, has developed a “symbiotic relationship” with local economic development groups, according to Kelsey. “Not only do they help put us in contact with companies, they would ask, ‘If you get anything, will you share it with us,’” for business attraction efforts, she says. (For confidentiality, any information that KIPDA shares is provided at aggregated and corridor levels.) KIPDA staff maintain relationships with land use planners, chambers of commerce, and other business stakeholders to encourage their input into transportation planning and give them an opportunity to understand how the transportation system is funded and how they can play a role in the process.

Simpson, from BRADD, agrees that relationships are key for finding common ground between economic development and transportation planning goals. “Promoting these connections between [KYTC] and the regional agencies, then going out to local economic development agencies, gives the ADDs a large role in linking transportation and economic development,” she says. Simpson also cites strong connections between KYTC’s multimodal staff and regional staff, part of a structure to support increased cooperation and linkages.

### **Maintaining the Database**

The Major Freight Users Inventory survey is an example of a successful partnership between state and local agencies. In 2000, KYTC contracted with the Kentucky ADDs to move to a fully digital mapping system. The move benefitted the ADDs with increased GIS staffing and analysis capacities so

they could better respond to the challenge of updating data for all local and state roads, while the cabinet benefitted from a much-improved digital update of the statewide roadway system. The Major Freight Users Inventory is one of many overlays stemming from the initial statewide GIS mapping project.

To remain a useful tool, the inventory must be periodically updated as businesses open, close, grow, or change locations. KYTC will lead a major data recollection effort by the ADDs every five years, with ADDs performing routine maintenance on the dataset year-to-year as part of KYTC’s Regional Transportation Planning Annual Work Program, which outlines the non-metro planning tasks the ADDs complete. The next major update will occur in 2015.

KYTC will draw on its recent focus on freight as a co-sponsor (along with KIPDA, the Institute for Trade and Transportation Studies, FHWA, and the Mid-America Freight Coalition) of the “Building Paths to Prosperity—The Role of Regional Corridors” conference, to be held in Louisville in March 2013. Mobile workshops will feature freight facilities in the Louisville metropolitan area, such as a lock and dam on the Ohio River and the United Parcel Service (UPS) Worldport. The conference is open to the public and will bring together 21 state DOTs, ADDs, MPOs and private industry leaders and will serve as a forum for sharing ideas about how to support freight movement to grow the region’s economy, drawing examples from KIPDA’s service area.<sup>17</sup>

### **TAKEAWAY #1:** **“Be willing to offer assistance”**

*In reaching out to the private business community, Simpson noted the importance of offering help or assistance when asking for companies’ participation in the survey. “We tried to be open about our purpose and emphasize that we’re there to help,” she says. “Making sure they knew what we were doing with the information and how it would help them was essential for getting buy-in. We can’t do a project like this without it.”*



## FOCUS ON:

### Priority Corridors: Brazos Valley Council of Governments, Bryan, Texas

#### CEDS Standards of Excellence:

#### 4 Link strategies and outcomes.

In 2009, the Brazos Valley Council of Governments (BVCOG) changed the method for its Regional Transportation Committee to prioritize transportation investments in its seven-county region in central Texas. Rather than selecting individual projects, the 28-member committee identifies important corridors to support—“trade routes instead of single spots,” explains Michael Parks, BVCOG assistant executive director. Corridors offer an alternative way for BVCOG to give its opinion to the Texas Department of Transportation about where it would like to direct resources.

As opposed to a traditional “one shot and it’s done” planning and ranking process, Parks was curious about whether different variables would produce different outcomes when committee members were asked to prioritize corridors. When participants asked what would be used as the basis for decision making, Parks replied that it depends on what’s important to the members and their constituents. Given three different objectives—safety, mobility, and economic development—participants identified different sets of priority corridors.

The corridors identified as priorities for economic development were mainly trucking routes that move freight from the coast to Dallas and beyond. The Brazos Valley is located in the middle of the triangle formed by Texas’s largest cities, Houston, San Antonio, and Dallas, and has the potential to play a larger role in the state’s logistics and shipping sectors. “It’s easy for our rural judges [analogous to chair of county board of commissioners in other states] to get behind the idea of shipping containers when they think in terms of jobs. Anyone that’s been on a trade route has prospered,” says Parks of the committee’s recognition of how transportation supports other objectives.



Parks makes an effort to articulate the economic importance of the region to committee members. He emphasizes that being rural doesn’t have to mean being isolated, and that their roads are crucial for linking the cities that generally receive more funding and resources. He explains, “Rural areas connect the urban dots. Freight doesn’t get to Dallas until it moves through our region from the Port of Houston—commerce happens here, and we support it.” Brazos Valley’s transportation networks play an important role in the statewide economy, and BVCOG’s prioritization categories allow committee members to consider the impacts of investment.

Adjusting the prioritization process has had several positive outcomes. By maintaining three sets of priorities based on each category, BVCOG can quickly respond to funding opportunities that have requirements in one of these areas. Replacing projects with corridors has encouraged more regional thinking. Committee members no longer advocate only for projects within their jurisdiction because the majority of corridors run through three or four counties.

One of the most important outcomes of the new process has been the acceptance of the benefits of planning in an environment that does not always welcome it. According to Parks, it has “helped raise the level of consciousness for what planning is for rural transportation officials,” he says. “We want people to recognize the benefit of good planning, so we explain that it goes towards making sure people can enjoy their way of life and standard of living.”

## FOCUS ON: Transportation Advisory Committee Representation: Boonslick Regional Planning Commission, Warrenton, Missouri

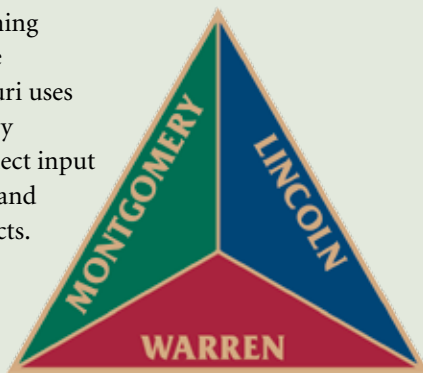
### CEDS Standards of Excellence:

#### 7 Collaborate on plans and implementation.

Like many regional planning commissions (RPCs), the Boonslick RPC in Missouri uses a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) to collect input on transportation issues and prioritize potential projects. To increase participation and introduce new disciplines to the planning process, the RPC implemented a

new TAC structure in early 2012. RPC planner Christopher Michael explains, “The goal is not to tell the Missouri DOT how to spend its money, but rather advise on how to invest resources in a manner that supports the community and economic interests in the region.” Diversifying the representation of committee members offers new opportunities for broadening the benefits of transportation investment.

In the former configuration, the mayors and county commissioners appointed members to the TAC based on population size, so that each RPC member with a population over 500 could be represented. Because members went to many similar meetings for different committees, attendance at TAC meetings declined and members became less engaged. “With the old structure, the TAC had the same feeling as most of the other meetings. We still achieved our end goals and set priorities, but it didn’t feel like everyone was being heard,” he says.



At the end of 2011, RPC Executive Director Steve Etcher proposed a modified structure with a new composition of membership. Each of the RPC’s three counties appoints one representative to the TAC in each of nine disciplines, for a total of 27 members. Explaining the reasoning behind the new membership, Michael says: “We knew transportation affected more than the people who worked in the streets department—we wanted more feedback on transportation issues from people using the network.” The disciplines are:

- > Manufacturing
- > Retail/commercial/residential development
- > Trucking and transportation
- > Agriculture and agribusiness
- > Economic development/chambers of commerce
- > Education
- > Emergency services
- > Special needs population
- > Private citizens

RPC staff spent many of the early meetings educating the new TAC members on the committee’s responsibilities and the processes of transportation planning and funding. Soliciting and analyzing needs so projects may be identified and prioritized is the TAC’s primary task. Efforts by the Missouri Department of Transportation and the RPC to introduce more data into the process will help the committee understand the road network in a more interactive process. According to RPC Planner Krishna Kunapareddy, restructuring the committee has already produced a more diverse list of needs, particularly an increase of multimodal projects.

Michael anticipates a larger connection between the TAC and the CEDS in the future. As the RPC prepares to update its CEDS, planners hope to have the same sectors involved with committee membership. As the new structure matures and meetings increase their focus on prioritization, “we’ll get more into the economic development connection and look more at land use,” he says. Similarly, future discussions about the committee’s structure and responsibilities will focus on how members can effectively represent the needs of their discipline in their county.

## Collaborating Across Organizations: North Central Washington

### CEDS Standards of Excellence:

1 Build resilient regions and capitalize on assets.

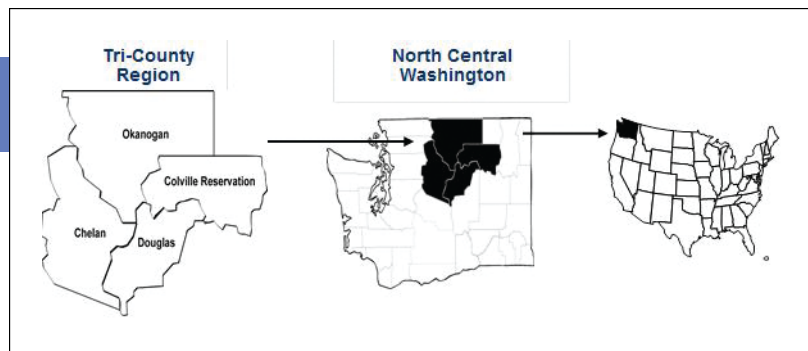
7 Collaborate on plans and implementation.

- > Organization: Wenatchee Valley Transportation Council, Wenatchee, Washington
- > Other program designations: North Central Regional Transportation Planning Organization; MPO
- > Service area: 3 counties; 10,008 square miles
- > Approximate population: 153,859
- > North Central Washington Economic Development District, Wenatchee, Washington
- > Service area: 3 counties plus Colville Confederated Tribes

In a three-county region in North Central Washington, there are several organizations responsible for different components of regional planning. These agencies include the North Central Washington Economic Development District (NCWEDD) and the Wenatchee Valley Transportation Council (WVTC). While each agency maintains separate missions and work programs, they frequently work together to support the region's development. This case study highlights the collaboration between NCWEDD and WVTC and their contributions to initiatives that address both economic development and transportation.

### Collaboration and Influence

NCWEDD assists its members with securing funding for economic development efforts, provides technical assistance, and completes the region's CEDS. WVTC serves as the MPO for the Wenatchee metropolitan area and provides staff support to the North Central Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), serving the same three-county region covered by NCWEDD. Despite differences in responsibilities, NCWEDD Administrator Jennifer Korfiatis and WVTC Executive Director Jeff Wilkens collaborate through formal and informal channels.



*The WVTC service area includes Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan counties. NCWEDD serves those counties in addition to the Colville Reservation, which straddles two counties.*

*Credit: NCWEDD*

Washington's RTPOs were authorized in the state's Growth Management Act, passed in 1990. In regions where MPOs are designated, RTPOs are housed in the same lead planning organization to avoid duplication of effort, and the Washington State DOT administers the program jointly.

Overlapping membership and staff involvement provide opportunities for "official" collaboration. Korfiatis explained how the region's planners are "careful to staff the board of each organization with similar members" to ensure a more "streamlined approach in how we do things and create greater collaboration." This includes staff participation in the regular meetings of peer organizations. Wilkens represents WVTC at NCWEDD meetings, but as an associate member, the agency does not pay dues and cannot vote. Similarly, Korfiatis is a member of a review committee that ranks and prioritizes transportation projects.

Outside of these meetings, ongoing communication between the agencies allows staff to remain familiar with other projects and initiatives. "We keep each other informed of what's happening and have a mutual interest in each other's work," says Wilkens of collaboration between the two agencies. Korfiatis agrees and describes the relationship between NCWEDD and WVTC as "informal" compared to other EDDs. "I know I can call [Wilkens] with any transportation questions and have a frank conversation," she says of working with the WVTC. "Whenever a new project or strategy emerges that has economic development and transportation components tied to it, we both get involved."



*“Whenever a new project or strategy emerges that has economic development and transportation components tied to it, we both get involved.”*

*– Jennifer Korfiatis, NCWEDD*

Increasing recognition of the links between economic development and transportation helps the agencies align priorities. Wilkens cited a high degree of consistency between regional planning in these fields, particularly in policy development. “We seek to take cues from the EDD and other organizations, because transportation is really a means to an end,” he says. “Regional consensus on economic development objectives facilitates transportation planning, and those objectives strongly influence our priorities,” he explains.

One such example is a worsening bottleneck at the main entry point to the City of Wenatchee, the regional hub where both organizations are located. Korfiatis recognized this as a potential impediment for tourism and business recruitment. She suggested this location to Wilkens as something the WVTC might want to address, citing future impacts on her efforts to bring businesses, workers, and visitors to the area. Three other examples of NCWEDD and WVTC’s involvement in projects that involve economic development and transportation planning are described below.

### **Vehicle Electrification**

In June 2012, North Central Washington welcomed the opening of the world’s first dedicated electric vehicle tourism corridor between Seattle and Wenatchee. Travelers along Interstate 5 and Highway 2 have access to several charging stations. NCWEDD led the project efforts in the region and provided major support to the creation of the Plugin Center, an organization whose mission is to establish the region “as a catalyst and home for development, demonstrations, and deployment of plug-in vehicles across a spectrum of residential, commercial, and agricultural uses.”<sup>18</sup>



*NCWEDD sponsored a competition to design a logo to help brand vehicle electrification efforts in the region.*

*Credit: NCWEDD*

The development of the corridor and the facilities to support it has generated interest in an emerging industry. Vehicle electrification has impacts beyond the charging stations for economic development and transportation as more visitors and businesses are drawn to the region. Considering these secondary effects, Korfiatis asks: “What does it mean [for the region] if we build charging infrastructure and invite larger economic development drivers over to North Central Washington?” The success of the corridor will require others’ involvement in finding ways to accommodate the increased activity.

To that end, WVTC made important contributions to the project in an advisory role. Wilkens provided input on how vehicle electrification could impact the transportation system and other issues that Korfiatis and other project partners should consider. Many of the road impacts that result from this project will appear several years after the opening of the corridor. For example, Korfiatis cited preliminary concerns that electric vehicle users will not be paying taxes on gasoline but will still be contributing to wear and tear on the transportation system. While there is not yet a recommendation for a policy response, Korfiatis anticipates further collaboration between economic development and transportation agencies in finding solutions.

### **Route 97 Heavy Haul Corridor**

U.S. Route 97 connects North Central Washington with communities in British Columbia, Canada, and has a long history as a vital trade route through the region.<sup>19</sup> The road is particularly important for tourism in Okanogan County and for Canadian residents who shop in Washington State. Regional leaders identified the desire to increase industrial activity near the border, as several employers cited difficulties attracting freight south from Canada because of truck weight differentials on highways. The VIA 97 International Alliance Organization formed as a cross-border group to promote the road as a viable option for border travel.

As a result of regional and bi-national coordination, state legislation passed in early 2008 established a five-mile section of U.S. 97, from the border south to the Cascade and Columbia River railhead, as a “heavy haul” corridor. The designation now allows fully loaded trucks from Canada to access a rail intermodal facility in the United States, primarily to ship wood products. VIA 97, whose partners include NCWEDD and WVTC, initiated this effort and continues to support the corridor. This project shows a clear link between transportation networks and opportunities for economic



### **U.S. Route 97**

*Credit: Flickr user Jim Carson*

development, as the designation is expected to generate new activity near the railhead and create new jobs for the region.<sup>20</sup>

### **Agritourism**

North Central Washington is in line with national trends of a growing tourism industry and a struggling agricultural sector. Tourism has become the state's third largest industry (and is especially predominant in Chelan County<sup>21</sup>), as farm income has had little growth over recent decades.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, agriculture maintains a strong presence in the largely rural region, which grows a variety of crops, particularly tree fruit.

These two industries have increasingly complemented each other with the growing popularity of agritourism. According to a report from the Washington State University Extension program, agritourism offers farmers a way to diversify their business and expand their incomes by welcoming visitors to their farm for recreation, meals, or lodging.<sup>23</sup> Successful operations can have a large positive impact on the local economy.

Many of North Central Washington's orchards and vineyards have also transitioned to agritourism. For example, Lake Chelan's designation as an American Viticultural Area and promotion by the Lake Chelan Chamber of Commerce has increased tourism in the region and allowed the community to leverage its natural assets beyond agricultural uses.<sup>24</sup> Korfiatis welcomes this diversification, partly because it "isolates the region from single industry fluctuations," such as when low apple prices hurt the region economically.

The growth of the region's tourism and agritourism industries, however, became an issue of concern for the region's



### **Apple crates near Wenatchee, WA.**

*Credit: Flickr user m5050b*



### **Tourists visit a vineyard, a typical agritourism activity becoming more common in North Central Washington.**

*Credit: Flickr user PhilipGreen-NZ*

transportation planners. As visitors increasingly share rural highways with more intense uses, such as freight, there are a number of safety concerns that arise. Increased traffic overall also creates congestion, which can impact tourism. "If the primary tourist routes are a backlog of traffic, that doesn't present the best picture" of the region to visitors, says Korfiatis.

To address some of these issues, WVTC worked with the Washington State DOT to identify state routes to prioritize for funding for passing lanes. "The desire to support a new, growing industry drives this effort, rather than only focusing on the potential safety benefits of passing lanes," says Wilkens.

*"The desire to support a new, growing industry drives this effort, rather than only focusing on the potential safety benefits of passing lanes."*

*– Jeff Wilkens, WVTC*

### *Looking Forward*

Planning for the region has challenges regardless of the field or agency—both organizations cover a large geographic area that contains diverse sub-economies with different needs. Although this makes it difficult to present a single economic development strategy for the region, Wilkens will continue to welcome direction from the objectives of other programs or initiatives.

The collaboration between NCWEDD and WVTC takes many forms and has supported several successful programs. Despite the challenge of addressing regional planning from separate organizations, continuous communication among staff leads to integrated planning and investment, and ultimately enhanced opportunities for aligning transportation and economic development.

### **TAKEAWAY #1: “Broaden transportation’s goals”**

*While both fields impact each other in different ways, Wilkens attributes the stronger influence of economic development on transportation to the collaboration among organizations, which helps overcome the tendency for engineering principles to dominate transportation thinking. He believes it is beneficial to “look outside of the limited transportation world to gain a broader direction for planning.” Often this means not examining transportation outcomes only from a transportation perspective, but considering the many other positive impacts of investment.*

### **TAKEAWAY #2: “Share staff to support consistency”**

*When aligning transportation and economic development goals and programs, it can be helpful to share staff and board members among different organizations. According to Korfiatis, this structure provides an extra layer of consistency and helps all planners see each other as partners. “When we work together, we can present a more well-rounded picture of strategy instead of competing for resources,” she explains. Though NCWEDD and WVTC do not share a budget or formal work programs, common members promote an attitude of collaboration.*



## FOCUS ON: Redirecting Growth: North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Gainesville, Florida

### CEDS Standards of Excellence:

#### 2 Align plans and investments.

The eastern side of Gainesville, Florida struggled with disinvestment for decades even as other parts of the region benefited from growth in the western suburbs and around the University of Florida's main campus.<sup>25</sup> Adopted in 2003, *Plan East Gainesville*



describes strategies for the area's revitalization that achieves the community's vision of strong, connected neighborhoods. The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO) for the Gainesville Urbanized Area, which is staffed by the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council (NCFRPC), led the development of the plan in association with Alachua County, the City of Gainesville, Gainesville Regional Utilities, and the Florida DOT (FDOT).

Marlie Sanderson, assistant executive director and director of transportation planning at NCFRPC, explained the plan's overall goal: "Most growth and development has gone west primarily because of the location of the interstate, creating an unhealthy land use balance. With *Plan East Gainesville* we hope to rebalance the community back towards the east side." The plan aligns with the MTPO's transportation policy goals of supporting investment in East Gainesville as articulated in its long range transportation plan.

*Plan East Gainesville* contains four elements: land use, conservation, transportation, and implementation. Transportation investments play a key role in supporting the plan's other components, and provide "a vital template to the redevelopment and careful planning for quality growth

in East Gainesville....The major roadways also provide an organizing framework for how redevelopment and new development should occur to enhance economic opportunity, ensure preservation of natural areas, and support land use patterns that promote walking, bicycling, and use of public transportation."<sup>26</sup>

Improving the interconnectivity of transportation networks is essential for restoring the land use balance mentioned by Sanderson. In addition to providing more mobility options for residents, "investment in transportation infrastructure and improved accessibility can substantially increase the value of property for commercial development."<sup>27</sup> The plan's signature transportation project is a bus rapid transit (BRT) line to connect East Gainesville to downtown and the region. Once a necessary bus maintenance facility is constructed and the BRT line is in operation, Sanderson expects this premium transit service will stimulate private investment and draw more activity to the area.

When the plan was written, East Gainesville's roads had excess capacity, indicating the area's ability to accommodate increased traffic from new development. Rather than attempting only to add cars to empty lanes, the MTPO implemented a "road diet" to redesign several corridors, making them more attractive for development. One example is Main Street through downtown, which now has bike lanes and on-street parking. According to Mike Escalante, senior transportation planner at the MTPO, the road diet has led to private sector reinvestment to take advantage of the changed road.

Regional planners and elected officials continue to refer to *Plan East Gainesville* as a template for guiding growth. The past decade has seen increased development activity in East Gainesville. Projects include a Walmart Super Center, two major FDOT statewide facilities, and the University of Florida's East Campus, which houses mostly administrative functions. The Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency transformed a vacant lot into a gateway landscape feature in 2009, and in 2012 spearheaded the revitalization of an abandoned building with a private partner. The building, now home to a local small business, will help catalyze commercial development along a major corridor in Southeast Gainesville.

## Conclusion

The efforts of these organizations to maximize and broaden the impacts of transportation investments have contributed to strong and connected regional economies across the United States. In many different ways, the projects highlighted here benefit from the principles outlined in the CEDS Standards of Excellence: they build off of existing assets, align investments from multiple sources, measure success with performance metrics, and use data and public input to inform development strategies.

One key factor in each of these successful practices is collaboration among RDOs and other public and private sector stakeholders. Aligning transportation and economic development planning requires communication about objectives and initiatives so that they can complement and support each other, rather than compete for limited resources. Regional planners can use the lessons from this case study research to continue to promote the role of transportation in economic development practices.

## Glossary

**BRT:** Bus Rapid Transit, express bus service in dedicated lanes where riders usually pay fares before boarding

**CEDS:** Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, used by economic development organizations to analyze the regional economy, establish goals and objectives, identify investment priorities and funding sources, and lay out an implementation plan. The EDA requires a CEDS to be eligible for funding assistance.

**DOT:** Department of Transportation

**EDA:** Economic Development Administration, a bureau within the United States Department of Commerce

**EDD:** Economic Development District, designated by EDA to serve as a convener of multiple jurisdictions and stakeholders and to conduct regional strategic planning by developing a CEDS

**FHWA:** Federal Highway Administration, a division of the United States Department of Transportation

**GIS:** Geographic Information Systems

**HUD:** United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

**LRTP:** Long Range Transportation Plan, generally with a 20-year horizon

**MPO:** Metropolitan Planning Organization, federally-designated transportation planning agencies for urbanized areas with a population greater than 50,000

**NADO:** National Association of Development Organizations

**RDO:** Regional Development Organization, multi-jurisdictional, public-based entities focused on fostering regional strategies, partnerships, and solutions; they deliver and manage various federal and state programs in areas such as community and economic development, housing, emergency management, business development finance, and transportation

**RTPO:** Regional Transportation Planning Organization; first authorized under MAP-21 for non-metropolitan areas, but many states have already formed networks of RTPOs to conduct planning activities and outreach under contract to state DOTs

**TOD:** Transit-Oriented Development

**USDA:** United States Department of Agriculture

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[www.RuralTransportation.org](http://www.RuralTransportation.org)