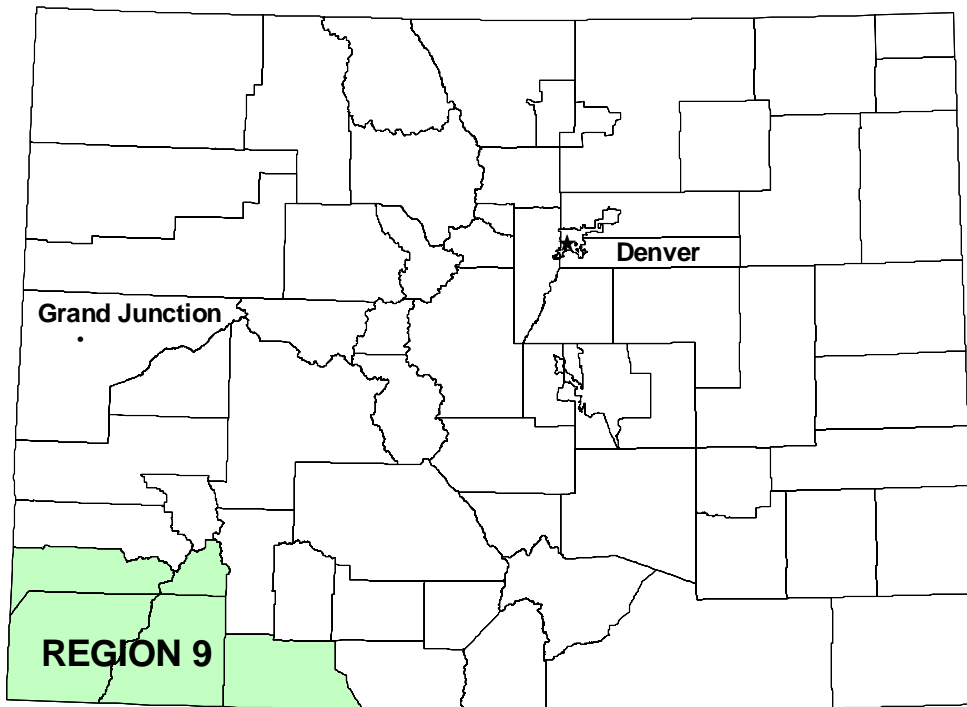


1. INTRODUCTION TO CEDS

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COLORADO



INTRODUCTION

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is the result of a local planning process designed to guide the economic growth of an area. In July of 1995, the Region 9 Economic Development District of Southwest Colorado (Region 9) launched Southwest Colorado's initial CEDS process by offering data, a vision and goals, and outlining specific strategies for reaching those goals. The CEDS was subsequently revised in 2001. This 2006 document is the third full edition.

The purpose of the CEDS is to create a plan for retaining and creating better paying jobs, fostering stable and more diversified economies, as well as maintaining and improving the quality of life in Southwest Colorado. This CEDS planning process provides an opportunity for economic development stakeholders, and the community at large, to unite behind a vision that creates long-term economic growth and stability, while protecting the natural and social assets that make the region distinct and attractive.

This CEDS document is a result of public input, CEDS Advisory Committee meetings, a systematic distribution of draft documents, and active feedback. The process was enhanced by a review of a variety of community plans, planning documents and other community reports.

The foundation of this document comes from the communities that make up the Region 9, including the five counties of Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma and San Juan, plus the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribes. This plan builds upon these communities' economic development efforts, goals, and strategies.

More specifically, the CEDS:

- Summarizes the economic condition of the region
- Coordinates local economic development interests in a regional context
- Identifies viable economic development projects and initiatives
- Develops goals and strategies for implementing economic development projects and initiatives, and
- Facilitates eligibility for federal and state economic development funding.

While the document is a product of Region 9 (and is required to qualify for Economic Development Administration (EDA) assistance), the CEDS document is meant to be a working plan for all local governments, community entities and respective economic development organizations. Region 9 also works to disseminate the CEDS information to state, local, and regional organizations. It is useful for anyone who desires to understand their local economy and work to improve the community in which they live. The full CEDS is updated every five years, and each County's profile and Community Development Action Plan (CDAPs) is updated on a two-year cycle. Through the region's continuing communication and outreach that encourages partnership-building, public engagement and participation, many, if not all, of the goals identified in the CEDS can be addressed.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLANS (CDAPS)

Important component of the CEDS are the Community Development Action Plans (CDAPs), which were developed for each county in the region. The CDAPs are a list of short-term projects (defined as two years or less) that address specific projects in the areas of economic and community development. The initial drafts of the CDAPs were developed through interviews with key community stakeholders, and those working on/ or planning community projects. The CDAPs were presented at various community and public meetings, and distributed for public comment. The final drafts were presented to each county's Board of Commissioners for approval. The approved copies are included in this document.

The CDAPs are useful tools for organizations working with communities and can be one central source for understanding the full range of projects that are in process, or are desired. They help to define specific projects, their expected outcomes, action steps towards completion, partners in the project, available resources, and any gaps in resources or organization.

The CDAP covers three broad categories including 1) public infrastructure and services; 2) economic development, and 3) housing. Within the broader categories there are sub-components that have been added throughout the years to make the CDAPs more responsive to community needs. For example, the CDAP formats have changed in each CEDS publication based on community feedback. Currently, the format lists: the project, primary partners, available resources (including funding), expected outcomes and action steps. The CDAP also provides a column for ranking each project as a "high, medium or low" priority. Communities requested that more specific prioritization and time frames for implementation be included for many reasons. The reasons include:

- Even a low priority project will be completed before a high priority one if funding is available.
- Projects get behind schedule.
- Listing specific timeframes cause the CDAP to quickly look inaccurate and not be utilized.
- Listing specific timeframes requires too much guesswork.
- Listing a project on the CDAP is a way to make it a community priority.

Current CDAPs only list projects with a two year window to completion. The CDAP categories include, but are not limited to:

Public Infrastructure and Services

1. Public Infrastructure
 - Gas, electric, water, sewer, solid waste, recycling
 - Transportation
 - Telecommunications
2. Services
 - Arts and culture
 - Education
 - Childcare
 - Fire protection
 - Health & Human Services
 - Land use
 - Public Lands
 - Parks and recreation
 - Public safety
 - Historic Preservation

Economic Development

1. Business expansion and retention
 - Retention – incentives to keep businesses in the community,
 - Capital for business expansion, i.e. revolving loan funds
 - Recruitment of new businesses
 - Development of infrastructure, i.e. industrial parks
 - Leadership
 - Youth
2. Tourism
 - Market development / targeting
3. Workforce development / training
4. Agriculture

Housing

- Housing availability
- Development of affordable housing
- Fair housing programs

Guidelines for CDAP Review & Project Additions

Region 9 updates and monitors the Community Development Action Plans for Archuleta, La Plata, Montezuma, Dolores and San Juan Counties in an ongoing cycle.

Every Five Years:

- Community meetings are held in each county for CDAP input.
- The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is revised and updated CDAPs are included as part of the document.

Every Two Years:

The Community Action Development Plans (CDAPs) are:

- Updated per county/municipality by Region 9, but county commissioners* may revise their county's CDAP at any time.
- Include projects with completion dates with a timeframe of two years or less.
- Reviewed by community stakeholders.
- Projects are prioritized by community groups and then confirmed or revised by the appropriate county board of commissioners.
- Signed by county commissioners.

Every Year:

- Additional projects may be submitted for inclusion into the CDAP. If approved by the CEDS Advisory Committee, they are listed as addendums to the current CDAP.
- Additional projects are added twice a year (January & June).

If a project is submitted out of cycle due to timing or grant applications, the project will be brought to a quarterly meeting of the Region 9 Board of Directors for review and approval. *Region 9 should be notified of any changes to a county CDAP approved by the County Commissioners.

Criteria for Adding CDAP Projects out of Cycle:

Is the proposed project required to be part of a community plan?

Is project happening before next CDAP revision?

Does project fit a CDAP definition?

CEDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The key to a good CEDS is an on-going, participatory planning process that includes input from the CEDS Advisory Committee. Region 9's CEDS Advisory Committee was established in 2001, separate from the Board of Directors. The CEDS Advisory Committee oversees the development of an accurate, unbiased, comprehensive, collaborative and balanced document that describes and informs the communities of Region 9's Economic Development District about their economic development strategies, priorities, goals and challenges. The CEDS Advisory Committee meets at least twice a year.

The committee membership targets representation from each county's economic development organization, public sector community leaders, the United States Forest Service, private sector representatives, and selected Region 9 board members. The representation of the committee meets Economic Development Agency requirements for community diversity. **A list of the CEDS Committee as of January 2006, along with their area of expertise is listed in Appendix 1.**

The duties of the CEDS Advisory Committee are as follows:

- Advise/oversee the support staff that produces the CEDS 5-year plan.
- Help Identify and set goals and strategies of the different regions for yearly CEDS updates.
- Ensure the CEDS Advisory Committee reflects the diversity of Southwest Colorado.
- Establish community priorities/goals/timeline for the CEDS document.
- Set strategic direction for the CEDS' process/work plan.
- Support local governments and community groups with planning, expertise and technical assistance for economic development efforts.
- Uphold CEDS vision statement.
- Assist communities to prioritize their specific projects in the CDAPs

COMMUNITY INPUT PROCESS

Data Gathering

Extensive data was gathered to answer: *Where is each county economically?* This question is very critical since goal setting and strategic planning must rest upon sound data collection. For each county, and the region as a whole, there is data presented relating to population, infrastructure, county government, county revenues, land use, transportation issues, services, labor force, employment and income by sector, employment trends, income, base analysis of each county's economy, retail sales and more. This data is compiled into *Community Profiles* for each county and are presented in this CEDS document. New to the 2006 report is information on the social and economic impacts of 2nd homeowners, from a Region 9 funded study. This study is still in progress, but findings to date are included in the profiles.

Input from Communities

While data collection is important in economic development strategic planning, an equally important consideration is defining what communities want, what they think is going on with their economies, how they perceive their challenges and opportunities, and what they see as solutions. Meetings were held with key stakeholders in each community. This included county/town staff, human service agency representatives, economic development organizations, and nonprofit agencies. The purpose of these meetings was to select and begin prioritizing each community's goals. **A list of all the organizations and groups that supplied input is listed in Appendix 2.**

Goals and Strategies

Once the data was compiled, the community meetings completed and the CDAPs drafted, the CEDS Advisory Committee met to develop goals and strategies from the information. These goals and strategies, both local and regional, represent the action-oriented element of the CEDS and are based on community data, extensive community input and strategic thinking.

Vision Statement

The overall CEDS process allows for the formulation of a clear vision statement. A vision statement is an overall "compass" for where communities want to head in the future. Through gathering community level input and analyzing previous vision statements, a *Regional Vision* was compiled. This vision paints a picture of desired economic development for the region.

“We strive to encourage economic development that preserves our small-town and traditional heritage, takes care of our natural resources, and provides opportunities for our children to stay in Southwest Colorado.”

EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT

There are many different types of goals and actions listed in the CEDS plan, each requiring either a qualitative or quantitative evaluation strategy. Thus, the two evaluation strategies that will be used include a) tracking on and reporting economic indicators; and b) documenting the progress or completion of individual projects. This will be accomplished by Region 9, Region 9's partners, other entities (e.g. non-profits and governments) and/or by local economic development groups. As stated in the CEDS plan, accomplishing all of the goals and actions listed will take the resources and efforts of all sectors, not just Region 9.

Evaluation tools will include: a yearly economic base analysis; the *Region 9 Report, Pathways to Healthier Communities; Retail Data for Decision Makers; the Four Corner's Economic Quarterly; The Social & Economic Effects of 2nd Homes; The Southwest Colorado 2030 and 2035 Transportation Plans; and the Enterprise Zone Benchmarks Report*. These tools will be used in the evaluation process to measure our regional economy.

Base Analysis.

Our region will continue to work with the Colorado Division of Local Government- Demography Section to refine the data related to ES 202 Labor Market information and Bureau of Economic Analysis. This data does the following:

- Allows each county in the region to track jobs and employment income for their economies as a whole (total employment), and to distinguish the Base Industry portions of their economies - those jobs that bring in dollars from outside of the local economy. Base Analysis will be discussed at length in following sections.
- Tells each county which employment sectors are strong in terms of income, wages and numbers of jobs, and which sectors are declining and need assistance. This information will be used by Region 9, and local economic development groups, in their strategic planning.
- Shows our region the income and jobs attributed to "amenity migration", which is related to population and economic growth - a major issue for Southwest Colorado. Amenity migration will be further discussed in following sections.

The Region 9 Report

Region 9 publishes the *Region 9 Report*, which tracks such data as population growth or decline, employment and income, labor force statistics, retail sales, total personal income, and per capita income for each county in the region. This information provides a regional snapshot of each county's progress towards achieving the goals and strategies outlined in the CEDS plan. The next update of the Region 9 Report will be in the fall of 2006. This report will be done every other year.

Pathways to Healthier Communities

This "healthy communities indicator" report presents, monitors and tracks various aspects of communities in Region 9. The purpose of the report is to present community indicators. Because economic development is intricately tied to all community issues even healthcare, childcare, and the environment, the utility of *Pathways* is that it presents a broader picture beyond the income and employment indicators. Region 9 is a strong partner in this project and a user of this important tool. This report is updated every two to three years.

Social & Economic Effects of 2nd Homes

Region 9 commissioned a study to look at the social and economic impacts of second homes in the region. In evaluating assessor data, 40% of residential properties, vacant and agricultural lands are owned by non-locals. The potential economic impacts on the region are still being evaluated. This report is available online at www.scan.org under Region 9 publications. Findings from this study are profiled throughout this CEDS document.

Retail Data for Decision Makers

This report, initially commissioned by Region 9 in 2004, was just updated in August 2006. The report uses data from 1999 - 2005 retail sales to provide insights about which retail sectors (in each county) are meeting their potential, and which are experiencing "leakage". This report is available online at www.scan.org under Region 9 publications.

The Four Corner's Economic Quarterly

This is a quarterly report produced by Fort Lewis College, which examines impacts on the "local" economy. Initially a La Plata County publication, the former, *Econometer*, will be expanded to include other counties in the region.

2035 Regional Transportation Plan

Region 9 administers the Southwest Regional Transportation Planning Commission that is currently completing work on a 2035 Transportation Plan. This plan includes a list of priority transportation projects including intersections, transit, and design work. The completion of the listed priorities will be used to track regional progress in transportation. More information about transportation is available in this document. This report is done about every 3 to 5 years.

Enterprise Zone Benchmarks

Region 9 administers the Enterprise Zone program. Accordingly, targets are established by county for the number of jobs created in various sectors, as well as the tax credits and dollars invested through the EZ program. Region 9 EDD will continue to set these targets with communities. The information provides a very concrete tool for measuring success of goals related to job creation and business expansion. This report is done annually.

In order to monitor whether priority community projects are being accomplished, projects listed in CDAPs since 2001, and completed, have been included in the CEDS in **Appendix 4**. This is the CEDS first opportunity to look at accomplishments since that last full document and future CEDS publications will be able to further evaluate the effectiveness of the CDAP process in the area communities.