SOUTHWEST REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

January 11, 2023

Members Present: Keith Thibault, Chairman, *Southwestern Community Services;* Sarah Bollinger, *Town of Swanzey;* Steve Fortier, *NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs;* Med Kopczynski, *City of Keene*; Danica Melone, *Town of Peterborough;* Ed Merrell, *Town of Jaffrey;* Cody Morrison, *Monadnock Economic Development Corporation;* Luca Paris, *The Greater Keene and Peterborough Chamber;* Sara Powell, *The Hannah Grimes Center for Entrepreneurship*; Ron Rzasa, *Town of Chesterfield;* Bruce Smith, *Town of Westmoreland*; Margaret Sharra, *Town of Winchester*; Scott Young, *Mascoma Bank.*

Staff: Todd Horner, *Assistant Director*; Sean O'Donnell, *Planner*.

Guests: Tom Bascom, *Town of Greenfield;* Davis Bernstein, *Office of Congresswoman Kuster*; Michael Branley, *Town of Swanzey;* Sara Carbonneau, *Town of Winchester*; Julie Glosner, *NH Small Business Development Center*; Rachel Roderick, *U.S. Small Business Administration;* Christine Roubidoux, *Town of Temple*; Julie Schoelzel, *Greater Keene and Peterborough Chamber*; Mark Tigan, *Winchester Economic Development Corporation*.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Thibault called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and introductions were made.

II. Minutes of July 13 and October 27, 2022

Motion: To approve the minutes of July 13, 2022 as submitted.

Motion by Med Kopczynski, seconded by Ron Rzasa. Approved by unanimous vote.

Motion: To approve the minutes of October 27, 2023 as submitted.

Motion by Med Kopczynski, seconded by Margaret Sharra. Approved by unanimous vote.

III. South-West Collaborative Economic Development Region (SW CEDR)

Todd Horner provided an overview of the South-West Collaborative Economic Development Region (SW CEDR), an initiative launched by the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs (NH BEA) to enhance collaboration among regional economic development stakeholders and to improve communication between those stakeholders and state agency staff, particularly those housed within NH BEA.

Todd Horner noted that although there are similarities between the EDAC and SW CEDR, one key distinction is the respective geographic scale of each group. While the EDAC focuses on the Monadnock Region, the SW CEDR's area of interest includes both the Monadnock Region and the Upper Valley, loosely understood to extend throughout the service area of SWRPC and the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC). SWRPC is co-facilitating the SW CEDR with UVLSRPC and NH BEA.

The SW CEDR is currently focusing on building capacity in the region to pursue grant opportunities for community and economic development projects. Recent federal legislation has precipitated a significant increase in federal funding opportunities. There is a question, however, about whether under-resourced, smaller communities and organizations will have the capacity to pursue these opportunities. The SW CEDR is currently collecting project nominations in order to identify those that could benefit from grant writing assistance. The CEDR has a limited amount of funding to invest in grant writing services for a few priority projects. Even though the CEDR won't be able to provide grant writing services to all nominated projects, it will endeavor to connect those projects with other technical assistance and funding opportunities.

Projects can be nominated at the following URL: bit.ly/swcedr. Nominating a project for SW CEDR assistance will also qualify it for consideration as a priority project in the *Our Economy: A Strategy for Southwest NH*, the latest iteration of the Monadnock Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), currently under development.

IV. Our Economy: A Strategy for Southwest NH

a) Analysis of Economic Mobility and other Metrics

Sean O'Donnell provided an update regarding data analysis being conducted as part of *Our Economy: A Strategy for Southwest NH*. He discussed a variety of economic metrics, including workforce projections, economic mobility, and economic connectedness - a form of social capital that recent research has identified as being key to facilitating upward economic mobility. He also shared analysis from tracktherecovery.org, an initiative of the research group Opportunity Insights that leverages big data to provide up-to-date information on economic trends since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. Presentation slides are attached.

b) Review of Draft Goals and Objectives

Todd Horner notified meeting attendees that draft goals and objectives for *Our Economy* are available online at https://www.oureconomy.info/goals-objectives/. These goals and objectives are intended to help set a strategic direction for economic and community development in the region. They also aim to create a map to facilitate partnerships and collaboration on matters related to community and economic development.

c) Priority Project Solicitation

Todd Horner reiterated that projects submitted via the SW CEDR nomination form will also be considered for inclusion in *Our Economy: A Strategy for Southwest NH*. Towns or organizations who sponsored a project that was previously accepted in the CEDS will receive a pre-filled form with information on file for that project. Project sponsors will be asked to make any necessary changes or updates to reflect the project's current status. Nominating a project for SW CEDR consideration is not required for inclusion in *Our Economy*, but doing so would be a good way to nominate the project for both initiatives through submission of a single form. For reference, the last slide from the meeting slide deck (attached) lists all projects previously accepted in the CEDS.

V. Partner Updates

Steve Fortier shared that the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) recently designated Cheshire County as economically "distressed." The designation qualifies NBRC applicants in Cheshire County for an 80-20 cost share (meaning 80% federal funding to 20% local match funding), up from the 50-50 ratio in effect during previous years. He also indicated that NBRC's definition of "infrastructure" will shift in 2023 to include a wider array of project types.

Mark Tigan said that the Winchester Economic Development Corporation has run into a particular barrier when pursuing NBRC funding. NBRC has indicated that they cannot invest grant dollars into extension of utility-owned electrical infrastructure. He mentioned that the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) has exercised flexibility on this point. Steve Fortier acknowledged that this is a factor currently constraining deployment of NBRC funds. Mark Tigan also noted that enabling applicants to count currently owned land assets as in-kind match would improve the ability of cash-poor organizations to access NBRC funding.

VI. Other Matters

There were no other matters.

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2023.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Horner
Assistant Director

Southwest Region Planning Commission

Economic Development Advisory Committee

January 11, 2023

SWRPC

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Minutes of July 13 and October 27, 2022
3. South-West Comprehensive Economic Development Region (SW CEDR)
4. Our Economy: A Strategy for Southwest NH
   a. Analysis of Economic Mobility and other Metrics
   b. Review of Draft Goals and Objectives
   c. Priority Project Solicitation
5. Partner Updates
6. Other Matters
7. Adjourn

SWRPC

South-West CEDR

An Overview

1. It's an initiative launched by the Department of Business and Economic Affairs (NH BEA) to facilitate coordination among regional economic development stakeholders and state partners.
2. The SW CEDR, 1 of 4 CEDRs established across the state, includes both the Monadnock Region and the Upper Valley.
3. The SW CEDR's current focus is building regional capacity to access funding and other resources that support local economic development.
4. SWRPC is partnering with UVLSRPC and NH BEA to facilitate the work of the group.

SW CEDR

South-West CEDR

Current Activities

1. Taking incremental steps to disentangle and navigate the web of resources available for rural economic development, i.e., this →
2. Compiling economic development projects in order to identify potential funding sources.
3. Prioritizing a limited number of projects for grant writing and other technical assistance.
4. Considering future formation of an U.S. EDA-recognized Economic Development District.
5. Working with NH BEA staff to develop educational programming.
6. Roster development.

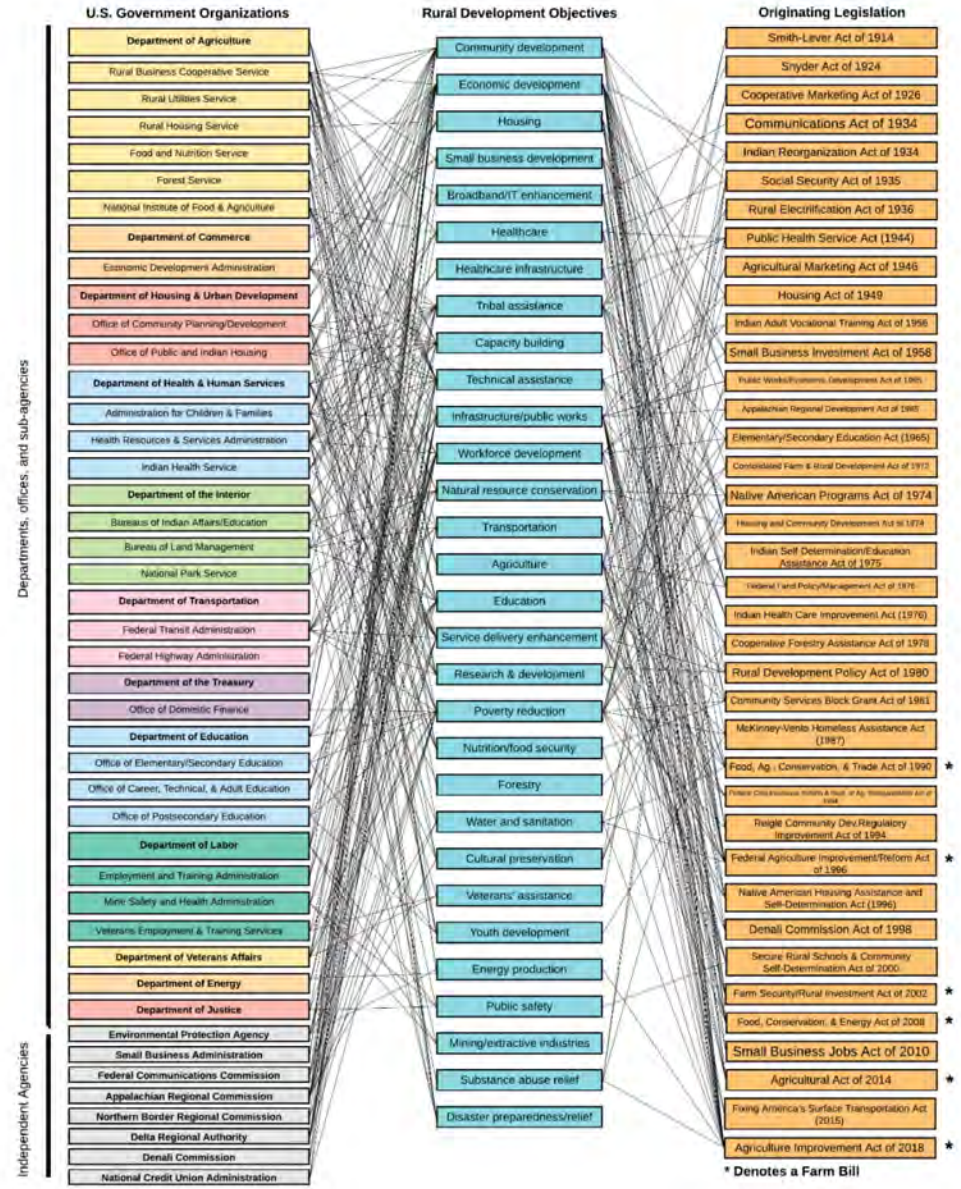


Image Credit: Brookings Institute

OUR ECONOMY

A Strategy for Southwest NH

SWRPC

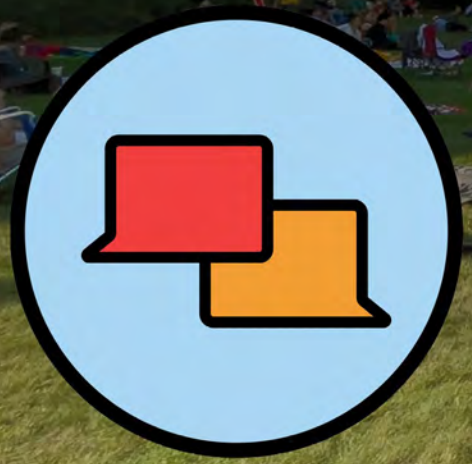
What is

OUR ECONOMY?

BUILD KNOWLEDGE

SET GOALS

TAKE ACTION



OUR ECONOMY

Data Analysis Update

OUR ECONOMY

Goals and Objectives

- Establish a strategic direction for regional economic development efforts.
- Create a map for partnerships and collaboration.
- Serve as a framework for identifying priority projects.
- Help funders and resource providers understand how a project fits within its regional context.

OUR ECONOMY

Goals and Objectives

- Revised goals and objectives live on the Our Economy website: oureconomy.info/goals-objectives
- The goals cover 6 areas:
  - Population
  - Physical infrastructure
  - Social infrastructure
  - Business infrastructure
  - Sustainability
  - Capacity & coordination

OUR ECONOMY

Project Solicitation

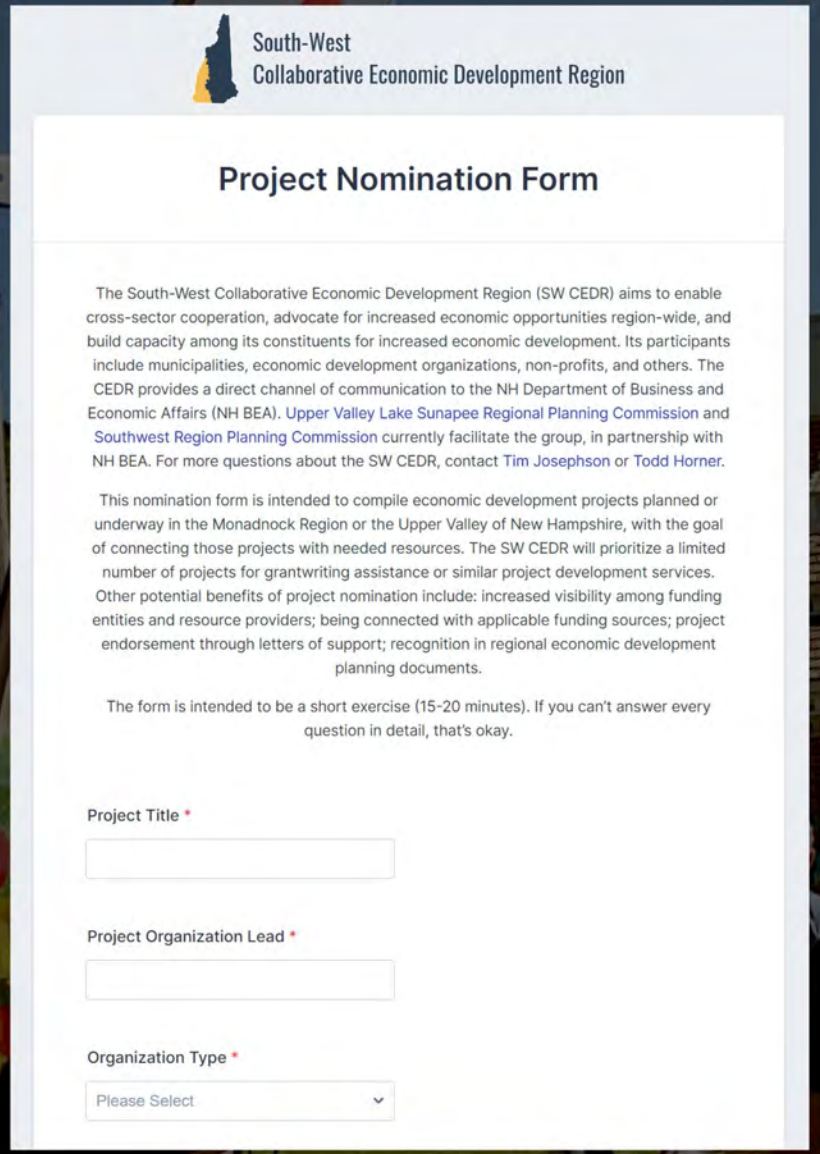
- Generating excitement and buy-in about the CEDS process.
- Helping regional organizations keep their finger on the pulse of on-the-ground economic development efforts.
- Identifying where technical assistance is needed to help bring projects from concept to implementation.
- Supporting funding proposals.
- Prompts communities and organizations to look beyond their silos for opportunities to collaborate.

Potential Process for Identifying Priority Projects

OUR ECONOMY

Project Solicitation

- Our Economy projects can be nominated through the active SW CEDR form.
- If project is nominated for consideration by SW CEDR, it will automatically be put forward for consideration under Our Economy.
- There will be additional opportunity to nominate projects for Our Economy.



South-West
Collaborative Economic Development Region

Project Nomination Form

The South-West Collaborative Economic Development Region (SW CEDR) aims to enable cross-sector cooperation, advocate for increased economic opportunities region-wide, and build capacity among its constituents for increased economic development. Its participants include municipalities, economic development organizations, non-profits, and others. The CEDR provides a direct channel of communication to the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs (NH BEA). Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission and Southwest Region Planning Commission currently facilitate the group, in partnership with NH BEA. For more questions about the SW CEDR, contact Tim Josephson or Todd Horner.

This nomination form is intended to compile economic development projects planned or underway in the Monadnock Region or the Upper Valley of New Hampshire, with the goal of connecting those projects with needed resources. The SW CEDR will prioritize a limited number of projects for grantwriting assistance or similar project development services. Other potential benefits of project nomination include: increased visibility among funding entities and resource providers; being connected with applicable funding sources; project endorsement through letters of support; recognition in regional economic development planning documents.

The form is intended to be a short exercise (15-20 minutes). If you can't answer every question in detail, that's okay.

Project Title *

Project Organization Lead *

Organization Type *

Please Select

bit.ly/swcedr

Previously Accepted Projects

TAKE ACTION

Cheshire County Conservation District	Agriculture Business Development
Cheshire County, City of Keene, MEDC	Cheshire County Courthouse Expansion
Cheshire Medical Center	Healthy Monadnock 2020
City of Keene	Marlboro Street Corridor Improvements – Phase II
City of Keene	Winchester Street Reconstruction
City of Keene	Transportation Heritage Trail
City of Keene	Lower Winchester Street Reconstruction
City of Keene	Keene Recreation Center Renovation
City of Keene	Patricia T. Russell Park
City of Keene	Keene Downtown Improvements
City of Keene	Gigabit Keene
City of Keene	Gilbo Ave Utility Replacements in support of Arts and Culture Corridor
City of Keene	Parking Garage/ Intermodal Transportation Center on Gilbo Ave
City of Keene	Public Wireless/Smart Cities in Downtown Keene
City of Keene	Broadband Expansion in Keene
City of Keene, MEDC	Downtown Keene Railroad Land
Collaboration of local arts and cultural groups	ArtsAlive! Collaborative
Colonial Theatre/City of Keene/NH DRED	Colonial Theatre Sustainability
Franklin Pierce University, Town of Rindge	Age Restricted Active Adult Housing Initiative
Franklin Pierce University, Town of Rindge	Attraction of Retail Development
Jaffrey Civic Center	Jaffrey Civic Center
Keene and Peterborough Chamber of Commerce	Promoting the Monadnock Region
Keene Senior Center	Keene Senior Center Safety and Program Space Improvements
Keene State College	Regional Center for Advanced Manufacturing
MBV, MEDC, Town of Jaffrey, Webster St. LLC, Larry & Stephen Thibeault	WW Cross Building Redevelopment
MEDC	Keene ICE
MEDC	Arts and Cultural Corridor
Monadnock Buy Local	Monadnock Buy Local
Monadnock Food Co-op	The Local Crowd Monadnock
Park Theater, Town of Jaffrey, Franklin Pierce University	Jaffrey Park Theatre
Rindge Telecommunications Committee, Private Companies	Broadband Initiative
SWRPC	VT Yankee Nuclear Plant Closure and Tri-State Initiative
Town of Antrim	Downtown water flow improvement
Town of Antrim	Antrim Mill (former Goodell factory)
Town of Antrim	Great Brook River Walk
Town of Hinsdale, Hinsdale EDC, MEDC	Monument Road Industrial Park
Town of Jaffrey	Stone Arch Bridge Industrial Park water line extension
Town of Jaffrey	Town of Jaffrey Broadband Expansion
Town of Jaffrey	Cold Stone Spring Public Water System
Town of Jaffrey, NH DOT	Jaffrey Dogleg
Town of Peterborough	Peterborough Collaborative Energy Purchasing Program
Town of Peterborough	Stormwater management system
Town of Swanzey	Swanzey Industrial Park
Town of Swanzey	Swanzey Enterprise Zone
Town of Swanzey	Fire Pond Infrastructure Development
Town of Swanzey	West Swanzey Water and Sewer Infrastructure Improvements and Expansion
Town of Swanzey	Swanzey Broadband Initiative
Town of Winchester/ NH DES	Winchester Wastewater Improvements
Town of Winchester/ Winchester Economic Development Corporation	Stone Mountain Business Park
Towns of Hinsdale, NH and Brattleboro, VT, NH DOT, VTrans	Hinsdale, NH Brattleboro, VT Bridge
Towns of Stoddard, Antrim, and Hillsborough, NH DOT	Stoddard-Antrim-Hillsborough NH 9 ROW Purchase
Troy Redevelopment Group, Private Investors	Troy Mills Redevelopment
UNH, Network New Hampshire Now (NNHN), NH CDFA, MEDC, WCNH.net	NH FastRoads
UNH, the nine Regional Planning Commissions, NH DRED	NH Broadband Mapping and Planning Program