



Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 27, 2026
2:00 P.M.**

Via Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86892698994>

Or Call 669-900-6833, Meeting ID: 868 9269 8994

In-person option at MCEDD Office, 802 Chenoweth Loop, The Dalles, OR

AGENDA

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Estimated Time</u>	<u>Item</u>
Call to Order, Introductions <i>What do you want to see from this process?</i>	10 minutes	Discussion
2027 CEDS Launch <i>Discuss Committee Member Expectations, Draft Strategy Session Schedule, Committee Meeting Schedule</i>	40 minutes	Discussion, Decision
Public Comment	5 minutes	
Other New Business; Committee Members Updates		

Adjourn

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. If you have a disability that requires any special materials, services, or assistance, please contact the MCEDD office at 541-296-2266 (TTY 711) at least 48 hours before the meeting.

MCEDD is an equal opportunity lender, employer and provider.

Memorandum

To: MCEDD CEDS Steering Committee

From: Jessica Metta, Executive Director

Date: May 21, 2026

Re: Preparing for the 2027 CEDS

Overview of the CEDS

Development of the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is one of the most important roles that MCEDD plays in the region and is a requirement of the Partnership Planning grant we receive from the US Economic Development Administration (EDA). The EDA states that Economic Development Districts “help lead the locally-based, regionally driven economic development planning process that leverages the involvement of the public, private and non-profit sectors to establish a strategic blueprint (i.e., an economic development roadmap) for regional collaboration... known as a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).... A CEDS is the result of a ‘regionally-owned’ planning process designed to guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region. It provides a coordinating mechanism for individuals, organizations, local governments, and private industry to engage in a meaningful conversation and debate about the economic direction of their region” (from <https://www.eda.gov/about/economic-development-glossary/edd>).

While the MCEDD Board adopts a priority project list annually as part of the CEDS, the full rewrite is required every five years. Our last major rework was adopted in 2022; therefore, we are beginning the lengthy update process in 2026 with the goal of adoption of a new CEDS in 2027.

CEDS Strategy Committee

The CEDS is formally adopted by the MCEDD Board of Directors, but it can be developed by a separate strategy committee with a formal recommendation to the Board. In March, the MCEDD Board appointed a CEDS Strategy Committee to include a broader range of members. Members were suggested with consideration of geographic diversity, industry sector focus, a mix of public/ private/ nonprofit partners, and consideration of those otherwise underrepresented on the Board.

Under the committee structure, we retain the public process and comprehensive stakeholder engagement. MCEDD staff will compile the strategy, but the committee acts in a strong advisory capacity to staff and would ultimately present the Strategy to the Board for consideration of adoption. As an advisory committee to the Board, meetings of the committee are publicly noticed.

Expectations for CEDS Strategy Committee Members

The committee allows MCEDD to maximize staff resources with support and direction from the committee through:

- 1) Participation in committee meetings.
- 2) Outreach to your community to encourage participation in the strategy sessions.
- 3) Participation in strategy sessions as much as possible.
- 4) Reviewing draft materials as needed.

Discussion Request: *Provide agreement on expectations listed above.*

Proposed Strategy Process

In drafting the process to develop the CEDS, we consulted guidance from the EDA and best practices published by the National Association of Development Organizations. The series of meetings for the last update were all virtual as it was developed during COVID-19. For this round, we suggest returning to the practice of hosting meetings rotating through all our counties.

The series of meetings is designed to build on each other and build out sections of the Strategy. Each will include an overview of the County where the meeting is being held provided by local economic development partners. We also suggest including an optional tour as part of each event. Broad invitations to these meetings are sent to our economic development partners to allow for input into the strategy, with typically around 50-75 participants at each session. ***Please see the table with the draft schedule on the next page.***

For the last update, we had additional funds that allowed us to contract with The Next Door Inc. for focus groups to gather additional feedback from our Native American and Latino communities. We lack the extra funds this time and will look for other ways throughout the process to ensure those perspectives are still captured.

Discussion Request: *Share thoughts on the rotation, possible venues, specific industries you think we should be sure to include in the tours, or any other ideas/ concerns.*

Staff's Next Steps

- Seek sponsors to help cover meeting expenses like venue costs and refreshments (est. \$1000-1500 needed per session). Committee suggestions for sponsors are welcome!
- Secure venue/ tour/ speakers for July's event.
- Release press release about the effort and push announcements through MCEDD's channels.
- Gather economic and demographic data for the July event. Potential for contract with University of Oregon's Institute for Policy Research and Engagement.

Discussion Request: *Share thoughts on Committee meeting frequency.*

Focus Area	Meeting Location	Tour Option: One of our growing businesses	Welcome Speaker	Community Overview Speaker(s)	CEDS Steering Comm. Leads
July 2026: Demographics and Data: A summary background of the economic development conditions of the region, including resilience concerns.	CGCC Lecture Hall	CGCC Skills Center, invite a few biz who use it? OR Cherry Growers?	MCEDD county commissioner or city rep	Jacob Anderson, Andrea Klaas, Andrew Danies	Andrew/ Kristyn
September 2026: Sector Focus Areas, including more in-depth industry cluster analysis and how resilient each is.	Hegewald Center or Fairgrounds	Slingshot? Backwoods?	MCEDD county commissioner or city rep	Kevin Waters, Pat Albaugh	Kevin/ Hannah
October 2026: Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, including resiliency focus.	Goldendale Observatory or Klickitat County bldg	Observatory, Klickitat Valley Health?	MCEDD county commissioner or city rep	Chelsey Jones, Margie Ziegler	Chelsey
November 2026: Vision and Goals, utilizing the annual Columbia Gorge Economic Symposium for even broader participation.	The Ruins	Cardinal IG? Pfriem? Trillium?	MCEDD county commissioner or city rep	Allison Williams, Kevin Greenwood, Jeremiah Blue	Mark
<i>December 2026: smaller group meetings to flesh out the Strategies within each Goal area: Strong businesses/ Robust workforce/ Resilient infrastructure/ Powerful regional collaboration</i>					
January 2027: Strategies - development of strategies under each Goal Area	Wasco Event Center or Moro Senior Center	Driving tour of wind/ solar /wheat? Azure standard?	MCEDD county commissioner or city rep	County Commissioner, Michelle Colby	Andrew
February 2027: Measuring Success -crafting metrics to show progress.	Arlington	Ask Jed Crowther	MCEDD county commissioner or city rep	County Commissioner, Jed Crowther	