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Market Street brings original insights and clarity to the evaluation and revitalization of the places where people live, work and grow. Through honest and informed assessments, *Market Street* can equip you with the tools to create meaningful change. Our solutions successfully merge our experience and expertise with the economic and social realities of our clients. *Market Street's* community clients are successful at creating stronger programs, increasing operational budgets, and creating new quality jobs that improve the quality of life in their communities.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Recent events in the national and global economy are unprecedented and have certainly affected all of California and the Coachella Valley. This project represents a great opportunity for the Valley to assess its current competitive position and prepare for what will be a new and different future.

Understanding this reality, the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership (CVEP)—working with key local partners—has launched a process to create a new regional *Blueprint* for the Coachella Valley. Funding support for the *Blueprint* was provided by the cities of Cathedral City, Coachella, Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, Indio, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, and Rancho Mirage, Riverside County, the Imperial Irrigation District, University of California Riverside Palm Desert Graduate Center, the Palm Springs Desert Resorts Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and the Building Industry Association.

National economic development consulting firm *Market Street Services* was retained to help facilitate this effort. At the end of the months-long process, the Valley will have an actionable, consensus and forward-thinking strategy to become competitive for the high-value jobs being created in the New Economy.

The components of the process include:

Competitive Assessment: This report included an analysis of a combination of factors that determines a community's competitiveness as a place of business for entrepreneurship, existing, expanding, and relocating companies. The key findings and recommendations of these reports helped inform the development of the Coachella Valley's *Blueprint*. Original research into the latest economic structural dynamics in Coachella Valley was complemented by an understanding of the trends affecting the local population. *Market Street* compared Coachella Valley to the Wine Country in California, Tahoe-Reno in Nevada and California, and Naples, Florida. The Valley was also profiled against the state of California, and the nation so the region's competitiveness could be put into perspective. Extensive qualitative input collected through interviews, focus groups and an online survey supported the quantitative research.

Target Business Analysis: The Analysis included quantitative and qualitative research to determine the most promising business sectors for Coachella Valley to pursue. Many times, communities lack focus or attempt to capture opportunities that do not fit their assets and reality. This Analysis provided specific information and a needs assessment on future sectors for the Valley to pursue.

Marketing Assessment: The Assessment included a thorough review and assessment of local marketing efforts to determine if they reflect best-practice

methods for increasing awareness and investment in the Coachella Valley. Specific recommendations for enhancing the effort are contained in this *Blueprint* strategy.

Best-Practices Analysis: The report identified a number of communities similar to the Coachella Valley and how they’ve achieved success. While there was no attempt to directly “copy” these programs, there were lessons that were applied to the development of the Valley’s *Blueprint*.

Blueprint Strategy: The four preceding research components led to the development of the *Economic Blueprint* strategy itself. The plan confirms and enhances existing programs and efforts and provides recommendations for developing the capacity necessary to be competitive in today’s economy.

Implementation Plan: The final and perhaps most important step in this process involves centering on “how” the strategy will be put into practice. There will be a specific “game plan” created to address each goal in the strategy. Benchmarks and measures will be assigned and a one-year priority Action Plan will be followed by plans for the following years. The *Implementation Plan* will enable local stakeholders to successfully activate the *Blueprint*’s recommendations.

At the end of the *Blueprint* development process, the Coachella Valley will have – for the first time – a comprehensive regional strategy to unite local governments and constituencies behind a forward-thinking action plan for positive community and economic change. It will not be implemented wholly by any one organization or entity, but rather will benefit from a comprehensive regional action plan to bring the strategy’s recommendations to fruition.

Indeed, the implementation of the strategy will bring together regional stakeholders in new and different ways to partner on programs and efforts designed to enable the Coachella Valley to prosper.

The Steering Committee would like to acknowledge the dedication, insight, guidance and hard work that the late Riverside County Supervisor Roy Wilson contributed to this process.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A diverse Steering Committee was established to provide guidance and leadership over the planning process. The Committee was selected from both public and private sectors to provide broad representation from local constituencies. The group's oversight ensured that the development of research reports and the *Blueprint* itself was reflective of the Coachella Valley's true competitive issues and opportunities.

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INTRODUCTION

The Coachella Valley has come together to shape a comprehensive regional strategy that will define its future success. The *Blueprint* plan is an ambitious, comprehensive and forward-thinking strategy that addresses the challenges the Valley faces to be competitive and the opportunities to better diversify its economy, raise local wealth, train youth and adults for high-wage careers and continue to enhance the region's enviable quality of life.

Moving forward with the *Blueprint* will require that Valley communities and leadership think differently about what constitutes community and economic development and regional cooperation/participation. While its history has been focused on local growth – predominantly in residential, retail and hospitality development – the Valley's future must be increasingly directed towards regional solutions. Both internal and external pursuit of employment growth will be defined by a more unified and collective approach to growth. The Valley must strive to speak with one voice to best advance its economic development prospects. It will not be simple to incorporate a more regional focus to the Coachella Valley's community and economic development activities, nor will it happen overnight. But failing to do so will threaten the Valley's evolution to a more diverse, year-round economy. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Valley's public and private leadership to come together in new and positive ways to ensure that the region's promise is fulfilled.

The *Blueprint* strategy focuses on four primary goal areas. These are:

- Regionalism
- Economic Diversification
- Workforce Excellence
- Quality of Place

The four goals are interrelated and must be approached systematically. Failure to achieve results in one goal area significantly threatens the prospects of the others. Economic development has never been more competitive than it is today. If the Coachella Valley does not succeed, another community will.

Because the Valley is starting late in the regional community and economic development game, it has further to go to be competitive with communities that have been thinking and acting regionally for years – some, even decades. Patience, persistence and positivity will be required. But the Coachella Valley has an ace up its sleeve that puts it ahead of many regions trying to reinvent themselves in the New Economy. The Valley is a place people – and companies – want to be. The challenge will be to create a community that embraces its regional identity and acknowledges that local success benefits the entire Valley.

coachella valley
blueprint

REGIONALISM

ISSUE

Though regions are now the definitive geography for economic competitiveness, the Coachella Valley has little significant history of thinking or acting regionally in terms of comprehensive economic development.

GOAL

The establishment of a true regional identity and framework that will enable Coachella Valley communities to compete and thrive in the global marketplace.

OBJECTIVE 1: PROMOTE A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF REGIONAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

The effectiveness of the Coachella Valley's regional programs and initiatives will partially be determined by the degree to which local public and private leaders, economic development staff, and key stakeholders embrace their roles as stewards and participants in regional efforts. A region that exists in name alone will not succeed in competition against those that truly operate as cohesive units.

Strategy 1: Provide opportunities for Valley constituencies to be informed about the benefits of regional economic partnerships.

ACTION 1: Develop a volunteer Speaker's Bureau to make presentations on regional economic competitiveness and development.

- 1) Seek participation from respected and influential public and private leaders.
- 2) Develop a PowerPoint presentation and printed materials for use at the informational meetings.
- 3) Secure commitments from local groups and membership to support regional economic development efforts through donations of time or resources.
- 4) Ensure that the presentations are made to both English- and Spanish-speaking constituencies.

ACTION 2: Organize and lead public information sessions to enable residents and businesses to become educated on regional issues and strategies.

- 1) Leverage all necessary partnerships to effectively promote the sessions.
- 2) Strive to make the sessions interactive to give attendees the opportunity to ask questions and/or respond to inquiries using electronic-voting devices.
- 3) Consider hosting sessions at popular Valley events, festivals, and gatherings.
 - Secure time on event programs or space at festivals to promote the Valley's regional economic and community efforts.

ACTION 3: Secure commitments from the Valley's English- and Spanish-language media to consistently promote and report on regional issues, programs and achievements.

- 1) Consider producing updates on implementation of the *Blueprint* strategy to be published as a newspaper insert or broadcast as a monthly feature on television and radio news programs.
 - Ensure information is provided to both English- and Spanish-language media audiences.
- 2) Ensure that progress towards attainment of performance benchmarks is consistently communicated to all media partners.

ACTION 4: Publish a quarterly newsletter on the *Blueprint* process.

- 1) Feature updates and information on each goal area and corresponding initiative.
- 2) Provide printed copies of the newsletter and post the file electronically on government, chamber, institutional and regional organization websites.
- 3) Determine the need to produce the newsletter in Spanish as well as English.

Strategy 2: Connect influential Valley leadership with representatives from best-practice regional programs.**ACTION 1: Coordinate trips for key Valley leadership to visit top Western U.S. regions.**

- 1) Schedule trips roughly once per year.

- 2) Adjust invitee lists to ensure that a broad range of Valley stakeholder groups are represented by trip attendees.
- 3) Plan trip itineraries to include engagements with local public and private officials and visits to local program-sites and developments realized through regional development efforts.
- 4) Coordinate meetings with representatives from local governments in the host community to highlight the benefits of regional partnerships.

ACTION 2: Invite - as feasible - Valley leaders to attend regional conferences and organizations' annual meetings.

- 1) Leverage programs with a regional-competitiveness focus or component for the educational benefit of Coachella valley elected officials, department staff, corporate executives, institutional directors and influential public citizens.
- 2) Ensure attendees communicate the key “takeaways” of the events back to their local constituencies.

OBJECTIVE 2: BETTER LINK COACHELLA VALLEY COMMUNITIES THROUGH PROGRAMS THAT FOSTER REGIONAL IDENTITY- AND RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING.

The process of becoming a unified regional entity involves much more than just acknowledgement of its need. Proactive, directed and ongoing effort must be applied to the bringing together of diverse communities and constituencies under the Coachella Valley banner. This process is often viewed as contrary to localities' instincts to prioritize their own economic and community interests. However, if the true benefits of regionalism can be embraced, its component communities will ultimately appreciate the proven benefits of collective participation, cooperation and coordination.

Strategy 3: Host regional issues forums and conferences.

ACTION 1: Foster partnerships between the Valley's regional economic development organization, CVAG, Riverside EDA, Coachella Valley Water District, BIA, and other organizations with a regional focus to design, coordinate and host the events.

- 1) Ensure the forums effectively convey the challenges and benefits of regional participation to impact key issues and strategies.
- 2) Engage local chambers, governments and stakeholder groups in issue-identification efforts and the planning and development of regional events.
- 3) Plan events – as necessary – to inform Spanish-language speakers as well as English speakers.
- 4) Heavily promote the events through all necessary local channels.

Strategy 4: Support the creation of new or enhanced regional stakeholder networks.

ACTION 1: Consider development of a Regional Council of Chambers.

- 1) Formalize a partnership of Coachella Valley chambers of commerce through the creation of a Council of local chamber representatives.
 - Leverage existing regional organizations to inform the Council of potential opportunities for discussion and engagement on regional issues that could be impacted by local activity.
- 2) Apply the influence of the Council towards advocacy and lobbying efforts directed towards enhancement of the Valley's business climate and economic prospects.

ACTION 2: Assess the potential to create additional regional networks.

- 1) Initiate discussions with regional and local constituency leadership to determine the viability and benefit of developing networking platforms and associations.
- 2) Potential networking opportunities include:
 - Faith-based community
 - Gay and lesbian community

- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Social service entities
- Neighborhood groups
- Youth-serving organizations

Strategy 5: Fund and develop an internal marketing and branding initiative.

ACTION 1: Partner in the design, programming and implementation of the effort.

- 1) Assemble a roster of local stakeholder groups – including CVAG to leverage its current initiatives – to collaborate on the development of the internal marketing initiative.
 - Pool personnel and programs from Valley organizations as effectively as possible for the common purpose of internal marketing.
- 2) Better coordinate local stakeholder groups around a consensus brand and message to promote the Coachella Valley to those who live and work there.
 - Take utmost advantage of public relations and marketing efforts already being implemented by local stakeholder groups.
 - Coordinate messages as necessary to speak with one voice to the community related to priority issues and efforts.
- 3) Seek a local public relations firm that could potentially offer in-kind services to develop and help implement the program.
- 4) Translate elements of the program into Spanish as needed.

ACTION 2: Consider the potential to create a training “curriculum” from the internal marketing initiative.

- 1) Utilize the curriculum as a tool to train local employees and business “ambassadors” in the nuances of the region, its history and existing/future resources.
 - Offer elements of the curriculum in Spanish for non-English-speaking employers.

OBJECTIVE 3: BUILD THE CAPACITY TO ADVOCATE FOR ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO COACHELLA VALLEY CONSTITUENCIES.

Strength in numbers is one of the most important reasons for communities to develop effective regional partnerships. Whether the matter is regional, statewide or national in scope, bringing a strong, united coalition to bear on the issue exerts much greater influence on decision-makers than piecemeal lobbying.

Strategy 6: Partner with CVAG to assess local needs and advocate for development of needed capacity enhancements.**ACTION 1: Support CVAG in its development of a list of priority infrastructure needs and a strategy to develop enhanced capacity.**

- 1) Ensure representation from interests specific to water supply and distribution; roads and highways; transit capacity; power supply and transmission; flood control; sewer capacity; and Broadband and wireline communications.
 - Fully leverage any and all existing constituency groups.
 - Prioritize the maintenance and enhancement of the I-10 corridor.
- 2) Inform the priority development list with key needs of the private sector and development community.
- 3) Leverage influential public and private leadership to compel regional and state agencies to prioritize the Valley's list of key projects.
 - Use key projects as priorities for the Valley Action Group's agenda.

Strategy 7: Develop an annual Coachella Valley Joint Legislative Agenda for the Valley Action Group to leverage.**ACTION 1: Conduct a discussion process to bring regional partners together to achieve consensus on the Valley's top legislative priorities for the coming year.**

- 1) Ensure that Valley communities are able to speak with one voice on the projects and policies needed to make the region more competitive.
 - Leverage all key local groups such as the Palm Springs Chamber's Governmental Affairs Committee and similar groups at other regional organizations.

- 2) Incorporate the infrastructure-need list developed by CVAG into the Agenda.
- 3) Communicate the Agenda to the Valley Action Group for lobbying and advocacy efforts.

Strategy 8: Apply resources towards favorably impacting policies and legislation critical to the Coachella Valley business climate and economic competitiveness.

ACTION 1: Consider plans to retain in-house or contracted lobbyists to advance Valley-supportive legislation statewide and nationally.

- 1) Evaluate existing Southern California state and national lobbying efforts to determine the potential to advocate for Coachella Valley-serving interests.
 - o Assess whether the work of the Valley Action Group – in its existing or a potentially expanded role – could alleviate the need for contracted lobbyists.
- 2) Ensure lobbyists prioritize passage of the Valley’s Joint Legislative Agenda.
- 3) Leverage the lobbyists to advance the prospects of key projects advocated by the Coachella Valley Infrastructure Team.
- 4) Assess the potential to partner with other Inland Empire communities to fund and advise a lobbying team for service in Sacramento.

Strategy 9: Work to best leverage the Coachella Valley’s status as a federal Census County Division.

ACTION 1: Work with state and federal data bureaus to regularly update regional information for this designation.

- 1) Determine the potential to partner with the state and federal statistical bureaus to provide them consistently updated regional data for the Coachella Valley Census County Division to be included in the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey.
- 2) Assess the potential to further leverage the CCD designation to provide site consultants, researchers and corporate relocation professionals with recent Valley data on an ongoing basis.



ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

ISSUE

High concentrations in cyclical, largely low-paying employment sectors risk continued instability in the Coachella Valley economy.

GOAL

Greater diversification through development of high-wage sectors that will boost regional wealth and increase economic sustainability.

OBJECTIVE 1: DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MARKETING PROGRAMS FOR THE COACHELLA VALLEY.

Ensuring that companies and talent across the state and nation understand the Coachella Valley's competitive advantages and targeted industries is critical to building a more sustainable regional economy and increasing local wealth. It is also incumbent on regional and local economic development organizations to leverage all potential assets, attractions, events and amenities to attract and sell top prospects on the Valley as a relocation destination. As such, the Coachella Valley's regional EDO should invest in developing a full three- to five-year marketing strategy; the *internal* components of the strategy will take initial precedence as the Valley builds up its marketing capacity. The strategy should consist of a timeline for all marketing activities, performance metrics, and budget estimates.

Strategy 1: Refresh or create a new brand identity for the Coachella Valley's regional economic development organization to build brand awareness within the region and beyond.

ACTION 1: Refresh the logo and tagline of the regional EDO.

- 1) Ensure the new logo is modern and reflects the sophistication of the region.
- 2) Incorporate words into the tagline that are familiar with external audiences.

ACTION 2: Continue to align the regional EDO with the CVA's tourism marketing efforts, including brand identity.

- 1) Capitalize on the CVA's marketing initiatives to positively impact the region's external perception.

- 2) Leverage CVA programs to reinforce marketing messages and avoid brand confusion in the larger marketplace.

Strategy 2: Develop an inbound economic development marketing program.

ACTION 1: Leverage dynamic regional events and destinations for hosting corporate-relocation professionals and external prospects.

- 1) Begin planning inbound marketing events at least six months prior to the visit.
 - Attempt to schedule inbound marketing activities around major athletics, music and arts events.
- 2) Pay all travel and accommodation expenses for guests and their spouses.
- 3) Limit the length of formal presentations about the region.
 - Develop a comprehensive presentation to capture awareness of Valley assets for attendees at inbound marketing events.
 - Conduct strategic driving tours of the Valley catering to the specific interests of the visiting professional(s).
 - For industrial prospects, highlight such elements as access to transportation infrastructure, utilities and telecomm capacity, Foreign Trade Zones and sub-zones, governmental agencies and natural resources.
 - For visitors in “creative” industries, showcase Coachella Valley’s assets through trips to specific restaurants, hotels, and other dynamic venues.
- 4) Identify CEOs, retired executives, and celebrity residents willing to serve as marketing champions for the region.
 - Feature them in print and electronic marketing materials.
 - Invite them to play a role in CVEP’s in-bound site selection events and interaction with prospects.
- 5) Invite Southern California-based regional and national organizations to the Coachella Valley for their conferences and conventions to solicit business-owners to relocate.
 - Focus on diverse organizations from manufacturing, sales, Latino, media and trade categories that could relocate events to the Valley.

Strategy 3: Create a doorstep marketing initiative targeting individuals who visit the Valley but own and manage businesses elsewhere.

ACTION 1: Fully leverage Coachella Valley group meetings and conventions.

- 1) Partner with convention and visitor organizations to cross-promote the Valley's attractions and economic development potential.
- 2) Ensure a visible economic development presence directed towards targeted audiences at Valley events.
 - Host receptions, exhibits, or invite top industry executives to stay an additional evening to explore the Valley and build relationships with regional EDO staff and board members.

ACTION 2: Target influential leisure travelers visiting the Coachella Valley.

- 1) Update a regional economic development marketing video and air it on in-room hotel television networks.
 - Also consider developing new media strategies including electronic messaging and informational e-mails to targeted decision-makers.
- 2) Develop a brochure touting the region as a business destination specifically targeted at leisure travelers.
 - Partner with proprietors to allow distribution of the brochure in mid-to high-end Valley hotels, shopping centers, golf clubs and resorts.
 - Seek partners in the time-share industry to identify visitors taking advantage of these units as a component of the doorstep marketing initiative.
- 3) Consider developing advertising and signage touting the region at Valley airports.
 - Include an effort to capture awareness of Valley assets for military personal who come through local airports.
- 4) Fully leverage opportunities to reach potential relocation prospects at special events, tournaments, festivals and summits.
 - Seek marketing and sponsorship opportunities at visible tournaments like the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic and Kraft Nabisco Championship and the BNP Paribus Open.
 - Compel regional economic development staff to meet with club directors and identify ways the “do business here” message can be communicated to tournament visitors.

- Develop strategies to effectively reach prospects at the Palm Springs International Film Festival, Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, Stagecoach Festival, Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award Summit and other major events.
 - Strategies may include:
 - Doing extensive pre-research on attendees to determine industry representation and number of decision-makers that will be present.
 - Reaching out to key attendees to set up informal meetings at the event.
 - Preparing specific discussion points and – potentially – marketing pieces like DVD-Roms with short marketing presentations – to present to key attendees.
 - Offering to coordinate follow up visits to the industry representatives home office at some point in the future to continue discussions on business opportunities in the Coachella Valley.

Strategy 4: Develop a well-researched outbound marketing program.

ACTION 1: Leverage enhanced regional research capacity to identify priority relocation prospects.

- 1) Concentrate efforts on the Coachella Valley's identified target business sectors.
- 2) Determine key external markets to focus on for prospect identification.
 - Assess the Valley's cost-competitiveness related to certain target regions; for example, Silicon Valley.
 - Conduct extensive pre-research to inform officials and volunteers making outbound marketing trips on key talking points and competitive dynamics.
- 3) Leverage existing relationships between Valley officials and executives with key external prospect firms.

ACTION 2: Mine viable relocation leads from business retention and expansion (BRE) efforts.

- 1) Determine if buyers, suppliers or other firms with relationships to existing businesses could be target candidates for relocation.
- 2) Seek to capitalize on existing business relationships with incumbent firms to initiate dialogue with relocation targets.
 - o Utilize research capacity to fully review and assess the prospect's corporate dynamics, competitive needs and relocation history.

ACTION 3: Attend key external conferences and meetings.

- 1) Focus only on high-value events in the Valley's target business sectors.
- 2) Partner with Southern California and statewide economic development entities on trip planning and on-site marketing and relationship-building.
- 3) Consider bringing local executives with existing relationships to conference attendees to the high-value events.

Strategy 5: Develop a regional branding and external marketing program for the Coachella Valley.**ACTION 1: Engage in a process to create a unique and effective brand and tagline for the Coachella Valley's economic development marketing campaign.**

- 1) Ensure that the brand and message incorporate the Valley's strong capacity in lifestyle, recreation, arts and culture, industrial competitiveness, resort destinations, festivals and special events, and other distinguishing regional elements.
- 2) Integrate the brand and tagline into all advertising and collateral-development efforts.
- 3) Ensure consistency – as warranted – with the campaigns of the CVA and the Valley's component cities.

ACTION 2: Identify priority media and markets for external marketing investments.

- 1) Consider a multi-channel and target-specific campaign maximizing advertising exposure to key decision-makers in the Valley's target business categories and high-value external markets.

- Focus on certain key markets for niche campaigns promoting the Valley's resources in its targeted clusters.
- 2) Utilize online media and websites for influential business publications in the Valley's external campaign.

ACTION 3: Contract with a qualified public-relations firm or sole proprietor to publicize the Coachella Valley's competitiveness as a destination for companies and talent.

- 1) Consistently provide the PR firm with story ideas related to the Valley's businesses, talent and competitive infrastructure to promote with local and national media.
- 2) Effectively coordinate all economic development PR efforts with those managed by the CVA.

Strategy 6: Optimize electronic and print media and collateral as consistently updated, targeted marketing tools.

ACTION 1: Create a best-practice, dynamic website for the Coachella Valley's regional economic development organization.

- 1) Ensure the site is informative, easy to navigate, concise and makes effective use of photos, data, video, quotes and other graphics.
 - Keep site architecture flat and clean to quickly escort visitors to the information they need.
- 2) Clearly identify the Valley's target sectors and provide comprehensive, easy to download data and information on each target.
- 3) Optimize searchability by integrating keywords into homepage copy and linking from other websites in order to improve rankings by search engines.
- 4) Develop a comprehensive and regularly updated "links" page directing the site-user to Coachella Valley, Riverside County and statewide resources.
 - Provide detailed descriptions for key local programs and organizational partners.

ACTION 2: Develop an e-newsletter for regular distribution to internal and external audiences.

- 1) Ensure the e-newsletter includes updated information on all regional business activities.
 - Be consistent on timing the newsletter's release, whether monthly, quarterly or annually.
- 2) Develop a distribution list of influential site selectors, targeted prospects and other key audiences.

ACTION 3: Effectively leverage social media for economic development marketing purposes.

- 1) Utilize outlets such as Twitter and Facebook to promote the Coachella Valley during periods of high visitor traffic, for example, during film and music festivals and entrepreneurs events.
- 2) Consider involving local young professional organizations in organizing and launching the social media campaigns.

ACTION 4: Develop a strong array of marketing collateral.

- 1) Create a PowerPoint template and slide library that can be customized to create effective sales presentations.
- 2) Develop a "regional overview" brochure that highlights the Valley from a business perspective.
 - Focus on topics related to infrastructure, business climate, workforce, and quality of life.
 - Offer a PDF version of the brochure on the regional EDO's new website.
- 3) Design a simple, standard-sized pocket folder or folio to house the regional EDO's marketing materials.
 - Produce a mailing envelope large enough to hold the pocket folder and sturdy enough that contents are not damaged during shipment.
- 4) Create target audience datasheets.
 - Demonstrate to target audiences that the regional EDO is attuned to their needs by crafting datasheets (or brief brochures) that highlight the Valley's assets specific to the industry.
 - Offer PDF versions of the datasheets on the regional EDO's new website.

- 5) Develop identically formatted datasheets for each Valley community.
 - Include an overview of the community, showcasing its unique assets, competitive resources, demographic profile, major employers, and location.
 - Post PDFs of the datasheets to the website.
- 6) Design stationary and business cards featuring the regional EDO's new logo and tagline.
- 7) Create a series of coordinated print, radio, and television advertisements to support the targeted-marketing campaign, customized to:
 - Specific venue and event involvement.
 - In-room hotel network segments.
 - Ongoing local, paid media placements.

OBJECTIVE 2: EFFECTIVELY DEVELOP THE COACHELLA VALLEY'S IDENTIFIED TARGET SECTORS.

Economic development investments are most effective when they can be applied to focused opportunities for local growth. The identification of target sectors for the Coachella Valley to pursue was the result of significant quantitative and qualitative research. Successfully realizing regional job growth and investment in these sectors will take a three-pronged approach concentrated on existing industry expansion, growth in small business and enterprise development, and targeted attraction of outside firms.

Healthcare and Life Sciences

Strategy 7: Effectively market the Coachella Valley as a destination for health, wellness and life sciences companies.

ACTION 1: Design a component of the Coachella Valley's external marketing program related to the Healthcare and Life Sciences sector.

- 1) Consider developing specific media and materials highlighting the Valley's strengths in Healthcare and Life Sciences.
 - Integrate messages related to positioning the Valley as a destination for health, nutrition and wellness activities.

- Consistently assess the potential to recruit companies in diverse sectors – including nutritional product and pharmaceutical manufacturing – to the Valley.
 - Create a unique URL or a stand-alone page on the regional economic development website focused on Healthcare and Life Sciences in the Coachella Valley.
 - Create consistently updated one-sheets and promotional materials marketing the sector.
- 2) Leverage the Valley's diverse stock of quality housing as a regional attractor and relocation incentive.
 - 3) Prioritize media and markets for dissemination of messages related to promoting the region's Healthcare and Life Sciences economy.

Strategy 8: Work with existing sector businesses and leaders to grow Healthcare and Life Sciences in the Valley.

ACTION 1: Expand the focus and membership of the Career Pathways Initiative's (CPI) Healthcare Industry Council.

- 1) Invite participation from non-services businesses, including manufacturing and life sciences representatives.
- 2) Charge the Council with providing insight and assistance into target-development activities.
- 3) Continue to staff the meetings and translate Council conversation into strategic mandates.
 - Ensure that strategic dynamics are broadened to include economic as well as workforce development activities.
 - Determine potential opportunities to target non-local associates and/or acquaintances of Council members for relocation to the Coachella Valley.
- 4) Effectively leverage the Inland Empire CEO meetings of the Hospital Association of Southern California.
 - Work with the Committee to enable top hospital administrators to determine how the region's hospitals can better partner on efforts related to clinical research, training-program development, public policy and advocacy, talent recruitment, healthcare affordability, and linkages between public health and the built environment.

- As feasible, provide minutes of the meetings to the regional EDO to leverage for target-development activities.
- 5) Partner with Valley cities, Riverside County and state EDOs to address strategic issues related to permitting and regulations, site and building availability, taxes and incentives and provision of infrastructure.
 - Consider the potential to jointly influence health-insurance providers to broaden coverage to underserved constituencies and raise policy reimbursement rates.

ACTION 2: Seek to develop teaching capacity at the region's major hospitals.

- 1) Through a partnership of the Valley's three major hospitals, assess the potential to provide a teaching component at one or more of the facilities.
 - Investigate a potential funding and/or programmatic linkage to the new UC-Riverside medical school slated to open in 2012¹.
- 2) Seek public and private money and grant awards to fund the development of multiple residency slots at the Coachella Valley teaching hospital(s).

ACTION 3: Leverage sector representatives for target-marketing purposes.

- 1) Incorporate Healthcare and Life Sciences leaders into a regional Ambassadors Program.
 - Leverage local leaders for conversations with external prospects and/or site-selection professionals on the Coachella Valley's benefits as a location for Healthcare and Life Sciences businesses.
- 2) Seek to utilize sector leaders' offices and facilities as sites for hosting relocation prospects and as destinations for inbound marketing events.
- 3) Capture quotes, comments and stories from sector leadership for incorporation into external marketing materials and website content.

¹The proposed UCR School of Medicine will enroll its first class of 50 medical students in the fall of 2012. Due to budget constraints, however, development of dedicated campus buildings will likely be delayed.

Strategy 9: Seek to establish a stronger research and development presence in the Coachella Valley.

ACTION 1: Initiate a partnership among major regional healthcare establishments and the Valley's four-year university branches to form a Health and Wellness Research Consortium.

- 1) Formalize a structured partnership between top public and private Coachella Valley healthcare entities to share resources through a research consortium.
- 2) Establish research priorities with a clear vision for translation of findings into potential enterprises.
- 3) Seek public, private, foundation and grant monies to fund initial and ongoing research activities.
- 4) Leverage UCR and CSUSB main campuses to attract (perhaps on a loaned basis) researchers to work with the Valley consortium.
- 5) Reach out to key entities outside the region to determine the potential for them to establish a research presence in the Valley.
 - Potential partners include Loma Linda University, UCLA, Children's Hospital of Orange County and City of Hope.
- 6) Strive to co-locate researchers and research activities in a single location.
 - This location could either be at an existing campus or hospitals in the region such as DRMC or EMC that already have considerable research on-going.
 - Eventually, seek dedicated space to house the consortium.
- 7) Pursue long-term plans to fund and develop a business-incubation facility affiliated with the research consortium.
 - Link activities with small-business-development programs focused on the Valley's healthcare and life sciences sector.

Clean Technology/Energy

Strategy 10: Effectively market the Coachella Valley as a destination for Clean Technology/Energy companies.

ACTION 1: Design a component of the Coachella Valley's external marketing program related to the Clean Technology/Energy sector.

- 1) Seek to position the Coachella Valley as one of the nation's most sustainable and green-friendly regions.
 - Leverage local efforts and companies in all external marketing and public relations activities.
- 2) Design a short-term "clean and green" marketing agenda in advance of longer-term regional marketing-development efforts.
 - Bring together key regional stakeholders currently involved in developing and implementing "green" and sustainable development projects and strategies.
 - Determine how best to incorporate existing program dynamics into a cohesive message promoting the Coachella Valley as a clean energy and technology destination.
 - Seek one-time contributions from regional partners to design a website, marketing brochure and – potentially – CD-Rom demonstrating the Valley's competitive strengths for "clean and green" businesses.
 - Leverage County, Southern California and state-level economic development partners to effectively market the Valley for clean energy employment.
 - Consider sending regional economic development personnel to key state and national conferences focused on the "green" economy."
 - Ensure that Coachella Valley Clean Technology/ Energy materials are distributed at these meetings.
- 3) As a component of longer-term, comprehensive economic development and targeted marketing efforts, update and/or develop specific media and materials highlighting the Valley's strengths in Clean Technology/Energy.
 - Integrate messages related to positioning the Valley as a destination for "clean and green" companies and programs.

- Clearly identify areas in Valley cities where "green industrial" development can occur, either through existing buildings or shovel-ready projects.
 - Create a unique URL or a stand-alone page on the regional EDO's website focused on Clean Technology/Energy in the Coachella Valley.
 - Create consistently updated one-sheets and promotional materials marketing the sector.
- 4) Leverage the Valley's diverse stock of quality housing as a regional attractor and relocation incentive.
 - 5) Prioritize media and markets for dissemination of messages related to promoting the region's Clean Technology/Energy economy.

Strategy II: Work with existing sector businesses and leaders to grow Clean Technology/Energy in the Valley.

ACTION 1: Expand the focus and membership of the "Green Build" Subcommittee of the Career Pathways Initiative's Advanced Technology Industry Council.

- 1) Invite participation from representatives of all key Clean Technology/Energy companies, institutions and organizations in the Coachella Valley.
 - Seek membership from utilities, private power-generation firms, researchers, green builders, clean-energy consultants, agriculture representatives, local government clean-energy-program managers, and others.
- 2) Charge the Council subcommittee with providing insight and assistance into target-development activities.
- 3) Continue to staff the meetings and translate Council subcommittee conversation into strategic mandates.
 - Ensure that strategic dynamics are broadened to include economic as well as workforce development activities.
- 4) Fully leverage efforts launched in Valley cities to capitalize on the "green" economy.
 - Partner with Valley cities, Riverside County and state EDOs to address strategic issues related to permitting and regulations, site and building availability, taxes and incentives and provision of infrastructure.

ACTION 2: Seek to better promote and/or enhance green-power options in the Coachella Valley.

- 1) Partner with regional utilities to increase awareness of locally available green-power-purchasing options.
 - Ensure local homes and businesses are aware of their options related to “distributed generation” programs and equipment.
 - Determine the capacity needed for local utilities to offer on-site consulting, resources, and education to help residents and businesses create environmentally-sound homes and workplaces.
 - Promote Southern California Edison’s Self Generation Incentive Program, the California Energy Commission’s Renewable Energy Buydown Program, and Imperial Irrigation District’s (IID) incentive on qualifying Photovoltaic (PV) systems.
 - Identify resources to enable the IID to install sufficient PV systems to meet demand.
- 2) Survey top U.S. regions to assess additional green-power-purchase programs that could be designed and implemented in the Coachella Valley.

ACTION 3: Leverage sector representatives for target-marketing purposes.

- 1) Incorporate Clean Technology/Energy leaders into a regional Ambassadors Program.
 - Leverage local leaders for conversations with external prospects and/or site-selection professionals on the Coachella Valley’s benefits as a location for Clean Technology/Energy businesses.
- 2) Seek to utilize sector leaders’ offices and facilities as sites for hosting relocation prospects and as destinations for inbound marketing events.
- 3) Capture quotes, comments and stories from sector leadership for incorporation into external marketing materials and website content.

Strategy 12: Establish a culture of “green entrepreneurship” in the Coachella Valley**ACTION 1: Work with existing small business development and entrepreneurship support entities to educate them on Clean Energy/Technology start-up possibilities.**

- 1) Connect small-business-support personnel with regional Clean Technology/Energy company representatives to educate them on the dynamics of green-business operations and management.
- 2) Consider the creation of a detailed Guide to Green Business Development to assist would-be entrepreneurs with the process of launching a clean-energy company.
 - Promote and create incentives for enterprise development in the Valley.
 - These include: fast-track permitting, existing local incentives zones, and state/federal grants.
 - Research federal stimulus monies available to incentivize green-building retrofits and determine the potential to launch small businesses in this field.
 - Determine which additional incentives may be offered to clean technology start-up efforts.

ACTION 2: Leverage the Valley’s Early-Stage Capital Fund (see Objective 4) for seed and gap financing for regional Clean Technology/Energy start-ups.

- 1) Seek out regional clean-energy companies, state and federal governments, and wealthy clean-energy-supportive philanthropists in the Valley to help capitalize the fund.
 - Determine the need to establish a separate Green Technology Fund underneath the Early-Stage Fund.

ACTION 3: Initiate longer-term plans to develop a Clean Energy Incubator in the Coachella Valley.

- 1) Look to partner with UCR-Palm Desert or CSUSB-Palm Desert to launch an affiliated Incubator on either’s campus.
- 2) Develop on-site – or leverage main-campus – commercialization-assistance capacity to help transition incubated companies to the marketplace.

- 3) Work to broker contractual agreements between incubated companies and regional utilities and Valley cities to leverage the start-up firms' technologies to improve efficiencies and/or enhance consumer choice.
- 4) Actively promote the Incubator to entrepreneurs and nascent clean technology firms in higher-cost California regions.

Strategy 13: Proceed with efforts to develop a regional Coachella Valley Sustainability Plan.

ACTION 1: Look to the planning and approval process for the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan for guidance.

- 1) Ensure that the partnerships, coordination and conversations leading to the Conservation Plan's passage inform the Sustainability Plan development process.

ACTION 2: Formalize and leverage local partnerships to launch "green community" initiatives in all Coachella Valley cities.

- 1) Consider existing Coachella Valley sustainability initiatives as regional models.
 - o Craft a sustainable-community process blueprint from existing programs such as the Palm Desert Sustainability Plan and the Palm Springs Path to a Sustainable Community.
 - o Designate city officials/staff as sustainability ambassadors, working with other Valley cities to plan, develop and launch sustainability initiatives.
- 2) Leverage the Coachella Valley Association of Government's (CVAG) efforts to bring Valley cities together around sustainability issues to determine ways to effectively link local efforts through the regional Sustainability Plan framework.

ACTION 3: Incorporate strategies for management of key natural resources into the Plan.

- 1) Build on the regional momentum of Plan development to focus on issues related to the Valley's water supply, air quality, and desert landscape.

ACTION 4: Capitalize on opportunities to use public forums to broaden local, state and national awareness of the Valley's sustainability efforts.

- 1) Consider additional unifying events such as the recently signed pledge by Valley mayors and council members committing their cities to inventorying greenhouse gasses.
- 2) Fund, develop and convene additional regional events such as the Coachella Valley Energy Summit.
- 3) Incorporate regional efforts into public relations efforts promoting the Valley for residents, companies and visitors.

ACTION 5: Consider incorporating an advocacy component into the regional Sustainability Plan.

- 1) Form partnerships among city and county officials to lobby publically for issues related to sustainability and green-economy development.
 - o Issues may include: additional tax and cash incentives for green development and entrepreneurship; planning mandates linking land use and transportation infrastructure; and caps on carbon emissions to make renewable energy sources more cost-competitive.
- 2) Engage elected officials at the state and federal levels to advocate for issues vital to the Coachella Valley's green economy.
- 3) Direct local and regional governments and economic development organizations to join the American Council on Renewable Energy and other key industry associations.
 - o Leverage association memberships to address regional competitive concerns and advance Coachella Valley clean/ green energy initiatives.

Supply Chain Management/Logistics

Strategy 14: Effectively market the Coachella Valley as a destination for Supply Chain Management/Logistics companies.

ACTION 1: Design a component of the Coachella Valley's external marketing program related to the Supply Chain Management/Logistics sector.

- 1) Strive to link the Valley in the minds of external companies and site-selection professionals with the dynamic logistics economies of the Inland Empire.
 - Pursue joint-marketing activities as available with Inland Empire economic development agencies and state officials.
- 2) Consider developing specific media and materials highlighting the Valley's strengths in Supply Chain Management/Logistics.
 - Integrate messages related to positioning the Valley as a destination for warehousing, distribution, wholesale trade, and supply-chain management companies.
 - Create a unique URL or a stand-alone page on the regional economic development website focused on Supply Chain Management/Logistics in the Coachella Valley.
 - Create consistently updated one-sheets and promotional materials marketing the sector.
- 3) Leverage the Valley's diverse stock of quality housing as a regional attractor and relocation incentive.
- 4) Prioritize media and markets for dissemination of messages related to promoting the region's Supply Chain Management/Logistics economy

Strategy 15: Work with existing sector businesses and leaders to grow Supply Chain Management/Logistics in the Valley.

ACTION 1: Gain a more detailed understanding of the sector's current capacity.

- 1) Conduct an assessment of the Valley economy to identify existing firms in this sector.
- 2) Determine the current supply-chain linkages of warehousing, distribution and wholesale trade firms.
 - Map these linkages to determine key origination/destination markets and the Valley's role in external supply-chains.

- 3) Approach company leadership to serve more active roles in regional economic development practices.

ACTION 2: Utilize key Supply Chain Management/Logistics representatives to help inform an Action Plan for the sector.

- 1) Form a Strategic Task Force among the region's top public and private leaders in this sector.
- 2) Work with Task Force members to develop an Action Plan for growing Supply Chain Management/Logistics in the Coachella Valley.
 - Identify top competitive concerns and opportunities to address proactively through the Action Plan.
 - Determine how to most effectively leverage California Senate Bill 375 in positioning the Valley for growth in this sector.
- 3) Fully leverage assets such as the Valley's highway connectivity to Mexico and regional Foreign Trade Zones (FTZs) into action planning.
 - Determine the potential to develop additional FTZs in the region.
- 4) Determine how to best utilize Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport as a lynchpin of regional sector development.
 - Ensure the Action Plan includes specific strategies for integrating the Airport into the coordination and facilitation of sector development efforts.
- 5) Assess the potential to transition the Strategic Task Force into an ongoing role as the Coachella Valley Logistics Council.

ACTION 3: Leverage sector representatives for target-marketing purposes.

- 1) Incorporate Supply Chain Management/Logistics leaders into a regional Ambassadors Program.
 - Leverage local leaders for conversations with external prospects and/or site-selection professionals on the Coachella Valley's benefits as a location for Supply Chain Management/Logistics businesses.
- 2) Seek to utilize sector leaders' offices and facilities as sites for hosting relocation prospects and as destinations for inbound marketing events.
- 3) Capture quotes, comments and stories from sector leadership for incorporation into external marketing materials and website content.

Strategy 16: Develop regional small-business-support capacity for the Supply Chain Management/Logistics sector.

ACTION 1: Work with existing small business development and entrepreneurship support entities to educate them on Supply Chain Management/Logistics start-up possibilities.

- 1) Connect small-business-support personnel with regional Supply Chain Management/Logistics company representatives to educate them on the dynamics of the sector's operations and management.
- 2) Determine the need to source additional program-design assistance from Inland Empire organizations more familiar with the dynamics of small-business development as it relates to Supply Chain Management and Logistics.
 - o Utilize networks of economic development and government officials to identify industry experts to counsel Valley institutions on best-practice development dynamics.
- 3) Integrate information on Supply Chain Management/Logistics support capacity into all small-business promotional materials and SourceLink activities.

Strategy 17: Fully leverage the Coachella Valley's location in the Inland Empire as a growth-driver for the Supply Chain Management/Logistics sector.

ACTION 1: Initiate outreach to Inland Empire economic development organizations.

- 1) Leverage SB 375 as the impetus to discuss the Coachella Valley's potential role as a link in the supply chain from ports and top state and national markets to the logistics hubs of the Inland Empire.
- 2) Ensure Coachella Valley sites identified for logistics development are listed in Riverside County and Inland Empire property databases.
- 3) Identify potential shared competitiveness issues that could lead to joint-advocacy efforts in Sacramento or Washington, D.C.

ACTION 2: Leverage expertise from CSU-San Bernardino.

- 1) Seek to partner with the William and Barbara Leonard University Transportation Center at California State University San Bernardino on local assessment and development efforts.
 - Identify potential Valley issues, districts, projects or strategic opportunities that could benefit from analysis by affiliated Center faculty, researchers and students.
 - Determine if a Center faculty member or researcher could be relocated to CSUSB-Palm Desert on a loaned basis to study the Valley's logistics sector.

Strategy 18: Ensure competitive infrastructure is provided to support Supply Chain Management/Logistics development.**ACTION 1: Identify priority locations for the development of a multi-modal logistics park.**

- 1) Charge the Supply Chain Management/Logistics Strategic Task Force with determining the most viable location(s) for local development of multi-modal warehousing and distribution capacity.
 - Initially prioritize sites adjacent to Cochran Regional Airport and/or located in regional incentives zones.
- 2) Partner with city economic development staff and elected leadership to optimize the competitiveness of the chosen site(s).
 - Assess needs related to infrastructure development of all types, including road, rail, utilities and telecommunications.
 - Determine the capacity of local government to effectively prepare the site(s) for development.
 - Assess all potential funding mechanisms to facilitate site preparation.
- 3) Coordinate with regional, county and state economic development organizations/departments to effectively market the selected site(s) for logistics projects.
 - Ensure Coachella Valley sites identified for logistics development are included in the Riverside County and Inland Empire property databases.

ACTION 2: Ensure infrastructure development needs inform regional planning and capacity-development processes.

- 1) Partner with CVAG, the Riverside County Economic Development Agency (EDA), the Western Riverside Council of Governments and other key state and local agencies to include logistics-related infrastructure-development needs in planning processes and reports.
- 2) Coordinate advocacy for target-sector-related infrastructure development with Coachella Valley-wide infrastructure planning.

ACTION 3: Assess the potential for Coachella Valley firms to better leverage the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

- 1) Commission a study to determine existing connectivity to the ports and impacts from port-related commerce.
 - Identify key competitiveness issues and needs to be addressed to better leverage the ports for regional economic development.
- 2) Include priority recommendations from the study in ongoing Supply Chain Management/Logistics strategic implementation activities.

Creative Arts and Design

Strategy 19: Develop a strong, multi-faceted external marketing effort to promote and grow the Creative Arts and Design economy.**ACTION 1: Contract for the development of a best-practice marketing and branding plan for the Coachella Valley's creative economy.**

- 1) Position the Valley as a cost-competitive, dynamic and growing location for arts and media businesses and talent.
- 2) Develop a unique, stand-alone website geared towards marketing the Coachella Valley for Creative Arts and Design businesses.
 - Leverage a variety of new media technologies and social-networking websites to spread the word on the Coachella Valley as an arts and design destination.
 - Reach out to local companies to donate in-kind services for development of video pieces, computer animation, graphic design, etc.

- Utilize the site to promote creative enterprises, events and individuals in the region.
- 3) Leverage the Valley's diverse stock of quality housing as a regional attractor and relocation incentive.
- 4) Identify priority markets to target through promotional efforts marketing the Valley's creative economy.
 - Consider higher-cost areas such as Greater Los Angeles, San Diego and the Bay Area as priority target markets.
- 5) Integrate and coordinate as needed with destination and tourism marketing managed by the Palm Springs Desert Resort Communities Convention and Visitors Authority.

ACTION 2: Pursue Creative Arts and Design firms and talent for relocation to the Coachella Valley.

- 1) Dedicate resources to the pursuit of targeted small businesses and visionary artists to the Coachella Valley.
 - Leverage existing local arts, media and design talent to identify potential relocation prospects.
 - Conduct targeted research to determine additional arts, media and design prospects for attraction to the region.
- 2) Consider the potential to offer specific relocation incentives to Creative Arts and Design businesses and talent.
- 3) Pursue local production of student films to expose the Valley's assets to future filmmakers and production talent.
 - Develop relationships with film schools throughout Southern California to promote the Coachella Valley as a destination for student film production.
 - Develop a promotional package on CD-Rom detailing the facilities, locations and services available to support student film production in the region.
 - Assess the potential to "incentivize" local production of student films through direct payments from a fund capitalized by regional public-private economic development organizations.

Strategy 20: Work with existing sector businesses and leaders to grow Creative Arts and Design in the Valley.

ACTION 1: Consider integrating the Career Pathways Initiative's Multimedia Industry Council as a program of the Coachella Valley Arts Alliance.

- 1) Expand the Council's efforts to include an increased focus on leveraging education and workforce training programs for growth of the Creative Arts and Design sector.
 - Determine the need to expand the Council's membership based on components of the *Blueprint* strategy.
- 2) Leverage the Council as a mechanism to launch a Creative Arts and Design networking program in the region.
 - Coordinate regular forums, information sessions, and arts-based community events as opportunities for networking, mentorship, and educational outreach.
- 3) Seek ways to ensure sustainable funding for the Council through the resources of the Alliance.
- 4) Ensure that all key regional partners are engaged in target-development efforts, including the Entertainment Industries Committee of the Palm Springs Chamber, Palm Springs Women in Film and Television, the American Advertising Federation Palm Springs/Desert Cities, Palm Springs Film Festival organizers, etc.

ACTION 2: Leverage the Arts Alliance's ArtsOasis effort as a key component of the Coachella Valley Blueprint's Creative Arts and Design development strategy.

- 1) Tailor the ArtsOasis strategy as necessary to reflect the recommendations in the *Blueprint* plan.
 - Ensure that an expanded ArtsOasis focus is reflected in Alliance membership and leadership specializations.
- 2) Achieve seamless coordination between ArtsOasis implementation and regional economic development efforts.

Strategy 2I: Launch efforts to develop sole-proprietorships and small businesses in the Creative Arts and Design sector.

ACTION 1: Work with existing small business development and entrepreneurship support entities to educate them on Creative Arts and Design enterprise-creation opportunities.

- 1) Connect small-business-support personnel with regional Creative Arts and Design stakeholders – perhaps through a relationship with the Coachella Valley Arts Alliance – to educate them on the dynamics of launching and sustaining businesses in this sector.

ACTION 2: Partner with the Arts Alliance to launch a Storefront Artists Program in Coachella Valley cities.

- 1) Consider launching and managing a program to provide rent-free space to artists in vacant retail storefronts.
 - Formalize program components to allow landlords to obtain signed leases for the space and artists to be provided with ample notice that the space has been leased to a paying tenant.
 - Determine how to most effectively enable artists to remain in the retail spaces as paying tenants.
 - Determine the nature of artists’ contributions beyond occupying the space as a studio – for example, paying utility costs and taking responsibility for the upkeep of the retail space.
- 2) Leverage the artists’ spaces to start or enhance “art crawls” or “open studio” events.

ACTION 3: Strive to realize efforts to develop an Arts Incubator in the Coachella Valley.

- 1) Secure flexible building space (either purchased or donated) to house the Incubator.
- 2) Provide capacity to staff the facility, develop programs and manage operations.
- 3) Formalize a business plan to develop the Incubator as the region’s central location for Creative Arts and Design development.
 - Consider housing offices of the Coachella Valley Arts Alliance at the facility.

- Coordinate the ArtsOasis strategy out of the Incubator.
 - Develop sufficient capacity to provide affordable, quality studio space for emerging artists across a range of media to start and further their careers.
 - House classrooms, lecture halls and flexible event space at the Incubator for programs related to education, training, seminars, events, etc.
- 4) Incorporate the Incubator in all internal and external marketing efforts.
- Partner with the Palm Springs Desert Resort Communities Convention and Visitors Authority to promote the facility to Valley visitors.

Strategy 22: Leverage public and/or private money to develop media-serving infrastructure.

ACTION 1: Work to develop sound stages, post-production facilities and other infrastructure necessary to grow a media economy.

- 1) Assess all existing infrastructure related to media production in the Valley.
- 2) Partner with Valley communities to create Master Plans for districts with the highest potential to be positioned for production-facility development.
 - Consider locating facilities in existing incentives districts or utilizing tools such as TIF districts to facilitate project-development.
 - Work with the Inland Empire Film Commission and Palm Springs Film Office/Alliance to inform the selection of priority development sites and the dynamics of providing competitive infrastructure for film, television and video productions.
- 3) Seek private-sector partners in Greater Los Angeles interested in developing a Coachella Valley facility.
 - Also consider a public-private funding dynamic to realize the development of local production facilities.

OBJECTIVE 3: PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS SERVICES FOR REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS.

A regional EDO can offer significant value-added benefit to public and private investors by providing them with timely and robust data and information. For the Coachella Valley, this benefit is greater because state and federal governments do not define the Valley as a statistically unique region. In addition, the EDO can serve as a convener and facilitator for local economic entities through the development and hosting of informational sessions and events.

Strategy 23: Position a regional entity to serve as a data storehouse for Coachella Valley organizations and governments.**ACTION 1: Create a data center on the organization's website.**

- 1) Partner with all local and regional governments to secure agreements to acquire and publish relevant data on the website.
 - Aggregate data to the Coachella Valley regional level for provision to companies and site-selection professionals.
 - Ensure that data are updated regularly.
- 2) Allow users to select Valley cities and Riverside County as well as data types, then run cross comparisons against aggregate regional, state, and national data.
- 3) Ensure the accessibility of the data is user-friendly and prominently positioned.
- 4) Promote the data center as a resource to local community leaders, businesses, and real estate brokers who may be investing in their own research without knowing that it is already available through the regional EDO.

ACTION 2: Create a map center on the organization's website.

- 1) Leverage GIS mapping technologies to enable site-users to customize local and regional maps.
 - Determine how to leverage existing mapping information and GIS databases developed by CVAG.
 - Assess how to best reconfigure this information for economic-development consultants and relocation professionals.

- Offer users the chance to incorporate population and labor dynamics, transportation and utilities infrastructure, business parks, and other layers into the base maps.
 - Look into the feasibility of enabling site-users to create “overlay” maps that highlight regional resource sites, facilities and infrastructure for the Valley’s targeted clusters.
- 2) Engage partners such as CVAG and the Riverside EDA to provide mapping content and links to additional online geographical resources.

Strategy 24: Offer custom-tailored research services to regional partners.

ACTION 1: Position a regional EDO as the key go-to resource for original research.

- 1) Work closely with local cities, chambers and organizational partners to determine research needs the regional EDO could fulfill.
- 2) Consider – among others – providing the following research services:
- Assessing local lease rates and commercial absorption.
 - Quantifying the Valley’s population diversity and promoting regional demographics to consumer market-research firms interested in dynamic locations for product-assessment testing.
 - Leverage ethnographies to identify potential of segmenting the population and the economic benefit in providing data to marketing firms across the US.
 - Tracking of market trends and provision of up-to-the-minute market information.
 - Studies of workforce skills, including a “hidden workforce” analysis of underemployment and labor force participation dynamics.
 - “Harvesting” of information about local communities to utilize in marketing and prospect-management efforts.
 - Tracking and identifying workforce-development and training grants and foundation resources.
 - Research on regional spending power oriented by district.
 - Ongoing assessment of Coachella Valley’s competitive advantages and challenges.
 - These could be related to costs of land, housing, utilities, worker’s compensation, development fees, taxes and other competitive concerns.

- 3) Identify and communicate best-practice local and regional programs that may have potential benefit for economic development activities in Valley cities.
- 4) Position the EDO as a “collective-intelligence” source for regional partners related to target-industry dynamics.
 - Leverage the EDO’s institutional knowledge of developing technologies, processes and products in the implementation of target-industry-development activities and marketing efforts.

Strategy 25: Coordinate and host regional economic forums.

ACTION 1: Continue the development and management of events such as the Coachella Valley Economic Summit and Share Our Abundant Resources (SOAR) Small Business Resource Forum and Expo by a regional EDO.

- 1) Tie certain event content to the *Blueprint* strategy and regional target sectors.

ACTION 2: Consider the development of additional economic forums and conferences.

- 1) Coordinate with regional partners to identify issues and topics, develop content and co-sponsor events.

Strategy 26: Research and manage relocation prospects for attraction to the Coachella Valley.

ACTION 1: Process, qualify and update relocation leads.

- 1) Serve as a regional point-of-first-contact for prospect-initiated and state-provided leads.
 - Research and respond to all inquiries through provision of regional and community-specific information and data.
 - Provide timely response to all follow-up inquiries.
 - Distribute viable leads to local partners.
- 2) Effectively track progress on lead activity and communicate information back to local partners.

ACTION 2: Design a research protocol to identify external prospect companies in the Valley's target sectors for relocation to the region.

- 1) Focus attention on companies in selected high-cost markets.
- 2) Research prospects identified by existing companies through BRE visits.
 - a. Focus priority efforts on companies considered to be the strongest prospects for relocation.
- 3) Plan meetings with prospect firms around out-of-market recruitment trips and/or in-bound marketing opportunities.

OBJECTIVE 4: PROVIDE ENTREPRENEURS AND SMALL BUSINESS PERSONS THE RESOURCES NECESSARY TO SUCCEED.

Jobs created by small businesses comprise a large percentage of total local employment. This is especially true in the Coachella Valley. Plus, every new small business has the potential to grow into a major local employer. Ensuring that individuals who start small businesses can sustain and expand them is vital to a community's long-term success.

Strategy 27: Enhance the capacity and coordination of local small-business-support services.**ACTION 1: Formalize an Entrepreneurs Network in the Coachella Valley.**

- 1) Engage regional entrepreneurs in a program to leverage local expertise for the benefit of fledgling entrepreneurs.
 - o Consider development of a formal mentorship program pairing experienced and beginning entrepreneurs.
- 2) Coordinate meetings around information sessions, guest speakers and workshops on enterprise-development in the Valley.

ACTION 2: Launch and manage an Early-Stage Capital Fund to provide seed and gap financing to Coachella Valley start-up enterprises.

- 1) Develop a business plan formalizing the detailed dynamics of the Fund, how it will operate, its management and oversight structure, loan and follow-up processes, capitalization goals, eligibility requirements, etc.
 - Establish criteria for the Fund prioritizing disbursement to individuals starting arts, technology, media, energy and logistics companies consistent with the Coachella Valley’s targeted sectors.
- 2) Capitalize the Fund through local public and private donations and state and federal grant monies.
 - Outreach to local members of the Keiretsu Forum for contributions to the Fund.
- 3) Market the Fund through local media and relationships with key regional partners.
- 4) Work closely with the Coachella Valley Angels Network (CVAN) to direct entrepreneurs to the appropriate funding source.

ACTION 3: Implement the SourceLink model in the Coachella Valley to better coordinate regional small-business-support services.

- 1) Conduct a thorough assessment of existing regional support capacity.
- 2) Contract with the Kauffman Foundation to customize the SourceLink curriculum for the Valley.
- 3) Designate a regional entity to manage the ongoing implementation of Coachella Valley SourceLink.
- 4) Effectively market SourceLink as the point-of-first-contact for fledgling small business people in the region.
- 5) Consider the potential to co-locate SourceLink program staff with key regional small-business-support officials to develop a “one-stop shop” for small business assistance.

ACTION 4: Fully leverage the Alliance for the Commercialization of Technology (ACT) virtual incubator for local enterprise-development.

- 1) Ensure that the incubator – when operational – is effectively promoted to potential constituents.
- 2) Catalogue the incubator in the SourceLink database.

- 3) Coordinate the ACT incubator program with the full array of local and regional small-business-support services.
- 4) Determine the future need to incorporate virtual incubator services into a physical location for incubation of regional businesses.

Strategy 28: Better enable under-represented constituencies to start and grow companies in the region.

ACTION 1: Create a program focused on facilitating and enhancing regional minority enterprise-development.

- 1) Work with representatives of established programs in Metro Los Angeles and other regions to design the components of the program.
 - Determine if a “loaned executive” from a top Southern California program can manage the Coachella Valley initiative during the start-up phase.
- 2) Partner with the Coachella Valley Mexican-American Chamber of Commerce to establish a Latino Entrepreneur Business Investment Program to review potential business opportunities within the Valley’s identified target sectors.
 - Additional partners could include the Inland Empire Hispanic Chamber, the Greater Riverside Hispanic Chamber, and other Hispanic chambers in Valley-adjacent communities.
- 3) Partner with Riverside County and local governments to formalize a process to provide contracting opportunities to qualified minority-owned Valley businesses.
- 4) Host regional information sessions and workshops to introduce Valley minority business people to the program.

OBJECTIVE 5: ENSURE EXISTING COACHELLA VALLEY BUSINESSES ARE RETAINED AND EXPANDED.

The vast majority of local jobs are created by companies already operating in the community. They must be provided with a competitive climate necessary to grow effectively.

Strategy 29: Create a regional business retention and expansion program.**ACTION 1: Assess existing activities.**

- 1) Partner with local chambers of commerce and city economic development departments to determine the dynamics of existing BRE programs.
- 2) Work with chamber and city representatives to assess the potential of developing a regional program.
 - o Ensure there is broad consensus on the benefits to be accrued by leveraging the resources of a regional organization.
 - These include:
 - Recruiting identified suppliers, affiliates, and corporate allies of local firms to the Valley.
 - Providing software to build a database of existing business dynamics and the personnel to update and manage the database.
 - Comprehensive research services conducted for the competitive benefit of local departments and companies.
 - Enhanced potential for advocacy on local, state and national competitiveness issues important to Valley businesses.
 - Perspective on strategies and best-practices from across the Valley that can be communicated to local partners.
 - The presence of trained, experienced staff available to assist local developers with issues related to import/export assistance, tax and regulatory dynamics, incentives, workforce, infrastructure, etc.

- Relationships with other Valley, Riverside County and state organizations that can be leveraged for the benefit of regional cities and businesses.

ACTION 2: Formalize the components of the regional BRE program.

- 1) Determine which companies will be visited by the regional economic development organization (EDO), local chambers, cities, and jointly.
- 2) Establish visitation priorities and frequencies.
 - Strive to coordinate BRE functions according to target-sector classifications.
- 3) Research and purchase BRE software.
 - Offer sub-licenses of the program to local partners.
- 4) Leverage the software to conduct pre-visit research based on company performance and hiring trends.
- 5) Ensure – if possible – that visits are made by professional staff and not volunteers.
- 6) Consistently update the BRE database with information gathered during company visits.
- 7) Leverage the BRE database as an information source for local and regional partners and prospect companies.

ACTION 3: Develop BRE follow-up protocols.

- 1) Work with partners to formalize a process to follow up on all issues and opportunities identified through BRE visits.
 - Ensure that all supplier-recruitment opportunities are pursued through the external marketing program.
 - Leverage government partners to address infrastructure, permitting and tax/incentive issues.

Strategy 30: Work to decrease permit-acquisition times and lower the costs of project-development in Coachella Valley communities.

ACTION 1: Establish a regional Task Force to reform local permitting systems and processes.

- 1) Assemble the Task Force from a roster of top local business people and institutional representatives.
- 2) Utilize staff to prepare a detailed list of national best practices related to permitting processes.
 - Consider inviting a representative from a best-practice community to speak to Coachella Valley officials and business people.
- 3) Empower city planning and development staff to contribute to the development of the new processes.
- 4) Partner with local governments to review, customize and approve new regulatory processes in Valley communities.
 - As best as possible, ensure regulatory consistency across Valley governments to provide businesses with a set of uniform regulatory policies
- 5) Formalize a process for ongoing communication between government and business leadership to ensure that new processes are pursued and re-worked (if necessary) to ensure long-term benefit.
- 6) Market new permitting processes in Coachella Valley cities to companies and corporate relocation professionals as examples of the Valley's commitment to become a best-in-class community

ACTION 2: Partner with local governments to lower fees and better coordinate the provision of infrastructure for new development.

- 1) Examine models from other fast-growing communities to determine best-practices for infrastructure development in greenfield areas.
 - Invite representatives from these communities to travel to the Valley to speak with elected officials and department staff.
 - Assess means to proactively provide transportation and utilities infrastructure to targeted growth areas while easing the fee burden on developers.

- Eliminate project-specific infrastructure development that results in service gaps between newly constructed projects and the existing street- and utilities-grid.
- 2) Formalize best-practice infrastructure-development processes through revised local development codes.
 - Ensure consistency between development codes of all Coachella Valley governments.
- 3) Ensure that any action resulting in decreased fees to Valley cities is balanced with the identification of an alternative revenue source, perhaps through state/federal grant programs or incentives.

Strategy 31: Sustain the viability of the Coachella Valley’s agricultural economy.

ACTION 1: Ensure that local farms remain competitive.

- 1) Leverage BRE efforts to visit top local producers to determine what assistance could be provided to address market pressures.
 - Coordinate efforts to address competitive concerns with regional advocacy and infrastructure-development programs.
 - Partner effectively with agriculture-development agencies² to further the Coachella Valley’s competitive agenda and provide needed support to maintain regional employment.
 - Take advantage of any existing – or proposed – subsidies to enable local producers to compete with lower-cost regions.
- 2) Continue to engage in substantive regional discussions on issues related to water capacity and usage.
 - Ensure that concerns of agricultural producers are given a fair hearing in water-provision and distribution decision-making.

ACTION 2: Protect agricultural lands from encroachment of other uses.

- 1) Ensure that land zoned agricultural is reserved for this purpose.

² Agencies include: Riverside County Agriculture Commissioner; the Riverside County Farm Bureau; the University of California Cooperative Extension, Riverside County – Indio Office; and U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Center in Indio.

- 2) Consider tools such as *transfer of development rights* to provide farmers with best-practice tools to hold onto their land in the face of development pressures.
- 3) Pursue all opportunities to form farm cooperatives to increase the leverage and buying power of local producers.

Strategy 32: Assess the potential for local companies to increase their trade with Mexico.

ACTION 1: Leverage the California Inland Empire District Export Council office in Indio to discuss local opportunities.

- 1) Ensure that the Coachella Valley has a representative number of members on the Council to advance regional interests.
 - Work with the Coachella Valley U.S. Export Assistance Center to ensure that qualified candidates are nominated and approved.
- 2) Host well-publicized information sessions between Council members and local businesses.
 - Actively promote the event through local chambers, governments and regional organizations.
- 3) Integrate the Council’s assistance with ongoing BRE and target-development efforts in the Valley.

Strategy 33: Partner with local Native American tribes to positively impact regional development.

ACTION 1: Ensure tribal representatives are involved in regional economic development leadership and strategic implementation.

- 1) Commit to increasing the tribes’ role in advancing the regional economy.
 - Outreach to the tribes to better involve Native American constituencies in key regional efforts.
 - Determine how tribes’ well-developed programs could fit into the overall dynamics of the *Blueprint* strategy.
 - Leveraging tribes’ unique non-tax presence, consider designing contracts for local governments to partner with tribes on transformative regional projects.

- These could include gaining access to federal funding for projects related to infrastructure; workforce; housing; public safety; clean tech/renewable energy; and land use policy.
- Seek to include additional tribal leaders on local boards and commissions.
- Include tribal leadership on “team mission” trips and internal marketing “ambassadors” events.
- 2) Actively involve tribal representatives in target-development efforts.
 - Incorporate opportunities for leveraging tribal lands, stakeholders, businesses, relationships, facilities, and resources for development of the Valley’s healthcare, energy, logistics and arts economies.
 - Fully leverage Native American culture, arts, and events in the region’s overall tourism and visitation marketing program.

ACTION 2: Partner with tribal leadership to advance the Coachella Valley’s competitive agenda.

- 1) Leverage regional tribes in the discussion of the key issues facing the Valley.
 - Work with the tribes to assess the potential to influence legislation, elected leadership and project development at the local, state, and federal levels.

coachella valley
blueprint

**WORKFORCE
EXCELLENCE**

ISSUE

Overall workforce skills and capacity must be enhanced for the Coachella Valley to compete for the high-value jobs being created in the New Economy.

GOAL

Development of a competitive labor force that will enable existing and future Coachella Valley companies to thrive and workers to greatly increase their incomes.

OBJECTIVE 1: OPTIMIZE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY.

Education practitioners and child-development specialists argue that the most critical period in a child's academic development is the transition from grade-to-grade in their early primary-school years. It is also vital that a student's engagement is maintained throughout his or her middle-school and high-school years. The Coachella Valley must affirm the region's emphasis on supporting and expanding the network of existing local career academies already functioning in the Valley's targeted sectors. Ultimately, the success of a community's economy is greatly dependent on the ability of its Pre-K to 12 systems to prepare students for multiple pathways to both college and the workplace.

Strategy 1: Ensure student performance is maximized.

ACTION 1: Support strategic efforts at the Valley's three unified school districts (USDs) to address critical performance and facility concerns.

- 1) Work to develop 21st Century learning opportunities for Valley students.
 - o Infuse classroom environments with project-based learning focused on collaborative student problem-solving on "real life" issues.
 - Train students to ask the right questions, take calculated risks, think entrepreneurially and learn the "soft skills" necessary to succeed in the workplace.
 - Ensure that students are taught workplace dynamics related to attire, promptness, work-ethic, attitude,

phone etiquette, customer relations, and other employer requirements.

- Integrate state-of-the-art technology into all components of students' educational experience and consistently invest in this technology for the region's schools.
 - Support an ongoing and comprehensive emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education programs throughout PreK-12 classes as a foundation for preparing students in the Valley's targeted industries.
 - Ensure that exposure to the arts is a component of all districts' curricula.
 - Enhance outreach to Valley arts and cultural institutions and practitioners to partner with schools on program-development and implementation.
- 2) Ensure that Valley schools are safe and secure learning environments.
 - 3) Effectively communicate the long-term consequences of teenage pregnancy, drug use and gang activity.
 - 4) Strive to best engage parents in their children's education.
 - Determine if programs such as Palm Springs USD's Parent Institute for Quality Education can be replicated in all Valley districts.
 - 5) Seek to expand capacity in programs for self-directed students.
 - Support the Cadet Corps and grow capacity as necessitated by demand.
 - 6) Continue to pursue quality educators with strong training credentials.
 - Ensure that teachers are consistently provided opportunities to enhance their knowledge-bases and skill-sets.
 - Aim to attract and retain a teacher population that reflects the demographic makeup of the community-at-large.

ACTION 2: Ensure students' English-language proficiency and literacy is optimized.

- 1) Work to best engage second-language learners in programs to improve their English-language skills, classroom engagement, and success in coursework and standardized testing.
- 2) Continue to consistently assess best-practices in English-language acquisition in other California districts for possible implementation in the Coachella Valley.

ACTION 3: Provide quality, accessible after-school and summer engagement opportunities for Valley youth.

- 1) Ensure strong and ongoing business-community support of the Boys & Girls Club of Coachella Valley.
 - Actively publicize and promote the summer 2009 opening of the Smilow Family Teen Center.
 - Determine the need for business and/or foundation contributions to a fund to subsidize membership fees for low-income families.
 - Assess needs related to transportation for Valley transit-dependent families to access regional facilities.
 - Consider partnerships with SunLine or the funding of a summer shuttle service to transport youths to area Clubs.
- 2) Ensure that the Indio Teen Center is able to operate at full capacity and receives the support of the regional business community.

ACTION 4: Provide quality Pre-Kindergarten classes for all eligible local children.

- 1) Monitor and support statewide efforts seeking to provide access to Pre-K education for all California youth.
 - Ensure SB 1629 (Early Learning Quality Improvement Act) leads to development of a statewide “first 5” system.
 - Work with local and state legislatures to actively support full funding for Pre-K education in the Coachella Valley.
- 2) Mobilize regional school districts to develop reliable funding streams to support Pre-K education.
 - Determine the potential to fund Pre-K locally through budget disbursements or voter-approved assessments.
 - Partner with entities such as the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to source additional funds to build regional Pre-K capacity.

Strategy 2: Enhance opportunities for career- and target-industry-focused education in the Coachella Valley.

ACTION 1: Create a regional Career Academy Master Plan developed through the Career Pathways Initiative.

- 1) Encourage active, long-term partnerships between regional USDs and the Valley’s higher educational institutions to best coordinate planning of programs and curricula geared to the *Blueprint’s* targeted sectors.
- 2) Ensure the Master Plan enables the region to achieve “Leadership Level” designation through the Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies Next Generation Learning Initiative.
 - Leverage the Ford Partnership’s Next Generation Learning Community 12-point Master Plan in the development of the Valley’s Career Academy Master Plan.
 - Work in partnership with the Ford Motor Company Fund to establish and support a regional Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies (PAS) Hub.
 - Develop a data-management tool that will gather, track and interpret data to inform program development.
 - Support maximization of the Valley’s partnership with the Cal-PASS data program.
- 3) Retool the Initiative as necessary to reflect the target sector recommendations of the Coachella Valley *Blueprint*.
 - Ensure that membership in the CPI industry councils is consistent with components of targeted industries.
 - Integrate CPI mandates with the additional roles Council members will play related to target-sector development.
- 4) Ensure that California Partnership Academies (CPA)³ in the Valley are effectively connected to regional economic development activities.

³ The academy model is a three-year program, grades 10-12, structured as a school-within-a-school. Academies incorporate integrated academic and career technical education, business partnerships, mentoring, and internships. Academies include: Coachella Valley HS – Health Careers Academy; Hospitality Recreation and Tourism Academy, Visual and Performing Arts Academy, Public Service Academy; La Quinta HS – Health Career Academy, Public Service Academy; Palm Springs HS – Money, Marketing and Management Academy, Health Academy, Academy for Audio Recording Technology; and Cathedral City HS – Digital Arts Technology Academy, Health and Environmental Academy of Learning.

- Link curricula, internships, mentorships, job-shadowing and other programs to regional target-development activities and incumbent firms.
 - Market the CPAs to recruitment prospects in the programs' affiliated industries.
 - Determine the need to refine CPA curricula based on processes, technologies and products featured in the Valley's targeted businesses.
 - However, ensure that campus-based programs continue to reflect the needs at their individual school sites.
- 5) Determine the need to design, fund and operate additional CPAs in the region.
 - Assess whether CPAs geared to the Valley's target industries could be implemented in all regional USDs.
 - 6) Expand target-focused magnet programs to all regional high schools.
 - Expand – as viable – to the Valley's middle schools.
 - 7) Secure a consistent, long-term funding source for the Initiative, perhaps through incorporating the program under the auspices of the *Blueprint*.
 - Identify structural components that make the CPI and the Career Academies successful to ensure that successful programs continue after state funding sunsets.
 - Seek all program funding from sources that do not impact existing public-education budgets.
 - 8) Consider the eventual development of a CPI Council dedicated to Supply Chain Management and Logistics.
 - 9) Fully support efforts to develop charter schools in the Coachella Valley that reflect consensus-based program areas and curricula.

ACTION 2: Integrate entrepreneurship and small-business training into every regional public school.

- 1) Continue to optimize implementation of the Virtual Enterprise program in Valley schools.
 - Ensure the program's curriculum reflects business, industry and cultural dynamics in the Coachella Valley economy.
- 2) Support the expanded use of the Ford PAS curriculum in regional middle and high schools.
- 3) Organize business clubs and competitions in Valley high schools.

- Partner with local businesses to sponsor and assist with the efforts.
- Ensure that regional media actively publicize club activities and competition winners.

ACTION 3: Greatly expand career and technical education (CTE) programs in regional high schools in partnership with College of the Desert.

- 1) Enhance USD partnerships with College of the Desert to facilitate greater school-to-work opportunities for local students.
 - Leverage economic development organizations and regional businesses to identify technical careers in greatest demand.
 - Work with area companies to design or re-tool curricula in partnership with the College.
 - Seek pledges from area companies to take part in internship programs culminating with employment for participating students.
 - Invite employed graduates of the program back to campus to discuss the benefits of CTE with current students.
- 2) Conduct a public education campaign to build consensus among parents and community organizations on the value of CTE.
 - Highlight stories and examples from best-practice efforts across Southern California to illustrate the benefits of CTE programs.
 - Leverage program operators from external districts to speak to groups of concerned stakeholders on the challenges, opportunities and long-term benefits of effective CTE programs.

Strategy 3: Provide the business community opportunities to volunteer their support for Coachella Valley USDs.

ACTION 1: Launch a Partners in Education (PIE) program coordinated by the regional economic development organization.

- 1) Design the PIE program according to best-practice models.
- 2) Partner with Coachella Valley USDs to determine the highest value assistance business community volunteers could provide.
 - Continue with efforts through CPI to create an online Work Based Learning Tool and a process that would coordinate and streamline the business/education link for the CPI Industry Councils.

- Other potential programmatic examples include:
 - Bringing volunteers into the classroom during the school day to promote student engagement and achievement and support teachers in reaching their own instructional goals.
 - Designating Classroom Coaches to serve as both mentor and tutor to a small group of students.
 - Compelling volunteers to speak to students about their businesses, opportunities for high-paying employment, and the skills required to obtain these positions.
- 2) Assess the long-term potential to incorporate the program as a staffed 501(c)3 corporation.

ACTION 2: Recruit private-sector volunteers to assist Valley families with the processing of financial-aid applications.

- 1) Leverage the ongoing Pathways to Success outreach program assisting students with financial-aid awareness.
 - Through Pathways to Success, designate monthly “Financial Aid Saturdays” for business volunteers to work one-on-one with area families to fill out and file their child’s Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms.
 - Enlist the support of the Valley’s USDs and high schools to identify families of students who could benefit from Financial Aid Saturdays assistance.

Strategy 4: Source additional resources for regional USDs.

ACTION 1: Strengthen and support educational foundations in the Coachella Valley.

- 1) Work with local foundations to broaden awareness of these tools as vehicles to augment funding for the Valley’s USDs.
- 2) Ensure priority programmatic needs are communicated to foundation administrators.

ACTION 2: Pursue business community support to enhance programs.

- 1) Approach local companies about donating equipment and/or software to upgrade classroom learning environments or seek sponsorships for key local programs.

OBJECTIVE 2: FULLY LEVERAGE REGIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS.

It has been said that research universities are the “steel mills of the 21st Century” based on their local economic impact. Even if a community does not have a top-tier, established research university, its higher-education institutions are still key lynchpins in economic and workforce development efforts. Likewise, colleges, organizations, departments and agencies focused on workforce training play a vital role in the linkage between worker “supply” and employer “demand.”

College of the Desert (COD)**Strategy 5: Maximize COD’s impact on regional workforce and economic development.****ACTION 1: Ensure COD program-development staff are partners in regional economic development efforts.**

- 1) Leverage information garnered from BRE visits, industry councils, workforce-gap analyses, and company expansions/relocations to work with COD on program expansion and creation.
 - Compel regional businesses to donate funding or equipment to COD to realize program-development goals.
- 2) Ensure COD officials have a seat at the table for discussions with businesses considering expansion in – or relocation to – the Valley.
 - Determine the potential to offer free or subsidized worker training as a local economic incentive.
- 3) Based on the Coachella Valley *Blueprint*’s recommended target sectors, consider new COD program development in key degree programs.
 - Leverage a consensus, employer/training-provider discussion process to assess program-development needs, curricula, funding capacity,

timeframes for implementation, and linkages between Valley higher educational institutions and K-12 districts.

ACTION 2: Seek consensus and funding to greatly increase career and technical education (CTE) programs at COD.

- 1) Conduct a regional employer survey to determine vocational and technical careers in greatest demand.
 - o Utilize CPI Industry Council rosters as a key resource in these assessments.
 - o Corroborate findings with regional and local economic development officials and Workforce Development Center staff.
- 2) Work with regional USDs to provide students the opportunity for school-to-work programs and guaranteed employment upon graduation.
- 3) Partner with regional businesses to source qualified instructors and identify opportunities for internship, school-to-work and job shadowing placement.

ACTION 3: Incorporate soft-skills training into all career-focused programs.

- 1) Re-tool curricula to ensure students understand basic job-site requirements and employer performance expectations.
- 2) Consider inviting local employers and former students to speak to classes on the importance of soft-skills acquisition.

Strategy 6: Increase awareness of COD programs and degree/certificate opportunities.

ACTION 1: Renew and initiate partnerships with regional entities to help promote COD offerings.

- 1) Reach out to social service, faith-based, neighborhood-based, immigrant- and non-English-speaker focused organizations to advise clients and members of degree and career-development opportunities at the College.
- 2) Ensure Valley media outlets are partners in the promotion and dissemination of COD news and programs.
- 3) Work with local and regional economic development organizations to advise Valley employers on the training and re-training resources at COD.
- 4) Effectively promote the regional Pathways to Success program.

ACTION 2: Ensure information related to COD's Mecca-Thermal campus is effectively provided to employers and potential students.

- 1) Continue to engage in a bi-lingual campaign to promote the new campus as an alternative to the COD main campus for residents and businesses in the East Valley.
- 2) Work with existing students to orient them to degree and certificate programs that may be closer to their place of residence.

Strategy 7: Partner with COD administrators to ensure that facilities-development goals are advanced.**ACTION 1: Optimize the development of the Mecca-Thermal campus**

- 1) Provide business-community support to enable the COD system to effectively develop academic infrastructure at the campus.
 - o Seek all potential benefactors and naming-rights opportunities for existing and planned buildings.
- 2) Ensure that the gradual transition of the East Valley Center to the Mecca-Thermal campus proceeds smoothly.

ACTION 2: Support the development of a West Valley COD campus.

- 1) Provide consistent and vocal business-community support for the funding and construction of the campus.
- 2) Work with local and regional economic development officials to proactively determine priority program needs for the new campus.
 - o Strive to match program-development goals to the Coachella Valley's target sector employment opportunities.

Strategy 8: Help address the COD system's resource needs.**ACTION 1: Actively support and promote the College of the Desert Foundation.**

- 1) Ensure Valley chambers of commerce and the regional economic development organization make all area businesses aware of the Foundation

and businesses' responsibility to support it for the benefit of the regional economy.

- 2) Design a strategy to capitalize on the Coachella Valley's complement of wealthy full-time and seasonal residents to support the Foundation.
 - Plan outreach and informational sessions at popular Valley events and establishments.
 - Develop promotional materials identifying key needs and touting the tax advantages of donating to the Foundation.
- 3) Leverage relationships of regional business people and residents with top national education foundations and trusts to further COD efforts to obtain grant money for the Foundation.

ACTION 2: Consider a future bond election in the COD district.

- 1) Lay the groundwork for a potential future bond vote to facilitate growth in the College's programs and facilities.
- 2) Consider the establishments of funding districts oriented around the East and future West Campuses.

California State University, San Bernardino-Palm Desert (CSUSB-PD)

Strategy 9: Maximize CSUSB-PD's impact on regional workforce and economic development.

ACTION 1: Ensure CSUSB-PD program-development staff are partners in regional economic development efforts.

- 1) Monitor ongoing implementation and re-assessment of target-development efforts to ensure that CSUSB-PD programmatic strategies are aligned with regional economic opportunities.
 - Consider developing specific courses or specializations if creation of stand-alone degree programs is infeasible.
- 2) Ensure CSUSB-PD officials have a seat at the table for discussions with businesses considering expansion in – or relocation to – the Valley.
 - Advise prospects of programs in existence or development that support the prospect's staffing needs.
- 3) Based on the Coachella Valley *Blueprint's* recommended target sectors, consider new CSUSB-PD program development in key degree programs.

- Leverage a consensus, employer/training-provider discussion process to assess program-development needs, curricula, funding capacity, timeframes for implementation, and linkages between Valley higher educational institutions and K-12 districts.
 - Ensure coordination between – and leveraging of – programs at the CSUSB main campus.
- 4) Maintain ongoing communication and coordination with COD to ensure that two-year degree programs are effectively linked to CSUSB-PD offerings.

ACTION 2: Strengthen relationships with local and external partners.

- 1) Maintain an active role in processes established to realize a more seamless relationship between USDs, colleges and universities and the private sector.
- Continue participation in – or petition to join – efforts related to existing business retention/expansion, entrepreneurial and small business development and internal/external marketing.
 - Determine the University’s capacity to assist with design, promotion, and implementation of economic and workforce development efforts.
- 2) Ensure that San Bernardino campus administration recognizes and commits to the active support of Palm Desert campus priorities.
- Develop and maintain relationships with Coachella Valley public and private “influencers” to advocate in San Bernardino and Sacramento for growth of CSUSB-PD programs and infrastructure.
- 3) Add the University’s voice to regional public-private efforts petitioning state and federal elected officials to support key Coachella Valley initiatives and legislation.

Strategy 10: Prioritize local graduates for matriculation to CSUSB-PD.**ACTION 1: Continue outreach efforts to local high schools promoting the benefits of attending the University.**

- 1) Develop strong and ongoing relationships with academic advisors and college counselors to recommend CSUSB-PD to qualified graduates.
- 2) Consider sponsoring USD programs and events to develop a sense of goodwill between local students and the University.

- 3) Speak with local high school students in one-on-one and group settings to identify factors that would lead them to enroll at CSUSB-PD.
- 4) Effectively promote the regional Pathways to Success program.

Strategy 11: Work to achieve CSUSB-PD's facility-development goals.

- 1) Partner with UCR-PD, the city of Palm Desert, CVAG and the regional EDO to develop a Campus District Master Plan for the two universities.
 - o Assess potential program development and growth, enrollment trends, projected space constraints, campus connectivity, and a number of other issues related to the optimal expansion of each campus' footprint.
 - o Consider linkages with adjacent streets and neighborhoods and the opportunity to develop a "campus environment" similar to traditional college-serving districts.
 - Include provision of student housing, retail, mixed-use projects and other development consistent with what is found in typical campus-adjacent environments.
- 2) Ensure CSUSB administrators and the U.C. Board of Regents understand and support the Palm Desert campus' vision and expansion goals.

Strategy 12: Help address CSUSB-PD's resource needs.**ACTION 1: Fully leverage all regional businesses, foundations and philanthropists to help fulfill the University's mission.**

- 1) Ensure that all potential supplemental funding sources are aware of the University's priority needs and the benefits their development will accrue.
- 2) Maintain consistent contact and conversation with prospective funders to keep them abreast of the campus' growth, goals and resource-constraints.

ACTION 2: Consider a future Coachella Valley bond election to support development of the CSUSB-PD and UCR-PD campus cluster.

- 1) Lay the groundwork for a potential future bond vote to facilitate growth in the universities' programs and facilities.

University of California, Riverside-Palm Desert

Strategy 13: Maximize UCR-PD's impact on regional workforce and economic development.

ACTION 1: Ensure UCR-PD program-development staff are partners in regional economic development efforts.

- 1) Monitor ongoing implementation and re-assessment of target-development efforts to ensure that UCR-PD programmatic strategies are aligned with regional economic opportunities.
 - a. Consider developing specific courses or specializations if creation of stand-alone degree programs is infeasible.
- 2) Ensure UCR-PD officials have a seat at the table for discussions with businesses considering expansion in – or relocation to – the Valley.
 - a. Advise prospects of programs in existence or development that support the prospect's staffing needs.
- 3) Based on the Coachella Valley *Blueprint's* recommended target sectors, consider new UCR-PD program development in key degree programs.
 - i. Leverage a consensus, employer/training-provider discussion process to assess program-development needs, curricula, funding capacity, timeframes for implementation, and linkages between Valley higher educational institutions and K-12 districts.
 - ii. Ensure coordination between – and leveraging of – programs at the UCR main campus.

ACTION 2: Strengthen relationships with local and external partners.

- 1) Maintain an active role in processes established to realize a more seamless relationship between USDs, colleges and universities and the private sector.
 - a. Continue participation in – or petition to join – efforts related to existing business retention/expansion, entrepreneurial and small business development and internal/external marketing.
 - b. Determine the Graduate Campus' capacity to assist with design, promotion, and implementation of economic and workforce development efforts.
- 2) Ensure that Riverside campus administration recognizes and commits to the active support of Palm Desert campus priorities.

- a. Develop and maintain relationships with Coachella Valley public and private “influencers” to advocate in Riverside and Sacramento for growth of UCR-PD programs and infrastructure.
- 3) Add the University’s voice to regional public-private efforts petitioning state and federal elected officials to support key Coachella Valley initiatives and legislation.

Strategy 14: Capitalize on research conducted at UCR-PD to benefit the regional economy.

ACTION 1: Work with the Valley’s regional economic development organization to link campus research with opportunities in the Clean Technology/Energy sector.

- 1) Partner with faculty at the UCR Center for Conservation Biology and Boyd Deep Canyon Desert Reserve Center to determine how the centers’ research can be integrated into sector-development efforts.

ACTION 2: Seek to develop local research capacity in the life sciences.

- 1) Launch a community-wide effort to advocate for the location of a research component of the proposed UC-Riverside Medical School at the Palm Desert campus, when developed.
- 2) Coordinate with economic development officials targeting Healthcare and Life Sciences for the Valley to ensure that potential research conducted at the Palm Desert campus is aligned with identified opportunities for growth.

Strategy 15: Ensure UCR-PD maintains an active role in the regional community.

ACTION 1: Strengthen relationships with local and external partners.

- 1) Maintain an active role in processes established to realize a more seamless relationship between USDs, colleges and universities and the private sector.
 - o Continue participation in – or petition to join – efforts related to existing business retention/expansion, entrepreneurial and small business development and internal/external marketing.

- Determine the university's capacity to assist with design, promotion, and implementation of economic and workforce development efforts.

ACTION 2: Continue the management and development of community-serving programs.

- 1) Maintain and enhance the campus' efforts to offer dynamic lectures and film series; coordinate community roundtables, discussion groups and lifelong-learning programs; and operate literacy and school-focused writing programs.
- 2) Work to broaden awareness of campus-sponsored events and programs through partnerships with media, organizational and institutional partners.

Strategy 16: Prioritize local graduates for matriculation to UCR-PD.⁴

ACTION 1: Conduct outreach efforts to local high schools promoting the benefits of attending the University.

- 1) Develop strong and ongoing relationships with academic advisors and college counselors to recommend UCR-PD to qualified graduates.
- 2) Consider sponsoring USD programs and events to develop a sense of goodwill between local students and the University.
- 3) Speak with local high school students in one-on-one and group settings to identify factors that would lead them to enroll at UCR-PD.
- 4) Effectively promote the regional Pathways to Success program.

Strategy 17: Work to achieve UCR-PD's facility-development goals.

- 1) (See Strategy 11, Action 1)
- 2) Ensure UCR administrators and the U.C. Board of Regents understand and support the Palm Desert campus' vision and expansion goals.

⁴ This strategy is most germane to the *Blueprint* if UCR-PD is able to offer undergraduate education at its campus.

Strategy 18: Help address UCR-PD's resource needs.**ACTION 1: Fully leverage all regional businesses, foundations and philanthropists to help fulfill the University's mission.**

- 1) Ensure that all potential supplemental funding sources are aware of the University's priority needs and the benefits their development will accrue.
- 2) Maintain consistent contact and conversation with prospective funders to keep them abreast of the campus' growth, goals and resource-constraints.

ACTION 2: Consider a future Coachella Valley bond election to support development of the CSUSB-PD and UCR-PD campus cluster.

- 1) (See Strategy 12, Action 2)

Workforce Development Resources**Strategy 19: Develop a rapid-response workforce-capacity protocol.****ACTION 1: Initiate partnerships with regional, county and Southern California training institutions to facilitate the provision of trained workers for positions of priority need.**

- 1) Receive agreements from partners that they will provide skilled workers for Valley economic agencies to draw from to attract prospects or retain incumbent businesses.
 - o Market these agreements to prospects as a local incentive.
- 2) Work with Valley education and training partners to develop long-term skills-development solutions for these occupations and skill sets.
- 3) Continue actively leveraging the programs and relationships of the Riverside County Economic Development Agency to further workforce-development goals and optimize training programs.

Strategy 20: Enhance the region's federally-funded workforce development capacity.

ACTION 1: Maximize business community participation on the Riverside County Workforce Development Board and fully engage Valley leaders in its programs.

- 1) Utilize internal marketing efforts to promote the Board's activities and successes.
- 2) Integrate discussion of potential service and volunteer opportunities into BRE visits.
- 3) Ensure that the Board continues to work towards effective inclusion of all its sub-regions in Riverside County workforce development efforts.

ACTION 2: Seek to increase the number of Workforce Development Centers in the region.

- 1) Assess the need to supplement the WDC in Indio with potential locations in the West and East Valley.
- 2) Reach out to the Riverside County Workforce Development Board and other Southern California boards to determine the optimal means to secure funding and approval for additional regional Centers.

Strategy 21: Develop a Work Readiness Certificate program through the local workforce board or College of the Desert.

ACTION 1: Design, fund and operate the skills-assessment and certification program.

- 1) Partner with regional employers to identify key skill-sets required to succeed in local occupations.
- 2) Formalize a skills-assessment and development process to prepare Valley adults for the local workforce.
 - Research and select a best-practice assessment and training protocol.
 - Options include WorkKeys software or a custom-tailored process designed by regional partners.
 - Ensure all services are bi-lingual.
- 3) Seek a consistent funding source to support the Certification program.

ACTION 2: Effectively market and support the Certificate program.

- 1) Leverage all public, private and institutional partners to advocate for and market the Certificate program to potential individual and employer participants.
 - Partner with education and training entities to ensure seamless consistency and strong coordination with regional adult and continuing-education programs to formalize a system for preparing adults to succeed in Valley workplaces.
 - Fully leverage the programs and capacity of the Coachella Valley Adult School to inform the development and implementation of the program.
- 2) Secure commitments from regional businesses to hire employees based on receipt of Work Readiness Certificates.

Strategy 22: Reduce limitations to adults' ability to enter the workforce.**ACTION 1: Establish a Child Care Task Force in the Coachella Valley.**

- 1) Utilize the Task Force to identify potential childcare capacity improvements and design programs to effectively address shortages of quality local care.
- 2) Pursue funding and partnerships to develop additional government-funded, subsidized childcare centers.
- 3) Work with regional companies to determine the potential to provide additional on-site childcare for employees with small children.
 - Provide services as needed during peak shifts, both day and evening.

ACTION 2: Provide sufficient transit capacity to enable potential and current workers to access training and employment.

- 1) Enlist the participation of regional companies and workforce development entities to survey employees and students as to their transportation needs to access the workplace or training.
- 2) Assess whether to develop additional lines and/or higher service frequencies to serve transit-dependent employees who do not have access to an existing bus line.

coachella valley
blueprint

QUALITY OF PLACE

ISSUE

Quality of life and quality of place – increasingly critical when competing for companies and talent – are Coachella Valley strengths, but must be maintained and enhanced to ensure long-term economic sustainability.

GOAL

Aggressive and ongoing efforts to continue the Coachella Valley's standing as one of the west's most compelling destinations to live, work and visit.

OBJECTIVE 1: LEVERAGE LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SERVICES FOR COACHELLA VALLEY RESIDENTS.

In most communities, a diverse network of agencies and organizations works hard every day to keep streets and neighborhoods safe and offer support to residents-in-need; the Coachella Valley is no exception. The challenge is typically in coordinating services to the extent necessary to reduce operational redundancies and effectively inform program operators and clients of all regional support services. Ultimately, however, public safety and community services can make or break a company or worker's decision to remain in (or locate to) a region.

Strategy 1: Actively support public safety agencies and personnel.

ACTION 1: Continue efforts to coordinate regional public-safety operations and communication.

- 1) Fully leverage CVAG's Public Safety Committee as a vehicle to bring public-safety personnel and stakeholders together to address Valley crime issues.
 - o Capitalize on other regional public-safety groups such as the Coachella Valley Gang Task Force
- 2) Encourage local public-safety officials to share operational best-practices with colleagues in other Valley communities.
 - o This includes information-sharing on successful efforts such as Desert Hot Springs' sweep of criminal activity in local gangs.

- 3) Work with local and county public safety departments to ensure that communications frequencies, incident-response protocols and issues related to jurisdictional boundaries are effectively coordinated.
 - Ensure that major public-safety challenges, natural or man-made disasters and other catastrophic events are effectively managed by first-responders and Valley agencies/departments.

ACTION 2: Mobilize citizen groups to best support public-safety agencies and safeguard against local crime.

- 1) Conduct a thorough review of existing volunteer-based neighborhood organizations to determine current capacity and coverage gaps.
 - Compile an organizational contact list of Neighborhood Watch, Valley Crime Stoppers, Coachella Valley Chapter of Community Associations Institute and other volunteer efforts in the Valley.
 - Determine the need to launch additional local efforts to enhance crime-protection in key neighborhoods and districts.
 - Partner with local public-safety agencies to facilitate the development and management of these citizen groups.
 - Consistently update the database of citizen organizations.
- 2) Leverage local partner organizations to help promote the presence of volunteer groups and recruit new members.
- 3) Ensure that Latino leaders and organizations from each Valley community are included in the creation of deep and constructive dialogues between public safety agencies and Latino populations to develop a climate of mutual understanding, respect and cooperation.

Strategy 2: Better connect, coordinate and promote regional service providers.

ACTION 1: Consider the development of a Regional Service Council.

- 1) Identify a community-service organization that could manage and coordinate the Council.
- 2) Utilize the Council as a tool to bring together groups such as Family Services of the Desert, United Way of the Desert, Coachella Valley Housing Coalition, Coachella Valley Immigration Service and Assistance, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Chapter No. 24, and others.

- Ensure that city and county community and social services department representatives are active participants in the Council.
 - Foster discussions on strategies to improve coordination, referrals and resource-sharing among regional organizations.
- 3) Leverage the collected influence of the Council to impact legislation of import to regional constituencies.
 - 4) Charge Council members with consistently researching best-practice services and programs for implementation in Coachella Valley cities and agencies.

ACTION 2: Boost awareness of regional social service providers and programs.

- 1) Actively promote Desert Healthlink (www.deserthealthlink.org) as a key regional resource for identifying service providers available in a number of social-service specialty areas.
 - Link the Healthlink URL to the websites of all Valley health and social service organizations, departments, facilities and corporations.
 - Ensure the Healthlink service is regularly updated with new programs, services and providers.
 - Consider producing a printed version of the Healthlink database for distribution to regional service offices and facilities.
- 2) Identify resources to upgrade the design, capacity and utility of the Healthlink website.
 - Promote the urgency of translating the information on the Healthlink site into Spanish.

Strategy 3: Ensure Valley residents have access to affordable healthcare services.**ACTION 1: Fully leverage the existing network of free- and reduced-cost healthcare providers.**

- 1) Promote the Desert Healthlink website as a tool to connect clients with services.
 - Provide translation of Healthlink information into Spanish as necessary.
- 2) Partner with local and regional business organizations to inform their membership of affordable healthcare resources and connect their websites to Healthlink.

- 3) Work with local school districts and youth-serving organizations to identify their healthcare service and resource capacity.
 - Ensure that all youth-serving healthcare programs and providers are added to Healthlink.
 - Provide fiscal and resource support as necessary to optimize existing capacity.

ACTION 2: Develop strategies to enhance the availability of affordable healthcare in the Valley.

- 1) Charge the Regional Service Council with identifying key local needs related to healthcare affordability.
 - Prioritize the identified needs and leverage Council-members’ expertise to develop strategies to fill service gaps and launch new programs.
- 2) Determine the need to source additional revenue to enhance the region’s capacity to provide affordable healthcare services.
 - Consider a variety of fundraising mechanisms, including a non-profit healthcare foundation; a broad-based regional fundraising campaign directed at companies, philanthropists and existing foundations; or a public vote to direct tax monies for healthcare capacity-building or creation of an affordable healthcare fund.
 - Leverage an existing (or hire a new) grant writer charged with securing state and federal grants and foundation monies to support the provision of affordable healthcare in the Valley.

OBJECTIVE 2: CONTINUE TO ENHANCE THE COACHELLA VALLEY’S CAPACITY IN ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION AMENITIES.

Decades of development focused on creating a Shangri La for vacationers and seasonal residents have produced a vast array of resorts, restaurants, museums and galleries, performance venues, golf courses and countless other assets in the Coachella Valley. Coupled with the mid-Century boom in architecture and design – and its lasting impact – the region can boast one of the state’s most dynamic collections of arts, culture and recreation amenities. Previous *Blueprint* strategies have recommended leveraging this capacity to retain and attract businesses and workers. Augmenting the already strong supply of quality of place resources will further enhance the Valley’s appeal to top companies and skilled talent.

Strategy 4: Continue active promotion of local events and attractions.**ACTION 1: Optimize online event calendar listings.**

- 1) Determine the need to invest in search-optimization to prioritize site listings for online searches.
 - Potentially focus optimization funding on a single organization's online event calendar to streamline a user's search process.
- 2) Charge a Valley organization (potentially the Palm Springs Desert Resorts CVA) to serve as the coordinator of events listings and information.
 - Ensure consistency between the CVA's events calendar (GiveInToTheDesert.com) and those of other Valley entities (TheDesert247.com, MyDesert.com and PlanetPalmSprings.com).

ACTION 2: Capitalize on all opportunities for cross-promotion between organizations and events.

- 1) Ensure ongoing and active communication between all Valley arts and culture stakeholder groups and hospitality businesses.
 - Leverage regular meetings of industry groups – including the Palm Springs Chamber's Entertainment Industry Committee and similar regional groups – to capitalize on cross-promotional opportunities such as joint-admissions programs, marketing materials, signage, sponsorships, cost-sharing for electronic and print media advertising, and website linkages.

Strategy 5: Renew and protect vital regional natural resources.**ACTION 1: Advance efforts to restore the Salton Sea.**

- 1) Actively and aggressively leverage regional public and private leadership to support comprehensive Salton Sea-restoration efforts and lobby to advance state-level efforts to implement a 75-year, \$9 billion restoration plan.
 - Determine if local public and private funds – and/or federal stimulus dollars – can supplement state monies to hire a consultant to design a short-term plan to develop shallow saline pools to support fish and wildlife.
 - Pursue additional funding to enable the management and operations of the program.

- Fully support the passage of SB 51 that would create the Salton Sea Restoration Council.
 - Ensure the bill provides the Council with the power and influence needed to effectively control Sea-restoration efforts.
 - Work closely with the Salton Sea and Colorado River Branch of the state Department of Water Resources and the Department of Fish and Game to facilitate passage of the measure.
 - Commit to seating influential Valley leaders on the Council critical to moving restoration efforts forward.
- 2) Capitalize on past legislation creating the Salton Sea Restoration Fund to advance efforts in anticipation of eventual funding of comprehensive restoration programs.
- 3) Ensure close partnerships between the Council, CVAG and local governments to positively impact land use decisions affecting the Sea's prospects.
- 4) Leverage the full force of the regional business community to advocate for the Sea's role in fostering tourism development and preserving air and water quality.

ACTION 2: Actively enforce regional species and habitat protection efforts.

- 1) Support the implementation of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.
- 2) Ensure that conservation lands are successfully secured and protected.
- 3) Continue ongoing outreach to the development community to keep leaders informed of Plan implementation and review.
 - Work to view development interests as partners in resource-preservation efforts.

ACTION 3: Support key regional efforts to improve the Valley's air and water quality.

- 1) Leverage the influence of the business community behind these efforts.
 - Ensure CVAG's existing efforts are fully supported by the regional business community.
 - Communicate the importance of air-and-water-quality compliance as it relates to effective recruitment and retention/expansion of companies.

- Ensure that Spanish- as well as English-speaking constituencies are leveraged.

Strategy 6: Effectively coordinate target-development efforts with enhancement of local arts, culture and recreation capacity.

ACTION 1: Identify priority projects with joint benefit to Creative Arts and Design sector and hospitality industry growth.

- 1) Coordinate meetings to brainstorm on potential product-development efforts.
 - Consider the potential to launch additional music, film, arts/culture and sporting events.
 - As recommended earlier in this *Blueprint*, develop strategies to best leverage additional events for inbound and “doorstep” marketing opportunities.
- 2) Ensure that certain product-development efforts also benefit existing and future Valley residents.
 - Make new outdoor recreation capacity (biking/walking/hiking paths) available to residents as well as visitors.
 - Determine how best to construct additional Coachella Valley parkspace to serve both residents and hotels/resorts.
 - Leverage all existing planning coordinated by local and regional parks and recreation departments.
 - Consider the potential to source private and non-profit funds through the incorporation of a Coachella Valley Parks Foundation.

ACTION 2: Foster strong partnerships between hospitality-development leadership and regional economic development officials.

- 1) Leverage existing and proposed communications channels to achieve consensus on a priority development agenda.
 - Partner influential hospitality executives with economic development volunteer leadership to advocate for funding and development of important projects.
 - Coordinate joint lobbying trips to elected officials, banks, pension funds, etc. required to secure project approval.

- 2) Ensure that the regional economic development organization is consistently supportive of the Palm Springs Desert Resorts CVA and its activities.
 - Routinely work to identify opportunities for coordination between hospitality development and strategies to grow the regional Creative Arts and Design sector.

OBJECTIVE 3: SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES AND INCOMES.

Implicit in the process of creating and implementing strategic economic development plans is that existing and future workers will have access to housing that enables them to stay in the region long-term. Otherwise, jobs will go unfilled and economic growth will be difficult to sustain. While the ongoing national and state housing crisis has significantly lowered the average cost of Coachella Valley housing, affordability was still said to be a local concern and the likely rebound of the regional housing market will again drive up prices beyond the reach of many workers. Public and private leadership must be vigilant to ensure that residents of all ages and incomes are not priced out of the region.

Strategy 7: Advocate for the development of “age-in-place”⁵ homes and communities.

ACTION 1: Utilize development controls to facilitate age-in-place development.

- 1) Consistently advocate for policies, regulations and business practices that promote aging in place.
 - Review existing zoning and development controls to assess the ability to develop age-in-place projects “by-right.”
 - Consider providing zoning incentives (density bonuses, fast-track permitting, waived or discounted development fees, etc.) for development of age-in-place homes, communities and supportive services.

⁵ Defined by AgeInPlace.com as “a concept that promotes living in your home as long as possible as you age, while having the proper care and support services you need.” Selected action steps for this strategy were informed by the National Aging in Place Council.

- 2) Promote the construction and retrofitting of homes according to “universal design” principles that accommodate residents of different physical abilities and ages.
 - Provide printed, visual and online examples of universal design best-practices.

ACTION 2: Establish an Aging In Place Council in the Coachella Valley.

- 1) Seek membership from regional businesses, public agencies, non-profit organizations, the aging network, and the health care system.
 - Leverage the Orange County Chapter of the National Aging in Place Council for information on the most effective way to start a local Chapter.
- 2) Promote inter-disciplinary knowledge about aging-in-place and enhanced professional referral networks.
- 3) Promote National Aging In Place Week and other events through various media and community partners.

Strategy 8: Provide a competitive array of regional housing options.**ACTION 1: Build regional consensus on the importance of appealing to all categories of home-owner.**

- 1) Fully leverage existing planning, advocacy and policy work developed and coordinated by CVAG.
- 2) Partner with young-professional organizations, senior-citizen groups, minority-community advocates, sustainable-development practitioners and others to confirm the attractiveness of various residential development types.
- 3) Create an informational brochure featuring details, definitions and designs of various residential development types.
 - Potential development types include: mixed-use; co-housing; quality multi-family; small-lot subdivisions; and New Urban and Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) communities.
 - Highlight existing developments of these types in the Coachella Valley.
 - Also provide visual examples of best-practice developments in other communities.

ACTION 2: Leverage out-of-market “field trips” to demonstrate examples of best-practice residential development types.

- 1) Coordinate community visits to external “sustainable” cities and regions to include a showcase of various residential developments.

Strategy 9: Ensure a component of Coachella Valley housing is affordable to medium- and low-income residents.**ACTION 1: Partner with CVAG to provide an assortment of tools to incentivize development of affordable housing.**

- 1) Rework local zoning codes to compel project developers to make a percentage of homes affordable to earners below the regional median income.
- 2) Offer developer bonuses to incentivize a higher percentage of affordable housing in residential projects.
 - Examples include density bonuses for additional workforce housing in new developments; fast-track permitting, waived or reduced developer fees, tax abatements and others.
 - Review development codes from other communities to identify successful affordable-housing incentives.
- 3) Leverage the proposed regional Housing Trust to advance workforce-housing-development efforts.
- 4) Determine the need to work with regional employers to provide company-developed workforce housing for lower-wage-earning employees.
 - Study models in communities such as Sun Valley, Idaho; Mammoth Lakes, California; Vail, Colorado; and others.

ACTION 2: Develop government policies to enable Valley residents to purchase quality housing.

- 1) Enact a first-time-homebuyer tax credit for eligible purchasers.
 - Incentivize home ownership in Valley communities through the temporary lowering of property tax rates for first-time home buyers.
 - Determine a median income level for eligibility in the program.
 - Partner with local governments to ensure consistency of program adoption and implementation across the Valley.

- 2) Assess the longer-term potential to develop a government-run affordable housing fund.
 - Provide loans to low-income residents to afford quality housing.
 - Partially capitalize the fund through fees from developers that decline to provide a statutory percentage of affordable housing in their developments.

OBJECTIVE 4: ENSURE THAT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS ARE SUPPORTED AND ENFORCED.

Approval of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan made a strong statement that the region is committed to protecting its cherished natural habitats while also allowing for continuing growth. Valley stakeholders and leadership must continue to be active stewards of the region's natural assets while acknowledging that the local economy and population base must grow to enable governments to function effectively and residents to afford an enriching quality of life.

Strategy 10: Optimize private-sector partnerships with CVAG.

ACTION 1: Ensure the business community is a strong advocate for sustainable development patterns.

- 1) Organize regular meetings between CVAG officials and staff and volunteer leadership of the regional EDO and local chambers.
- 2) Promote a consistent understanding of the need for economic growth balanced against the constraints of environmental protection and resource/infrastructure sustainability.

Strategy 11: Initiate a public-education campaign on the need for – and benefits of – sustainable development.

ACTION 1: Foster a true public-private communications partnership to promote a regional understanding of future growth dynamics.

- 1) Develop a scalable program for presentation to regional audiences and constituency groups.

- 2) Leverage lessons and examples from regions that have effectively realized sustainable development patterns.
- 3) Utilize state-of-the-art technology to help communicate the vision of a sustainable Valley.
 - Take advantage of programs such as SketchUp and CommunityViz to visually translate concepts into teachable examples of higher density development.

ACTION 2: Organize “field-trips” for regional leadership to communities that feature examples of sustainable urban development.

- 1) Consider the potential to take annual trips to regions that have embraced the notion of higher density development patterns.
 - As feasible, combine these trips with economic development visitation to top regional economies.
- 2) Use the trip to highlight the benefits of different development models.

Strategy 12: Better connect Valley communities through development of non-motorized infrastructure and wayfinding programs.

ACTION 1: Leverage the development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure for the benefit of connecting regional communities.

- 1) Fully support the implementation of the final Coachella Valley Association of Governments Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Update.
 - Ensure that implementation of the Plan augments local bike/ped infrastructure while purposefully striving to link currently disconnected regional activity centers.
- 2) Effectively engage the Coachella Valley Community Trails Alliance in discussions and strategies related to bike/ped capacity development and community-connectivity strategies.
- 3) Actively promote the available locations to obtain a copy of the Coachella Valley Urban Trails and Bikeways Map.

ACTION 2: Consider the funding, design and development of a Coachella Valley wayfinding signage program.

- 1) Source the resources necessary to retain a professional consultant to produce a Valley-wide wayfinding strategy and implementation plan.
- 2) Position signage for the benefit of not only vehicles, but also pedestrians.
- 3) Partner with hotels and resorts to locate informational markers, maps and kiosks in their developments and on their properties.
- 4) As necessary, visit external locations to demonstrate to stakeholders best-practice wayfinding systems.

CONCLUSION

The Coachella Valley's Draft *Blueprint* strategy contains dozens of strategies to enhance the Valley's competitiveness as a location to do business, live, work and visit. Associated with those strategies are still more action steps and sub-actions. It should not come as any surprise to Valley leadership and stakeholders that there is a LOT to do to make the region competitive.

There has never been a truly holistic, regional community and economic development strategy developed and implemented in the Coachella Valley. This means that the region and its communities are "starting from way behind" in the race for jobs and investment in the New Economy. Competitor regions have been planning strategically for years, with some organizations on their second, third, fourth or higher cycles of strategic fundraising and implementation. Because of this, the Valley must acknowledge that tremendous resources will be needed to initiate regional programs and enable them to gain traction.

That said, the Coachella Valley is not starting from scratch in terms of its economic development and community capacity. Valley cities have been engaged in economic development programs for many years, while a strong array of organizations work to improve the area's planning, environmental-resource protection, arts and culture capacity, social-services assistance, public safety, recreational options, etc. The challenge is that few of these activities have had a true regional focus.

While much of the *Blueprint* implementation process will involve development of new capacity, other components will require jumping aboard a "moving train." Communities that are most successful at strategic implementation leverage all regional resources, personnel, programs and partnerships into a cohesive effort to create a place where their children and their children's children will thrive.

The Coachella Valley's regional economic development organization will not implement every single component of this strategy. Rather, the Valley must embrace this *Blueprint* as just that – a roadmap for a regional future that will be brighter and more successful than could ever be achieved by individual communities acting alone.

It will be important for regional stakeholders to understand that:

- Implementation of the *Blueprint* is a long-term process – substantive changes will not happen overnight, but as the result of sustained, coordinated effort;
- Significant investments will be required from the full complement of public, private, philanthropic and foundation partners in order to enhance the capacity to implement the *Blueprint*;

- Investments will not be “pay to play” nor will communities with fewer resources be left out of implementation efforts; and
- Implementation will partly be about better coordinating and integrating existing efforts in a more comprehensive, strategic way.

APPENDIX A: PERFORMANCE ATTAINMENT AND TRACKING METRICS

The following table represents metrics that will be reported to demonstrate progress on *Blueprint* implementation. They are comprehensive because the strategy is comprehensive and reflect the projected local advancements that can occur if the plan is successfully implemented. For example, effective employment growth that creates high-value jobs will lower poverty rates, bring more adults into the workforce, attract more young professionals to the region, increase educational attainment, provide more resources to improve educational performance, etc. They represent the anticipated return-on-investment for the public and private partners that provide their time and resources to support *Blueprint* implementation.

Projections were estimated by extrapolating performance trends for previous years and estimating incremental performance gains based on the assumption of effective *Blueprint* implementation. Implementation tracking for the five-year program begins in January 2012 with the understanding that the first two years of implementation – in addition to launch of priority programs – will involve a great deal of consensus building, resource development, and capacity building.

These estimates, while based on empirical data, are subject to economic and demographic dynamics that cannot be predicted in advance. Thus, they should be taken as current performance goals but could be subject to revision in the future.

It is important to note that, although wage and income trends were not indexed to rates of inflation, *Market Street* believes that inflationary impacts are still incorporated into performance projections. This is because actual past values of year-to-year increases/decreases in these indicators reflect the inflationary or deflationary pressures exerted during that calendar year. In other words, companies estimating wage rates in that particular year would have taken inflation into account when establishing hourly/salary wage parameters. By taking these trends and extrapolating them into future years, the inflationary effects on wages/incomes would be perpetuated as well.

Establishment of performance goals for various programs and initiatives recommended to be developed in the Valley were based on *Market Street's* experience with other community strategic programs and their relative performance levels.

Coachella Valley Blueprint Implementation		<i>Latest Figure</i>	<i>Goal in 2016 (or earlier, as noted)</i>
EXTERNAL (PUBLIC) METRICS			
Overall Performance Benchmarks	Total population	352,490 (07)	398,500
	Population, ages 25-34	14% (07)	17%
	Total employment	140,200 (Q2,08)	158,150
	Average annual per capita income	\$25,943 (06)	\$27,243
	Average annual wages	\$34,701 (07)	\$49,000
	Taxable Retail Sales (Billions)	\$5.89 (07)	\$7.50
	Total assessed valuation	\$65.1 billion (08)	\$108 billion
	Labor Force Participation Rate	64.9% (07)	72%
	Total poverty	14.9% (07)	13.5% (or at or below national/state level)
	Youth poverty	22.9% (07)	17%(or at or below national/state level)
	Percentage of adults with Bachelor's degree or higher	23.3% (07)	27% (or at or below national/state level)
	High school graduation rate	79.0% (07-8)	89%

APPENDIX B: BEST-PRACTICE PROGRAMS

Regionalism

HAMPTON ROADS PARTNERSHIP (HAMPTON ROADS, VA)

Blueprint Objective 2

The Hampton Roads Partnership is a unique public-private organization formed in 1996 to provide leadership on regional marketing and strategic issues that will improve the area's competitive position in the global economy.

The Partnership represents ten cities, six counties, and one town, equaling nearly 1.6 million citizens of Virginia.⁶ Roughly eighty percent of the Partnership's operating funds come from annual investments made by member businesses and educational institutions; the remaining twenty percent comes from investments made by the localities within the Hampton Roads region.

Membership in the Partnership includes the chief elected officials of the organization's principal governments, along with key leadership in business, education, military, and labor. The Partnership operates under the belief that metropolitan regions like Hampton Roads are the primary unit of competition in the global economy; regions ignore this fact at their own peril.

Strategic areas on which the organization has focused include regional identity, healthy communities, transportation, tourism, workforce training, water resources, and professional sports.

EXTERNAL LEADERSHIP VISITS (ATLANTA, GA)

Blueprint Objective 1 Strategy 2 Action 1

Created by the Atlanta Regional Commission in 1997, LINK (Leadership, Involvement, Networking, Knowledge) brings leaders of the Atlanta region together to visit other metropolitan areas to learn how they address similar issues and challenges experienced in Atlanta.

⁶ Hampton Roads Partnership. 11 August 2009. <<http://www.hrp.org/index.php>>.

Over 100 area leaders participate in the annual trip, during which they are allowed the opportunity to converse with other leaders and exchange ideas, experiences, and solutions that have helped affect positive change in their respective communities.

In 2008, the LINK delegation visited Denver, Colorado, where they explored how the area has confronted issues that Atlanta is facing, such as indigent health care, water shortages, and limited public transit.⁷ In 2009, they visited Minneapolis-Saint Paul, Minnesota, where they observed how the area is governed by a regional organization, one of few in the country to do so.⁸ They also explored how the area has built and maintained a high quality of life, including its nationally recognized park and trails system and arts and culture offerings. Previous trips included Denver, Seattle, Dallas, Cleveland, San Diego, Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, Portland, Miami, and Vancouver, Canada.

THINKONEKC (KANSAS CITY, MO)

Blueprint Objective 2 Strategy 5 Action 1

An effort to raise the bar in city branding, the Kansas City Area Development Council (KCADC) launched the OneKC and ThinkKC campaigns in 2004 using several billboards. The goal of “ThinkKC” is to promote the Kansas City region as an attractive place to live and work and upgrade the region’s national image. “OneKC” is the regional unity portion of the campaign—to create a regional mindset, create a unified product to increase the region’s competitive advantage, and to give residents a renewed sense of place and pride.

To share the overall message, “Together we are stronger. We are all KC,” KCADC commenced an aggressive grassroots level effort by making over 150 presentations to organizations throughout the metro area. Other initiatives to advertise the brand included naming a major road OneKC Way, leaders signing the “Declaration of Interdependence,” and launching a KC merchandise line.

Since 2004, over 250 companies and communities use the brand in their marketing efforts, and the Development Council has attracted over 500 new businesses to the region. As a result of acting and working as a unified region, the Kansas City region has gained many new jobs and millions of dollars in new investment.⁹

⁷ “Atlanta Leaders try to link into Denver’s successes.” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. 12 May 2008.

⁸ Atlanta Regional Commission/LINK. 17 August 2009. <<http://www.atlantaregional.com/html/396.aspx>>.

⁹ ThinkKC. 14 August 2009. <http://www.thinkkc.com/AboutKCADC/onekc/thinkonekc_main.php>.

BUSINESS AMBASSADOR INITIATIVE (PHILADELPHIA, PA)

Blueprint Objective 2 Strategy 5 Action 2

Select Greater Philadelphia's (SGP) Ambassador Initiative is a program that leverages top regional stakeholders as advocates and "salespeople" for Greater Philadelphia. SGP provides volunteer ambassadors with a variety of tools to further educate them on the assets of Greater Philadelphia and how to share this information with others. Registering to be an ambassador also enables volunteers to access the SGP site through a password-protected portal.

Ambassadors are also encouraged to participate in the "Bring it Home" program coordinated by the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau. The program encourages business leaders to bring and "keep" meetings/conventions in the Greater Philadelphia region.

Ambassadors can choose to participate in SGP activities in a number of ways. These include:

- Advocating the attractiveness of doing business in Greater Philadelphia when talking with peers, vendors, and clients, and providing referrals to SGP from these discussions.
- Representing the region on marketing missions in other cities and countries as a speaker.
- Hosting and/or meeting with prospective company executives and acting as a resource for their questions about the region, labor force, business opportunities, etc.
- Participating in task forces to define the business opportunity in Greater Philadelphia for companies in the Life Sciences, IT & Communications, Financial & Professional Services, and Chemicals industries.
- Including information/slides about doing business in Greater Philadelphia when speaking on the conference/lecture circuit and including SGP marketing material when attending industry conferences.
- Incorporating messages about why the Ambassador's company does business in Greater Philadelphia in the company's marketing materials.
- Offering access to Human Resource executives in the Ambassador's company who can participate in task forces to share their recruiting/retention experience and host internal focus groups with young employees.
- Offering the Ambassador's company box or tickets to assist with business attraction efforts.
- Providing research data about the region, industry in the region, industry trends, industry suppliers, housing, tax data, etc.
- Giving quotes to reporters about the Ambassador's company/industry for trade journals, newspapers, etc.

- Sharing success stories about business innovations or accomplishments that SGP can market.
- Providing speaking opportunities in front of the Ambassador’s corporate board members, employees, associations, trade and business groups, to raise awareness about SGP’s services and the region’s business assets.
- Sharing industry knowledge as well as association, alumni, and other industry databases to help SGP identify and contact companies for business development efforts.
- Making introductions to local companies and business leaders to help SGP cultivate new investors.
- Making a financial contribution to fund SGP’s business development, marketing, and research work.

SGP’s Business Ambassador Initiative enables the organization to take tremendous advantage of Greater Philadelphia’s most effective marketing resources: the companies already doing business in the region. Through the MOU signed with local economic development entities, SGP has the freedom to partner with existing regional businesses at a very high level and leverage top executives at these firms to further prospect-development and recruitment efforts.

JOINT LEGISLATIVE AGENDA (TULSA, OK)

Blueprint Objective 3 Strategy 7

Through its Government Affairs department, the Tulsa Metro Chamber coordinates a group of key partners to prepare a Regional Joint Legislative Agenda for presentation to state and federal elected officials each year. Preparation of the Agenda begins months before the legislative session, with the Chamber managing and staffing meetings of Task Forces assembled to discuss key competitive issues such as transportation, taxes/incentives, healthcare, and others.

The Chamber also works with a Regional Chamber Coalition and local Coalition of Tulsa Area Governments to formalize the creation of the Joint Agenda.

The regional advocacy program has led to the development of more effective partnerships between the Chamber and local governments. The identification of key issues for joint advocacy at the state and federal level ensures that the region has a coordinated approach, and that “one voice” is heard in Oklahoma City and Washington, D.C.¹⁰

¹⁰ For the region’s 2009 agenda, see <http://ww3.tulsachamber.com/general.asp?id=461>.

Economic Diversification

ATI CLEAN ENERGY INCUBATOR (AUSTIN, TX)

Blueprint Objective 2 Strategy 12 Action 3

The Clean Energy Incubator is an entity of the Austin Technology Incubator (ATI) in Austin, Texas. Created in 2002, the Clean Energy Incubator provides resources and facilities to start-up clean energy companies with the goal of growing the companies into self-sustaining, thriving businesses that will eventually provide jobs to Austin. With the help of the Clean Energy Incubator, companies are able to attract funding, create stronger business proposals, increase their competitiveness, and add intellectual capital to the world.

Member and alumni companies of the Clean Energy Incubator are enterprises that focus on technology development or commercialization in the areas of renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy management, distributed resources, energy storage, fuel cells, microturbines, power quality, alternative fuels, and transportation.¹¹ Since its inception the Incubator has assisted 18 companies in the renewable and energy efficiency sectors.

The Clean Energy Incubator is supported by the Texas State Energy Conservation Office and receives funding from the City of Austin and Austin Energy. It has previously received funding from the U.S. Department of Energy.

METROPOLITAN CHICAGO HEALTHCARE COUNCIL – GREATER CHICAGO, IL

Blueprint Objective 2 Strategy 8 Action 1

The Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council identified that Chicago would need 36,000 nurses by 2020 to meet the demands on the local healthcare system.¹² However, many nursing degree programs are faced with shortages in nurse faculty and are unable to enroll the number of student necessary to expand the nurse workforce. Finding applicants for nurse candidacy was not the problem – the major obstacle was recruiting and retaining qualified clinical educators to instruct the students. Some of the factors contributing to the nursing educator shortage include an aging and retiring population of educators, the income gap between instructors and clinical or private sector jobs, and the requirement of a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) for all instructors.

¹¹ Austin Technology Incubator: Clean Energy. 13 August 2009. <<http://www.ati.utexas.edu/cei2.htm>>.

¹² Slupski, Geneva. "Greater Chicago Works Together to Quell Impending RN Shortage." *Nurse.com*. 9 February 2009. <<http://include.nurse.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2009102090038>>.

The MCHC, in conjunction with area healthcare facilities, launched a two-day clinical nurse faculty academy in August 2008 at Prairie State College. For nurses interested in becoming instructors, the forum gave information and advice on various aspects of becoming an educator and teaching.

The first nurse faculty academy was so successful that over 30 master's-level nurses became part-time instructors. The second academy is planned for December 2009 at Wright College.

MCHC also initiated partnerships between hospitals and nursing degree programs to share staff so that nurses could teach as adjunct professors and continue to practice.

A nurse residency program by University HealthSystem Consortium, another alliance of hospitals and schools in Oak Brook, IL, aims to decrease turnover rates by targeting first-year nurses with mentoring and support. This program has also facilitated stronger relationships between the hospital and the schools that train nurses, transforming some advanced practice nurses into part-time instructors.

ARTIST RELOCATION PROGRAM (PADUCAH, KY)

Blueprint Objective 2 Strategy 19 Action 2

Paducah (population 25,545 in 2004) is located 120 miles northwest of Nashville, TN, the closest major metro in the area. The Paducah community initiated an Artists Relocation Program¹³ in August 2000 to revitalize its central core, known as Lowertown. The program has been a phenomenal success, luring over 45 artists from across the country to relocate to town. The program has won Kentucky's Governor's Award in the Arts, the American Planning Association National Planning Award, and the Kentucky League of Cities Enterprise Cities Award. The program continues to grow through Paducah's city general fund and strong dollar commitments from Paducah Bank, as well as an array of support from the re-energized downtown arts and tourism community.

Incentivizing small business creation, Lowertown is zoned for both commercial and residential use so that residents are able to have a gallery, studio, restaurant, café, etc., as well as their living quarters in one place. The relocation program also offers incentives including: low interest loans from Paducah Bank with up to 100 percent financing; free lots for new construction; up to \$2500 in financial assistance for architectural services and other professional fees; Enterprise Zone incentives; and discounted web pages and other joint marketing programs.

¹³ Paducah Artist Relocation Program. 12 August 2009. <<http://paducaharts.com>>.

EXTERNAL MARKETING: “THE HUMAN CAPITAL” (AUSTIN, TX)

Blueprint Objective 1 Strategy 2

A key strategic recommendation of the first Opportunity Austin economic development program was to announce to the economic development world that Greater Austin was refocused on strong employment and wage growth led to recharged efforts to “get the word out” to corporations, site-selection and corporate relocation professionals, and the national media that metro Austin was again “open for business.”

The result of the Greater Austin Chamber’s strong push into external marketing was a new brand and tagline (“Austin: The Human Capital”), a refreshed website, and a new, multi-channel marketing effort complete with direct mail, horizontal and vertical trade publication advertising, on-line advertising, public-relations-coordinated media placements, target-specific marketing materials, and other tools.

As a component of Opportunity Austin implementation, the Greater Austin Chamber completely redesigned its website and created an additional site specific to the technology and innovation economy. Chamber officials have received positive feedback from prospects and site-selection professionals on the comprehensiveness of the main site’s data, navigability/user-friendliness, and provision of support services information. Because of the efficacy of the website, Chamber officials said they are being called “later in the game” by site consultants who have short-listed Austin based on web-provided information alone.

The Greater Austin Chamber then contracted with New York-based public relations firm Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher (JFWBK) to handle media placement, crisis communications, arrangement of out-of-market interviews and other selected services. The firm has secured Austin-centered stories in such influential publications as the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Economist*, *Business Week*, *Business 2.0* and other publications. JFWBK estimates that 17,500,000 “consumer impressions” have been generated via media placements to date. The firm has calculated an “advertising equivalency” value of these placements at \$131,089 between July 2006 and June 2007.¹⁴ A full-time public relations director has been hired by the Chamber to support on-going operations.

¹⁴ “By the Numbers: A Progress Report for the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, July 2006 to June 2007,” Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher.

HEALTHCARE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP (TALLAHASSEE, FL)

Blueprint Objective 2 Strategy 9 Action 1

In April 2009, Florida State University and Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare became research partners.¹⁵ In an agreement to work on projects that will possibly have a direct impact on health care in the area as well as across the state of Florida, the over 500 physicians who practice at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, the seventh largest hospital in the state, will be able to work along with university researchers and other faculty to conduct laboratory research and clinical trials.

Prior to this agreement, physicians who are clinical faculty at FSU’s College of Medicine did not have the opportunity to participate in or lead university research projects. Instead of having one teaching hospital, FSU is partners with over 60 teaching hospitals, clinic, and community healthcare centers throughout the state, and physicians throughout Florida are members of the College of Medicine’s clerkship faculty and teach one or two third- or fourth-year medical students during selected rotations. Now, with the healthcare research partnership, over 1,500 physicians will have the opportunity to conduct healthcare research.

Making the idea of “bench to bedside to community” a practice rather than just a philosophy, physicians and researchers participating in this partnership have already begun developing initiatives to treat neurological and genetic associated diseases.

INTERNATIONAL INLAND PORT OF DALLAS (DALLAS COUNTY, TX)

Blueprint Objective 2 Strategy 17 Action 1

The **International Inland Port of Dallas** (IIPOD) is a public-private partnership located in Southern Dallas County; the entire project’s impact area covers 234,000 acres and encompasses 12 municipalities. The project leverages the region’s transportation infrastructure, which includes five interstate highways and two Class I railroads (Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe).

When completed, the project is intended to utilize an Agile Port System to speed processing from deep-water port locations inland and leverage technology to enhance security and better facilitate the customs process. The total project is estimated to take 30 plus years to complete.

The IIPOD project is comprised of a consortium of communities including Dallas County, the Dallas County Community College District, the North Central Texas

¹⁵ “The Florida State University enters research partnership with Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare.” *Florida State University*. 17 August 2009. < <http://www.fsu.edu/news/2009/04/08/tmh.partnership/>>.

Council of Governments (NCTCOG), and 10 Dallas County cities, including the City of Dallas itself.¹⁶

SEED CAPITAL FUND (CENTRAL NEW YORK)

Blueprint Objective 4 Strategy 27 Action 2

Seed Capital Fund (SCF) members invest in and guide early-stage technology companies in Syracuse and Central/Upstate New York in order to create wealth for investors and assist in the region’s transformation into a high-tech, high-growth economy. The Fund has a team of five high-profile advisors that helps inform SCF decision-making.

SCF’s engagement with entrepreneurs covers five stages from first contact through exit. These are:

1. Entrepreneur Self Evaluation: A series of 20 questions is posed to the entrepreneur to determine if he/she is a viable candidate for SCF funding and services.
2. Business Plan Review and Member Presentation: Summary information is reviewed and promising candidates are invited to present to a screening committee. This committee decides whether to recommend the prospect to the full SCF membership.
3. Due Diligence and Investment Decision: Following presentation to the full membership, a vote is taken to determine interest in launching due diligence.
4. Funding: Companies selected for investment are offered a term sheet and funds are made available following successful conclusion of these negotiations.
5. Post-investment Oversight and Assistance: A representative from SCF is designated to work with the company’s management leadership in an advisory or governance (director) capacity. Through this relationship, the wider resources of SCF members can be accessed in the hopes of driving a successful investment outcome.¹⁷

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION PROGRAM (AUSTIN, TX)

Blueprint Objective 1 Strategy 4 Action 2

Greater Austin, Texas is a five-county region with a dynamic roster of existing businesses that have helped make the area one of the nation’s most talked-about locations for employment and population growth. After the “dot-com bubble” burst in the late 1990s and early 2000s, however, Austin found itself with very little

¹⁶ For more information, see <http://www.iipod-texas.org/>.

¹⁷ Seed Capital Fund of Central New York. *Investment Process*. <http://www.scfcny.com/investment-process.htm>

capacity for economic development and declining employment growth for the first time in years.

As the result of a strategy developed by *Market Street* for the Greater Austin Chamber in 2003, the Chamber created a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program and committed three staff to implement it. Tracking software was purchased and a calling program was developed focusing on the region's key industry sectors and top companies. A number of community partners now sub-license the Chamber's BRE software to better coordinate the development of an existing-business database for the region.

The Chamber invests a significant amount of time doing "pre-research" on companies before making their visits and has a list of key questions prepared to discuss with company representatives. Though the visits are conversational, they are nevertheless targeted towards information the Chamber wants to glean from businesses. After the visit, Chamber staff updates the BRE database with information from the session and engages the Chamber's other departments to address competitive issues and pursue recruitment opportunities sourced from the BRE visit.

As a direct result of BRE activities, in April 2006 Samsung Electronics announced a \$3.5 billion expansion in a new 300mm semiconductor plant to create nearly 1,000 new jobs in Austin.

Workforce Excellence

CHILD CARE SERVICES ASSOCIATION (TRIANGLE REGION, NC)

Blueprint Objective 2 Strategy 22 Action 1

Child Care Services Association (CCSA) is a nationally recognized nonprofit working to ensure affordable, accessible, high quality childcare for all families through research, services and advocacy.¹⁸ CCSA works to improve childcare and is an association of groups, individuals and volunteers committed to supporting the rights of young children and their families to have the best possible life.

CCSA provides free referral services to families seeking childcare, technical assistance to child care businesses, and educational scholarships and salary supplements to child care professionals. CCSA licenses its successful programs to states across the country and provides consultation to others addressing childcare concerns.

¹⁸ Child Care Services Association. 12 August 2009. <<http://www.childcareservices.org/index.html>>

CCSA is a leader and advocate in childcare services on the local, state and national level. CCSA collaborates with many partners, businesses and stakeholders to address needs within the local childcare system. CCSA is only a part of the broader community's commitment to create systemic changes affecting everyone.

THE MET (RHODE ISLAND)

Blueprint Objective 1 Strategy 2 Action 3

The Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center is a network of six small state-funded public high schools in Rhode Island. All Met students have tailored curricula and apply academic learning at internships in the community. To date, The Met has inspired a national network of 50 similar schools.

The Met is grounded in the philosophy of educating one student at a time and that true learning takes place when each student is an active participant in his or her education. Learning also takes place when teachers, parents, and mentors who know the student well personalize a course of study, and when school based learning is blended with outside experiences to heighten the student's interest.

The Met uses internships as a way to take theory and abstract knowledge and apply them to real life. Kids learn math and people skills by selling a house. They learn physics by building a boat. These final products – the boat or the sale of the house demonstrate real proficiency in those skill areas. This system creates a culture where students take pride in their work and internalize high standards.

The Met does not use the ordinary top-down approach, where students learn everything in the order in which it is laid out in a textbook. It instead builds a personalized learning plan around each student's needs, interests, and passions. Students explore possible career paths by interning at organizations and businesses of their choosing.

The Met's advisory system allows at least one adult to really know each student and makes a small school smaller. Students refer to their advisory as "their second family."

Core tenets of a Met education include¹⁹:

- Learning in the Real World
- Advisory & Assessment
- Applied Academics & Assessment
- College Transition Program
- Health & Wellness
- Travel Opportunities

¹⁹ The Met. 12 August 2009. <<http://www.themetschool.org/Metcenter/home.html>>

Success can be tracked with the following 2006 statistics:

- 94.9% Graduation Rate (RI avg. 89.2% and Providence avg. 86.7%)
- 92.1% Attendance Rate (RI avg. 90.4% and Providence avg. 84.46)
- 98% College Acceptance
- 75% College Enrollment

WALTON CAREER ACADEMY (WALTON COUNTY, GA)

Blueprint Objective 1 Strategy 2 Action 1

Walton Career Academy is a publicly-funded charter school with the mission of “ensuring a viable 21st Century Workforce.” The Career Academy opened in August 2006 as a joint venture of local businesses, the Walton County School System, and Athens Technical College (ATC) to create new options for students in a rapidly changing economy. Serving grades 10-12, the program combines academics with career and technical education. The Academy serves as the county’s workforce development center and as the Walton County campus for ATC. Students from local high schools regularly attend classes alongside adults, for all or part of the school day and earn dual-enrollment college certifications through the college.

Area businesses help develop Walton Career Academy’s curriculum and customize training through input on workforce skill gaps. Career pathways and courses offered include automotive technology, cosmetology, commercial art, engineering and manufacturing sciences, marketing, business, healthcare science technology, engineering, drawing and design, veterinary science, broadcast video and production, construction technology as well as advanced placement and foreign language courses. The Academy also focuses on developing students’ soft skills such as communication and work ethic, providing a work ethic grade in addition to a course grade in every class. Students also have access to work-based learning opportunities with more than 80 local businesses, including job-shadowing, internships, and apprenticeships. Walton Career Academy also offers GED preparatory courses and ATC curriculum courses for adults.

In its first three years of operation, Walton Career Academy’s dual-enrollment high school students increased by over 500 percent. The number of dual-enrollment course offerings also doubled during this time, and the program boasts a graduate rate of 99 percent for its dual-enrollment students. The adult population at the Walton County campus of Athens Technical College grew by more than 200 percent.

The Academy was awarded one of six Career Academy Initiative grants from Georgia’s Lieutenant Governor. The grant will help fund the development of a life science wing that will house full-time health care and biotechnology education programs.

FORSYTH TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE (WINSTON-SALEM, NC)

Blueprint Objective 2 Strategy 5 Actions 1 & 2

Faced with declining textile and tobacco manufacturing jobs and an emerging biotechnology sector in the Piedmont Triad region, Forsyth Tech decided to survey biotech companies to see what their employment needs were in order to transition dislocated manufacturing workers. The companies did have great needs for new employees, primarily as laboratory technicians, but there was a significant gap in worker skills from the old industries of Winston-Salem.

Since many former manufacturing workers had very limited formal educations, Forsyth Tech dedicated a portion of its staff to remediation programs such as GED training and ESL classes. The college also partners with a number of human service and community-based organizations to serve as a WIA One-Stop Center.

Forsyth Tech developed a two-year associate in applied science degree through a grant from the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor. Most professors have Ph.D.s and extensive experience in the field of biotechnology; courses are hands-on and the curriculum also includes a required internship. Articulation agreements with other local community colleges as well as four-year institutions ensure that students will complete their course of study or transfer to four-year colleges with their credits intact.

Forsyth Tech opened a new technology building in 2006 through the U.S. Department of Labor and North Carolina Community College System BioNetwork grants. With 17,000 square feet of lab space (including four wet labs, an immunology room, and a bioprocessing room) and state of the art equipment, this center is a key source of biotechnology training in the region.²⁰

In conjunction with Western Carolina University and the North Carolina Biotechnology Center, Forsyth Tech offers an intensive five-day summer program for North Carolina high school science teachers to give them valuable hands-on experience to take back to their students. As a National Center for the Biotech Workforce Center of Expertise, Forsyth Tech works to do outreach to other educational partners in the Triad region to prepare skilled workers.

A study of workforce outcomes has found that graduates are able to find jobs in many areas and some continue their studies at a four-year college. Displaced manufacturing workers have found success in the Forsyth Tech program, and the college has been recognized for its achievement in workforce re-skilling through grants from the U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Education, the North Carolina Biotechnology Center, and WIRED.

²⁰ National Center for the Biotechnology Workforce. National Center Profile: Forsyth Tech Community College. 17 August 2009. <<http://www.biotechworkforce.org/pdf/CenterProfilesForsyth100406.pdf>>;

WORKKEYS (LYNCHBURG, VA)

Blueprint Objective 1 Strategy 21

A component of the workforce development efforts in Lynchburg, Virginia, the local two-year college, Central Virginia Community College (CVCC) offers pre-employment training, which includes the national Work Keys system. Work Keys evaluates an individual's skill set and job readiness by measuring eight foundation workplace skills: applied mathematics, applied technology, listening, location information, observation, reading for information, teamwork, and writing.²¹ This information assists individuals in learning about their own strengths and weaknesses, educators in tailoring their instruction to that individual's skill set, and employers in their hiring processes.

Several large and small businesses use CVCC to do their pre-employment screening and training and employ the Work Keys system. Work Keys is integrated with the Standards of Learning program in some of the high schools in the region, but many employers have discovered that basic skill sets are not being taught. Many jobseekers were coming into the workplace lacking the basic skills such as reading and math and did not possess a full understanding of why these skills are important. The Work Keys system provided a mechanism for the region to prepare workers and attract employers as well as for employers to identify qualified workers.

Quality of Place

WEED AND SEED PROGRAM (AUSTIN, TX)

Blueprint Objective 1 Strategy 1 Action 2

Plagued with the persistent problem of an open air drug market and related crime, the neighborhood of Central East Austin wanted not just to eradicate the current crime issues and drug abuse but also create sustainable success through collaborative community services. In 2006, the community, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice, created a five-year strategy called Weed and Seed to “weed” out criminals and substance abusers and “seed” local organizations to provide necessary social services.²² The goal of the program is to go beyond the resources of local law enforcement by leveraging citizen involvement in concrete and proactive actions to sustain their neighborhood's safety and quality of life. The Austin Police Department, local businesses, non-profits, and churches in the community coordinate through Weed and Seed to focus on four key areas: youth and family programs, neighborhood restoration, public safety, and ex-convict re-entry programs.

²¹ Work Keys – Workforce Development – CVCC. 17 August 2009. <<http://www.cvcc.vccs.edu/Workforce/Work%20Keys/default.asp>>.

²² U.S. Department of Justice. *Weed & Seed*. 11 August 2009. <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/ws/>>.

A Neighborhood District Attorney, under the supervision of the Travis County District Attorney’s office, organizes and enforces the initiatives of the Weed and Seed program, reviews crimes and cases that occur within the Weed and Seed district, identifying and targeting repeat offenders, and collaborating with community organizations to keep citizens educated on their rights and responsibilities as neighbors.

In its first two years of operations, Central East Austin’s Weed and Seed program has received three grants from the DOJ totaling \$500,000.²³ One of the most successful benefactors of Weed and Seed’s concentration on youth and family services is the Life Changers program, a youth summer employment program that saw its number of employed teens jump from nine in the first year to twenty the next.

The City of Austin has been home to federally funded Weed and Seed programs since 1997, and the initiative in Northeast Austin to reduce gang-related crime was designated a model program by the Department of Justice in 2000.²⁴

In Northeast Austin’s Coronado Hills apartment complex, conflicts were arising between Spanish-speaking residents and the police, apartment owners and managers, and the Northeast Austin community. The Neighborhood District Attorney partnered with an immigrants right organization and the Austin Police Department to host a rights festival, operated primarily in Spanish, in an effort to establish trust between apartment residents and local law enforcement so that residents would feel more comfortable reporting crimes in the area. Follow up events were planned by the three hosting organizations to continue informing Coronado Hills residents of their rights and responsibilities.

THE IMPACT! GROUP (FORMERLY THE GWINNETT HOUSING RESOURCE PARTNERSHIP)

Blueprint Objective 3 Strategy 9 Action 2

As Gwinnett County (located just north of Atlanta) increasingly diversified in the 1990s, The Impact! Group opened its doors to help families and individuals successfully achieve homeownership. The Impact! Group helps local residents transition into homeownership by providing a variety of “bridge” services that help break down barriers to acquiring a mortgage or finding a suitable home. The organization’s focus is on serving groups that have lower homeownership rates within Gwinnett County. As such, about two-thirds of Impact’s clients are female and nearly three-fourths are minorities.

²³ Crooks, Ashley. “Austin granted \$150,000 to reduce crime.” *The Daily Texan*. 31 July 2008. <<http://media.www.dailytexanonline.com/media/storage/paper410/news/2008/07/31/StateLocal/Austin.Granted.150000.To.Reduce.Crime-3396137.shtml>>.

²⁴ Austin City Connection. *Weed and Seed chosen as national model for community prosecution*. 01 November 2001. <<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/news/weed&seed.htm>>.

Between 1996 and 2002, Impact! served 8,900 households and helped 1,270 families purchase homes.²⁵

As a certified lender, Impact! provides a variety of services in Spanish and English including:

- Pre-purchase education classes;
- Financial fitness classes;
- Economic literacy courses;
- Individual housing counseling;
- Post-purchase classes and support;
- Flexible loans for down payments
- Mortgage lending; and
- Foreclosure prevention assistance.

Impact's services help to holistically address the housing needs of Gwinnett County's residents.

HEALTHY COMMUNITY COALITION (GREATER FRANKLIN COUNTY, ME)

Blueprint Objective 1 Strategy 3 Actions 1 & 2

Created by Franklin Memorial Hospital in 1991, the Franklin Community Health Network (FCHN), which is a non-profit network of health care providers. The mission of the Healthy Community Coalition (HCC) is to promote health and well-being in Greater Franklin County, Maine.²⁶ To fulfill its mission, HCC provides health screenings and health information and implements programs that inform the community about how to achieve a healthy lifestyle.

HCC has a 34-foot mobile unit with wheelchair access that it uses to administer screenings and services, such as blood pressure screenings, breast exams, flu shots, and tobacco dependence and treatment counseling. Programs sponsored by HCC include, but are not limited to:

- Breast Cancer Campaign, which promotes early detection of breast cancer;
- CUT the Habit, a student-led film project that highlights the effects of tobacco on health and tobacco companies' use of media to promote smoking;
- Work Healthy, which encourages businesses to establish and promote healthy worksite policies and practices;
- ScoreHealth, a health risk screening program that assesses various areas of health, including cholesterol, blood pressure, and nutrition; and

²⁵ Neighborworks America. 11 August 2009.

<<http://www.nw.org/network/comstrat/minorityOwnership/documents/gwinnett.pdf>>.

²⁶ Healthy Community Coalition. <<http://www.fchn.org/hcc>>. Accessed 19 March 2009.

- GOAL – Simple Steps to Better Health, a nutrition and physical activity program.

HCC also partners with other agencies, such as Franklin Health Access, Western Maine Community Action, and Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program, to increase public access to available resources. HCC also hosts biannually a Community Health Visioning process that engages community stakeholders in a discussion about health-related issues and strategies to address concerns. Over time, this process has resulted in improved transportation services, expanded mental health and dental services, more doctors, and more health education.