



**2018-2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy  
Annual Report and Update – Adopted March 26, 2020**

## Regional Economic Conditions

Along with Oregon and the rest of the world, our region is experiencing significant and rapidly evolving economic challenges due to the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic spreading in Oregon and around the world. The health care industry is anticipated to be challenged to provide care for the number of projected persons who will require hospitalization for severe illness, stressing workers and supplies. The tourism industry and most small businesses are suffering from sudden declines in sales due to social distancing, mandatory closures and isolation necessary to help slow spread of the disease. NEOEDD and other business and economic development partners in Oregon, including government and private foundations, are collaborating to monitor emerging strategies and resources in order to assist in providing financial and other supports to businesses, communities and individuals. NEOEDD is also ramping up our videoconferencing capacity so that classes and other coordinated service delivery and collaboration can continue to the greatest extent possible during the pandemic. We anticipate that additional investments will need to be made to support businesses financially and help businesses to transition to more on-line business practices. We anticipate an increased demand for entrepreneurial development and small business support activities by the District and other partners within the region.

Prior to the pandemic, the tourism industry was showing strong gains. For the 2010-2018 period visitor spending increased by 21.4% in Union County, 19.8% in Wallowa County and 15% in Baker County; earnings increased 35% in Union County, 30.5% in Wallowa County and 29.6% in Baker County; employment increased 19% in Union County, 26.8% in Wallowa County and 9.3% in Baker County; local lodging tax receipts increased 42% in Union County, 27.6% in Wallowa County and 0% in Baker County; state lodging tax receipts increased by 33% in Union County, 57% in Wallowa County and 20% in Baker County.

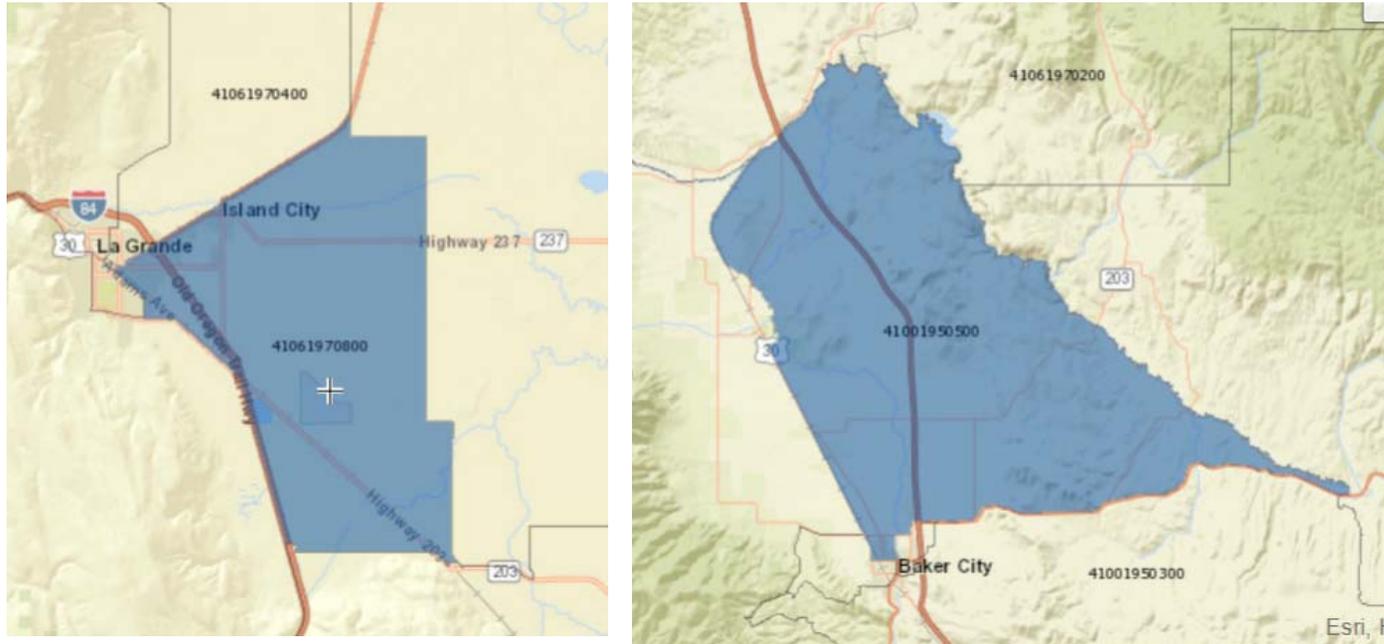
Wood products employment in Union County experienced a significant 23% decline between 2015 to 2016, with a loss of 125 jobs.

According to the newly released 2018 Census of Agriculture, cattle, hay and grain continue to be the most important commodities in the region, however their combined overall value has decreased 17% since 2012. The make-up of farm income shifted with income from sales of farm products increasing from 77% to 88% and income from government payments/other farm income decreasing from 23% to 12% since 2012.

## Opportunity Zones

The region contains two Opportunity Zones, one in Union County and one in Baker County (**APPENDIX A-2020**). Opportunity Zones are qualifying low-income census tracts that have been designated by states (<https://www.oregon4biz.com/Opportunity-Zones/>)

and certified by the Treasury Department. These zones can be used to attract investors by providing a 15% to 100% reduction on capital gains taxes when capital gains are invested in an Opportunity Zone.



The Opportunity Zones in Union and Baker counties can be used as assets to accomplish the following CEDS goals and objectives:

**Goal 1 - Diversify the economy and increase the percentage of family-wage jobs**

*Objective 1a: Encourage more business-friendly local governments and communities*

*Objective 1b: Retain and expand existing businesses*

*Objective 1e: Increase recreation-related manufacturers*

**Goal 2 – Increase and formalize regional economic development collaboration**

*Objective 2a: Take advantage of common characteristics to position region as more resilient and attractive for residents, businesses, and visitors*

### Goal 3. Assess, improve, and utilize infrastructure needed for economic growth

#### *Objective 3b: Improve and develop economic-development assets*

Opportunity Zones incentivize investors with capital gains tax liabilities to reinvest their gains in “Opportunity Funds” by: (i) deferring payment of those capital gains taxes through 2026; (ii) reducing those capital gains taxes by as much as 15%, if the investment in the Opportunity Fund is held for at least seven years; and (iii) waiving taxes on capital gains associated with the Opportunity Fund investment, for investments held for at least 10 years. The Opportunity Funds are required to invest at least 90% of their assets in Opportunity Zones.

The [Opportunity Zone Playbook](#) provides guidance on best practices associated with attracting and deploying investment to achieve the purpose of the zone designation: “Investments should be made in collaboration with community leaders and organizations, residents and other stakeholders who have an ongoing, vested engagement in neighborhood revitalization. This kind of revitalization includes the creation of fulfilling, family-sustaining jobs, affordable housing, thriving businesses, good transit, quality education and all the other requisites of a healthy community that everyone deserves.”

Planning, leadership and community involvement is important because the Opportunity Zone policy does not provide protections to ensure that investments receiving the tax break promote development intended to help residents of the zone to create strong, stable communities. NEOEDD staff have started discussions with the City of La Grande on how we could help them plan for investments in their Opportunity Zone and strengthen their community involvement and leadership.

### **Resiliency and Pre Disaster Recovery Planning**

The 2018-2023 CEDS includes information on Hazards and Risks in NE Oregon as well as a report on Strategies to Build Economic Resilience and Preparedness Across Oregon. Economic resiliency helps businesses and communities recover from an economic shock. An economic shock may be a natural disaster (e.g. fire, earthquake, extreme weather or pandemic) or a man-made disaster such as federal policy regarding use of public lands or the closure of a major employer. In 2020 NEOEDD developed guides for workforce and business recovery to assist with preplanning and recovery from economic shock. The guides are available on our website at [www.neoedd.org](http://www.neoedd.org). The region’s ability to recover from COVID-19 closures will be partly based on our ability to pivot and address areas of greatest concern with our economic and entrepreneurial development programs and new initiatives that will be

developed to respond to this crisis. The ability of our businesses to demonstrate their resiliency will also be dependent upon their financial reserves, funding they can access, and their willingness and ability to change business practices, and potentially products and services, to respond to changing consumer and business markets.

## **Regional Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan**

The goals and objectives focus primarily on creating a more productive, more sustainable, and more vibrant rural community. This will involve catalyzing a shift in rural development strategy across several sectors that respond to key changes in economic and environmental systems. This approach focuses primarily on “building from within,” mobilizing and strengthening local assets, and forming partnerships to fill gaps in order to strengthen our rural economy and rural-urban interdependence. The actions should reflect new ways to build the capacity of and engage marginalized rural people, places, and firms – all to reduce economic disparities and improve health and livelihoods. Regional partners seek projects that can provide economic, social, and environmental benefits.

### **Goals**

1. Diversify the economy and increase the percentage of family-wage jobs.
2. Increase and formalize regional economic development collaboration.
3. Assess, improve, and utilize infrastructure needed for economic growth.
4. Improve, develop, and expand community assets.
5. Strengthen and/or improve ability of nonprofits and local governments to meet needs and enhance quality of life for the public.

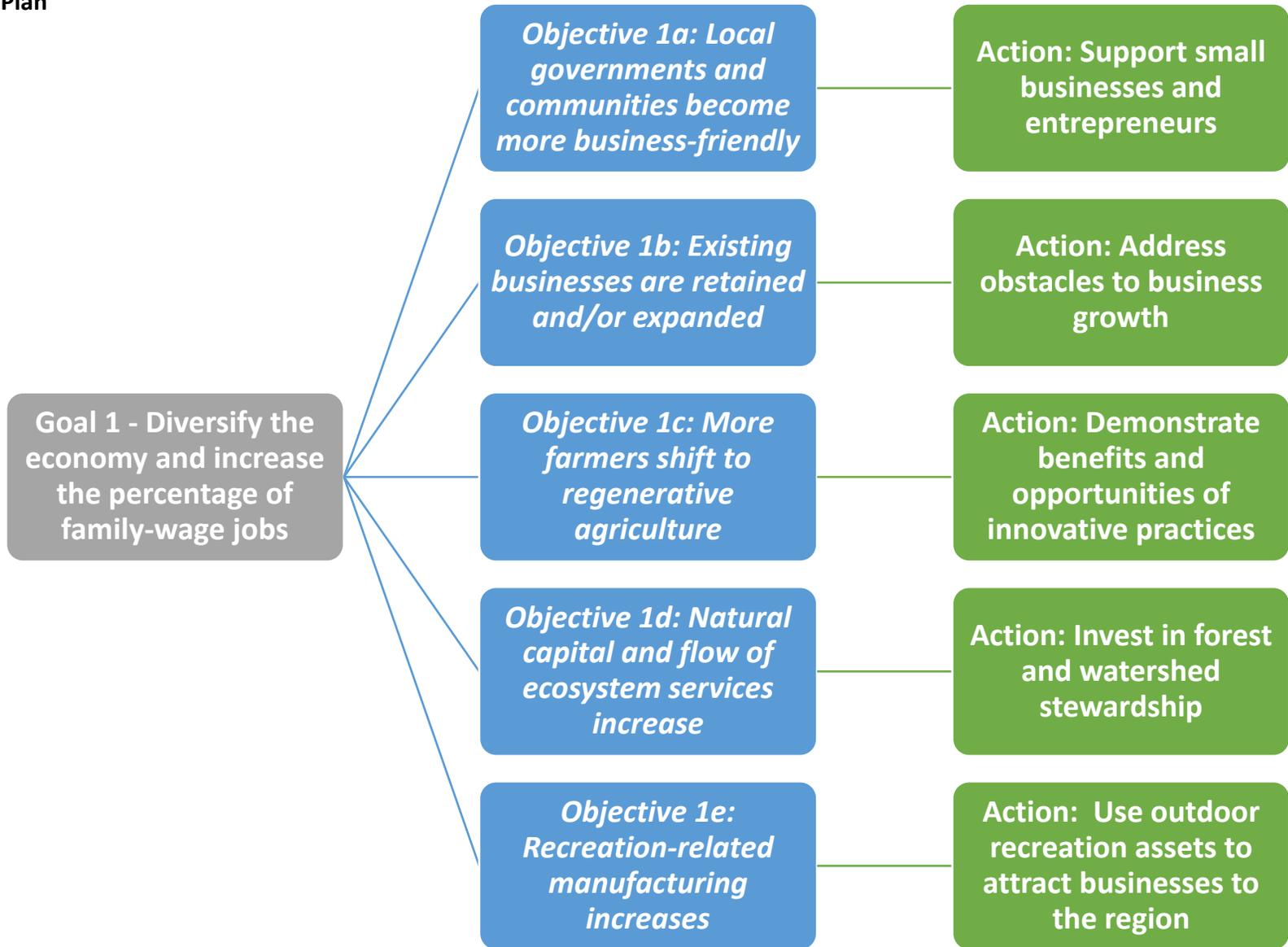
### **Objectives**

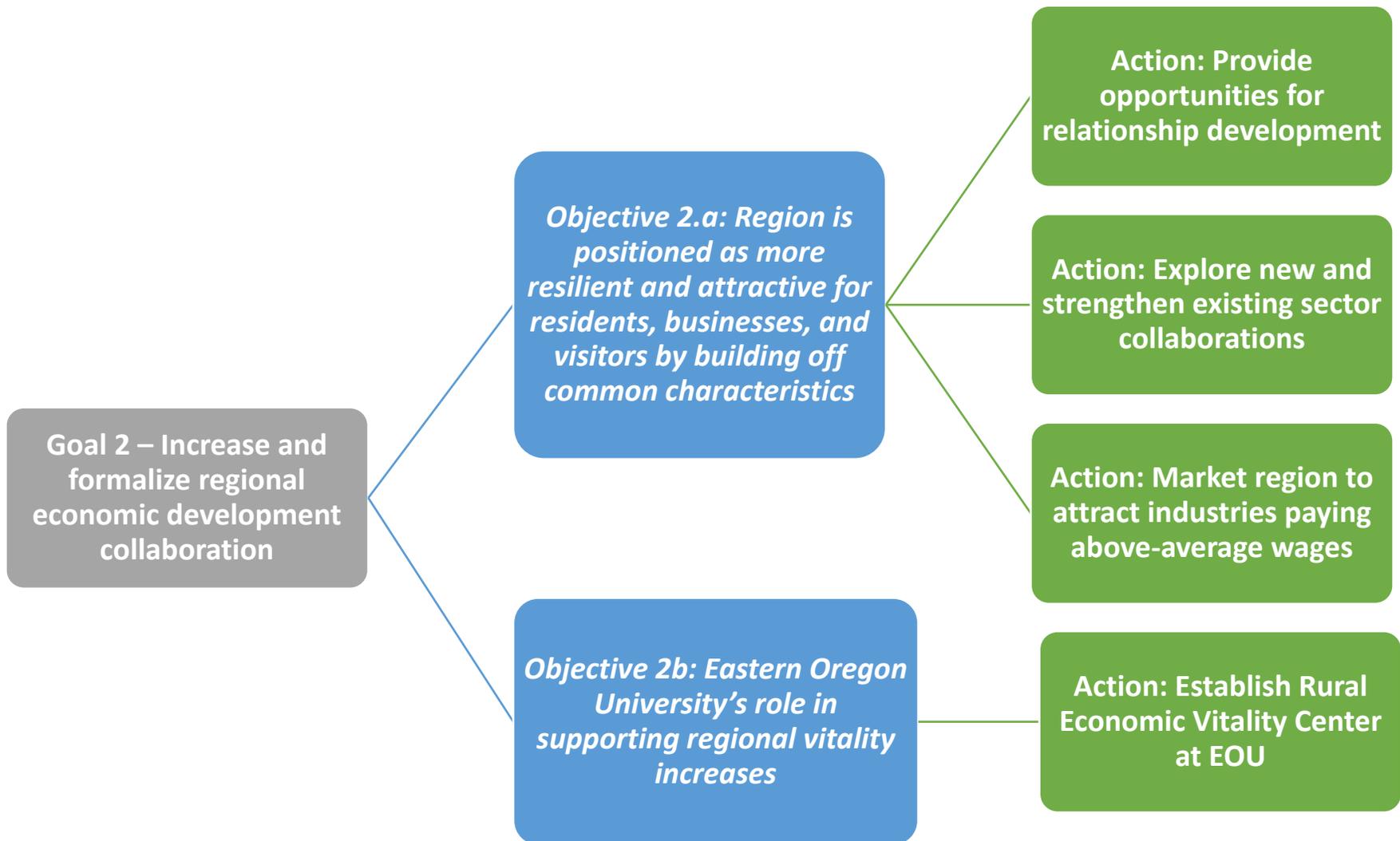
In developing the five-year plan, NEOEDD selected objectives that would promote economic development and opportunity while providing social and environmental benefits to the region’s residents. Objectives were selected to meet the following criteria:

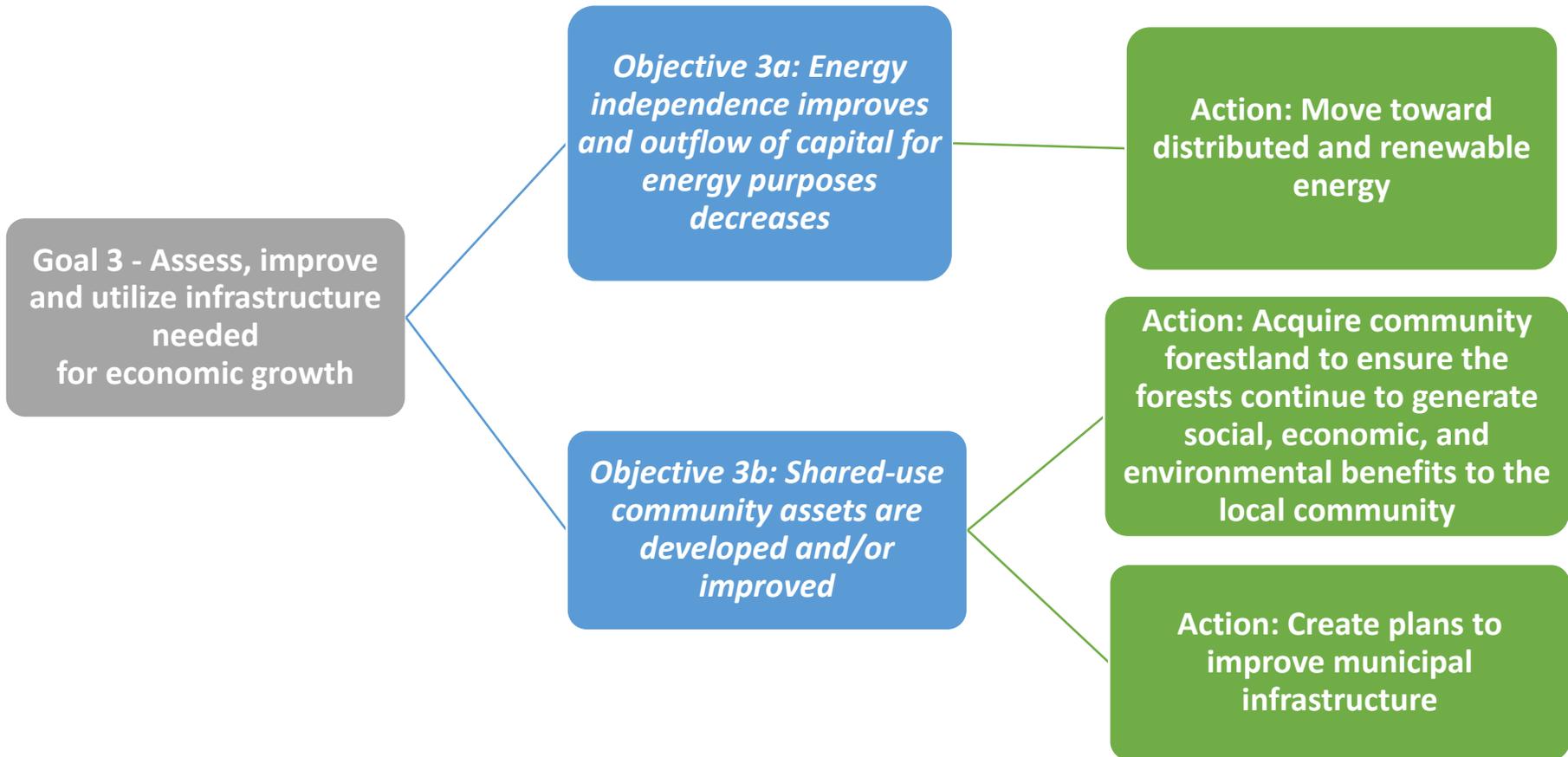
- Facilitate planning among municipalities, nonprofits, and citizens, and foster diversity, acceptance, and sense of belonging
- Enhance and protect the environment through projects that emphasize conservation and sustainable use of resources, such as basic infrastructure, food, and energy
- Respond to the threats and weaknesses that have been identified
- Build off the region’s strengths, opportunities, and past investments

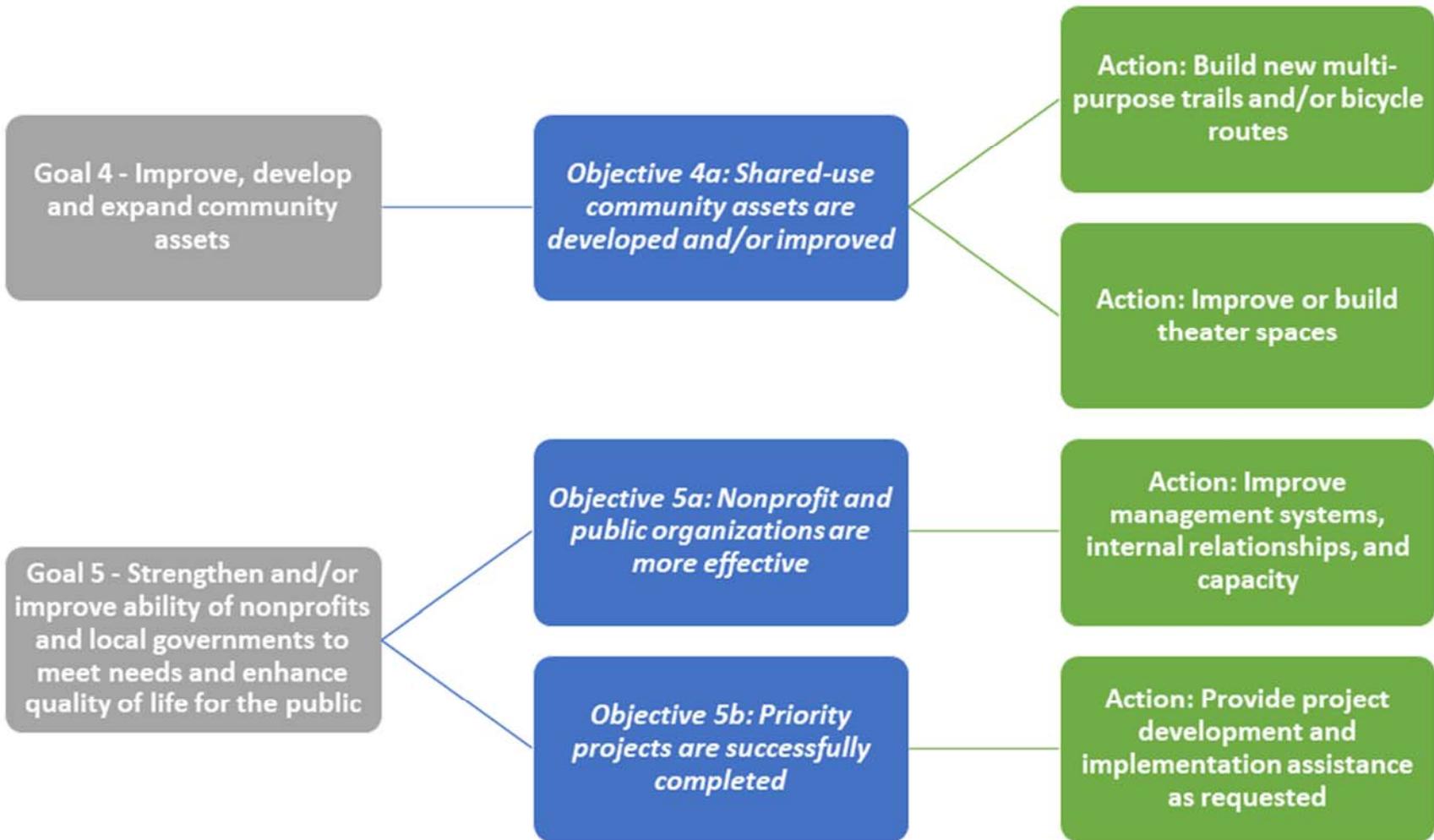
- Be appropriate to the capacity of NEOEDD and its partners, doable, tangible, and be things that “get results”
- Take advantage of partnerships and collaboration to leverage internal and external resources, including public and private
- Be started or implemented during the five-year time frame and lead to achievement of goals
- Innovate and build on regional and national trends

**Action Plan**









## Vital Project Updates

### Goal 1 - Diversify the economy and increase the percentage of family-wage jobs

#### *Objective 1a: Local governments and communities become more business-friendly*

##### **Action: Support small businesses and entrepreneurs**

Vital Project 1a.1 Lead Organization: NEOEDD

- Support the development and use of entrepreneurial coworking and networking centers



○ *NEOEDD was successful in obtaining funding to support the IGNITE center including funds from the Kauffman Foundation (in partnership with Rural Development Initiatives - RDI), US Bank, and Rural Opportunity Initiative (ROI) funds from Business Oregon. ROI funds will support the IGNITE center and an entrepreneur-certificate program and youth entrepreneurship programming at EOU. Successful programming at IGNITE includes a monthly networking event for women-owned business owners; workshops on Oregon Benefit Corporations, getting traction and financing your business.*

- *Launch Pad Baker has become independent from NEOEDD and is accessing grants on their own. They were recently awarded Rural Opportunity Initiative (ROI) funds from Business Oregon. NEOEDD continues to offer business planning classes and other services at their site. Funding for Launch Pad Baker was also received from the Kauffman Foundation (in partnership with NEOEDD and RDI and US Bank.)*
- Provide classroom instruction, business counseling, coaching, and support services
  - *Eight Business Foundations courses, a series of 6 classes each, were conducted in Baker City, La Grande and Enterprise. These classes covered the basics of writing a business plan. Additional classroom instruction included a Business Start-Up for Contractors workshop, the Oregon Native Enterprise course, Journey to Equity workshop and a Changing Hands Agriculture Succession workshop.*

- *NEOEDD is collaborating with the Eastern Oregon University Small Business Development Center to plan an E-Day Business Plan Competition in Fall 2020.*
- *NEOEDD staff provided one-on-one services to ten entrepreneurs (including two Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs and not including Individual Development Account participants) seeking information on start-up resources, marketing and research, referrals to regulatory agencies and service providers, and financing. Types of businesses included food carts, in-home care, bookkeeping, horse training, manufacturing, and indoor child play/party facility.*
- *Blue Mountain Community College counseled 493 business clients throughout their service area, with almost 2000 hours of one-on-one coaching and support services, supporting 19 new business starts and creating 149 jobs and retaining 20 jobs. Multiple workshops and PubTalks were hosted, with e-commerce platforms and fundamentals a sought-after topic.*



Business planning class graduates in Baker City and Enterprise in March 2020.



Business planning class graduates in La Grande and Enterprise in March 2020.

- Finance businesses through loans, IDA accounts, and private and public investments
  - *NEOEDD enrolled 8 new Individual Account savers and is currently supporting 34 savers, with an overall graduation/completion rate of 86.3%. To date, graduates have saved over \$292,000 matched with \$876,000 from the IDA program. Unfortunately, changes to the federal income tax code has resulted in a decrease in donations through the Oregon IDA Tax credit, the primary source of IDA matching funds for the VIDA IDA collaborative of which NEOEDD is a member. NEOEDD is not expecting to get additional funding for the 2020-2021 IDA year (starting April 1, 2020).*
  
- Introduce or enhance entrepreneurship education at the K-16 levels
  - *A new 2-year high school entrepreneurship program was launched this year in Baker City joining the long-standing MicroMentor program in Enterprise focusing on entrepreneurial education for teens.*
  - *The City of La Grande Parks and Recreation Department, in partnership with La Grande Economic Development, launched National Lemonade Day during the summer. They organized a week-long day camp and the youth then sold lemonade during the city's Crazy Days celebration at stands they built during the week.*

Vital Project 1a.2 Lead Organization: Business Oregon, LOC or DLCD

- Offer zoning and land-use workshops for municipalities to help them understand responsibilities and opportunities to become more business-friendly
  - *One land-use/zoning workshop was offered to provide information on how Oregon's Enterprise Zone and other tax incentives could be utilized to help promote business expansions by Business Oregon; Economic Opportunity Analyses were prepared for the cities of Baker City, Richland, Halfway, Haines, Sumpter, Unity, Lostine and Joseph. Committee meetings and public meetings were conducted by a contractor hired by Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. City, county and NEOEDD representatives participated in the process.*

Vital Project 1a.3 Lead Organization: SBDC

- Assist businesses to increase online sales
  - *Blue Mountain Community College Small Business Development Center offered classes on social media, website design and other internet-based sales channels. Ignite Center for Entrepreneurship offered a workshop on Getting Traction which included information on increasing online sales.*

*Objective 1b: Existing businesses are retained and/or expanded*

**Action: Address obstacles to business growth**

Vital Project 1b.1 Lead Organization: EO Workforce Board

- Assist identified sector businesses in addressing prioritized problems or concerns
  - *Eastern Oregon Workforce Board (EOWB) and the Jobs Council collaborated with the Higher Education Council, Oregon Employment Department (OED), and Department of Education to complete an asset map of resources available to assist employers and facilitate coordination of employer support services in the region. An online interactive version of the tool hosted on the Oregon Employment Department website should be available by the end of 2020. EOWB is convening groups from two key sectors for a series of sector meetings to identify employer concerns and needs. The first sectors engaged have been manufacturing and health care. Staff gave a presentation on workforce development activities related to creating a more marketable location for business recruitment at the December board meeting.*
  
- Assist schools, particularly Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, in developing curriculum that exposes youth to career opportunities in Eastern Oregon
  - *The Ford Family Foundation funded a series of tours for youth to learn what was available in different industries. EOWB videoed those tours and they are available for the Career Technical Education instructors to use in their high school classrooms. In fall of 2020, EOWB wants to provide trades training for Eastern Oregon youth. This training would bring in contractors from different trades to provide 2 days of training to youth who are interested in the trades, during which several small buildings will be constructed. Baker, La Grande, Joseph and Wallowa high schools have increased investment in CTE programs. Baker Technical Institute (BTI) offers training in heavy machines, aquaponics, and greenhouse construction, and those students (and others) will now be able to continue on for a Bachelor Degree in Sustainable Rural Systems coming in Fall 2020 at Eastern Oregon University.*
  
- Work with service contractors to provide training for adults, dislocated workers, and youth in choosing a career path
  - *In response to a labor shortage and the fact that 6% to 8% of adults age 25 to 64 do not have a high school diploma, EOWB is working with Training and Employment Consortium to providing pretesting classes to prepare workers to pass the GED test.*

*Objective 1c: More farmers shift to regenerative agriculture*

**Action: Demonstrate benefits and opportunities of innovative practices**

Vital Project 1c.1 Lead Organization: NEOEDD

- Engage the Wallowa County Community Food Systems Council
  - *Members of the Council collaborated on an application and were selected to receive funding and support to host a public FEAST event (Food, Education, Solutions, Together) in 2020. They will receive an additional \$4,000 to implement project(s) to improve the local food system. Planning meetings are ongoing, however the FEAST event planned for April has been postponed due to the pandemic. A member of the Food Council was asked to serve on the grant review committee to award a \$1,500 producer grant funded by Slow Food Wallowas. Staff contracted with the Baker City Farmers Market to assist with recruitment and training of vendors and conducted a planning meeting. A workshop for vendors scheduled for March 28 has been postponed until May.*
  
- Support development of community food system councils in Baker and Union counties
  - *NEOEDD contracted with the Baker City Farmers Market to assist with recruitment and training of vendors and conducted a planning meeting. A workshop for vendors was scheduled for March 28 and videoconferencing is being explored as a way to deliver the workshop in May.*
  
- Connect regional food system partners and provide networking opportunities
  - *NEOEDD staff shared food-system related legislative updates and other information with the Wallowa County Food System Council and NE Oregon partners via email and social media. Food system related articles and information are regularly shared via NEOEDD's Facebook page.*
  - *NEOEDD helped plan a two-day statewide training conference for the Oregon Community Food System Network and lead two conference sessions. Three organizations from the region participated in the two-day training and networking event which included more than 50 organizations from around the state.*
  - *NEOEDD staff assisted the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla by providing information for a commercial kitchen feasibility study.*

Vital Project 1c.2 Lead Organization: Farmers Markets in Wallowa, Baker, Union

- Support farmers markets
  - *Staff assisted the Baker City Farmers Market to develop a project to recruit and train vendors. The market was applying to the Oregon Farmer's Market Association for project funding.*

Vital Project 1c.3 Lead Organization: Oregon Community Food System Network

- Support SNAP match, Veggie RX and Farm-to-School programs that increase the local market demand and the amount of locally grown food consumed by the general population including those with lower incomes, less-healthy diets, and/or children
  - *The OCFSN SNAP Match Incentive Working group is using data from the Farmers' Market Fund Double Up Food Bucks program and other sources to document program benefits (social and economic) and identify and quantify unmet needs. They are collaborating to expand programming to all Oregon farmers' markets and to rural grocery stores in areas with poor food access and expect to fully match the approximately \$900,000 in SNAP benefits being redeemed in Oregon farmers markets this year.*
  - *The OCFSN Veggie RX working group provided comments and recommendations to the Oregon Health Authority regarding the role of Coordinated Care Organizations in implementing Veggie RX programming across Oregon. The working group is led by 12 organizations, including 2 which provide services in Northeast Oregon.*
  - *Expansion of community gardens in Wallowa County is underway to provide additional produce for Head Start's farm to school activities.*

Vital Project 1c.4 Lead Organization: Rogue Farm Corps, OSU Extension

- Provide farmer training
  - *A new cadre of beginning farmers was recruited in spring of 2020 for the Rogue Farm Corps program.*
  - *Rogue Farm Corps, Oregon Small Business Development Center, OSU Extension, NEOEDD and other partners hosted a Changing Hands workshop providing beginning farmer/rancher training in financing, business planning, leasing and other resources, as well as succession planning for retiring farmer/ranchers and networking between the two groups.*
  - *A resource summary of organizations providing assistance to beginning farmer/ranchers was developed and was distributed at the 2020 Small Farms Conference at OSU and is available online at [bit.ly/oregonbfrd](https://bit.ly/oregonbfrd)*
  - *A collaborative proposal to fund coordination of training and support for beginning farmer/rancher was submitted to the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.*

- Diversify general food production
  - *A producer mini grant was provided for a beginning farmer to invest in equipment for her diversified vegetable growing operation.*
  - *Assistance was provided to a landowner looking to develop shared infrastructure and land leasing to incentivize diversified vegetable production on their land.*

Vital Project 1c.5 Lead Organization: Rogue Farm Corps, OSU Extension

- Facilitate land acquisition and leasing
  - *Rogue Farm Corps, Oregon Small Business Development Center, OSU Extension, NEOEDD and other partners hosted a Changing Hands workshop providing succession planning for retiring farmer/ranchers and networking between retiring and beginning farmer/ranchers.*
  - *A resource summary of access to land supports and tools and organizations was created and is available online <https://oregonfarmlink.org/>, along with a story bank of examples of new and creative land succession and leasing structures.*
  - *A collaborative proposal to fund coordination of training and support for beginning farmer/rancher, including development of one-on-one professional technical assistance for land-seekers and landholders needing succession was submitted to the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture for 2020-2021 funding.*

*Objective 1d: Natural capital and flow of ecosystem services increase*

**Action: Invest in forest and watershed stewardship**

Vital Project 1d.1 Lead Organization: Wallowa Resources

- Investigate opportunities for stewardship contracts on forests within the region
  - *In 2019 Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman Forest Collaboratives voted to merge into a regionally-focused Northern Blues Forest Collaborative (NBFC). Merger goals are to expand reach and effectiveness across both national forests and the surrounding communities and increase efficiencies and capacity. The NBFC, 45+ stakeholder members, continues work on 6 projects, covering 260,000+ acres of analysis and management planning. A set of prescriptions is being developed to guide work across projects for a given forest type, greatly decreasing the amount of time spent on project development. A leadership team has been established with diverse representation from stakeholders, to guide the mission, direction, and strategic activities. A Science/Research sub-committee has been established to bring relevant new science to NBFC for shared learning and addressing issues critical to the current and future restoration/stewardship work of the collaborative and its partner agencies. The NBFC continues to engage with other*

*partners to increase capacity for reaching private adjacent land owners, assisting in local workforce development, ongoing project monitoring, and connecting small local forestry contractors with work and contract opportunities through expanding shared stewardship agreements between the USFS and state/local agencies.*

- *The My Blue Mountains Woodland Partnership is prioritizing cross-boundary projects across northeast Oregon and exploring where stewardship contracts and other funding mechanisms would be most effective. The current Wallowa County project, “Wallowa Front Forest Health and Fuels Reduction”, will promote forest and watershed health and fire resilience across 4,200 acres of non-industrial private forestland and 106,000 acres of public land over the next five years (2019-2023). Partners have agreed to leverage the Regional Conservation Partnership Program’s \$2.28 million investment, by contributing an additional \$4.43 million in funding and in-kind support to bolster the effort across private and public land boundaries.*
- Identify and deliver career-connected training, including for contractors
  - *Wallowa Resources developed an internship/training program for forest management contractors during the summer of 2019. NEOEDD provided a one-day workshop to these potential contractors on how to plan for business start-up, structuring and registering their businesses, and risk-management.*
- Improve and increase forest collaborations
  - *Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Collaboratives are increasing the amount of work they do together to increase their effectiveness and efficiency. Combined, they are actively working on 6 projects that cover 260,000 acres of analysis and management planning. They are also working on their first set of prescriptions that could guide work across projects for a given forest type. This could greatly decrease the amount of time spent on project development.*

#### **Objective 1e: Recreation-related manufacturing increases**

**Action: Use outdoor recreation assets to attract businesses to relocate to the region**

Vital Project 1e.1: Lead Organization: City of La Grande

- Identify manufacturing businesses in the outdoor recreation industry and find opportunities to increase their supply chains through local businesses
  - *City of La Grande formally identified the Outdoor Recreation industry as one of three top priorities for recruitment activities.*

- Utilize tourism to showcase outdoor recreational opportunities
  - *City of La Grande is updating their website to highlight outdoor recreation as a recruitment priority and working with Oregon Trail Electric Coop (OTEC) to have the City be featured as part of the Golden Shovel business recruitment project. OTEC will provide the city with a virtual reality video highlighting outdoor recreation in Union County. La Grande is also working with the Buxton Company to conduct market research: information on visitors coming to La Grande, where they are going when in the area, and what resources they are using.*
  - *Union County Chamber hired a consultant and is creating a strategic plan for tourism which includes outdoor recreation as one of the key components.*
  
- Promote Northeast Oregon at outdoor recreation trade shows
  - *Trade show was canceled.*
  
- Develop and market Enterprise Zones
  - *Union County is in the process of renewing their Enterprise Zone. They have a dedicated Opportunity Zone. City of La Grande is looking into hiring a consultant to create a prospectus and promote development of the Opportunity Zone as a project to be included in next year's budget. NEOEDD could be involved with that project if it proceeds.*
  
- Identify and develop shovel-ready industrial sites and/or turn-key buildings
  - *City of Joseph has nearly completed final design to extend water, sewer and power to a large industrial parcel within the City limits. The project is expected to go out for bid this spring with construction to take place during the summer months.*
  - *Baker City has installed broadband fiber and electrical power to most of the Elkhorn View Industrial Park. Installation to the remaining portion of the site will be complete by June.*
  - *Union County completed paving of the Baum Industrial Park. Three lots were sold and a fourth is pending. One business has located there and created three jobs. Two other businesses are building now.*

## Goal 2 – Increase and formalize regional economic development collaboration

*Objective 2.a: Region is positioned as more resilient and attractive for residents, businesses, and visitors by building off common characteristics*

### **Action: Provide opportunities for relationship development**

Vital Project 2a.1 Lead Organization: Business Oregon, NEOEDD

- Host Oregon Humanities Conversation Projects to provide opportunities for community members to engage in relationship-building
  - *NEOEDD hosted six public Conversation Projects, with locations in La Grande, Enterprise and Joseph*
  
- Provide project development and funding assistance
  - *NEOEDD assisted five organizations with project development and/or funding assistance, including Friends of the Joseph Library renovation and expansion, Elgin Stampeders Association replacement of community hall, Grand Ronde Symphony Association expand collaborative youth music programming, Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center property acquisition and program development; Wallowa History Center capital improvements.*

### **Action: Explore new and strengthen existing sector collaborations**

Vital Project 2a.2: Lead Organization: EOVA

- Increase participation in the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association (EOVA) and the Hells Canyon Scenic Byway committee
  - *EOVA has reconvened the Hells Canyon Scenic Byway (HCSB) marketing committee to increase cross-county collaboration. Additionally, the tri-county partners have applied for Travel Oregon's Rural Tourism Studio to further solidify partnerships and participation.*
  
- Improve internal communication systems among tourism industry providers and supporting agencies
  - *EOVA hired a full time Executive Director in May 2019 and has since increased the number of recipients who receive the industry newsletter. EOVA also continues to host quarterly stakeholder meetings around the region, in addition to stakeholder meetings in partnership with Travel Oregon.*
  
- Engage in tourism industry planning and project implementation at the local destination-marketing organization level
  - *After receiving public input, EOVA developed a strategic regional cooperative tourism program plan over the biennium (July 2019 - June 2021) to increase destination development and support new attractions, trails, events;*

*continue strong marketing initiatives; target marketing toward greater geographic coverage and lesser known destinations; advocate more for the tourism industry; share tourism and EOVA statistics demonstrating the industry's value to Eastern Oregon communities; and communicate regularly with all stakeholders*

- Coordinate activities and investment with EOVA and Travel Oregon
  - *EOVA continues to work with Travel Oregon as the regional destination marketing organization for eastern Oregon, implementing the strategic regional cooperative tourism program plan in response to public input, in the broad focus areas of destination development, global sales, global marketing, and global strategic partnerships. EOVA received funding from Travel Oregon to continue as the regional destination marketing organization for eastern Oregon.*
- Engage in regional product development and promotional planning and implementation, including outdoor adventure, bicycling, arts/culture/heritage, agriculture/culinary, and packaged group and international tourism products and marketing campaigns
  - *EOVA's strategic regional cooperative tourism program includes components that address each of these areas. EOVA will continue to grow and strengthen these programs, incorporating feedback and input from our regional partners and stakeholders before the end of each biennium.*
  - *NEOEDD shared information on financing options as part of motel recruitment activities in Baker County.*
  - *NEOEDD assisted Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center with a proposal to fund due diligence for property acquisition related to development of a culture and heritage tourism destination; multiple collaborators are involved, including EOU, Tamastlikt Cultural Institute and Wallowa Resources.*
  - *NEOEDD provided resources and referrals for the Wallowa History Center for their proposal seeking funding from Eastern Oregon Visitors Association.*

Vital Project 2a.3: Lead Organization: City of La Grande

- Identify solutions and address workforce housing shortages in La Grande
  - *The City of La Grande completed a workforce housing analysis.*

Vital Project 2a.4: Lead Organization: Baker County, Lostine, Joseph

- Analyze Eastern Oregon Economic Opportunities

- *Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 9 Economic Opportunities Analysis reports Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development hired a planning contractor and selected the cities of Haines, Sumpter, Baker City, Richland, Halfway, Unity, Lostine and Joseph. NEOEDD staff participated on the advisory committee.*

**Action: Market region to attract industries paying above-average wages**

Vital Project 2a.5 Lead Organization: La Grande Urban Renewal District

- Create exploratory sub-committee of NEOEDD to investigate regional marketing
  - *NEOEDD board decided not to create a sub-committee at this time, but agreed to ask for Board member updates on county-level marketing and planning, and work with the Regional Workforce Board on asset-mapping that could inform a future decision to pursue regional marketing activities.*
- List available land and buildings in Oregon Prospector and keep site updated
  - *City of La Grande will list all properties on the City's new website. Industrial and light industrial properties are listed on Oregon Prospector and linked to national Zoom Prospector, which will pull information from the City's new website. City has hired a new realtor for the business and technology park (light industrial) and the sites are individually listed on the MLS and Prospector.*
- Create marketing strategy
  - *The City of La Grande marketing strategy includes their new website and microsites for additional communities in Union County are under development as part of the Oregon Trail Electric Coop (OTEC) Golden Shovel project.*
  - *OTEC used their funds, Travel Oregon funds and Transient Room Tax funding to complete three virtual reality familiarization tours which are in final production. This includes one in Union County, one in Baker County, and one joint agritourism video featuring the Cove-Union Farm Loop, Barley Browns and Copper Belt Winery.*
- Hire consultant to work with partners to develop marketing plan
  - *OTEC is leading marketing efforts through their Golden Shovel project.*
- Utilize coworking sites as magnets for companies that have embraced independent workers and need worksites distant from high-cost metropolitan locations

- *City of La Grande hired a consultant to update the website for the IGNITE coworking space. Consultant is in the process of creating profiles of potential types of co-workers and developing text and image content for social media posts to market to specific types of coworkers.*

*Objective 2b: Eastern Oregon University's role in supporting regional vitality increases*

**Action: Establish Rural Economic Vitality Center (REV) at EOU**

Vital Project 2b.1: lead organization: EOU

- Access resources to establish operations of the REV
  - *EOU completed the feasibility study for the REV and is moving forward with development of the center. They are looking at raising \$250,000/year to provide services and support to connect students with businesses, internships and other collaborative engagement.*

Goal 3. Assess, improve, and utilize infrastructure needed for economic growth

*Objective 3a: Energy independence improves and outflow of capital for energy purposes decreases*

**Action: Move toward distributed and renewable energy**

Vital Project 3a.1: lead organization Wallowa Resources, Wallowa Resources Community Solutions Inc. (WRCSI)

- Support project identification, design, and development (including grantwriting, permit applications, etc.)
  - *WRCSI assisted multiple entities with grant writing activities.*
- Invest in Renewable Energy
  - *In 2019 WRCSI received funding and started construction on a community scale solar PV project at an affordable housing facility, Park Street Apartments, with project commissioning anticipated in Spring 2020. Several community Solar projects are being explored across Wallowa County, with funding in hand for pre-development activities.*
  - *OTEC used a REAP grant from USDA and matching funds from OTEC to include small scale solar resources for small business partners on their Economic Development Gateway website. This includes information on using OTEC Engineering personnel to create the design for small scale solar suitable for small businesses and agriculture/irrigators. Next phase of the project is reaching out to OTEC members in the region and marketing the opportunity online.*

- Design and install micro-hydro projects
  - *WRSCI commissioned a micro-hydropower project owned by the Wallowa Lake County Service District in the fall of 2019.*

**Objective 3b: Shared-use community assets are developed and/or improved**

**Action: Acquire community forestland to ensure the forests continue to generate social, economic, and environmental benefits to the local community**

Vital Project 3b.1: lead organization, Wallowa Resources

- Transition existing private or federal public forest land into community-owned forests that will contribute to other diversification strategies
  - *Wallowa Land Trust, lead partner in the Wallowa Lakes Moraines Partnership, facilitated the acquisition of the East Moraine Community Forest (EMCF), 1791 acres, which is now under ownership by Wallowa County. Another 30 acres is expected to be added to the EMCF by end of the 2020. The Partnership is current working on completing a conservation easement and management plan for EMCF. They need to raise \$200,000 to implement the management plan, including capital improvements and staffing.*
- Build partnerships with conservation funders to purchase forestland with the intention of onward sale of the land to a new community or county forest structure
  - *Wallowa Resources received grant funds to explore new and existing models to fund and manage community forests. A report will be available at the end of 2020.*
- Explore interest by family forest landowners in participating in a pooled fund for charitable donations of forest lands to secure the land as working forest assets
  - *Wallowa Resources is working this project area and does not yet have measurable progress to report.*
- Recruit forest-industry buyers with a commitment to long-term ownership & stewardship
  - *Wallowa Resources is working this project area and does not yet have measurable progress to report.*

**Action: Create plans to improve municipal infrastructure**

Vital Project 3b.2 Lead Organization: Individual governmental agencies

- Create plans to develop municipal infrastructure to support economic growth
  - *City of Elgin completed plans and bid documents for Sewer Rehabilitation and Replacement Project Phase 1 –to repair or replace approximately 20,000 lineal feet of sewer main as well as service lines and manholes.*
  - *EOU completed design, bidding and construction documents for the Ackerman Hall Access and new outdoor event plaza; and a new modular classroom building and site improvements at the existing Head Start Site in La Grande. EOU also completed design documents for site and parking improvements to meet ADA requirements at the front entrance of Loso Hall.*
  
- Provide project development assistance and identify funding sources
  - *City of Haines completed a new water storage tank; new city-wide water meters; new electrical upgrades at well house #3; and installed new water mains, service lines, and hydrants for a portion of town.*

**Goal 4. Improve, develop, and expand community assets**

*Objective 4a: Shared-use community assets are developed and/or improved*

**Action: Build new multi-purpose trails and/or bicycle routes**

Vital Project 4a.1:

- Develop pilot segment of Joseph Branch Rail with Trail
  - *The Joseph Branch Trail Consortium (proposed trail operator) held a board retreat to reevaluate strategies for developing a pilot segment, increasing staff capacity, building collaboration with other trail and outdoor recreation partners, and to engage and expand membership.*

**Action: Improve or build theater spaces**

Vital Project 4a.3:

- Develop Liberty Theatre in La Grande
  - *Funding was acquired to update the electrical system, HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning), plumbing, façade restoration, fire suppression and some reconstruction costs associated with the auditorium.*

Vital Project 4a.4:

- Develop Elgin Opera House
  - *The Hale Turner Little Theater building was donated to Friends of the Opera House and some renovations were completed to provide a separate theater location for smaller performances; six performances were held there. The Friends are working to renovate the rest of the building to provide a studio where actors can work on skills such as dancing and choreography. The main Opera House renovation is now focused on a complete upgrade to the west side, to accommodate a set-building workshop, new green room, and upgrade to the actual stage area. City of Elgin is the lead organization for the Opera House renovations.*

Goal 5. Strengthen and/or improve ability of nonprofits and local governments to meet needs and enhance quality of life for the public

*Objective 5a: Nonprofit and public organizations are more effective*

**Action: Improve management systems, internal relationships, and capacity**

Vital Project 5a.1:

- Facilitate meetings and team-building
  - *NEOEDD staff became certified in storytelling for community development and collaborated with The Ford Family Foundation staff to host a public storytelling event in La Grande.*
- Provide organizational development training
  - *NEOEDD provided organizational development and facilitation services to three non-profit organizations.*
- Assess financial systems
  - *No activity*
- Provide diversity, equity, and inclusion training
  - *NEOEDD hosted quarterly Nonprofit Roundtable workshops in the region.*
  - *NEOEDD led a two-part Journey to Equity workshop in La Grande with tools for assessment, strategic planning, decision-making and communication for organizations seeking help with equity-related changes.*
  - *NEOEDD participated in Conectate, a regional gathering of organizations serving the LatinX community and led a World Café session on Increasing Diversity without Tokenism.*

*Objective 5b: Priority projects are successfully completed*

**Action: Provide project development and implementation assistance as requested**

Vital Project 5b.1:

- Identify potential projects
  - *NEOEDD issued a call for new projects and four new projects were identified for addition to the CEDS. One design project for a truck-to-rail spur facility, and three construction projects: a truck-to-rail spur, a mental health/drug and alcohol treatment facility and a regional food bank warehouse. (APPENDIX B-2020 PROJECTS)*
  
- Conduct feasibility study for projects
  - *NEOEDD assisted four organizations studying the feasibility of new facilities, including an animal shelter and a community event facility in Wallowa County, and two community event facilities in Union County.*

## APPENDIX A-2020 OPPORTUNITY ZONES

Two Opportunity Zones are located within the region, information for each is shown below

<http://www.statsamerica.org/opportunity/map.aspx>

### Baker County, OR Tract 9505.00

**Located In: Baker County, OR**

**Nearest City: Baker city, Oregon**

#### Opportunity Zone Key Metrics

Population	2,641
Land Area	193.0 sq. miles
Labor Force	1,074
Labor Force Participation Rate	47.9
Unemployment Rate	3.9
Per Capita Money Income	\$26,052
Poverty Rate	7.7

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey*

#### U.S. Economic Development Administration

- This OZ is part of an Economic Development District: **Northeast Oregon Economic Development District**.  
[Learn more about EDDs](#)
- The closest EDA University Center is at **Boise State University**. It is about **116** miles away.  
[Learn more about UCs](#)
- There is 1 EDA funded Revolving Loan Funds serving areas in this OZ:  
[Northeast Oregon Economic Development District](#) Phone: (541) 426-3598  
[Learn more about RLFs](#)

### Related Government Programs

- This **is not** a HUD 2019 Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Qualified Tract. [Learn more](#)
- The 2018 SBA HUBZone Qualified Census Tract status of this tract is: **Redesignated until Dec 2021**. [Learn more](#)

**Note:** Users should verify participation with official program sources before making any financial decisions.

### Opportunity Zone Demographics

2,641 people live in this opportunity zone.

Age	Count	Pct. Distribution	U.S. Pct. Distribution
Under 18	441	16.7 %	22.8 %
18 to 64	1,636	61.9 %	62.0 %
65 and over	564	21.4 %	15.2 %

Educational Attainment (age 25 and over)	Count	Pct. Distribution	U.S. Pct. Distribution
High School Diploma or Equivalent	574	29.5 %	27.1 %
Some College or Associate Degree	685	35.2 %	29.0 %
Bachelor's Degree and Higher	449	23.0 %	31.5 %

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey

Innovation and Entrepreneurship - Baker County, OR

The [Innovation Index 2.0](#) provides insight into the innovation capacity and innovative output of a region.

Baker County, OR has an innovation index score of 71.9.

	<b>Index</b>
Human Capital and Knowledge Creation Index	84.8
Business Dynamics Index	48.0
Business Profile Index	59.9
Employment and Productivity Index	82.4
Economic Well-Being Index	86.8

**Source:** IBRC at the Indiana University Kelley School of Business

### Industry Mix - Baker County, OR

LQ = Location quotient is one indication of how concentrated employment is in a particular industry. An LQ less than 1.0 shows it is below the U.S. average (which equals 1.0). An LQ > 1.0 shows a higher concentration of employment than the U.S. average.

Industry Classification	Establishments	Employment	Employment Dist.	Employment LQ
Total Nonfarm	698	5,544	100.0%	N/A
Natural Resources, Mining, Construction	124	661	11.9 %	1.86
Manufacturing	30	560	10.1 %	1.16
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	129	1,122	20.2 %	1.06
Information, Finance, Real Estate	53	202	3.6 %	0.47
Professional, Scientific, Technical	47	145	2.6 %	0.41
Management of Companies; Administration, Support, Etc.	25	328	5.9 %	0.74
Educational Services	19	520	9.4 %	1.08
Health Care and Social Services	52	522	9.4 %	0.63
Arts, Entertainment	6	89	1.6 %	0.85
Accommodation, Food Services	57	567	10.2 %	1.07

**Source:** IBRC at the Indiana University Kelley School of Business

**Occupation Mix - Baker County, OR**

LQ = location quotient is one indication of concentrated employment in a particular industry. An LQ<1.0 s below the U.S. average (which equals 1.0). An LQ > 1.0 shows a higher concentration of employment than the U.S. average.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Employment LQ</b>
All Occupations	4,661	N/A
Management, Business, Financial	389	0.81
Computer, Math, Architecture, Engineering, Life, Physical and Social Science	150	0.58
Community and Social Services	54	1.05
Legal	16	0.51
Education, Training, Library, Arts, Design, Entertainment	370	1.06
Health Care Practitioners, Technical, Support	327	0.76
Protective Services	51	0.94
Food Prep and Serving	537	1.14
Services Include Cleaning, Maintenance, Grounds, Personal Care	290	0.89
Sales	569	1.13
Office, Admin	693	0.96
Ag, Construction, Installation, Maintenance	525	1.31
Production Workers	287	1.13
Transportation & Material Moving	403	1.21

*Source: IBRC at the Indiana University Kelley School of Business*

## Union County, OR Tract 9708.00

Located In: Union County, OR

Nearest City: La Grande city, Oregon

### Opportunity Zone Key Metrics

Population	3,750
Land Area	33.0 sq. miles
Labor Force	1,702
Labor Force Participation Rate	57.6
Unemployment Rate	7.6
Per Capita Money Income	\$24,240
Poverty Rate	17.2

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey*

### U.S. Economic Development Administration

- This OZ is part of an Economic Development District: **Northeast Oregon Economic Development District**. [Learn more about EDDs](#)
- The closest EDA University Center is at **Boise State University**. It is about **150** miles away. [Learn more about UCs](#)
- There is 1 EDA funded Revolving Loan Funds serving areas in this OZ: [Northeast Oregon Economic Development District](#) Phone: (541) 426-3598 [Learn more about RLFs](#)

### Related Government Programs

- This **is not** a HUD 2019 Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Qualified Tract. [Learn more](#)
- The 2018 SBA HUBZone Qualified Census Tract status of this tract is: **Not Qualified**. [Learn more](#)

**Note:** Users should verify participation with official program sources before making any financial decisions.

### Opportunity Zone Demographics

3,750 people live in this opportunity zone.

<b>Age</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Pct. Distribution</b>	<b>U.S. Pct. Distribution</b>
Under 18	948	25.3 %	22.8 %
18 to 64	2,020	53.9 %	62.0 %
65 and over	782	20.9 %	15.2 %

<b>Educational Attainment (age 25 and over)</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Pct. Distribution</b>	<b>U.S. Pct. Distribution</b>
High School Diploma or Equivalent	773	30.9 %	27.1 %
Some College or Associate Degree	984	39.3 %	29.0 %
Bachelor's Degree and Higher	542	21.7 %	31.5 %

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey

Innovation and Entrepreneurship - Union County, OR

The [Innovation Index 2.0](#) provides insight into the innovation capacity and innovative output of a region.

Union County, OR has an innovation index score of 77.1.

	<b>Index</b>
Human Capital and Knowledge Creation Index	96.8
Business Dynamics Index	46.4
Business Profile Index	62.3
Employment and Productivity Index	89.7
Economic Well-Being Index	91.1

**Source:** IBRC at the Indiana University Kelley School of Business

**Industry Mix - Union County, OR**

LQ = location quotient and is one indication of how concentrated employment is in a particular industry. An LQ less than 1.0 shows it is below the U.S. average (which equals 1.0). An LQ > 1.0 shows a higher concentration of employment than the U.S. average.

<b>Industry Classification</b>	<b>Establishments</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Employment Dist.</b>	<b>Employment LQ</b>
Total Nonfarm	998	10,173	100.0%	N/A
Natural Resources, Mining, Construction	190	1,202	11.8 %	1.85
Manufacturing	30	1,327	13.0 %	1.50
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	163	1,911	18.8 %	0.99
Information, Finance, Real Estate	74	343	3.4 %	0.44
Professional, Scientific, Technical	53	220	2.2 %	0.34
Management of Companies; Administration, Support, Etc.	40	479	4.7 %	0.59
Educational Services	20	756	7.4 %	0.86
Health Care and Social Services	93	1,665	16.4 %	1.10
Arts, Entertainment	12	354	3.5 %	1.86
Accommodation, Food Services	77	917	9.0 %	0.94

**Source:** IBRC at the Indiana University Kelley School of Business

**Occupation Mix - Union County, OR**

LQ = location quotient is one indication of concentrated employment in a particular industry. An LQ < 1.0 is below the U.S. average (which equals 1.0). An LQ >1.0 shows a higher concentration of employment than the U.S. average.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Employment LQ</b>
All Occupations	8,787	N/A
Management, Business, Financial	691	0.77
Computer, Math, Architecture, Engineering, Life, Physical and Social Science	306	0.63
Community and Social Services	97	1.00
Legal	23	0.40
Education, Training, Library, Arts, Design, Entertainment	590	0.89
Health Care Practitioners, Technical, Support	885	1.08
Protective Services	86	0.84
Food Prep and Serving	970	1.10
Services Include Cleaning, Maintenance, Grounds, Personal Care	605	0.98
Sales	1,027	1.08
Office, Admin	1,173	0.87
Ag, Construction, Installation, Maintenance	1,077	1.42
Production Workers	560	1.17
Transportation & Material Moving	698	1.11

*Source: IBRC at the Indiana University Kelley School of Business*

## APPENDIX B-2020 PROJECTS

The following projects were added to the CEDS in March of 2020.

### New Projects - 2020

#### Goal 2 – Increase and formalize regional economic development collaboration

*Objective 2.a: Region is positioned as more resilient and attractive for residents, businesses, and visitors by building off common characteristics*

**Action: Market region to attract industries paying above-average wages**

Vital Project 2a.5

- Construct regional truck-to-rail spur at Baum Industrial park

Lead Organization: Union County

Partner Organizations: NEOEDD, Oregon Dept of Transportation, Northern Pacific Railroad

Funding Sources: Capital Construction Funds – Oregon Legislature, Northern Pacific Railroad, Union County

#### Goal 3. Assess, improve, and utilize infrastructure needed for economic growth

*Objective 3b: Shared-use community assets are developed and/or improved*

**Action: Acquire community forestland to ensure the forests continue to generate social, economic, and environmental benefits to the local community**

Vital Project 3b.2:

- Complete due diligence to acquire 246-acre timber parcel that includes the Maxville town site in order to provide public access and heritage/cultural education, and accommodate community-based timber management

Lead Organization: Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center

Partner Organizations: Wallowa Resources, Eastern Oregon University, Wallowa County, Oregon DEQ

Funding Sources: Private foundations

**Action: Create plans to improve municipal infrastructure**

Vital Project 3b.3

- Final design for Truck to Railroad Spur facility at Baum Industrial Park

Lead Organization: Union County

Partner Organizations: NEOEDD, Oregon Dept of Transportation, Northern Pacific Railroad

Funding Sources: Capital Construction Funds – Oregon Legislature, Northern Pacific Railroad, Union County

Goal 5. Strengthen and/or improve ability of nonprofits and local governments to meet needs and enhance quality of life for the public

*Objective5a: Nonprofit and public organizations are more effective*

**Action: Improve management systems, internal relationships, and capacity**

Vital Project 5a.2:

- Enhance mental health and drug and alcohol treatment facilities

Lead Organization: City of Baker City

Partner Organizations: Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization, New Directions NW

Funding Sources: Community Development Block Grant, New Directions NW

Job Creation: 1.5

Vital Project 5a.3:

- Construct a regional food bank warehouse facility in La Grande

Lead Organization: Community Connection of Northeast Oregon

Partner Organizations: Oregon Food Bank

Funding Sources: Community Development Block Grant, New Directions NW