

ACTION PLAN: IMPLEMENTATION

The action plan answers the question “How do we get there?” and is based primarily on the prioritized goals and objectives of the strategic direction. The action plan distills the vision, goals and objectives into concrete, specific actions to achieve the aspirations of the region’s stakeholders. Building on the well-defined strategic direction, the action plan should explicitly describe how the region will work together to achieve its goals and measurable objectives, including activity ownership, timetables, and committed resources. A detailed, well-considered action plan increases the overall value of the CEDS, and makes it relevant and useful. While the action plan should provide a guide to prioritizing resources and efforts, it should not be used to limit the identification and implementation of other activities that support the strategic direction that was established as part of the development of the vision, goals and objectives within the CEDS. Specific dollar amounts are not attached to each goal or strategy item. The scope of the of this plan is five years with staff time as the anticipated greatest cost. The Meramec Regional Planning Commission plans to partner with other organizations and explore grant and cost sharing opportunities to reduce duplicated efforts and lower costs.

GOAL 1: SEEK EXPANSION OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMY THROUGH DIVERSIFIED BUSINESS GROWTH

PERFORMANCE MEASURES: Track tax revenues, number of new jobs, number of new/expanded businesses, assessed valuation, and unemployment rates

OBJECTIVE 1: Support the maintenance and growth of Fort Leonard Wood

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
Increase advocacy with Federal and State Legislators	Meet with legislators annually to discuss important topics related to FLW and provide ongoing information on significant updates or completion of goals Encourage military advocate to be a permanent State Cabinet positions	MRPC, SOP, Local Governments	Ongoing
Support and participate in Sustainable Ozarks Partnership (SOP) and other advisory groups	Regularly participate SOP meetings	MRPC, Local Governments	Ongoing
Monitor Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) and emphasize long-term sustainable growth in the region	Review and Update the JLUS	MRPC, Local Governments, Economic Development (ED) entities, SOP	2019-2020
	Continue to implement JLUS recommendations	Local Governments	Ongoing
	Create/Implement contingency plans for both expansion and potential decline of Fort Leonard Wood from the impact to the surrounding region	MRPC, Local Governments, SOP	Ongoing

Encourage opportunities for military spouse and family employment/ancillary workforce	Promote database of military spouses looking for employment to employers and Missouri Job Centers to meet the workforce needs of employers	SOP, Central Workforce Development Board (CWDB), FLW	Ongoing
	Create social media presence and host job fairs for FLW spouses to connect with employers	SOP, CWDB, FLW	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 2: Create an entrepreneurial ecosystem to support start-up enterprises and strengthen businesses

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
Continue to encourage the concept of entrepreneurship into K-12 curriculum	Work with school districts to have local entrepreneurs present at schools for a firsthand look at opportunities	MRPC, School Districts, ED entities	Ongoing
	Encourage entrepreneurial efforts among existing high school youth organizations	MRPC, School Districts, ED entities	Ongoing
Encourage opportunities for private investment in entrepreneurs	Develop a contact list of current investors with their geographic and sector funding preferences	ED entities	2019-2020
	Promote existing regional loan programs for start-ups and research the establishment of a micro-loan program (loans less than \$25,000)	MRPC, Local Banks	Ongoing
Identify issues that are an impediment to growth of existing businesses	Survey local business owners in each community to create a list of issues that are impediments to business retention and opening a new business, and share with local jurisdictions Work with each city to do “How to Open a Business” pamphlets, etc.	MRPC, Local Governments, SBTDC, Chambers of Commerce, ED entities	2021-2022
Educate existing businesses of available assets and programs	Offer and/or promote webinar or YouTube videos explaining the programs	MRPC	Ongoing
	Hold business trainings to share best practices	MRPC, Meramec Regional Development Corporation (MRDC), Small Business Technology Development Center (SBDTC), Kauffman Foundation	Annually

	Refer local businesses to area Small Business and Technology Development Centers (SBTDC) or similar organizations for one on one counseling	MRPC, ED entities, Local Banks	Ongoing
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OBJECTIVE 3: Continue to grow and diversify the region

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
Support and attract more retail establishments within the region	Develop incentives and promote affordable facilities for businesses to relocate to the region	Local Governments	Ongoing
	Market region to retail brokers	ED entities	Ongoing
Recruit businesses engaged in supply chain and other ancillary support operations for existing manufacturers	Develop incentives and promote affordable facilities for businesses to relocate to the region	ED entities	Ongoing
	Work with existing business to identify which firms are industries in the supply chain, aggregate the data to identify trends and potential targets for attraction	MRPC, ED entities	2022-2023
Support manufacturing and the private sector by ensuring that sites and services are available and addressing the issues that impact their developments	Host quarterly meetings with manufacturers and other business owners to determine what their most critical needs are	MRPC, CWDB	Ongoing
	Expand Manufacturing Day activities	MRPC, CWDB, ED entities, Manufacturers	Annually
Retain, protect, and expand existing public sector employers and encourage more public/private partnerships	Understand the needs and challenges of the public sector employers	MRPC, ED entities	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 4: Expand the tourism/agritourism visitation potential and promote the region as a destination

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
Support, promote, and grow Naturally Meramec/Tourism related businesses	Implement USDA grants that will grow membership and promote the region. Grant work includes marketing efforts, expanding agritourism businesses, providing networking opportunities, etc.	MRPC, Agritourism businesses, University Extension offices, ED entities	2019-2022

GOAL 2: MAINTAIN, MODERNIZE AND EXPAND INFRASTRUCTURE TO MAKE THE REGION MORE COMPETITIVE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PERFORMANCE MEASURES: Review number of loan and grant funded infrastructure projects, Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) projects, and increase of access to broadband in Meramec Region

OBJECTIVE 1: Identify the maintenance needs and funding solutions for existing infrastructure

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
Maintain awareness of infrastructure needs within counties and cities in the Meramec Region	Meet with local officials on regular basis to develop a full list of specific infrastructure needs to include broadband, water, sewer, etc.	MRPC, Local governments	Ongoing
	Work with local governments on asset management utilizing GIS and other tools	MRPC, Local governments	Ongoing
Share information on funding opportunities including TIF, CID, NID, TDD, bond issues, grants, etc.	Host workshops with participating communities and counties to share information on funding opportunities	MRPC, ED entities, Local governments, Developers	2020
	Provide links to grant funding workshops and seminars		

OBJECTIVE 2: Modernize and expand infrastructure in our region

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
Promote the availability and expansion of broadband/high speed internet across the region	Identify gaps in broadband/high speed internet services and encourage expansion of service availability	MRPC, IT companies, Rural Cooperatives	2019
Improve major transportation systems in the region, including I-44, 63, 50, 21 & 8, Rail and Air	Promote the increase of transportation funding	MRPC/Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), MODOT	Ongoing
	Prioritize specific projects for major transportation systems	MRPC/Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), MODOT	Annually
	Encourage and support regional Jet Service for FLW	MRPC, SOP	Ongoing
Improve transportation networks, including local routes, highways, and air to support growth of logistical and distribution industries	Promote freight routes within the region for additional funding opportunities	MRPC/TAC, ED entities	Ongoing
Upgrade utility systems in rural areas and local communities (Water, Sewer, Electric, Natural Gas)	Encourage small communities to consider regionalization of utility systems	MRPC, Local governments, Water/Sewer Districts	Ongoing
	Assist communities with grant/loan applications for system upgrades	MRPC, Local governments	Ongoing

	Educate the public and local community leaders on costs involved with expansion and modernization of infrastructure	MRPC, Local governments	Ongoing
Provide modern services and facilities for communities in the region	Do an assessment of the communities' physical assets and then determine what it will take to bring them all up to an established standard	MRPC, Local governments	Ongoing

GOAL 3: PROMOTE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY, SAFE AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

PERFORMANCE MEASURES: Evaluate Kids Count data, number of jobs in healthcare, annual County Health rankings, high school and college graduation rates, increase in affordable housing, sidewalk surveys, access to food stores, number of recycling programs, and number of visitors at state and federal lands

OBJECTIVE 1: Encourage local governments to design a business model that is 21st century driven and globally minded in governance

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
Educate and promote the use of planning	Offer trainings on how to create and implement community planning	MRPC, Local governments	Ongoing
	Develop and offer a presentation on planning to city councils and other local government entities	MRPC, Local governments	Ongoing
Broaden the scope of participation in local government	Establish a Student in Government Day for high school students to begin interest in becoming the next generation of community leaders	MRPC, School Districts, Local governments	Ongoing
	Sponsor an annual meet and greet for citizens to meet local government officials	MRPC, Local Governments	Ongoing
	Aid in the development of leadership training in the region	MRPC, University Extension offices, Local Businesses, Delta Leadership Institute	2020
Raise awareness of financing, philanthropy, and management tools available to local communities	Form a group of local business owners, investors, and bankers to prepare information on government financing and management tools to inform local communities	MRPC, Local businesses, Financial institutions, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis	2021
	Host workshops and best practices on philanthropy and fundraising	MRPC, MRCE, CFO	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 2: Provide quality, patient-centered healthcare in the region

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
Support small hospitals and county healthcare facilities	Include the needs of regional healthcare facilities within MRPC's state and federal priorities and advocacy opportunities	MRPC, Healthcare facilities	Ongoing

Assist in the fight against substance abuse	Implement the Rural Health Opioid Program grant in Crawford, Dent, Maries, and Phelps Counties	MRPC, Local Health departments, Mental Health agencies	2019-2021
	Secure funding to implement the Rural Health Opioid Program grant in additional four counties (Osage, Gasconade, Pulaski, and Washington)	MRPC, Local Health departments, Mental Health agencies	2019
Encourage utilization of healthcare services and facilities within the Meramec Region	Identify gaps in service and promote quality healthcare facilities in the region through existing marketing efforts	MRPC, Local Health Departments & facilities	Ongoing
Attract and retain healthcare professionals	Encourage high school and college career fairs to include healthcare professions and opportunities to mentor and shadow healthcare professions in the region	MRPC, School Districts, CWDB, ED entities, Higher Education institutions	Ongoing
	Review compensation packages to ensure they are competitive and promote the quality of life in the Meramec Region	Healthcare facilities	Ongoing
Promote healthy living	Encourage replication of county programs similar to Healthy Dent County	MRPC, Dent County, Local Governments	Ongoing
	Encourage and expand an increase in recreational opportunities that support healthy living	MRPC, Local communities, University Extension offices, Local Health departments, MO Foundation for Health	Ongoing
Advocate on behalf of rural critical access and Federally Qualified Health Center (FHQC) institutions and keep abreast of the issues impacting them	Access the FHQC data to determine needs and then form a committee of regional healthcare facilities and FHQC leadership to address gaps in service and unmet needs	MRPC, Healthcare facilities, MO Rural Health Association	2022

OBJECTIVE 3: Encourage lifelong learning in the region

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
Introduce students to all educational opportunities including on-the-job training, apprenticeships, job shadowing, internships, etc.	Support career days in schools that include both colleges/universities and major employers/professionals Expose students to local manufacturing sites where STEM, on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs	MRPC, School Districts, CWDB, Local businesses, Chambers of Commerce	Ongoing

	are in place and where employers are actively recruiting for employees Collaborate with Mo Career Center's Manufacturing Day activities to expose students to jobs in manufacturing		
Assist schools to keep kids safe	Assist schools in identifying resources and securing grants to address school safety and security	MRPC, School Districts	Ongoing
Promote flexibility for post-secondary education in our region	Encourage colleges to provide more flexibility for non-traditional learners who may be working, including more evening, weekend, and online classes Encourage educational institutions to increase the availability of life enrichment classes to the community	MRPC, Local Colleges, CWDB	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 4: Promote smart and sustainable housing developments

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
Improve quality and affordability of housing stock	Encourage the development of workforce housing, both owner occupied and rental Seek resources to improve and/or upgrade existing housing stock Encourage local communities to adopt and enforce regulations for property maintenance	MRPC, Local Governments, Private Developers, Non-profits	Ongoing
Encourage use of financing tools and incentives at state and federal levels	Share information on existing financing tools	MRPC, Local Governments, State and Federal Agencies	Ongoing
Identify need and increase availability of housing for vulnerable populations	Determine need and encourage development accordingly for transitional youth, veterans, elderly, homeless, etc. Seek and share resources to address needs	MRPC, Local Governments, Private Developers, Non-profits, State and Federal Agencies	Ongoing
Encourage residential development with adequate infrastructure	Work with local communities to adopt development standards to ensure adequate infrastructure prior to development	MRPC, Local Governments	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 5: Maintain a physical environment that supports healthy communities

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
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Educate citizens on best practices related to water quality	<p>Provide the public with information on what factors influence the quality of their water</p> <p>Hold or participate in community events that promote best practices related to water quality</p>	MRPC, State and Federal Agencies	Ongoing 2020
Ensure availability and access to state and federal lands for future generations	<p>Educate the public on the value of state and federal lands and support organizations that are involved in their protection</p> <p>Encourage the development of the Rock Island Trail</p> <p>Work with local communities to increase and improve access to state and federal lands (i.e. County roads, stream crossings, trails, etc.)</p> <p>Build stronger relationships with agencies responsible for state and federal lands</p>	MRPC, State and Federal Agencies, Local Governments, Grassroots Support Organizations, other Regionals Planning Commissions	Ongoing
Increase availability and convenience of solid waste management	<p>Encourage/support recycling and reuse</p> <p>Incorporate recycling into existing and future solid waste management contracts</p> <p>Seek and secure financing opportunities to establish infrastructure</p>	MRPC, Solid Waste Management Districts, Local Governments, Waste Haulers, Landfill Operators, Non-profits	Ongoing
Encourage the development of livable communities	<p>Sharing information with cities regarding standards and the importance of livable communities</p> <p>Identify and share financing resources and local incentive opportunities to encourage the development of livable communities</p>	MRPC, Local Governments, Developers	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 6: Promote recreation, cultural activities, entertainment, and place-making within the region

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
Improve existing assets in the region and expand opportunities	<p>Identify and share available resources with local governments and non-profits</p> <p>Promote regional collaboration around cultural activities and entertainment</p>	MRPC, Local Governments, Non-profits, Businesses, Naturally Meramec, Federal Resources, Chambers of Commerce	Ongoing

GOAL 4: CREATE A ROBUST WORKFORCE PIPELINE TO SATISFY THE NEEDS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

PERFORMANCE MEASURES: Increase in the number of college placements, decrease in unfilled jobs, increase in technical college programs, review of WorkKeys testing goals

OBJECTIVE 1: Maximize business engagement

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
Improve communication between businesses and the public regarding job needs	Host, convene and support regular business/community forums where area business leaders can share their current and forecasted employee needs and skill requirements with elected officials, school and higher education leadership, economic development professionals	MRPC, Local Governments, School Districts, Economic Developers, Chambers of Commerce, Workforce Development, US Department of Labor – St. Louis office	Annually
	Encourage job fairs and employer open-houses	MRPC, CWDB, Economic Developers, Chambers of Commerce, Businesses	Annually
Increase the availability of on-the-job training, apprenticeships, job shadowing, internships, etc.	Encourage businesses to establish formal internship/apprenticeship programs that can be promoted through workforce development centers and college placement offices	MRPC, Businesses, CWDB, Colleges	Ongoing
	Promote successful apprenticeship programs by identifying business champions who can share their success stories and advocate for additional apprenticeships	MRPC, State and Federal Legislators	Ongoing
	Advocate for on-the-job training funds to meet the needs of regional manufacturers	MRPC, School Districts, Businesses	Ongoing
	Encourage schools to permit job-shadowing between students and local businesses		Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 2: Focus on Improving Worker Skills

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
Align career pathway elements and services through education and training systems	Support existing models of business/community advisory committees that is utilized by State Technical College to include more local business leaders serving on appropriate educational institution advisory committees	Educational Institutions, Businesses	Ongoing

	Encourage employers to complete job profiling to require National Career Readiness Certificates (NCRC)	Businesses, Workforce Development	Ongoing
Improve employees' soft and life skills	Expand emphasis on soft and life skills through existing programs such as FFA, 4-H, FCCLA, and Junior Achievement	School Districts, Local Organizations, University Extension offices	Ongoing
	Encourage businesses to host trainings for current employees relative to improving skill sets	Businesses, Workforce Development	Ongoing
Expand opportunities for on-the-job training	Convene workshops between educators, employers, and workforce development to discuss on-the-job training issues	MRPC, Educational Institutions, Businesses, Workforce Development	2021
	Encourage the use of shorter-term training models and make education and skill attainment programs more accessible and affordable for all workers	Businesses, Workforce Development	2022
Ensure the counties in the region maintain community WorkReady status and promote business utilization of WorkKeys	Maintain ongoing efforts to earn and retain WorkReady status for each county within the region Encourage employer participation in WorkReady communities Promote and highlight businesses that require or prefer National Career Readiness Certificates to improve certification value and encourage more workers to take the exam	MRPC, Local Governments, Economic Developers, CWDB, Chambers of Commerce	Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 3: Increase career awareness

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
Create an awareness initiative and increase workplace exposure that promotes manufacturing, technical, and health care careers	Continue to coordinate annual Manufacturing Day tours for students, high school counselors and advisors Expand Manufacturing Day model into technical and healthcare fields, building trades, etc. Provide better and more accessible career data – occupational demand, wages, and education requirements – for use by students, parents, counselors, and educators	MPRC, Businesses, Economic Developers, CWDB, School Districts, MO Entrepreise	Annually

OBJECTIVE 4: Attract and Retain More Talent

Strategy	Action Items	Partners and Stakeholders	Timeline
<p>Encourage employers to improve the work experience</p>	<p>Expose business leaders within the region to the worker retention strategies</p>	<p>Economic Developers, Chambers of Commerce</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>Survey companies with long-term employees to see what are these employers doing to retain staff and then share data with regional businesses</p>	<p>MRPC, Businesses, Economic Developers, Chambers of Commerce</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Promote sense of community within the region</p>	<p>Promote employer participation in community events where employees are paid to help out in identified and supervised projects in the community</p>	<p>MRPC, Chambers of Commerce, Businesses, Tourism</p>	<p>Annually</p>
<p>Develop recruitment strategies for attracting quality workforce</p>	<p>Encourage communities within the region to establish alumni associations in order to encourage alumni to return to their hometown</p>	<p>Chambers of Commerce, School Districts, Local Governments</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>Assist businesses with development of a recruitment strategies plan tailored specifically to each job</p>	<p>MRPC, Businesses, CWDB, Local Governments, Chambers of Commerce</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Identify and address statewide policies that create barriers to expanding the workforce</p>	<p>Participate in statewide Department of Economic Development (DeD) and Chamber efforts to identify policies and then advocate for change at the state level</p>	<p>MRPC, State Agencies, State Legislators</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>