Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

COMPRISING THE PEOPLES AND COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES OF MONTANA'S LAKE, MINERAL AND SANDERS COUNTIES

2022-2027

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Executive Summary

This report aims to summarize the research, data collection, and discussion around the economy, people, businesses, and development of Lake, Sanders, and Mineral County (Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District) to gain an understanding of the potential development of the area at a regional level.

The mission of Mission West Community Development Partners (MWCDP) is 'to enhance the quality of life and economic well-being of all residents of Mission West CDP Region and the Flathead Indian Reservation.' Enhancing the quality of life and economic well-being can mean different things to community members; still, most would agree that building better communities is the foundation to achieve those goals.

The MWCDP 2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a tool meant to enhance the building of partnerships and strategies essential to building the economic health of the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District. CEDS provides a vision for the region's future growth and development, which identifies critical regional issues and provides data to help support the development of regional solutions. CEDS does not overrule or eliminate the need for individual community planning efforts; it reviews potential development at the regional level.

The Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District (MWCDP-EDD) consists of 5,470.11 square miles with a population of 48,069 and is considered a rural area. The median age of the region is 42.3 Lake County, 54.5 Sanders County, and 53.3 Mineral County, with a median income of $52,493, $45,805, and $57,169. Through the community surveys, a major concern revolved around higher-paying jobs and affordable housing. The concern from the surveys highlights the median wage and the difficulty to afford housing, the median house price being above $600 thousand, which is over double that was reported in 2016-2020 of $278,400.

MWCDP-EDD is impacted by many weaknesses and threats, but; many strengths the region can build upon and opportunities to leverage to enhance the quality of life and economic well-being of all residents of the region.

MISSION WEST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Mission West Community Development Partners (MWCDP)

Introducing the Organization

Mission West Community Development Partners (MWCDP)is a 501c3 nonprofit community development organization that serves Lake, Mineral, and Sanders Counties and a portion of the Flathead Indian Reservation for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) in north western Montana, overseeing a variety of economic development projects throughout the western region. MWCDP is a region economic development organization established to provide leadership, community and economic development efforts and to address growth issues as they affect residence, community and the quality of life in the counties served. Established in 1995, the organization began as the Lake County Community Development Corporation (LCCDC), undergoing a name change in 2021 and now doing business as Mission West Community Development Partners[1], referred to as "Mission West" in this document.
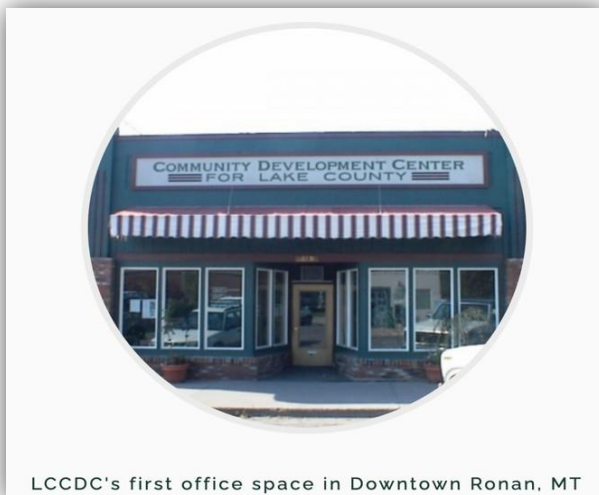
Mission West works with Small Businesses, Community Development organizations and food and Agriculture producers. Mission West works with outside funding sources for economic development projects, including federal, state, local, and private resources. A MWCDP Board of Directors has up to fifteen volunteer members that provide governance and leadership of the organization. Current Board membership is available in the attachments section.

Image 1: LCCDC's first office space in downtown Ronan, MT

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER	**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTER**	**COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTER**	**MISSION MOUNTAIN FOOD ENTERPRISE CENTER**
HELPING ENTREPRENEURS START UP & EXISTING BUSINESSES GROW	WORKING WITH PARTNERS TO PLAN AND FACILITATE COMMUNITY PROJECTS	HELPING NEW AND EXISTING COOPERATIVES GROW AND THRIVE	WORKING WITH FOOD & AGRICULTURE CLIENTS TO GROW THE LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY

Partners

The vision established in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is accomplished through partnerships with a multitude of other organizations. Local government organizations and local economic development agencies contribute to developing the action plan and utilize the contents of the CEDS to apply for grants and formalize their annual work plans. Numerous other local partnerships, agencies, citizen groups, and other assessments are used to inform the full scope of the CEDS. Local partnerships include:

- **Local County Government**
  - Lake, Mineral and Sanders Counties
- **Tribal Organizations**
  - Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)
- **Local Economic Development Organizations**
  - Arlee Community Development Corporation,
  - Mineral County Economic Development, and
  - Sanders County Community Development Corporation
- **Local Chambers of Commerce**
  - Polson Chamber of Commerce,
  - Ronan Chamber of Commerce,
  - Superior Chamber of Commerce, and
  - Thompson Falls Chamber of Commerce
- **State Agencies**
  - Governor's Office of Economic Development,
    - Montana Site Selector
  - Montana Department of Commerce
    - Office of Tourism
      - Glacier Country Tourism,
    - Montana Main Street Program,

- - - ■ Community Development Block Grant Program,
      - ■ Montana Manufacturing Extension Center, and the
      - ■ Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
  - ○ Montana Department of Transport ,
  - ○ Montana Department of Health and Human Services
  - ○ Montana Department of Agriculture,
  - ○ Montana Secretary of State
  - ○ Montana Department of Environmental Quality, and
  - ○ Montana Department of Labor & Industry
    - ■ Job Service Polson,
    - ■ Job Service - Thompson Falls
- **Federal Agencies**
  - ○ United States Department of Agricultural (USDA)
  - ○ Rural Development ,
    - ● Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS),
    - ■ United States Forest Service (USFS),
    - ■ Farm Service Agency (FSA),
    - ■ Food and Nutrition Service (FNS),
    - ■ National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and the
    - ■ Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS)
  - ○ United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Brownfields Program,
  - ○ United States Department of Commerce
    - ■ US Census Bureau
  - ○ Small Business Administration (SBA),
  - ○ Unites States Department of Labor
    - ■ Bureau of Labor Statistics
  - ○ U.S. Department of Transportation,
  - ○ U.S. Treasury
  - ○ Community Development Financial Institutions Fund
    - ■ U.S. Economic Development Administration
- **Education**
  - ○ School Districts and Schools in the region - Ronan, Polson, Arlee, St. Ignatius, St. Regis, Charlo, Alberton, Superior, Noxon, Thompson Falls and Plains
  - ○ Colleges - Salish Kootenai College and Flathead Valley Community College
  - ○ University -
    - ■ Montana State University
      - ● Montana State University Extension
    - ■ University of Montana

- Institute of Tourism & Recreation Research
- **Nonprofits and Citizen Groups**
  - Mission Valley Nonprofit Network,
  - Envision Polson,
  - Ronan Community Roundtable,
  - Local community foundations,
  - Ronan Revitalization Committee, and
  - Other local nonprofits
- **Businesses and Major employers**
  - Logan Health,
  - St. Luke Community Healthcare
  - Providence St. Joseph Medical Center
  - Clark Fork Valley Hospital
  - Mineral Community Hospital
  - Blackfoot Communications
  - Mission Valley Power
  - Western Montana Growers Cooperative
  - Thompson River Lumber
  - Rocky Mountain Twist
  - Access Montana
  - Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
  - Glacier Bank and Valley Banks

District Staff Roster

The District Staff Roster for MWCDP includes the following personnel:

- Heather Knutson-Walter, Executive Director
- Steve Clairmont, Director - Community Focused Economic Development Center
- Jan Tusick, Director - Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center
- Kaylee Thornley, Director - Cooperative Development Center
- John Whitworth, Manager - Loan Services Center
- Karen Dellwo, Business Development Manager

The District Staff Roster for regional agencies includes:

- Ray Brown, Executive Director – Sanders County Community Development Corporation (SCCDC)
- Emily Park, Executive Director – Mineral County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC)
- Marie Hirsch, Executive Director – Arlee Community Development Corporation (ACDC)
- Lisa Fried de Reyes Executive Director – Sanders County Community Housing Organization (SCCHO)

Biographies of current appointees are provided in attachments.

MWCDP Board of Directors

MWCDP is governed by a Board of Directors with a membership of up to fifteen, including a representative from the Lake County, Sanders County and Mineral County Commissioners, and the CSKT Tribal Council. A table presenting Board member information is available in attachments.

MWCDP Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws

The MWCDP Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws are available in attachments.

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Introduction

This comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) is designed to bring together the public and private sections in the tri-county region to create an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen the local economies. The CEDS development process aims to:

- Analyze the regional economy and guide the establishing of regional goals and objectives, Develop and implement the plan of action, and
- Identify investment priorities and funding sources.

The 2022 – 2027 CEDS is the result of a continuing economic development planning process including broad-based and diverse public and private section participation, leading to the setting of goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the region, accompanied by metrics to measure success. This CEDS document will be the benchmark by which the MWCDP-EDD can evaluate opportunities, assess economic priorities and develop strategies and projects through the tri-county region. This CEDS is not intended to be used as a 'stand-alone' document and is regarded as one tool used in economic development[2].

The 2003 Montana Legislature created the Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC) program. The legislative intent of the program is to encourage a regional approach to economic development that facilitates the efficient delivery of economic development programs by supporting regional capacity building. Mission West was named the Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC) for a partnership formed within the geographic region encompassed by the three-county area in western Montana, including Lake, Mineral, and Sanders Counties. In October 2021, the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) recognized the region as an Economic Development District, which has been named Mission West Community Development Partners Economic Development District (MWCDP-EDD).

This geographic region also comprises a portion of the native homelands of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), including parts of the Flathead Indian Reservation. Mission West is responsible for assisting local development organizations and communities, governing bodies, and businesses they serve to assess, plan, and facilitate economic activity within the region. In the MWCDP-EDD, local governments and the tribes are committed to working together in areas of mutual interest. For purposes of publishing this document, we acknowledge that

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[2] 1 U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies, CEDS, Summary of Requirements

portions of this document reference the CSKT CEDS document, and links are provided throughout this document. This document does not supersede the CSKT CEDS nor set Tribal Economic Development priorities, which the CSKT Tribal Council establishes.

Scope

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) contributes to effective economic development in America's communities and regions through a locally based, regionally driven economic development planning process. According to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), the CEDS provides the capacity-building foundation for the public sector, working in conjunction with other economic actors (individuals, firms, industries), creating the environment for regional economic prosperity[3]. This CEDS contains the results from the planning process, which involved broad community participation in identifying strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities. Through this process, we will establish a vision for each community and include goals and strategies to help the communities achieve these visions over the next five years. The CEDS is formally revised every five years to meet the changing needs and conditions of the area. The CEDS Board oversees the formal revision and annual updates so that the action plan meets the goals and objectives of current and future community needs.

Goals, and Objectives

The overall goal of this plan by the MWCDP-EDD's coalition is to develop priority areas and tasks that reflect the objective of strengthening our communities and the need to diversify the region's economy. Through the planning process, there are five subset goals to help achieve the overall goal of this plan as follows:

Goal 1: Increase each community's development

A collaborative economic development strategy will be used to achieve this goal, which will emphasize communication, cooperation, alignment of initiatives, shared assets, and promotion of the region for business investment. To successfully meet the needs of the region's businesses and future businesses, infrastructure will need to be addressed with a strong focus on housing, transportation, utilities, and communication. Partnering across the region will promote creativity and innovation to provide solutions to the affordable housing crisis.

Goal 2: Increase diversification, job growth, and innovation throughout the region

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[3] https://eda.gov/ceds/

To achieve this goal, an emphasis on creating an environment where business can thrive will be guided by a business development strategy. Counties will need to secure and sustain necessary resources to maximize regional opportunities for small and microenterprise-- development to promote workforce development and innovation to clients. Finally, e-commerce and telework employment (remote work) offer multiple business and development opportunities, from enabling laptop professionals to work from a rural home to providing services, creating new e-commerce businesses that can link to global markets, and opportunities to develop data centers.

Goal 3: Promote and increase the awareness of (local) regional agriculture

To achieve this goal, synergies with Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC) help add value to regional agriculture. MMFEC has become a leader in food and agriculture economic development initiatives by providing technical assistance to food entrepreneurs. Securing and obtaining developmental resources will allow for technical assistance in marketing, business planning, and the improvement of business capitalization. This synergy will allow the growth of local fresh food to offer opportunities, which will bolster local and regional economies when local stores begin to carry the products.

Goal 4: Foster a cooperative nature among the communities

To achieve this goal, there will need to be a strong foundation of understanding cooperative models. To develop a strong foundation for outreach and educating communities on cooperative models and how they can meet community needs and challenges. Developing a cooperative eco-system, sources of capital, referrals for specialized technical assistance, and outreach to community professionals for CLE specific to cooperative models will bolster the community's cooperative nature.

Goal 5: Increase the use of pre-existing commercial and industrial properties

To achieve this goal, a redevelopment strategy will be used. Currently, there are currently 65 commercial properties for sale in the region (Lake 38, Mineral 10, and Sanders County 17). With the redevelopment of these properties, they will be encouraged to use patterns that allow growth while protecting natural resources.

The District's strategic economic development plans are an essential part of achieving sustainable, measurable economic growth and improving the quality of the communities. We have set clear, attainable economic development goals, and the organization has policies and programs to achieve them. These goals help promote a higher quality of life for the communities through support and enhancement of the region's community identity, community health,

natural features, cultural and recreational amenities, and creative industries. To attract visitors worldwide, a tourism plan will be effectively marketed and branded while honoring the heritage across the region.

Process

1. **Analysis** – The analysis assesses the state of the regional economy, the opportunities and threats posed by eternal trends, and the availability of partners and resources for economic development
2. **Vision and Goals** – The community's vision and goals and an appraisal of the region's competitive advantage (strengths and weaknesses) set the strategic direction for the action plan.
3. **Action Plan** – the action plan establishes priority programs and projects for implementation.
4. **Evaluation** – Criteria are established to evaluate the process for periodic updates of the document and its elements. The CEDS document will be evaluated as information changes and determine the success of the implemented action plan. Changes will be made as deemed appropriate.

Advisory Board and Steering Committee

The Mission West Community Development Partners - Economic Development District Advisory Board and CEDS Steering Committee is available in attachments.

MWCDP-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District

Background and Socioeconomic Conditions

Geography and Landscape

Mission West CDP is the lead organization for a three-county partnership that includes Lake, Mineral, and Sanders counties and the Flathead Indian Reservation. The western side of Montana is home to some of the state's prettiest scenery and its ugliest economy, according to the 2018 Associated Press Economic Stress index (historical data through 2016).
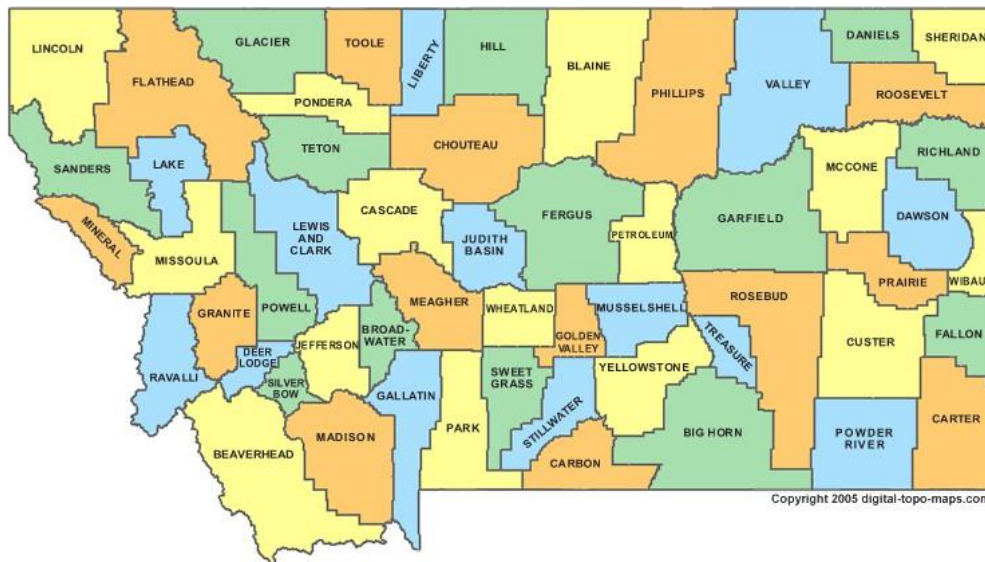
Figure 1: Montana Counties

Source: https://www.waterproofpaper.com/printable-maps/montana.shtml

The Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District is illustrated by the map of Montana's Lake, Sanders, and Mineral Counties. The Flathead Indian Reservation, shown below, Intersects with the western third of Sanders County and a large portion of Lake County.

Figure 2: Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District

Source: https://missionwestcdp.org/community-development-center/regional-development/
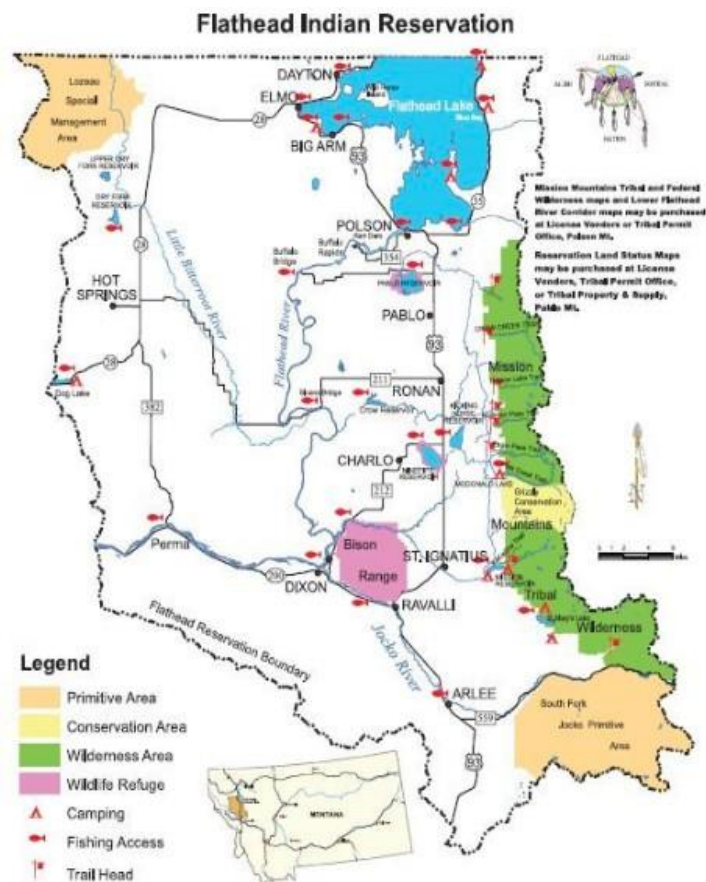
Figure 3: Flathead Indian Reservation, home to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Source: https://www.pinterest.com/pin/99219998026745683/

Flathead Indian Reservation

The Flathead Indian Reservation is home to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) with the reservation noted as being rural in character and located between two of the larger urban communities of Kalispell and Missoula within Montana. The Flathead Indian Reservation has several small towns that are mainly located along U.S. Highway 93. The reservation is roughly 60 miles long and 40 miles wide, comprising the lower quarter of the Flathead River Basin, the South half of Flathead Lake, the lower Flathead River, the Jocko River Basin, and the lower portion of the Little Bitterroot River Basin. The abundant waters in the Flathead Basin have great opportunities for hydropower and outstanding recreation activities. CSKT also provide wildland fire protection, road and bridge construction, law enforcement, forestry, healthcare, management of clean air and water programs, job training, housing, and sewer and water services to tribal members and many non-members. The map presented in Figure 3 above depicts several types of land held status which are uncommon to individuals who live off the Flathead Indian Reservation or away from Montana. These include tribal, individual Indian-owned trusts,

state-owned "school" sections, and federally owned. Please refer to the Reservation History in the CSKT Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2021[4]. The evolution of the Flathead Indian Reservation to its present-day boundaries and the three counties has created complexities sometimes difficult to understand and navigate. These include a sovereign Indian nation, three county governments, and eight city and town governments. Each provides administrative, police, code enforcement, and public works services.

Regional Governance Landscape
Below is the breakdown of the governance landscape in the region:
- **Sovereign Indian Nation**
  - The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
- **County Governments**
  - Lake County
  - Sanders County
  - Mineral County
- **City and Town Governments**
  - Polson (Lake County)
  - Ronan (Lake County)
  - St. Ignatius (Lake County)
  - Hot Springs (Sanders County)
  - Plains (Sanders County)
  - Thompson Falls (Sanders County)
  - Alberton (Mineral County)
  - Superior (Mineral County)

Unincorporated communities are generally under the jurisdiction of the county government in which they are located, which provide many services through local fire districts, community boards, sewer and/or water districts, school districts and other local organizations.

Lake County
Lake County features the National Bison Range, the Mission Mountain Range and the Flathead Lake area. Lake County also includes the majority of the Swan River Basin and the Jocko River Basin. Over two-thirds of Lake County lies within the Flathead Indian Reservation and similar to

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[4] http://cskteconomics.org/

other counties in Montana, the region relies heavily on the tourism industry. During peak season in the summer months, the region's population grows drastically as tourists flock to Flathead Lake and the many recreation opportunities located throughout the region.

Image 2: Polson, Montana - Credit Heather Knutson-Walter

Sanders County

Sanders County spans the valley between the Coeur d'Alene Mountain range and the Cabinet Mountains with the Clark Fork River flowing through the middle of the county and sharing a border with Idaho. A portion of the Flathead Indian Reservation and the lower Flathead River lies within Sanders County, as does the majority of the Bull River Basin and the Thompson River Basin. County. The National Bison Range spans a portion of the border between Lake and Sanders Counties. The Bison Range refuge supports a bison population of roughly 500 bison and a myriad of other wildlife species.

Mineral County

Mineral County is known for its diverse terrain which spans the valley north of the Bitterroot Mountains and is entirely within the external boundaries of the Lolo National Forest and shares a border with Idaho. The Clark Fork River runs through the eastern portion of the county, and the St. Regis River runs through the western portion of the county.

Counties and Municipalities

MWCDP-EDD has eight incorporated cities and towns within the three-county region. The largest city within the region is the city of Polson in Lake County which has a population of 5,033. The region also has around 20 unincorporated towns within the three counties. The incorporated cities and towns within each county include:

Lake County - Polson, Ronan and St. Ignatius

Lake County has a total area of 1,654 miles and has three municipalities: Polson, Ronan and St. Ignatius. Polson serves as the county seat for Lake County and is the largest city in the region with a population of 5,033.

Sanders County - Hot Springs, Plains and Thompson Falls

Sanders County encompasses 2,790 square miles and has three municipalities: Hot Springs, Plains, and Thompson Falls. Thompson Falls serves as the county seat for Sanders County and is the largest city in the region with a population of 1,489.

Image 3: Thompson Falls Dam - Credit Steve Clairmont

Mineral County - Alberton and Superior

Mineral County encompasses 1,223 square miles and has two municipalities: Alberton and Superior. Superior serves as the county seat for Mineral County and is the largest city in the region with a population of 830.

Image 4: Superior, MT

History and Culture

Native Americans are an important part of the history of Montana and the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District. There are seven Indian Reservations in Montana and Lake and Sanders County is home to the Flathead Indian Reservation. Prior to the Hellgate treaty in 1855, members of what is now known as the Confederate Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) used to migrate around the region throughout the year. Montana is said to be first settled in the late 1700s to early 1800 by trappers and Roman Catholic missionaries who followed trappers to the region. Around the mid-1800s the Montana gold rush occurred which brought a large number of explorers hoping to strike it rich. Montana became a territory in 1864 with towns rapidly appearing and disappearing when the gold ran out.

Lake County became an established county in 1923. The Flathead Allotment Act of 1904 opened the Flathead Indian Reservation to homesteading by 1910 only about a fourth of

the population was Native Americans. Lake County's population in 1930 was 9,541[5]. Polson was Incorporated in 1910 and served an important role in the county as a hub for steamboats and lumber milling.

Image 5: St. Ignatius Mission – Credit Steve Clairmont

Sanders County was established in 1906 and named after Wilbur Fisk Sanders, grand pioneer, first president of the State Historical Society, and U.S. Senator of Montana. The assembly passed a bill to create the county in 1905 but it did not occur until over a year later. Population in 1930 was 5,692. The timber industry provided a significant economic impact due to one of the most valuable stands of white pine in the United States.

Image 6: Lower Flathead River – Sanders County, MT - Credit Steve Clairmont

Mineral County was established in 1914 but was first in the mid to late 1800s when gold was discovered. In 1859 Captain John Mullan and his men built a road from Walla Walla, Washington to Fort Benton, Montana which went through what is now Mineral County. Since the first gold rush mining has been a significant part of the county, currently having 140 active mining claims. Population in 1930 was 1,626.

Tourist Attractions

Within the three counties and reservation's geographic boundaries, there are snow-crested mountain peaks, numerous reservoirs, the country's largest freshwater lake west of the Mississippi, major systems of rivers, and streams, and great opportunities for wildlife viewing.

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[5] Population of Montana, Urban and Rural: 1870-1950. Retrieved 6/1/22
from https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1950/population-volume-2/15276180v2p26ch1.pdf

tourists' and visitors are welcome to enjoy a wide range of activities the region has to offer; however, they are asked to be respectful to the people and cultural sites of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes so generations to come can enjoy these beautiful areas.

Image 7: Mountain Lake - Credit Heather Knutson-Walter

The region has historically participated in the tourism industry from the sidelines, as a "pass-through" area for visitors heading toward Glacier National Park. The area has not been vigorously promoted as a destination stop, but this has been improving during the past decade through the state-level Brand Montana tourism and marketing initiative. Thousands of annual and seasonal

visitors travel through the region, yet few stop to enjoy the vast recreational opportunities available. Recreational activities include, boating, sailing, fishing, hunting, photography, hiking, golfing, snowmobiling, painting, cross-country skiing, camping, backpacking, and riding the list of outdoor activities is endless and the unused potential is enormous. The region also has several excellent museums depicting the rich area history.

Image 8: Flathead Lake Islands - Credit Heather Knutson-Walter

Land Use and Population Density
The region is dominantly rural in nature with 89.3% of the population residing in rural areas. The region has one incorporated city with a population great than 2,500 people, which is Polson. The MWCDP-EDD consists of 5,470.11 square miles which is 3.8% of the state while making up 4.4% of the states' population. Table 1 below illustrates the land area, population, and population density of the three counties based on 2020 U.S. Census data.

LAND USE AND POPULATION DENSITY			
LOCATION	AREA	POPULATION	POPULATION DENSITY
Sanders County, MT	2,760.52	12,400	4.1
Lake County, MT	1,490.15	31,134	19.3
Mineral County, MT	1,219.44	4,535	3.5
MWCDP-EDD	5,470.11	48,069.00	8.8
Montana	145,545.80	1,084,225	6.8
United States	3,531,905.43	331,449,281	87.4

Table 1: Land Use and Population Density

Table 2 presents the largest Cities and Towns in MWCDP-EDD region[6] listed from largest to smallest, with a population threshold of 700 residents.

LARGEST CITIES AND TOWNS IN MWCDP-EDD REGION			
NAME	POPULATION IN 2020	PERCENT OF REGION	COUNTY
Polson	5,148	10.7%	Lake
Pablo	2,138	4.4%	Lake
Ronan	1,955	4.1%	Lake
Thompson Falls	1,336	2.8%	Sanders
Plains	1,106	2.3%	Sanders
Superior	830	1.7%	Mineral
St. Ignatius	768	1.6%	Lake
Arlee	720	1.5%	Lake

Table 2: Largest Cities in the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District

Source: https://www.citypopulation.de/en/usa/places/montana/30047_lake/

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[6] USA: Montana, Counties Population. Retrieved from https://www.citypopulation.de/en/usa/places/montana/

Agricultural Land Use

The number of farms and farmlands in the region is presented in Table 3 below. A large portion of the region is used for agriculture. From 2012 to 2017 the region experienced a significant increase in acreage of farmland with the average farm size increasing by more than 50%.

Image 9: Lake County, MT

				AGRICULTURAL LAND USE					
COUNTY	**# FARMS 2012**	**# FARMS 2017**	**% CHANGE**	**ACREAGE 2012**	**ACREAGE 2017**	**% CHANGE**	**Average size 2012**	**Average size 2017**	**% CHANGE**
Lake	1,158	1,170	1%	545,250	641,471	15%	471	548	14%
Sanders	490	521	6%	64,264	642,640	90%	259	1233	79%
Mineral	95	93	-2%	16,935	18,408	8%	178	198	10%
Region	1,743	1,784	2%	626,450	1,302,519	52%	908	1,979	54%

Table 3: Agricultural Land Use

Source: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Montana/cp30047.pdf

Planning and Zoning

Each county has a planning and zoning commission which is composed of volunteers and County officials. There are City Planning departments for each incorporated city and town.

People of this Region

Population

As noted in Table 4 below, each of the three counties in the MWCDP-EDD region have experienced significant population growth since 1980.
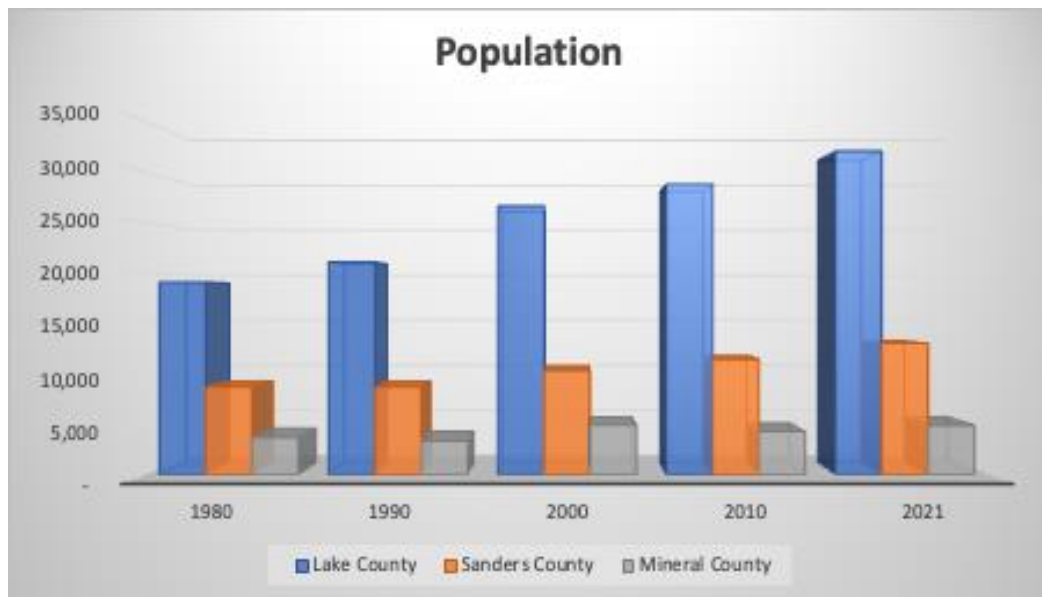
Table 4: Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District Population

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

Lake County

According to the United States Census Bureau reports, the population of Lake County grew at a rate of 7.6% total or 0.7% per year from 2010 – 2020. The population of Lake County has continued to increase since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, however, no formal studies have been completed to assess the significance of the change in population since April 2020 with the Census report.

Sanders County

The county has been gradually increasing at 0.87% per year. As the table 4 (Reference to datum point) shows the population is estimated to increase by 4.5% from April 2020 to July 2021 which is a significant amount compared to a single year in the past decade.

Mineral County

During the past decade (2010-2020), Mineral County has had minimal 7.4% population growth when comparing the other two counties.

Age Distribution

The population within the MWCDP-EDD counties is aging and is expected to continue as a trend because of the baby boomer effect as well as outmigration of the 18-24 years old. Sanders County has the highest median age of 54.5 as compared to the states median age of 39.8 years of age. Figure 4 below shows the age distribution in each county. Figure 5 presents the median age for the counties.
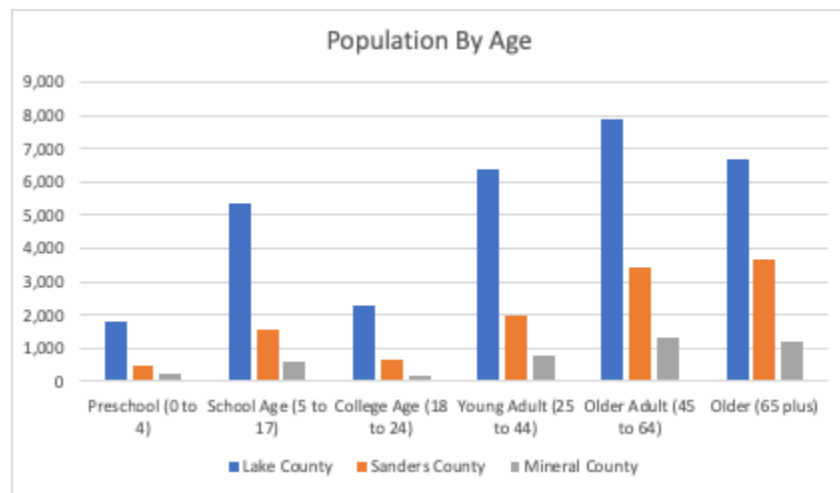
Figure 4: County Population by Age

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/
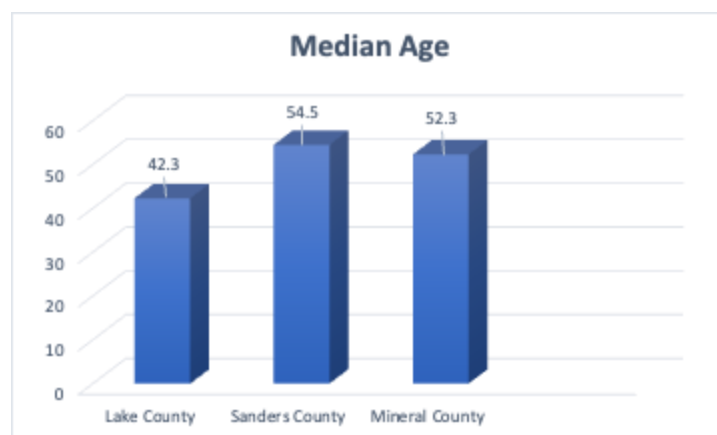
Figure 5: County Median Age

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

Diversity

The MWDCP-EDD has a unique history regarding the people who have lived here since time immemorial, as well as those who currently call the region home. Whether it is CSKT members or the families who moved to the county for other opportunities, its diversity has constantly been expanding, although the MWCDP-EDD race composition is white. With the Flathead Indian Reservation covering the majority of Lake County and a sizable portion of Sanders County, the Native American population represents 16% of the region as noted in Figure 6 below. Figure 7 presents the data for race as Hispanic or Latino Population.
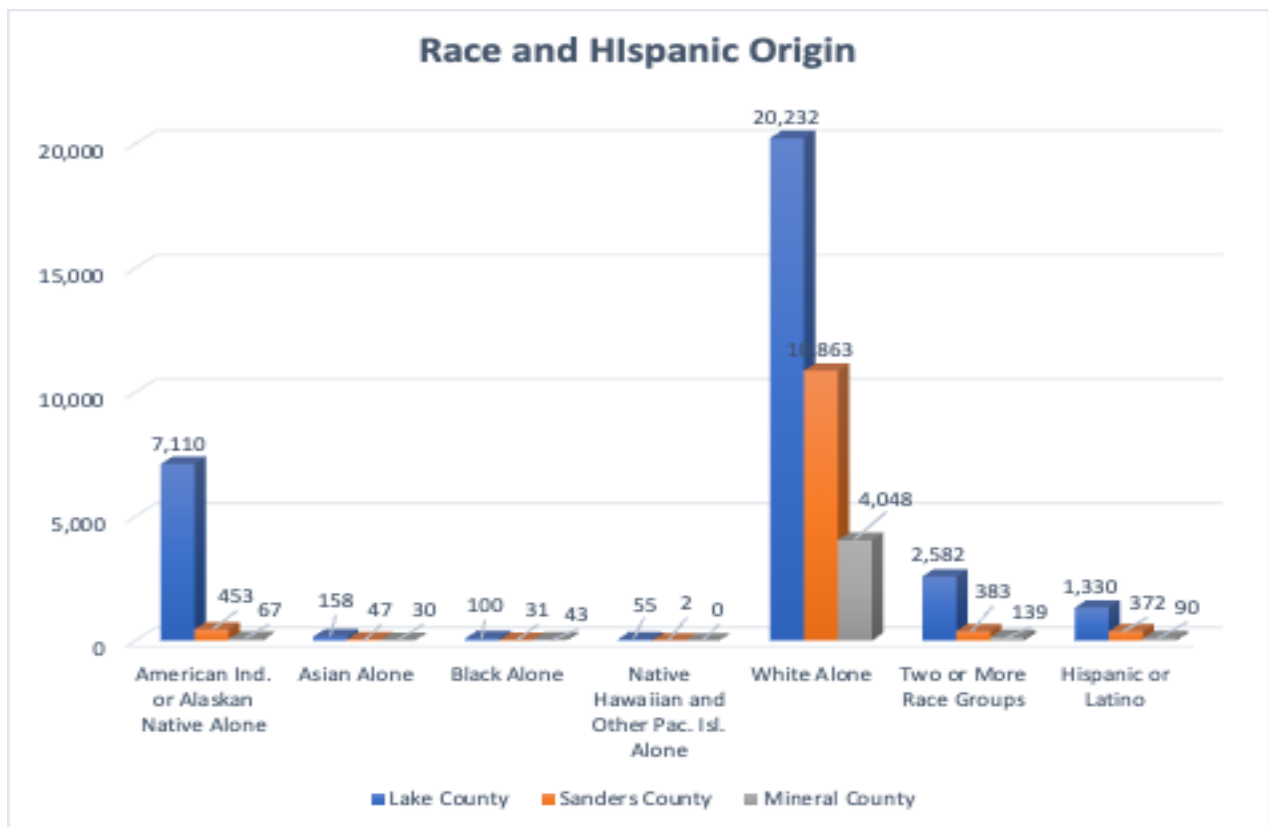
Figure 6: Race and Hispanic Origin of Population

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/
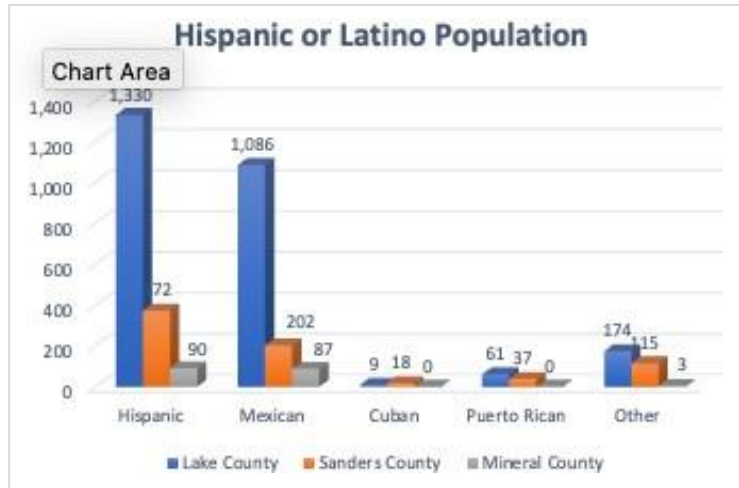
Figure 7: Hispanic or Latino Population

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP

Veterans

Across the MWCDP-EDD region, Sanders County has the highest portion of veteran per capita at 11.4%.

Veterans Population 2016-2020	
Lake County	2,453
Sanders County	1,480
Mineral County	515
Montana	85,401
United States	17,835,456

Table 5: Veteran Population across MWCDP-EDD

Source: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mineralcountymontana,sanderscountymontana,MT,lakecountymontana,US/BZA115220

Education Attainment

Education attainment at the county level shows an interesting mix when compared county by county. For all counties high school graduate and some college experience represents a sizable portion of the population of 25 years and older. Bachelor's degree represents the third highest portion of the population. In Lake County, the population represents a higher portion of education attainment as a graduate, professional or doctorate degree when compared to completing an associate degree.
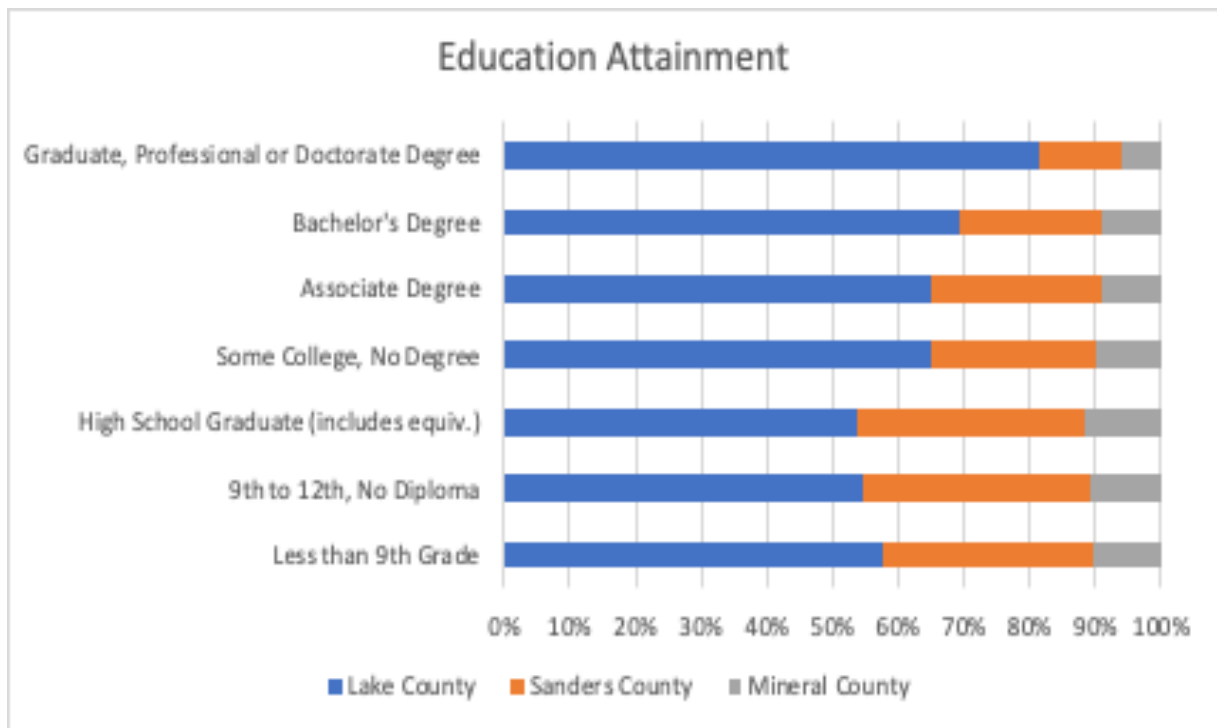
Figure 8: Education Attainment by County

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/
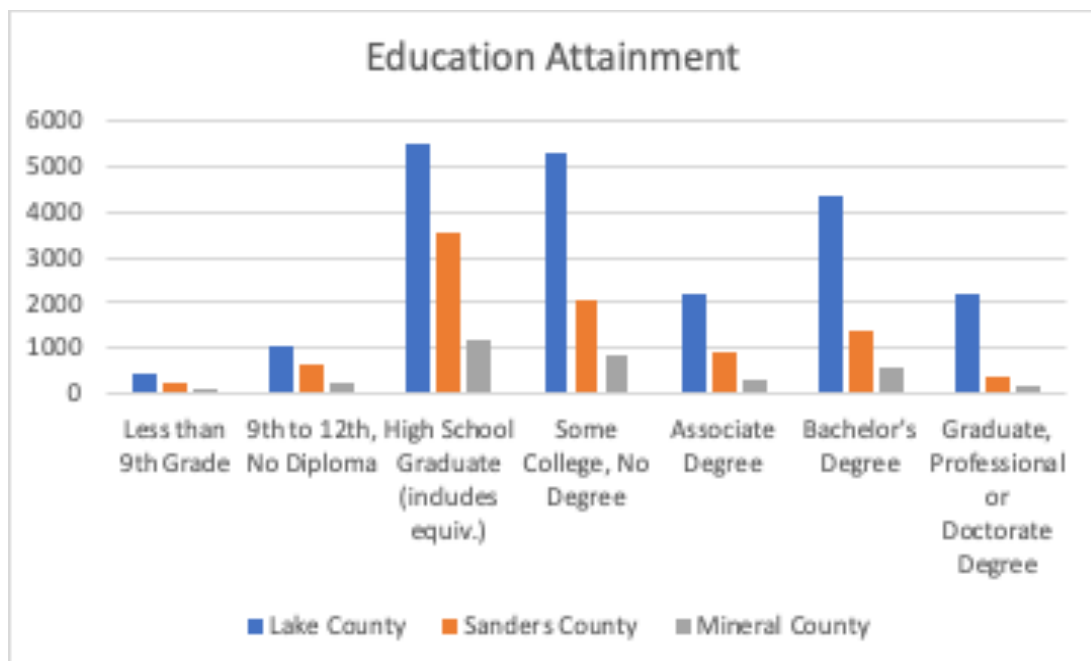
Figure 9: Education Attainment by Qualification

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

Life in this Region

Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE)

For an economy to thrive, employees must be paid enough to not only meet basic expenses but also have the ability to purchase products produced within the region. There is no benefit to the economy if employment does not pay enough to sustain a healthy economy. According to the acronym ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed), individuals that earn just above the Federal Poverty Level but less than what it costs to make ends meet are not able to afford household budget necessities. These struggling households face a cost of living that outpaces what they can earn, requiring many difficult choices each day[7]. [Across the three counties, poverty rates have increased from 2019 to 2020, which has placed more households in the ALICE classification. These households are working vital jobs for the region's economy, such as salespeople, laborers, and unskilled roles.

Figure 10: MWCDP-EDD Poverty Rates

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/
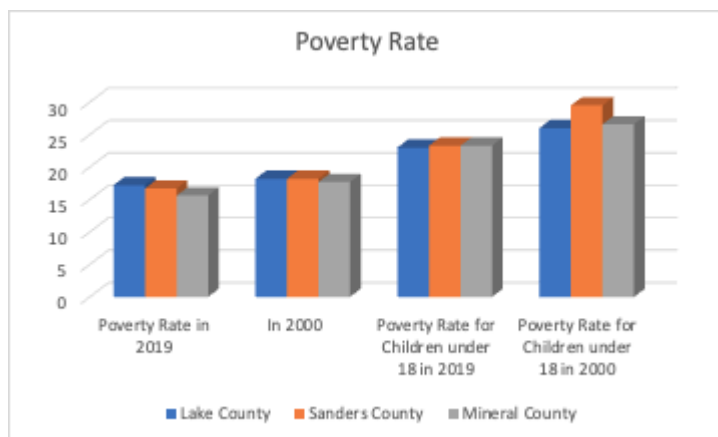
Income and Wages

Over the past two decades each County's median income has increased more than 15 thousand dollars, as shown in Figure 11. Figure 12 presents the per capita personal income levels which have been increasing since 1990. Despite the increase in median income, the poverty rate increased in 2020 from the previous year.
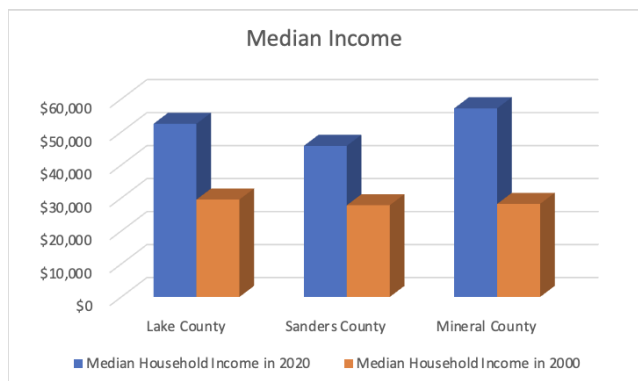
Figure 11: MWCDP-EDD Median Income

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

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[7] United for Alice. Retrieved 6/3/22 from https://www.unitedforalice.org/
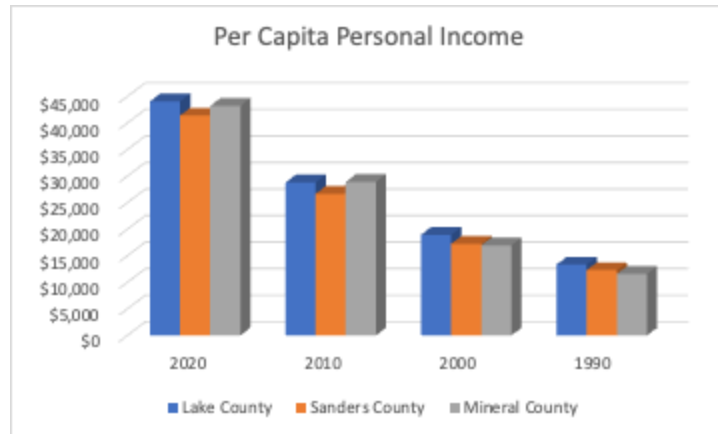
Figure 12: Per Capita Personal Income

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

Cost of Living Index

COST OF LIVING INDEX	
Lake County	98.1
Sanders County	92.4
Mineral County	82.4
Montana	94

Table 6: MWCDP-EDD Cost of Living Index

Source: https://www.bestplaces.net/cost_of_living/county/montana/lake

The 'Cost of Living Index 'in the MWCDP-EDD is lower overall in relation to the state (94) and ranges from a low of 82.4 in Mineral County to a high of 98.1 in Lake County. The lower cost of living has drawn individuals into the area which has resulted in an increase in prices (housing) since 2020. The Composite Index measures the differences in the cost of purchasing a standard "basket of goods" consisting of grocery, housing, utilities, transportation, health care and miscellaneous.

Unemployment

The MWCDP-EDD region is at a critical point in its evolution as youth out-migrate and unemployment is at a historically low level in 2021[8]. Each of the communities are competing against higher earning capacities in locations outside of the region, despite having a low cost of living index. Unemployment is impacted by the available labor force, which is a complex discussion given the median age of each county, combined with being a rural economy and youth leaving to find better paying jobs.
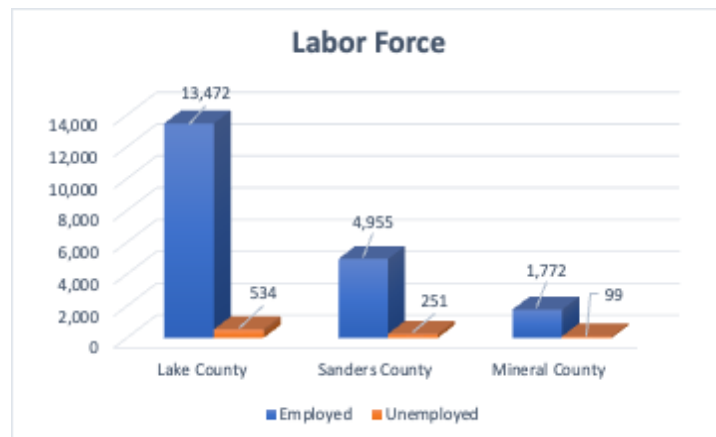
Figure 13: MWCDP-EDD Labor Force

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/
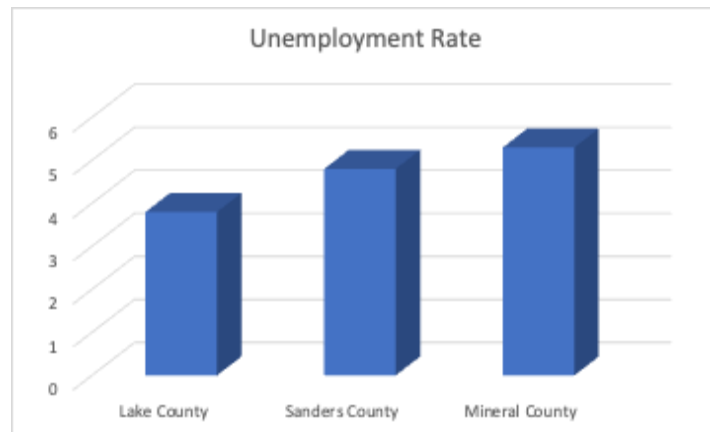
Figure 14: MWCDP-EDD Unemployment Rate

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

8

https://dli.mt.gov/#:~:text=%E2%80%93%20Governor%20Greg%20Gianforte%20today%20announced%20Montana's%20unemployment%20rate%20decreased%200.3,ever%20recorded%20in%20the%20state.

Agriculture

Agriculture has a significant economic impact on the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District, especially in Lake and Sanders County. Lake County is the number one producer of Montana of fruits, tree nuts, and berries ($2,972,000 sales), also fourth in cultivated Christmas trees, short rotation woody crops and vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes in the state. Sanders County is number three in cultivated Christmas trees and short-rotation woody crops. Only a small portion of Mineral Count's land is suitable for agricultural production. Farmland in the region has been steadily increasing since 2012 as seen in Tables 7, 8 and 9 below[9].

Image 10: Cherries - Credit Joel Carlson

CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF FARMS			
AREA	**# FARMS 2012**	**# FARMS 2017**	**% CHANGE**
Lake County	1,158	1,170	1%
Sanders County	491	521	6%
Mineral County	95	93	-2%

Table 7: Change in the Number of Farms

Source: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Montana/cp30047.pdf

According to the U.S Census of Agriculture, the land used in farms in all regions have increased since 2012. Sanders County had experienced a significant increase of 90% in farmland compared to 2012. In addition to the increase in farmlands, the average size of farms within each county

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[9] United States Department of Agriculture. 2017 State and County Profiles - Montana
retrieved: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Montana/

had a similar change as seen in the farmlands. Table 8 below presents the average farm size by acreage increasing over the past decade for Lake and Sanders counties.

LAND USED IN FARMS			
AREA	ACREAGE 2012	ACREAGE 2017	% CHANGE
Lake County	557,801	641,471	15%
Sanders County	338,232	642,640	90%
Mineral County	17,044	18,408	8%

Table 8: Land Used in Farms

Source:
https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Montana/cp30047.pdf

AVERAGE FARM SIZE BY ACREAGE			
AREA	Average size 2012	Average size 2017	% CHANGE
Lake County	481	548	14%
Sanders County	689	1233	79%
Mineral County	180	198	10%

Table 9: Average Farm Size by Acreage

Source:
https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Montana/cp30047.pdf

The tri-county region has a variety of farmlands which contribute to the economic impact. Of the farm's production livestock, poultry and products contribute more than 60%.

FARMS SOURCE OF PRODUCTION		
AREA	Crops	Livestock, poultry, and products
Lake County	34%	66%
Sanders County	31%	69%
Mineral County	38%	62%

Table 10: Farm Source Production

Source:
https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Montana/cp30047.pdf

Natural Resources

Lake County

The bulk of Lake County lies within the exterior boundaries of the Flathead Indian Reservation, and there are limited amounts of natural resources available for development on private, state, and federal lands within that area. Small woodlots, forested ranch lands, and tree farms produce timber and post and pole material for their use or local and regional mills on an opportunity basis. Several local wood product manufacturers sustain themselves primarily on such sources of wood.

Significant areas of Forest and related natural resources are located north and east of the reservation. The largest of these areas is the Swan River Valley which has some of the most productive timberlands in northwestern Montana. These areas are largely part of the Flathead National Forest and include the Swan River State Forest, significant small private holdings, and large tracts of timber industry-owned lands. Timber harvest continues to be the primary extractive use of these lands though at less than historical levels. These lands are also highly valued for water supply, hunting, fishing, and other recreational uses. Other than as a potential source of biomass fuels, there is no obvious potential for energy development on these lands.

Sanders County

Sanders County's natural resources are amongst their major competitive advantages. The abundance of publicly accessible mountain forests and streams is a significant component of the overall economy of the county which can be used locally. Due to the size of Sanders County timber production, if there is any volatility in regional, national or global markets along with changes in industry standards/practices could impact the economic stability at the local level. Sanders County forestry and forest product industries experienced significant downsizing and restructuring over the past two decades, are starting to finally build back up. In addition to the forest industry, there has been a strong mining presence in the county. Hecla, a large mining company has provided steady employment in the county for over a decade as they have done exploratory work, collecting data for mine construction and permitting process of the Rock Creek Mine located in western Sanders County. This potential mining has raised significant concerns regarding the potential impact on environmental resources and local communities.

Sanders County has two large corporate-owned hydropower generating facilities which have stimulated the local economy with jobs, taxes, and other revenues. Thompson Falls is home to a school power plant that is designed to burn biomass fuels. Thompson Falls is also the home of oil storage facilities for the Phillips-Conoco's Yellowstone Pipeline. Sanders County is rich in energy development which will constitute a sizable portion of their economic base in the near term.

Image 11: Thompson River Lumber Co. – Thompson Falls, MT

Mineral County

Forestry, forest products, and mining are important parts of the heritage of Mineral County. Over 84% of the county is in timberland representing a total of 657,725 acres of which 636,073 timbered acres are National Forest, 83,609 timbered acres are in private ownership, while the remaining timbered acres are state and other public owned. In 2014 the county's timber harvest accounted for 4% of the state's harvest at 16 million board feet. In Western Montana, there has been a considerable investment in sustainable timber production since the 1950s but due to changes in industry practices and forest products markets over the past several decades have required a significant downsizing and restructuring in the local forest products industry. Even with these changes in the industry, forestry and forest products remain a major component of the county's economic base.

Image 12: Amador Mine, Cedar Creek, Superior, Mineral Co. Montana

The county has approximately 140 active mining claims, despite the industry having ceased to be an essential part of the economic base in the early 1900s because mines went out of production. There is a high potential that new mining activity could start with the sufficiently high prices of copper, gold, silver, and other precious metals. As economies have become more concerned with the environmental impact it has resulted in new requirements to reclaim mines and other costs

associated with production may impact the likelihood of the mining industry flourishing in the near term.

Housing

Housing inventory availability varies throughout the MWCDP-EDD region. Some of the factors impacting the availability of affordable housing include income levels of the residents, moderate to negative wage growth, changes in a local job market, the age and type of available housing and the availability and affordability of real estate that can be developed for residential and workforce housing. A major concern that has emerged since 2020 is the lack of available affordable workforce housing. Each county identifies their unique factors that influence their housing and development planning and are also impacted by its proximity to other housing markets. The improvement of the MWCDP-EDD regions housing market depends on the availability of new housing, job growth and how wages compare to the median housing price. One key factor in mortgage qualification is a households' monthly take-home pay relative to payments for housing costs. Increasing the number of higher-paying jobs in the region is critical to the future availability and sustainability of the housing market. Accessing an inventory of available and affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges facing the MWCDP-EDD communities. MWCDP-EDD, SCCHO, and the Salish & Kootenai Housing Authority have identified similar challenges and issues. Mission West has worked with the Sanders Community Housing Organization in Sanders County to bring affordable housing to Plains. With funds from the Montana Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds, rehabilitation projects created housing occupancy for families qualifying for media income levels. Figure 15 below presents the range of household types in the tri-county area.
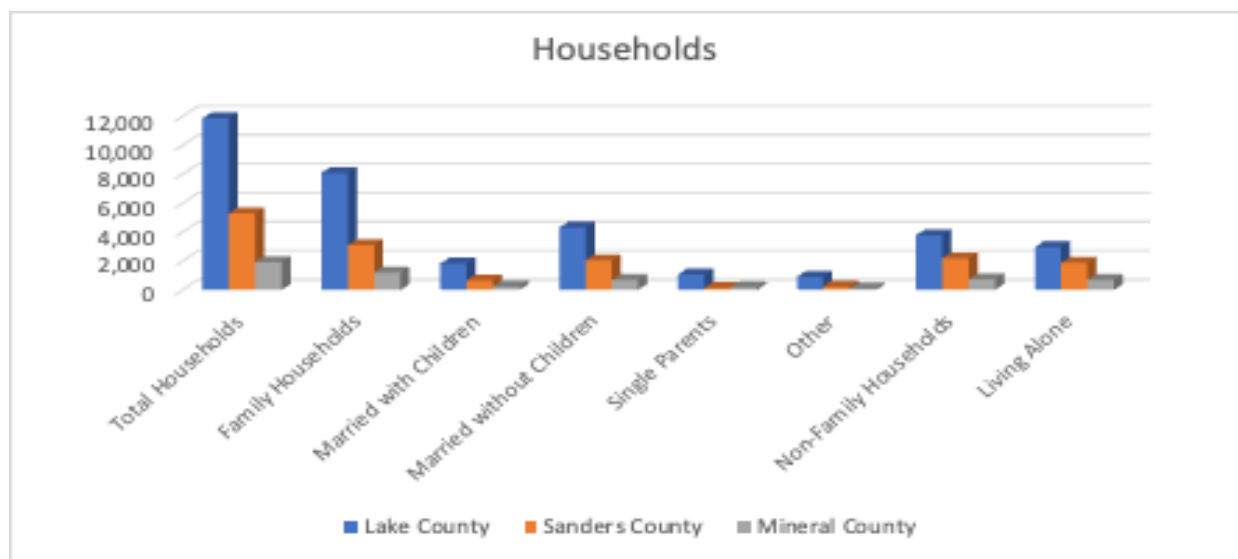
Figure 15: Types of Households

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

Lake County

According to the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District CEDS (2020) Addendum, "more than 75% of all housing units in Lake County [much of which lies within the Reservation] are single-family, detached [homes], and the majority of homes (63.9 percent) have been constructed since 1970. Just over 74% of the housing stock is occupied and of the occupied housing, one-third are renter-occupied, and two-thirds are owner-occupied. However, these numbers do not reflect the occupancy of seasonal homes, the majority of which are located in the Swan Valley [off-Reservation] and Flathead Lake areas (partially on reservation). When the seasonal homes were not counted as vacant, Lake County had a 5.4% vacancy rate in 2010[10]

Image 13: Housing Complex - Polson, MT

Lake County has seen its property values fluctuate over recent decades with 2010-2019 reflecting a levelling of value in home prices. The U.S Census indicated the median value for Lake County being $278,400 from 2016-2020[11]. This census information is an indicator of typical "normal" housing prices but due to the pandemic in 2020 – 2021, Lake County experienced a drastic change upwards in housing prices for buying and renting, leading to current low vacancy rates. According to realtor.com the median price in Lake County had increased from $278,400 to $659,500 in April 2022, reflecting a 237% increase in two years[12]. The availability of rental properties in the area have decreased and also experienced similar increase prices. In 2020 of the 16,917 housing units 22% are seasonal or recreational use. It is important to note there has not been any comprehensive housing data obtained for 2020-2022. The data presented in the section above is based on available research and may not be a correct representation of the county.

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[10] United States Census Bureau. QuickFacts. Retrieved from: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mineralcountymontana,sanderscountymontana,MT,lakecountymontana,US/BZA115220

[11] United States Census Bureau. QuickFacts. Retrieved from: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mineralcountymontana,sanderscountymontana,MT,lakecountymontana,US/BZA115220

[12] Realtor.com. Lake County, MT housing Market. (n.d) Retrieved from: https://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-search/Lake-County_MT/overview

LAKE COUNTY HOUSING PRICE MEDIAN VALLUE		
	Median value of owner-occupied housing units 2016-2020	Median gross rent 2016-2020
Lake County	$278,400	$744
Montana	$244,900	$836

Table 11: Lake County Housing Price Median Value

Source: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mineralcountymontana,sanderscountymontana,MT,lakecountymontana,US/BZA 115220

Figure 16: Types of Households - Lake County

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

Figure 17: Types of Housing Occupancy - Lake County

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

Affordable Housing

A major concern in each of the three counties is the lack of affordable housing for existing and potential residents, that also hinders job creation and business development. Real estate listings noted in 2022 reflecting significant price increases and valuations and anecdotal information point to the assumption that there is extremely limited affordable housing inventory in the region.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Housing

CSKT established the Salish Kootenai Housing Authority in 1963 and manages nearly 700 units which include rental, homeownership, 50 units of Tenant-Based Assistance and an 80-lot trailer park. In response to the homelessness problem on the reservation[13], CSKT created a Homelessness Task Force to develop a long-range Homelessness Response Plan. In addition, the task force has developed 14 permanent, supportive housing units and purchased 7 manufactured homes for this at-risk population.

Lake County

StatsAmerica indicates there are 11,869 housing units in Lake County in 2020 from U.S. Census Bureau data[14]. There are 26 low-income housing apartment communities in Lake County which offer 437 affordable apartments. Of the affordable apartments available, there are 169 income-

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[13] http://www.charkoosta.com/news/tribal-council-task-force-aims-to-eradicate-homelessness/article_e1a5efb8-1649-11ec-b9e4-87be813a698a.html

[14] Affordable Housing online. Affordable Housing in Lake County. retrieved 5/25/22 from https://affordablehousingonline.com/housing-search/Montana/Lake-County

based apartments and 259 rent-subsidized apartments which remain affordable to low-income households. In addition to providing housing there is also rental assistance which is a housing subsidy that pays a portion of a renter's housing cost.

Sanders County

StatsAmerica indicates there are 6,764 housing units in Sanders County in 2020 from U.S. Census Bureau data[15] Figure 18 below shows the county's occupancy profile. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, Sanders County's median home value is more than the state of Montana value, recorded at $251,600. This census information is an indicator of typical "normal" housing prices but due to the pandemic, Sanders County experienced some severe changes in its housing profile and does not have the current vacancy rates. Figure 20 below shows the 2020 household breakdown for the county.

Sanders County Community Housing Organization (SCCHO) was established in 2003 to serve the needs of the county's typically lower-income households StatsAmerica. Living arrangements for Sanders County, MT. Retrieved 5/26/22 from https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/which encompasses a sizable portion of the population.
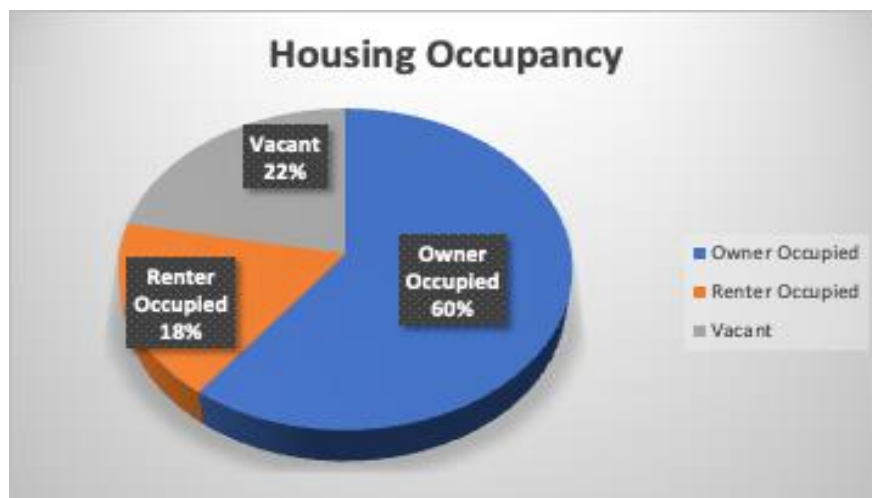
Figure 18: Housing Occupancy - Sanders County

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

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[15]   StatsAmerica. Living arrangements for Sanders County, MT. Retrieved 5/26/22 from https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

SANDERS COUNTY HOUSING PRICE MEDIAN VALUE		
	Median value of owner-occupied housing units 2016-2020	Median gross rent 2016-2020
Sanders County	$251,600.00	$634.00
Montana	$244,900.00	$836.00

Figure 19: Sanders County - Housing Price Median Value

Source: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mineralcountymontana,sanderscountymontana,MT,lakecountymontana,US/BZA 115220
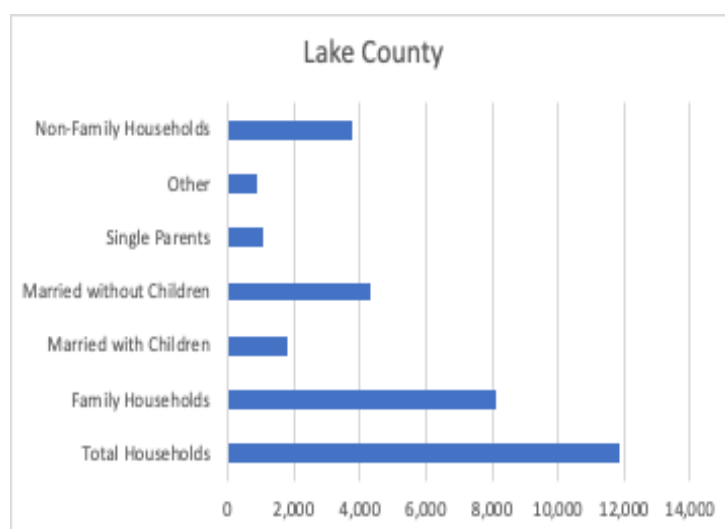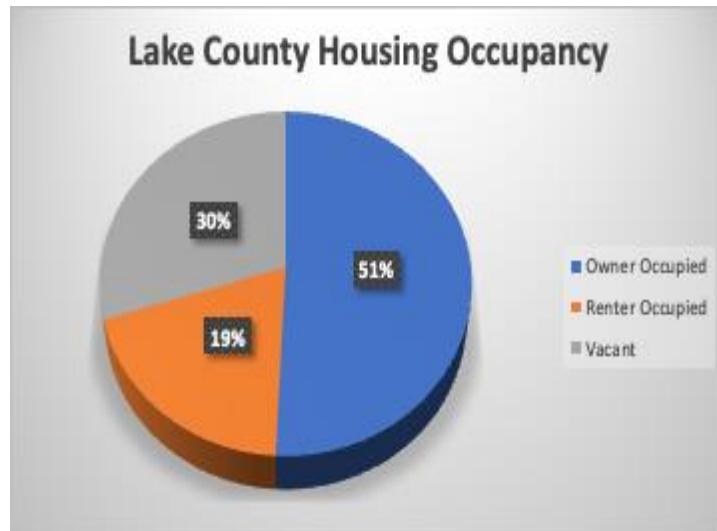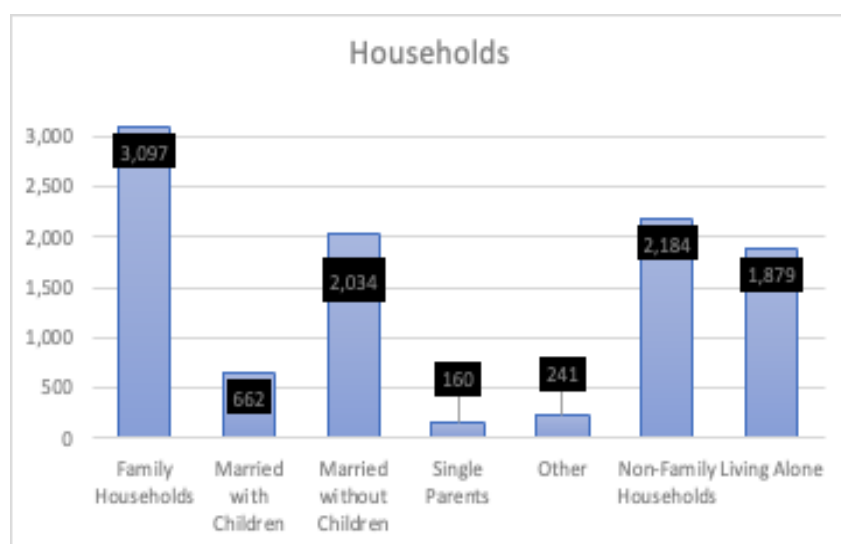

Figure 20: Sanders County Housing Types

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

Sanders County has 6 low-income housing apartment communities which offer 64 apartments. Of the apartments available 48 are income-based and 16 are rent-subsidized apartments. In addition, county residents can apply for section 8 housing choice vouchers which assist with rent in the amount of $600 per month[16].

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[16] Affordable Housing online. Affordable Housing in Sanders County. Retrieved from https://affordablehousingonline.com/housing-search/Montana/Sanders-County

Mineral County

StatsAmerica indicates there are 2,504 housing units in Mineral County in 2020 from U.S. Census Bureau data[17]. Understanding the housing units (occupied and vacant) allows individuals in charge of city planning to estimate rooms available, properties for development, potential demolishment decisions, and housing needs of the community. Figure 21 below shows the occupancy profile of Mineral County. As with the other counties Mineral was impacted by the pandemic which leads to an increase to the county's housing profile. Within Mineral County, Alberton, Superior and St. Regis have the highest concentration of lots that would be considered typical town lots and the highest concentration of development in the county. The urban development is located within one to two miles of the St. Regis River Valley and Clark Fork River Valley. Affordable housing for the county is provided through the Missoula Human Resource Council, District XI. No recent data has been obtained to assess the actual impact on housing in Mineral County over the past two years.
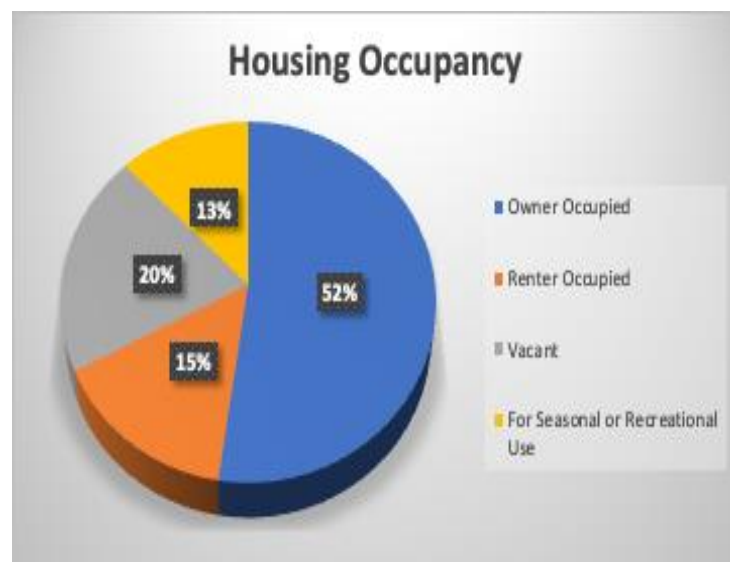
Figure 21: Mineral County Housing Occupancy

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

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[17]   StatsAmerica. Living arrangement for Mineral County, MT. Retrieved from https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

MINERAL COUNTY HOUSING PRICE MEDIAN PRICE		
	Median value of owner-occupied housing units 2016-2020	**Median gross rent 2016-2020**
Mineral County	$194,800	$606
Montana	$244,900	$836

Table 12: Mineral County Housing Price Median Value

Source:
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mineralcountymontana,sanderscountymontana,MT,lakecountymontana,US/BZA115220

In 2020, Mineral County consisted of 1,926 households with 1,208 being family households and an average household size of 2.2[18]. Figure 22 below shows Mineral County's household profile by housing types.
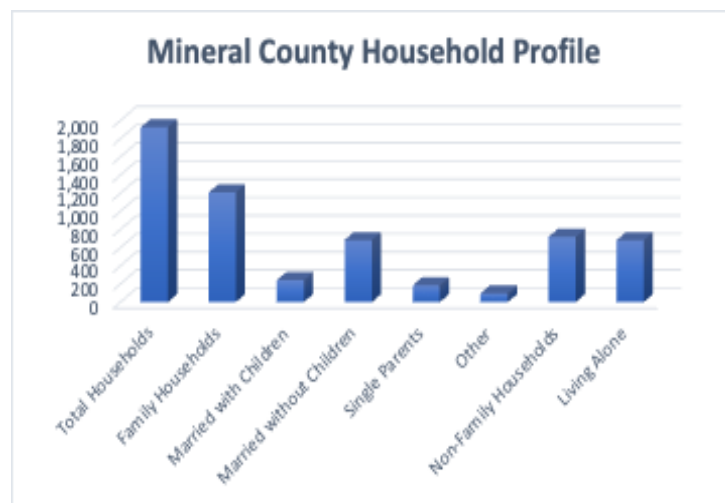
Figure 22: Mineral County Housing Types

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

Schools

Within the MWCDP-EDD region, there are school districts and a range of enrollment levels within the tri-county region that represent elementary, middle, and high school, K-12, private schools, parochial schools, and a college. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) funds the 7-12 grades school

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[18]   StatsAmerica. Living arrangement for Mineral County, MT. Retrieved 5/26/22 from https://www.statsamerica.org/USCP/

of Two Eagle River School in Pablo, Lake County. CSKT operates the Early Childhood Services (Early Head Start and Head Start), the Nkwusm[19] (a Salish language immersion school) and Salish Kootenai College[20].

Lake County
Lake County schools include primary, secondary, and tertiary education institutions.
Elementary Schools (4):
- Pablo
- Swan Lake-Salmon
- Upper West Shore
- Valley View

Schools K-12 (5):
- Arlee
- Charlo
- Polson
- Ronan
- St. Ignatius

Private schools (3):
- Mission Valley Christian Academy
- Mountain Heights Mennonite School in Ronan
- Glacier View School

Colleges (1):
- Salish Kootenai College (Pablo)

Image 14: Salish Kootenai College

Sanders County
Sanders county schools are limited to primary and secondary institutions, with no higher education colleges located in the county.

- Thompson Falls Elementary
- Thompson Falls Junior High
- Thompson Falls High School
- Trout Creek School K-8
- Dixon Public School K-8
- Hot Springs K-12 School
- Noxon Public School
- Plains K-12 School

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[19] https://www.nkwusm.com/
[20] https://www.skc.edu/

Mineral County

Mineral county schools are limited to primary and secondary institutions, with no higher education colleges located in the county.

- Alberton K-12
- St. Regis K-12
- Superior K-12

Image 15: Alberton School - Credit Jeff Crews

Health and Safety, Fire Protection, Transportation and Broadband Access

Health

Lake County

The county's healthcare system comprises the major suppliers: CSKT Tribal Health, Providence St. Joseph Medical Center, Logan Health and St. Luke Community Healthcare. Providence St. Joseph Medical Center and St. Luke Community Healthcare are both critical access hospitals. There are many smaller organizations that help deliver health and human services to the county. As seen in Table 13 below, Lake County has a higher percentage of its population that have disabilities and people without insurance than the State of Montana.

LAKE COUNTY HEALTH OVERVIEW		
	With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2016-2020	Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent
Lake County	10.50%	15.60%
Sanders County	14.10%	16.00%
Mineral County	13.00%	10.40%
Montana	9.30%	10.20%

Table 13: Lake County Health Overview

Source: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mineralcountymontana,sanderscountymontana,MT,lakecountymontana,US/BZA 115220

CSKT Tribal Health: The Tribal Health Department[21] (referred to as Tribal Health) operates medical clinics for Native American patients in St. Ignatius, Ronan, Polson, Elmo, and Pablo. Tribal Health provides dental, optical and pharmacy services in St. Ignatius and Polson clinics and operates fitness centers in Elmo, Ronan, St. Ignatius and Arlee. Tribal Health has created 70 jobs in the last 10 years and expenditure for Indian health care exceeds $10 million per year, which

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[21] http://www.cskthealth.org/

does not include Medicaid or private insurance payments. Tribal Health employs around 250 individuals, of which around 158 are enrolled CSKT members.

Image 16: CSKT Tribal Health, Polson, MT

Providence St. Joseph Medical Center: Providence Health and Services, located in Polson, is a not-for-profit health system continuing the legacy of the Sisters of Providence by committing to providing an array of services to meet the needs of communities across five states including Washington, Montana, Alaska, Oregon, and California. Providence St. Joseph Medical Center offers a wide array of specialties including:

Image 17: St. Joseph Medical Center Polson, MT

- a 24-hour emergency department
- Obstetrics and gynecology, family practice, orthopedics, general surgery, rehabilitation, laboratory services, diagnostic imaging, a full-service pharmacy, nutrition and social services, dermatology, outpatient infusion, behavioral health, and Suboxone Clinic.
- Providence St. Joseph Medical Center has 22 licensed and operational beds and a medical staff of 26 local providers.
- Specialty services offered include cardiologists from the International Heart Institute of Montana, oncologists from Montana Cancer Specialists, audiologists from Missoula Vibrant Hearing, surgeons from Missoula Bone and Joint and Ear, Nose and Throat specialists from Rocky Mountain ENT. Other specialties include urology, neurology, endocrinology, and nephrology.
- Walk-in clinic available seven days a week in Polson.
- Ronan clinic offers OB/GYN and family practice services five days a week.

St. Luke Community Healthcare: St. Luke Community Healthcare, located in Ronan, is a non-profit community-owned network of healthcare providers that delivers complete care for all stages of life from prenatal to extended elderly care. St. Luke Community Healthcare is in the process of implementing an Integrated Behavioral Health Program, which uses an integrated approach in the process of patient care.

St. Luke Community Healthcare offers a wide array of specialties including

- a 24-hour emergency department
- 25 licensed and operational beds
- Walk-in clinic available seven days a week in Ronan
- Providers deliver family practice, pediatric, internal medicine, OB/GYN, general surgery, orthopedics, internal medicine, rehabilitation, Infusion, laboratory, and x-ray services.
- Specialty services offered include cardiologists from the Montana Heart Center, audiology, sleep studies, varicose vein medical care, urology, oncology, nephrology, neurology, and neurosurgery.
- Clinics located in Polson and St. Ignatius
- A 75-bed extended care facility includes a transitional care unit and adult daycare.

Logan Health: Logan Health is a non-profit health system based in Kalispell, Montana and has medical campus in 13 counties across Montana. Logan Health Clinic in Lake County offers a variety of services to support residents with Primary Care with wellness, walk-in care, or specialty care, including:

- Primary care
- Chiropractic care
- Walk-in clinic five days a week
- Rehabilitation services: Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, and inpatient rehabilitation
- Ambulatory surgery center: services in ophthalmology, adult and pediatric gastroenterology, orthopedic surgery, and podiatry.

Ambulance Services: Polson Ambulance Incorporated is a privately owned ambulance service that provides emergency response for Polson and surrounding area. Volunteer ambulance services and first responders cover the remainder of the county. Air ambulances are available from both Kalispell and Missoula. The county 911 center dispatches all ambulances. As the need grows, volunteer services may have to give way to private service with full-time paid staff in order to assure prompt and professional service to a growing population.

Sanders County

Sanders County records 32.4% of its population as being 65 years or older, which is approximately 1.68 times greater than the State of Montana. With a large population being over 65 years of age healthcare is an important service for the county. Table 14 below highlights that Sanders County has a much higher percent of their population that have a disability and people without insurance than the State of Montana.

SANDERS COUNTY HEALTH OVERVIEW		
	With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2016-2020	**Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent**
Sanders County	14.10%	16.00%
Montana	9.30%	10.20%

Table 14: Sanders County Health Overview

Source: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mineralcountymontana,sanderscountymontana,MT,lakecountymontana,US/BZA 115220

Medical Needs: Sanders County medical needs are served by Clark Fork Valley Hospital and Family Medicine Network, a not-for-profit community healthcare organization located in the town of Plains and CSKT Tribal Health, located in the Hot Springs Health Center. Clark Fork Valley Hospital (CFVH) is one of the largest employers for Sanders County. The hospital provides a fully staffed primary care clinic and residential long-term care facility, participates in the rural visiting physicians program and is connected through Vision-net to other hospitals and services throughout the area. Additionally, CFVH has clinics in Thompson Falls and Hot Springs which provide primary care and rehabilitation services. Bonner General Health from Sandpoint, ID opened Bull River Clinic in the small town of Noxon located north of Thompson Falls to provide care to the community members. CFVH is a critical access hospital and treatment for difficult or specialized medical conditions. Through cooperative care agreements, CFVH utilizes ambulance and the A.L.E.R.T helicopter services to transport urgent care patients to Missoula, Kalispell or Spokane, Washington State hospitals. A.L.E.R.T. is an anacronym for Advance Life-support Emergency Rescue Team, synonymous with the 'Life Flight' helicopter model.

Image 18: Clark Fork Valley Hospital - Plains, MT

- Plains Community Ambulance (Plains) ,
- Thompson Falls Ambulance (Thompson Falls), and the
- Ambulance Service (Noxon)

Human Services and Community Services: Local Sanders County agencies providing human and community services include Sanders County Coalition for Families, Montana Western Mental Health Center, Sanders County Council on Aging, Sanders County Public Health/WIC, and CFVH which has two full time mental health professionals. Hot Springs houses the Council on Aging and works in conjunction with the Polson Agency. The Council on Aging for Sanders County is the umbrella for all senior centers and is responsible for meals at the centers, Meals on Wheels, homemaking services, information, and assistance services. Senior citizen centers are in Plains, Thompson Falls, Trout Creek, Noxon, Hot Springs and Dixon which provide regularly scheduled meals, host social activities, senior events, and celebrations.

Mineral County

Mineral County Hospital District is organized under the State of Montana as a nonprofit corporation under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The district appoints five of

the nine voting directors to the Board of Missoula Community Health Services, Inc., doing business as Mineral Community Hospital. The hospital is a component unit of the district. The district provides approximately $498,000 per year for operations and maintenance to the hospital through a hospital district levy.

Image 19: Mineral Community Hospital - Superior, MT

The Mineral County healthcare network comprises of the Mineral Community Hospital, Tamarack Health Clinic, Jack Lincoln Memorial Clinic and Mountain View Village. The hospital is an acute care hospital with 25 beds which offers both acute inpatient care and long-term care. Tamarack Health Clinic which offers primary, preventative healthcare and maintains a mobile clinic to serve St. Regis, De Borgia and other west-end communities. The hospital is largest employer in the county with around 95 employees, gaining this recognition after the closing of Tricon Lumber and Manufacturing during 2021. Hospital medical staff consists of two primary care physicians, five physician assistants and a facility that supports visiting specialists to care for patients.

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With the hospitals' location being on the Interstate 90 corridor with some of the most dangerous driving conditions noted in Montana, including a seasonally affected mountain pass, the hospital regularly receives multiple trauma cases with very limited capacity (3 bed emergency room, 1 operating room). Despite having insufficient capacity, the hospital became the number one trauma-receiving center for critical access hospitals in the state and number four for all hospitals in Montana.

MINERAL COUNTY HEALTH OVERVIEW		
	With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2016-2020	Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent
Mineral County	13.00%	10.40%
Montana	9.30%	10.20%

Table 15: Mineral County Health Overview

Source:
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mineralcountymontana,sanderscountymontana,MT,lakecountymontana,US/BZA 115220

Ambulance Service and Fire District: Within Mineral County, the town of Superior has an Emergency Quick Response Unit (QRU) which is housed in the Fire Hall. The eastern portion of Mineral county is served by the Frenchtown Rural Fire District.

Safety

Police & Law enforcement
The evolution of the Flathead Indian Reservation to present day boundaries of the reservation and county boundaries has created complexities sometimes difficult to understand and navigate. One example of this complexity is understanding the jurisdiction boundaries for law enforcement and over certain geographical bounded areas and demographics in the county (e.g., tribal members have the right to request a Tribal officer during traffic stops). The county or state has jurisdiction in the unincorporated areas within that county for felony crimes and non-tribal misdemeanors.

CSKT Tribal Police
Tribally operated law enforcement agencies provide a broad range of public safety services. Jurisdiction over offenses on the Flathead Indian Reservation may lie with federal, state, or tribal agencies, depending on the offense, offender, victim, and offense location. The inclusion of the state jurisdiction is due to CSKT opting in to Public Law 280. Public Law 280 allows states to

assume criminal jurisdiction over Native American reservations, which is traditionally handled by federal authorities. The CSKT are the only tribe in Montana that has authorized Public Law 280[22].

The CSKT Tribal Police respond to calls for service, investigate crimes, enforce traffic laws, execute arrest warrants, serve process, provide court security, and conduct search and rescue operations[23]. The Tribal Police Department and jail is located in Pablo and maintains misdemeanor, juvenile, and some felony jurisdiction over tribal members. The tribal jail can house 49 inmates. The Tribal Fish and Game Conservation Program enforces fish, wildlife, and recreation regulations on the reservation and administers incidents when regulations are violated.

Lake County

Law enforcement and detention-correctional facilities are the most expensive budget items in Lake County. These are funded out of Lake County's general fund, plus mill levy funds that have increased the budget by 5% and account for approximately 30% of that fund. Lake County jail was erected in 1975 and upgraded in 2000 to accommodate up to 42 adult inmates and two juveniles. The towns of Polson, Ronan, and St. Ignatius contract with Lake County for jail space. Lake County has a unique police and law enforcement group which includes:

- Lake County Sheriff's Department,
- City Police (e.g., Polson, Ronan, St. Ignatius),
- Tribal Police,
- Montana Highway Patrol,
- Tribal Fish and Game,
- Montana Fish, Wildlife and Park Game Warden, and
- U.S. Forest Service Forest Ranger.

Sanders County

County law enforcement is made up of the County Sheriff's Department, Tribal Police, Hot Springs Police Department, Plains Police Department and Thompson Fall Police Department. Sanders County Sheriff's Department consists of a sheriff, undersheriff and department staff.

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[22] https://montanabudget.org/report/jurisdiction-justice-systems-and-american-indians-in-montana#:~:text=Public%20Law%20280%20in%20Montana&text=In%201993%2C%20the%20CSKT%20secured,felony%20crimes%20committed%20by%20Indians.%E2%80%9D

[23] https://bjs.ojp.gov/topics/tribal-crime-and-justice/tribal-law-enforcement

SANDERS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT		
	Full-time Officers	Part-time Officers
Plains Police Department	3	
Hot Springs Police Department	3	
Thompson Falls Police Department	3	1

Table 16: Sanders County Law Enforcement

Mineral County

Mineral county is administered by the Sheriff's Department while the Montana Highway Patrol provides traffic enforcement and accident investigation on state highways. There are no municipal police departments in Mineral County. The Sheriff department consists of one under-sheriff, eight deputies, five jailers, and six 911 dispatchers. The Mineral County Sheriff serves as Coroner, facilitates the registry of sex offenders, manages, and administer the county jail, and facilitates Search and Rescue responses and operation of the Emergency Service Center. The Mineral County detention facility has a capacity of 27 adult inmates with no capacity for juvenile detention, with offenders transported to other facilities in other counties. The Search and Rescue organization consist of about 25 volunteer members. The Justice of the Peace Department has a full-time judge and 2.5 full time equivalent clerks. Due to the case load, the Mineral County Justice of the Peace Department is one of the busiest courts in western Montana.

Fire Protection

Within the tri-county region, fire departments respond to calls for fire suppression, medical emergencies, incidents involving hazardous materials, rescue calls, and motor vehicle or other accidents.

Lake County

Lake county supports 1 Fire Department per 1,844 people, with 1 Fire Department per 93 square miles. Within Montana, Lake County is ranked 47th of 56 counties in Fire Departments per capita, and 6th of 56 counties in Fire Departments per square mile[24]. Within Lake County, there are volunteer fire protection districts (VFDs), supported primarily through taxes to provide fire protection throughout the county. The CSKT Division of Fire also provides protection in wildland areas. These districts are:

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[24] https://www.countyoffice.org/mt-lake-county-fire-departments/

- Arlee Fire Department
- Arlee Volunteer Fire Department
- Big Arm Fire Department
- Bigfork Fire Department Station 2
- Charlo-Moise Rural Fire District
- Chief Cliff Volunteer Fire Department (Elmo)
- Chief Cliff Volunteer Fire Department (Proctor)
- Finley Point Fire Department
- Finley Point – Yellow Bay Volunteer Fire Department
- Polson Fire Department
- Polson Rural Fire District

- Ronan Volunteer Fire Department – Rural
- Ronan Volunteer Fire Department – City
- Ronan Volunteer Fire Department – Satellite Station (Pablo) – Rural
- Rollins Volunteer Fire Department
- Saint Ignatius Fire Department
- Swan Lake Volunteer Fire Department
- Swan Valley Emergency Services Station 2
- CSKT Division of Fire

Most of the designated fire districts have 12 to 15 volunteers, although the districts located in Polson and Ronan have closer to 30 to 40 volunteers. Additional support for volunteer fire organizations comes through grants administered by the State Forester, Mill levies, loans administered by USDA Rural Development, and local fund-raising efforts, including donations from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. All fire districts and the wildland fire protection agencies are members of the Lake County Rural Fire Association, which purchases joint insurance for the VFDs and reinvests the savings into the local departments. The county also has a Fire Action Plan that identifies fire-fighting resources and lists contacts in the case of fire. Most units are dispatched through the Lake County 911 office, although Arlee does receive some calls dispatched through Missoula, and Hot Springs is dispatched through Lake and Sanders Counties. Ferndale is dispatched through both Flathead and Lake County. Lake County, in coordination with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, has been very proactive in assisting landowners in developing fire protection, such as a defensible space around homes, on vulnerable sites over the past several years.

Image 20: Polson Fire Department – Polson, MT

Sanders County

There are 16 Fire Departments in Sanders County, Montana, serving a population of 11,414 people in an area of 2,760 square miles. There is 1 Fire Department per 713 people, and 1 Fire Department per 172 square miles. In Montana, Sanders County is ranked 19th of 56 counties in Fire Departments per capita, and 14th of 56 counties in Fire Departments per square mile[25]. Sanders County fire department locations:

- Dixon Rural Fire Department
- Heron Rural Fire Department
- Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department
- Noxon Rural Fire Department
- Noxon Rural Fire District
- Noxon Satellite Fire Department
- Plains Volunteer Fire Department
- Plains – Paradise Volunteer Fire Department
- Plains – Paradise Rural Fire
- Plains – Paradise Rural Fire District
- Thompson Falls Rural Fire Department Station (2 locations)
- Thompson Falls Volunteer Fire Department
- Thompson Falls Volunteer Fire Department Station 2
- Town of Plains Volunteer Fire Department
- Trout Creek Rural Fire Department
- Trout Creek Rural Fire District

Image 21: Plains – Paradise Rural Fire Department

Mineral County

There are six Fire Departments in various locations in Mineral County, Montana, serving a population of 4,194 people in an area of 1,220 square miles. There is 1 Fire Department per 599 people, and 1 Fire Department per 174 square miles. In Montana, Mineral County is ranked 14th of 56 counties in Fire Departments per capita, and 15th of 56 counties in Fire Departments per square mile[26]. The county has mutual aid agreements between the U.S. Forest Service and state agencies to provide coordinated fire suppression responses in urban interface areas.

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[25] https://www.countyoffice.org/mt-sanders-county-fire-departments/
[26] https://www.countyoffice.org/mt-mineral-county-fire-departments/

Additionally, the Lolo National Forest service is responsible for fire protection of national forest lands with the county. Mineral county's fire protection consists of seven department locations:

- Frenchtown Rural Fire District Stations and Station 8 (2 locations in Alberton)
- Saint Regis Rural Fire Department
- St. Regis Volunteer Fire Department
- Superior Volunteer Fire Department (2 locations: Town of Superior and the Superior Rural Fire District)
- West End Volunteer Fire Department
- Approved in 2022 – a plan to build a small fire department in the Tarkio area.

Image 22: Superior Volunteer Fire Department - Superior, MT

Transportation

Lake County

Across Lake County there are a number of state-maintained highways that intersect the region. Lake County is responsible for approximately 1,150 miles of rural roads of which 80% are gravel surfaced. These locally maintained roads pose an economic and safety challenge in that they are expensive to maintain with little to no revenue resources. Most of the roads were built on soft glacial soil that breaks up easily, with no drainage ditches, very little or no base materials and severe weather conditions consisting of freeze/thaw cycles that destroy roads. To correctly repair these roads, they need to be completely reconstructed. It is important to note that many paved rural roads are being reverted to gravel to save on maintenance dollars in the county budget.

Roads and Bridges: Currently Lake County receives a total of $1.8 million in tax revenue for all direct and indirect costs for the road department. Being a rural county, with vast miles of roads spread across the county makes it difficult if not impossible to maintain good roads due to limited available resources. Lake County is responsible for maintaining 92 bridges on a budget of $293,000. This budget is regarded as inadequate because most of the bridges need major infrastructure repairs or replacement. A hidden impact on roads and bridges is tourism, which is a vital part of the county economy but also adds a negative impact on local roads due to the increase in traffic and limited resources to keep up with adequate maintenance. The CSKT are

responsible for 406 miles of BIA roads and another 2580 miles of Tribal Forest roads. Refer to the footnote to access the CSKT CEDS document[27] with detailed information.

Airports: Lake County has non-commercial airports in Polson, Ronan and St. Ignatius. Polson and Roan support 24-hour all-weather service which have a beacon and windsock. These two airports have seen increased use by large privately owned aircraft and are projected to have usage growth in the coming years. Some of the usage can be attributed to landowners living out of the area. There are also private airfields in the Jocko, Mission, and Little Bitterroot Valleys. There are no commercial or freight services to any of these airports.

CSKT Transportation Plan: CSKT passed their first Flathead Reservation Transportation Plan in 1996. This plan has since been updated and includes information about the entire Reservation Road and transportation system. CSKT works diligently with Lake County, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and the Federal Highway Administration to improve multiple transportation projects on the reservation. CSKT also has a five-year Transportation Improvement Program (a list of construction and maintenance projects) that is updated annually.

Lake County Road Department and Tribal Roads Program: Lake County has developed a road plan that maintains an inventory of roads with respect to their use, condition, and needed improvements. From this plan, the county annually prepares a priority list. Equipment needs are in excess of the current budget due to maintenance costs. Lake County will soon be in the position of needing to purchase newer equipment to maintain the roads. The County Road Department and Tribal Roads Program work closely to make the most efficient use of the limited funds available to both governments for road work and improvements.

An example of this collaboration between organizations can be found in the South Valley Creek Bridge. Government representatives from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and Lake County joined forces to finalize the six-month project. The new two-lane bridge replaced a dangerously deteriorating metal truss wooden deck bridge built in 1910 by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). With an 8-ton weight limit, the previous bridge restricted residents' safe access to services provided by large vehicles such as fire engines, ambulances, and school buses. Funding for the project was an issue, as construction costs exceeded Lake County's budget of $223,000 in stimulus funds. To aid the project, the tribes applied for a grant with the Indian Reservation Road's High Priority Project Program. The grant was issued through the BIA and the Federal Highway Administration to assist tribes in completing underfunded high priority projects. It is also available for tribes who have had an emergency or disaster occur on a tribal transportation facility. The CSKT was granted $1 million to reconstruct the bridge, which is the maximum

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[27] http://cskteconomics.org/

awarded by the program. State roads through Lake County are either maintained by the state or through contractual maintenance agreements with the county. Lake County is currently investigating the assessment of a 2-cent per gallon gas tax with revenue being divided by cities and counties. Unincorporated towns rely on the county for assistance with their interior streets and roads.

Public Transit/Bus Service: There is limited availability of public transit in Lake County. Some services are provided by CSKT and other social service organizations such as Flathead Transit and the Lake County Council on Aging. North and south bus service connects Missoula and Kalispell which is underutilized by the residents of Lake County. The CSKT Transit Program provides low-cost bus transportation for Reservation residents and employees throughout the Reservation, and from Missoula to Whitefish, Montana. CSKT Transit has several regularly scheduled routes and drop-off/pick-up points. The Transit Program also provides individualized transportation if requested at least 24 hours in advance for on- Reservation transport, and 48 hours (about 2 days) in advance for off-Reservation transportation.

Flathead Tribal Transit: CSKT has created the Flathead Tribal Transit system on the Flathead Indian Reservation which has continued to expand, developing options to meet the ever-changing needs of the residence since its creation over five years ago[28]. Flathead Tribal Transit has been able to successfully scale in the region while providing more than 30,000 rides annually. Flathead Tribal Transit has received support from multiple organization which include federal Tribal Transit Program, a Congressional earmark, the State of Montana, The Indian Reservation Roads Program, the Community Transportation Association of America Vocational Rehabilitation, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF), the Older Americans Act, the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program, the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act and local partners.

Image 23: CSKT Transit System

Special Interest Agencies: There are other special interest agencies which provide services to other demographic niches dealing with underserved populations. These agencies consist of Mission Mountain Enterprises, Lake County Council on Aging, Salish Kootenai College and Tribal Health. Across Lake County some communities have access to more transit operations when

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[28] https://www.csktdhrd.org/transportation/flathead-transit

compared to outlying parts of the county. Public transit is an opportunity for growth in the county especially (poverty).

Western Montana Services: Missoula Ravalli Transportation Management Association (MRTMA) supports western Montana residents with a range of transportation choices today[29]. MRTMA is also developing comprehensive transportation alternatives designed to minimize traffic, reduce parking congestion, protect the environment and improve residents' quality of life. Working with the Montana Department of Transportation, MRTMA provides transportation choices for citizens of Missoula, Ravalli and Lake Counties. MRTMA staff brings a diverse range of experience in transportation coordination, community project development, as well as public and human relations. MRTMA is funded through a grant from the Montana Department of Transportation with matching funds from a consortium of Ravalli, Missoula and Lake County organizations.

Bike and Pedestrian Pathways

Throughout the Mission Valley there are several bike trails and pedestrian pathways which are in various project stages[30]. A bicycle/pedestrian pathway was included in the more recent construction of Highway 93 Ronan to Polson corridor and north and south of Arlee. Future highway designs through the county are expected to continue the trend of including a bicycle/pedestrian pathway. The recently constructed pathways are separated from the road surfaces and typically have higher rates of use because of perceived safety benefits, even though maintenance can be more difficult. The Lake County Commissioners and CSKT are dedicated to expanding these trails as much as possible due to the increase in use, including new forms of tourism reliant on bike travel, and the awareness of health benefits from recreational biking.

Rail Service: In 1883 the Northern Pacific Company built a railroad across the south end of the Flathead Reservation, completing a spur line from Dixon to Polson in the early 1900s. Today, Burlington Northern, who bought Montana Rail Link in January 2022, owns both lines, using the main line approximately three days a week for hauling inter- and intrastate freight. The spur line to Polson since 2012, but negotiations may be possible for reopening the line in the future if shipping volumes increase to the level needed to make it profitable for Montana Rail Link[31]. See Figure 23 below for a map of Montana Rail System.

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[29] http://www.mrtma.org/
[30] https://www.trailforks.com/region/north-mission-valley-40562/
[31] www.mdt.mt.gov/travelinfo/docs/railmap.pdf
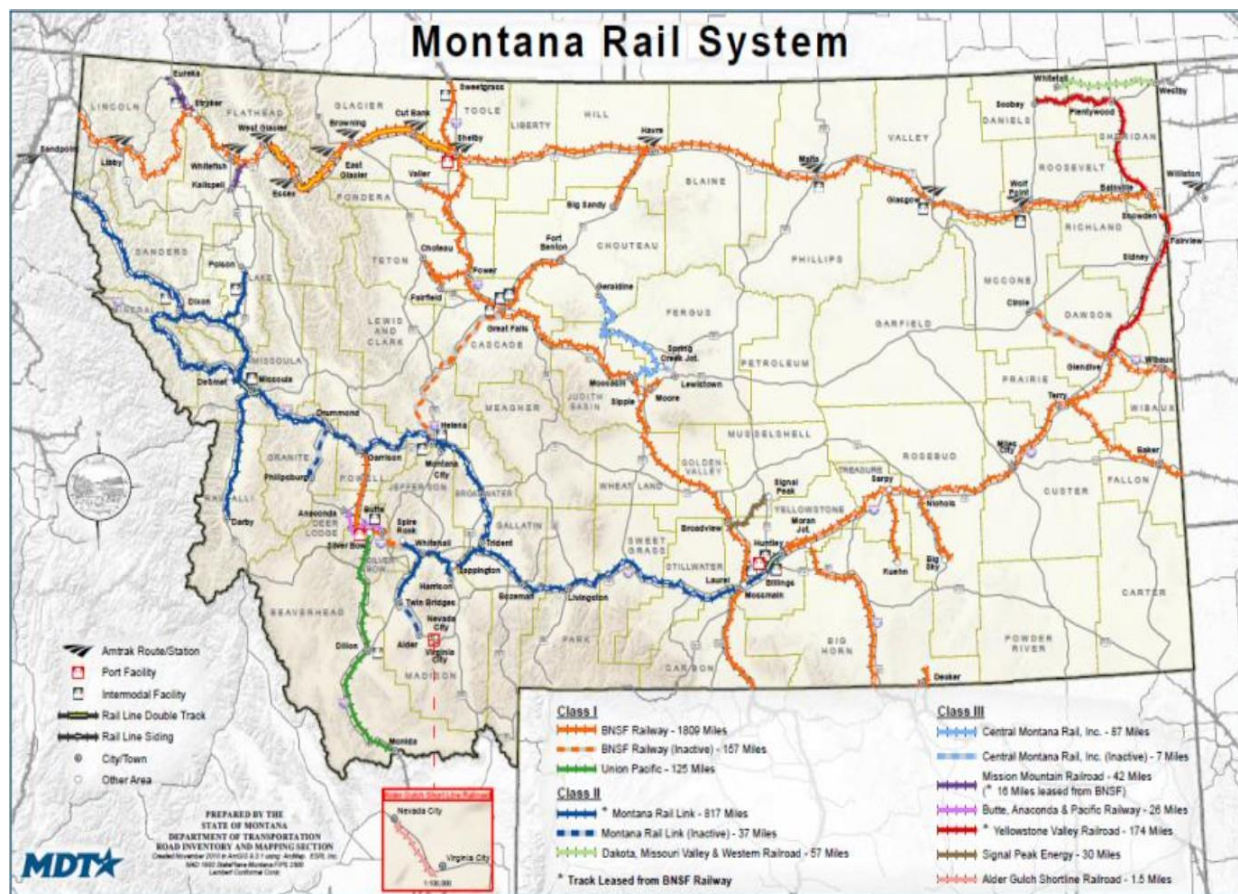
Figure 23: Montana Rail System

Sanders County

The primary transportation characteristic of Sanders County is Highway 200 which runs east and west, bisecting Sanders County from east of Dixon to the Idaho border. This highway passes through most of the major communities in Sanders County and carries a mix of traffic from normal passenger vehicular traffic to heavy commercial traffic. Tribal and non-tribal interests control the land along the highway. Understanding how this corridor is maintained and developed is significant in maintaining a strategic advantage in the region. Highway 28 plays another significant role in the county connecting Plains to northeastern Sanders County and beyond to Lake County.

These two highways are the two major corridors for Sanders County and along with state routes 56, 471, 556, 382 and 135, and requires an understanding of how these transport corridors are a large factor in land development, land use patterns and business development. Transportation routes are extremely important in rural areas because some residents might have to travel 50 - 100 miles to obtain services and some specialized services (e.g., specialized medical services or access to a doctor). Transportation is critical in fostering healthy, safe, attractive and

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economically viable access to the rural communities of Sanders County. Similar to comments about the impact on roads from tourism in Lake County, Sanders County experiences similar issues through increased traffic on the roads and bridges in addition to seasonal weather issues affecting roads and some bridges needing major repairs or rebuilding.

Image 24: Sanders County Transportation

Sanders County Transit (SCT): A major concern in rural communities is the need for affordable, relevant transportation options, especially for disadvantaged and underserved populations in the county. In 2015 Sanders County Council on Aging implemented a county-wide public transportation program (Sanders County Transit). This transit program coordinates trips within the county to grocery stores, shopping centers and medical appointments and to regional city-centers including Missoula, Kalispell and Sandpoint in Idaho. SCT fares are minimal and for qualifying clients, the fare cost for the service can be billed to Medicaid.

SANDERS COUNTY MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK	
	Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2016-2020
Sanders County	21.1
Montana	18.4

Table 17: Sanders County Mean Travel Time to Work

Source:
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mineralcountymontana,sanderscountymontana,MT,lakecountymontana,US/BZA 115220

Airports: Within Sanders County, public airports are in Hot Springs, Plains and Thompson Falls with several private airports located throughout the county. Thompson Falls airport had their fuel system upgraded in 2016 which is open to the flying public 24/7/365 via a self-serve terminal.

Community Trails: Thompson Falls expanded their trail system in 2017 and the state Park officials stated there are record numbers of visitations to the community trail system. The new trails connect Thompson Falls State Park to the Powerhouse Loop trail system that connects to the Thompson Falls downtown and residential area. The expansion of the trail system has led to indications of increased positive community health and social welfare.

Mineral County

Mineral County contains vast miles of roads for a county with such a small population. Among these roads Interstate 90 and Highway 135 are the major connecting transportation arteries to other counties in the region. Interstate 90 connects the county to the Idaho border and to Missoula County. This stretch of road produces high value to traffic from personal passenger vehicular traffic to commercial traffic. St. Regis provides a competitive advantage for Mineral County with an interstate exit that contains one of the major gas station/trucks stops before or after the Idaho border. Also, St. Regis is the access point for traffic wanting to travel north on Highway 135 to Sanders County or Lake County. With the vast miles of roads in Mineral County the maintenance of them is a team effort of the County, towns of Alberton and Superior, Department of Transportation and the U.S. Forest Service. The Department of Transportation maintains parts of old Highway 10 (interstate 90) while the County provides limited maintenance for remaining sections. Mineral County, the Lolo and Ninemile Districts have a cooperative schedule A maintenance agreement for interspersed road segments that results in road maintenance exchange. Additionally, all roads within an unincorporated community are maintained by the County. Maintaining or improving the roads to desirable standards is very difficult given the budget constraints.

Image 25: I-90, Mineral County, MT

MINERAL COUNTY MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK	
	Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2016-2020
Mineral County	27.4
Montana	18.4

Table 18: Mineral County Mean Travel Time to Work

Source: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mineralcountymontana,sanderscountymontana,MT,lakecountymontana,US/BZA 115220

Bridges: Throughout the county there are a large number of bridges which consist of major structures (greater than 20 feet) and minor structures (less than 20 feet). Major structures are inspected biennially by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) but the minor structures are not inspected on a regular basis by MDT or county crews. The lack of current information on the status of minor bridge structures poses a major concern on Mineral County community members. An inventory of minor structures needs to be conducted to identify critical problem areas so the county can effectively prioritize and source funding for improvements. The Mineral County maintenance garage is in Superior and state highway district garages are in Alberton, Superior, St. Regis and Saltese.

Rail Service

Montana Rail Link: The Montana Rail Link railroad enters at Alberton and travels along the Clark Fork River to Sanders County. There are frequently 20-25 trains per day on the 60-mile stretch of railroad. Montana Rail Link provided service to the former Tricon Timber Mill and the former Diamond Match Mill site.

Airports: Mineral County has one airport located outside of Superior. The airport is only accessible during the day because there is no nighttime lighting. The airport is also used by Air ambulance services as an on-call emergency basis from Missoula and the Lolo National Forest during the active fire season when firefighting is occurring. See the attachment section for detailed information. Eastern Mineral County is approximately 20 miles from the Missoula Montana Airport, which as daily commercial and passenger air service.

Commuting: Living in a rural area, commuting is a part of everyday life for work, healthcare, groceries, school activities and recreational interests. Tables 19 and 20 show the level of commuting in regard to living and working in the area, living and working outside the area, and living outside and working in the region.

2015 Commuting Tallies Based on People Living in this Region			
	Lake County	Sanders County	Mineral County
Number of residents with jobs (in or outside this region)	11546	3907	1507
Live and work in this region	9,554	3,410	1,093
Live here but work outside this region	1,992	497	414

Table 19: MWCDP-EDD Commuting - People Living in Region

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/regions/

2015 Commuting Tallies Based on People Working in the Region			
	Lake County	Sanders County	Mineral County
Number of people who work in this region (living in or outside this region)	10,420	3,779	1,291
Live and work in this region	9,554	3,410	1,093
Work here but live outside this region	866	369	198

Table 20: MWCDP-EDD Community - People Working in Region

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/regions/

Broadband Access

In 2021, the media reported that Montana has the worst internet service in the nation, with data transmission speeds only slightly better than half the national average[32]. Each of Lake, Sanders and Mineral counties has access to broadband services, with providers including nationally recognized names.

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[32] https://www.greatfallstribune.com/story/news/2021/04/23/montana-ranked-worst-nation-internet-data-transmission-speeds/7320220002/

ACCESS TO BROADBAND		
	Households with a computer 2016-2020	Households with a broadband Internet subscription 2016-2020
Sanders County	85.90%	75.90%
Lake County	89.30%	78.50%
Mineral County	88.40%	69.30%
Montana	90.50%	83.30%
United States	91.90%	85.20%

Table 21: MWCDP-EDD Access to Broadband

Source:
*https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mineralcountymontana,sanderscountymontana,MT,lakecountymontana,US/BZA
115220*

Lake County

There are seven internet service providers for Lake County. Providers include Spectrum (cable), Centurylink (DSL), Access Montana (Cable, fixed wireless, Fiber & DSL), Blackfoot (Fiber & DSL), Ultra Home Internet (4G & 5G), Montana Sky Networks (fixed Wireless), Starlink and HughesNet Satellite Internet.

Sanders County

There are ten internet providers for the county which include: CenturyLink (DSL), HughesNet (satellite internet), AT&T Mobility (4G wireless), Access Montana (Cable, DSL, Fixed wireless), Blackfoot (DSL, Fiber), Choice Wireless (3G wireless), Hot Springs Telephone Co (DSL, Fiber), T-Mobile (4G wireless), Verizon Wireless (4G wireless), Starlink and ViaSat (Satellite internet).

Mineral County

There are seven internet providers for Mineral County which include: HughesNet (Satellite), AT&T Mobility (4G wireless), Blackfoot Telephone (DSL, Fiber), Inland Cellular LLC (3G wireless), T-Mobile (4G wireless), Verizon Wireless (4G wireless), Starlink and ViaSat (Satellite).

Summary of Regional Economic Conditions

Industry Overview

Each of the three counties in the MWCDP-EDD region represents different combinations of industries that are highly typical and can create advantages through their relationships. Following national trends and noting the population ages, a reasonable industry overview would identify

healthcare industries are likely to experience growth over the next five years. This industry has average earnings per worker in relation to other industries in each county, when compared to higher earning jobs with government. Growth in management jobs can indicate the emergence of new businesses and support greater commitment to the region by existing employers with significant numbers of employees. With Sanders and Mineral counties, the closing of a significant industry employer, such as a lumber company, has a direct impact on the local communities.

Industry Clusters are local and regional concentrations of competitive businesses and industries that drive wealth creation in a region, primarily through export of goods and services. An industry cluster is a network of businesses and firms connected through supply and value chain linkages, labor markets, technology and skills transfer, institutional support, etc. The following industry clusters represent Traded and Local private, non-agricultural employment of 2016 for the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District. In the Figure 24 and

25 below, note the headings stating Western Development Region. The same region is now called Mission West Community Partners Economic Development District (MWCDP-EDD).

Figure 24: MWCDP-EDD Traded Economic Clusters

Source: https://clustermapping.us/region/county/lake_county_mt/cluster-portfolio

As observed in Figure 24 above, the top five Traded industry clusters provide 68% of employment listed as:
- Hospitality and Tourism,
- Business Services,
- Education and Knowledge Creation,
- Wood Products and Distribution, and
- Electronic Commerce.

Local industry clusters contribute the majority of the employment in the region with the top areas being health services, hospitality establishments, real estate, construction, and development. Figure 25 shows the local industry clusters.
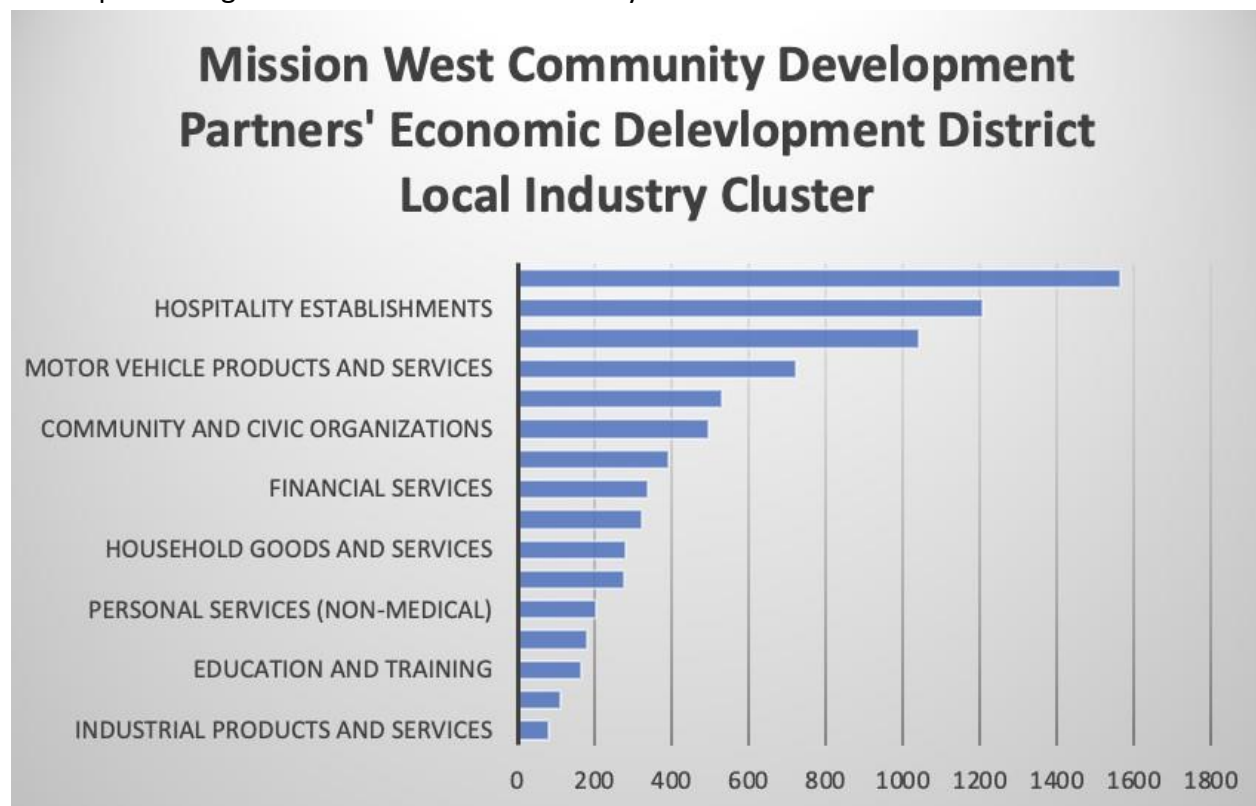
Figure 25: MWCDP-EDD Local Industry Clusters

Source: https://clustermapping.us/region/county/lake_county_mt/cluster-portfolio

Employment trends

Employment trends across the region have varied quite frequently across industry clusters both local and traded. Household goods and services represent the largest new job while education and training are losing jobs for the local industry cluster. The traded clusters business services provide the most potential new jobs and downstream metal products are losing jobs in that cluster.
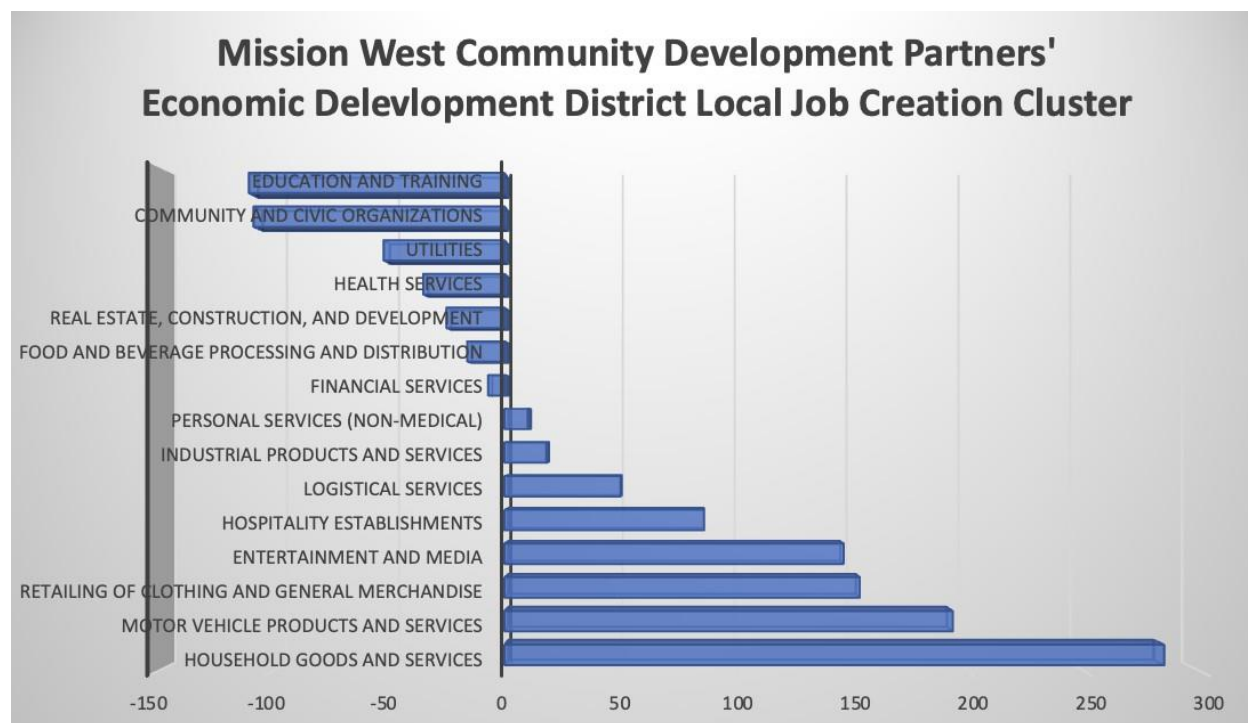
Figure 26: MWCDP-EDD Local Job Creation Cluster

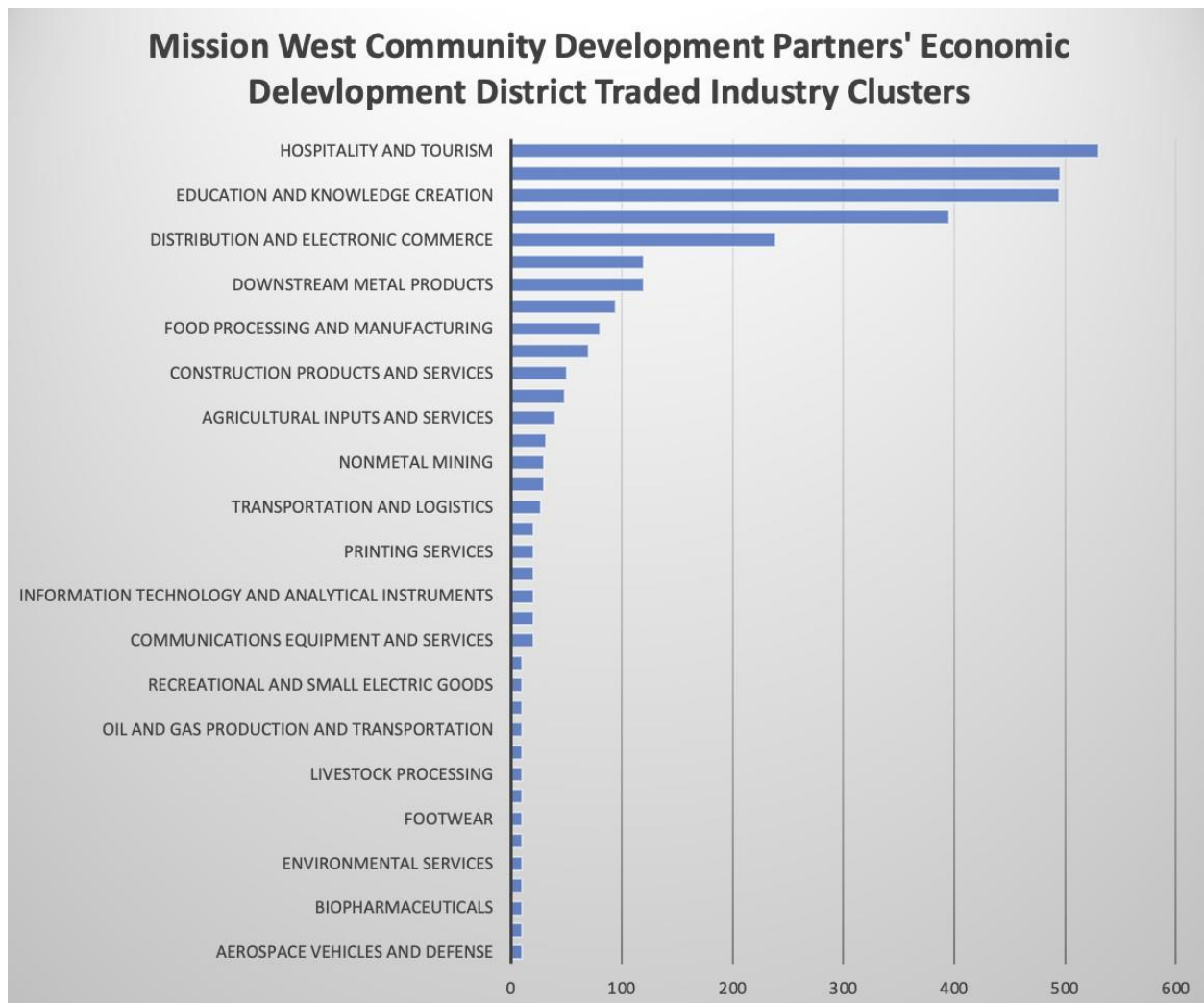*Source: https://clustermapping.us/region/county/lake_county_mt/cluster-portfolio#jobcreation*
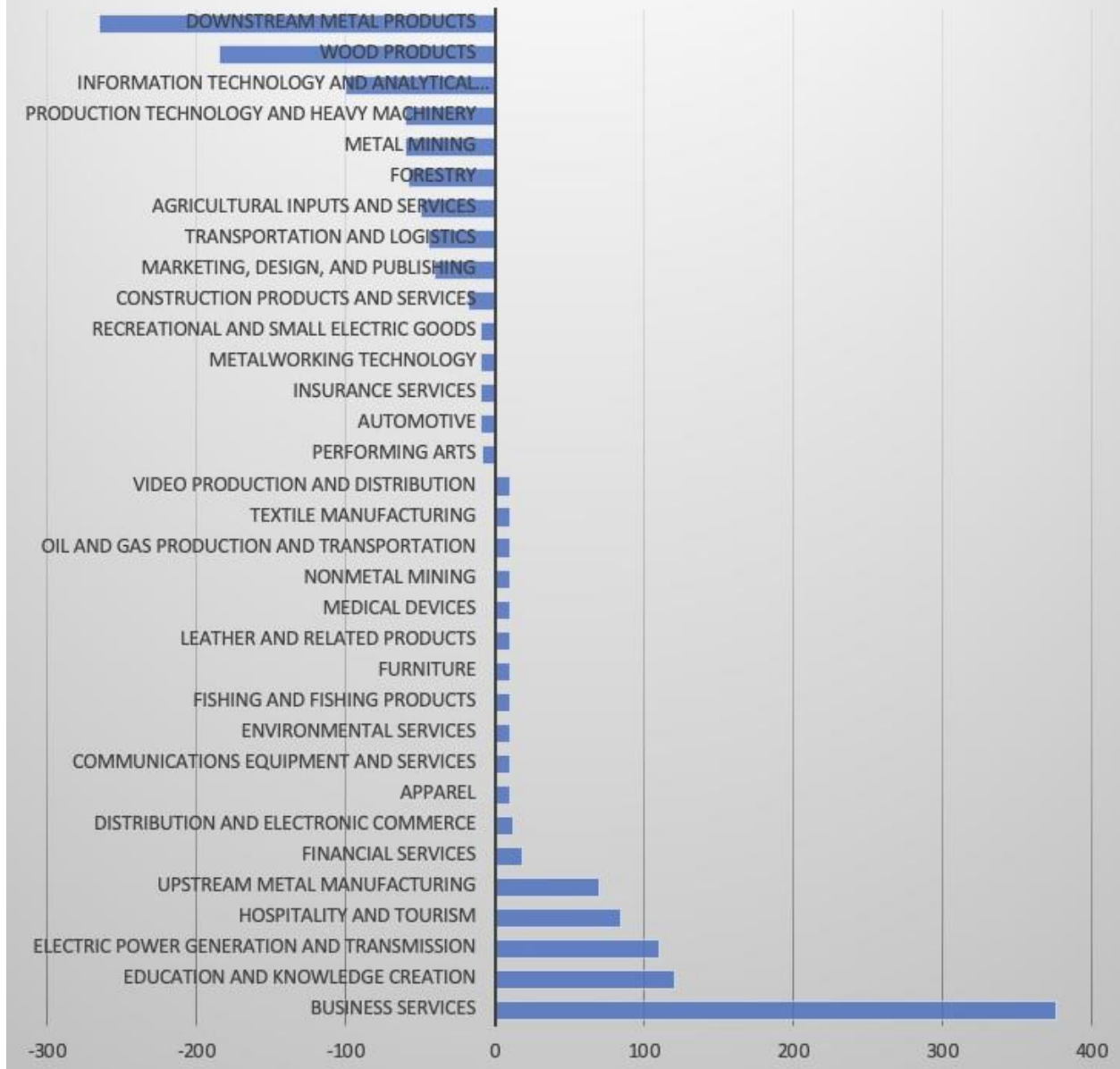
Figure 27: MWCDP-EDD Traded Job Creation Cluster

Source: https://clustermapping.us/region/county/lake_county_mt/cluster-portfolio#jobcreation

Innovation index

The three counties in the MWCDP-EDD are assessed in the moderate range relative to innovation capacity. Mineral and Lake County have higher index scores than the state of Montana level. The Innovation Index can help regional leaders to reach a strong consensus on strategic direction and understand the county and regional weaknesses, strengths, and potential.
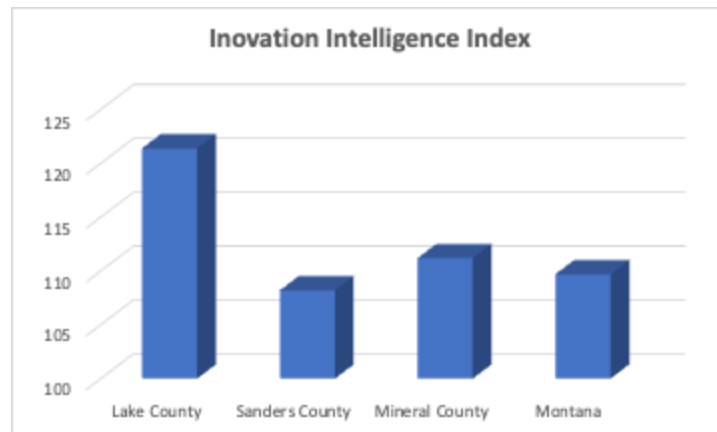
Figure 28: Innovation Intelligence Index

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/innovation/

Human Capital

Human capital and knowledge creation for all counties indicate there is a moderate level of business competitiveness within the region.
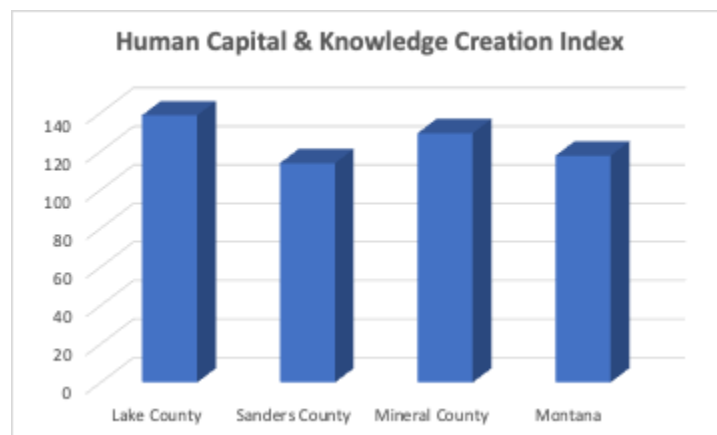
Figure 29: Human Capital and Knowledge Creation Index

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/innovation/

Productivity and Employment

Lake County, Sanders County and the State indicate a moderate level of positive outcomes from existing economic activity. Mineral County indicates a low level of positive outcomes from existing economic activity even though it has a higher index score than the state.
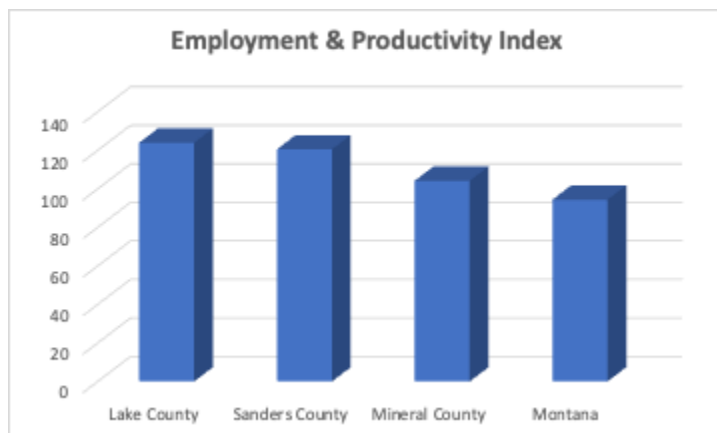
Figure 30: Employment and Productivity Index

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/innovation/

Economic Well-Being

Lake County, Mineral County and the State indicate a moderate standard of living. Sanders County has a low standard of living based on residential internet connectivity, income and other measurements.
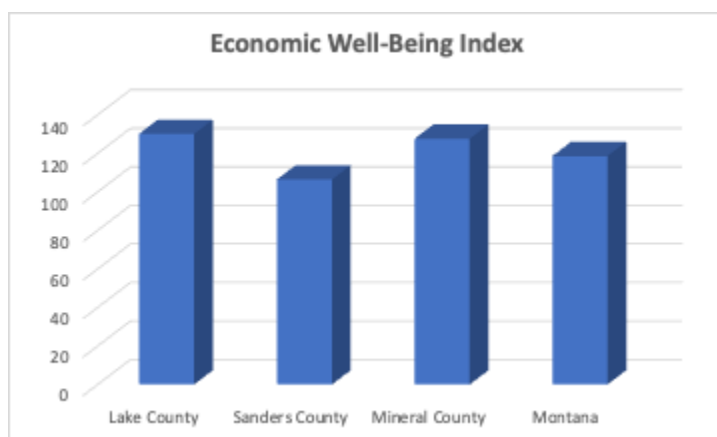
Figure 31: Economic Well-Being Index

Source: https://www.statsamerica.org/innovation/
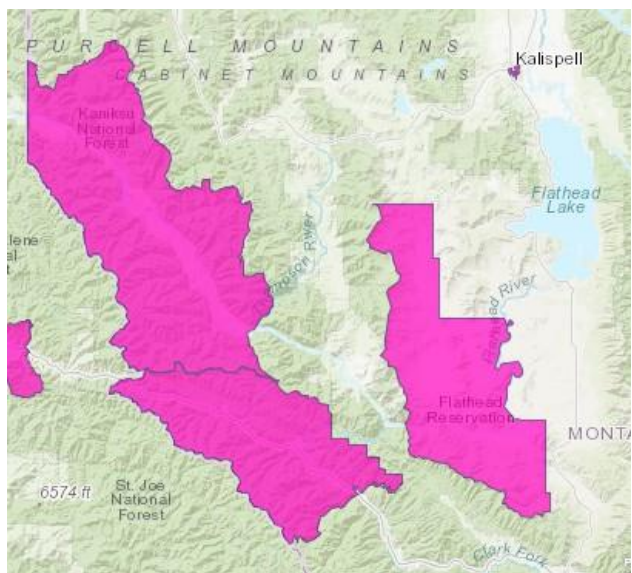
Figure 32: MCDP-EDD Opportunity Zones

Opportunity Zones

The EDA identifies Opportunity Zones (OZ) as a federal economic development tool focused on improving the outcomes of communities across the country, especially in areas that have suffered from disinvestment over time[33]. According to the EDA OZ are designated low-income census tracts where tax incentives are available to groups or individuals who invest in an Opportunity Fund (i.e., an investment vehicle for injecting money into an OZ) and hold their capital gains in Opportunity Zone-related assets or property. MWCDP-EDD has three Opportunity Zones: Sanders County, Mineral County, and the western portion of the Flathead Indian Reservation. For Opportunity Zones to thrive among the regions there must be effective collaboration of among stakeholders which include community stakeholders, state and local government leaders, investors and developers must work together to create plans that benefit residents, investors, and the region economy. The background of Opportunity Zones of the MWCDP-EDD has been presented throughout the first section of this report.

These areas have many similarities and face many of the same challenges such as affordable housing, retainment of the younger population, limited employment opportunities, however these Opportunity Zones need to be addressed separately because each area has their unique characteristics, and an overarching strategy will not be effective. There is a six-step process to follow to help establish an Opportunity Zone action plan, which MWCDP has followed to develop this CEDS. A detailed description of the actions for each step is available in the attachments.

Impact of the 2020 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has had significant impact caused from mandatory shutdowns that affected schools, businesses along with supply disruptions, closure of business, and the move to 'remote work.' According to the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Montana (BBER)[34] analysis of the pandemic has resulted in:

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[33] https://eda.gov/ceds/opportunity-zones.htm

[34] https://www.bber.umt.edu/pubs/econ/CovidStudy.pdf

- A loss of 75,000 jobs, on average, over the year 2020 for the Montana economy, reflecting worsening prospects for health care, transportation, and agriculture industries.
- State personal income of $6.4 billion in 2020, which is a 11.7% decrease compared to the original, pre-covid-19 projections.
- Slower recovery in the state economy, under performance in both employment and personal income compared to pre-covid-19 projections extending beyond the year 2022.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement

Regional Meetings

Following the steps outlined to develop Opportunity Zones, MWCDP conducted a series of stakeholder meetings and facilitated community engagement through a survey to collect data and information from constituents. After the initial draft of the CEDS was released to stakeholders and participants, there was limited public comment received in regard to altering the CEDS.

The following meeting schedule was facilitated:

- Regional Meeting:
- Public Hearings:
    - Lake County Courthouse (Polson, MT) 4/21/2022
    - Sanders County Courthouse (Thompson Falls, MT) 4/27/2022
    - Mineral County Courthouse (Superior, MT) 4/29/2022
- Local council meetings:
    - Plains City Council Meeting 6/6/2022
    - St. Ignatius City Council Meeting 6/8/2022
    - Superior City Council Meeting 6/13/2022
    - Hot Springs City Council Meeting 7/5/2022
    - Ronan City Council Meeting 7/12/2022

Community Engagement Survey

An online survey was made available to community members in the study area of Lake, Mineral and Sanders Counties, including the Flathead Reservation. The survey features included:

- No registration required to complete the survey
- No mandatory questions that precluded completing the survey
- A range of questions including qualitative responses, multiple choice responses and single choice "select one" responses
- Participant identities are optional.

The author notes that although more than 90% of the surveys were completed fully, in the remaining surveys, responders skipped questions, did not complete all questions and did include comments when text boxes were available. The software supporting the engagement platform uses advanced analytics based on survey monkey analysis, presenting information in formats

such as an Excel export, a CSV export (comma-separated values), and graphic presentations, including pie charges and line charts and column graphs. A copy of the survey is available in attachments.

Surveys submitted: 130 responded to the CEDS 2022-2027 Survey

Findings from the data capture are presented in the following 7 sections as

- Community
- Development
- Agriculture/Food
- Healthcare
- Climate Change
- Renewable energy alternative
- Emergency preparedness and planning

Community

Community participation is identified through postal zip-codes declared on the surveys correlated to the Lake, Mineral, and Sanders Counties. Community is addressed in the CEDS survey from the responses to questions Q.1, Q.2, and Q.24, where a respondent declares their identity and the employment sector. The following diagram presents the survey results.

Q.1. What county is your primary residence, place or business or employment located?

Lake County 54.3%
Mineral County 31%
Sanders County 7.8%
Other with comments Flathead, Missoula. 7%

9 (7.0%)
40 (31.0%)
70 (54.3%)
10 (7.8%)
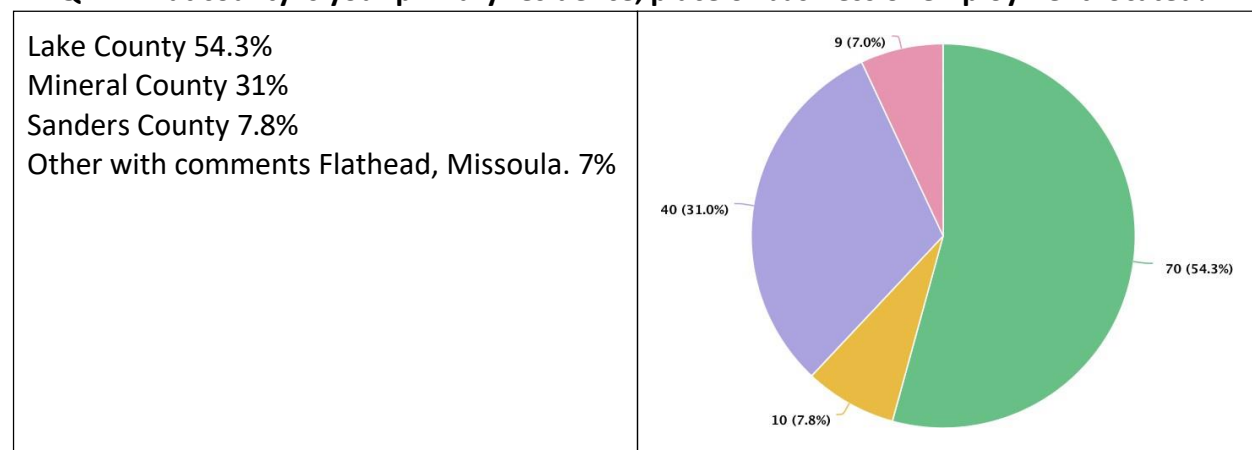
Q.2. Please select which industry sector best describes your business or economic interests

Nonprofit/Economic Development 17.8%
Government/Public Administration 13.2%
Healthcare/Social Services 11.6%
Education 12.4%
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing 8.5%
Tourism/Food Service/Accommodations 6.2%
Manufacturing 5.4%
Finance/Real Estate/Insurance 4.7%
Construction 3.9%
Professional/Administrative 4.7%
Retail Trade 1.6%
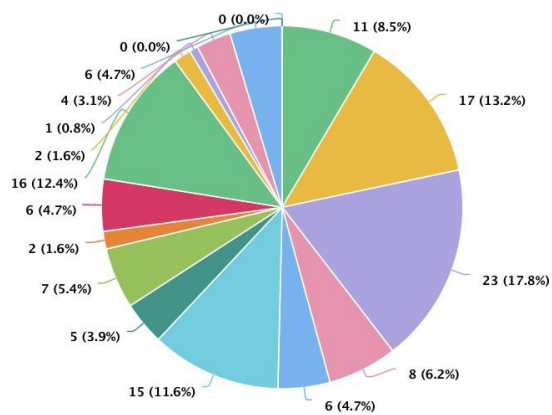
Q.24. Your Zip Code

Polson, MT 22.6%
Superior, MT 20.8%
Ronan, MT 14.2%
Arlee, MT 7.5%
Saint Ignatius, MT 6.6%
Saint Regis, MT 6.6%
Plains, MT 2.8%
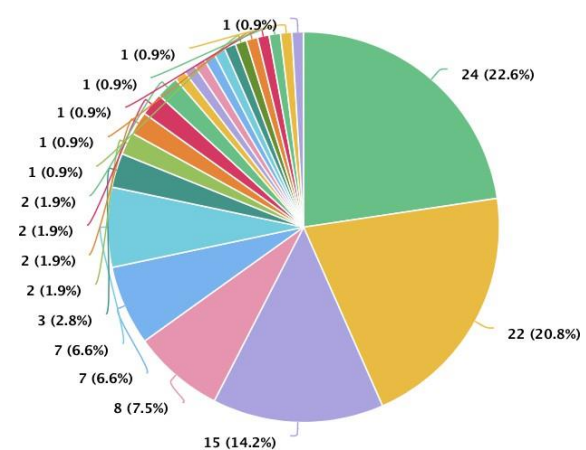
Development

Identifying the current commitment and outlook of community and business development of the tri-county region were addressed in survey questions, Q.3, Q.4, Q.5, Q.6, Q.7, Q.10, Q.20, Q.21, Q.22, and Q.23 where a respondent declares what could improve their business and the community. The following diagram presents the survey results.

Q.3. Please select three (3) services that would best support your business

Affordable workforce housing – 69
Improve access to capital/loans/grants - 45
Local infrastructure - 44
More workers - 24
Better trained workforce - 20
Retaining top talent/employees - 18
Recruiting and hiring - 18
Training for employees - 15
The development of cooperatives or associations to support the business sector - 14
Technology for business to improve productivity/automation/reaching customers - 13
Management and leadership development - 13
Public transportation for workers - 11
A strong business plan - 10
Sales support and understanding the market/competition - 9
A strong network of advisors - 9
Help with processes - 8
Other - 9
Working with vendors/access to new supply chain - 8
Solving problems - 6
How to determine pricing - 6
Succession planning for retiring business owners – 5

Q4. Education and Workforce Development – Please rank the following strategies using 6-1
(6= high priority and 1=low priority)

Options	Rank
Expand opportunities for high school and undergraduate students to engage in learning with local businesses like internships or apprenticeships	4.33
Help employers to access financial resources for the development of retention of their existing workforce	3.83
More local training opportunities for entrepreneurs or workforce development programs	3.78
Better access to college training courses	3.14
Investigate creative ways to improve productivity	2.99
Help businesses utilize remote work opportunities with development of a digital economy	2.93

Q.5. Access to Capital – Please rank the following strategies using 6-1
(6= high priority and 1=low priority)

Options	Rank
Help startups and emerging entrepreneurs with training to help identify options for capital from banks and investors as well as nontraditional options	3.28
Economic development agencies work with banks to provide gap lending to businesses that do not meet traditional bank requirements without additional support	3.26
Economic development agencies work with businesses to develop business plans and other documentation required by financing institutions	3.06
Facilitate access to angel investors	2.67
Collateral support from the government for loans	2.73

Q.6. Infrastructure – Please rank the following strategies using 6-1
(6= high priority and 1=low priority)

Options	Rank
Invest in the development or repair of roads, streets, bridges, etc.	**3.32**
Invest in the development of broadband and cell phone infrastructure in our rural communities	**3.27**
Invest in existing local industrial sites or business clusters to attract businesses that create well-paid jobs and increase and diversify the tac base	**3.19**
Invest in improvements to water/sewer infrastructure	**2.67**
Invest in infrastructure such as trails, parks, and green spaces that improve the quality of life	**2.56**

Q.7. Increasing entrepreneurship – Please rank the following strategies using 6-1
(6= high priority and 1=low priority)

Options	Rank
Improve access to capital in rural and underserved communities	**4.16**
Increase financial support from local, state, and federal agencies for local economic development organizations dedicated to informing, educating, and assisting entrepreneurs and businesses	**4.11**
Local economic development agencies help identify, mobilize, and pay for experienced skilled professionals to provide mentoring and business counseling services for free or at reduced rates	**3.95**
Help develop cooperatives or associations that can increase buying power for shared services	**3.11**
Provide business and remote worker training classes in my area or online	**2.98**
Support the creation of business incubator sites and coworking spaces	**2.70**

Ranking points appear to have changed from a bolded format to non-bolded on this table and the next. We should keep these consistent.

Q.10. Tourism – Please rank the following strategies using 6-1
(6= high priority and 1=low priority)

Options	Rank
Work with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes to maintain and promote responsible access to Tribal lands.	**3.83**
Encourage "destination stewardship tourism" to balance and meet the needs of the destination and its communities.	**3.60**
Develop geo-tourism, agritourism, and or cultural-tourism activities to increase tourist spending while in our region	**3.55**
Help businesses assess and develop their online presence to increase their digital marketing footprint and improve booking capability	**3.49**
Increase promoting of the area as a destination for year-round leisure and recreation travel	**3.41**
Develop promotions for the region or leverage Glacier Country Tourism to promote our region and its attractions more successfully	**3.12**

Emergency preparedness and planning - (Question 11)

With the region being rural, an emergency of any type can significantly impact the communities. To gain an understanding of the community's emergency preparedness and planning were addressed in question 11 of the survey, where participants mentioned issues, they were concerned about. Participants were able to select all that apply to their concerns, the results signify three major concerns include:

- Forest fires (115),
- An extended power outage (96), and
- Extreme drought (83).

The least concerning issues were a radiological incident/accident (10) and tornados, hurricanes, or other severe storms (12).

Renewable energy alternative - (Question 16)

To procure the communities outlook on renewable energy alternatives, it was addressed with question 16, where participants indicated their support for renewable energy alternatives. Many survey participants stated that it is acceptable (50%) to support investment in renewable energy alternatives. Of participants, 2.3% mentioned it was totally unacceptable that they support renewable energy alternatives.

Climate change - (Question 17)

To gain an understanding of the region's view and concerns about climate change, it was addressed in survey question 17. Of the participants, the majority are either extremely concerned 28.9 %, or somewhat concerned 24.2% about climate change. Of the survey responses, not concerned and very concerned were the lowest selected responses with both at 14.1%.

Healthcare - (Questions 18 and 19)

The tri-county access to healthcare was addressed with survey questions Q.18 and Q.19. According to participants, a reasonable distance to travel in one direction for healthcare needs is less than 20-30 miles. Of the participant's majority currently travel in one direction for healthcare needs greater than 50 miles (27.3%) and less than five miles (25%).

Agriculture/local food resources (Questions - 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15)

The tri-county region views and their understanding of agriculture/local food resources were addressed with survey questions Q.8, Q.9, Q.12, Q.13, Q.14, and Q.15, where respondents mentioned their use and understanding of agriculture/local food resources. Agriculture represents 1,302,519 acres of the tri-county area, and participants said a priority is to support local farmers/ranchers' operations by developing local food purchasing and distribution opportunities. A major land and water use priority of the participants is preserving the highest-level water quality in our streams and lakes is important to protect our unique water resources, and agricultural land preservation is important and should be prioritized in zoning. Most participants (109) mentioned they had not visited a food bank or soup kitchen, but a significant number (50) mentioned shopping for the least expensive food available. 30.5% of survey participants typically shop at farmers' markets 2-4 times during the season. Among the community, there is community-supported agriculture (CSA) groups; of the participants, a majority mentioned they did not join a CSA.

Development - (Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 20, 21, 22, and 23)

Identifying the current commitment and outlook of community and business development of the tri-county region were addressed in survey questions, Q.3, Q.4, Q.5, Q.6, Q.7, Q.10, Q.20, Q.21, Q.22, and Q.23 where a respondent declares what could improve their business and the community. A significant number of respondents mentioned that <u>affordable workforce housing</u> would support their business. To improve education and workforce development to expand opportunities for high school and undergraduate students to engage in learning with local businesses like internships or apprenticeships.

Being in rural areas, <u>access to capital</u> can be challenging, so respondents mentioned having economic development agencies work with banks to provide gap lending to businesses that do not meet traditional bank requirements without additional support and helping startups and emerging entrepreneurs with training to help identify options for capital from banks and investors as well as nontraditional options. <u>Infrastructure</u> is a significant concern for every town/city in the region; the majority mentioned investing in areas such as the development or repair of roads, streets, and bridges; and the development of broadband and cell phone infrastructure in rural communities. Respondents mentioned ways to improve entrepreneurship success by improving access to capital in rural and underserved communities and increasing financial support from local, state, and federal agencies for local economic development organizations dedicated to informing, educating, and assisting entrepreneurs and businesses.

<u>Tourism</u> is a vital part of the region and is a gateway for many travelers heading to Glacier National Park. The majority mentioned working with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes to maintain and promote responsible access to Tribal lands and encourage "destination stewardship tourism" to balance and meet the needs of the destination and its communities. Strengths and opportunities for economic growth and prosperity have been identified as outdoor recreation, Flathead Lake, and a corridor to Glacier National Park. Barriers to economic growth and prosperity have been identified as lack of infrastructure, rapid growth, low workforce, and lack of affordable housing. Survey participants mentioned projects they would like to see as affordable housing, improvement of infrastructure (roads, broadband, cell service, etc.), and community gathering centers. Participants were asked about thoughts and ideas on economic development in our community which highlighted trends already seen (housing, infrastructure, etc.), and a systematic review revealed they want to see the community expand. Still, they don't want the communities to lose the sense of who they are and cater to tourism and large corporations while local businesses struggle.
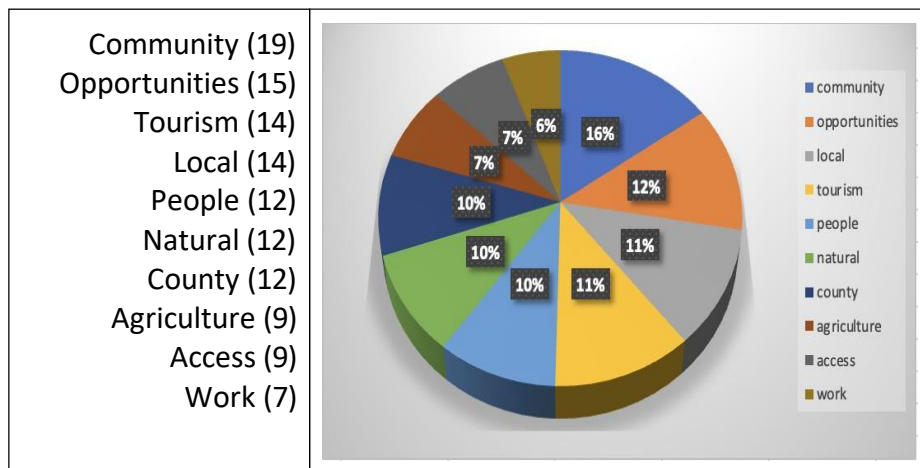
Community - (Questions 1, 2, and 24)

Community participation is identified through postal zip-codes declared on the surveys correlated to the Lake, Mineral, and Sanders Counties. Community is addressed in the CEDS survey from the responses to questions Q.1, Q.2, and Q.24, where a respondent declares their identity and the employment sector. Looking at each question, the highest portion of respondents are representatives of Lake County, particularly the Polson area 53.9%. The most prevalent industries of the participants are Nonprofit/economic development 18%, Government/Public administration 12.5%, and education 12.5%.

Open-ended Questions – (Questions 20, 21 and 23)

Survey questions 20-23 were open-ended questions where participants could answer the questions in their own words. To identify a trend of what participants were writing in their answers, each participant's responses were copied and placed into a Microsoft Word document. The document for that specific question was then uploaded to a free online application called Word Clouds to determine the frequency of the words used, which were then sorted from highest to lowest used. The following Figures show the results of the top 10 words by frequency, mentioned in by participants in response to an individual question.
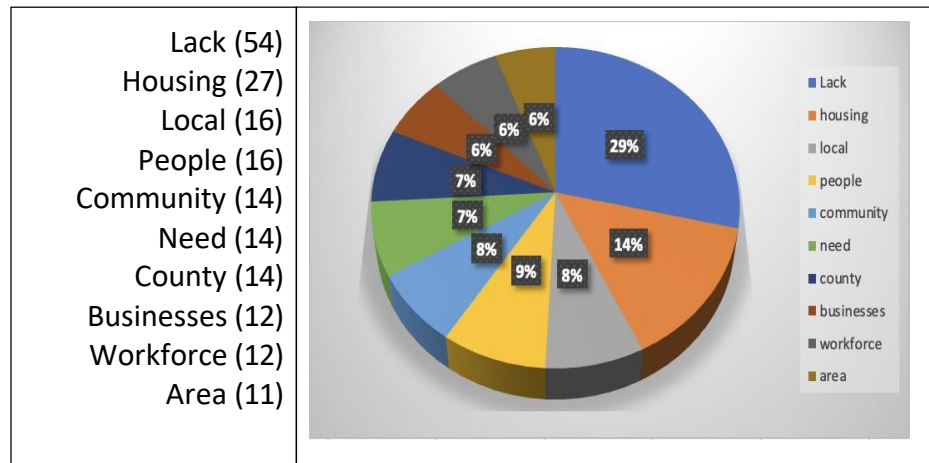
Q.20. Building Economic growth and prosperity – what unique "strengths" or "opportunities" can your community/county/region build upon for economic growth and Prosperity?

The top 10 areas/words used by participants for growth and prosperity were:

Community (19)
Opportunities (15)
Tourism (14)
Local (14)
People (12)
Natural (12)
County (12)
Agriculture (9)
Access (9)
Work (7)

Q.21. Barriers to economic growth and prosperity – what "weaknesses:" or "threats" pose the greatest barriers to economic growth and prosperity in your community/county/region?
The top word recorded is "lack" referring to lack of housing and a "lack" of other services that are perceived as weaknesses or threats. . The top 10 words recorded by participants for weaknesses and threats were:

Lack (54)	
Housing (27)	
Local (16)	
People (16)	
Community (14)	
Need (14)	
County (14)	
Businesses (12)	
Workforce (12)	
Area (11)	

Q.22. Please list any projects or strategies you would like to see take place in your community/county/region.
The top areas mentioned by participants for strategies were:

Community (33)	
Housing (21)	
Local (15)	
Food (10)	
Infrastructure (8)	
Highway (8)	
Support (7)	
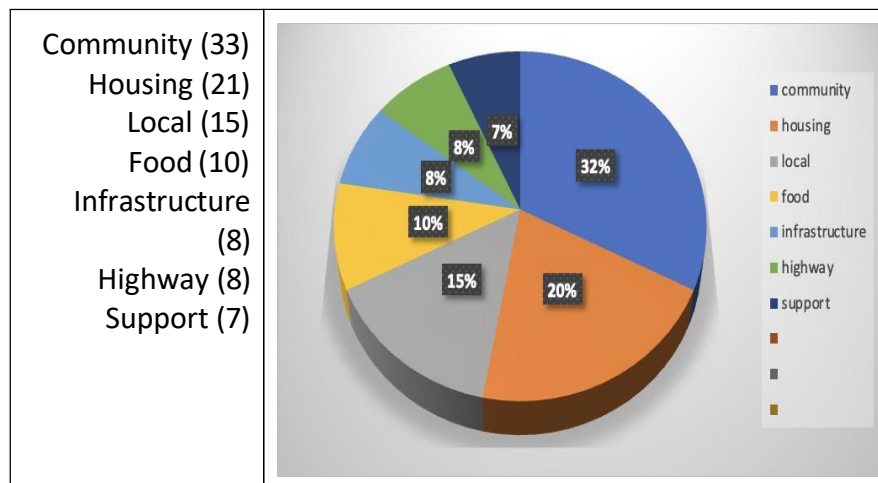
Q.23. Please provide general comments or feedback related to economic development in your community/county/region.
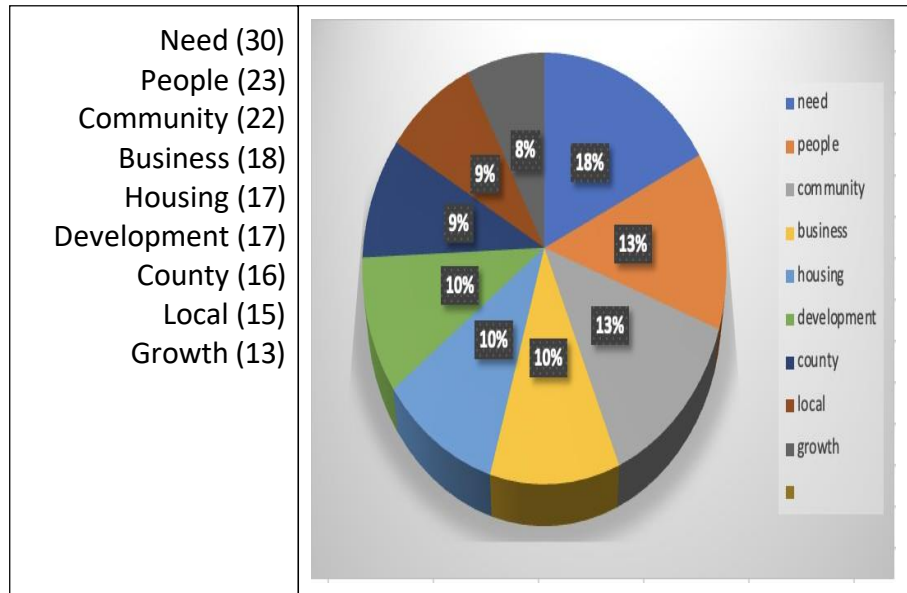
The top words used by participants for feedback regarding economic development were:

Need (30)
People (23)
Community (22)
Business (18)
Housing (17)
Development (17)
County (16)
Local (15)
Growth (13)

Agriculture/Local food resources

The tri-counties view and understanding of agriculture/local food resources were addressed with survey questions Q.8, Q.9, Q.12, Q.13, Q.14, and Q.15, where respondents mentioned their use and understanding of agriculture/local food resources.

Q.8. Agricultural/Food Priorities – Please rank the following strategies using 4-1
(4 = high priority and 1 = low priority)

Options	Rank
Support local farmer/ranchers' operations through development of local food purchasing and distribution opportunities	**3.05**
Improve access to capital to support value added agriculture enterprise development	**2.50**
Support the creation or expansion of food/meat processing facilities in the area	**2.38**
Develop identity branding for the region's food and agricultural products	**2.06**

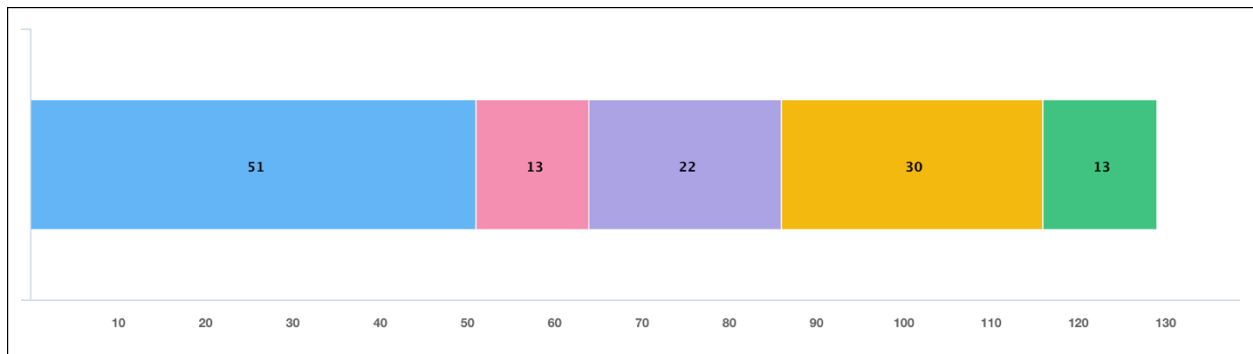**Q.9. Land and water use priorities - Please rank the following strategies using 5-1**
(5 = high priority and 1 = low priority)

Options	Rank
Preserving the highest-level water quantity in our streams and lakes is important to protecting our unique water resources	**3.49**
Agricultural land preservation is important and should be prioritized in zoning	**3.09**
Access to public land, wildlife corridors, and open space is critical to protecting and preserving our wildlife and the rural nature of our communities	**3.04**
Manage growth in order to maintain a rural quality of life	**2.93**
Climate change affects our rural communities and strategic initiatives should be pursued to mitigate its effects	**2.45**

Q.12. During the past year how often did you visit a food bank or soup kitchen?

BLUE - Every month – 5
PINK - Every 2-4 months – 3
PURPLE - 1-2 times every 6 months – 6
ORANGE - Rarely – 5
GREEN - Never – 110
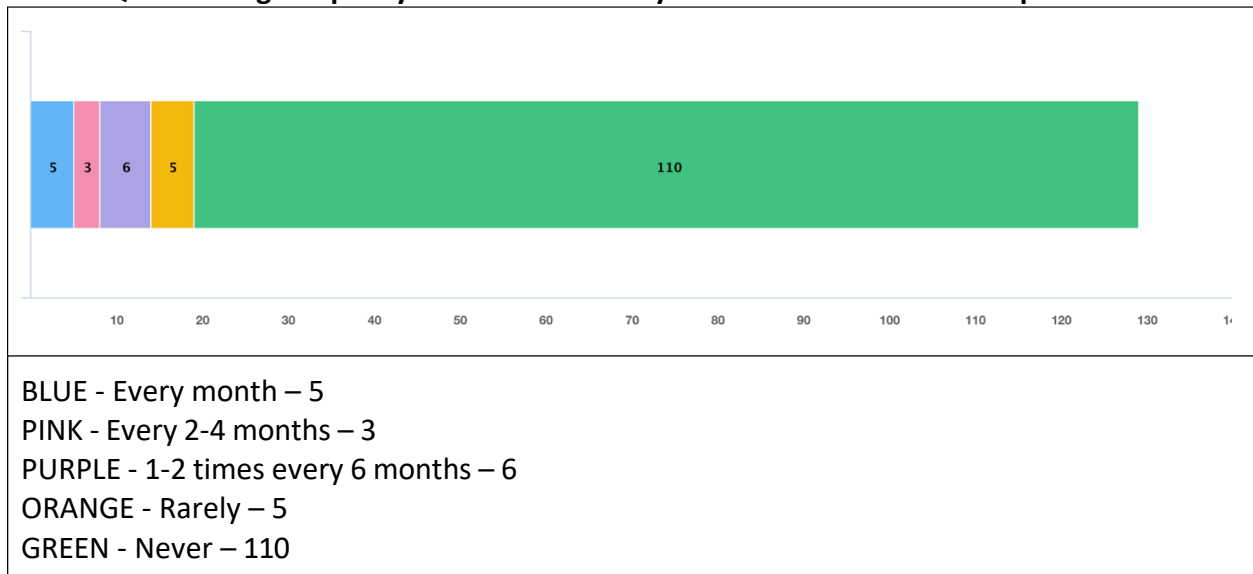
Q.13. During the past year have you shopped for the least expensive food available?
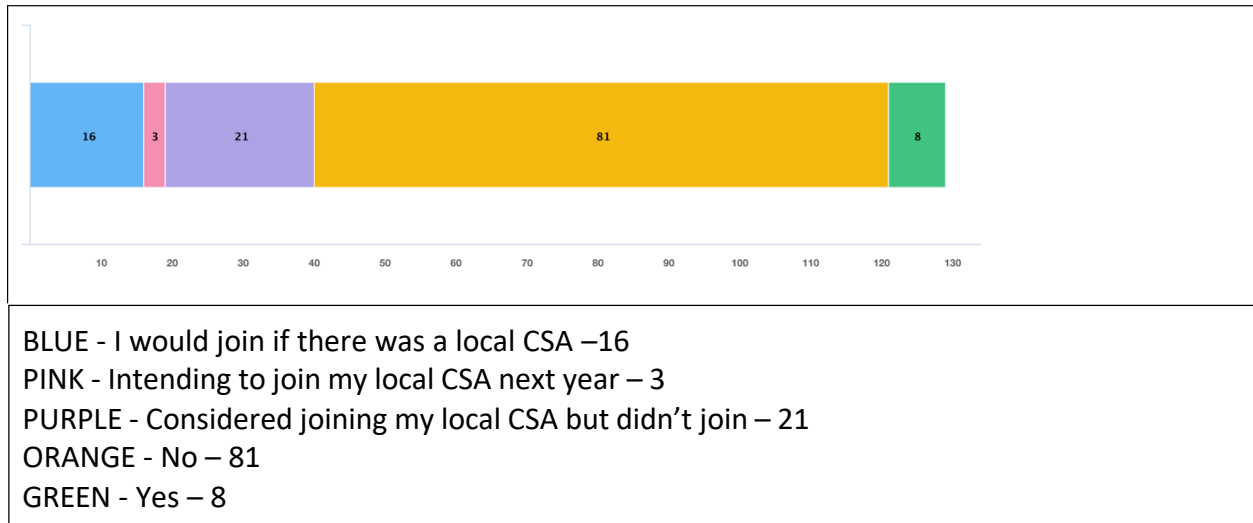

BLUE - Every month – 51
PINK - Every 2-4 months – 13
PURPLE - 1-2 times every 6 months – 22
ORANGE - Rarely – 30
GREEN - Never – 13

Q.14. During the past year shopped at a farmer's market?
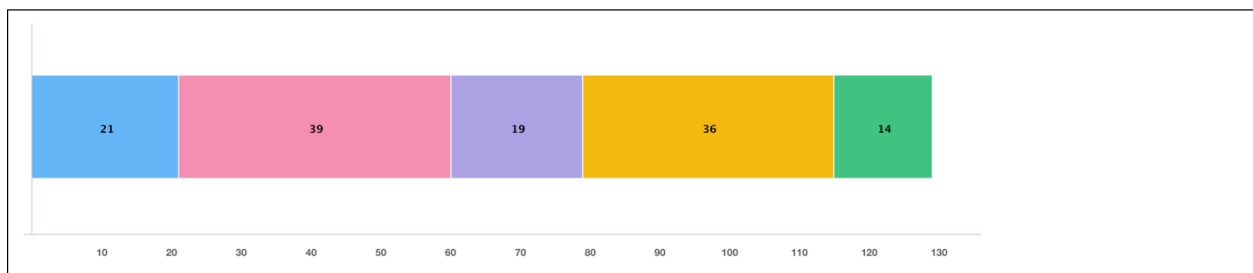
BLUE - Every week during their season – 21
PINK - Between 2-4 times during their season – 39
PURPLE - 1-2 times during their season – 19
ORANGE - Rarely – 36
GREEN - Never – 14

Q.15. During the past year joined a community supported agriculture (CSA) group?

BLUE - I would join if there was a local CSA –16
PINK - Intending to join my local CSA next year – 3
PURPLE - Considered joining my local CSA but didn't join – 21
ORANGE - No – 81
GREEN - Yes – 8

Healthcare

Access to healthcare in the tri-county area was addressed with survey questions Q.18 and Q.19. According to participants, a reasonable distance to travel in one direction for healthcare needs is less than 20-30 miles. Of the participants, the majority currently travel in one direction for healthcare needs greater than 50 miles (27.3%) and less than five miles (25%).

Q.18. How far is a reasonable distance to travel in one direction for your healthcare needs?
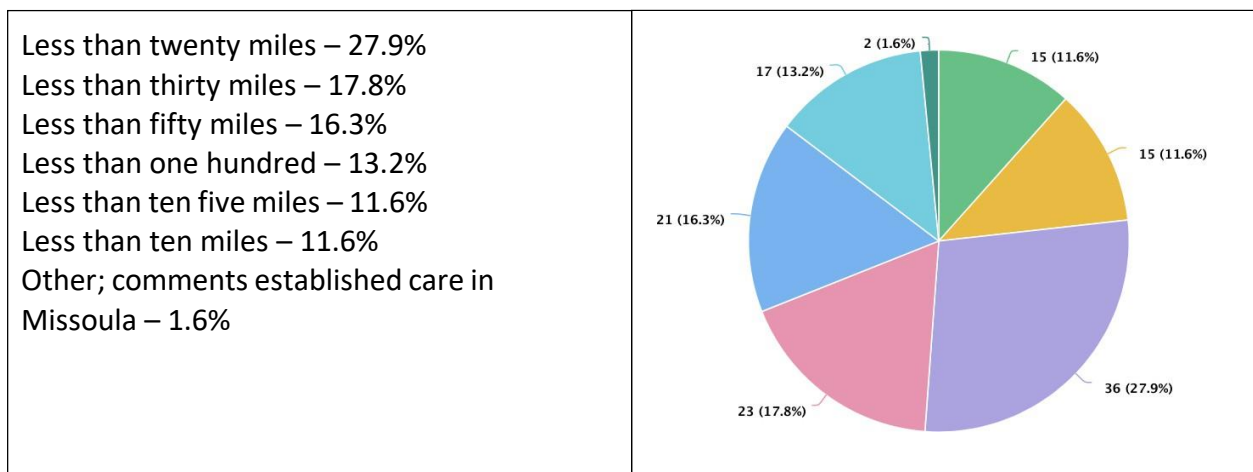
Less than twenty miles – 27.9%
Less than thirty miles – 17.8%
Less than fifty miles – 16.3%
Less than one hundred – 13.2%
Less than ten five miles – 11.6%
Less than ten miles – 11.6%
Other; comments established care in Missoula – 1.6%

Q.19 How far do you currently travel in one direction for your healthcare needs?

Greater than 50 miles – 27.1%
Less than 5 miles – 25.6%
20-30 miles – 14%
30-50 miles – 14.7%
10-20 miles – 10.1%
20-30 miles – 10.1%
5-10 miles – 7%
Other; comment 60-70 miles - 1.6%
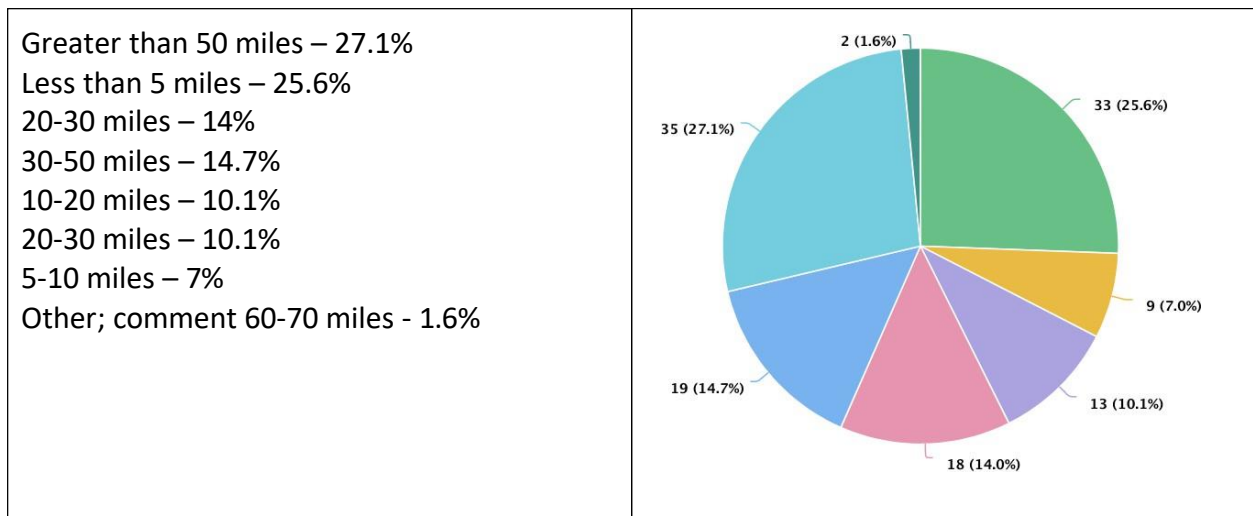
Climate change

To gain an understanding of the region's view and concerns about climate change, it was addressed in survey question 17. Of the participants, the majority are either extremely concerned 28.9 %, or somewhat concerned 24.2% about climate change. Of the survey responses, not concerned and very concerned were the lowest selected responses with both at 14.1%.

Q.17. How concerned are you about climate change?

Extremely concerned – 28.7%
Somewhat concerned – 24.8%
Concerned – 18.6%
Very concerned - 14%
Not concerned at all – 14%
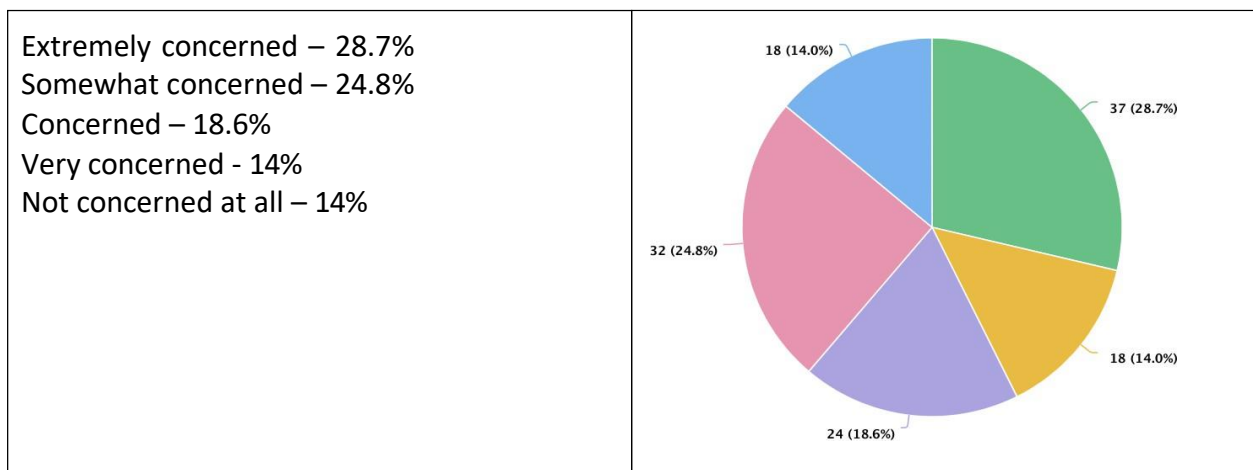
Renewable Energy Alternatives

To procure the community's outlook on renewable energy alternatives, it was addressed with question 16, where participants indicated their support for renewable energy alternatives. Many survey participants stated that it is totally acceptable (50%) to support investment in renewable energy alternatives. Of participants, 2.3% mentioned it was totally unacceptable that they support renewable energy alternatives.

Q.16. Do you support investment in renewable energy alternatives?

Totally acceptable – 49.6%
Acceptable – 24.8%
Neutral – 20.2%
Unacceptable 3.1%
Totally unacceptable 2.3%
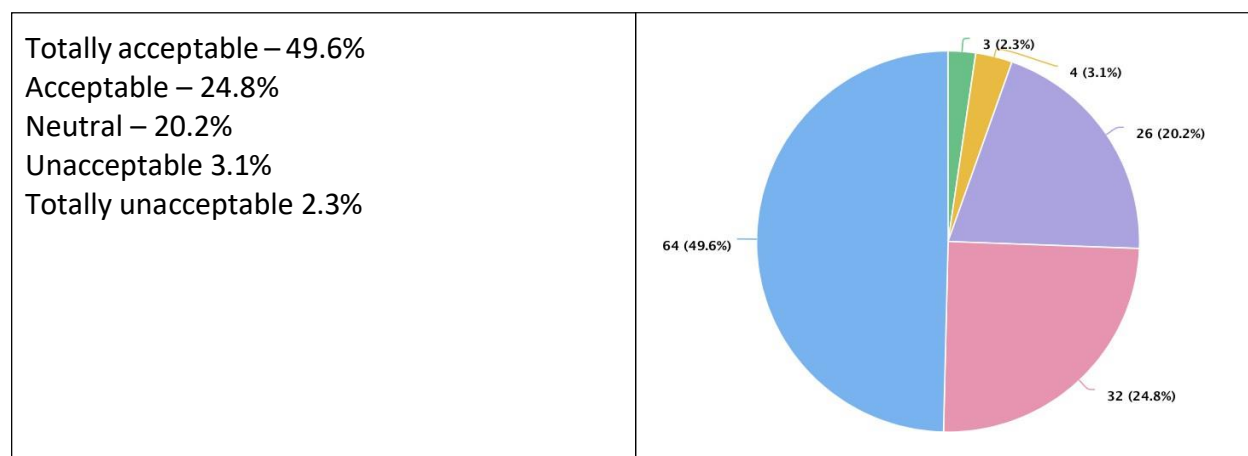
Emergency preparedness and planning

With the MWCDP-EDD region predominantly being rural, an emergency can significantly impact the communities. To gain an understanding of the community's emergency preparedness and planning, question 11 of the survey required participants to identify issues they were concerned about from a provided list. The following diagram presents the survey results.

Q.11. Emergency preparedness and planning – Check the issues you are concerned about
(unchecked issues are noted as 'not concerned')

Forest fires – 115
An extended power outage – 96
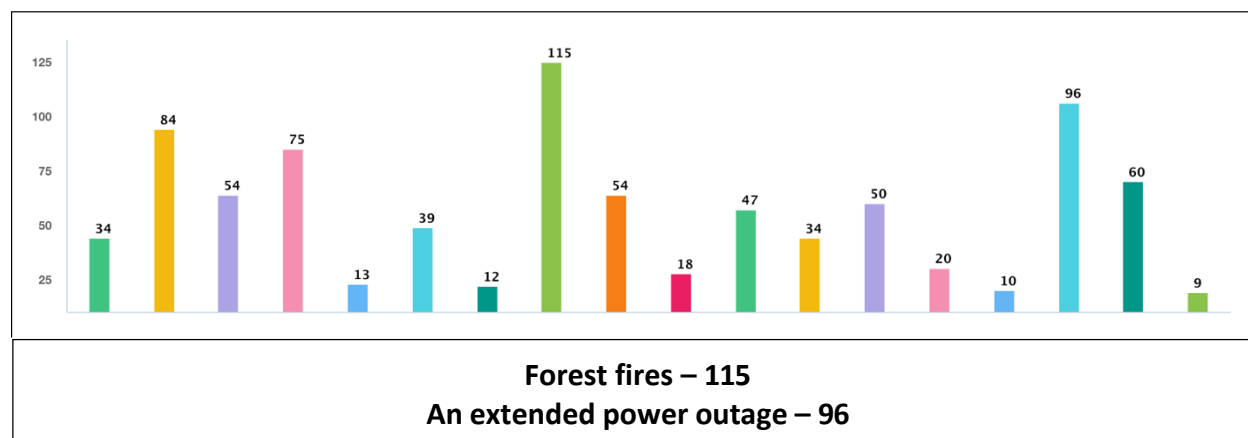
Extreme drought – 84
Severe winter storms – 75
An extended loss of internet or cell phone service – 60
A pandemic – 54
A cyber-attack – 54
A biohazard incident/accident - 50
Civil unrest – 47
Floods – 39
An earthquake – 34
Water impoundment/dam failure – 34
Accidental release of lethal chemical agents or munitions – 20
Terrorism – 18
Seismic eruptions and volcanic activity – 13
Tornados, hurricanes, or other severe storms – 12
A radiological incident/accident - 10
Other: comments economic collapse, active shooter, not concerned about any of the options
– 9

SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT Analysis

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis shown below is a compilation of activities completed at public meetings, capturing public comment, survey results, a SWOT Exercise conducted with the CEDS Advisory Committee, and a SWOT exercise conducted with the Board of Directors. The following provides an overview of identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as viewed by both regional partners and the public. As can be seen, the public and partners had a lot to say, therefore, the SWOT is not being presented in traditional chart fashion, but in list form, with accompanying narrative. Each input provided has been categorized into a general category for each of the SWOT elements. MWCDP has also utilized our CEDS Advisory Committee and our CEDS Survey for the development of our SWOT Analysis.

STRENGTHS

- **Outdoor Resources**
  - Access to outdoor recreation, nature, public lands
  - Vast public lands
  - Access to Clark Fork River – swimming and boating
  - Access to streams, lakes, mountains
  - Campgrounds and camping options
  - Access to trails
  - Hiawatha Trail and recreation areas
  - Skiing
  - Skateparks
  - Mineral County Rails-to-Trails
  - Local recreation options
  - Lookout Pass
  - Natural Beauty of area
  - Water and air quality
  - Flathead Lake

- **Industries**
  - Hydroelectric power

- Thompson River Lumber
- Number of small businesses
- Diversity of services available
- Tourism
- Healthcare options – clinics and hospitals
- Rail support for businesses (i.e., Propane facility in Mineral County)
- Robust broadband provided by Blackfoot Telephone – allows people to work from home
- Strong hospitality industry
- Diversity of businesses and support – college, etc.
- Ag industry and food processing center and Jan's team
- Incredible base of artists in a wide variety of mediums

- **Support organizations**
  - Community connection
  - Community supports each other
  - Giving community
  - Youth programs – Boys and Girls Club
  - Mineral County Collaborative Coalition is strong
  - Collaboration between governments – infrastructure project
  - Planning – Tribes
  - Strong leadership at many levels
  - Strong community development organizations
  - Community engagement

- **Lifestyle**
  - Increasing diversity of population
  - Longevity of families in the area
  - Community and School pride
  - Great quality of life
  - Rural community feeling
  - Rich cultural history and heritage
  - Lots of work available – job openings
  - Generational view and understanding of who we are and what we want – organic and cultural knowledge

- **Infrastructure**
  - Interstate 90 provides excellent ingress and egress to the area
  - Robust broadband provided by Blackfoot Telephone – allows people to work from home
  - Close drive to major airports
  - Rail support for businesses (i.e. Propane facility in Mineral County)
  - Easy access to major trucking routes

WEAKNESSES
- **Housing**
  - Lack of affordable housing
  - Lack of rental housing
  - Price volatility

- **Infrastructure**
  - Cell phone service
  - Limited childcare options
  - No preschool in many parts of region
  - No safe pedestrian path between Thompson Falls downtown and East end of town
  - Infrastructure for tourism, internet, cell service, land availability
  - Gaps in broadband coverage
  - Suburban sprawl

- **Resources**
  - Lack of grant writing knowledge and ability for organizations
  - Cost of housing materials
  - Limited tourism info – TF needs a visitor center
  - Low tax base
  - Minimal land available for development
  - Elderly and sick transportation options
  - Access to mental health
  - Supply chain and cost of ag supplies
  - Price volatility
  - Lack of funding to develop/maintain outdoor recreation avenues & opportunities
  - Lack of cultural preservation resources
  - Lack of youth programs throughout region
  - Lack of capital for economic growth
  - Natural resource development conflicts

- **Workforce**
  - Lack of employees to fill open positions - high retirement rate, non-workers moving to area
  - Higher than average unemployment
  - Few opportunities for young people
  - Have to hire employees that are not qualified
  - Young people leaving
  - Workforce training – technology, customer service, etc.
  - Aging population
  - Few job alternatives
  - Low wages
  - Lack of quality childcare
  - New people are not part of workforce

- **Prosperity**
  - Higher than average poverty
  - Low wages – minimum wage too low
  - Few opportunities for young people
  - Loss of timber industry jobs

- **Negative forces**
  - Divisive political culture
  - Increased population but not for workforce
  - Climate change
  - Politically charged differences of opinion

- Sense of community – how do we get more people involved?
- Sense of place missing
- Lack of understanding of culture, heritage, an area history for newcomers moving in

- **Business**
  - Lack of large businesses in region
  - Lack of industry diversity
  - Tourism is the only industry in some locations

- **Education/Communications**
  - Getting word out about area
  - Lack of knowledge about community development efforts
  - Lack of marketing for communities

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Education**
  - Create public preschool at Thompson Falls Elementary
  - Workforce development workshops for working skills
  - Cooperative with local schools for vo-tech classes or training
  - Knowledge base of elderly population
  - SKC education opportunities for seniors
  - SKC degrees
  - Kootenai immersion school
  - Educate people on what exists here and our history and assets
  - Programs for teens and kids to entice them to live in our region once they are adults (trade workshops in high school, local job fairs, community engagement, outdoor learning, etc.)

- **Recreation**
  - Create recreation district paid by taxes
  - Promote outdoor activities
  - Outdoor education
  - Expand recreation opportunities close to towns
  - More bike path and walking path opportunities
  - More hiking trails
  - Connect recreation trails & routes with surrounding communities

- **Business and Community Development**
  - Grant writer within SCCDC/Mission West/county to help organizations apply for grants
  - New community members bring new skills and volunteers
  - Development of downtown areas
  - Food processing development - beef
  - New people creating more tax revenue
  - Working together – three counties
  - Not tapping into the new folk in the region
  - Retired people could serve as SCORE resource or staying in the workforce part-time
  - Small town tourism development

- **Infrastructure**
  - More affordable housing

- Increase broadband and cell service infrastructure
- More access to rail services
- More airport development
- EV Charging stations
- More placemaking and art installations

- **Initiatives**
  - Promote "shop local"
  - Utilize services that are already AVAILABLE
  - More recycling
  - How do we teach people about the Tribes impact on the environment and economy?
  - Food sovereignty
  - Work-from-home
  - Solar and off-grid living
  - Growing sense of community

THREATS

- **Natural**
  - Natural Disasters (flood, fire, wind)
  - Winter weather, wildfires
  - Water resources threatened
  - Water quality threats due to population growth and tourism
  - Climate change

- **Business**
  - Online business threat to local businesses
  - Supply chain issues
  - Finding local workers
  - Work-from-home
  - Aging workforce
  - Loss of wood products industry jobs

- **Infrastructure**
  - Loss of workforce due to housing costs and availability
  - Locals priced out of housing options due to prices
  - Cost of building materials
  - Jail system not sufficient
  - Aging infrastructure deterioration and lack of infrastructure
  - Better broadband in more rural areas
  - Roads in poor condition
  - Low tax base
  - Blight
  - Not a good and strong growth plan in Lake County
  - Lack of reliable public transportation system

- **Human issues**
  - Local government official's radicalism
  - Alcoholism and drug use

- Newcomers wanting to change the area
- Political division on reservation
- Interstate 90 shutdown for extended period due to a variety of causes would cause chaos
- Divisive political culture
- Youth outmigration
- Lack of disadvantages and underserved youth programs and services
- High poverty rates

- **Insufficient resources**
  - Sale of private forestland to development
  - Age of population, Aging population, youth migration
  - Lack of available contractors, electricians, and plumbers (to meet demand)
  - Few post-drug treatment options locally
  - BIA support to Tribes not meeting expectations
  - Need more disaster preparedness
  - Declining school funding and resources

Key Findings

Regional Strengths

MWCDP-EDD residents feel strongly that our outdoor resources are one of the region's greatest strengths. Key resources such as Flathead Lake, the Clark Fork River, Lookout Pass, and the Hiawatha Trail were identified specifically, while water and air quality, vast public lands, and access to the streams, mountains, trails, and other local options such as skateparks were identified. Outdoor activities such as sightseeing, hiking, biking, skiing, swimming and boating are all popular activities that are considered strength. Other regional strengths include key industries, infrastructure services, community support and other support organizations and the rural lifestyle.

> **Key industries** such as our local healthcare industry, hospitality and tourism industry, real estate and construction industry. These make up the bulk of our private sector clusters. Thompson River lumber was specifically mentioned as our last remaining wood-products industry business, as was the rail service, which unfortunately only serves a portion of the region. Also mentioned were our strong hydroelectric power generation capacity, our diversity of local services and businesses, and a growing base of artists and arts participants. The agriculture industry production and associated expanding processing capacity is a strength and it is noted that the region has the largest number of young new farmers in the state.

Infrastructure services were also noted as an area strength. Those specifically identified include Interstate 90, broadband services offered by Blackfoot Communications and the rail system in Mineral and Sanders Counties. Also noted was the convenience of close access to major trucking routes, and easy access to major airports. Education is also considered a strength with Salish Kootenai College providing post-secondary education and with many public and private primary and secondary education options available.

Community support and support organizations were also considered a strength of the area. Those mentioned include the Mineral County Collaborative Coalition, the Boys and Girls Club, tribal support groups, and the Flathead Infrastructure Coalition which includes members of each government (county, multiple cities, and tribal) and economic development organizations working together to address infrastructure issues. Community giving and engagement was also mentioned multiple times, as was strong leadership in multiple government entities. Economic development organizations were also noted.

The rural lifestyle was also considered a strength. Some of the attributes that are critical to this include, increasing diversity of population, longevity of families in the area, rich cultural history and heritage, and a general view and understanding of who we are and what we want. These all contribute to the rural community feeling and an excellent quality of life.

Regional Weaknesses

Regional weaknesses include the lack of affordable housing, inconsistent infrastructure for cell phone coverage and access to broadband, workforce issues that include limited and low paying options which leads to limited prosperity.

Lack of Housing for both purchase and rental, and the change in affordability of housing as prices are rising rapidly throughout the region.

Some infrastructure needs were mentioned as a weakness including inconsistent cell phone service and coverage in the region, and gaps in broadband coverage. Also mentioned were lack of childcare options including the lack of preschool in many parts of region, the lack of infrastructure for tourism, and the growing suburban sprawl.

Workforce issues identified as weaknesses include the lack of employees to fill open positions, young people leaving, an aging workforce, having to hire people that are not qualified, and new people moving in are not part of the workforce. We are experiencing

higher than average unemployment and poverty, with few opportunities for young people to gain employment and remain in the region. There are few work alternatives for skilled employees and most businesses pay low wages compared to our urban counterparts. Workforce training is also not keeping up with technology and skills required to be considered among the best. The lack of diversity in work options, a key driver in the youth migration from the area.

Limited prosperity due to few large businesses in the region that can hire, and seasonal tourism being the only industry in some areas. Prosperity is lower than in our adjacent counties that are not in the region. This is due to lower wages and higher average poverty. Loss of wood products industry work has been a significant factor. Amongst our new people in the region, there is a lack a "sense of community", as the sense of place and community is changing. Communications is a weakness as well. There was broad agreement that we are poor at getting the word out about our area, and marketing for communities is sorely missing. There is also a lack of knowledge about community development efforts and about existing outdoor resources that already exist in the area, even amongst lifelong residents.

Regional Opportunities

Everyone is very hopeful that the three counties working together will add value to the entire region. This time is also viewed as a timely opportunity for reviewing and updating emergency preparedness plans.

Infrastructure opportunities include more affordable housing, increased cell phone and broadband infrastructure and accessibility, and more rail access, electric vehicle charging stations – planned for the I90 and US 93 highway corridors. The region is also looking for more airport development and more placemaking ideas and arts facilities and events for our arts communities.

Education provides many opportunities for the region including creating a public preschool in Thompson Falls, helping local high schools develop more vocational technology classes, Salish Kootenai College (a four-year college) offering advanced and graduate degree programs and free education classes for seniors, and the need for a Kootenai immersion school. Key ideas included workforce development workshops for working skills training programs, utilizing our elderly population's knowledge base, and programs to educate people on our current resources and assets as well as our history and culture. The recently arrived newcomers are helping to improve the tax base.

Other opportunities identified include accessing Federal and State funding was for communities and businesses was identified as an opportunity to secure a grant writer resource to be available for helping write grants, efforts to help small towns develop tourism infrastructure, newcomers getting involved in their communities and sharing their skills, and retirees serving as a SCORE resource or staying in the workforce part-time. Specific opportunities include further development of downtown areas, more food processing facilities.

Several initiatives are also providing new opportunities. These include promoting "shop local" campaigns, more recycling programs being available, food sovereignty initiatives, work-from-home and remote worker efforts including training and programming being available and utilizing services that are already available locally. There is also great hope for the impacts of teaching people about the Tribes' impact on the environment and economy.

Regional Threats

Regional threats include those that occur naturally such as wildfires, floods, wind events, and extended seasonal weather patterns. Other regional threats include degradation of water resources including availability and increased pollution, and the impact of climate change.

Infrastructure threats include the lack of housing (affordability, rentals, and removal from the housing inventory for vacation rentals.) The cost of building materials is preventing new housing starts that are affordable. Aging and deteriorating infrastructure (roads, etc.) is also a problem due to a low tax base that does not support an extensive maintenance budget. Non-redundancy in transportation options is also a threat if there was a major long-term closing of a primary road corridor. Gaps in access to broadband and cell phone service is also a threat. Lack of sturdy growth plans, and reliable public transportation is also a threat. Blight due to disparities in prosperity is also a big concern.

Limited workforce capacity includes businesses experiencing problems hiring employees due to a lack of available talent, resulting in hiring unqualified employees. The aging workforce and youth out-migration is causing severe workforce shortages in most industry sectors, especially those that do not support work-from-home options. Low pay is a key reason cited for out-migration however most businesses are paying what they can afford.

Additional issues such as supply chain problems and the loss of the wood products industry jobs are a huge threat. Resource issues include sale of private forest land to

developers, lack of available contractors and trades people (construction, plumbers, and electricians), and declining school funding are also threating. Funding support for BIA programs run by the Tribes is also inadequate and declining.

Human related threats include local government officials' radicalism and political dissonance are also threats. Prevalent poverty rates, larger than average unemployment rates, lack of youth programs, and alcoholism and drug use are also big problems. Newcomers wanting to change the area is also considered a threat.

Summary

The region has numerous strengths to build upon. Our weaknesses are not insurmountable and are in fact addressable with appropriate planning and funding. We recognize the opportunities that are currently available and ahead of us and are committed to working hard to optimize as many of the identified opportunities as possible. The threats that we face are clearly recognizable and universally acknowledged amongst the CEDS Advisory Committee. It was clear as we conducted this process, that no matter where within the region you work or reside, that the input provided by the CEDS Advisory Committee and from the CEDS Survey process was supported by others and not in any conflict with the opinions that others have provided. There was great harmony within the responses.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the members of the CEDS Advisory Committee for their frank and honest inputs. The committee was served by representatives from every area and community within the region. We also had representation from most major employer industries, including education, healthcare, tourism and hospitality, media, ministry, utilities and energy production, agriculture operations, banking, telephone and broadband communications, and nonprofit organizations. We also had representation from government officials representing municipalities, county, state, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Together we have created a comprehensive listing of our SWOT attributes that will serve our region until the next CEDS revision. The CEDS Advisory Team's commitment to the prosperity of the region is truly commendable. Thank you again for your service.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND ACTION PLAN

Strategic Direction and Action Plan

Development and Implementation of Action Plan

The overall goal of this plan by the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development Districts coalition is to develop priority areas and tasks that reflect the objectives of strengthening our communities in need to diversifying the region's economy. Through the planning process, there are five sub-set goals to help achieve the overall goal of this plan.

Goal 1: Increase each communities development.

A collaborative economic development strategy will be used to achieve this goal, with an emphasis on communication, cooperation, alignment of initiatives, shared assets, and promotion of the region. The priorities within each community will include a strong focus on housing, transportation, utilities, and communication. Partnering across regions will promote creativity, synergy and innovation to provide solutions to the affordable housing crisis.

Goal 2: Increase the diversification, job growth, and innovation throughout the region.

To achieve this goal, a new business strategy will be initiated to create a place where businesses thrive. Counties will need to secure and sustain necessary resources to maximize regional opportunities for small and micro-enterprise development to promote workforce development and innovation to clients. Finally, ecommerce and remote work offer multiple business development opportunities, from enabling professionals to work from rural homes to provide services to creating new ecommerce businesses that can link to global markets and data centers.

Goal 3: Promote the awareness of local regional agriculture.

To achieve this goal, an established partnership with Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC) can add value to regional agriculture. MMFEC has become a regional leader in the food initiatives and value-added food processing by providing technical assistance to food entrepreneurs. Securing and obtaining development resources will allow for technical assistance in marketing, business planning, and the improvement of business capitalization. This partnership will allow the growth of local fresh foods to local consumers which will bolster local and regional economies when local stores begin to carry the products.

Goal 4: Foster a cooperative nature among the communities.

To achieve this goal, there will need to be a strong foundation for outreach and education to communities on cooperative models and how cooperative models can meet community needs and challenges. Additionally, to foster greater cooperation between non-tribal and tribal communities. Developing a cooperative ecosystem, sources of capital, referrals, specialized technical assistance, and outreach to community professionals will bolster the communities' cooperative nature

Goal 5: increase the use of pre-existing commercial and industrial properties.

To achieve this goal, a redevelopment strategy will be used. Currently, there are to achieve this goal; a redevelopment strategy will be used. Currently, there are currently 65 commercial properties for sale in the region (Lake 38, Mineral 10, and Sanders County 17). With the redevelopment of these properties, property owners will be encouraged to use respectful growth decision while protecting natural resources

The region's strategic economic development plans are an essential part of achieving sustainability, measurable economic growth, and improving the quality of life within the communities. MWCDP has set clear, attainable economic development goals for the organization policies and programs to achieve. These goals help promote a higher quality of life for the communities through support and enhancement of the region's local community identity, community health, culture, recreational amenities, creative industries, and economic resources.

Action Plan

CEDS 5 Year Action Plan 2022- 2027
Mission West community Development Partners' Economic Development District

Five Priorities are addressed in this Action Plan
- Priority 1: Community Development
- Priority 2: Business Development – General
- Priority 3: Business Development – Food Economies
- Priority 4: Business Development –Cooperative
- Priority 5: Growth Areas

Priority 1: Community Development

Goal: Increase each community development

Objective: A collaborative economic development strategy will be used to achieve this goal, which will emphasize communication, cooperation, alignment of initiatives, shared assets, and promotion of the region for the business investment period to successfully meet the needs of the region's businesses and future businesses, infrastructure will need to be addressed with a strong focus on housing, transportation, utilities, and communication. Partnering across regions will promote creativity and innovation to provide solutions to the affordable housing crisis.

Project Description	Invested Parties	Timeline	Priority
Provide Technical Assistance to community champions and fee-based grant research/writing/management services for community projects including conducting feasibility studies.	Federal, State, and local governmental organizations, CSKT, Mission West CDP, Mineral County EDC, Sanders County CDC, St Regis Sewer Board, St. Regis Community Council/Resort District Board, MSU Extension	Long-term	High
Address the following infrastructure priorities: Roads, Broadband, Public Safety, Housing	Federal, State, and local governmental organizations, CSKT	Short-term	High
Advance economic opportunities for under-represented people and communities.	Mission West CDP, SCCDC, MCEDC, CSKT, Arlee CDC, EDA, SBA, SKC, FVCC	Long-term	High
Support professional development of Mission West CDP staff and partners to provide community and economic development.	Mission West CDP, SCCDC, MCEDC, SCCHO, ACDC, RMAP, RBDG	Long-term	High
Continue resource development within the region by applying for or assisting regional partners in applying for and managing state and federal grant programs	Federal, State, and local governmental organizations, Mission West CDP, SCCDC, MCEDC, CSKT, Arlee CDC	Long-term	Medium
Provide media outreach regarding community projects and regional services.	Local EDOs, CSKT ED, Chambers of Commerce	Long-term	Medium
Support and champion Regional Main Street revitalization efforts	All cities and towns within the region, Mission West CDP, SCCDC, MCEDC, Chambers of Commerce, County Commissioners, CSKT	Short-term	Medium
Continued support of Regional Tourism Task Force activities and efforts	All cities and towns within the region, Mission West CDP, SCCDC, MCEDC, Chambers of Commerce, County Commissioners, CSKT, Federal and State governmental organizations, Business owners	Long-term	Medium
Represent the economic development perspective at various venues serving in the	Local Governmental Orgs, Service Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, Main Street Programs, Polson PRA, CSKT, St. Regis Community Council, Water and	Long-term	Medium

Figure 33: Action Plan Priority 1 - Community Development

Priority 2: Business Development – General

Goal: Increase the diversification, job growth, and innovation throughout the region.

Objective: To achieve this goal, a new business strategy will be initiated to create a place where business is thriving. Counties will need to secure and sustain necessary resources to maximize regional opportunities for small and micro-enterprise development to promote workforce development and innovation to clients. Finally, ecommerce and remote work offer multiple business development opportunities, from enabling professionals to work from rural homes to providing services supporting the creation of new ecommerce businesses that can link to global markets and data centers.

Project Description	Invested Parties	Timeline	Priority
Advisory Services - provide business technical assistance for new and expanding businesses through one-on-one consultations with staff and the "Expert Network" of service providers. MWCDP as umbrella and each local EDO enhancing the reach and impact.	USDA, CDFI, EDA, Mission West CDP, SCCDC, MCEDC, CSKT, Business owners	Long-term	High
Training and Development—workshops regionally on a variety of topics. Subject matter experts will drive training conversations around organizational leadership and culture, governance, sales, marketing, operations, finance, and other customer driven training needs	USDA, FVCC, SKC, Mission West CDP, SCCDC, MCEDC, CSKT, Business owners	Long-term	High
Access to Capital: Convene resources, gather data, and secure lending capital for new and expanding businesses.	USDA, EDA, Treasury Department, Mission West CDP, SCCDC, MCEDC	Long-term	High
Provide fee-based grant research/ writing/ management services for new and expanding businesses including gathering data and conducting feasibility studies.	Montana Department of Commerce, Federal agencies, Mission West CDP, SCCDC, MCEDC	Long-term	Medium
Support professional development of Business Development Center staff and partners to be able to provide Technical Assistance and Education.	USDA, EDA, Treasury Department, State of Montana, MEDA, IEDC, NDC, Mission West CDP	Long-term	Medium

Figure 34: Action Plan Priority 2 -Business Development - General

Priority 3: Business Development – Food Economies

Goal: Promote the awareness of local and regional agriculture.

Objective: To achieve this goal, a common partnership with Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC) helped add value to regional agriculture. MMFEC has become a leader in food in regional economic development initiatives by providing technical assistance to food entrepreneurs. Securing and obtaining development resources will allow for technical assistance in marketing, business planning, and the improvement of business capitalization. These partnership will allow the growth of local food entrepreneurs with opportunities to efficiently reach and flourish in our local and regional markets. These efforts will increase health benefits to consumers while bolstering local and regional economies when local stores sell the products.

Project Description	Invested Parties	Timeline	Priority
Provide technical assistance for food businesses via personalized counseling and workshops.	FFI, MSU, OSU, FIC, MDOA Food and Agriculture Program	Long-term	High
Provide food safety education and resources to food and value-added agricultural enterprises.	MMEC, MDOA, DDB Technical Services	Long-term	High
Increase food production at MMFEC Food Processing Facility.	WMGC/LINC/Puget Sound Coop, WARC, MSU Food Lab		High
Build fiscal, operational, managerial, and equipment capacity of MMFEC's Food Processing Facility.	Food Corridor, DDB Technical Services, DPHHS CEDS		High
Collaborate with regional and statewide partners to enhance local food system development, value and increase added agriculture processing opportunities	AERO, NCAT, MFU, MMEC, WARC, FADC Network, MSU Northern, MSU Food Lab	Long-term	High
Assist food and value-added agricultural enterprises with capitalization.	WMGC/LINC/Puget Sound Food Coop, USDA LFPP, Farm Fare, NCAT	Long-term	Medium
Use SCB funding to provide technical assistance to food and ag businesses.	USDA, MDOA, MODC, CFAC, MW Loan Program	Long-term	Medium
Increase opportunities for Agri-tourism through outreach and education	Great Northern Development Corp., MMAPP, Governor's Office of Tourism and Rec., MT - DOC	Long-term	Medium
Support professional development of MMFEC staff to be able to provide technical assistance and education	MMEC, FFI, T.A. Network, FVCC, NDC		Medium
Market/communicate services offered, and events held by MMFEC.	T.A. network	Short-term	Medium
Form and utilize a MMFEC communications team to increase public communications and community involvement for the department.	MWCDP	Short-term	Medium

Figure 35: Action Plan Priority 3 -Business Development - Food Economies

Priority 4: Business Development –Cooperative

Goal: Foster a cooperative nature among the communities.

Objective: To achieve this goal, there will need to be a strong foundational understanding cooperative models. Developing an effective outreach and education communities on cooperative model and how they can meet community needs and challenges. Developing a cooperative ecosystem, sources of capital, referrals, customized technical assistance, and outreach to community professionals for cooperative models will bolster the community's cooper

Project Description	Invested Parties	Timeline	Priority
Research, collect and disseminate principles, facts, models, and technical knowledge related to cooperative business development.	Cooperative Business to be featured in Case Study (i.e., Western Montana Growers Cooperative), Mineral County Economic Development Corporation, Sanders County Community Development Corporation, Arlee Cooperative Development Corporation, USDA- RCDG (grant)	Short-term	High
Provide Technical Assistance and support to emerging and existing cooperative development projects that improve the economic conditions of the region through workshops and one-on-one counseling.	Mission West Expert Service Providers Network and service providers in the Mission West Cooperative Referral Guide, MCEDC, SCCDC, Arlee CDC, USDA-RCDG (grant), USDA- Regional Food Systems Partnership (grant)	Long-term	High
Build capacity and resources in developing cooperative projects through broad collaborations, partnerships, and cooperative development networks.	MCEDC, SCCDC, SBDC, Other Economic Development Organizations/CRDCs, Chambers of Commerce/Downtown Organizations, Other non-profit organizations, CSKT, Local/state governments/organizations, Montana Cooperative Development Center, NW Agriculture Business Center, USDA-RCDG (grant), USDA- Regional Food Systems Partnership (grant)	Long-term	High
Research models for cooperatives to address growth areas and develop organizational capacity to provide cooperative development services in growth areas. Specifically cooperative solutions to affordable housing.	SCCDC, MCEDC, SCCHO, Pacific NW Rural Broadband Alliance, Community Food and Agriculture Coalition, Center for Community Ownership, SBDC, Downtown Organizations, Chambers of Commerce, Local Government USDA RCDG (grant)	Short-term	High
Support the development of cooperative networks in Montana and foster cooperative to cooperative collaboration.	Montana Cooperative Development Center, MCEDC, SCCDC, Arlee CDC, Farm Fare and Local Food Marketplace, Kitchen Sync Strategies, Western Montana Growers Cooperative, LINC Foods, Puget Sound Food Hub, NW Agriculture Business Center, USDA- Regional Food Systems Partnership (grant) USDA-RCDG (grant)	Long-term	Medium
Support professional development of Mission West Cooperative Development and other staff to be able to provide cooperative development technical assistance and education.	Cooperation Works, National Cooperative Business Association, Federation of Worker Cooperatives, USDA, USDA-RCDG (grant)	Long-term	Medium
Develop Mission West Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund Program to increases access to financing for cooperatives.	USDA-RBDG (grant), USDA-RCDG (grant), Local and regional foundations	Short-term	Medium

Figure 36: Action Plan - Priority 4 - Business Development - Cooperative

Priority 5: Growth Areas

Goal: Increase the use of pre-existing commercial and industrial properties.

Objective: To achieve this goal, a redevelopment strategy will be used. Currently, there currently 65 commercial properties for sale in the region (Lake 38, Mineral 10, and Sanders County 17). With the redevelopment of these properties, property owners will be encouraged to use models and blueprints that support growth while protecting natural resources

Project Description	Invested Parties	Timeline	Priority
Collaborate with county partners to determine growth centers. Analyze market opportunities and strengths within geographies as well as the barriers residents and small businesses face in benefiting from them to determine policy and practice sifts.	Mission West CDP, Sanders County CDC, Mineral County EDC, Arlee Cooperative Development Corporation, CSKT, Business owners, Chambers of Commerce/Downtown Organizations, Other non-profit organizations,	Short-term	High
Develop an action plan that leverages place-based investments for community benefit and integrates community, economic and workforce development efforts within underinvested communities to connect them to their regional economies.	Mission West CDP, Sanders County CDC, Mineral County EDC, Arlee Cooperative Development Corporation, CSKT, Business owners, Chambers of Commerce/Downtown Organizations, Other non-profit organizations,	Short-term	High

Figure 37: Action Plan - Priority 5 - Growth Areas

The region's strategic economic development plans are an essential part of achieving sustainability, measurable economic growth, business performance and profitability, and improving the quality of the region's community economies. MWCDP has set clear and attainable economic development goals for the organization's policies and programs to achieve. These goals help promote a higher quality of life for the region's communities through support and enhancement of the region's local community identity, infrastructure, community health, culture, recreational amenities, creative industries, and economic resources.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Evaluation Framework

Introduction

The 2022 CEDS five-year plan is a thorough analysis of the current conditions and perceptions of the region strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and offer goals, objectives, and actions to support growth from its current conditions[35]. Measurable performance metrics are essential to the document to ensure actions are being initiated, projects are being documented, and subsequent results are quantified. The purpose of this section is to state evaluation methods of the CEDS document and assure the successful implementation of the plan.

The MWCDP-EDD performance is also evaluated on an ongoing basis by the MWCDP Board of Directors and committees as facilitated via staff communications relating to current and future projects. Program updates occur through Board of Directors meetings, personal contacts, meetings of member entities, annual reports and the CEDS.

Indirect Measures

While some measures directly measure job growth and wealth in their respective region, there are several indirect measures that contribute to program effectiveness and impact by concentrating on the built environment, social issues, cultural assets, educational offerings, and natural resources. These indirect measurements include:
- Number of jobs created after the implementation of the CEDS
- Number and types of investments in the region
- Number of jobs retained in their region
- Companies growing and expanding
- Changes in the economic environment of the region
- Educational attainment
- Poverty rates
- Mean household income
- Organizations forced to build partnerships among invested partners to increase economic resiliency
- Housing and rental unit growth and availability
- Demographics
- Monitor county business patterns to commute businesses information rates and declines

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[35] https://www.statsamerica.org/ceds/pdfs/Denver/2015_06_4_1_74.pdf

The CEDS is a living document, reliant on the CEDS Committee to reconvene to evaluate the effectiveness of the CEDS goals and objectives. Throughout the region individual projects will be examined for congruency to the CEDS goals and objectives and will be documented. In addition to evaluation of current actions, the committee will also discuss whether the CEDS document is relevant, and if current implementation and action items are meeting the expectation of the region. Lastly, the committee will suggest changes to the document for future updates that may make it more effective for the region's use.

RESILIENCY

Resiliency

Economic Resiliency

The MWCDP-EDD region of Lake, Mineral and Sanders Counties are vulnerable to a wide variety of disasters including, but not limited to, fires, flooding, chemical/biological warfare, dam failure, drought, and extreme heat, freeze events and extreme cold, earthquakes, hazardous materials, landslides, nuclear attack, tornadoes, vector-borne diseases, volcanic fallout, violence, terrorism.

Included as a separate detailed document in attachments is the MWCDP-EDD Economic Resiliency Strategy. The primary areas of focus for the economic resiliency strategy revolve around the following topics:

- Resumption and Retention of Employers
- Small Business Assistance
- Workforce Retention
- Physical Economic Redevelopment
- Opportunities to Sustainably Restore Economic Vitality
- Infrastructure and Public Facilities

Detailed topics and strategies include:

- Pre-Disaster Planning and Preparation
- Pre-disaster Preparedness
- Recovery and Mitigation Planning

Contact Information

The Lake County Emergency Management Officer and the Salish Kootenai Tribal Emergency Management Officer co-chair a committee and oversee the co-developed Emergency Operations Plan for the tribe and county, meeting on a monthly schedule to review, update and plan exercises related to implementing the plan under varying conditions. Contacts are:

Dale Nelson, Disaster Emergency Services, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

P.O. Box 278,

Pablo, MT

dalesn@cskt.org

(406) 676-2700 Ext 6414

Mark Clary, Emergency Management Coordinator, Lake County

25 Regatta Road,

Regatta Plaza - Suite A,

Polson, MT 59860

mclary@lakemt.gov

(406) 883-7253

Both Mineral and Sanders Counties have written Emergency Management plans and coordinating instructions. The current emergency plan coordinators in those counties are:

Lori Dove, Emergency Department Head, Mineral County

300 River Street,

Superior, MT 59872

ldove@co.mineral.mt.us

(406) 203-6122

Bill Naegeli, Emergency Manager, Sanders County

1111 Main St.

P.O. 519,

Thompson Falls, MT 59873

bnaegeli@co.sanders.mt.us

(406) 827-6955

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

Mission, Vision and Values of MWCDP

Mission
To enhance the quality of life and economic well-being of all residents of Mission West CDP Region and the Flathead Indian Reservation.

Vision
The vision of the Mission West region is to be culturally respectful, economically sustainable, and environmentally progressive.

Values
- We value business growth while maintaining a high quality of life and our environment.
- We foster a collaborative relationship within the region's business community.
- We nurture a close working relationship with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Lake, Mineral and Sanders Counties, and local governments.
- We execute our mission in a manner that is ethical, legal, and fiscally responsible.
- We pursue opportunities that support economic development and self-sustaining operations.

We perform our duties using best practices management principles and strive for continuous improvement.

MWCDP District Staff Roster

Primary Staff of Mission West who work on behalf of the regional collaboration include:

Heather Knutson-Walter, Executive Director

Heather Knutson-Walter was born and raised in Polson, Montana. Following graduation from Polson High School, she attended Montana State University and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business. After college she moved to Billings where she worked in an advertising agency for several years before returning to Polson to work in the family business, Country Pasta, and coach girls' volleyball and basketball. In 2013 Heather ran for Mayor of Polson and was sworn in at the start of 2014. During her time as mayor, she enjoyed working with our citizens and aimed to provide positive leadership in our changing community. In 2022 Heather started working at Mission West Community Development Partners as the Executive Director. She is married to Brad Walter, who was also born and raised in Polson, and they have two boys.

Steve Clairmont, Center Director –Community Focused Economic Development Center

Steve Clairmont, a Flathead Reservation and Lake County Native, holds a BS in Business Administration and a AS in Electronic Engineering Technology. He is also certified as an Economic Development Finance Professional from the National Development Council. Steve served as the President of S&K Business Services, Inc. and Sovereign Leasing & Financing Inc., tribal enterprises involved in regional economic development activities for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. He also was the designated Tribal Economic Development Administration (EDA) Planner and conducted work for the Tribes under their EDA planning program. Steve joined Mission West in July 2021.

Jan Tusick, Center Director – Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center

Jan has a strong background in agriculture, finance and capitalization, networking, and marketing. She received her certification as a Cooperative Development Specialist through Cooperation Works in 2003 and completed the National Development Council Economic Development Finance Professional training in 2005. She has effectively facilitated cooperative groups in their business development and assisted emerging cooperatives with business and market planning, capitalization, and feasibility analysis. In previous positions, Jan worked with entrepreneurs and start-up businesses in acquiring venture capital for their companies. She networked with economic development organizations and state agencies statewide to ensure her clients were represented. Jan's agricultural background of 20 years gives her a solid foundation of understanding the Agricultural economy and the challenges it faces. Jan holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Science from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA.

and is HAACP certified. Jan serves on the Board of Montana Farmers Union and is recognized nationally for her work in developing local food systems.

Kaylee Thornley, Center Director - Cooperative Development Center
Originally from rural Northern Wisconsin, Kaylee Thornley joined Lake County Community Development Corporation in Western Montana as Cooperative Development Program Manager in November 2019. Previously, she worked in Washington, DC at the Democracy Collaborative contributing to research on community wealth building and economic democracy. She has a degree in Sustainable Community Development from Northland College. Her interdisciplinary degree focused on the intersections between environmental, social, and economic systems. During college, Kaylee worked for three years as a research assistant at Northland College's Center for Rural Communities (CRC). Her work at the CRC focused on rural community development, including topics such as social capital, food systems, agricultural and environmental issues, and lake and water management. Prior to joining LCCDC, Kaylee could be found traveling across North America in a tiny house she and her partner built inside a cargo van and riding her road bike around the world's largest lake, Lake Superior.

John Whitworth, Center Director –Loan Services Center
John joined the Mission West Community Development Partners team as part of the company's succession plan. During COVID, John worked as an independent business consultant helping local businesses and entrepreneurs with feasibility studies, proposals, and business plans and before that he managed a multimillion-dollar investment and loan portfolios for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. John has a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Montana and undergraduate's degree in Business Management and Entrepreneurship from the Salish Kootenai College in Pablo. For John's public and community service and outreach efforts during his undergraduate studies, John was awarded a full scholarship to the University of Montana where he also worked at the national office of the American Indian Business Leaders where he organized the National K through 12 business planning competition and recruited national SCORE organization members to judge it. John is the chair and vice chair on two separate company board of directors and is currently developing his own business that is creating a unique online payment service. John also served as a Combat Engineer with the Montana National Guard and has earned many other certificates and accreditations throughout his life.

Karen Dellwo, Business Development Manager
Karen joined the team of Lake County Community Development in October

2019. Previously you would find Karen working in the banking industry where she worked in many facets of banking over the past 4 decades. During her tenure in the banking sector, Karen held and led positions in bookkeeping, new accounts, tellers, operations, investments, deposit compliance, safety soundness for the bank and the customer, security, risk assessment, third party contracts, facility management, and worked with borrowers in the business and agriculture arena. She was also involved in many aspects of human resources. After Karen transitioned out of banking in 2017, she spent the last two years working with adults on financial literacy. Karen works with business clients and economic development organizations providing technical assistance, analysis, and research to increase new business and expansion of existing business. She attended the Kinman Business University in Spokane WA receiving an AA in business administration /accounting, has a certificate in agriculture lending provided through Pullman WA, and a certificate from National Financial Educators Council in Las Vegas, NV. When not in the office you will find Karen volunteering at community activities that she is involved with, spending time with family and friends up and down the valley or enjoying a good read.

Liz Hansen, Program Coordinator
Liz joined the Mission West team in the fall of 2021. She attained a bachelor's degree in environmental studies with an emphasis in food systems from Western Washington University. Liz is passionate about all facets of the food system, but is most emboldened about sustainable agricultural practices, and the socioeconomic, political, and social justice aspects of food system work. Her most recent work experience has been with a sustainability non-profit and educational farm, but she worked as a veterinary assistant for a number of years before transitioning to the food systems world. As the Food and Ag Program Coordinator for Mission West, Liz works with food and farm businesses and institutions across the state to bring opportunities to food businesses and rural communities to help them thrive. Outside of work, Liz spends her free time with her family exploring the Big Sky's great outdoors, playing in the garden, or relaxing with a craft project.

Ray Brown, Executive Director – Sanders County Community Development Corporation
Ray has lived in Montana since 1992. He graduated from Thompson Falls High School in 1994 and the University of Montana in 2001 with a BS in Business Administration and Information Technology. Ray has worked in multiple business sectors that include wine distribution, energy conservation, resort sales and marketing, excavation and erosion control, teaching, and behavioral sciences. Ray is a coach for the State Champion

Thompson Falls Blue Hawks Football team and his passions include supporting non-profit organizations with over 25 years of service, live concert experiences, and being a good father to his 15-year-old son and 5-year-old blue heeler.

Emily Park, Executive Director – Mineral County Economic Development Corporation
In December of 2015 Emily joined MSU Extension Mineral County as the Administrative Assistant, in August of 2017 she became the Economic Development Extension Agent, working closely with her regional partners, Mission West Community Development Partners (MWCDP) and Sanders County Community Development Corporation (SCCDC) to provide leadership in economic and community development in Mineral County. In 2019, she became the Executive Director of the Mineral County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC). Priorities include strategic planning and implementation of educational programming throughout Mineral County with emphasis on community and economic development, leadership and capacity building, and workforce development.

Marie Hirsch, Executive Director – Arlee Community Development Corporation
As a seasoned and passionate regional supporter of community and economic development over the past nine years, she joined the Arlee CDC in November 2020, from Mission West Community Development Partners where she has served as the Business Development Center Director, involved in grant writing, business development, community building, partnerships and collaborations, and outreach. Marie currently serves on the Montana Economic Developers Association board as well as the board of the Montana Food Bank Network since July of 2021. Since moving to Montana in 2009, Ms. Hirsch has worked with several other nonprofits including the Polson Chamber, Safe Harbor and Doves. Before that, she spent twenty years in Corporate Investor Relations with four publicly traded companies. Ms. Hirsch is a communication and finance professional educated at Regis University in Denver, CO.

Lisa Fried de Reyes, Executive Director – Sanders County Community Housing Organization
Lisa is a native of Sanders County living in the Plains area. She has had 36 successful years in finance and recently found a new "home" in the nonprofit sector, in particular Sanders County Community Housing Organization, Inc. She is passionate about bringing solutions to problems and building successful teams. Her lifelong career of choice is becoming the best person she can be. Lisa enjoys helping people find solutions to their needs, reading, puzzling, crocheting, canning, traveling, and spending time with her family and friends

ARTICLES OF AMENDMENT
OF

MISSION VALLEY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
a Montana Non-Profit Corporation
Hereinafter Known as:
LAKE COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

334185

STATE OF MONTANA
FILED
APR - 7 1995

SECRETARY OF STATE

TO THE PUBLIC:

These Articles of Amendment are filed pursuant to M.C.A. §35-2-225 for the purpose of reflecting the change in the name of this Corporation as well as to reflect a change in the Registered Office and Registered Agent. Accordingly, the pertinent provisions of the Articles of Incorporation originally filed with the Office of the Montana Secretary of State, on November 24, 1993, are hereby amended as follows:

ARTICLE I

The name of the Corporation shall be: LAKE COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

ARTICLE V

The address of the Registered Office of this Corporation is 319 Main SW, Ronan, MT 59864, and the name of the Registered Agent at such address is BILLIE J. LEE.

The number of outstanding members of the organization, likewise being the number of members entitled to vote on the amendment, is three. These amendments to the Articles of Incorporation were duly adopted by the unanimous vote of approval of the membership and Board of Directors at a meeting duly noticed and conducted for such purpose on January 31, 1995. No other approval is required.

DATED this 5ᵗʰ day of April , 1995.

MISSION VALLEY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
a Montana Corporation

By: _____
JAY WILSON PRESTON, President

ATTEST:

_____
PAULA SCHILPEROORT KEEP, Secretary

ARTICLES OF AMENDMENT - Page 1 of 2

325652

STATE OF MONTANA

FILED

NOV 24 1993

SECRETARY OF STATE

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF
MISSION VALLEY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

These Articles of Incorporation are executed by the undersigned for the purpose of forming a Public Benefit Corporation under the Montana Nonprofit Corporation Act.

ARTICLE I

The name of this cooperation shall be: "Mission Valley Development Corporation"

ARTICLE II

The period of existence of this corporation shall be perpetual.

ARTICLE III

This a Public Benefit Corporation organized "not for profit" under Title 35, Chapter 2 M.C.A. to receive and administer funds exclusively for educational, charitable and scientific purposes without pecuniary gain or profit, incidental or otherwise, to its members.

It's purpose shall be to assist in the development of projects, undertakings, studies, training programs, workshops and other activities beneficial to the public interest, in cooperation and in coordination with local governmental, civic bodies and other groups, corporations or individuals to: aid, assist and foster the planning, replanning, development, renewal, redevelopment and improvement of the Mission Valley area of Montana; to combat community deterioration and support the elimination of slums, blight and blighting influences of the Mission Valley area; to promote social welfare, relief of the unemployed or underemployed; to lessen neighborhood tensions and work to eliminate prejudice; to secure adequate housing, community facilities and other related facilities, services and conditions, economic and otherwise, conducive to the progress and general welfare of the community; to conduct research in the public interest for purposes of aiding the community by attracting new industry to the community and by encouraging the development and retention of industries within the Mission Valley area; and to that end:

1.   To encourage and assist in the preparation of plans, surveys, studies and recommendations;

2.   To investigate and study general specific economic conditions and support product research within the Mission Valley area of Montana with an aim to increase economic activity, employment, tax base and opportunity;

ARTICLES OF INCOR ORATION - ARTICLE III (CONT. JED)

3.   To assist in finding sources of funding and financing for plant and equipment for local business concerns, either by funds solely from its source or in conjunction with the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 and other such programs, when such assistance will result in broad economic benefit to the area through job expansion or retention; to assist local businesses to expand to provide a means of livelihood and expanded job opportunities for unemployed and underemployed Mission Valley residents; and to help establish new business in the area and to rehabilitate existing or former businesses that have deteriorated where it can be shown to be in the public interest and beneficial to the area's overall economic condition.

4.   To aid and assist in clearing, rebuilding, and rehabilitating blighted, deteriorated areas or structures;

5.   To encourage citizen participation in housing and community improvements and improvement programs and to disseminate information to the general public concerning the objectives and purposes of such programs;

6.   To purchase, take, receive, lease, take by gift, devise or bequest, or otherwise acquire, own, hold, improve, use and otherwise deal in and with real and personal property, or any interest therein, wherever situated;

7.   To make contracts and incur liabilities, receive grants of money, borrow money at such rates of interest as the corporation may determine, issue its notes, bonds, and other obligations and secure any of its obligations by mortgage or pledge of all or any of its property, franchises and income;

8.   To carry on any of the foregoing activities or purposes either directly, or as agent for or with other persons, associations or corporations;

9.   To carry on any activity and to deal with and expend any such property or income therefrom for any of the foregoing purposes without limitation, except such limitations, if any, as may be contained in the instrument under which such property is received, the Certificate of Incorporation, the By-laws of the Corporation, or any other limitations as are prescribed by law, provided that no such activity shall be such as is not permitted by a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax; under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or any corresponding future provision of the Revenue Code, and that the Corporation shall not attempt to influence legislation by propaganda or otherwise, nor shall it intervene in or participated in, any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office, and provided further that no part of the net earnings of this Corporation shall inure to the benefit of any member or private individual and no member, director or officer of the Corporation shall receive any pecuniary benefit from the Corporation, except such reasonable compensation as may be allowed for services actually rendered to the Corporation;

10.   To have and exercise all powers necessary or convenient to effect any or all of its purposes and to have and exercise all powers granted non-profit corporations by the laws of the State of Montana.

ARTICLES - MVDC PAGE 2

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

ARTICLE IV

In the event of voluntary or involuntary dissolution or liquidation of this corporation under the laws of the State of Montana, and procedures prescribed therein, all assets remaining to be distributed after payment of costs and expenses of court proceedings and all liabilities and obligations of the corporation, shall be distributed to either an organization likewise qualifying under 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or the legally governing body wherein said property is located: i.e., The City of Ronan or Lake County or other municipal corporations as may be in place at the time of dissolution or liquidation.

ARTICLE V

The address of the initial registered office of this corporation is 312 Main Street S.W., Ronan, MT 59864, and the name of its initial registered agent is Jay Wilson Preston, 312 Main Street S.W., Ronan, MT 59864.

ARTICLE VI

The number of directors constituting the initial Board of Directors shall be nine, and the names and addresses of such persons who are to serve as the initial board of Directors are:

Jay Wilson Preston, 717 2nd Place S.W., Ronan, MT 59864

Margaret Hall, P.O. Box 277, Pablo, MT 59855

Tim Schauss, P.O. Box 248, Pablo, MT 59855

Robert Voth, 419 4th Avenue S.W., Ronan, MT 59864

Paula Keep, P.O. Box 254, Ronan, MT 59864

Dan Salomon, 4255 Salomon Road, Ronan, MT 59864

Martin Olsson, P.O. Box B, Ronan, MT 59864

Allen Buhr, P.O. Box 4, Ronan, MT 59864

Robert McCrea, #17 4th Avenue S.E., Ronan, MT 59864

A change in the number of directors of this corporation shall be made by the By-Laws of this Corporation, or any amendment thereto.

ARTICLES - MVDC PAGE 3

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

ARTICLE VII

The names and addresses of each incorporator of this corporation are:

Jay Wilson Preston, 717 2nd Place S.W., Ronan, MT 59864

Margaret Hall, P.O. Box 277, Pablo, MT 59855

Tim Schauss, P.O. Box 248, Pablo, MT 59855

Robert Voth, 419 4th Avenue S.W., Ronan, MT 59864

Paula Keep, P.O. Box 254, Ronan, MT 59864

Dan Salomon, 4255 Salomon Road, Ronan, MT 59864

Martin Olsson, P.O. Box B, Ronan, MT 59864

Allen Buhr, P.O. Box 4, Ronan, MT 59864

Robert McCrea, #17 4th Avenue S.E., Ronan, MT 59864

ARTICLE VII

No part of the income, profits, or net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to, its directors or officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article III hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt form Federal income tax under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 amended (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 amended (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

ARTICLES - MVDC PAGE 4

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
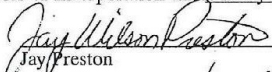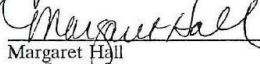
ARTICLE IX

The date of the meeting of the Board of Directors at which these Articles of Incorporation were adopted was October 7, 1993. A quorum was present at such meeting, and such Articles received the vote of a majority of the Directors in office.
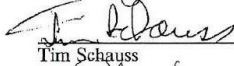
ARTICLE X
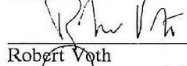
The directors, officers, employees and members of this corporation shall not, as such, be liable for its obligations or liabilities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have made, subscribed and acknowledged these Articles of Incorporation this 4th day of November, 1993.

Jay Preston
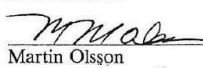
Margaret Hall
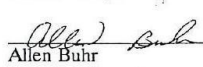
Tim Schauss
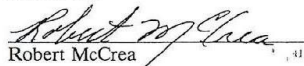
Robert Voth

Paula Keep

Dan Salomon

Martin Olsson

Allen Buhr

Robert McCrea

ARTICLES - MVDC PAGE 5

BY-LAWS
OF
LAKE COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (DBA) MISSION WEST
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS
AS AMENDED August 23, 2021

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this corporation shall be: "Lake County Community Development Corporation (DBA) Mission West Community Development Partners" hereafter referred to as "Mission West Community Development Partners."

ARTICLE II: OFFICES

The principal office of the Corporation shall be located in the City of Ronan, County of Lake, State of Montana.

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE

This is a Public Benefit Corporation organized "not for profit" under Title 35, Chapter 2 M.C.A. to receive and administer funds exclusively for educational, charitable and scientific purposes without pecuniary gain or profit, incidental or otherwise, to its members.

It's purpose shall be to assist in the development of projects, undertakings, studies, training programs, workshops and other activities beneficial to the public interest, in cooperation and in coordination with local governmental, civic bodies and other groups, corporations or individuals to assist and foster the planning, development, renewal, redevelopment and improvement of the Lake County area of Montana and the region forming the *Mission West Community Development Partnership (Mission West CDP), which is inclusive of Lake County, Mineral County, Sanders County and the Flathead Reservation.* Further, to combat community deterioration and support the elimination of slums, blight and blighting influences; to promote social welfare, relief of the unemployed or underemployed; to lessen neighborhood tensions and work to eliminate prejudice; to secure adequate housing, community faci ties and other related facilities, services and conditions, economic and otherwise, conducive to the progress and general welfare of the community; to conduct research in the public interest for purposes of aiding the community by attracting new industry to the community and by encouraging the development and retention of existing industries and businesses within the District.

As designated by the Economic Development Administration, Mission West Community Development Partners will serve as the fiduciary for the Economic Development District. The Economic Development District brings together public and private interest to coordinate economic development strategies, provide technical assistance, and facilitate economic development funding. As a District Organization, Mission West Community Development Partners shall engage in the full range of economic development activities listed in its EDA-approved CEDS.

ARTICLE V: DIRECTORS

Section 1: General Powers.   The affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by its Board of Directors which shall serve as the governing arm related to EDA District matters.

Section 2: Number, Tenure and Qualifications.

A. The Board of Directors of Mission West Community Development Partners shall have no less than **nine (9)** and up to *fifteen (15) Directors.*

B. Three (3) seats on the Board of Directors shall be held by County Commissioners or their designee as follows: Lake County shall have one seat on the board, Mineral County shall have one seat on the board, and Sanders County shall have one seat on the board.

C. One (1) seat on the Board of Directors shall be filled by a representative from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe (CSKT).

D. Three (3) seats on the Board of Directors shall be filled by representative from partner community economic development and community development organizations such as, economic development corporations and community development corporations.

E. All other seats shall be comprised of responsible citizens as nominated from the population of the Mission West CDP region at large – making every effort to balance the Board with representatives from incorporated cities and towns, and unincorporated areas. Mission West CDP will also make every effort to balance membership by geographical, economic and ethnic distribution of the population to accurately reflect the demographics the region. Nominations may come from any current Director in good standing. A Director appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the unexpired term of his/her predecessor in office.

F. The term of office of each Director is to be three (3) years and multiple terms may be served.

Section 3: Nomination and Election of Directors – Mission West Community Development Partners:

A. Directors for expired terms of office shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Corporation by a majority vote of the members present and constituting a quorum.

B. Prior to the annual meeting, the President shall call a meeting of the Executive Committee which shall act as the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall nominate one (1) qualified member as a candidate for each directorship to be filled, taking into consideration the goal of maintaining appropriate broad representation from all geographic areas and communities in Lake, Sanders, and Mineral counties.

C. Upon calling the annual meeting to order, the President shall first call for the election of Directors and shall read the slate of candidates nominated by the Nominating Committee, followed by a call for additional nominations from the floor. A valid nomination consists of any qualified member nominated by any other qualified member then receiving a second to the nomination by a third qualified member.

D. If no additional nominees are presented from the membership, the members nominated by the Nominating Committee shall be considered elected. If additional nominations are made, a ballot containing the names of all nominees shall be distributed to qualified members in attendance. Ballots will be collected and tallied by two Directors as appointed by the President from those members not having been a nominated for office or a Director's position on the Board. Those nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be considered elected.

E. The nominees so elected shall be then immediately seated prior to continuing with the next order of business on the agenda with full voting privileges.

Section 4: Resignation of Directors. Any member of the Board of Directors may resign therefrom by resignation in writing lodged with the Secretary/Treasurer.

Section 5: Removal of Directors. Any member of the Board of Directors may be removed from his/her position because of failure, for any reason, to perform his/her duties as such Director. Such removal shall be made by the vote of two-thirds of the remaining Directors of the Corporation at a meeting duly called and noticed for that purpose where such removal is clearly identified on a meeting agenda which has been sent to each director at least 3 days prior to the meeting. The Board of Directors may have the option of removing any Director without notification or special meeting if a Director is not actively participating as shown by absence at four consecutive meetings.

Section 6: Quorum.   The authorized number of members of the Board of Directors necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at meetings of the Board of Directors is a majority of the then duly elected members of the Board.

ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS

Section 1: Officers. The Officers of the Corporation shall be a President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer, each of whom must be selected from among the membership of the Board of Directors.

Section 2: Election and Term of Office. The Officers of the Corporation shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors during the next regular Board of Directors meeting after the annual meeting of the membership. Each officer so elected shall serve for one year or until his/her successor is duly elected and qualified, except in the case of his/her earlier death, resignation or removal.

Section 3: Resignation. Any officer may resign by resignation in writing, by mail or e-mail, lodged with the Executive Director at the Corporation's address.

Section 4: Removal. Any Officer elected by the Board of Directors may be removed by the Board of Directors by a simple majority vote whenever, in its judgment, the interests of the Corporation would be served. Such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the officer so removed.

Section 5: Vacancies. A vacancy in any office, because of death, resignation, removal, or otherwise, may be filled by the Board of Directors for the unexpired portion of the term.

Section 6: Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is a permanent, standing committee of the Board, serving also as the Nominating Committee and consists of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Immediate Past President of the Board.

Section 7: Powers and Duties. The Officers and Executive Committee shall have such powers and shall perform such duties as may from time to time be specified in the resolutions or other directives of the Board of Directors. In the absence of specifications, each officer shall have the

powers and authority and shall perform and discharge the duties usual to such officers in similar corporations, except as otherwise expressly provided herein.

Section 8. The President. The President, or in his/her absence, the Vice President, shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors, and shall sign, or countersign, all contracts or other instruments made on behalf of the Corporation, as authorized by the Board of Directors. He/she shall make reports to the Directors and perform all such other duties as are incident to the office or are properly required by the Board of Directors.

Section 9. The Secretary/Treasurer. The Secretary/Treasurer, or Executive Director as their appointee, shall issue notices for meetings; keep their minutes; and have charge of the Seal and the Corporate Books; and. The Secretary/Treasure, with the President, shall sign such instruments and contracts on behalf of the Corporation as require such signature(s).

He/she, or the appointed staff, shall keep an active, accurate account of all money, donations and/or gifts received by and expended for use of the Corporation; be responsible for the safe guarding of all funds received by the Corporation and for their proper disbursement; and make reports to the Directors and an annual report at the end of each year to the members and the Board of Directors. Such funds shall be kept on deposit in financial institutions approved by the Board of Directors. The Books of the Corporation shall at all times be open to inspection by the Board of Directors. He/she shall sign or countersign such instruments as require his/her signature and shall insure the performance of all such other duties as are incident to the office or are properly required by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VII: MANAGEMENT/STAFF

The Board of Directors shall have the power to hire appropriate management at such time as the Board deems such action to be in the best interest of the Corporation. The Board of Directors shall determine the duties of such management and fix compensation as are appropriate to the services rendered.

ARTICLE VIII: MEETINGS

Regular Meetings. A regular meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held no fewer than one each calendar quarter at a time and place which shall be determined from time to time by the Board. Such determination shall constitute the only notice required for regular meetings and notice of each change shall be provided to each Director by phone, fax, mail or e-mail.

Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called at the request of the President or any two (2) Directors. Notice of special meeting shall be given before the special meeting by written notice, including phone, mail, fax, e-mail or delivered personally to the address of record of each Director. A confirmed phone call directly to the Director may be used where time is of the essence. Any Director may waive notice of any meeting. The attendance of a Director at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a Director attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. The business to be transacted at the meeting need not be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such meeting.

Regional Meetings. As a District Organization, Mission West shall hold meetings open to the public at least twice a year and also shall publish the date and agenda of such meetings

sufficiently in advance to allow the public a reasonable time to prepare in order to participate effectively.

Parliamentary Procedures: Mission West shall adopt a system of parliamentary procedures to assure that board members and others have access to an effective opportunity to participate in the affairs of the District.

Public Notice and Transparency: Mission West shall provide information sufficiently in advance of decisions to give the public adequate opportunity to review and react to proposals. Mission West should communicate technical data and other material to the public so they may understand the impact of public programs, available options and alternative decisions. Mission West shall make available to the public such audited statements, annual budgets and minutes of public meetings, as may be reasonably requested.

Transactions and Adjournment. The authorized number of members of the Board of Directors necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at meetings of the Board of Directors is a majority of the then duly elected members of the Board and if such a number is not present at any meeting, the presiding officer may adjourn the meeting until such a number is present.

Precedence. At all meetings of the Board of Directors, the President, Vice President or Secretary/Treasurer, in the order given, shall preside.

Voting. At every meeting of the Board of Directors, each Director shall be entitled to one vote to be cast either in person or by proxy. A phone or email poll of the entire board may be taken on any action requiring a vote of the board where a quorum is not present or if action requiring such vote is necessary prior to the next scheduled meeting. A majority of voting members is required to pass any resolution. Votes shall be recorded and included in the minutes at the next meeting.

ARTICLE IX: CONTRACTS, CHECKS, DEPOSITS AND FUNDS

Section 1: Contracts. The Board of Directors may authorize any agent or agents of the Corporation, in addition to the officers so authorized by these By-Laws, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or may be confined to specific instances.

Section 2: Checks, Drafts or Orders. All checks, drafts, or orders for the payment of money, notes or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the Corporation, shall be signed by two officers or agents of the Corporation, as and in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors. In the absence of such determination by the Board of Directors, such instruments shall be signed by the Secretary/Treasurer and countersigned by the President or Vice President of the Corporation.

Section 3: Deposits. All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as the Board of Directors may select.

Section 4: Gifts. The Board of Directors may accept on behalf of the Corporation any contribution, gift, bequest or device for any purpose of the Corporation.

ARTICLE X: BOOKS AND RECORDS

The Corporation shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and shall also keep minutes of the proceedings of its Board of Directors and committees having and exercising any of the authority of the Board of Directors, and shall keep at the principal office a record having the name and addresses of the Board members. All books and records of the Corporation may be inspected by any member or his/her agent or attorney for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.

ARTICLE XI: FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on the first day of July of each year.

ARTICLE XII. DISSOLUTION

In the event of voluntary or involuntary dissolution or liquidation of this corporation under the laws of the State of Montana, and procedures prescribed therein, all assets remaining to be distributed after payment of costs and expenses of court proceedings and all liabilities and obligations of the corporation, shall be distributed to either an organization likewise qualifying under 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 fulfilling similar need/position within the community or the legally governing body wherein said property is located: i.e., Lake County or other political subdivision as may be in place at the time of dissolution or liquidation.

ARTICLE XIII: INDEMNIFICATION

The Corporation shall indemnify and hold harmless each person who shall serve at any time hereafter as a Director or Officer of the Corporation from and against any and all claims and liabilities to which such person shall become subject by reason of his/her having heretofore or hereafter been a Director or Officer of the Corporation, or by reason of any action alleged to have been heretofore or hereafter taken or omitted by him/her as such Director or Officer, and shall reimburse each person for all legal and other expenses reasonably incurred by him/her in connection with any such claim or liability; provided, however, that no such person shall be indemnified against, or be reimbursed for any expense incurred in connection with any claim or liability arising out of his/her willful or criminal misconduct.

The rights accruing to any person under the foregoing provisions of this article shall not exclude any other right to which he/she may be entitled, nor shall anything herein contained restrict the right of the Corporation to indemnify or reimburse such person in any proper case, even though not specifically herein provided for. The Corporation, its Directors, Officers, employees and agents shall be fully protected in taking any action or making any payment under this Article VIII, or in refusing so to do, in reliance upon the advice of counsel.
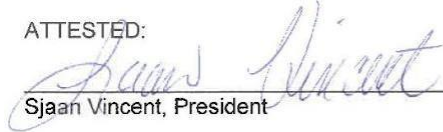
ARTICLE XIV: AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS

These By-Laws may be altered, amended or repealed, and new By-Laws may be adopted by a majority of the Directors present at any regular meeting or at any special meeting if at least three (3) days written notice delivered personally or sent by mail, fax or e-mail to the address of record of each Director of intention to alter, amend or repeal, or to adopt new By-Laws at such meeting.

AS AMENDED THIS 23rd DAY OF August 2021 BY MOTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

ATTESTED:

Sjaan Vincent, President

J\!0Uility 20, 202.1

Angela **Martine .** Regional Director
Economic D v!!opm1mt Admin1stration, Oerwer Reglo11al Office
1244 5peer Boulevard, Suite 431
Denver, CO 80204

RE: Request for Designation

Dear Ms.. Marti.nei..,

Lake County Community De-veloprnen,t Corporation jdba Mlsslon West Community De11elopme11t Partners! has been a certified R gional D elopment Corporatiion [ORDC] tihrough th,e stab! of Montana slnce 2003. As Board Presfd1mt for Mission we.st community Developmein.t Partner!i, I am requestin11 thait th@ n!!gion compiri!!ied of Lak@, Sa d@rs, and Mineral Counties be formally de:.lenated as an Economic Developmerrt District under EDA euidelines.

The rel!ion is comprised of both public and tribal land's belonging to the Canfe-derat Salisli and k.ootenal Trlbe,.s. Communtt.y and economic developmerrt ors,mizatiom have convened as a forum foir all of the regional partners to review and address economrc and community development isl;u s across the rel!ion and to initiate stratel!ic initiatives and programs that are of mutual benefit. Attached vou will find letters of suppo:rt from these primary entiUe5and a letter of conrnrrence from the Montana Departmern of Comm@rce,

The entire region ar1d reservation oontinue to strugg,le to realize economic recovery that much of the re,st of the staw of Montana h.as@Xperl@nc!!d att eculmlnatlonoftiheGreat Recession. Thissitiua tion has only worsened withtirle onset ohh@ COVID-19 pandemic and we all re.ill:i:e there 1$ a long rood 11'l frorrt of l.iS, The EDA'S approval of this desil!nation, as well as the wanahility of funding under *th@* Economic Development Assistance and Revolving Loa11 Proeram, will help provide essent*ial additional resources that support the ongoing strat@gic f)lanning and program developmet'lt tha,t will help the region move tow.;ud more rnstainable economic pro.s.pelity.

La e Coumy Community Development Corporation jdba MissiOfl West Communify Development Partnersl commits to continu1:ng to provide strong leadership ancl organizaitional stnicture in support of the Distrkt's collective objectives **and** believes; t!his design<1tion will give our entire region a critic.al boo t toward economictabllity.

6{;,,.1tJ,oa

SJaan Vincent, *President*
Lake County Community Developm rrt Corparatlon {dba Mission Wr!St Community Deve,lopment Partners]

MWCDP-EDD CEDS Board and Steering Committee

CEDS   Board & Steering Committee

2021 Three-County Economic Development District Advisory Board

Appointed Representative	Title	Member Organization	Category	Other Interest
Steve Stanley	Lake County Commissioner	Lake County	Local Government	Infrastructure development and disaster and emergency services
Roman Zylawy	Mineral County Commissioner	Mineral County	Local Government	Economic Dev
Pending (Dan Rowan)	Sanders County Commissioner	Sanders County	Local Government	
Michael Dolson	CSKT Tribal Council	Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes	Tribal Government	Law, history, business
Rodney Davis	Retired Agent	Arlee Community Development	Extension Services	Agriculture
Roxanne Duckworth Board Vice President	Asst. V. P.	Glacier Bank	Private Sector	Banking/Business
Landon Godfrey	Administrator	St. Joseph Hosp.	Private Sector	Medical
Joel Onsager Board Secretary Treasurer	Accountant	St. Luke Hospital	Private Sector	Medical
Moriah Lundeen	VP – Loan Officer	Eagle Bank	Private Sector	Banking/Business
Jay Preston	President/CFO	Access Montana	Private Sector	Broadband Telecommunications

Sjaan Vincent Board President	Rancher	Extension	Private Sector	Agriculture
Bill Williams	Lawyer/ Business Owner	French, Grainey, Williams, PLLC	Private Sector	Law
Ryan Gage**** Non-voting Member	Consulting CPA	Gage Accounting	Private Sector	Finance

*Sjaan Vincent, Board President; **Roxanne Duckworth, Board V.P., *** Joel Onsager, Board Secretary/ Treasurer, **** Ryan Gage, Non-Voting Member, Consulting CPA

CEDS Committee

CEDS   Advisory Committee

Appointed Representative	Title	Member Organization	Category	Other Interest and key attributes
Sheila Matt	General Manager	KwaTaqNuk Resort	Private Sector	Rancher, Tourism, Hospitality, Lives in Sanders County, Works in Lake County, CSKT Tribal Member
Brenda Schneider	City Clerk	Town of Superior	Local Gov't	Local activities and issues, Mineral County resident
Brooke Lincoln	Business Owner	50,000 Silver Dollar Bar	Private Sector	Tourism, Hospitality, Business Owner, Mineral County resident

Karen Thorson	Executive Director	Paradise Center	Non-Profit	Arts, Hospitality, Tourism, Sanders County resident
Jean Matt	General Manager	Mission Valley Power	Utility Provider	Infrastructure, business owner, Lake County resident, CSKT Tribal Member
Velda Shelby	Director – Economic Development Department (CSKT)	CSKT Tribal Gov't	Tribal Gov't	Economic Development, business owner, Lake County resident, CSKT Tribal Member
Brodie Moll	City Council Member	City of Polson	Local Gov't	Economic Development, Non-profit, Local activities and issues, Lake County resident
Brenda Dennis	Loan Officer	Valley Bank	Private Sector	Finance, Economic Development, Lake County resident
Jeff Crews		Alberton School District	Education	Education, Non-profit, Local activities and issues, Mineral County resident
Tracie McDonald	Director – TRIO Student Support Services	CSKT Tribes	Education	Education, Non-profit, Local activities and issues, Lake County resident, CSKT Tribal Member

Annie Wooden	Business Owner	Sanders County Ledger	Private Sector	Media, Business Development, Chamber activities, Local activities and issues, Sanders County resident
Kayla Mosher	Executive Director		Non-Profit	Land management, Public access, Conservation, Natural resources, Local activities and issues, Sanders County resident
Denley Loge	State Legislature Representative (HD14)	Montana State Legislature	State Gov't	Rancher, Energy, Natural resources, Business Development, Arts, Local activities and issues, Mineral County resident
Chuck Cushman	Pastor	Swan Chapel	Non-Profit	Faith organizations, Outdoor recreation, tourism, Local activities and issues, Swan Valley and Lake County resident
Greg Hanson	Superintendent CEO	Clark Fork Valley Hospital	Non-Profit	Healthcare, Local activities and issues, Sanders County resident
Sean Kelly	Chief Operator	Avista	Private Sector	Energy generation, Technology, Outdoor recreation, Local activities and issues, Sanders County resident
Stacy Conrow-Ververis	HR Manager	Mineral County Hospital	Non-Profit	Healthcare, Employee relations, Local activities and issues, Mineral County resident

Debbie Dantic	Community Outreach Specialist	Kaniksu Land Trust Blackfoot Communications	Private Sector	Telecommunications, Broadband, Economic Development, Missoula County resident

Mission West EDD Regional CEDS Survey 2022

Lake County Community Development Corporation dba Mission West Community Development Partners, a Certified Regional Development Corporation for the State of Montana, is conducting this survey on behalf of the Mission West Economic Development District. This survey is used to gather feedback as part of the process for the development of a five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Lake, Mineral and Sanders Counties and the Flathead Indian Reservation. Community input is important to the process and we greatly appreciate your time in taking this survey.

1. **What county do you reside in?**
   ☐ Lake
   ☐ Mineral
   ☐ Sanders
   ☐ Other (please specify) _____

2. **Please select which industry sector best describes your business or economic interests.**
   ☐ Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing
   ☐ Government/Public Administration
   ☐ Nonprofit/Economic Development
   ☐ Tourism/Food Service/Accommodations
   ☐ Wholesale/Transportation
   ☐ Finance/Real Estate/Insurance
   ☐ Healthcare/Social Services
   ☐ Construction
   ☐ Manufacturing
   ☐ Retail Trade
   ☐ Transportation or Warehousing
   ☐ Professional/Administrative/Management
   ☐ Education
   ☐ Arts/Entertainment/Recreation
   ☐ Mining/Resource Extraction
   ☐ Technology/Scientific/Technical Services
   ☐ Other (please specify) _____

3. **Please select three services that would best support your business.**
   ☐ Improve access to capital/loans/grants
   ☐ Better trained workforce
   ☐ A strong business plan

☐ Training for employees
☐ Technology for the business to improve productivity/automation/reaching customers
☐ Help with processes
☐ Recruiting and hiring
☐ More workers
☐ Affordable workforce housing
☐ Management and leadership development
☐ Public transportation for workers
☐ Sales support and understanding the market/competition
☐ The development of cooperatives or associations to support the business sector
☐ Retaining top talent/employees
☐ A strong network of advisors
☐ Local infrastructure (i.e. transportation/electrical service/broadband internet, cell phone coverage)
☐ Working with vendors/access to new supply chains
☐ Solving problems
☐ How to determine pricing
☐ Succession planning for retiring business owners

4. **Education and Workforce Development. Please rank the following strategies using 1-6 (low priority to high priority).**

    _____   Expand opportunities for high school and undergraduate students to engage in learning with local businesses like internships or apprenticeships
    _____   Better access to college training courses
    _____   Help employers to access financial resources for the development of retention of their existing workforce
    _____   More local training opportunities for entrepreneurs or workforce development programs
    _____   Investigate creative ways to improve productivity

    _____   Help businesses utilize remote work opportunities with development of a digital economy

5. **Access to Capital. Please rank the following strategies using 1-5 (low priority to high priority).**

    _____   Help startups and emerging entrepreneurs with training to help identify options for capital from banks and investors as well as nontraditional options
    _____   Facilitate access to angel investors

MWCDP-EDD Regional CEDS Survey 2022 Cont.

_____ Economic development agencies work with banks to provide gap lending to businesses that do not meet traditional bank requirements without additional support

_____ Collateral support from the government for loans

_____ Economic development agencies work with businesses to develop business plans and other documentation required by financing institutions

6. **Infrastructure. Please rank the following strategies pertaining to your infrastructure priorities using 1-6 (low priority to high priority).**

_____ Invest in improvements to water/sewer infrastructure

_____ Invest in existing local industrial sites or business clusters to attract businesses that create well-paid jobs and increase and diversify the tax base

_____ Invest in the development of broadband and cell phone infrastructure in our rural communities

_____ Invest in the development or repair of roads, streets, bridges, etc

_____ Invest in infrastructure such as trails, parks, and green spaces that improve the quality of life

_____ Other: (Please identify)

_____

7. **Increasing entrepreneurship success. Please rank the following strategies using 1-6 (low priority to high priority).**

_____ Increase financial support from local, state, and federal agencies for local economic development organizations dedicated to informing, educating and assisting entrepreneurs and businesses

_____ Local economic development agencies help identify, mobilize, and pay for experienced skilled professionals to provide mentoring and business counseling services for free or at reduced rates

_____ Improve access to capital in rural and underserved communities

_____ Support the creation of business incubator sites and coworking spaces

_____ Provide business and remote worker training classes in my area or online

_____ Help develop cooperatives or associations that can increase buying power for shared services

8. **Land and Water Use Priorities- Please rank the following strategies using 1-4 (low priority to high priority).**

MWCDP-EDD Regional CEDS Survey 2022 Cont.

_____ Access to Public Lands, Wildlife Corridors, and Open Space is critical to protecting and preserving our wildlife and the rural nature of our communities

_____ Climate Change affects our rural communities and strategic initiatives should be pursued to mitigate its effects

_____ Agricultural land preservation is important and should be prioritized in zoning

_____ Preserving the highest-level water quality in our streams and lakes is important to protecting our unique water resources

_____ Manage growth in order to maintain a rural quality of life

9. **Agricultural/Food Priorities: Please rank the following strategies using 1-4 (low priority to high priority).**

_____ Improve access to capital to support value added agriculture enterprise development

_____ Support the creation or expansion of food/meat processing facilities in the area

_____ Develop identity branding for the region's food and agricultural products

_____ Support local farmers/ranchers' operations through development of local food purchasing and distribution opportunities

10. **Regarding Emergency Preparedness and Planning, are you concerned about the following:**

   a. **An earthquake**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

   b. **Extreme drought**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

   c. **A pandemic**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

   d. **Severe winter storms**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

   e. **Seismic eruptions and volcanic activity**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

   f. **Floods**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

g. **Tornados, hurricanes, or other severe storms**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

h. **Forest fires**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

i. **A cyber attack**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

j. **Terrorism**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

k. **Civil unrest**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

l. **Water impoundment/dam failure**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

m. **A biohazard incident/accident or spill**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

n. **Accidental release of lethal chemical agents or munitions**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

o. **A radiological incident/accident**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

p. **An extended (3 days or more) power outage**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

q. **An extended (3 days or more) loss of internet or cell phone service**

☐ Not Concerned ☐ Concerned

11. **Please indicate how often you did each of the following during the last year.**

Gone to a food pantry or soup kitchen to get or eat food
☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Most the time

Shopped for the least expensive food available
☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Most the time

Shopped at a Farmer's Market
☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Most the time

Joined a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) group
☐ Yes ☐ No

12. How far is a reasonable distance to travel for your healthcare needs?

☐ Less than five (5) miles
☐ Less than ten (10) miles
☐ Less than twenty (20) miles
☐ Less than thirty (30) miles
☐ Less than fifty (50) miles
☐ Less than one hundred (100) miles

13. How far do you currently travel for your healthcare needs?

☐ Less than five (5) miles
☐ Five to ten (5 - 10) miles
☐ ten to twenty (10 - 20) miles
☐ twenty to thirty (20 - 30) miles
☐ thirty to fifty (30 - 50) miles
☐ Greater than 50 (>50) miles

14. Tourism. Please rank the following strategies using 1-6 (low priority to high priority).

_____ Help businesses assess and develop their online presence to increase their digital marketing footprint and improve booking capability

_____ Increase promoting of the area as a destination for year-round leisure and recreation travel

_____ Develop geo-tourism, agri-tourism, and / or cultural-tourism activities to increase tourist spending while in our region

_____ Work with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes to maintain and promote responsible access to Tribal lands.

_____ Develop promotions for the region or leverage Glacier Country Tourism to more successfully promote our region and its attractions

_____ Encourage "destination stewardship tourism" to balance and meet the needs of the destination and its communities.

15. Do you support investment in renewable energy alternatives?

☐ Totally unacceptable
☐ Unacceptable
☐ Slightly unacceptable
☐ Neutral
☐ Slightly acceptable

☐ Acceptable
☐ Totally acceptable

16. How concerned are you about climate change?

☐ Not concerned at all
☐ Somewhat concerned
☐ Concerned
☐ Very Concerned
☐ Extremely concerned

17. What unique "strengths" or "opportunities" can your community / county / region build upon for economic growth and prosperity?

_____
_____
_____
_____

18. What "weaknesses" or "threats" pose the greatest barriers to economic growth and prosperity in your community / county / region?

_____
_____
_____
_____

19. Please list any projects or strategies you would like to see take place in your community / county / region.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

20. Please provide general comments or feedback related to economic development in your community/county/region.

_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your time and input in this process. We really appreciate your opinion and effort to participate in our regional CEDS development process. Your opinion matters.

Opportunity Zone Steps to Create an Action Plan

Lake, Sanders, Mineral Counties There is a six-step process to follow to help establish an Opportunity Zone action plan; Step 1 Hold a Stakeholder Meeting, Step 2 Embarking on a plan for work in the Opportunity Zones, Step 3 Incentives and Guardrails in the Opportunity Zones, Step 4 Collaborating to build pipeline & leverage local expertise, Step 5 Ramp up your investor Marketing and Step 6 Develop impact metrics & encourage transparency.

Step 1 Hold a Stakeholder Meeting

Conducting stakeholder meetings in Opportunity Zones allows individuals and organizations to gain a further understanding of what Opportunity Zones and here everyone's views, concerns, and ideas. It is important to have a diverse stakeholder group because each possesses different skills, tools, and relationships that will be key to planning and implementing successful projects. Additionally, it is important to identify a local organization/group which will take the lead role for the community's Opportunity Zone efforts.

Step 2 Embarking on a Plan for work in the Opportunity Zones

It is important to identify the locations of designated tracts in or near the community and illustrate them on a map of the Opportunity Zone. To help communities identify these tracts, the Department of Treasury has made all tracts publicly available and the economic innovation resources. The next process is to determine if there are any current community plans in those areas and obtain the project's status. During this step, it is important to gather community data and potential project data, identify impact investors in the planning process and establish a planning task force (determine roles, prioritize strategies& projects & feedback). Review the following sections for data of Sanders and Mineral County including Geography and Landscape, The People of the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic District, Life in the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic District and Summary of Economic conditions of the Region.

Step 3 Incentives and Guardrails in the Opportunity Zones

There are different geographic and socioeconomic variations among Opportunity Zones which means that some Opportunity Zones will be more appealing to investors while others may not be. Before diving into moving finances around for Opportunity Zones projects, the area should update its economic/community development strategic plans to highlight the compatibility of existing debt finance tools with Opportunity Fund equity investments. Incentives include Tax increment Finance, Private Activity Bonds, Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE), tax incentives and abatements, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC).

Establishing guardrails is an important process to limit negative effects, concerns and promote direct investments towards impactful projects which support the existing population. List a area that are considered guardrails are adhere to existing comprehensive plans, create impact standards required to receive additional state and local incentives, find private partners dedicated to creating impact, and review and revise existing zoning ordinances.

Step 4 Collaborating to Build Pipeline & Leverage Local Expertise

Among the stakeholders in the Opportunity Zones there are vast expertise that can greatly influence the success of planning and projects of the area. There are several methods OZ team can do which include forming a consortium, financial feasibility modeling or Opportunity Zone Impact Grant program.

Step 5 Ramp up your Investor Marketing

Having a plan in place for the Opportunity Zone now the team must determine and create marketing strategies to attract investors either local or out of the region. This is where step 4 is beneficial by utilizing the collaboration and local expertise to promote the area.

Step 6 Develop Impact Metrics & Encourage Transparency

As the same with the guardrails that were established in step 3 having effective and reliable metrics are important to evaluate Opportunity Zone projects. These projects are designed to promote and enhance the community over profit. That is where transparency is beneficial to help bring up the community instead view other projects as competitors.

MWCDP-EDD supports and encourages its communities to:
- Engage in pre-disaster recovery and mitigation planning
- Regularly assess the community's risks and vulnerabilities
- Inventory and organize the community's recovery resources
- Engage in business continuity planning
- Ensure resources are available for the elderly and those with special needs
- Identify shelters
- Identify recovery partners, as well as the type of assistance and resources they can provide
- Initiate and maintain collaborative relationships between recovery partners
- Establish a timeline for recovery activities (immediate, short-term, intermediate, and long term)
- Develop and disseminate a community evacuation plan
- Establish a communication chain
- Engage the community's residents in the planning and recovery process
- Regularly refresh and continuously improve pre-disaster, mitigation and post disaster plans

Recovery and Mitigation: The Region served by the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District is challenged by:
- Small population dispersed over a large area
- Lack of comprehensive services
- Isolation/lack of access
- Few alternative transportation routes to the major highway systems; singular bridge system over the Flathead River in Lake County, isolating communities on either side
- Limited options for transmitting information, including limited cell services in many areas and limited Broadband in very rural areas
- Possibility for widespread interruption of services
- High percentage of stationary, at-risk population (elderly)
- Lack of economic diversity
- Limited public transportation options
- Limited incomes
- Few liquid assets
- Significant amount of money tied up in land and equipment
- Vulnerable infrastructure, including historic sites and structures
- Heavy reliance on imported materials and food

Recovery and Mitigation Planning

Without being prepared for the complexity of redevelopment in a compressed timeframe following a major disaster, local officials may struggle with recovery decisions and miss opportunities for public participation in reshaping the community's future. To become more disaster-resilient, local governments should plan for what must happen after rescue and recovery operations are completed in order to return the community to normal or perhaps rebuild an even better community. Through a Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP or Plan), local governments can collaboratively create a long-term recovery and redevelopment strategy in pursuit of a sustainable community. Local Governments within the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District have Emergency Operations Plans in place. However, the plans in place are very heavily focused on short term disaster recovery operations. PDRP Plans identify policies, operational strategies, as well as roles and responsibilities for implementation that will guide decisions affecting long-term recovery and redevelopment of the community after a disaster. They emphasize seizing opportunities for hazard mitigation and community improvement consistent with the goals of local and regional comprehensive plans, with full participation from the area's citizens.

There are three principal benefits to having a well-developed Plan:

1) Faster and More Efficient Recovery

Without a comprehensive, long-term recovery plan, ad hoc efforts in the aftermath of a significant disaster will delay the return of community stability. Creating a process to make smart post-disaster decisions and prepare for long-term recovery requirements enables a community to do more than react, prompting post-disaster action rather than time-consuming debate. By identifying appropriate planning mechanisms, financial assistance, and agency roles and responsibilities beforehand, a community begins the road to recovery more quickly. Being able to show efficient and effective use of taxpayer dollars after a disaster is incredibly important for the public's perception of the recovery.

2) Opportunity to Build Back Better

A disaster, while tragic, can also create opportunities to fix past mistakes or leap forward with plans for community improvements. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, local officials are under significant pressure to restore the community to its pre-disaster condition. Without a guiding vision, short-term decisions may inadvertently restrict long-term, sustainable redevelopment and overlook opportunities to surpass the status quo. A Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan strengthens the recovery process, and communities benefit from assessing their risk levels and crafting a long-term redevelopment plan under "blue skies." Local officials and the public can thoughtfully analyze and debate issues, linking redevelopment goals with other important community plans. Careful thought and

planning achieve a more sustainable and resilient outcome than decisions made under emergency circumstances, compromised budgets, and political pressures.

3) Local Control over Recovery

Developing a PDRP provides local government officials, residents, and businesses the opportunity to determine long-term redevelopment goals and develop policies and procedures that will guide redevelopment before well intended outside agencies and non-government organizations rush to aid the community. While outside resources are needed and welcomed in a major or catastrophic disaster, a locally developed Plan will best channel those resources to effectively meet the community's specific needs and goals. A Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan will show outside agencies and donors that the community is prepared to play an active role in the recovery process and promote its capabilities to wisely use donated and loaned resources. There will always be rules and, occasionally, strings attached to external sources of funding, but a community that has researched the allowable uses of federal and state assistance can better work within their boundaries in an effort to fund projects that further local and regional redevelopment goals.

The MWCDP-EDD communities participated in the region's comprehensive planning process. PDRPs (Pre-Disaster Response Plans) can identify disaster scenarios in which opportunities may be present to advance already-stated visions for these communities in a compressed timeframe.

- Opportunities to Consider During Post-Disaster Redevelopment:
- Disaster-resilient land use patterns
- Hazard mitigation construction techniques
- Energy-efficient buildings
- Healthy community design
- Affordable or workforce housing
- Alternative transportation networks
- Environmental preservation and habitat restoration
- Sustainable industry recruitment

Tornadoes, wildfires, floods, and other disasters do not confine themselves to jurisdictional boundaries. Displaced residents compromised infrastructure, changes in economic conditions, hazardous materials contamination, and degradation of sensitive environments are some of the impacts that can affect an entire region after a major disaster. When recovery is slow, neighboring communities also experience these impacts for an extended period of time. A PDRP is designed to be used in any disaster, regardless of type, as long as the damage will require long-term redevelopment efforts. It is an all-hazards plan addressing disasters identified in each

county's Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) and each community's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). As an economic development organization serving Lake, Mineral and Sanders counties the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District will respond accordingly, utilizing the resources and information outlined in the region's CEDS document. Therefore, the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District counties are encouraged to update and improve their existing planning documents by incorporating PDRP strategies into their existing disaster planning documents.

Disaster Phases and Redevelopment
Disaster management occurs in a cycle with overlapping phases:
1) Pre-disaster mitigation and emergency management preparedness,
2) Emergency response,
3) Short-term recovery, and
4) Long-term recovery and redevelopment.

Pre-Disaster Phase – Mitigation and recovery planning occurs during the pre-disaster phase (unless a community is struck by a disaster before planning is complete). Once a mitigation and recovery plan are adopted, preparatory activities should be implemented on an on-going basis during normal operations, which are sometimes referred to as "blue skies." Plans should be tested prior to a disaster event, so that all stakeholders with a post-disaster implementation role are familiar with their responsibilities.

Emergency Response Phase –Emergency response activities are specifically addressed in a municipality's EOP and include immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs. This is the shortest phase of the cycle, lasting only a few days in minor disaster conditions.

Short-Term Recovery Phase – The role of any plan during the short-term recovery phase is to begin organizing for long-term redevelopment activities and guiding short-term recovery decisions that may have long-term implications (e.g., placement of temporary housing or debris sites). Short term recovery operations are addressed in EOPs, but a recovery plan can provide direction for transitioning to long-term redevelopment during this phase. The short-term recovery phase begins as the emergency response phase is winding down and will continue until critical services are restored. The duration of the short-term recovery phase depends on the severity of the disaster and the level of community preparedness.

Long-Term Recovery and Redevelopment Phase – A recovery plan is used most during this phase. Long-term recovery and redevelopment include efforts to reconstruct and enhance the

built environment, as well as recover the economy, environment, and social systems. This phase begins as short-term recovery activities are accomplished and can last from a couple years for a minor disaster to five or more years for a major or catastrophic disaster.

Interaction with Other Plans - The objective of this "Disaster and Economic Recovery and Resiliency Strategy" is to guide the redevelopment decision-making process following a disaster in a manner consistent with local comprehensive plans (especially Future Land Use maps, where applicable), Local Mitigation Strategies, Emergency Operation Plans, and other relevant plans or codes, such as land development regulations. Each of these plans, and potentially others, has pre-existing policies or procedures that affect post-disaster redevelopment. For instance, local comprehensive plans include many policies that determine where and to what extent redevelopment can occur. Since the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District communities are resource constrained, the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District will help its counties and local community's access information and resources through state and federal agencies, local private partners and others. By helping communities integrate resources the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District will help each county make better post-disaster redevelopment decisions.

Post-Disaster Planning and Implementation
Disaster Assessment
In the days and weeks following a disaster, the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District will be available to assist counties and communities in their disaster assessment:
- Assess the nature and magnitude of the disaster
- Assess the impact on local and regional economies (business, industry sectors, labor market, etc.)
- Assess the impact on transportation and public infrastructure
- Assess the impact on housing, schools, and health care facilities

Develop and/or Implement Recovery Timeline
Based on the results of the disaster assessment, the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District will help regional partners and community leaders move forward with:
- Listing and prioritizing recovery activities to be performed
- Identifying resources (federal, state, local, and private sector) needed for each activity
- Determining the level and type of assistance needed
- Identifying roles and responsibilities

- Determining the timeframe for each activity (immediate, short-term, intermediate, long-term)
- Establishing recovery benchmarks

Implementing the Recovery Plan (long-term recovery)

In order to accomplish recovery activities quantified as part of long-term recovery, the Mission West Community Development Partners' Economic Development District will work with community governments, organizations and leaders to help them:

- Identify business, economic, and entrepreneurial rebuild initiatives
- Identify and utilize workforce initiatives to employ workers and rebuild the local economy
- Apply for funds from multiple federal and state agencies and local programs
- Develop plans to ensure the most effective use of funds

Prioritizing Areas to Focus Redevelopment

Limited time, limited funds, and limited materials are going to make simultaneous redevelopment of all damaged areas difficult. Communities may want to encourage redevelopment in areas that correspond to their vision for the future and those less vulnerable to disasters by prioritizing and incentivizing development in these areas. The best way to build resiliency to disasters is to direct future development to safe locations, while minimizing or mitigating highly vulnerable types of development in hazardous areas. After a disaster, targeted sustainable redevelopment areas can provide immediate opportunities for redevelopment since they will have sustained less damage and can be prioritized for infrastructure restoration and expedited permitting. Allowing for rapid redevelopment in safe areas intended for increased future development will minimize vulnerable redevelopment and/or allow time to plan the sustainable reconstruction of areas severely impacted by the disaster. Designated priority recovery and redevelopment areas can also be used to locate temporary post-disaster facilities more efficiently that are consistent with future land uses.

Historic Preservation and Restoration

The loss of historic resources due to a disaster can have a major impact on the community. Some losses may be unavoidable, but others could occur accidently during recovery operations if procedures are not in place to watch for these concerns. Historic structures are particularly vulnerable to damage due to their age, and repair of these structures must meet certain requirements to maintain their character and historic designation. There may also be funding opportunities before or after a disaster for implementing mitigation measures to prevent further damage to historic resources. Engaging state and local historic preservation organizations in the planning and implementation process can ensure that the unique considerations involved with preserving and restoring historic structures and archeological sites are included in a community's

recovery plan. With the Region's overlay of the Flathead Indian Reservation, this takes on added meaning relative to the preservation of cultural sites deemed specifically critical to the Salish and Kootenai Tribes. In this regard, the Lake County and Tribal Emergency Management Coordinating Team is critical to assuring that all interests are considered in identifying and prioritizing recovery operations related to historic preservation.

Reducing Disaster Vulnerability through Land Use and Development Regulations

The best practice for post-disaster redevelopment is to restrict rebuilding in hazardous locations and require mitigation where vulnerable redevelopment cannot be precluded. While this plan of action would ensure optimal community resiliency to disasters, it may be very difficult to achieve and may not be a good choice for the first action to be tackled when implementing any recovery plan. However, with careful consideration of the legal implications concerning property rights and extensive public outreach, there are many regulatory tools for increasing disaster resiliency that may be a possibility for the region, especially if pursued during the post-disaster "window of opportunity" for future reductions in disaster vulnerability. Potential regulatory methods could include reduced intensity or density of use, special permit requirements, increased setbacks from hazard sources (e.g., a waterway or building, etc.), hazard-specific site design requirements, and/or increased structural mitigation requirements. These methods could be implemented through policies instituting lower damage thresholds requiring nonconforming uses/structures to meet current standards (in certain zones or throughout the jurisdiction), zoning overlay districts, post-disaster specific land development codes, and/or special assessment districts to fund mitigation projects that benefit more than one property.

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