
IX. STRATEGIC PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES

A. Purpose

1. CEDS Guidelines

The 2007 CEDS guidelines for this section call for the identification of all suggested regional projects, programs, and activities designed to implement the Goals and Objectives of the CEDS; the projected number of jobs to be created as a result; and the lead organizations with responsibility to implement. They further ask for a prioritization of “vital” projects, programs, and activities that address the region’s greatest needs or that will best enhance the region’s competitiveness; and funding sources not necessarily limited to EDA programs.

2. Our Approach

Based on the input from sources including the Strategy Committee; the One Land, One Plan sessions; and other community input, a list of suggested projects was prepared in response to the Regional Goals and Objectives outlined in Section VII. The term “projects” on the list also includes implementation strategies better classified as “programs” or “activities.” The term “project” is also equivalent to “strategy,” as used to define the action alternatives selected to implement the various objectives in the 2002 CEDS Plan.

The listing also identifies projects, programs, and activities considered “vital” by the Strategy Committee and staff to implement the 2007 CEDS Goals and Objectives. These vital projects are indicated by an asterisk (*). Prioritization of the projects was based on several factors, considerations, and judgments including: likelihood of their ability to meet the CEDS performance measures of creating/retaining jobs and private investment; likelihood of being accomplished within a 5-year timeframe from 2008-2012; and the available or potential availability of funding, personnel, partnerships, and other resources needed to carry them out. Consistency with State and local government economic and community development plans was also taken into account.

A large number of our vital-rated listings do not directly create jobs or private investment, but do represent essential elements or activities which need to be completed or in place before development and work on the main project can start. Suggested projects may be upgraded to vital status, and noted in the Annual CEDS Reports. Notation in the reports will also be made for any new strategies adopted, or others which may be revised or dropped. These changes will also be carried forward to the Action Plan.

B. Listing of Suggested and Vital Projects

Category/Project/Vital Projects*	Jobs	Lead Agencies
<p><u>Renewable Energy</u> * Obtain financing and provide for completion of a \$125,000 feasibility study and met station to evaluate technical design, optimal sitting, and other requirements for a 100-MGW CSP plant.</p>		SLVDRG, NREL, Counties, DOLA, Western Governors; OEDIT, Gov Energy Office
<p>* Based on recommended courses of action, assist in the development of the CSP plant with capacity to generate electrical energy for local use and export. Cost of construction is estimated at \$300+ million, with 300 construction jobs and 40 permanent jobs.</p>	300 40	SLVDRG, DOLA, OEDIT, Gov Energy Office
<p>* Maintain and expand partnerships with the NREL and other research partners to access technical expertise and assistance needed for the CSP project and other prospects for solar energy production.</p>		SLVDRG, NREL, Gov Energy Office
<p>* Facilitate reviews and public presentations for other solar energy prospects, and track potential developments such as the Sky Fuels proposal for a 1,000-MGW operation.</p>		SLVDRG, Counties
<p>* Provide additional assistance for renewable energy prospects which advance to the feasibility study or development phase.</p>	300	SLVDRG, DOLA, OEDIT, Gov Energy Office
<p>* Establish a San Luis Valley Power Authority with county governments in the region to ensure appropriate levels of participation and governance by local governments, organizations, and residents in the planning, implementation, production, and benefits of renewable energy projects.</p>		SLVDRG, Counties, DOLA
<p>* Participate with the SLV Regional Medical Center, Adams State College, and other partners to identify and develop solar energy applications for their facilities.</p>	10	SLVDRG, SLV Reg Hosp, ASC
<p>* Working in partnership with SLV Rural Electric, Xcel Energy, and other industry representatives, assists in the development of transmission lines for delivering electrical power generated in the Valley to the national grid. Also assist in the development process to ensure adequate benefits for the Valley and minimal negative impacts on communities and the environment.</p>	30	SLV Rural Elect, Xcel Energy, Counties, DOLA
<p>* Assist in developing a business network of supplier and service industries in support of the Sun Edison solar-farm and other renewable energy projects as they come on line.</p>	20	SLVDRG
<p>* Assist Invenegy Corporation and other prospects in their search for a feasible location to develop a 60-MGW wind-farm with capacity to generate electrical energy for local use and export.</p>		SLVDRG, Invenegy
<p>* Provide additional assistance in the development of wind-farms contingent on the identification of a suitable wind-farm site.</p>	20	SLVDRG

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* Assess the potential for region-based manufacturing, distribution, repair, or assembly of solar- and/or wind-powered equipment, components, and materials, and assist as necessary in the development phase.	250	SLVDRG, Gov Energy Dept, DOLA
Pending completion of a feasibility study, participate as may be requested in the Resource Conservation & Development's SEED Park project using a variety of technologies to generate renewable energy by recycling a wide diversity of biomass and waste product		RC&D
RC&D's demonstration project to net-meter electrical energy generated from solar panels located at center pivot sprinkler sites with the power used to operate the equipment.		RC&D
Explore the feasibility of establishing a Renewable Energy Academy or Solar Institute in the Valley.		SLVDRG
* Identify appropriate partnerships and assist in providing feasibility studies on the potential for development of a cellulosic form of ethanol production based on wheat straw, hull-less barley, or other crops which can be produced locally.		SLVDRG
Further assess potential for utilizing wood chip technologies for the Adams State power plant, and also assess the extent of supplies available from forest wood waste and drought-damaged trees.		SLVDRG, ASC, CU Boulder
Identify renewable energy potentials or expanded utilization based on geothermal resources such as swimming pools and spas, greenhouses, and other projects, and assist where feasible.		SLVDRG
* Determine feasibility for production based on the byproducts of biodiesel operations including glycerin, fuel pellets, wet and dry meal for cattle and fish food, and drip-oil for pivot sprinkler lubrication.		SLVDRG, DOLA
<p><u>Workforce Development</u></p> <p>* Maintain and expand partnerships for the workforce preparation and training requirements of new employers with the TSJC Valley Campus, Colorado Workforce Center, SER job training programs, and Colorado First.</p>		SLVDRG, TSJC, Colo WF Center, SER, Colo First
* Research the workforce requirements for solar and other renewable energy operations in more detail to assist training institutions in making the skill upgrades needed in the Valley's workforce to meet industry demands for "gold collar" and specialized workers.		SLV DRG, Colo WF Center
* Maintain communications and working partnerships with the ASC Community Partnerships Department to address educational requirements of employers, sponsor conferences and workshops, and provide other forms of assistance.		SLVDRG, ASC

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Support initiatives to meet the workforce needs of the agricultural sector and farm workers.		
Encourage public schools to develop School-to-Career and School-to-Work programs, and higher academic achievement to meet industry requirements and new job opportunities.		
Encourage development of a Rural Workforce training program to keep pace with higher technical skill required for new job opportunities.		SLVDRG, Colo WF Center
<p><u>Agriculture and Related</u></p> <p>* Participate with the Colorado Potato Admin Committee to assess feasibility of producing packaging material made from potatoes as an alternative to packaging made from plastic.</p>		SLVDRG, CPAC
* Assist in the evaluation of potentials for producing higher-end starch products such as pharmaceutical-grade starch at the Moraine Partners plant north of Monte Vista.		SLVDRG, Moraine Part, CSU
* Research the feasibility of creating an industrial park based on renewable energy and value-added ag industries on property north of Monte Vista, and explores possibilities of re-engineering the Veterans Lagoon wastewater treatment facility with the City.		SLVDRG, Monte Vista
* Determine status of expansion plans for the Idaho Pacific/Ottertail potato dehy operation in Center, (with or without expanded natural gas supply) and provide assistance as needed.	30	SLVDRG, IP/Ottertail
* Identify opportunities and provide assistance for a range of development prospects based on the value-added processing of Valley-grown crops such as barley malting; expanded canola production and oil crushing operations; carrots; quinoa; vodka from potatoes; and others.		SLVDRG
Explore potentials for development projects based on the byproducts of existing value-added processing plants as these operations reach full production capacity.		
Identify prospects and assist in development of aquaculture projects and hydroponic production of tomatoes, other vegetables, and herbs.		
<p><u>Tourism and Related</u></p> <p>* Provide information and data needed for grant applications to assist with continued operations of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.</p>		SLVDRG, C&TSRR
* As part of the proposed Business Center Development, provide space for the San Luis & Rio Grande Railroad passenger rail ticketing and terminal facilities.	10	SLVDRG, SL&RGRR

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Explore potential for establishing a Narrow Gauge Railroad Park in the region.		
* Provide assistance to businesses with total or partial dependence on tourism through the BLF and MEP business loan programs and other services.	10/yr	SLVDRG
* Assist in efforts to create the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area including Alamosa, Conejos, and Costilla counties, and research possibilities for expansion of the designated area or creation of a new NHA based on themes compatible with Mineral, Rio Grande, and Saguache counties.		SLVDRG
* Provide for the completion of contracted services for the Heritage Tourism pilot project funded by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs in order to develop travel itineraries for the region with heritage themes.		SLVDRG
* Continue to identify and research business opportunities for nature-based and eco-tourism projects, including development of a Valley branch of the Colorado Birding Trail.		SLVDRG
Encourage hospitality training.		
* Strive to obtain better visitor records in order to improve tourism planning and marketing efforts.		SLVDRG, Chambers
<p><u>Other Non-Agricultural Industry Projects</u></p> <p>* Obtain funding and provide for the completion of a Targeted Industry Study to identify appropriate industry targets which will open up new development opportunities, and conduct meetings to identify the assets and development preferences of individual counties and communities across the region.</p>		SLVDRG, DOLA, Alamosa, OEDIT, Counties
* Monitor plans and progress for the proposed Village at Wolf Creek to assess potential development impacts on workforce, transportation systems, and local government infrastructure.		SLVDRG
Provide assistance to viable business prospects for technology-based industries including call centers, customer-support services, or similar ventures		
* Provide BLF and MEP loan financing to businesses in the trade and service sectors with potential to fill market niches, provide a source of local supply, or reduce sales leakage.	20/yr	SLVDRG
* Identify opportunities for new and existing lines of production based on lumber and wood products, such as furniture manufacturing, wood pellets for fuel, and resumption of sustainable small-scale sawmill operations.		SLVDRG

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Determine feasibility and optimal sitting in the region for development of a high-altitude training center for athletes.		
Identify potentials for Brownsfield projects.		
Evaluate potentials for mine reclamation and tailing salvage operations.		
Provide data and information and monitor progress in developing an RV Park with a destination theme.		
<p><u>Business and Industry Recruitment</u></p> <p>* Participate as requested with local- and county-based EDC's and community groups to provide assistance through BLF, MEP, Enterprise Zone, funding agency contacts, data and research, and other regional programs and tools as may be requested for business recruitment and other development initiatives.</p>		SLVDRG, ACDC, URGEDC, MVEDC, CCEDC, ScSEED, CON-CEPTS
* Prepare information packages in response to OEDIT business on a selected basis.		SLVDRG, OEDIT
Attend trade shows sponsored by OEDIT on a selected basis.		
* Pursue development of industries and business prospects identified by results of the Targeted Industry Study.		SLVDRG
* Monitor and assist as needed in marketing the availability of sites and buildings suitable for development, and provide additional assistance to further advance projects of the new owners.		SLVDRG
<p><u>Financial and Business Assistance</u></p> <p>* Monitor the adequacy of capitalization levels and prepare recapitalization grant applications as needed to maintain and expand the BLF, MEP, and possible other loan funds as an ongoing tool for creating and retaining jobs, private investment, and for the advancement of other CEDS goals and projects.</p>	35/yr	SLVDRG
* Administer the Colorado Enterprise Zone providing State tax credits and benefits as an ongoing tool for generating private investment in farm and business expansions, and as an important investment vehicle generating taxpayer contributions to eligible Zone projects.		SLVDRG

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* Establish a Business Development Center with property acquired in downtown Alamosa to create a one-stop service convenience to business prospects and clients; enable SLVDRG to expand; and increase interagency coordination through co-location with other development agencies, Chamber of Commerce, and Visitor Center.	10	SLVDRG, Alamosa Mkt Dist
* Obtain financing through EDA and/or other sources to renovate and convert the former depot building to desired office configuration following relocation of the Alamosa County DSS to new county facilities.		SLVDRG, EDA
* Explore feasibility and develop a business incubator using co-located agency services and renovated space at the Business Development Center.		SLVDRG, EDA
* Maintain partnerships with various agencies for connections to Leading Edge, SBDC, and other business services.		SLVDRG, SBDC
Maintain partnerships with the Southwest Colorado EDD for venture capital contacts through the Angel Investors program.		
Assist with efforts to develop a system to explore sales tax revenue sharing among counties in the region.		
<p><u>Transportation Infrastructure and Transit Services</u></p> <p>* Participate and assist with transportation planning for the 7-county SLV Transportation Planning Region (including Chaffee) to provide liaison with CDOT planners, input on the 2035 Plan, STAC representative support, and meeting arrangements for over 100 persons.</p>		SLVDRG, CDOT
* Monitor the planning process to ensure adequate response to regional priorities for projects and proposals including intersection improvements; US 160 passing lanes; Enhancement funding set-asides; air service to Albuquerque; north access to the Sand Dunes; 4-laning of US 160 as a major east/west corridor across the State; and other proposals and issues.		SLVDRG
* Oversee the completion of a Coordinated Transit Services Plan with CDOT Transit Unit funds and consultant to design a workable system for delivering job commuter and general public transit services in the region, and capable of meeting the local match requirements for over \$500,000 in FTA 2008-2009 funds contingent on the study results.		SLVDRG, CDOT-TU
* Encourage and assist if feasible in the establishment of a Regional or Rural Transit Authority by local governments as the appropriate institutional structure for governance and management of the transit system and FTA funds.		SLVDRG, Counties
* Oversee the completion of a Multimodal Site Facility Plan for the depot project.		SLVDRG, CDOT-TU

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<p><u>Other Physical Infrastructure Projects</u></p> <p>* Revisit the need and partnership support required to develop a high-volume natural gas pipeline to the Town of Center to enable expansion of value-added processing plants, and to create a redundant service capacity for the town and ag warehousing, shipping, and support industries.</p>		SLVDRG, Xcel Energy
<p>* Assist in development of broadband connections to county courthouses and municipal buildings contingent on funding from State and local sources.</p>		SLVDRG, State MNT
<p>Assist with development of landfill and recycling projects to the extent that these projects represent a barrier to economic development opportunities.</p>		
<p><u>Capacity Building and Communications</u></p> <p>Assist with local government partners to develop a single portal website for the region which provides information accessible on a 24/7 basis.</p>		SLVDRG, Counties
<p>Participate with ASC and other partners in sponsoring technical workshops and training for local- and county-based economic development and community groups, other agencies, and the general public.</p>		SLVDRG, ASC
<p>* Sponsor meetings to gather community input such as the One Land, One Plan sessions.</p>		SLVDRG
<p><u>Community Services and Facilities</u></p> <p>* Assist Main street Revitalization and related project initiatives by providing access to regional financial and business assistance programs and tools, and participation on community evaluation teams.</p>		SLVDRG, Communities
<p>Maintain and establish loan fund pools to assist active downtown organizations in their efforts to improve and enhance the appearance of business storefronts.</p>		SLVDRG, Communities
<p>* Support development of the Rio Grande Hospital expansion providing space for medical clinics and other essential services.</p>	25	SLVDRG, RG Hospital
<p>* Support development of museums and other community facilities.</p>		SLVDRG, Community gps
<p>Support efforts to improve safety and emergency services.</p>		
<p>* Support efforts of the Boys and Girls Club and other youth-oriented programs.</p>		SLVDRG, B&G Club
<p>Identify potentials for developing an Alzheimer's unit in the Valley.</p>		

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Encourage efforts to create affordable and accessible health insurance coverage, such as the Single Payer insurance proposals.		
Research the feasibility of developing facilities in Monte Vista for co-location and expansion of Federal, local, and State government agencies.	10	
Encourage development of affordable and energy efficient housing for the workforce.		
* Assist a local mortuary business in obtaining Homeland Security funds for a project involving services in response to large-scale natural and other disasters where a mobile morgue is needed.		SLVDRG, Dept of Defense
Support restoration of the Homelake State Veterans Hospital in Monte Vista.		
Explore potentials for construction of green buildings and retrofits.		
Encourage development of Community Endowments.		
<p><u>Natural Resources and Environment</u></p> <p>* Maintain and expand partnerships and provide assistance where feasible to the Rio Grande National Forest, BLM, US Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Colorado Division of Wildlife, and other land management agencies.</p>		SLVDRG, GRSA, RGNF, BLM, USFWS, CDOW
* Participate as may be feasible in supporting water conservation agencies and measures designed to protect watersheds and aquifers, and to promote sustainable uses of water resources such as the proposed Water Management Sudistricts.		SLVDRG, RGWCD, State Div Water Res
* Participate as a member of the Data Team, and provide additional research as may be feasible, to advance the Environmental Protection Agency's San Luis Basin Sustainability Project to test the application of Energy Budget, Fisher Information, Ecological Footprint, and Net Regional Product metrics as a national model for evaluating regional sustainability.		SLVDRG, EPA
* Promote and accommodate projects which are compatible with the sites chosen, scaled appropriately for water availability, and do not present extensive impacts, public cost, and risk to residents and owners. Projects of concern include proposed oil and natural gas drilling on the GSRA Preserve, Summitville mine reclamation, and others.		SLVDRG
Participate with the SLV Wetlands Area Focus Committee in various watershed enhancements and wetlands conservation projects.		
Plan for implementation of trails and recreation projects using the Trails and Recreation Master Plan.		

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* Conduct environmental reviews for BLF, infrastructure, and other projects as required by funding sources for clearance of funding requests.		SLVDRG, OEDIT
Support efforts of the Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust to promote conservation easement and set-asides for private landowners.		
Promote the consideration for open space, greenbelts, wildlife and natural areas, and public access points in land use planning.		
Re-establish the agency review and comment functions once carried out by the RDPC for subdivision proposals and other proposed projects and developments.		SLVDRG
<p><u>Data Collection, Management, and Research</u></p> <p>* Provide data services as an ongoing economic development tool, responding to over 400 requests a year and including the preparation of statistical summaries; updating and expanding the data collection; referrals for more detailed information; and related services.</p>		SLVDRG
* Maintain designation as a State Data Center Affiliate with the State Demography Office.		SLVDRG, SDO
* Contingent on additional funding support, provide for research studies and reports related to various aspects of development such as economic impact studies of proposed or existing operations and community events; tax impact studies; surveys; and other research.		SLVDRG
* Provide for presentations as requested to local governments, business groups, schools, and community groups.		SLVDRG
* Share appropriate levels of information with the general public via website access.		SLVDRG
Participate with local governments to identify housing units and addresses in preparation for the 2010 Census under the Census Bureau's LUCA program.		