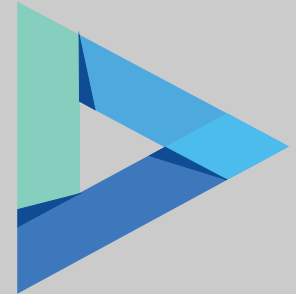
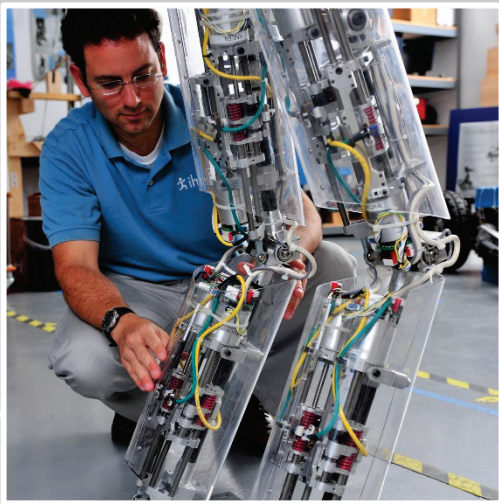


FEBRUARY 2017

NORTHWEST FLORIDA FORWARD



A REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TIP would like to thank the following members of the Northwest Florida Forward Steering Committee for their participation and guidance in this planning process. The committee-organized stakeholder input meetings, directed the planning process, and reviewed key deliverables throughout the development of Northwest Florida Forward.

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TIP STRATEGIES, INC. is a privately held Austin and Seattle based economic development consulting firm committed to providing quality solutions for public and private sector clients. Established in 1995, the firm's primary focus is economic development strategic planning.

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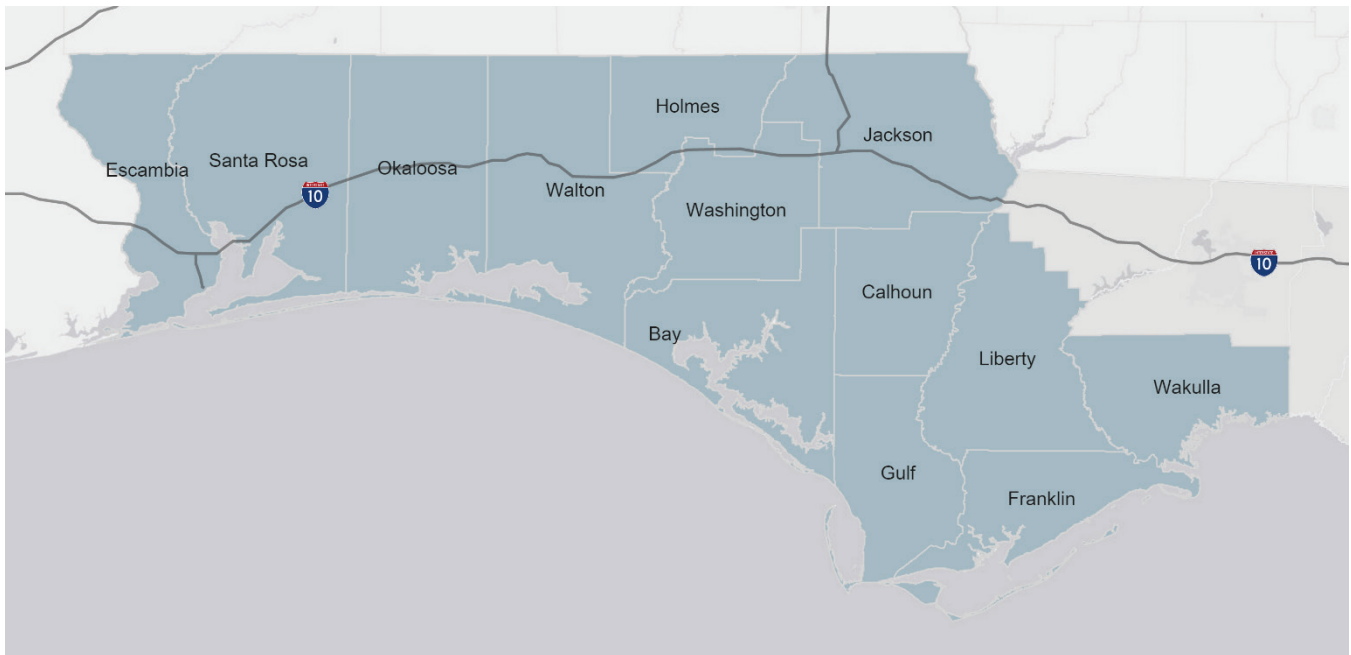
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Northwest Florida Forward: A Regional Strategy for Economic Transformation offers a candid evaluation of the region's economic development challenges and opportunities, informed by quantitative analysis, reviews of national best practices, and qualitative input from across the 13-county region. It articulates a set of guiding principles that reflect the values of the region's residents and businesses, that define economic vitality in Northwest Florida, and that directly inform the goals and strategies. It provides a holistic set of goals, strategies, and actions designed to ensure economic vitality through new investment and job creation, as well as the enrichment of the region's talent base, innovation ecosystem, infrastructure, and quality of place. The regional transformation strategy is not the responsibility of one organization to implement. It is a strategy for the entire region and will require many engaged partners for it to be successful.

13-COUNTY REGION



Sources: Esri, Bureau of Transport. Statistics, GeoSystems Global Corporation in assoc. with National Geographic Maps and Melcher Media, Inc.

APPROACH AND STRUCTURE

Over the course of five months, the TIP Strategies consulting team worked closely with Northwest Florida's business, government, and community leaders to identify the region's most promising opportunities for transformative economic growth. The first step was to establish a common understanding of assets and challenges. This "Discovery Phase" included roundtable discussions and interviews with over 860 Northwest Floridians representing a broad cross section of regional stakeholders. Roundtable discussions were held in multiple locations in the region with groups representing important constituencies, including:

- Education and workforce development officials,
- Human resource professionals,
- Entrepreneurs,

- General business and target industry leaders,
- Manufacturers,
- Real estate developers,
- Economic development and chamber professionals,
- Minority community leaders,
- Infrastructure officials, and
- Government and elected officials.

In addition to roundtable discussions, interviews were conducted with the region’s delegation of state elected officials and key private employers.

During this phase, the University of West Florida’s Haas Center compiled a **Technical Report** that includes a wide range of data and analysis for the 13-county region, which is published under a separate cover. The Technical Report addresses topics such as economic indicators, labor force, commuting patterns, industry analysis, occupational analysis, and innovation indicators. It also includes a snapshot of key indicators for each of the 13 counties. A summary of key findings from the Technical Report is provided below.

The “Opportunity Phase” included two regional workshops that involved more than 100 stakeholders from throughout the region to discuss the key opportunities the regional strategy should be built around. Stakeholders provided direct feedback on a draft structure for the plan, including a vision, goals, and priority strategies.

During the “Implementation Planning Phase,” TIP incorporated all the input, data analysis, as well as our experience working with regions across the country to develop the **Strategic Action Plan**. Following the plan is an **Implementation Matrix** that outlines a proposed timeline for carrying out each of the strategies and actions. The matrix also assigns prioritization of strategies and suggests potential organizations to help support implementation.

Northwest Florida Forward should not be viewed as a static document, but as one that invites revisions and amendments as conditions change. For this reason, regional stakeholders should take a dynamic approach to implementation—one that revisits this plan on a regular basis to ascertain progress and to reprioritize strategies and actions as needed.

Appendix 1 contains the regional **Target Industry** analysis, recommendation, and profiles. It includes industry definitions and trends, occupational characteristics, strategic considerations, and industry intelligence for each industry sector. The targets outlined in this section were identified by TIP Strategies and the Haas Center.

TECHNICAL REPORT KEY FINDINGS

Published under a separate cover, the Haas Center at the University of West Florida prepared a Technical Report detailing economic trends for the region. These findings drove many of the considerations for strategy development. Below is a summary of some of the key findings.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS

- Population in the region grew 6.5% from 2010-2015, which is 59% higher than the national population growth of 4.1% over the same period. The population of residents age 0-17 grew by 3.4% in the region over the same period that the national population age group decreased by 0.7%. Likewise, the working age population (18-64) in the region grew 4.1% while the same population segment nationally grew only 2.9%.
 - The population of the region's largest five counties has grown by 8.0% from 2010-2015, which exceeds Florida's 7.8% growth. These counties' population aged 0-17 grew 4.9%, which is significantly higher than Florida (3.8%) and the US (-0.7%).
 - The population of the region's smallest eight counties has declined by 0.7% from 2010-2015, primarily because of a decrease in children (-4.5%) and working age adults (-2.2%).
- The primary cause of the population growth has been domestic migration, i.e. residents who moved into the region from another U.S. county. Domestic migration generally accounts for 10,000-15,000 net-new residents in the region each year.
 - The region has also seen a significant increase in international migration, which for the most recent data added 2,572 net-new residents.
- The most recent median household income for the region (\$48,567¹) is slightly higher than state level (\$47,212) but lower than the national median household income (\$53,482); yet, average earnings in 2016 (\$47,943) are significantly lower than state (\$53,376) and national average earnings (\$61,389).
- The percentage of the region's population with a bachelor's degree or higher (23.0%) lags percentages for both Florida (26.8%) and the nation (29.3%).
 - However, there are relatively more Associate degree holders in the region (10.3%), than the state (9.2%) and nation (7.9%).
- Between 2009 and 2016, job growth was slower in the 13-county region (6.6%) compared to state (14.1%) and national growth rates (9.0%); however, the regional unemployment rate (4.6%) was lower than state (4.9%) and national rates (5.0%).
 - Between 2009 and 2016, jobs grew by 8.0% in the region's five most populated counties. Over this same period, the eight least populated counties experienced job loss of 4.7%.
- The cumulative defense contract dollar amount for contract with a place of performance in the counties with large military population (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, and Bay) has been steadily decreasing since 2008. The total value of defense contracts in the region in 2015 (\$890M) is the lowest since 2002, and is approximately half of the value as recently as 2008.

¹ Weighted average of each county's median

COMMUTING PATTERNS

- In 2014, the 13-county region experienced a small net inflow of workers into the region compared to net outflows during the periods of 2004-2008 and 2011-2013.
 - Escambia, Okaloosa, Walton, and Bay counties experienced a net inflow of workers. The remaining nine counties each have a net outflow.
 - Regional residents who commute outside the region for the work are mostly employed in “Public Administration,” “Transportation & Warehousing,” and “Manufacturing.”
 - Non-residents who commute into the region for work are mostly employed in “Retail Trade” and “Accommodation & Food Services.”
 - Twenty-one percent of the region’s workers commute more than 50 miles to work in 2014 compared to only 13% in 2006.
- Labor is largely drawn towards three areas within the 13-county region: Pensacola, Fort Walton Beach, and Panama City. The main commuting destination outside the 13-county region is Tallahassee in Leon County.

INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

- Federal Government Services (including military) (55,340 workers), Business Services (21,295), and Hospitality and Tourism (12,189) are the largest industry clusters in terms of total employment within the 13-county region.
- Several of the high performing industry clusters are essentially a single firm or single location:
 - 70% of employment in the Textile Manufacturing cluster is Ascend Performance Materials LLC in Escambia County
 - 60% of employment in the Financial Services cluster is Navy Federal Credit Union in Escambia County
 - 50% of employment in the Water Transportation cluster is Eastern Shipbuilding Group in Bay County

OCCUPATIONAL ANALYSIS

- Within the 13-county region, the Military Occupations (35,708 workers) and Public Safety and Domestic Security (11,098 workers) occupational clusters have more than 20% higher concentration than the national average.
- Occupations that require minimal on-the-job training and education comprise 53% of total regional employment, which is the same percentage as the US but lower than Florida (56%).
- All six of the Purdue “Tech Clusters”² lost competitiveness between 2009 and 2015 (based upon shift-share analysis) and generate significantly lower median hourly earnings compared to Florida³ and the U.S.

² Information Technology; Engineering and Related Sciences; Health Care and Medical Science (Medical Practitioners and Scientists); Mathematics, Statistics, Data and Accounting; Natural Sciences and Environmental Management; and Postsecondary Education and Knowledge Creation

³ One exception - the Engineering and Related Sciences cluster in the region has higher earnings than the state, but not the nation.

SWOT

This figure below highlights Northwest Florida’s economic development strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, commonly referred to as a SWOT analysis. It was developed based on direct input provided by the regional stakeholders gathered from roundtable discussions and interviews conducted throughout the region. Data and quantitative analysis completed as part of the regional profile and the industry and occupational analysis also informed the SWOT.



STRENGTHS

- Natural amenities, beautiful beaches, and a lifestyle attractive to all age groups and demographics
- Research & development, testing, talent, and technology development associated with the region’s military installations
- Supportive business climate for licensing, permitting, zoning, taxes, and regulation
- A growing commitment to strong regional cooperation
- A consortium of high quality post-secondary educational institutions
- Capable regional economic development organizations led by Florida’s Great Northwest and Opportunity Florida
- Strong economic analytics partner – University of West Florida’s Haas Center
- An emerging ecosystem of entrepreneurial programs, assets, and networks
- Areas of affordable rural land available for industrial/commercial development
- Industry specialization assets in Aerospace & Defense, Financial Services, Water Transportation, Cybersecurity, Advanced Manufacturing, AI/Robotics, and Unmanned Systems
- Transportation infrastructure: Interstate 10, three commercial airports, three deepwater seaports, CSX rail



WEAKNESSES

- Employers report difficulty in attracting skilled talent to fill certain positions
 - Regional prevailing wages are not competitive with other regions.
 - While improving, the region still lacks many urban amenities sought by younger professionals.
 - The scarcity of similar career opportunities for certain high skill positions makes it more difficult to attract talent.
- Lack of vibrant industry clusters with supply chains: high performing industry clusters are essentially a single firm or location
- Lack of affordable workforce housing in certain areas and especially city centers
- Deficiency of industrial sites and buildings, especially in rural areas
- Limited access to startup capital for entrepreneurs and small businesses and lack of a formal process to obtain funding
- Generational pockets of poverty in some counties, especially in predominantly minority communities
- Limited access points in transportation infrastructure
- Lack of a region-wide transportation mobility system
- Limited/antiquated wastewater infrastructure
- Declining population, workforce, and tax base in rural areas
- Insufficient funding for workforce development and training
- Lack of funding for rural real estate product development and marketing
- Early childhood education



OPPORTUNITIES

- BP oil spill settlement funds due to economic damages specifically allocated to the eight coastal counties of Northwest Florida
- Strengthening the regional economy beyond military and tourism
- Expanded and coordinated regional entrepreneurship support
- Leveraging federal and private R&D assets to stimulate new private investment and entrepreneurship
- Additional shared business retention & expansion efforts, especially in rural areas
- Further strengthening cradle to career education system
- Investments in public infrastructure
- Creating a demand-driven workforce development initiative able to accommodate large employers
- Creating informal and formal mechanisms to promote greater regional identity and collaboration
- Internal and external marketing and awareness campaigns
- Intra-regional and interstate partnerships, especially connected to Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing



THREATS

- Reduced military investment in the region
- Inability to align resources beyond traditional geographic boundaries
- External shocks that disrupt the tourism sector (e.g., hurricanes or environmental disasters)
- Uncertainty surrounding state economic development funding and support
- Reduced statewide incentives for economic development
- Legislative reallocation of BP oil spill economic damages settlement funding
- Close proximity to neighboring states/markets with significant resources to win competitive projects and to recruit Northwest Florida companies

VISION

A comprehensive economic strategy must be driven by a clear vision. Meaningful vision statements should be bold, provide a clear direction, and differentiate the region from its peers and competitors. The existing vision for the region articulated by Florida's Great Northwest achieves those objectives and reflects its economic potential.

A diverse and vibrant regional economy where Northwest Florida residents and businesses have a wealth of opportunities

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles reflect the values of the region. In the context of an economic strategy, they are a set of statements expressing how a community defines economic development. The overarching principle is to ensure economic vitality. These principles were crafted through input from regional stakeholders and embody values broadly shared throughout the region and its communities. For Northwest Florida, economic vitality encompasses the concepts below.

- **SUSTAINABLE AND ENDURING ECONOMIC BASE**
- **DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES AND HIGH WAGE EMPLOYMENT GROWTH**
- **GREATER ALIGNMENT OF PARTNER RESOURCES THROUGH REGIONAL COLLABORATION**
- **IMPROVING THE VITALITY OF ALL AREAS AND POPULATIONS IN THE REGION**
- **STRENGTHEN BEYOND TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC ENGINES**

For the regional transformation strategy to genuinely reflect the values of Northwest Florida, every strategy must be directly linked to at least one guiding principle.

GOALS

Northwest Florida Forward is built around five aspirational goals that serve as the pillars of future economic vitality and growth for the region. They reflect a holistic view of economic development that addresses business vitality, talent, infrastructure, innovation, and place. Under each goal are a number of strategies and actions needed for implementation.

1. TALENT

Connect the talent assets of Northwest Florida to key industry clusters and ensure a dynamic and diverse workforce for new and growing businesses.

STRATEGIES

- Create a regional workforce training and development initiative designed to meet the needs of large employers relocating or expanding in Northwest Florida.
- Better leverage separated and retired military personnel as a key talent pool for target industry clusters.
- Explore establishing an employer-driven workforce training initiative focused on assisting underemployed and long-term unemployed residents.
- Develop a regional talent recruitment program.
- Expand work-based learning and career exploration opportunities for students.

- Further leverage the manufacturing academies model to expand the promotion of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs and technical skills development as early as grade school to build long-term talent supply in the region.
- Increase employability skills training programs to reduce employment barriers for all students and adults, with a particular focus on underserved populations.

2. BUSINESS VITALITY

Strengthen the region's economy through targeted recruitment of new businesses and supporting existing business expansions.

STRATEGIES

- Ensure the growth of the region's key industry clusters.
- Create industry sector councils to ensure the critical workforce and business competitiveness needs of each sector are addressed.
- Market and promote Northwest Florida as a destination for new investment and employment.
- Increase shared Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) activities throughout the region.
- Expand and leverage tourism to support industry attraction.
- Support the growth of microenterprises and small businesses in the region, particularly in rural areas and minority communities.
- Streamline government processes across the region to help business start-ups, expansions, and relocations get up and running quickly.
- Market Northwest Florida as an investment location to full- or part-time residents who own a business outside of the region.

3. INFRASTRUCTURE

Ensure that Northwest Florida's economic infrastructure is state of the art and connects communities in every part of the region.

STRATEGIES

- Use the Regional Planning Councils to address shared infrastructure needs and other economic development issues.
- Develop sites to accommodate business expansions and relocations.
- Support the development of industrial megasites, with a deliberate focus on rural areas of the region.
- Ensure that the necessary infrastructure improvements to ports and airports to accommodate new private investment and employment are funded and completed.
- Continue advocating for state and federal funding for improving the region's road infrastructure and explore new options to improve transportation mobility.
- Continue efforts to expand broadband infrastructure and adoption in rural and underserved areas of the region.

4. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

Foster robust entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems to drive future economic growth.

STRATEGIES

- Develop the region's entrepreneurial hubs and connect them with industry clusters, assets, services, networks, facilities, tools, and expertise.
- Establish commercialization tools and programs connected to the region's national security research and technology assets.
- Increase access to capital for Northwest Florida entrepreneurs and develop a formal mechanism to access funds.
- Encourage local entrepreneurs and innovators to tap into federal funding in the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grants.
- Promote rural entrepreneurship.
- Market regional entrepreneurial success stories.
- Support youth entrepreneurship programs at local school districts to foster a culture of innovation and cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit in the region.

5. QUALITY OF PLACE

Make Northwest Florida a place appealing to existing residents and visitors as well as to a new generation of talented and creative individuals and companies.

STRATEGIES

- Encourage the development of vibrant downtowns, new town centers, and mixed-use developments in the region.
- Gain a better understanding of the preferences and needs of existing Northwest Florida residents.
- Invest in the amenities and infrastructure in underserved communities.
- Incorporate the site location needs of target industries into local and regional planning and placemaking strategies.

OVERVIEW OF TARGET INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

TIP Strategies and the Haas Center sought to identify target industry clusters for Northwest Florida that will transform the region if successfully developed through business recruitment, retention, expansion, and entrepreneurial support. These recommendations, however, should not be viewed as the only viable industries in the region for attraction and development. Some counties and communities offer competitive advantages to specific sectors that may not be part of these recommendations. However, based on regional industry and occupational data, national and regional trends, as well as the consulting team's experience in identifying target industries for markets nationwide, the following regional targets are recommended for inclusion in the regional strategy.

- **Aerospace and Defense** is the region's deepest and most diverse cluster. While Aerospace employment has declined in the region in recent years, Northwest Florida's proximity to five major Aerospace OEM Assembly facilities as well as new commercial aerospace developments in the four-state region present opportunities for renewed growth.
- **Financial Services** plays an essential role in the economy as it interacts with virtually all other clusters via the banking industry. The recent and projected growth of the cluster in the region is being driven by the ongoing expansion of Navy Federal Credit Union in Escambia County. In addition to employing thousands of residents, the sector serves as an essential support service for other industries and contributes significantly to the regional economy.
- **Water Transportation** is poised for healthy growth in the region largely due the success of Eastern Shipbuilding in winning the significant U.S. Coast Guard Cutter shipbuilding contract. Targeting the shipbuilding supply chain presents opportunities for additional cluster growth in the region beyond Bay County.
- **Cybersecurity** is not considered a traditional cluster, yet presents promising high-wage growth opportunities due to unique assets and new supporting programs in the region.
- **Advanced Manufacturing** is an important target for growth as it impacts many other clusters and offers high-wage employment growth for all areas of the region. Since advanced manufacturing is an activity that cannot easily be grouped by industry codes for analysis purposes, it was not included in the target industry cluster profiles. Strategies and actions for promoting the growth of Advanced Manufacturing in the region are still included in the plan.

Finally, a region can be home to a cluster that is experiencing overall decline and, through spillover effects, can negatively impact an entire regional or state economy. The concentration of the U.S. auto industry in Michigan is such an example. The goal of the regional strategy, therefore, should not be solely to support a fixed number of clusters, but to foster a dynamic economy that can support a variety of industries, especially those that Northwest Florida is uniquely positioned to nurture.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Northwest Florida Forward is an ambitious plan that proposes numerous strategies and actions. It is not feasible for any one organization to lead and coordinate implementation in such a large region. Therefore, a new regional implementation partnership consisting of Northwest Florida Forward Councils is being proposed to lead, coordinate, and champion the regional strategy. The Northwest Florida Forward Councils will be aligned with the goals of the strategy. The councils will function as task forces charged with coordinating the implementation efforts for one of the goals. The proposed councils will include:

- Talent Council
- Business Vitality Council
- Entrepreneurship & Innovation Council
- Infrastructure Council
- Quality of Place Council

In addition, industry councils will be organized around each of the target clusters. A Northwest Florida Forward Steering Committee will be created to provide overall coordination of the effort.

Each council will be led by volunteer co-chairs, who will be responsible for recruiting members, organizing council meetings to discuss implementation tasks, and communicating progress to the larger partnership. The councils can take their sections of the strategy and reprioritize, add, and delete strategies and actions; adjust timelines; recruit organizations to participate; and set metrics to measure success.

Funding the strategies and initiatives recommended in the plan also cannot depend on any one organization or source of money. It will require the councils to pursue funds from a variety of public and private sources. Below are just some of the potential sources of implementation funding.

- U.S. Economic Development Administration
- Triumph Gulf Coast
- RESTORE Act funds
- U.S. Department of Labor
- Florida Department of Transportation
- U.S. Small Business Administration
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. National Park Service
- U.S. Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment
- Federal Highway Administration
- Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
- National Endowment for the Humanities

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

GLOSSARY OF ORGANIZATIONS

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION	ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
AA	Aerospace Alliance	IC	Innovation Coast
CCs	Chambers of Commerce	MIE	Millaway Institute for Entrepreneurship
CSFs	CareerSource Florida Organizations	NFCU	Navy Federal Credit Union
CVBs	Convention & Visitors Bureaus	NWFMC	Northwest Florida Manufacturers Council
EDOs	Economic Development Organizations	OF	Opportunity Florida
EFI	Enterprise Florida	RC	Regional Council*
FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation	TPO	Northwest Florida Regional Transportation Planning Organization
FGNW	Florida's Great Northwest	PSEs	Post-Secondary Education Institutions
FW	FloridaWest	RPCs	Regional Planning Councils
DI	Doolittle Institute	SBDCs	Small Business Development Centers
GCIP	Gulf Coast Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship	TeCMEN	Technology Coast Manufacturing and Engineering Network
GP	Gulf Power	TF	TechFarms
K12s	K-12 Educational Institutions	UWF	University of West Florida
LGs	Local Governments	VF	Visit Florida

*Proposed

LEGEND			
Priority:	Low ★	Medium ★ ★	High ★ ★ ★

MATRIX

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
GOAL 1: CONNECT THE TALENT ASSETS OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA TO KEY INDUSTRY CLUSTERS AND ENSURE A DYNAMIC AND DIVERSE WORKFORCE FOR NEW AND GROWING BUSINESSES.						
Strategy 1.1. Create a regional workforce training and development initiative designed to meet the needs of large employers relocating or expanding in Northwest Florida.						
1.1.1.1. Work with educational institutions and workforce boards to create an employer-driven workforce training initiative.	★ ★ ★	◆	◆			PSEs, GP, CSFs, K12s, EDOs, FGNW
Strategy 1.2. Better leverage separated and retired military personnel as a key talent pool for target industry clusters.						
1.2.1.1. Formalize a regional military talent pipeline survey and marketing program.	★ ★ ★		◆			CSFs, FGNW, EDOs, Military Installations
1.2.1.1.1. Expand the existing surveys to include all installations in the region where meaningful numbers of military personnel are separating from service.			◆			CSFs, Military Installations
1.2.1.1.2. The region’s CareerSource organizations should jointly develop a common set of questions across all surveys.			◆			CSFs
1.2.1.1.3. Tabulated and analyzed data should be shared with Florida’s Great Northwest and other local economic development organizations for business development purposes.			◆			CSFs, FGNW, EDOs
1.2.1.1.4. Survey data should be shared with existing regional employers seeking workforce assistance.			◆			CSFs, FGNW, EDOs, CCs
1.2.1.1.5. If needed, execute a regional MOU between the region’s CareerSource organizations, Florida’s Great Northwest, Veterans Florida, and other pertinent entities necessary to structure a regional survey program.			◆			CSFs, FGNW, Veterans Florida
1.2.2. Partner with Veterans Florida to build an online portal designed to connect veterans with occupational opportunities in the region and to market Northwest Florida to veterans.	★ ★ ★		◆			CSFs, Veterans Florida
1.2.3. Explore options for assisting service members and veterans obtain higher education credits and based on their military skills and credentials.	★ ★ ★		◆			CSFs, Veterans Florida

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
1.2.4. Partner with Veterans Florida and CareerSource Florida organizations to address Northwest Florida veterans and spousal needs.	★ ★ ★		◆			CSFs, Veterans Florida
1.2.5. Build awareness among employers regarding the skill sets represented by personnel separating from service at installations in the region.	★ ★ ★		◆			CSFs, FGNW, EDOs, Veterans Florida
1.2.6. Encourage employers to participate in job fairs and related events at the region's installations.	★ ★ ★		◆			CSFs, FGNW, EDOs, CCs
1.2.7. Work with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, CareerSource Florida organizations, and other relevant organizations to ensure that military training requirements match state licensing requirements.	★ ★ ★		◆			CSFs, PSEs, FDEO
Strategy 1.3. Explore establishing an employer-driven workforce training initiative focused on assisting underemployed and long-term unemployed residents.						
1.3.1. Explore creating/transforming a workforce organization using the demand-driven model developed by Skills for Chicagoland's Future.	★ ★ ★		◆	◆		CSFs, EDOs, FGNW
1.3.1.1. Review the Demand-Driven Playbook offered by SCF to determine if such a model is feasible in the region.			◆			CSFs
1.3.1.2. If there is interest, reach out to SCF to inquire about obtaining assistance in developing a model in the region.			◆			CSFs
1.3.2. Engage employers and regional workforce partners in evaluating and prioritizing comprehensive, long-term strategies for improving access to economic opportunity for all residents. Programs that facilitate re-entry into the workforce for underrepresented populations should be emphasized.	★ ★ ★			◆		CSFs, EDOs
Strategy 1.4. Develop a regional talent recruitment program.						
1.4.1. Create a regional talent retention and attraction program similar to the Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce's talent development program.	★ ★		◆	◆		CSFs, EDOs, FGNW, CSFs
1.4.2. Create an online talent portal that provides information about working, living, and relocating to Northwest Florida.	★ ★			◆		CCs, EDOs, FGNW
1.4.3. Design a "come home" campaign to inform former residents and alumni who live in other cities of the career opportunities, events, and quality of place amenities in Northwest Florida.	★ ★			◆		CCs, EDOs, PSEs, K12s
1.4.3.1. Assemble a network of local alumni associations—both college and high school—that are willing to relay information and content out to their alumni networks.				◆		CCs, EDOs, PSEs, K12s

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
1.4.3.2. Use this network to communicate regularly with alumni. Share information such as job opportunities, arts and cultural events, notable economic development activities, and other types of information that will build awareness of the positive things going on in the region and draw the alumni back.				◆		CCs, EDOs, PSEs, K12s
1.4.4. Create a Digital Ambassadors program that utilizes a network of “connectors” who share positive stories about Northwest Florida online and through social media.	★ ★			◆		CCs, EDOs, CVBs
1.4.4.1. Identify connectors and thought leaders and encourage them to be digital ambassadors for the region.				◆		CCs, EDOs, CVBs
1.4.4.2. Develop content that portrays a positive image of the regional business climate and highlights opportunities for business and talent to be successful in the region.				◆		CCs, EDOs, CVBs
1.4.4.3. Create an incentive system that rewards digital ambassadors for actively participating.				◆		CCs, EDOs, CVBs
1.4.4.4. Promote the program across the region through city, chamber, CVB, and other local existing communications channels, including traditional and social media.				◆		CCs, EDOs, CVBs
1.4.5. Continue supporting the content growth and awareness of existing local and regional career pathways online portals.	★ ★			◆		CSFs, K12s, PSEs
Strategy 1.5. Expand work-based learning and career exploration opportunities for students.						
1.5.1. Work with existing workforce development organizations, education institutions, and the proposed sector councils to create an inventory of existing public, private, and nonprofit work-based learning programs.	★ ★			◆		CSFs, K12s, PSEs
1.5.2. Create a directory of companies and volunteers who are willing to provide these opportunities to students to help career counselors, instructors, and students identify the opportunities more easily. Promote the database.	★ ★			◆		CSFs, K12s, PSEs
1.5.3. Pursue funding from the Florida Apprenticeship Grant Program to expand apprenticeships in the region.	★ ★			◆		CSFs, K12s, PSEs
1.5.4. Develop a toolkit for employers to use to organize meaningful work-based learning experiences that will ensure the realization of benefits for both the employers and students.	★ ★			◆		CSFs, K12s, PSEs

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
1.5.5. Work collaboratively with employers to target traditionally hard-to-reach populations such as minority youth and students in rural communities.	★ ★			◆		CSFs, K12s, PSEs
1.5.6. Continue to bring funds into the region to do more internships.	★ ★			◆		CSFs, K12s, PSEs
1.5.7. Recognize, celebrate, and reward businesses that are engaged in talent development/offering work-based learning opportunities.	★ ★			◆		CSFs, K12s, PSEs
Strategy 1.6. Further leverage the manufacturing academies model to expand the promotion of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs and technical skills development as early as grade school to build long-term talent supply in the region.						
1.6.1. Work with education, workforce development, private sector, nonprofit, and economic development partners to expand STEM education and technical skills development program throughout the region.	★ ★ ★			◆		K12s, CSFs, EDOs
1.6.2. Partner with cradle to career efforts like Achieve Escambia and Alignment Bay County to ensure programming supports employability and technical skills development to support target industries.	★ ★ ★			◆		K12s, CSFs, EDOs
Strategy 1.7. Increase employability skills training programs to reduce employment barriers for all students and adults, with a particular focus on underserved populations.						
1.7.1. Incorporate employability skills training in all schools across the region, including but not limited to career academies and business/education partnership programs.	★ ★			◆		K12s
1.7.2. Explore establishing other national programs and models in the region that address soft skills, employability, and leadership development in low-income populations.	★ ★			◆		K12s, CSFs, LGs
GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN THE REGION'S ECONOMY THROUGH TARGETED RECRUITMENT OF NEW BUSINESSES AND SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESS EXPANSIONS.						
Strategy 2.1. Ensure the growth of region's key industry clusters.						
2.1.1. Strengthen and build on the Aerospace and Defense cluster, and leverage the presence of major regional employers in the Water Transportation and Financial Services sectors for economic growth.	★ ★ ★	◆	◆	◆		PSEs, GP, CSFs, EDOs, FGNW
2.1.1.1. Continue strengthening the region's workforce education and training programs connected to aerospace and other STEM fields.		◆				CSFs, K12s, PSEs
2.1.1.2. Identify and attract suppliers of Airbus, Boeing, and other major aerospace and defense companies to the region.			◆			FGNW, AA, EDOs

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
2.1.1.3. Build aerospace supply chain across I-10 from Pensacola to Jacksonville.					◆	FGNW, AA, EDOs
2.1.1.4. Continue leveraging relationships with Aerospace Alliance partners in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana to promote the Southeastern U.S. as a top location for aerospace companies.		◆				FGNW, AA, EDOs
2.1.1.5. Build an online database of regional aerospace suppliers. Assist original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) in identifying and partnering with capable supply chain partners.			◆			FGNW, AA, EDOs
2.1.1.6. Create or attract a new center of excellence (COE) focused on Advanced Manufacturing in the Aerospace sector.				◆		PSEs, CSFs, FGNW
2.1.1.7. Develop marketing campaign and materials to encourage aerospace and defense companies to locate and expand in Northwest Florida.			◆			FGNW, EDOs, AA
2.1.1.8. Work with NFCU to conduct a supply chain analysis of IT vendors to identify suppliers and service providers located outside of the region.			◆			FW, FGNW, NFCU
2.1.1.9. Develop a targeted marketing initiative to persuade NFCU vendors and other Financial Services firms to locate operations in proximity to the campus as well as other areas of the region.			◆			FW, FGNW, NFCU
2.1.1.10. Work closely with Eastern and other ship building companies to identify future workforce development and attraction requirements and implement programs to address these needs.			◆			Eastern, CSFs, PSEs, K12s
2.1.1.11. Conduct a supply chain analysis of Eastern's vendors and suppliers to identify candidates for recruitment to the region.			◆			Eastern, FGNW, EDOs
2.1.1.12. Develop marketing campaign and materials specific to the Water Transportation cluster.			◆			FGNW, EDOs
2.1.1.13. Ensure the region's maritime and industrial infrastructure can accommodate new facilities, employment, and investment.				◆		FDOT, EDOs, LG
2.1.2. Support the ongoing expansion of Cybersecurity employment, investment, education, and training in the region.	★ ★ ★		◆			PSEs, FW, FGNW, EDOs
2.1.2.1. Develop a regional Cybersecurity business development strategy that highlights the collective assets in this sector.			◆			PSEs, FW, FGNW, EDOs

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
2.1.2.2. Identify Cybersecurity as a formal regional industry target and design marketing efforts and materials for its growth.			◆			PSEs, FW, FGNW, EDOs
2.1.2.3. Identify and promote niche specializations to build competitive advantages.			◆			PSEs, FW, FGNW, EDOs
2.1.3. Support the vibrancy of Advanced Manufacturing across clusters.	★ ★ ★	◆	◆	◆		FGNW, GP, EDOs, NWFMC, TeCMEN
2.1.3.1. Support the efforts of the Northwest Florida Manufacturing Council to develop a robust marketing plan to raise awareness and perception of Advanced Manufacturing career (and other middle skills occupations) opportunities for students in Northwest Florida.			◆			NWFMC, TeCMEN, K12s, PSEs, CSFs
2.1.3.2. Pursue federal and private funding to establish new advanced manufacturing training centers in the region and/or to strengthen existing centers.					◆	PSEs
2.1.3.3. Enhance the regional manufacturing supply chain by creating an online buyer-supplier database.			◆			NWFMC, TeCMEN, FGNW
2.1.3.4. Brand and promote the North Florida Manufacturing, Logistics, and Distribution Corridor along I-10 from Pensacola to Jacksonville.			◆			FGNW, NWFMC, TeCMEN
2.1.3.5. Provide technical assistance, technology acquisition, and financial support to assist manufacturers transition from traditional production into more advanced upstream (e.g., research and development or design) and downstream segments (repair and maintenance or sales) of the manufacturing value chain.					◆	NWFMC, TeCMEN, FGNW
Strategy 2.2. Create industry sector councils to ensure the critical workforce needs and challenges of each sector are addressed.						
2.2.1. Bring together primary decision makers in Northwest Florida's key economic drivers and target industries to assess talent and business competitiveness needs.	★ ★ ★		◆			EDOs, FGNW, CSFs, GP, PSEs, CCs
2.2.2. Identify critical occupations and skills and quantify demand through employer surveys.	★ ★ ★		◆			CSFs, EDOs, CCs
2.2.3. For critical occupations and skills that are shared across sectors, create a multi-sectoral group that could engage a wider community of employers.	★ ★ ★			◆		EDOs, FGNW, CSFs, GP, PSEs, CCs
2.2.4. Continue to update and expand the regional training inventory to meet the needs of those critical occupations through the training provider survey.	★ ★ ★		◆			CSFs, PSEs, K12s, GP

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
2.2.5. Determine if relevant curricula are teaching students the critical skills they need.	★ ★ ★			◆		CSFs, PSEs, K12s
2.2.6. Work with educational institutions and training providers to define career pathways related to critical occupations.	★ ★ ★			◆		CSFs, PSEs, K12s
2.2.7. Launch awareness initiatives to drive students/workers into training programs.	★ ★ ★			◆		CSFs, PSEs, K12s
2.2.8. Monitor the needs of other industries and facilitate the launch of new councils as needed.	★ ★ ★			◆		EDOs, FGNW, CSFs, GP, PSEs, CCs
2.2.9. Work with regional CareerSource organizations to utilize data captured from military talent pipeline surveys to benefit employers in each sector and translate military occupations and skills to civilian sector career opportunities.	★ ★ ★			◆		EDOs, FGNW, CSFs, GP, PSEs, CCs
Strategy 2.3. Market and promote Northwest Florida as a destination for new investment and employment.						
2.3.1. Engage in a coordinated business attraction and marketing campaign with other local and regional economic development organizations.	★ ★	◆	◆			FGNW, OF, EDOS
2.3.1.1. Provide data and information developed for Northwest Florida Forward to local and regional partners, especially the individual county profiles and the regional target industry profiles.			◆			FGNW, OF, EDOS
2.3.1.2. Develop a package of regional marketing materials that highlight the unique assets of each county.			◆			FGNW, OF, EDOS
2.3.1.3. Continue supporting Opportunity Florida's marketing efforts to promote rural Northwest Florida and coordinate those with FGNW's activities.		◆				FGNW, OF, EDOS
2.3.1.4. Schedule economic development marketing pieces, such as email newsletters, to coincide with recent business attraction, retention, expansion, and creation success stories. Also, highlight successes around education/training programs, infrastructure developments, and quality of place enhancements.			◆			FGNW, OF, EDOS
2.3.1.5. Leverage the Digital Ambassadors Network (1.4.4) and develop a coordinated effort to highlight targeted industry success stories to generate awareness and interest among out of state targeted business executives and site location consultants.			◆			FGNW, OF, EDOS

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
2.3.2. Cultivate relationships and networks with business executives for the recruitment of new businesses to Northwest Florida, especially in target clusters and sectors.	★ ★	◆	◆			FGNW, EDOs, GP, OF
2.3.2.1. Join and participate in trade or industry associations for the priority target sectors.			◆			FGNW, EDOs
2.3.2.2. Conduct domestic call trips/marketing missions to meet with company executives in regions where each target industry concentration is the highest.		◆	◆			FGNW
2.3.3. Continue building awareness of Northwest Florida as a destination for investment among site selection consultants.	★ ★ ★	◆	◆	◆		FGNW, EDOs, OF, GP
2.3.3.1. Call on site consultants in targeted metropolitan areas, particularly the Atlanta metro area. Utilize a site selection database to identify targets and periodically set appointments to discuss the Northwest Florida market and development opportunities.		◆	◆			FGNW
2.3.3.2. Continue maintaining and updating information typically of interest to commercial and industrial site selectors on the FGNW website.		◆	◆			FGNW
2.3.3.3. Periodically host events in Northwest Florida that showcase specific assets, such as available land and buildings or new projects.		◆	◆			FGNW, EDOs, GP
2.3.4. Maintain database of company expansion/relations for tracking and marketing purposes.	★ ★ ★		◆			CSFs, FGNW
2.3.5. Promote the region for new foreign direct investment.	★ ★		◆			FGNW, EDOs, GP, OF
2.3.5.1. Identify individuals and organizations from the international community residing or working in Northwest Florida that could assist in marketing and recruitment efforts.			◆			FGNW, EDOs, GP
2.3.5.2. Leverage the existing international connections of exporters and foreign-owned companies within the region.			◆			FGNW, EDOs, GP, OF
2.3.5.3. Leverage university/college relationships with foreign institutions and students.			◆			FGNW, EDOs, PSEs, OF
2.3.5.4. Build a regional international business alliance comprised of companies with international operations, foreign ownership, or trade relations.				◆		FGNW, EDOs, GP, OF

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
2.3.5.5. Strategically attend international industry events and trade shows in target markets, especially in Aerospace and Defense.		◆				FGNW, EDOs, GP
2.3.5.6. Develop marketing materials to show benefits of a Northwest Florida location to international companies.			◆			FGNW, EDOs, GP, OF
2.3.6. Build and maintain relationships with state economic development organizations, including Enterprise Florida, to ensure Northwest Florida remains top of mind for prospect leads.	★ ★		◆			
Strategy 2.4. Increase shared Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) activities throughout the region.						
2.4.1. Local and county economic development organizations should engage regional partners to assist in BRE support and visits with companies within the region's target industry clusters.	★ ★			◆		FGNW, EDOs, OF
2.4.2. Identify local businesses to gain competitive intelligence across the region on how we can help existing companies grow and remove common barriers for business across the region.	★ ★			◆		FGNW, EDOs, OF
2.4.3. Encourage education on trade and exporting opportunities.	★ ★			◆		SBDCs, EDOs, FGNW, OF
Strategy 2.5. Expand and leverage tourism to support industry attraction.						
2.5.1. Establish a conference and meeting strategy linked to target sector opportunities.	★ ★		◆	◆		FGNW, EDOs, CVBs, CCs, OF, VF
2.5.1.1. Identify a complementary theme for tourism attraction, business recruitment, and talent attraction.			◆			FGNW, EDOs, CVBs, CCs, OF
2.5.1.2. Local and regional economic development organizations should work with the local CVBs to tie their conference and meeting strategy to targeted occupations, groups, and industries.				◆		FGNW, EDOs, CVBs, CCs, OF
2.5.1.3. Identify industry associations within each target industry and encourage them to consider Northwest Florida as a destination for annual events and meetings.			◆			FGNW, EDOs, CVBs, CCs, OF
2.5.1.4. Coordinate with local EDOs the targeting of specific businesses and organizations holding conferences and symposia in the region.			◆			FGNW, EDOs, CVBs, CCs, OF

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
2.5.1.5. Create a brief profile and coherent and coordinated marketing message to assist local economic developers in promoting Northwest Florida's competitive advantages.			◆			FGNW, EDOs, CVBs, CCs, OF
2.5.2. Leverage tourism assets to get business marketing messages out.	★ ★			◆		FGNW, EDOs, CVBs, CCs, OF
2.5.2.1. Prominently display positive information about the region's economy and business climate at key visitor destinations (e.g., commercial airports, hotels, CVBs).				◆		FGNW, EDOs, CVBs, CCs, OF
2.5.2.2. Encourage first points of contact to communicate positive messages about the region's business advantages to visitors. Provide educational materials and talking points on the region's economy to first points of contact.				◆		FGNW, EDOs, CVBs, CCs, OF
2.5.2.3. Work with tourism partners to learn more about the visitors traveling to the region on business, including information on the businesses they own or represent.				◆		FGNW, EDOs, CVBs, CCs, OF
2.5.3. Diversify and expand the Tourism sector to capitalize on the region's historical, cultural, heritage, scenic, ecological, sports, and recreational assets, including those north of I-10.	★ ★			◆		CVBs, CCs, EDOs, VF
2.5.3.1. Build upon existing efforts to maintain a "trail and destination" guide that captures all the major outdoor recreation, adventure, scenic, historical, and cultural assets in the region.				◆		CVBs, CCs, EDOs, VF
2.5.3.2. Work in conjunction with the UWF Historic Trust, the African American Heritage Society, and other organizations to identify underutilized historical and heritage assets that may need investment and/or additional marketing.				◆		CVBs, CCs, EDOs, VF
2.5.3.3. Pursue federal and foundation grants to support the region's tourism infrastructure needs.				◆		CVBs, CCs, EDOs, VF
Strategy 2.6. Support the growth of microenterprises and small businesses in the region, particularly in rural areas and minority communities.						
2.6.1. Review and catalog small business support at the city and county levels. Develop programs to fill gaps. Publicize resources available to small businesses through cities, chambers, economic development organizations, and community organizations.	★ ★ ★		◆			EDOs, SBDCs, LGs, CCs, OF, FGNW

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
2.6.2. Fully leverage and promote existing Small Business Development Center (SBDC) programs and investments in the region.	★ ★		◆			SBDCs, EDOs, CCs
2.6.3. Establish a regional revolving loan fund to provide “gap” financing to small business startups, expansions, or relocations.	★ ★			◆		EDOs, RPOs, FGW
2.6.3.1. Pursue a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to seed the fund.				◆		EDOs, RPOs, FGW
2.6.4. Work with nonprofits, especially in disadvantaged neighborhoods in the region, to identify specific growth opportunities in retail and services to expand the number of microenterprises.	★ ★ ★		◆			EDOs, RPOs, SBDCs, LGs
2.6.5. Establish a program to promote enhanced participation of minority contractors and vendors in contracting opportunities. The program should address licensing fees, training, fostering joint venture opportunities, and promotion and marketing.	★ ★ ★		◆			LGs, EDOs, CCs, SBDCs
Strategy 2.7. Streamline government processes across the region to help business start-ups, expansions, and relocations get up and running quickly.						
2.7.1. Streamline government processes across the region to help business start-ups, expansions, and relocations get up and running quickly.	★ ★ ★	◆	◆			LGs, EDOs, RPCs
Strategy 2.8. Market Northwest Florida as an investment location to full- or part-time residents who own a business outside of the region.						
2.8.1. Market Northwest Florida as an investment location to full- or part-time residents who own a business outside of the region.	★ ★			◆		EDOs, FGW, OF, CCs
GOAL 3: ENSURE THAT NORTHWEST FLORIDA’S ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE IS STATE OF THE ART AND CONNECTS COMMUNITIES IN EVERY PART OF THE REGION.						
Strategy 3.1. Use the Regional Planning Councils to address shared infrastructure needs and other economic development issues.						
3.1.1. The West Florida and Apalachee Regional Planning Councils will directly support the implementation of the Northwest Florida Forward regional strategy with the development and implementation of regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs).	★ ★ ★		◆			RPCs, FGW, LGs
3.1.2. The Regional Planning Councils should serve as a champion for specific regional economic development and infrastructure initiatives and work across jurisdictions to ensure they have the greatest regional impact.	★ ★ ★	◆				RPCs

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
3.1.3. Florida's Great Northwest and the Regional Planning Councils (ARPC and WFRPC) boards should meet at least annually to create the Panhandle Forum to discuss large regional issues and reevaluate/update the regional CEDS process.	★ ★ ★		◆			RPCs, FGNW
3.1.4. Explore the use of regional revenue sharing models to support regional economic development and infrastructure projects in Northwest Florida.	★ ★ ★		◆			GP, FGNW, LGs
3.1.5. Bring the Transportation Planning Organizations (TPOs), Regional Planning Councils, and FGNW together in the region together for strategic discussions.	★ ★ ★		◆			TPOs, LGs, RPCs, FGNW
Strategy 3.2. Develop sites to accommodate business expansions and relocations.						
3.2.1. Engage a geospatial consulting firm to conduct a land suitability assessment in Northwest Florida for locating new industrial and commercial parks.	★ ★ ★		◆			GP, FGNW, EDOs
3.2.2. Raise awareness of the Florida's First Sites Program.	★ ★ ★	◆	◆			GP, FGNW, EDOs
3.2.3. Explore options for developing shared regional industrial parks that serve multiple counties in the region.	★ ★				◆	FGNW, LGs, RPCs
Strategy 3.3. Support the development of industrial megasites, with a deliberate focus on rural areas of the region.						
3.3.1. Continue working with state and regional partners in Florida and Alabama to develop the proposed Florida-Alabama Mega Site in Jackson County.	★ ★	◆			◆	LGs, FGNW, EDOs, GP, OF
3.3.2. Support the efforts of the public/private partnership to develop the "The Bluffs – Northwest Florida's Industrial Campus" in Escambia County that is envisioned to become a world-class site for new manufacturing that could accommodate as many as 60 industrial tenants and create more than 15,000 new jobs.	★ ★				◆	LGs, FGNW, EDOs, GP, UWF
3.3.3. Explore other promising industrial megasites, such as Shoal River Ranch in Okaloosa County, that are located near interstates, ports, airports, and rail.	★ ★				◆	LGs, FGNW, EDOs, GP, OF
Strategy 3.4. Ensure that the necessary infrastructure improvements to ports and airports to accommodate new private investment and employment are funded and completed.						
3.4.1. Ensure that the necessary infrastructure improvements to ports and airports to accommodate new private investment and employment are funded and completed.	★ ★ ★				◆	LGs, FDOT, RPCs, EDOs, FGNW, OF

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
Strategy 3.5. Continue advocating for state and federal funding for improving the region’s road infrastructure and explore new options to improve transportation mobility.						
3.5.1. Utilize the Regional Planning Councils to present a unified voice to advocate for funding highway transportation projects of regional significance.	★ ★		◆			LGs, RPCs, TPO, RC
3.5.2. Strengthen the business community’s involvement in advocating to state leaders for transportation infrastructure funding.	★ ★		◆			LGs, RPCs, TPO, FGNW, EDOs, RC
3.5.3. Continue implementing the Northwest Florida Transportation Corridor Authority 2013 Master Plan.	★ ★		◆			
3.5.4. Organize a regional mobility summit and invite transportation planning experts to share innovative approaches to regional mobility undertaken and offer suggestions for Northwest Florida.	★ ★			◆		FDOT, TPO, LGs, RPCs
Strategy 3.6. Continue efforts to expand broadband infrastructure and adoption in rural and underserved areas of the region. (Medium Priority, Long Term)						
3.6.1. Continue efforts to expand broadband infrastructure and adoption in rural and underserved areas of the region.	★ ★				◆	LGs, RPCs
GOAL 4: FOSTER ROBUST ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS TO DRIVE FUTURE ECONOMIC GROWTH.						
Strategy 4.1. Develop the region’s entrepreneurial hubs and connect them with industry clusters, assets, services, networks, facilities, tools, and expertise.						
4.1.1. Expand the Northwest Florida Entrepreneurial Support Coalition into a formalized region-wide network of entrepreneurship and innovation service providers and experts representing each of the three hubs. Identify common strengths and gaps and ways to connect resources.	★ ★ ★			◆		, PSEs, IC, MIE, DI, GCIP, EDOs, FGNW
Strategy 4.2. Establish commercialization tools and programs connected to the region’s national security research and technology assets.						
4.2.1. Work with the Doolittle Institute, UWF, FSU Panama City, Florida Institute for Commercialization and other entrepreneurship and innovation partners to ensure the necessary tools and programs are available in the region to transfer and commercialize research and technology.	★ ★ ★			◆		DI, PSEs
Strategy 4.3. Increase access to capital for Northwest Florida entrepreneurs and develop a formal mechanism to access funds.						
4.3.1. Support the formation of angel networks focused on providing startup capital to regional entrepreneurs.	★ ★ ★		◆			

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
4.3.2. Work with regional investors to establish a seed fund for pre-angel investment rounds.	★ ★ ★		◆			MIE, IC, EDOs, FGNW
4.3.3. Work with other angel networks in Florida and surrounding states to form a syndication network to improve deal flow for Northwest Florida companies and investors.	★ ★ ★		◆			MIE, IC, EDOs, FGNW
4.3.4. To address the capital needs of non-tech firms in targeted clusters, a regional working capital (debt) fund should be created.	★ ★ ★		◆			MIE, IC, EDOs, FGNW
Strategy 4.4. Encourage local entrepreneurs and innovators to tap into federal funding in the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grants.						
4.4.1. Improve awareness of these grant programs among regional business community.	★ ★			◆		EDOs, SBDCs
4.4.2. Provide training and assistance to companies on how to apply for SBIR/STTR awards.	★ ★			◆		DI, SBDCs, PSEs
4.4.3. Consider targeting companies in other regions that have received SBIR and STTR grants and providing incentives to expand/relocate in Northwest Florida.	★ ★			◆		FGNW, EDOs
Strategy 4.5. Promote rural entrepreneurship.						
4.5.1. Strategy 4.5. Promote rural entrepreneurship.	★ ★			◆		FGNW, EDOs, OF, PSEs
Strategy 4.6. Market regional entrepreneurial success stories.						
4.6.1. Earn media placement in local media outlets (TV, print, radio stations, etc.) to highlight success stories of local startups and entrepreneurs.	★ ★		◆			FGNW, EDOs, CCs
4.6.2. Aggressively utilize social media to publicize successes. Utilize local digital ambassadors to share local entrepreneurial success stories through their social network.	★ ★		◆			FGNW, EDOs, CCs
4.6.3. Utilize existing entrepreneurship networks, investors, and researchers to spread the word about successes.	★ ★		◆			PSEs, IC, MIE, DI, GCIP, EDOs, FGNW, CCs
4.6.4. Develop a regional entrepreneurial recognition program that harnesses the strengths of ones that already exist in the area.	★ ★		◆			PSEs, IC, MIE, DI, GCIP, EDOs, FGNW, CCs

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
4.6.5. Establish Entrepreneur of the Year awards and aggressively publicize winners throughout the region.	★ ★		◆			PSEs, IC, MIE, DI, GCIP, EDOs, FGNW, CCs
Strategy 4.7. Support youth entrepreneurship programs at local school districts to foster a culture of innovation and cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit in the region.						
4.7.1. Support youth entrepreneurship programs at local school districts to foster a culture of innovation and cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit in the region.	★ ★				◆	K-12s, PSEs
GOAL 5: MAKE NORTHWEST FLORIDA A PLACE APPEALING TO EXISTING RESIDENTS AND VISITORS AS WELL AS A TO NEW GENERATION OF TALENTED AND CREATIVE INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANIES.						
Strategy 5.1. Encourage the development of vibrant downtowns, new town centers, and mixed-use developments in the region.						
5.1.1. Ensure that land use policies encourage high-density uses and foster high-quality development.	★ ★			◆	◆	LGs, RPCs
5.1.2. Continue to assess the local regulations to ensure they are supportive of desired developments.	★ ★				◆	LGs, RPCs, EDOs
5.1.3. Develop specialized toolsets using special financing districts, overlay districts, and other mechanisms to encourage desired development in targeted areas.	★ ★			◆	◆	LGs, RPCs, EDOs
5.1.4. Participate in public-private partnerships that facilitate significant infrastructure improvements and quality redevelopment projects.	★ ★				◆	LGs
5.1.5. Encourage the expansion or relocation of business in targeted development areas to stimulate commercial activity.	★ ★				◆	LGs, EDOs
5.1.6. Identify anchor projects that can bring in the type of traffic and uses needed to catalyze development.	★ ★				◆	LGs, EDOs
5.1.7. Develop affordable housing and co-working spaces.	★ ★				◆	LGs, EDOs, RPCs
5.1.8. Support the growth of arts and culture assets and amenities across the region.	★ ★				◆	LGs, CCs, EDOs
Strategy 5.2. Gain a better understanding of the preferences and needs of existing Northwest Florida residents.						
5.2.1. Work with local chambers and young professionals groups to design and circulate surveys to appraise the quality of place amenities in their community.	★ ★			◆		CCs

	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME				POTENTIAL PARTNERS
		Ongoing	Short-Term Next 24 mo.	Mid-Term 3 to 5 years	Long-Term 5+ years	
5.2.2. Include similar questions regarding quality of place preferences on surveys of military personnel separating from service in the region.	★ ★			◆		CSFs, CCs
Strategy 5.3. Invest in the amenities and infrastructure in underserved communities.						
5.3.1. Ensure that adequate funds are invested in roads, sidewalks, education, recreational facilities, and other basic infrastructure in underserved neighborhoods and communities.	★ ★ ★				◆	LGs, RPCs, TPO, RC
5.3.2. Expand the development of affordable student and workforce housing in the region. This is a need in underserved neighborhoods, coastal communities, and rural areas.	★ ★ ★				◆	LGs, RPCs, RC
5.3.3. Make sure that underserved communities are directly engaged in local planning efforts.	★ ★ ★				◆	LGs, RPCs, RC
5.3.4. Identify sites and properties of historical significance and seek to have them designated as historical landmarks.	★ ★ ★				◆	LGs, CVBs, RPCs
5.3.5. Explore funding options available from the USDA Rural Community Development Initiative.	★ ★ ★				◆	
Strategy 5.4. Incorporate the site location needs of target industries into local and regional planning and placemaking strategies.						
5.4.1. Local and regional planning and transportation organizations should meet regularly consult with economic development officials and with the business sector councils to learn of target industry site selection needs and incorporate those needs into planning efforts.	★ ★			◆		FGNW, EDOs, LGs, RPCs