

High Desert Strategy Feedback Session Summary

Summary of Key Points

The High Desert SRT reviewer group met on May 30th, 2024 to discuss the draft regional plan as outlined in the reviewer pamphlet. The agenda included topics on Economic mobility and wealth building, identifying important industries for economic development and improving access to childcare and housing.

The main themes of conversation followed the reviewer pamphlet and included: Quality Jobs within the IT, Healthcare, Construction and Related Trades, and Advanced Manufacturing industries as well as Childcare, Employer-Sponsored Workforce Housing, Cultural and Social Capital, and Sustainable Supply Chains.

Quality Jobs by Industry:

- **IT**
 - Support historically underrepresented communities by establishing clear pathways into IT jobs —IT support, data analysis, cybersecurity— to increase access to higher-paying work, and promote diversity within the sector.
 - Develop a county-wide strategic plan for new technology jobs and infrastructure to attract more companies to the area and address the shortage of local IT jobs.
 - Offer financial incentives like scholarships and tuition reimbursement to overcome upskilling entry barriers by partnering with educational institutions and local corporations.
 - Implement hands-on learning through internships, apprenticeships, and bootcamp programs in collaboration with local governments that build IT skills and provide comprehensive career development —resume writing, interview prep, job search strategies.
- **Healthcare**
 - Address healthcare professional shortages by expanding academic offerings, establishing a four-year college, and increasing funding

for community colleges, to train healthcare professionals in fields like clinical laboratory science and public health.

- **Construction and Related Trades**
 - Collaboration between unions and companies to develop solutions that improve employment conditions for tradesmen like addressing unemployment between projects.
- **Advanced Manufacturing**
 - Support the region's small and medium-sized advanced manufacturers by addressing high operational costs, regulatory hurdles, and workforce development through strategic investments and supportive policies.
 - Balance job creation and environmental sustainability with green technologies due to the industry's high environmental impact.
 - Improve workforce skills by expanding university collaboration and training programs like Chaffey College's InTech Center, which need better industry alignment, and improved accessibility for disadvantaged residents through targeted outreach and support services.

Childcare:

- Establish strong public-private partnerships and collaborate with childcare providers to streamline program administration.
- Secure funding for childcare subsidies, infrastructure, and comprehensive training programs for childcare professionals.
- Provide affordable and reliable childcare services equitably across different communities.

Employer-Sponsored Workforce Housing:

- Develop stable communities through collaboration between employers, local governments, and housing authorities to build affordable housing options that reduce commute times and enhance employee recruitment and retention.

Cultural and Social Capital:

- Enhance social connections, exposure to different career paths, access to training and education, and familiarity with workplace norms to better equip individuals from historically underrepresented communities to navigate professional environments and pursue meaningful career opportunities.

Sustainable Supply Chains:

- Contribute to inclusive economic development by improving job quality, and align with state and federal climate priorities to reduce environmental impacts and improve overall health of the community.
- Collaboration among companies and higher education that focus on research, commercialization, and worker training with skills related to zero-emission technologies, energy efficiency, and sustainable logistics to accelerate innovation, technology adoption and process improvements.
- Assist small and medium sized companies in transitioning to zero-emission by increasing solar panel installation and community solar projects.
 - The proposed Consortium aims to convene these firms to work on decarbonization and energy efficiency measures, providing opportunities for peer learning and potential cost savings.
- Create a network for seamless data sharing and coordination among companies to facilitate efficient logistics operations, reduce redundancies, enhance peer learning, and enable collaborative efforts towards decarbonization.

RAW MEETING NOTES:

CJF THRIVE Inland SoCal Focus: Business services

PRIORITY TRADABLE INDUSTRY CLUSTER

Why is the business services cluster important for inclusive regional economic Development?

The Inland SoCal Economic Assessment found that the region has a significant gap in jobs that enable workers to make ends meet, obtain health insurance, and enjoy stability by holding such a job over the next decade. In addition, the region's economy is overly weighted towards a small number of sectors—logistics and local-serving industries such as healthcare—highlighting the need for industry diversification. Several categories of business services generate quality jobs even for workers without a four year degree. These occupations include the emerging area of cybersecurity and

subsectors related to various regional industry strengths such as freight arrangement (which is part of sustainable supply chains) and engineering drafting and design (which is part of advanced manufacturing). Cybersecurity is growing rapidly in response to an increasingly complex cyber threat environment; the Cybersecurity Center at California State University—San Bernardino (CSUSB) and other local efforts provide a foundation for the region to seize this opportunity.

Approach to strategy development

Strategy development will explore the viability of a business services cluster, with an emphasis on cybersecurity, as an emerging growth opportunity for the region. This process will also consider the extent to which cybersecurity is or can be integrated with other industries, such as sustainable supply chains, to maximize the region's competitive advantage. Special attention will be paid to ensuring that pathways into the industry are accessible to Inland SoCal residents, including those from disinvested areas, by building on existing efforts underway at CSUSB.

While cybersecurity is the primary emphasis of the business services strategy, several other elements will also be considered, including opportunities within the creative economy such as graphic design and music production. Business services subsectors that are relevant to the sustainable supply chains and advanced manufacturing clusters will be addressed within those cluster strategies.

Strategy activities will include:

- Individual interviews with intermediaries involved in cybersecurity (such as CSUSB) to understand the existing state of the regional industry and associated opportunities and challenges.
- Individual interviews with firms to understand market dynamics, benefits and challenges of operating in the region, prospects for growth, talent needs, and related issues.
- Desk research to investigate promising models and best practices in use within and outside the Inland SoCal region.

Initial ideas

- Form an industry-led employer alliance to establish a center of gravity for the cluster.
- Explore a regional procurement strategy that leverages the purchasing power of hospitals, defense installations, and other major buyers by aggregating local demand for cybersecurity services in order to grow the cluster.
- Launch an accelerator program to support and attract cybersecurity entrepreneurs to the region.
- Offer technical assistance and infrastructure supports such as sensitive

compartmented information facilities (SCIFs) to promote industry growth.

- Continue to support workforce pipeline efforts like CSUSB.

Questions to be explored

- To what extent is the region advancing innovation in cybersecurity (for example, by developing new methods and technologies) as opposed to meeting customer needs for standard cybersecurity services?

While Cybersecurity may be a focus, it should not be the only focus in the region.

There are other aspects that can be explored that will increase the number of opportunities today and in the future of our community. Today, the initiative at Cal State University in San Bernardino is not known widely – pretty much to the people who are in the program or meet the current qualifications and are hence handpicked to be apart of them. The students who complete the program are not remaining in the area for employment opportunities in the IE or High Desert because these jobs do not exist in the area. The training basically prepares students to move away. The programs themselves are only focused on meeting customer needs outside of the community.

- To what degree is the region's value proposition grounded in back-office / remote operations that serve adjacent Southern California regions and / or customers at even greater distances?

100 percent of these programs are focused on customers/operations away from the IE/HD areas.

- To what extent is the region's company ecosystem composed of small and medium-sized firms as opposed to large anchors? How do these firms relate to one another? Do they act as a cohesive cluster? Is there a center of gravity?

While there is a mix of both large, small and medium sized firms, the types of opportunities for employment do not exist outside of supply chain, distribution centers and warehouses – which mostly focus on the retail sector. While retail is king in the area, there are very few organizations outside of this sector. People who want to work outside of these sectors must ultimately leave the area to do anything else in the region. These companies do not work together and in fact work against each other.

- To what extent is the region's emerging cybersecurity specialization integrated with other regional industries such as logistics? Is there an opportunity for better integration to boost the competitive advantages of both industries?

While several organizations exist with a cybersecurity focus, there is no integration with other regional industries. To do so would take efforts from the

local cities and chambers who must offer incentives for organizations and companies to come to the communities and bring in jobs – not just in logistics, retail and supply chain but many other industries. In the HD community, the HD chamber and leadership from each city would be a perfect place to start. Present a unified front to companies to bring in their companies to the area.

- Beyond CSUSB's Cybersecurity Center, what supports are needed to grow the industry?

The industry is not inclusive. Students who want to receive this training are identified in middle school and high school and the process for entering as a college student is also not inclusive. To actually grow the industry, the opportunity to learn the technology should be offered to every student regardless of background, experience or education. Even remedial or catch up bootcamps can be offered for those who might be lacking the skills up front. Additionally, if we expect to grow opportunities in the region, we will need to also increase the job opportunities across the region so that once people finish the training, they can go to a job in their community and not have to leave the community to provide for their families.

CJF THRIVE Inland SoCal

Focus: Pathways to quality jobs in IT ECONOMIC MOBILITY & WEALTH BUILDING

Why are pathways to quality jobs in IT important for inclusive regional economic development?

Clear, well-supported pathways into quality information technology (IT) jobs make it easier for people to prepare for and find higher-paying work. These jobs range widely from IT support to data analysis to cybersecurity. Outreach, programming, and wraparound supports tailored to the needs of those from historically underrepresented communities can help the region tap into a more diverse talent pool and foster innovation and creativity. Greater worker diversity in IT can not only improve economic outcomes for historically marginalized groups but can also strengthen the overall competitiveness and dynamism of the sector.

Initial ideas

- Implement clear pathways into quality jobs in the IT sector that provide opportunities for skills development and career advancement.
- Offer hands-on learning experiences via internships and apprenticeships that allow individuals to acquire practical skills while working alongside experienced professionals.

(the only way to do this is via bootcamp programs that will work to build skills and then bring in resources (training and employers) into our community. There are no IT related jobs in the area so collaboration with the cities/counties etc... are especially needed to create programs.

- Connect people with employment search support and career training services, including resumé writing, interview preparation, job search strategies, and other career development resources. Who are the official resources that can do this? Without the background training and skill development or retraining opportunities, there is nothing to put on a resume'. A county wide look at bringing in new technology jobs and infrastructure to support the companies into the county is needed.

Where is the county-wide strategic plan that discusses technological needs?

- Provide scholarships, tuition reimbursement, and other financial incentives to help individuals overcome barriers to entry in order to pursue careers in the IT sector. The need is more basic than scholarships. Even when people complete the training,

where are the jobs they are being 'trained' for? In their local community OR in Los Angeles county?

- Partner with local colleges, universities, and vocational schools to develop tailored programs that give students relevant skills and knowledge needed for in-demand IT roles. It's not just partnering with schools, its meeting with the corporations that are in the county as well as those companies who are looking to establish new work locations and ensuring that the working population of people have the skills and resources to do it.

- Connect aspiring IT professionals with mentors in the sector who can provide guidance and support in navigating challenges and achieving career goals. Mentors in SB County / High Desert do not exist in volume in the area and neither do large numbers of jobs in IT. Until the county and cities include a way to bring jobs in IT to the area, this is putting the cart before the horse.

- Promote diversity and inclusion by actively recruiting and supporting individuals from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

D&I can be incorporated once jobs have been identified and positioned.

Specific feedback requests

We know that some of these solutions have been piloted in the region in the past and would like to hear how successful they were and what could be improved. If successful, how scalable / broadly applicable are these approaches?

Focusing on IT / Cybersecurity is possible only if there is an influx of new companies and industries to support the people we are preparing for these roles.

Focus: Pathways to Healthcare jobs

There is an acute need for trained healthcare workers to fill increasing job vacancies in our region. A physician shortage as well as reduced numbers of other allied health professionals have long been problematic in the High Desert. Entry level nursing and respiratory training programs are available in the High Desert area at Victor Valley College. However, other fields such as clinical laboratory science and public health need more academic offerings to train critically needed graduates. Ideally, the establishment of a four-year college or university with advanced health curricula would ease the situation. Otherwise, more funding to community colleges for faculty and classroom facilities will address the problem of healthcare staffing shortages.

Pathways: Access to Education and training needed for quality jobs

The bullet points addressed in the initial ideas are all fine on the surface, they sound good, they look great, they even have a chance of being effective if giving the opportunity. The number one set back with most elements of the plan is: the who all of these services are made available to, and who gets the opportunity to hear about them? COMMUNICATION For several years now the southern California carpenters union has offered the availability of this program. The problem that we have run into is the communication of the program to the minority underprivilege students. Bottom line we need to create a more effective area of communication of the services available and the opportunity to use these service. Once we get past that barrier. Then we can address the concerns that come along with how to get these young people employed in the career structure jobs and then keep them employed or a better system of maintaining employment once a PROJECT (JOBSITE) has come to its conclusion. Understanding the importance of these items and then making it our business to address these concerns will go a long way with in the preparation of future employment opportunities for our youth in trades for the future.

Pathways to quality jobs in construction and related trades

Each of the bullets within initial ideas expressed in this focus subject are key components of creating access to unionized and career construction opportunities. Having individuals that can sustain this type of work is critical and important to all branches of this industry. Understanding the mindset of the pool of candidates for our future construction jobs is equally important. There are several areas of concern that

would help the future of jobs and candidates to sustain jobs within this sector. All of these assignments are based on PROJECTS. A PROJECT is a current jobsite where the skills of these tradesman's are needed. At the conclusion of a project, each of these tradesman are technically unemployed. And will remain unemployed until another PROJECT comes available. Most of these trades have an out of work list, or daily call in procedure. In all honesty if we want to improve on the strengthen of consistent employment within these trades, then we need to sit down with each of these trades and establish a better solution to keeping all of its members employed and not just a few selective handful of them that have this privilege for whatever reason. Addressing and fixing this issue could be accomplish through incentives that will be giving to the construction companies themselves that are technically responsible to hire these tradesman. In conclusion: in order for us to utilize this sector of employment opportunities and effectively embraces each of the bullet points in a scalable fashion with longevity in mind. We first must address the elephant in the room that has plagued this industry for the past 20 years. Address this, come to a compromise and solution with the unions and construction companies, and we will be fill jobs for the future within these trades.

Childcare SRT questions

- *We know that some of these solutions have been piloted in the region in the past and would like to hear how successful they were and what could be improved.*

Answer: These initiatives increased childcare availability and improved employee retention. However, challenges included inconsistent funding, limited scalability, and uneven distribution of services. Improvements could focus on securing stable funding sources, ensuring equitable access across different communities, and streamlining program administration for better efficiency.

- *If successful, how scalable/broadly applicable are these approaches?*

Answer: Successful approaches, such as collaborating with childcare providers and incentivizing businesses, are scalable and broadly applicable with the right support. For scalability, it is crucial to establish strong public-private partnerships, increase funding for childcare subsidies and infrastructure, and implement comprehensive training programs for childcare professionals.

Importance of Access to Childcare for Inclusive Regional Economic Development

1. Why is access to childcare important for inclusive regional economic development?

Answer: Access to childcare is essential for inclusive regional economic development because it enables more people to participate in the workforce, enhances employee retention and productivity, and encourages entrepreneurship. Affordable and reliable childcare helps workers, especially women and single parents, balance career and caregiving responsibilities, thus reducing financial burdens..

Employer-sponsored housing assistance programs and partnerships with local governments for housing projects have generally been successful in improving employee retention and reducing commute times. However, challenges included limited funding, bureaucratic hurdles, and difficulty in scaling up projects. Improvements could involve streamlining approval processes, increasing funding and incentives, and enhancing coordination between employers, local governments, and housing authorities to ensure smoother implementation and greater impact.

Importance of Employer-Sponsored Workforce Housing for Inclusive Regional Economic Development

Why is employer-sponsored workforce housing important for inclusive regional economic development?

Because it provides affordable housing options, reduces commute times, and enhances employee recruitment and retention. This type of housing promotes diversity and inclusion in the workforce, supports economic mobility, and fosters community development and revitalization. By addressing the housing needs of employees, it helps create stable and thriving communities, facilitates partnerships and collaboration between businesses and local governments, and contributes to a more inclusive and resilient economy.

Importance of Building Cultural and Social Capital for Inclusive Regional Economic Development

Why is building cultural and social capital important for inclusive regional economic development?

Building cultural and social capital is crucial for inclusive regional economic development because it helps individuals from historically underrepresented communities overcome barriers to economic opportunity, career advancement, and wealth building. By enhancing social connections, exposure to different career paths, access to training and education, and familiarity with workplace norms, individuals are better equipped to navigate professional environments and pursue meaningful career opportunities. This, in turn, promotes a more inclusive and equitable economy, fostering diverse talent and driving regional growth and prosperity for all.

Advanced Manufacturing cluster SRT Feedback Questions

1. Competitive Advantages

- *In which industry segment(s) is the Inland SoCal region most competitive compared to other parts of the state and the U.S.? What accounts for this advantage? How could it be strengthened?*

2. Answer: Inland SoCal is competitive in industrial and commercial equipment, machine parts, microelectronics, and instrumentation. This advantage is due to the region's established infrastructure, proximity to large markets, and existing foothold in transportation equipment components and structural metals. To strengthen this advantage, investments in innovation, infrastructure improvements, and targeted attraction of anchor manufacturers could be prioritized.

3. Company Ecosystem

- *To what extent are these industry segments composed of small and medium-sized manufacturers as opposed to large companies? Are these segments concentrated in certain parts of the region?*

4. Answer: The advanced manufacturing segments in Inland SoCal are predominantly composed of small and medium-sized manufacturers. These firms are likely concentrated in industrial zones and areas with supportive infrastructure. Understanding their distribution can help tailor regional support programs effectively.

- *How do firms in the cluster relate to one another (for example, in terms of supply/value chain links, collaboration to address shared needs)?*

5. Answer: Firms within the advanced manufacturing cluster often interact through supply and value chain links, collaborating to meet shared needs such as workforce training and technological innovation. Establishing a manufacturing alliance could further strengthen these relationships.
 - *What are the specific challenges and benefits that these firms get from being located in the region?*
6. Answer: Benefits include access to a large market, established infrastructure, and a growing talent pool. Challenges may involve high operational costs, regulatory hurdles, and the need for continuous workforce development. Addressing these challenges through strategic investments and supportive policies can enhance the region's attractiveness.
 - *What else do Inland SoCal advanced manufacturing companies need to succeed?*
7. Answer: Companies need more technical assistance for innovation, enhanced collaboration with universities, better infrastructure, and supportive regulatory frameworks. Creating short-term, responsive training programs and improving the business climate are also crucial for their success.
8. Workforce and Other Existing Supports
 - *What advanced manufacturing training programs and supports exist in the region? How effective are they? Do they meet firm needs? What else is needed?*
9. Answer: Programs like Chaffey College's InTech Center provide work-based learning and upskilling opportunities. While these programs are beneficial, there is a need for scaling successful initiatives, aligning training more closely with industry needs, and addressing gaps in program accessibility and responsiveness.
 - *Are existing training programs responsive and accessible to area residents? What more can be done to improve access?*
10. Answer: Existing programs are somewhat responsive but may not be fully accessible to all residents, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Improving access requires targeted outreach, culturally-responsive programming, and support services to remove barriers to participation.
11. Environmental Impact
 - *What are the energy and environmental impacts associated with each industry segment? Can these be reduced? How should any drawbacks be weighed against the potential for more quality job creation?*
12. Answer: Energy and environmental impacts vary by segment but can include high energy consumption and emissions. These impacts can be mitigated through the adoption of green technologies and sustainable practices. Balancing these drawbacks against job creation involves ensuring that environmental

considerations are integrated into growth strategies, promoting both economic and environmental sustainability.

Supply Chain feedback questions

Why are sustainable supply chains important for inclusive regional economic development?

- Sustainable supply chains are important for inclusive regional economic development because they can provide economic and environmental benefits to a large proportion of residents. The logistics sector in Inland SoCal, despite its growth and job creation, has faced criticism due to the lack of quality jobs and environmental harms caused by reliance on carbon-based fuels. By embracing sustainable practices, the sector can address these concerns, improve job quality, reduce environmental impacts, and align with state and federal climate priorities, ultimately contributing to more inclusive economic development.

To what degree are companies and research institutions in Inland SoCal generating new technologies and solutions that can help with the transition to more sustainable supply chain models? What else is needed to encourage these efforts?

- To encourage these efforts, increased collaboration among companies and higher education on research, commercialization, and worker training is needed.

What are the biggest opportunities and challenges facing companies in Inland SoCal's goods movement sector? What actions are needed to make this cluster truly sustainable?

- The biggest opportunities include accelerating innovation, product development, technology adoption, process improvements, and increasing collaboration among companies and higher education. Challenges involve overcoming skepticism due to environmental harms and limited quality jobs. Actions needed include helping small and medium-sized companies transition to zero-emissions, and increasing solar panel installations and community solar projects.

What skills are in highest demand for sustainable supply chains? How easy/difficult is it to find employees in the region with the right skills?

- Worker preparedness is a focus, suggesting a need for skills related to zero-emission technologies, energy efficiency, and sustainable logistics. Finding employees with the right skills might be a challenge, hence the need for collaboration with higher education for worker training.

To what extent are small and medium-sized companies getting the help they need to make the transition to clean energy? What about energy efficiency? Technology adoption?

- Small and medium-sized companies need assistance in transitioning to clean energy, improving energy efficiency, and adopting new technologies. The proposed Consortium aims to convene these firms to work on decarbonization and energy efficiency measures, providing opportunities for peer learning and potential cost savings, suggesting that more coordinated efforts are required to support these companies.

How would rapid decarbonization of this cluster affect environmental outcomes for residents of the region's most disinvested communities?

- Rapid decarbonization of the logistics sector would likely improve environmental outcomes for residents of the region's most disinvested communities by reducing pollution and reliance on carbon-based fuels. This could lead to better air quality and overall health benefits for these communities.

How can the cluster boost productivity and environmental sustainability by creating a network for seamless data sharing and coordination among companies within a given supply chain?

- The cluster can boost productivity and environmental sustainability by creating a network for seamless data sharing and coordination among companies. This would facilitate more efficient logistics operations, reduce redundancies, enhance peer learning, and enable collaborative efforts towards decarbonization and energy efficiency measures, ultimately leading to more sustainable supply chain practices.