

Gulf Coast Economic  
Development District  
Board Meeting

April 3, 2020

▶ 2020--2024  
Comprehensive Economic  
Development Strategy  
Updates and Revisions

In 2018, the GCEDD received a Planning and Technical Assistance Grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to create a strategy-driven, regional plan for economic development: the **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**.

2020-2024

# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Gulf Coast Economic  
Development District



## Overview of CEDS Contents

# Summary Background

- Population
- Environment
- Infrastructure
- Industry Sectors
- Workforce

# Summary Background

- Population

- Environment

- Infrastructure

- Industry Sectors

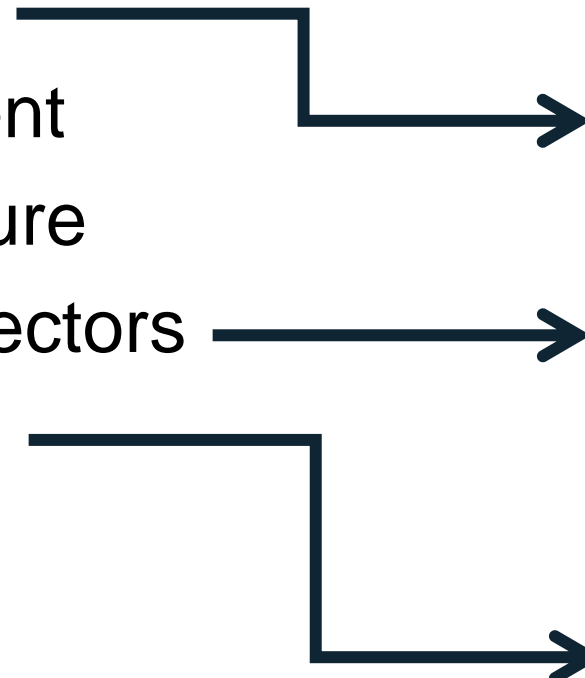
- Workforce

- Growth
- Education
- Ethnicity
- Employment
- Age
- Poverty

- Mobility
- High-speed internet
- Utilities

- Energy
- Medical
- Manufacturing
- Innovation and entrepreneurship
- Agriculture, fisheries, and tourism

# Updates to Summary Background

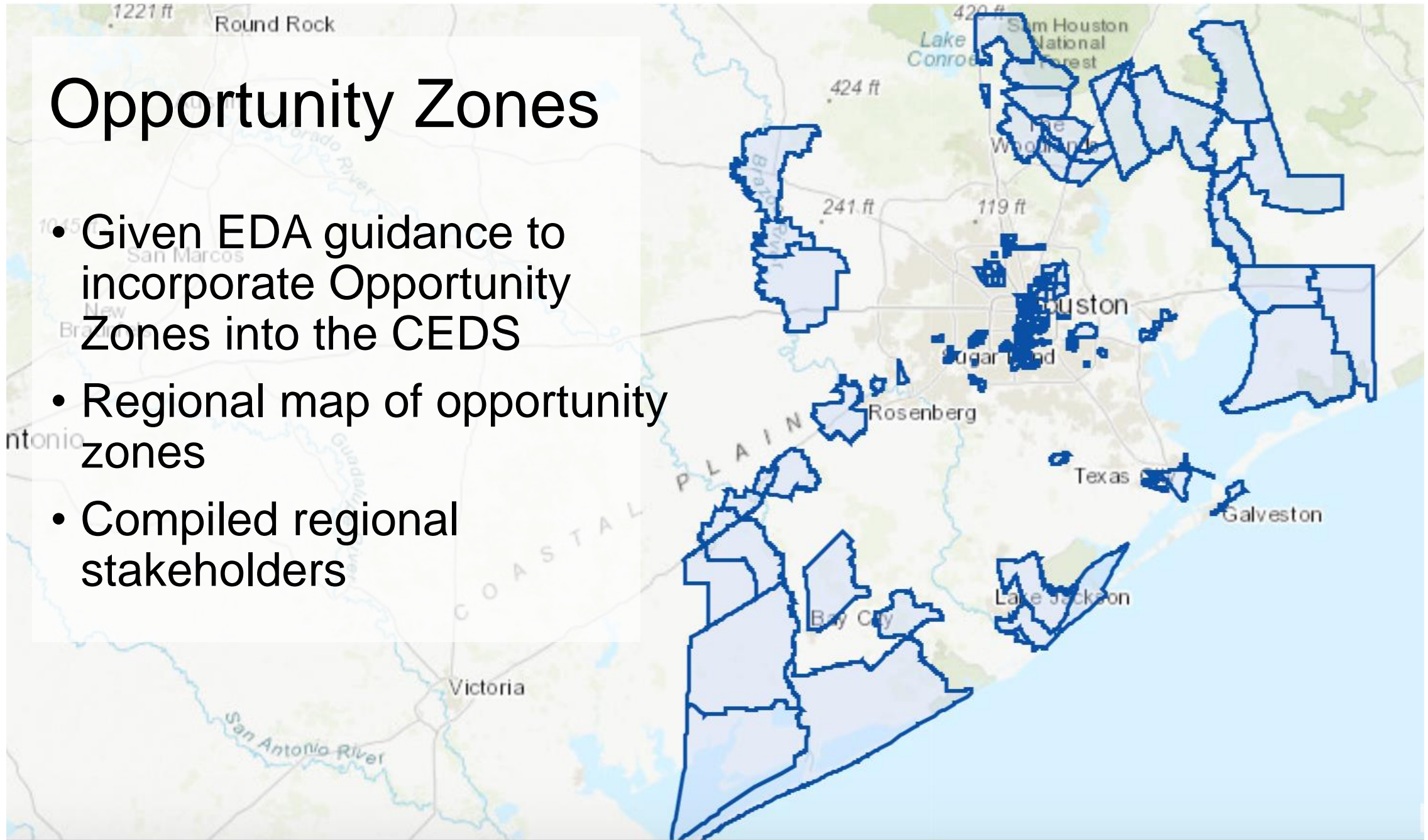
- Population
  - Environment
  - Infrastructure
  - Industry Sectors
  - Workforce
- 
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graph LR; A[Population] --> B[Updated Data]; C[Industry Sectors] --> B; D[Workforce] --> B;
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## Updated Data

- 2019 employment by major sector data
- 2017 poverty rates
- 2017 Census of Agriculture data
- 2019 counties designated as Economically Distressed Areas
- 2010-2019 unemployment data

# Opportunity Zones

- Given EDA guidance to incorporate Opportunity Zones into the CEDS
- Regional map of opportunity zones
- Compiled regional stakeholders



# SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS



# SWOT Analysis

## STRENGTHS

1. Growing economy
2. Goods and movement infrastructure
3. Favorable business climate
4. Cost of living
5. Location and proximity to assets
6. Diverse population

# SWOT Analysis

## WEAKNESSES

1. Unskilled labor force
2. Low high school graduation rates
3. Broadband access
4. Lack of public transit, active transportation, and recreation options
5. Aging water and sewer structure
6. Workforce housing availability

# SWOT Analysis

## OPPORTUNITIES

1. Leveraging assets in the energy, medical, and aerospace industries
2. Export possibilities, port expansion
3. Available affordable land
4. Entrepreneurship culture
5. Growing population
6. Proximity to natural gas and shale
7. Foreign Direct Investment

# SWOT Analysis

## THREATS

1. Vulnerability to disaster events
2. Insufficient drainage and water supply infrastructure
3. Aging population

# Strategic Direction

- Eight overarching goals
- Key priorities, strategies, and initiatives that foster a vibrant and diverse regional economy

RESILIENT TO  
ECONOMIC  
DOWNTURNS

DIVERSE  
ECONOMY AND  
SKILLED  
WORKFORCE

ACCESS TO  
EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING

INFRASTRUCTURE  
FOR GOODS  
MOVEMENT

ACCESS TO DATA  
FOR INVESTMENT  
DECISIONS

SAFE, HEALTHY  
COMMUNITIES

IMPROVE WATER  
INFRASTRUCTURE

VALUE  
ECOSYSTEM  
SERVICES

# Our region is resilient and adaptive to economic downturns, natural disasters, and new opportunities

- a. Support the development of long-term disaster recovery, hazard mitigation, and economic resilience plans throughout region.
- b. Support locally and regionally identified economic resilience plans, projects, programs, and policies.
- c. Support local governments in conducting economic vulnerability assessments, including vulnerability to natural disasters.
- d. Coordinate economic development efforts with regional infrastructure development projects.

# Our region has a diverse economy and skilled workforces that support businesses, innovation, and entrepreneurship

- a. Support regional efforts to enhance the region's innovation economy by leveraging existing assets in the energy, medical, and aerospace industries.
- b. Support current and future employer needs through the expansion of training and educational opportunities offered by educational and vocational institutions throughout the region.
- c. Support the expansion of educational opportunities to develop a broadly skilled workforce.
- d. Support policies that benefit local businesses and entrepreneurs.

# Our region's residents have access to education, training, jobs, and business opportunities that support a good quality of life and financial stability

- a. Support the development of small business, technology, manufacturing, and innovation incubators through partnerships between local governments, chambers of commerce, economic development corporations, universities, and/or other community anchor institutions to foster the development of locally owned enterprises.
- b. Support the development of high-speed internet connections and bridge gaps, particularly in rural areas.
- c. Support a regional assessment tool to increase awareness of community factors that limit educational achievement or workplace skills.
- d. Support the creation of an incentive or partnership program for communities to develop job training centers or community college and local paid apprenticeship programs where there is a demand.
- e. Support programs to increase high school graduation rates and access to college and technical education.





Our region's transportation and infrastructure promotes effective goods movement and is well connected to national and global destinations

- a. Support the prioritization and allocation of transportation funding to maximize intermodal capabilities and improve the efficiency of goods movement.
- b. Support campaigns that raise awareness of the importance of exports and goods movement on the regional and local economies.

Our region's local governments and economic development organizations have access to data, tools, and solutions that facilitate informed decisions on funding and investment decisions.

- a. Support economic impact assessment services to support local decisions regarding business retention, expansion, and recruitment incentives.
- b. Collaborate on data access tools that support the pursuit of grants, loans, and other sources of funding.
- c. Provide local governments and economic development organizations information about potential opportunity zone investment projects
- d. Provide opportunity zone investors with actionable information required to make investment decisions

Our region's residents live in safe, healthy communities with transportation options and have access to services and amenities that support a high quality of life

- a. Promote strategies for matching local housing stock with economic development needs (such as employer assisted housing agreements, public/private partnerships, developer incentives, etc.).
- b. Support coordinated land use and transportation investments to support increased connectivity to activity centers.
- c. Support the development of a toolkit to improve the quality of neighborhoods without displacing existing residents.
- d. Support Main Street revitalization programs in the region.



Our region's water and waste-water infrastructure supports current and future demands, while promoting the growth of healthy, resilient, and economically dynamic communities.

- a. Support the development of regional water plans.
- b. Support efforts to obtain federal, state, and regional funding to upgrade aging infrastructure (water, sewer, drainage facilities), while supporting the expansion of infrastructure to underserved areas.
- c. Support the creation of a regional circuit rider program for water quality issues.

Our region values its unique ecosystems and understands the ecological, economic and cultural benefits they provide

- a. Support the development of a regional conservation plan for high quality natural areas.
- b. Support the development of local farm management plans to improve water quality and preserve working lands.
- c. Improve access to fresh local foods by supporting the development of a regional food infrastructure.
- d. Support the creation of a regional campaign to promote the eco-coastal, hunting, and birding tourism options available across the region.



# Action Plan

- Specific objectives of the GCEDD moving forward
- GCEDD will work across the H-GAC and across the region to complete the action plan

HIGH-SPEED  
INTERNET

INFRASTRUCTURE  
INVESTMENT

ECONOMIC DATA  
TOOLS

ECONOMIC  
RESILIENCE

WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT

# Support the development of the region's high capacity internet infrastructure

- a. Collaborate with local governments and economic development organizations to enhance broadband access in partnership with federal agencies and the private sector

Outputs: Educational materials and technical assistance in enhancing local internet infrastructure.

Support efforts to obtain funding to upgrade and maintain aging infrastructure while supporting the expansion of infrastructure to underserved areas

- a. Targeted support of funding applications that best serve the needs of the region
- b. Provide up-to-date infrastructure information (data, legislation, etc.)

Outputs: GCEDD Letters of Support, investment in water infrastructure, presentations and updates



# Collaborate on data tools that support the pursuit of funding and regional economic information

- a. Utilize the GCEDD website, newsletters, and partner sites as an information clearinghouse
- b. Provide technical assistance and reports - economic impact analysis, EDA statistical tools

Outputs: GCEDD Letters of Support, updated list of funding streams, workshops/demonstrations of data tools, technical assistance to interested parties



# Support the increased economic resiliency of our region

- a. Support regional and local analyses to determine vulnerabilities and opportunities to enhance local economic resilience
- b. Support regional and local economic resilience plans, projects, and policies
- c. Collaborate with local governments and economic development organization on targeted business expansion and retention efforts
- d. Work towards implementation of the Regional Economic Resilience Plan and continuously revise the plan as conditions change

Outputs: GCEDD Letters of Support, participation in workshops and taskforces, technical assistance

# Support workforce development that aligns with high growth areas

- a. Support the expansion of training and educational opportunities offered by educational and vocational institutions throughout the region
- b. Support workplace and soft skills development
- c. Support small business and innovation incubators through partnerships between community anchor institutions to foster the development of locally owned enterprises

Outputs: Coordination with local colleges and Workforce Solutions, technical assistance for grants

# Evaluation Framework

- Amended evaluation framework
- Annual evaluation by CEDS committee responds to questions about action areas

HIGH-SPEED  
INTERNET

INFRASTRUCTURE  
INVESTMENT

ECONOMIC DATA  
TOOLS

ECONOMIC  
RESILIENCE

WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT

# Evaluation Framework Questions

1. What technical assistance did the GCEDD provide for high-speed internet deployment in the region?
  - a. Did the GCEDD maintain and update information about high-speed internet on their website?
  
2. What technical assistance did the GCEDD provide to local governments and economic development organizations seeking to invest in infrastructure?
  - a. Which organizations in the region working to upgrade and maintain infrastructure received assistance?
  - b. How much of the work to expand infrastructure investment was conducted in underserved areas?
  
3. What data on economic trends were shared with the region this year?
  - a. How effectively did the GCEDD communicate to the public funding resources and regional economic data tools?
  
4. What steps did the GCEDD take to advance regional economic resilience?
  - a. What economic and vulnerability analyses were undertaken?
  - b. How was the Regional Plan for Economic Resilience updated or implemented?
  
5. How did the GCEDD support workforce development in high growth areas?
  - a. Has the GCEDD helped expand workforce training by educational and vocational institutions?
  - b. Has the GCEDD provided support to small business and innovation incubators?

# CEDS Adoption Process

- CEDS Committee to Vote to Adopt on April 3, 2020 (this meeting)
- Based on CEDS Committee vote, it will be brought to GCEDD Board Meeting on April 3, 2020
- Once approved by the GCEDD, it will be submitted to the EDA for review and approval
- The CEDS will be presented to the H-GAC Board of Directors for adoption on May 19, 2020

Questions?