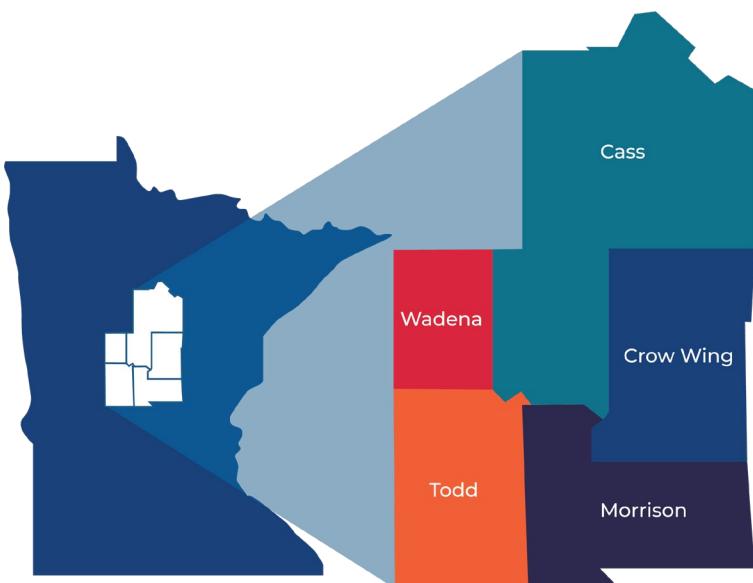




## 12 MONTH WORK PLAN

July 21, 2021 – June 30, 2022



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## R5DC Team Members:

Cheryal Lee Hills.....	Executive Director
Alexandria Lisson.....	Controller
Stephanie Barney .....	Business Loan Developer
Dawn Espe.....	Equitable Development Specialist
Staci Headley.....	Senior Regional Dev. Planner
Tad Erickson.....	Senior Regional Dev. Planner
Matt Kallroos.....	Regional Development Planner
Angela Anderson.....	Marketing Director
Erica Bjelland .....	Regional Development Planner

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Mission**

To enhance vitality and quality of life for all people in Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, and Wadena counties by bridging resources and relationships.

### **Vision**

To contribute, through planning and implementation of projects and programs, to a sustainable and prosperous regional economy, environment, and quality of life for all.

### **Role of R5DC**

The role of the Region Five Development Commission (R5DC) is to address critical regional issues without duplication of the private, public and non-profit sectors. It is the aim and intention of R5DC to utilize all available resources to address the issues that are of importance to all residents of our region.

### **Our Values**

#### **Dynamic Capabilities**

We act as a dynamic, forward-thinking organization, constantly working in a state of change. When appropriate, we stimulate activities, change or progress. We carry a positive energy and attitude and work efficiently to solve problems. We demonstrate competency and proficiency in community and economic development practices. This enables us to meet the evolving needs of our communities.

#### **Collaboration**

We value authentic partnerships, innovation, and teamwork. We establish alliances with organizations that align with our mission. We work in cooperation as a team and with diverse groups to promote and manage projects and programs. We share in our dedication and commitment to each other and strive to support one another in reaching our full potential, both professionally and personally.

## **Growth**

We focus on building economic prosperity and success in our region and strive to establish equitable economic ecosystems. We promote, encourage, and provide opportunities for development, leadership and mentoring. We promote continuous learning in our organization and invest in opportunities to enhance our growth through knowledge and practice.

## **Integrity**

We are accountable to the public, our funding agencies and to each other for the quality of our work, promoting development of the region and being fiscally responsible. We expect professionalism to be demonstrated in our behavior and our conduct. We value timely, open and honest communication.

## **Intention**

The work of our team and the inclusive nature of our programs are planned, purposeful, and deliberate. We value and respect the diversity of our region, all of its people, our partners and our organization. We understand uniqueness and recognize differing viewpoints, and we respond in a balanced, flexible and open-minded way.

# **STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2026 ALIGNMENT**

The Strategic Plan is used continuously to monitor and align activities with the R5DC and NCEDA missions while adapting to impending changes and opportunities. The Strategic Plan outlines goals and crafts a broad range of issues to focus on from a 10,000-foot view. The Work Plan drills down and identifies specific action for a shorter time frame of 12 months.

### *Summary of Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives:*

#### **Goal 1: Ensuring Organizational Integrity**

We will continue to be relevant and responsive to critical regional needs and issues through our innovative partnerships and ensure there is no duplication of efforts. Keeping our ears and hearts to the ground, we will bring together inclusive community input so that we can foster ideation and create future solutions that truly prioritize our people. Developing professionally as individuals and as a team, we will continue to grow our expertise and relationships.

#### **Goal 2: Empower Communities to Support Quality of Life for All People**

We will continue to work towards empowering communities through equitable decision making, building authentic relationships and community connections, embracing different perspectives, and improving accessibility and inclusive participation that leads to a greater sense of belonging across the region. Through our internal approaches, communication, and policies and practices, we will advocate for and support intentional dialogue and community-driven projects that uplift all people and communities in our region, particularly those who have been historically underserved or disadvantaged.

#### **Goal 3: Cultivate Regional Prosperity and Sustainability**

Driven by local and collaborative resources, we strive towards economic stewardship that is driven by local decision-making. Weaving resiliency into these efforts, we will have impacts on long-lasting and thriving systems of sustainability and prosperity that enhance the quality of life in our region. NCEDA will provide the access to capital, technical assistance, and connections needed for small businesses to thrive.

## PURPOSE OF THE WORK PLAN

The following Work Plan sets forth **action steps** that will be taken in the upcoming FISCAL year to address the overarching goals that were developed as part of the R5DC/NCEDA Strategic Plan 2021- 2026. The R5DC Work Plan directs staff to implement measurable actions that will address identified issues resulting in positive and equitable impacts.

***The following Work Plan shows steps that will be taken in the upcoming years to address these overarching strategic goals. Progress on meeting these goals will be incorporated into the Annual Report thus tying all documents and focus into one vision.***

R5DC practices the Plan-Do-Learn-Adjust-Teach methodology building equitable economic ecosystems through the WealthWorks 8 forms of wealth (also referred to as “community capitals”) that include: Built, Financial, Individual, Intellectual, Natural, Political, Social and Cultural assets rooted in our local communities and region.

Throughout all of the Strategic Plan Goals, Objectives and Activities, we are committed to Dedicating time toward coaching, coordinating and teaching the WealthWorks Community Capitals framework to others within and outside the region as a fee-for-service technical assistance.

The eight capitals	
The capital	The definition
	<b>Individual</b> The existing stock of skills, understanding, physical health and mental wellness in a region's people.
	<b>Intellectual</b> The existing stock of knowledge, resourcefulness, creativity and innovation in a region's people, institutions, organizations and sectors.
	<b>Social</b> The existing stock of trust, relationships and networks in a region's population.
	<b>Cultural</b> The existing stock of traditions, customs, ways of doing, and world views in a region's population.
	<b>Natural</b> The existing stock of natural resources—for example, water, land, air, plants and animals—in a region's places.
	<b>Built</b> The existing stock of constructed infrastructure—for example, buildings, sewer systems, broadband, roads—in a region's places.
	<b>Political</b> The existing stock of goodwill, influence and power that people, organizations and institutions in the region can exercise in decision-making.
	<b>Financial</b> The existing stock of monetary resources available in the region for investment in the region.

## **GOAL 1: ENSURING ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRITY**

### *Objectives and Action Steps*

#### **1. Commission Administration**

**Maintain a governing board comprised of locally elected officials and special interest groups from the five-county region with active participation**

- a. Continue to refine administration of commission to ensure effectiveness (this includes ensuring commissioners are able to communicate R5DC and NCEDA's strategic directions, objectives and goals)
- b. Further define the role of the commission, including the potential mediation between region community members and R5DC and NCEDA
- c. Continue to receive intentional feedback from commission to ensure meetings and roles are beneficial and supportive
- d. Continue to support local and specific meetings (such as TAC, RTCC, HR)

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

- Prepare/provide materials including meeting minutes, agendas and issue information needed to conduct meetings of the full Commission and NCEDA Full Corp.
- Provide policy recommendations to the Commission that will, when adopted, utilize resources available to best meet the needs of region.
- Provide the full Commission with periodic work program progress reports and information/recommendations pertaining to future direction.
- Maintain current Commission membership according to the Regional Development Act, State Statute and R5DC by-laws.
- Provide each Commission member a detailed orientation prior to their first Commission meeting.
- Presentations at periodic Commission and NCEDA Full Corp meetings to inform of programs.
- Submit to the State of Minnesota, a report on programs & services offered in past five years, and activities identified for the next five years. Report due in December of following years; 2021, 2026, 2031, 2036 and sequentially thereafter.

#### **2. Grow Internal Professional Development**

**Maintain quality skilled staff who honor agency core values and provide high quality, professional planning services**

- a. Attend useful events, conferences, and trainings to grow our networks and internal capacity, skill and knowledge.
- b. Utilize internal strengths and passions when starting new projects

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

- Maintain quality staff that complies with Operations Manual procedures, Code of Conduct, Ethics Policy and Core Values.
- Allocate resources and encourage staff to attend peer-to-peer learning opportunities at Team Development Days, conferences, workshops, seminars, statewide meetings, and other training sessions according to development needs and budget limitations.
- Annual performance evaluations will be conducted to align with performance-based culture and determine the quality of work in fulfillment of tasks assigned according to position descriptions, work program elements and local projects assigned.

- Accounting staff receives training to maximize accounting software capabilities.

### **3. Continue to be Fiscally Sound**

**To provide superior agency capabilities that support the delivery of exceptional services that address regional critical issues**

- a. Continue to perform audits AND report monthly financials
- b. Produce our annual report
- c. Grow our net assets and annual surplus
- d. Continue to meet our needs in a sustainable way
- e. Ensure NCEDA is fully self-sustained
- f. Carefully manage the growth of the NCEDA loan portfolio

**ACTION STEPS:**

- Prepare and recommend a fiscal year work program and annual budget to be considered and adopted by the Commission at its end of the fiscal year meeting in June. The budget will utilize available resources in the most efficient and effective fashion and align with the Regional Development Act.
- Prioritize repayment of debt. Issue the annual budget report pursuant to the Regional Development Act. Prepare an annual report, which includes a financial statement of all receipts and expenditures for the year just ended.
- Establish and maintain adequate accounting and financial management procedures, which include but are not limited to:
  - Submit for Commission review, monthly financial statements showing revenues by funding source, expenditures by line-item and end of month balances.
  - Generate required financial reports to EDA, USDA and others
  - Craft annual NCEDA budget
  - NCEDA monthly financials for Commission and NCEDA Loan Board
  - Conduct third party quarterly finance reviews, as needed
  - Contract for and complete fiscal year-end audit of Commission/NCEDA financials in accordance with Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 34 guidelines
  - Financial reports are prepared and submitted to funding agencies pursuant to contractual requirements
- Maintain adequate physical infrastructure
  - Maintain building, equipment and technology
  - Update technical hardware as necessary
  - Research new technology/obtain training

### **4. Communications & Branding**

**Continue to implement and refine creative ways to tell our story and communicate to the region at large – Maintain a strong brand.**

- a. Continue to implement the communications plan and adhere to the branding strategy
- b. Publish high quality reports, publications and materials in a multitude of formats supported by the communications plan. (See [Communications Plan](#))

- c. Make available information and appropriate referrals about existing federal, state and private resources which can assist local communities (units of government, businesses and others) in their development efforts - serve as a clearinghouse for this information

**ACTION STEPS:**

- Maintain a quarterly newsletters and websites
- Monitor branding image (See [Media Kit](#))
- Establish a soundproof podcast studio – continue podcast production
- Creation &/or coordination of Regional Networks to identify shared resources and prioritize new avenues of intergovernmental planning
- Continue to act as an information clearing house of opportunities including staff sharing of notices of funding opportunities to partners throughout the region on at least a monthly basis

**5. Convenings, Partnerships & Relationships**

**Provide a vehicle for facilitation and implementation of regional programs that cross over traditional jurisdiction boundaries and varied disciplines by collaborating with Local, State and Federal partners, as well as Private, Public and Nonprofit organizations.**

- a. Produce and ensure all activities are in line with our regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- b. Exceed expectations of all partners, includes meeting reporting deadlines
- c. Continue to achieve positive and informative performance evaluations
- d. Creatively “outsource” as to not duplicate efforts and utilize our partners strengths to achieve projects
- e. Participate as leaders or in supporting roles throughout the region through activity on boards, commissions, groups including at conferences and gatherings
- f. Clearly understand who R5DC partners are and articulate how our work aligns with or supports partner activities
- g. Transfer knowledge of the broad range and interconnectivity of regional issues
- h. Continue to coordinate with the Minnesota Workforce Centers, DEED and local community colleges to identify, create, develop, and maintain a qualified labor force

**ACTION STEPS:**

- Attend quarterly meetings with partners ( EDO Pro's, TAC and others) to learn of ongoing initiatives
- Send out surveys to our partners on an annual basis to ensure ongoing effort to achieve maximum partner satisfaction
- Initiate work to expand and regionalize the local Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program
- Serve on boards and advisory committees that add value to our work and where we can add value to work being done

### *Goal 1: Performance Measures*

01 - Commission self-evaluations used to measure stewardship

01 - Convene a Strategic Plan Commission Committee annually to conduct self-evaluation of duplication versus collaboration of services.

02 - Types of professional development utilized by employees

02 - What was learned during professional development effort/event/etc. and how many events we attend

02 - Internal staff evaluations

03 - The number and quality of reports submitted on time

03 - Dollars in reserves

03 - Annual and clean audits and informative annual report

04 - Number of hits and views on website and newsletters

05 - Number of new networks established and how many events were attended

05 - Satisfaction Survey results from customers and residents will be used as a measure of success.

## **GOAL 2: EMPOWER COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL PEOPLE**

### *Objectives and Action Steps*

#### **1. Increase Equitable Outreach**

**Continue to offer trainings and listening sessions throughout the region so that communities and residents can come together**

- a. Recognize the underserved populations and identify who have not been included
- b. Meet people where they are at (physically, socially, etc.)
- c. Enhance outreach methods to intentionally include places and communities that have been left out
- d. Genuinely include all voices and balance those voices that can be harmful
- e. Advocate for and support board-level thinking about how systemic inequities impact our region and how best to address that in a way that is consistent with our mission.

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

- Making space for continued conversations & host conversations after regional stories are shared
- Make staff available for informational meetings with public interest groups, community organizations, schools, etc. Attend various governmental and civic meetings to provide program information and updates.
- Pull together diverse groups to identify future needs and opportunities.
- Support and participate in activities of the Minnesota Association of Development Organization (MADO) and National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) when funding permits. Work with MADO on projects that address services, programs, and state legislation that best meets the needs of the Economic Development Districts (EDDs) regions in rural Minnesota.

## **2. Improve Accessibility**

**Develop online and physical space and resources specifically for equitable economic growth for local businesses.**

- a. Ensure that training and developmental resources are created with differing levels of knowledge/perspective/languages in mind
- b. Ensure the spaces we utilize are accessible

### **ACTION STEPS:**

- Build Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant website
- Develop other ADA resources and outreach materials
- Share resources pertaining to equitable hiring and employment practices.

## **3. Enhance Policies and Practices**

**Advance efforts to bridge communities within the region**

- a. Think more about how we spend our money. Ask ourselves if we can do a better job at using our resources for populations we typically do not work with
- b. Keep asking ourselves who is at the table and who benefits from our work – identify gaps in representation
- c. Prioritize and provide programs that have a strong value and high potential of success
- d. Offer programs/services that include:
  - i. Align with Mission, Vision, Values
  - ii. Is self-sustaining
  - iii. Public value
  - iv. Direct value
  - v. Positive return on investment
  - vi. Maximize expertise of staff
  - vii. Have regional need
  - viii. Political necessity
  - ix. Reduction of duplication
  - x. Can promote & evaluate the core program

### **ACTION STEPS:**

- Practice intentional lending practices
- Hire and partner with people with diverse lived experiences
- Assess the composition of the R5DC commission and NCEDA full corporation – identify gaps in representation and work to close those gaps
- Measure success via a dashboard that represents the agency's mission & values.
- Conduct periodic meetings with agency staff to ensure programs and activities remain coordinated, relevant and that program information is being effectively disseminated.
- Consider new programs and opportunities that may benefit the region. Explore funding possibilities, resources permitting, to expand R5DC services.

## *Goal 2: Performance Measures*

**O1** - How culture has shifted in region through storytelling, and the degree to which relationships and connections are authentic

**O1** - Number of stories collected regarding impact from partners and communities

**O2** - The number of people reached through our programs and services both directly and indirectly, Satisfaction Survey result -External and Internal program and agency evaluations, based on criteria used as a measure of success regarding the quality of professional planning

**O2** - A regional dashboard is invested in and maintained

**O3** - The dollars spent in lending, granting, and investments to local, small, and minority-led organizations and communities

**O3** - Dollars spent on our time provided through our programs and services to local, small, and minority-led organizations and communities

## **GOAL 3: CULTIVATE REGIONAL PROSPERITY & SUSTAINABILITY**

### *Objectives and Action Steps*

#### **1. Enhance Community Development Efforts**

##### **Continue to facilitate diverse broad stakeholder civic engagement opportunities**

- a. Weave resiliency into plans and projects (e.g. Health, safety, pandemic responses, environmental efforts)
- b. Develop proactive measures for new/upcoming/potential funding/staff coverage
- c. Address and support place-based planning needs
- d. Continue to draw upon the strengths, talents, and wisdom of local community leaders to support and inform projects within those communities.
- e. Cultivate broadband in partnership with local units of government

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

Deliver a multitude of Community Development initiatives including but not limited to:

- **Planning: Comprehensive, Prioritized Implementation, Energy & Environment Planning – AND Pandemic Planning AND Transportation Planning (AND Equitable Development Planning)**
  - Align Region 5 regional transportation and regional economic development plans with local units of government comprehensive planning efforts
  - Assist city officials and staff or community groups in the development of action plans in the areas of housing, land use, transportation, recreation, energy/environment, and economic development etc., as comprehensive plans or stand-alone plans
  - Secure funding for energy and environment resilience projects in the region
- **Implement and update the five-year Comprehensive Regional Economic Development Strategy (CREDS) in accordance with Economic Development Administration (EDA) rules and procedures.**
  - Staff support to the region's CREDS committee; provide direction on the Economic Development Planning and Assistance Program
  - Carry out needs-assessment, feasibility studies, community surveys and data compilation among other activities that provide information necessary to update the CREDS
  - Implement strategic core competencies and tactics outlined in the CREDS

- Maintain and review the ongoing CREDS governance structure; conform with recent changes to EDA rules and policy
- Solicit funding – including from the EDA Public Works Program – that support the projects selected as “vital projects” via the CREDS process
- Work with Minnesota Association of Development Organizations to improve the overall value of the CREDS and economic vitality in MN rural regions through DevelopMN
- **Provide assistance on planning projects by fee-for-service contractual agreements.**
  - Explore the broadband placemaking opportunities for further civic acknowledgment of the need for additional broadband services in rural communities
  - Foster intentional work that is place-based and arts based to learn and utilize a broad range of tools for implementation of community projects
  - Continue RxCSA, VetCSA and other relevant local food project or program implementation where funding permits.

## **2. Improve Upon Economic Development Endeavors**

### **Create practices and plans to manage our continually expanding loan portfolio**

- a. Continue lending practices that support local business growth
- b. Develop on-demand TA/training (videos)
- c. Refine loan portfolio management
- d. Prepare for larger funding pools/projects
- e. Enhance and grow partnerships with other banks and gap lenders to better serve the region
- f. Contribute to an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem through projects that attract workforce, families, and entrepreneurs

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

- Oversee multiple lending programs to serve the region; Gap, micro, well water, septic system, minority lending and COVID crisis lending
- Maintain NCEDA Full-Corp committee membership and provide regular updates
- Staff support to the NCEDA loan committee that make decisions on loan applications
- Provide updated information on all loan programs to Commission
- Conduct lending portfolio risk assessment per EDA guidelines
- Act as a fiscal administrator for groups in need
- Seek additional loan programs that R5DC can administer for the benefit of the region
- Deliver a multitude of lending initiatives including but not limited to:
  - **Business Lending**
    - Market the loan funds; provide business start-up, retention and expansion assistance and process requests that meet the goals and objectives of the RLF Plan. Administer and process loans according to approved financial procedures. Manage active loans.
    - Engage in activities that promote, identify, encourage and support businesses. Participate in collaborative lending activities if possible. Host and/or attend lending/lender finance meetings.
    - Follow RLF policies and procedures or any program policies in the areas of technical assistance/review of loan applications and management of approved loans.
    - Provide technical assistance as required by the grant to loan recipients, increasing the business owner’s grasp of business practices and probability of success.
      - One-on-one direct technical assistance at the business location
      - Provide group and webinar technical training
      - Offer in-person small group industry specific TA
      - Involve outside experts from Small Business Development Centers, SCORE chapters, Chamber of Commerce, and independent Consultants

- **Individual Sewage Treatment System (ISTS) & Household Water Well System (HWWS)**
  - Provide staff support to NCEDA loan committee that enables the Board to make a decision on loan application
  - Market the septic loan fund; process requests, communicate with county and landowner, process and close loans according to approved financial procedures. Manage active loans.
  - Partner with counties to provide additional options; cost share opportunities
  - Authorized as a multi-county lender, consider expanding septic loans to other counties
  - Communicate effectively with MN Department of Agriculture and US Department of Agriculture on program regulations
  - Seek additional funding to repair/replace water wells or other programs that directly assist the region's residents

### **3. Continue and Strengthen Transportation Partners & Projects**

#### **Enhance our integrated approach**

- a. Deepen partnerships (e.g., TAC, RTCC, ATP, MnDOT)
- b. Deploy RTCC workplan and deepen Stakeholder value.

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

Deliver a multitude of transportation initiatives including but not limited to:

- **Bi-Annual MnDOT Planning Grant** – Execute and fulfill the requirements set forth in the bi-annual MnDOT Planning grant agreement.
  - **ATIP Development** - Assisting MnDOT District 3 in the development of its annual DRAFT Area Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP).
  - **TAC Administration** - Providing staffing and coordination for the Transportation Advisory Council (TAC)
  - **MADO Transportation Planner Meetings** – Actively participate in and attend the quarterly MADO Transportation Planner meetings as well as subsequent committee assigned meetings as necessary.
  - **Statewide Priorities** – Assist MnDOT on various statewide transportation planning projects, programs, or initiatives as needed including:
    - Monitor state, federal transportation legislation.
    - Assist with ongoing updates to statewide transportation plans (Statewide Bicycle System plan, State Aviation System Plan, etc.)
    - Corridor Studies
  - **Regional Priorities** – Assist MnDOT District 3 on various regional transportation planning projects, programs, or initiatives as needed including:
    - Providing transportation related communication, information, and technical assistance to communities within Region Five in coordination with MN/DOT, and local units of government (LUG) such as:
      - Maintenance of Functional Classification
      - Coordinating and planning with Scenic Byway(s)
      - Access Management
      - Assist communities within the region regarding active transportation planning, projects, programs, and policies
      - Asset communities with trail, rail & aviation planning, programs, projects, and studies
      - Conduct regional transportation plan every 5-7 years in partnership with MnDOT
  - **Conference Attendance** – Actively attend pertinent transportation related conferences annually such as the Minnesota Transportation Conference and the NADO Rural

- Transportation Conference.
- **Safe Routes To School (SRTS)** - Coordinating with MnDOT, and local units of government to conduct Safe Route To School (SRTS) planning within region five by:
- Promote SRTS Technical Assistance Planning Grants
  - Assist communities to apply for SRTS Technical Assistance Planning Grants
  - Assist MnDOT determine Estimated budgets for SRTS Technical Assistance Planning Grants
  - Assist LUGs by executing SRTS contracts with MnDOT and fulfilling all aspects of the associated SRTS workplans.
  - Consider applying for MnDOT SRTS Coordinator Grant Solicitation
- **Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC)** – Execute the workplan associated with the Regional Transportation Coordination Council (RTCC) Implementation grants and agreements.
- Assist communities with public local transit planning, programs, projects and studies including updating the Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan

### *Goal 3: Performance Measures*

**O1** - How well we meet the place-based planning needs of our communities & partners, assessed through performance evaluations and surveys from our partners

**O2** - Our ability to deploy loans to community members

**O2** - Our ability to serve clients and business owners with technical assistance

**O3** - The quality of programs and services delivered, and number of grants applied/received will be used as a measure of success regarding how well we are filling service gaps within the region.

**O3** - Maintain Transportation networks and 100% membership positions filled.