

# **GREAT NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**



## **COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY GOALS & OBJECTIVES 2017 – 2022**

**Prepared For: US EDA Planning Partnership Program and  
Montana Department of Commerce Certified Regional  
Development Corporation Program**

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# I. Introduction and Executive Summary

## A. Overview

The Great Northern Development Corporation of northeastern Montana is a private, non-profit corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of Montana. Articles of Incorporation were filed on October 18, 1995 in specific response to the federal legislation of P.L. 8-136, the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended. The Great Northern Development Corporation submitted its first regional Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP) in 1997. The first update to the OEDP was completed in 1998 and the district became designated a U.S. Economic Development Administration Economic Development District.

In 2002 the Great Northern Development Corporation submitted its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS was approved within that same year. The Great Northern Development Corporation has been in continuous operation since 1995.

While the Board of Directors, officers and staff have undergone changes, the mission of the district remains the same. Realizing that positive changes must originate within specific communities, the Board of Directors of the district believes its role is to provide the resources required to make those changes a reality. Effecting change brings together agencies, community leaders, businesses and individuals with a common goal.

In the beginning Valley, Roosevelt, Daniels, Sheridan and McCone Counties as well as the Fort Peck Sioux and Assiniboine Tribes comprised the Great Northern Development Corporation. Later, Garfield County requested inclusion into the region expanding the district to a six county Economic Development District.

The district employs six full time professional economic development specialists including an Executive Director, a Housing Specialist/ Marketing Manager, a Loan Officer, Small Business Development Center Director, a Brownfields Program Manager/ Grant Administrator, and a Financial Officer/ Administrative Assistant. Each staff has specific responsibilities and works with specific committees within the organization. The Executive Director is responsible for reporting to the Board of Directors on a monthly basis and various funders. Final responsibility of all activities rests with the Board of Directors. A listing of the Board of Directors, GNDC's special committees and its staff members can be found in Section II.

Responding to the need for increased economic and community development across the state, the Montana State Legislature created the Certified Regional Development (CRDC) Program within the Montana Department of Commerce. In 2004, CRDC funds were allocated to GNDC to support expanded services to the six county region.

### *History of the Region*

It is unknown how long Native Americans have occupied the land that is now contained within the six counties of the Great Northern district in Northeastern Montana. Estimates range widely from 30,000 to 50,000 years. Whatever the time period, the Missouri River and its tributaries served as major transportation and migration routes to and through the region.

In 1804 Lewis and Clark led the first organized exploration through what was to become the great State of Montana and the Great Northern Development District. In those early days the economy of the region was based on the capitalization of natural and renewable resources. Early accounts and journals written by these first explorers tell of great fur trapping opportunities, an abundance of wildlife and spacious grasslands.

The first non-native settlements along the Missouri River were central to economic development in northeastern Montana as furs were traded among Native American and European trappers. Fort Union, Culbertson and Wolf Point were fur trading centers where wolf, buffalo and beaver hides were frozen during the winter and shipped to St. Louis, Missouri on barges and riverboats following the first thaw.

Later, homesteaders and cattle barons fought to master the land. Intrigued by the promises of free land and promoted by railroad advertisements, homesteaders built sod shanties on the prairie. Some were able to endure the tough winters and dry summers and produce a legacy of independence still evident today. In the 1930s, many farmers and ranchers did not make it through a national period of economic depression which created low commodity prices. This began a long period of population outmigration as farms continued to grow in size. As larger equipment and ever more efficient production farming practices emerge, the trend continues, albeit at a slower pace.

The Fort Peck Indian reservation was formally established on May 12, 1888 by an official act of Congress (25 Stat. Sec 113, Ch. 212.) The federally recognized and established Fort Peck Indian reservation is the permanent homeland of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes. The Fort Peck Reservation encompasses most of Montana's Roosevelt County. The remaining portions of the Reservation are situated throughout the northeast Montana counties of Valley, Daniels and Sheridan counties.

With the advent of the railroads through Montana in the late 1800s, travel and commerce changed dramatically in the region, shifting from the previous emphasis on river navigation. Today, the main northern line of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad passing through the district provides for shipment of freight and commodities across the northern tier of the United States and beyond.

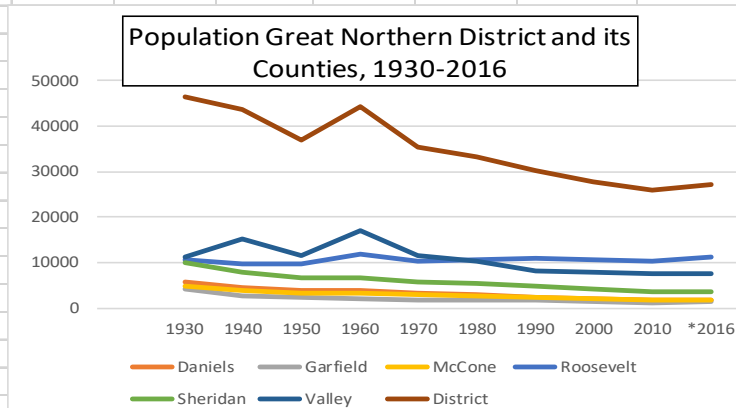
## **B. Key Findings**

### *The Region's Population*

The region has seen general population decline since the 1930s, owing largely to the Great Depression and a corresponding decline in farm commodity prices, extended drought, and other factors. Notable exceptions to this general trend during the period were in Valley County which experienced population increases resulting from the construction of the Fort Peck Dam which had peaked in 1940 before declining to previous levels. Then, by 1960, another peak was reached with the construction of the Glasgow Air Force Base. After closure of the base, the population of Valley County continued a gradual decline. Roosevelt County has also shown some population fluctuation during the period, although it has been among the most stable over the long term. Despite the general decline on population, the region appears

to have rebounded somewhat during the current decade. Much of this can be attributable to an increase in oil exploration and extraction activities in the region during the early part of the decade. As this activity has subsided to a significant degree, it remains a question as to whether the population can be maintained at the current estimated level. Though the region's population declined by 44 percent between 1930 and 2010, estimates are that the population rebounded in this decade by 5.3 percent though 2016, according to estimates of the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Population Great Northern District and Counties 1930-2016								
Year	Daniels	Garfield	McCone	Roosevelt	Sheridan	Valley	District	
1930	5,553	4,252	4,790	10,672	9,869	11,181	46,317	
1940	4,563	2,641	3,798	9,806	7,814	15,181	43,803	
1950	3,946	2,172	3,258	9,580	6,674	11,353	36,983	
1960	3,755	1,981	3,321	11,731	6,458	17,080	44,326	
1970	3,083	1,796	2,875	10,365	5,779	11,471	35,369	
1980	2,835	1,656	2,702	10,467	5,414	10,250	33,324	
1990	2,266	1,589	2,276	10,999	4,732	8,239	30,101	
2000	2,017	1,279	1,977	10,620	4,105	7,675	27,673	
2010	1,751	1,206	1,734	10,425	3,384	7,369	25,869	
*2016	1,755	1,310	1,700	11,305	3,648	7,539	27,257	
*Census Bureau Estimate								

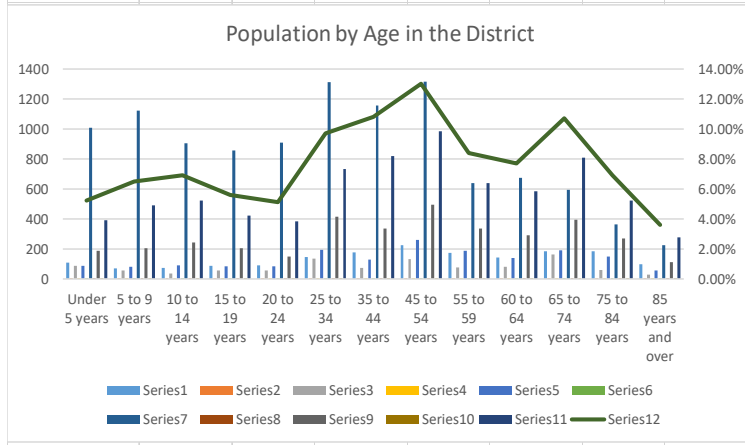


The population of the region shows some disparity across the counties in terms of the age of the population. While most of them are experiencing an overall increase in the median age of residents over time, Roosevelt County maintains a considerably lower median age than the others at 30.4 years compared to the other counties ranging from 45.1 to 51.2 years. Nearly 20 percent of the population in Roosevelt County is under the age of 10.

In terms of ethnicity, the region's population is predominantly made up of Western European extraction, though a significant proportion of the population consists of Native

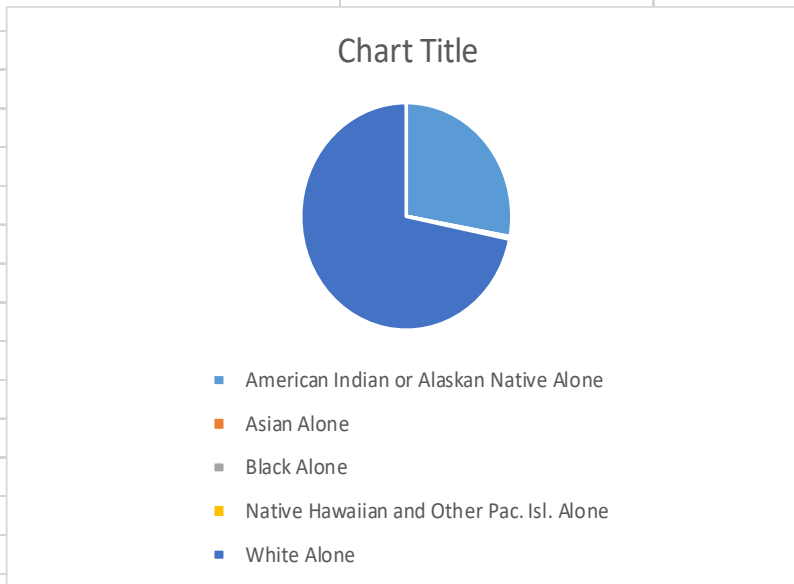
Americans, which comprise 27.5% of the District’s population. Native Americans comprise 60.4 and 9.8 percent of the populations of Roosevelt and Valley Counties respectively.

Population of the Great Northern District												
2015 Estimate by Age and Sex												
	Daniels County		Garfield County		McCone County		Roosevelt County		Sheridan County		Valley County	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total Population	1,758		1,047		1,728		11,072		3,630		7,577	
Male	891	50.70%	498	47.60%	925	53.50%	5,544	50.10%	1,837	50.60%	3,802	50.20%
Female	867	49.30%	549	52.40%	803	46.50%	5,528	49.90%	1,793	49.40%	3,775	49.80%
Under 5 years	108	6.10%	88	8.40%	88	5.10%	1,006	9.10%	187	5.20%	391	5.20%
5 to 9 years	70	4.00%	55	5.30%	80	4.60%	1,120	10.10%	203	5.60%	489	6.50%
10 to 14 years	75	4.30%	36	3.40%	89	5.20%	904	8.20%	242	6.70%	522	6.90%
15 to 19 years	86	4.90%	56	5.30%	84	4.90%	855	7.70%	204	5.60%	422	5.60%
20 to 24 years	92	5.20%	56	5.30%	83	4.80%	909	8.20%	149	4.10%	385	5.10%
25 to 34 years	145	8.20%	137	13.10%	193	11.20%	1,310	11.80%	414	11.40%	732	9.70%
35 to 44 years	178	10.10%	73	7.00%	129	7.50%	1,155	10.40%	335	9.20%	819	10.80%
45 to 54 years	225	12.80%	133	12.70%	258	14.90%	1,315	11.90%	495	13.60%	985	13.00%
55 to 59 years	172	9.80%	77	7.40%	187	10.80%	640	5.80%	335	9.20%	639	8.40%
60 to 64 years	142	8.10%	82	7.80%	139	8.00%	674	6.10%	292	8.00%	585	7.70%
65 to 74 years	185	10.50%	164	15.70%	191	11.10%	595	5.40%	393	10.80%	809	10.70%
75 to 84 years	184	10.50%	61	5.80%	150	8.70%	364	3.30%	270	7.40%	523	6.90%
85 years and ove	96	5.50%	29	2.80%	57	3.30%	225	2.00%	111	3.10%	276	3.60%
Median age (year)	50.3		46.5		51.2		30.4		47.1		45.5	



Great Northern District		
Population by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2015		
	GNDK District	Percentage of Total
Total Population	26,812	100%
American Indian or Alaskan Native Alone	7,138	26.60%
Asian Alone	51	0.20%
Black Alone	23	0.10%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pac. Isl. Alone	17	0.10%
White Alone	18,394	68.60%
Two or More Race Groups	1,045	3.90%
Hispanic or Latino		
Total Hispanic or Latino	420	1.60%
Mexican	319	1.20%
Cuban	0	0.00%
Puerto Rican	4	0.00%
Other	97	0.40%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates



Income and the relative economic condition of the residents of the district is a mixed bag. For many years, the region experienced a lagging economy due to low agricultural commodity prices and other factors which resulted in a high level of economic distress manifested in low per capita incomes, low median family incomes, and high rates of poverty as compared to their counterparts across the country. While these conditions persist to a certain

extent, the district shows some improvement. For example, the unemployment rate of all the counties, with the exception of Roosevelt County has a 24-month unemployment rate below the national average. This seemingly good news can be challenged on two fronts, however. First, the true unemployment rate may be understated as many chronically unemployed persons may have given up on seeking employment and, therefore, fail to file for unemployment and thereby understating this number. Secondly, the low unemployment rate in some portions of the district may also reflect a higher level of outmigration. In short, people lose their job, they relocate to other areas to seek employment. Overall, the 24-month unemployment rate for the district as a whole is 3.67 percent, more than a whole point below the national average.

In terms of income, two of the counties in the district, McCone and Sheridan, have per capita income levels in excess of the national average at 113.6 and 106.5 percent, respectively. Only Roosevelt County at 73.5 percent is below the distress threshold of 80 percent of the national average. The data from the 2000 Census shows that all of the counties had a per capita money income below the 80 percent level. The latest American Community Survey data paints a similar picture to that of the Bureau of Economic Analysis data. Only Roosevelt County appears to demonstrate significant economic distress across the various data sources. Much of this data may be skewed by the recent economic surge that was experienced as a result of the recent oil boom that occurred in eastern Montana and Western North Dakota, however. In addition, for much of this period, the region has enjoyed strong prices for agricultural commodities upon which much of the economy relies.

Great Northern District and Its Counties									
Economic Distress Criteria—Geographic Components									
	24 Month	Plus/	BEA	Percent	Census PCMI	Percent	ACS 5-Year	Percent	
	Unempl Rate	Minus US	PCPI	of US	-2000	of US	PCMI	of US	
Daniels County	2.47	-2.35	\$43,357	90.1	\$16,055	74.4	\$33,140	114.6	
Garfield County	2.82	-2	\$42,703	88.8	\$13,930	64.5	\$26,142	90.4	
McCone County	1.97	-2.85	\$54,654	113.6	\$15,162	70.2	\$28,654	99	
Roosevelt County	5.12	0.3	\$35,358	73.5	\$11,347	52.6	\$16,182	55.9	
Sheridan County	2.96	-1.86	\$51,250	106.5	\$16,038	74.3	\$30,814	106.5	
Valley County	3.27	-1.55	\$42,622	88.6	\$16,246	75.3	\$26,337	91	

Sources: U.S. Bureaus of Census, Labor Statistics, and Economic Analysis; Calculations generated by StatsAmerica.

Poverty statistics within the region as compared to the United States as a whole show that individuals experience somewhat higher rates of a poverty than their counterparts across the country, while families have a somewhat lower rate of poverty in the district compared to other families in the country as a whole.



Great Northern District Poverty Compared to the US				
	Great Northern District	Percentage of Total	U.S.	Percentage of Total
Total Population (for whom poverty status determined)	26,235	100%	308,619,550	100%
In Poverty	4,612	17.60%	47,749,043	15.50%
Age 65 and Over In Poverty	396	1.50%	4,058,359	1.30%
Family Households				
Total Family Households	6,451	100%	77,260,546	100%
In Poverty	685	10.60%	8,761,164	11.30%
In Poverty With Female Head	360	5.60%	4,648,079	6.00%
In Poverty With Female Head With Kids	316	4.90%	3,991,032	5.20%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates				

### *Employment in the Region*

Regarding employment in the district, a startling dichotomy is evident in the following chart. For a six-county area known for its dominant agricultural industry, employment in farming shows only 264 individuals in that industry. Despite the fact that this number fails to recognize the role of spouses and other family members and their contribution to the industry, it appears to be a very low number, especially considering the significant impact that the industry has on the economy of the district.

Great Northern District Resident Occupations, 2015				
	Great Northern District	Percentage of Total	U.S.	Percentage of Total
Employed civilian pop. 16 years and over	11,623	100.00%	145,747,779	100.00%
Management, professional, and related Service	4,521	38.90%	53,433,469	36.70%
Service	2,336	20.10%	26,446,906	18.10%
Sales and office	2,174	18.70%	35,098,693	24.10%
Farming, fishing, and forestry	264	2.30%	1,061,192	0.70%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	1,236	10.60%	11,977,387	8.20%
Production, transportation, and material moving	1,092	9.40%	17,730,132	12.20%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates				

Unemployment continues to be a problem within Roosevelt and Valley Counties in 2016. This may have been exacerbated by the decline of the oil and gas industry as many

workers were laid off as the oil boom inevitably experienced a decline with the corresponding drop in oil and gas prices across the nation.

Annual Employment Statistics - 2016						
	Year	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate %	
Daniels County	2016	948	923	25	2.6	
Garfield County	2016	776	754	22	2.8	
McCone County	2016	1,047	1,026	21	2.0	
Roosevelt County	2016	4,732	4,479	253	5.3	
Sheridan County	2016	1,988	1,923	65	3.3	
Valley County	2016	4,454	4,302	152	3.4	
Great Northern District	2016	13,945	13,407	538	3.8	

Employment in the Great Northern District

County	Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed
Daniels County	948	923	25
Garfield County	776	754	22
McCone County	1,047	1,026	21
Roosevelt County	4,732	4,479	253
Sheridan County	1,988	1,923	65
Valley County	4,454	4,302	152

### C. Opportunities

#### PROFILE OF THE REGION’S ENVIRONMENTAL, GEOGRAPHIC, CLIMATIC, CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

The Great Northern Development Corporation district is located in the northeastern most corner of the State of Montana. With the Canadian border to the north and North Dakota to the east. The district is comprised of Daniels County, Garfield County, McCone County, Sheridan County, Roosevelt County, and Valley County.

The area is large and lightly populated. The district area spans 2,987,633 acres or 17,477 square miles. This makes the Great Northern District larger in area than nine of the states in the union and it is only marginally smaller than New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware and Rhode Island combined.

The rolling hills and stream-dissected plateaus descend from the Canadian border on the north toward the Missouri River and from the Big Sheep Mountains on the south toward the Missouri River. The Poplar River, the Big Muddy River, Porcupine Creek, the Milk River and the Redwater River, along with several smaller creeks and tributaries empty into the Missouri that flows easterly through North Dakota and on to the Mississippi.

Fort Peck Dam, built across the Missouri in the 1930's as a W.P.A. project, generates hydroelectric power that is sold to the Western Area Power Administration, a part of the MAP Power Pool, and dispatched through centers which service the entire continental United States. Fort Peck Lake is 240,000 acres in size and has 1,600 miles of shoreline, more shoreline than the State of California. The lake is widely known for Salmon, Sauger, and Walleye fishing as well as boating, water skiing and camping activities. The Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, adjacent to Fort Peck Lake is the largest refuge in the continental United States.

The climate is semi-arid with normal annual rainfall averaging 11.55 inches with most rain falling during the growing season. The frost-free growing season lasts from mid-May to mid-September, ranging from 107 to 124 days. Temperatures vary greatly, throughout the seasons, from over 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer, to less than -20 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter.

### *Natural Resources*

Land use in the district is dominated by open agricultural land with 56% or most of the land in rangeland suited for grazing cattle and sheep. Cropland occupies 43% of the land base or 3,999,676 acres. Wheat, barley, durum wheat, flax and pulse crops are the primary crops grown within the region. Crops are marketed on the commodity market with little or no value added. Additional acres are covered by water and are inland lakes including Fort Peck Lake in Garfield, McCone and Valley Counties and the Medicine Lake and Whitetail Reservoir in Sheridan County. Between 1997 and 2007 the number of farms in the district increased slightly from 2,882 farms to 3,254 with approximately one fourth of the farm owners working off the farm 200 hours or more.

The District's primary mineral resources are natural gas, oil and coal. To a lesser degree sand, gravel bentonite and potash are located throughout the district. Enormous quantities of strippable coal reserves exist within the district and new technology for oil recovery offer substantial potential future energy resources within the district.

Potential wind and sun energy resources exist in northeastern Montana. The rolling hills and unobstructed landscape provides an abundance of these resources that have gone undeveloped and unexplored. Wind energy been explored within the region and tests show good quality wind with a consistent 17.5 to 18 mph wind speed demonstrated. Preliminary planning is underway and at least one wind energy company has plans to produce electricity from wind.

### *Air*

Air quality in the district is excellent throughout the district, rated Class 1 or Class 2. Occasionally air quality problems arise from dust generated by eroding croplands, dirt and gravel roads or smoke drifting into the area from large fires outside the region.

### *Water*

Water is one of the district's most abundant and valuable natural resources. The Missouri River System that dominates the region's water resources provides for a considerable amount of that resource for domestic, agricultural, and recreational uses. Water quality can be

compromised by increased sediment and total dissolved solids due to soil runoff and saltwater disposal practices. Most streams have been impacted to some degree by nonpoint source pollution. Total dissolved solids as well as iron, sulfates and manganese characterize water supplies. Most towns and cities located in the district maintain filtration systems to reduce the amount of iron and manganese and most systems are chlorinated.

### *Hazardous Sites*

Designated hazardous sites include; the Oswego Landfill, the Fort Peck Project, the Reading and Bates Oil Field, A&S Industries, Moe Chevrolet, the old Poplar landfill, the Poplar Post Office site, the Kenco refinery and the Tule Creek Gas Plant/Crystal Oil. Sites are ranked and action taken by the Department of Environmental Quality with highest priorities assigned the areas that meet program criteria. Criteria used for ranking is based on release to ground water or surface water that is a source of drinking water, danger of fire or explosion, release to the air that poses a threat to the public, contamination of the soil and existence of uncontrolled substances such as leaking containers.

### *Historic Sites*

Many properties within the Great Northern Development Corporation District are eligible for listing on the National Registry of Historic Sites. The following are currently listed; the Wolf Point Bridge (Wolf Point), the Daniels County Courthouse (Scobey), the Gladstone Hotel (Circle), the Fort Peck Agency Historic District (Poplar), the Fort Union Trading Post (Montana and North Dakota border), Hales' Filling Station and Grocery, Tipi Hills (Medicine Lake National Wildlife refuge), the Comertown Historic District (Westby), the Larson Homestead (Dagmar), the Outlook Depot (Outlook), the Raymond Grain Elevators (Raymond), the Rocky Valley Lutheran Church, the Thornwood School (Reserve), the Fort Peck Town Site and dam (Fort Peck), the Fort Peck Summer Theatre (Fort Peck), the Charles C. Sergeant house (Nashua) and the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse (Glasgow).

### *Endangered Species*

Endangered species within the district include the Piping Plover and the Interior Least Tern. These birds nest on the sandbars in the Missouri River and at the Medicine Lake Wildlife refuge. The birds are especially sensitive to people and require the presence of high sandbars that are inaccessible to natural predators. Management of the Fort Peck Dam is important to the nesting success of these birds.

Other endangered species include the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon, the black-footed ferret, the whooping crane and the pallid sturgeon. While there is no designated critical habitat for endangered or threatened species within the district, significant bald eagle nesting habitat exists along the Missouri River below Fort Peck Dam. Black-footed ferrets may be found co-existing with prairie dogs. Recently, the State of Montana, in cooperation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service have begun work to preserve the habitat of the Sage Grouse which may have some impact on development within the region.

## THE REGION'S INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS OF THE AREA THAT RELATE TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING:

### *Water and Sewer Services*

The Missouri River and Fort Peck Lake, through filtration systems, provides virtually unlimited water to the cities of Glasgow and Culbertson. Other towns in the district have deep-water wells. While water supplies are adequate, the quality requires filtration systems to reduce the amount of iron and manganese and require chlorination.

Sewer systems, while adequate, are aging. According to a 1996 U.S.D.A. Rural Development survey, water and/or sewer systems are needed in many of the rural communities. Several are currently upgrading those systems.

The Dry Prairie Water District is in the construction phase and will supply water to the northern most portion of the GNDC region. Dry Redwater plans to distribute water to the southern part of the region.

### *Telecommunications and Broadband Services*

Mid-Rivers Telephone and NeMont Telephone Cooperatives service the areas telephone needs with Internet and interactive telecommunications available through both. ADSL, redundant Internet service and cell phone coverage are available. Telecommunications infrastructure is seen as an asset and stepping-stone to economic development in the region.

### *Energy Distribution Systems*

Montana Dakota Utilities, Sheridan Electric, Northern Electric Co-op, Valley Electric Co-op and McCone Electric meet the electrical needs of the Great Northern Development Corporation District. Montana Dakota Utilities provides natural gas with private carriers supplying propane or fuel oil in some locations. Utility costs are reasonable in northeastern Montana as compared to other locations. The capacity is available to accommodate additional business in the region. Much of the area's electrical distribution system experienced upgrades in the past few years as a result of increased oil and gas production demands.

A draft of the Environmental Assessment for the Sand Creek Winds project in McCone County was completed and went out for public review in the fall of 2016. State and Federal agencies are reviewing the EA and Sand Creeks Winds is currently responding to requests for additional information. The final EA is expected to be released by December, 2017.

### *Transportation*

Transportation within the district consists of a network of Federal, State and local highways and roads, east-west passenger and freight rail service and daily commercial air service in Glasgow and Wolf Point.

U.S. Highway 2 provides the major east-west highway in the district. Improvements have been made on Highway 2 between the North Dakota State Line and Malta in recent years. North-south travel has been improved in recent years with new construction between Circle and Scobey including a newly constructed Missouri River Bridge at Wolf Point.

Air service is provided by Great Lakes Airlines, with assistance from the Federal Essential Air Service Program. Daily service from Wolf Point to Billings and from Glasgow to Billings offers fliers the ability to connect to direct flights to Denver, Salt Lake City, Chicago, Minneapolis, Helena and other Montana cities. In addition, private air charter services are available at several locations within the district with airports in all communities.

Railroads have played an important role in the development of the district as the main northern line of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad crosses the district east and west. Amtrak's "Empire Builder", provide daily service with passenger train stops in Wolf Point and Glasgow to points east and west.

Private carriers provide trucking services for grain, cattle and sheep. Bob's Pickup and Delivery, Molerway Freight, Federal Express and United Parcel Service deliver smaller freight to the customer's door.

### *Capital Resources*

The district has more than twenty financial institutions, banks and credit unions engaged in lending in all six counties. Consumer lending and agricultural loans dominate the financing activity although business lending is also common, with SBA loan guarantees used for small businesses across the state. In September 2016, GNDC received notice of certification as a Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI). The staff is working to implement a strategic plan for utilizing CDFI certification to bring additional small business and community development resources to the region. The Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (CDFI Fund) plays an important role in generating economic growth and opportunity in distressed communities. By offering tailored resources and innovative programs that invest federal dollars alongside private sector capital, injecting new sources of capital into neighborhoods that lack access to financing.

The district also has access to a number of state and federal programs to assist in financing for a myriad of purposes. The district often engages in facilitating access to these programs. Great Northern Development Corporation also maintains revolving loan funds with a total capital base of \$5,500,000

### *Agriculture*

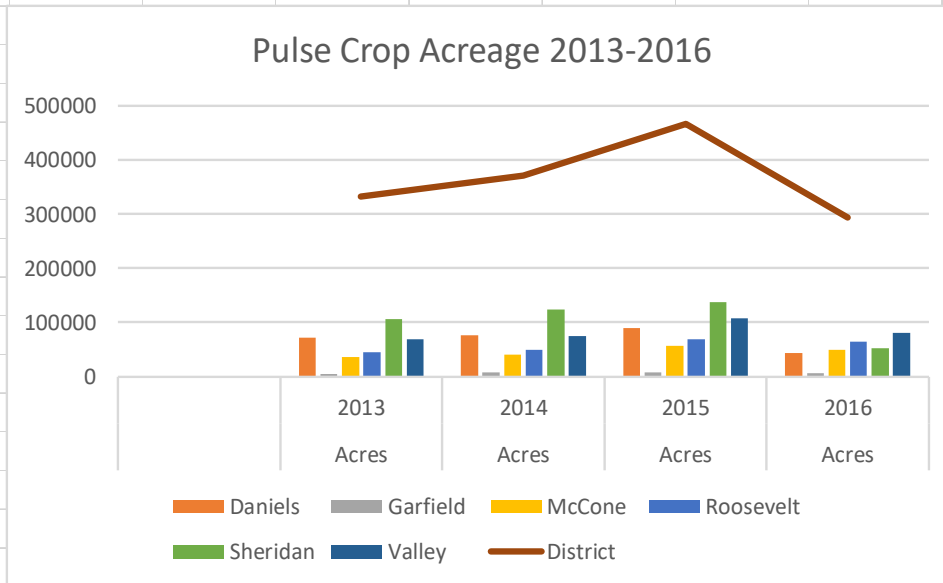
The predominant industry sector for the past 100 years or more has been agriculture with small grains and livestock leading the way. Traditionally, the region had been a big producer of wheat with other small grains also prevalent. Cattle is king in McCone and Garfield Counties, with other livestock, namely sheep, being traditional for the area. Though livestock remains significant, there has been some major changes in farming. Within the past 5-7 years, Montana has become the leading state in production of pulse crops (peas, lentils, chickpeas, and others). The leader among regions in the state has been the Great Northern District. In 2016, for example, five of the six counties in the district led producers of pulse crops with more than 70,000 acres planted.

Pulse crop production diminished somewhat in 2016 over the previous years but continues to be a major additional to the already formidable crop production. The benefits of pulse production go well beyond the diversification it provides to the district's agricultural

production. Pulse crops, being legumes, prove to be an ideal rotation crop for small grains so this added crop is introduced as a complement to existing crops. In short, it allows producers to generate a crop in what would otherwise have been a fallow year. The outlook for pulse crops in the future remains positive with much of the production being exported to the middle and far east where demand, particularly for peas and lentils is growing along with the population of those regions. The continuing demand for plant protein worldwide is helping to solidify production of pulse crops in Montana which has the ideal climate for these crops.

The following chart and graph show the production acreage of pulse crops in the district:

Great Northern District					
Pulse Crop Acreage					
2013 Through 2016					
	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	
County	2013	2014	2015	2016	
Daniels	71,018	75,618	90,052	43,680	
Garfield	4,863	6,751	7,040	5,645	
McCone	36,338	40,878	56,592	48,528	
Roosevelt	45,346	49,809	68,418	63,983	
Sheridan	105,439	123,303	136,260	51,560	
Valley	68,705	74,705	107,912	80,327	
District	331,709	371,064	466,274	293,723	



The district also leads the way in spring wheat. In 2016, Valley, Roosevelt, McCone, and Daniels were first, second, fourth, and fifth biggest producers of spring wheat among Montana's fifty-six counties. Altogether, these four counties produced more than 35 million bushels of spring wheat in 2016.

The district is consistently a top producer of durum wheat. In 2014 and 2015, for example, Sheridan County was the top producer in the state, with Daniels, Roosevelt, and Valley consistently among the top 5 durum producers.

Certainly, other crops are grown in quantity in the district, most notably oats and hay. However, among small grains, the district has been the state's leader in production of spring wheat and durum, and most recently, has catapulted Montana into leadership in production of pulse crops in the United States. Garfield County is a leader among Montana counties in beef cattle and sheep, consistently ranking in the top ten in both.

These significant agricultural statistics are only tempered by the fact that the district has experienced a major drought in 2017 which will certainly have devastating impacts on the area economy.

### *Energy*

Oil and natural gas production played an important role in the district's economy. In 2015, the district produced over 4.9 million barrels of oil and significant amounts of natural gas. Among producing counties, Roosevelt and Sheridan were second and fifth largest oil producers, respectively with Valley, Garfield, and McCone following. Among natural gas producers, Valley County was sixth among Montana counties. The drop in oil and gas products, coupled with the low natural gas prices have put a damper on the exploration and production boom of the past decade.

The promise of potential wind energy projects on the horizon supports future growth of this sector.

### *Tourism*

Though the district has significant tourism resources, much of it cannot be classified as "major destination" tourist attractions for the national or international tourists. With some exceptions such as hunting and fishing, most of the activities in the region support local or regional tourist or recreationists. This does not mean that potential does not exist. As other portions of the nation become less accessible for recreation and tourism, the district remains virtually wide open for such activity. In addition, US Highway 2 is a major route for tourists from the east traveling to Glacier National Park. As these tourists travel through the area, they offer potential for extending their stay within the district for a number of activities.

Specialized tourism, such as ecotourism has significant potential for wildlife viewing and birding, and paleontology excursions in the area, as examples. Some of these nontraditional tourist activities are growing worldwide and can offer additional potential for economic growth.

### *Cultural Resources*

Substantial cultural resources exist in the district. Much of this comes from a rich Native American and western ranching culture. Rodeos, powwows, and other traditional cultural



events and activities offer authentic experiential tourism assets that are disappearing in other portions of the country. By maintaining, growing, and enhancing these events and activities, these rich traditions can be shared with visitors to enhance economic activity in the district.

### *Transportation*

Transportation is critical the economic health of the region. Located thousands of miles from markets for agricultural commodities, oil and gas produced in the area, the Great Northern district must have adequate transportation infrastructure to get these products to worldwide consumers. Railroads, oil and gas pipelines, and a network of local, state, and federal highways are the lifeline of the region. In addition to providing that necessary infrastructure, transportation services provides a big source of employment for the districts workforce. At certain times, particularly during the recent oil boom, the transportation system was utilized beyond its capacity as the rail system was inadequate to accommodate the demands of both oil shipments and needs for agricultural shipments at the same time. Much of this was complicated by weather conditions elsewhere on the system. These issues have subsided largely due to extensive improvements made by BNSF to their rail lines and facilities to relieve congestion. In the past few years, much of the road and highway system experienced extensive traffic increases during the oil boom. Though oil development activity has subsided, the deterioration of some roads and highways remain throughout portions of the district.

### *Manufacturing*

In years past, manufacturing employment in the district was extensive. A&S Industries was, as late as the 1980s, the largest manufacturer in Montana with over 550 employees. Due to the lack of demand for the manufactured products at the time, this manufacturer lost nearly all of its employees. Some of this manufacturing employment was replaced by West Electronics which has enjoyed significant contracts from the US Department of Defense. Fort Peck Tech, another manufacturer has also maintained some manufacturing in the district.

## **II. Organization**

### **A. Board List**

The District's FY 17 Board of Directors is made up of twenty members, reflecting a balance of elected officials and private citizens. The Great Northern Development Corporation has a large Board of Directors representing a variety of interests, concerns, and cultural backgrounds. The By-laws of the EDD do not specify the percentages of elected officials compared to the private sector. The By-laws specify the number of Board representation that can be appointed by each paying member: each paying County member can have up to two representatives, each paying City member can have one representative, and each local development organization can have one representative.

### *Government Representatives*

Elected officials, employees or appointed community member of a general purpose unit of State, local or Indian tribal government who have been appointed to represent the government.

Name	Government	Position
Chris Dschaak	City of Wolf Point	Mayor
Jestin Dupree	Fort Peck Tribes	Fort Peck Tribes Council
Gary Macdonald	Roosevelt County	County Commissioner
Robert Kompel	City of Glasgow	Public Works, Appointed by Mayor
Erin Solem	City of Culbertson	Public Works, Appointed by Mayor
*Jim Moos	McCone County	County Commissioner
Gary Linder	Daniels County	County Commissioner
*Sonya Southland	Town of Scobey	City Clerk
Tara Theony	Town of Circle	City Clerk/Treasurer, Appointed by Mayor
Michael Downs	Town of Jordan	City Council Person
Rodney Miller	Fort Peck Tribes	Fort Peck Tribes Economic Development Office
Kaci Walette	Fort Peck Tribes	Fort Peck Tribes Council
*Mona Amundson	Valley County	Community Representative
Teddy Robertson	Garfield County	County Commissioner

\* Denotes Executive Board Member

### *Non-Government Representatives*

- 1. Private Sector Representatives:** Any senior management official or executive holding a key decision making position, with respect to any for-profit enterprise

Name	Company/Enterprise	Position
*Duane Kurokawa	Western Bank	President
*Frank French	Financial Consultant	Owner
Richard Rice	The Greeter	Owner
Doug Smith	Smith & Associates	Owner

\* Denotes Executive Board Member

- 2. Stakeholder Organization Representatives:** Executive Directors of Chambers of Commerce, or representatives of institutions of post-secondary education, workforce development groups or labor groups.

Name	Organization	Position
Haven Gourneau	Post Secondary Ed.	President, Fort Peck Community College
TeAra Bilbruck	Tow Rivers Economic Growth (Valley County)	Executive Director

**3. Representatives At Large:**

Name	Representing
Maureen Dionne	Native American Population

**Total Board Membership: 21**

**B. GNDC CEDS Committee Members**

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee is a direct and complete overlap of the Board of Directors, with the addition of input provided by staff.

**1. Private Sector Representatives**

Any senior management official or executive holding a key decision-making position, with respect to any for-profit enterprise.

Name	Company	Position
Chris Dschaak	Swap Shop	Owner
Gary Linder	Linder Farms	Co-Owner
Teddy Robertson	Robertson Farms	Owner
Frank French	Hi-Line Sports	Co-Owner
Richard Rice	The Greeter	Owner
Duane Kurokawa	Western Bank of Wolf Point	President
Doug Smith	Smith & Associates	Owner

## 2. Representatives of Other Economic Interests

Persons who provide additional representation of the main economic interest of the region. These may include, but are not limited to: public officials, community leaders, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and private individuals.

Name	Company	Position
Robert Kompel	Local Government	Public Works
Jestin Dupree	Fort Peck Tribes	Tribal Council
Gary Macdonald	Local Government	County Commissioner
Michael Downs	Local Government	City Council
Mona Amundson	Montana Job Service	Retired
Erin Solem	Culbertson	Public Works
Rodney Miller	Fort Peck Tribes	Director, Economic Development Officer
Tara Theony	Town of Circle	Clerk
Haven Gourneau	FPCC	President
Sonya Southland	Local Government	Scobey City Council
Maureen Dionne	Community Member	Native American
Jim Moos	Local Government	County Commissioner
Kaci Walette	Fort Peck Tribes	Tribal Council
TeAra Bilbruck	Two Rivers' Economic Growth	Executive Director

**Total CEDS Committee Members: 21**

## C. GNDC Staff

The district employs six full time professional economic development specialists including an Executive Director, a Housing Specialist/Community Development Specialist, a Loan Officer, Small Business Development Center Director, a Brownfields Program Manager/ Grant Administrator, and a Financial Officer. Each staff has specific responsibilities and works with specific committees within the organization. The Executive Director is responsible for reporting to the Board of Directors on a monthly basis and various funders. Final responsibility of all activities rests with the Board of Directors.

### III. Analysis of the Region's Economy

#### *The Regional Economy's Position*

The district's economy is linked to the larger regional, state, national, and global economies. The two largest industries – agriculture and energy – rely entirely on the global economy for consumption of commodities. While the district is an engine for production of commodities, it does not engage in adding extensive value to them. In short, raw commodities are exported to other areas of the country, or the world, where further refinement or processing takes place. While some of this can be attributable to added value being done in locations closer to consumers, much of it is not dependent on the location. In fact, there may be locational advantages to added value processes within the district that have not been fully realized.

#### **A. Factors Affecting Economic Performance**

##### *Workforce Issues*

Workforce issues will continue to be a challenge for many employers and offer challenges to attracting new employers to the region. The aging of existing population in many areas of the district and the sheer lack of numbers of people seeking employment in others limit the opportunity to attract private investment. However, these are not insurmountable problems. For example, higher unemployment in some portions of the district offers potential for adding training and apprenticeship programs that can have some impact on the demand for skilled workforce. In addition, much of the workforce may be underemployed, either working in lower wage jobs where workers are overqualified or where they may be working fewer hours than may be desirable. Outmigration of workers from the area to other places of greater workers demand is a continuing challenge for much of the district.

##### *Innovation Assets*

One of the most significant but often overlooked areas of potential economic growth is in the area of telecommunications and the assets within the district as it relates to connectivity. The district enjoys substantial assets when it comes to telecommunications resources that exists in terms of fiber optics available to businesses and homes within the region. These assets create enormous potential for home-based businesses as well as employers that demand high levels of bandwidth to conduct business.

##### *Infrastructure and Housing*

Infrastructure is always an issue within the district although much progress as occurred in the past few years. Municipal sewer and water systems require considerable improvements on a continuous basis owing to the aging process of these facilities and to the ever-increasing environmental requirements. Affordable housing is always an issue although the downturn in the oil industry has provided some relief in that regard. In some portions of the district, supply of housing units is an acute and continual problem.

### *Financial Resources*

Financial resources are only an issue for certain public projects. Private lenders do not have a shortage of available capital and public sources programs are available for viable projects. However, start-ups and other borrowers may not have adequate equity to be able to access funding to start and grow their businesses.

### *Transportation Systems*

Transportation systems are generally adequate with some need for improvements or more extensive maintenance.

### *Housing*

Early in the decade, housing was in short supply, especially along the eastern-most portion of the region. Oil exploration in both North Dakota and Montana had resulted in work camps and higher than normal rental rates and housing prices. Housing costs skyrocketed. Teachers, nurses and other service workers are forced to compete with oil field workers' wages and were unable to compete for available housing. Today, that situation has been reversed somewhat by the downturn in oil exploration activity. However, affordable housing for population within certain income segments is still a problem.

Through various federally funded programs the housing stock has been improved in many communities. Glasgow, Wolf Point, Froid, Westby, Nashua, Poplar, Medicine Lake and Circle have improved housing stock through these programs with efforts continuing throughout the region. The Fort Peck Indian Reservation continues to improve the housing conditions of the Native American population through the Fort Peck Housing Authority.

### *Health and Wellness Services*

With the exception of Glasgow, Plentywood and Wolf Point, many rural hospitals in the region are acute care facilities who partner with larger providers such as Deaconess Hospital in Billings, Montana. McCone County has a Medical Assistance/Nursing Home facility in Circle. The Daniels County Hospital/Nursing Home is located in Scobey and maintains a 6-bed facility along with a 48-bed nursing home.

Roosevelt County Medical Center and Nursing Home is located in Culbertson and Trinity Hospital in Wolf Point. The Bureau of Indian Affairs maintains a facility in Wolf Point and Poplar. Sheridan Memorial Hospital, located in Plentywood, maintains an eighteen-bed hospital and a 77-bed nursing home.

Francis Mahon Deaconess Hospital located in Glasgow, Valley County, maintains a 48 bed acute care facility accredited by JCAHO. Francis Mahon has 230 employees including nine physicians consisting of two family practice physicians, an internist, an OB/GYN specialist, an Urologist, two radiologists, an orthopedic surgeon and a general surgeon. Francis Mahon is a well-equipped facility that provides primary and secondary care services to residents in Northeastern Montana. Glasgow also provides nursing home care in a 98-bed facility.

Assisted living facilities provide an additional option for the elderly and in recent years have extended care to those who do not wish to live alone and maintain a residence but are not

ready to move to the nursing home. Assisted living facilities can be found in Wolf Point, Glasgow and Plentywood.

The Fort Peck Tribes are actively pursuing funding to construct a major wellness center in Poplar to address the need for preventative wellness and health care services.

### *Educational Resources*

The district's elementary and secondary school systems can be characterized as having relatively small enrollments with correspondingly small class sizes.

Post-secondary educational opportunities are an important component of economic development. Technology such as the Internet, satellite communications and interactive television have made it possible to work with educational institutions to offer students access to resources and opportunities not previously available in rural schools. This technology has opened the door for rural education and made it possible to obtain a variety of degrees.

The State of Montana currently has seventeen universities and community colleges. Among them, five offer distance learning for college credit. Montana State University (Havre, Billings and Bozeman), Rocky Mountain College and the University of Great Falls participate in these outreach programs.

The Montana University System offers many on-line courses and it is possible to obtain many degrees and certifications on line.

The Fort Peck Community College, with campuses in Poplar and Wolf Point, adds a wide variety of courses and curriculum. Fort Peck Community partners with fellow universities and recently added Masters' programs in some fields to their catalogue. Fort Peck Community College has expressed a willingness to train workers in specialized fields.

### *Cultural Resources*

An Interpretive Center is a recent addition to the lake area. The Interpretive Center features a life sized Tyrannosaurus Rex in the entry and displays that depict the history of northeastern Montana. A warm water fish hatchery supplies a variety of fish to fishing sites throughout Montana and has allowed the Fort Peck Lake area to expand tourism activities.

The Fort Peck Summer Theatre was constructed in 1934 during the building of the dam and was the largest theatre in Montana for many years. The theatre operates during the summer months and host productions such as Sound of Music, Cats, the Nerd, and West Side Story.

Brush Lake State Park adds to the cultural and recreational resources of the district.

The Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge is the summer home of more than 100,000 migratory waterfowl. Great blue herons, grebes, 16 species of ducks and a colony of 10,000 white pelicans share the prairie lake ecosystem.

Scobey's Frontier Town and Dirty Shame Dancers provide entertainment in a frontier setting for visitors from throughout the United States and Canada. Native American Powwows at Poplar River Days, the Standing Bear Celebration, Poplar Indian Days, the Wadopana Celebration, the Red Bottom Celebration and the Badlands Celebration provide authentic Native American activities. The Wolf Point Wild Horse Stampede, sanctioned by the

Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association attracts competitors and visitors from the United States and Canada.

Lewis and Clark traversed the district as they explored the Louisiana Purchase. Original campsites and events provide the opportunity for the expansion of tourism in northeastern Montana. Captain William Clark describes the area very simply in 1805: “The country on each side of the Missouri river is rich, high and beautiful.” The “Corps of Discovery” of 1804 to 1806 and its historic exploration attracts many history buffs through the region as much of the Missouri River within the district remains much as it was during Lewis and Clark’s time.

### *Recreational resources*

Fort Peck Lake, the result of the world’s largest hydraulic earth filled dam, is a center of recreational activity in eastern Montana. With 240,000 acres of water and 1600 miles of shoreline, the lake provides, Salmon, Sauger and Walleye Pike fishing for the outdoor recreationist. The Fort Peck Walleye Tournament, the Walleye In-Fisherman Professional Walleye Trail and the Hell Creek Fishing Tournament are a few of the annual events held at the lake. Boating, water skiing and camping add to the summer activities with ice fishing and snowmobiling events held during the winter. The northeastern corner of Montana boasts the only state park – Brush Lake.

The Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge is the summer home of more than 100,000 migratory waterfowl. Great blue herons, grebes, 16 species of ducks and a colony of 10,000 white pelicans share the prairie lake ecosystem. Museums and golf courses are located in most communities. Trail rides, cattle drives, wagon trains, county fairs and rodeos provide a variety of summer activities. Hunting and fishing provide attractions for the novice and experienced sportsman with outfitting services available in most locations. Sheridan and Daniels counties are known nation-wide for pheasant and upland game bird hunting. The Missouri River Breaks provides big game opportunities and trophy hunts.

A discussion on tourism would not be complete without inclusion of the dinosaur and other fossils. The barren terrain of northeastern Montana is a graveyard for world class discoveries including the 1902 Tyrannosaurus Rex, one of the first in the world. This 65 million-year old Cretaceous beast weighed over seven tons and stood 20 feet tall. The most complete T-Rex skeleton in the world was also found in 1990. Excavations continue yearly with some digs open to the public.

## **IV. Strategy for Economic Development**

### **A. Vision**

To sustain and grow vital, healthy communities by providing professional services that empower others to reach their economic goals and improve their lives.



## B. Goals and Objectives

Each year, in the early spring, the Great Northern Development Corporation hosts a Planning Summit. The summit is an opportunity for elected officials, the general public and the board of directors to review the expectations of Great Northern, develops criteria for selection of projects and refine the goals for the future. Prior to the Planning Summit held spring, 2017, staff of the Great Northern Development attended public meetings throughout the region. During the meetings the members of the public were informed of the access to Great Northern services and an opportunity to provide input of the community needs in for preparation for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

GNDC's regional goals are designed to be flexible enough to evolve and reflect new directions and opportunities that might be identified mid-term. All the district goals are reviewed annually in the CEDS Reports and Updates for their continued appropriateness and are reaffirmed as the direction for the coming year. The goals that are listed here suggest the general direction and thrust of the 2017 CEDS Committee.

### Goals

1. **Create jobs by supporting and encouraging entrepreneurship**
  - a. Provide technical assistance to the Fort Peck Tribes to develop successful business on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation through the Native American Business Advisor program.
  - b. Collaborate with local, State and Federal entities to provide workforce training and apprenticeship opportunities for local business owners
  - c. Develop services as a Community Development Financial Institution to leverage public funds with private dollars to recognize more impact from the Revolving Loan Funds
  - d. Host the Small Business Development Center
  - e. Processing applications from new or expanding business to county or local tax reduction, Tax Increment Financing, or New Market Tax Credits programs.
2. **Facilitate Orderly and Balanced community planning to maintain economic stability and encourage growth**
  - a. Participate in and sponsor area-wide educational programs and conferences
  - b. Encourage the development of partnerships and coalitions to address the economic needs of the region, avoid duplication of services, and improve access to information or resources for residents of the region
  - c. Utilize state and federal programs such as TSEP, BSTF, EDA Planning Partnership, etc. to area leaders and policy council members as they develop and update planning documents (growth policies, housing plans, capital improvement plans, etc.)
3. **Strive for a Balance between Environmental Protection and Economic Growth**
  - a. Development of Brownfields areas or locations that have the potential for reuse through collaboration with Montana DEQ and US EPA Brownfields.

- b. GNDC will continue as the managing member in the Eastern Montana Brownfields Coalition in support of Assessment and RLF funds.
- c. Support efforts to develop energy resources available in the region.

#### 4. Improve Services to the Elderly and Under Served

- a. Seek funding to provide housing rehabilitation for the low-income residents of the communities
- b. Support the development and expansion efforts of area hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and senior centers
- c. Provide assistance to cities, counties, and organization efforts to provide safe and healthy housing options

#### *Criteria for Inclusion in the Work Program*

The Planning Summit provided the criteria for inclusion in the future work plan for the Great Northern Development Corporation EDD. All activities will be compared to the criteria prior to inclusion in the work plan. In reviewing possible projects, the Board of Directors will ask if the proposed activity will:

- Create or retain basic jobs,
- Expand the District's manufacturing and value-added base,
- Promote public-private partnerships that will benefit the District's residents, especially those who are unemployed, have low and moderate incomes or who have special needs,
- Development of sustainable communities,
- Expand markets for natural resources and agricultural products,
- Eliminate barriers to economic growth,
- Foster inter-governmental cooperation between all units of government affecting the District,
- Increase the per capita income of the participants, or
- Retain or increase the population base?

The selection of programs and projects that the Great Northern Development Corporation undertakes is a joint decision between district professional staff and the EDD Board of Directors who has the ultimate authority over the budget and work program for any given year. Additionally, board members can and do suggest ideas and areas of interest that they would like to see explored or that they feel will provide economic benefit either for a particular community or the region as a whole.

## V. Action Plan

Goal 1. Create jobs by supporting and encouraging entrepreneurship								
Work Item	Priority	Short Term 1-2 Years	Mid Term 3-5 Years	Long Term 5-10 Years	Lead Agency	Partners	Type of Assistance	# Jobs Created
Native American Business Advisor TA	High	X	X		Fort Peck Tribes (FPT)	FPT, MT DOC ICED	Technical Assistance	
Develop workforce training and apprenticeship opportunities	High	X	X		GNDc	FPT, Chambers of Commerce, DOC, ICED, DOL	Technical Assistance	
Develop Organizational Capitalization Plan under CDFI	High	X			GNDc	CDFI, OFN	Technical Planning	
Host SBDC	High	X	X	X	GNDc	SBDC, SBA, MDOC	Technical Assistance to 40 businesses	5
Facilitate Tax Incentive Programs	Low	X	X	X	GNDc	Local Governments	Technical Assistance	

Goal 2. Facilitate orderly and balanced community planning to maintain economic stability and encourage growth								
Work Item	Priority	Short Term 1-2 Years	Mid Term 3-5 Years	Long Term 5-10 Years	Lead Agency	Partners	Type of Assistance	# Jobs Created
Educational Programs	Med	X	X	X	Community College	GNDc, SBDC, IWT, FPT, MT DOL, DBE, MEDA	TA	
Coordinate Efforts of all Public & Private Entities	High	X	X	X	GNDc	FPT, EPEDC, SEMDC, Private Foundations, LDO's, MEDA	Partnership and Coalition Facilitation	
Leverage Funds for impact	High	X	X	X	GNDc	EDA, EPA, MT DOC, MT DOL, USDA, CDFI	Project Coordination	

**Goal 3. Strive for a Balance Between Environmental Protection and Economic Growth**

<b>Work Item</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Short Term 1-2 Years</b>	<b>Mid Term 3-5 Years</b>	<b>Long Term 5-10 Years</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Type of Assistance</b>	<b># Jobs Created</b>
Development of Brownfields Areas	Med	X	X		GNDC	U.S. EPA, SEMDC, EPEDC, MT DEQ, MT PetroFund	Technical Implementation	
Management of EPA Funds	Med	X	X		GNDC	U.S. EPA, SEMDC, EPEDC, MT DEQ, MT PetroFund	Technical Assistance	1
Support Development of Energy Resources	High	X	X	X	GNDC	U.S. EPA, SEMDC, EPEDC, EMIC, USDA,	TA and Planning	

**Goal 4. Improve Services to the Elderly and Under Served**

<b>Work Item</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Short Term 1-2 Years</b>	<b>Mid Term 3-5 Years</b>	<b>Long Term 5-10 Years</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Type of Assistance</b>	<b># Jobs Created</b>
Housing Rehab	High	X	X		Local Government	GNDC, MBOH, NWMT, FPHA	Technical Assistance	
Hospitals & Senior Centers	High	X	X		Local Government	GNDC, USDA, MDOC, NWMT	Technical Assistance	
Affordable Housing	High	X	X	X	Local Government	GNDC, USDA, MBOH, MDOC, NWMT	TA and Planning	

## VI. Evaluation Framework

### A. Performance Evaluation

The Great Northern Development Corporation manages a growing number of programs for our member entities, programs that typically include public sector financing. Our consistent policy is to assure compliance with the rules and regulations that govern these programs. Our organizational performance is continually evaluated by a variety of state and federal government agencies that have entrusted our District with fiduciary and performance responsibilities relative to the proper management of their specific programs. These evaluations include, but are not limited to, performance and financial audits, regularly scheduled reporting obligations and frequent communication with the respective agencies.

The District's effectiveness is also evaluated on an ongoing basis by our Board of Directors and CEDS Committee through communication by staff on the progress of current projects. Project updates occur through such means as Board of Director meetings, personal contacts, meetings of member entities, the Great Northern Development Corporation newsletters, annual report and the CEDS. Criteria by which we measure our performance is describes as follows.

### B. Performance Measurements

- The level at which we comply with all EDA planning and technical assistance grant awards and administrative conditions.
- The number of jobs created or retained.
- Number and types of investments undertaken in the Great Northern Development Corporation EDD.
- Amount of private sector investment in the Great Northern Development Corporation EDD after implementation of the CEDS and the changes in the District's economic environment.
- The level and frequency to which District staff interacts with communities within the region to provide assistance toward mitigating identified infrastructure deficiencies.
- The level and frequency of participation by government, business and community leaders in projects and Board and CEDS committee meetings.
- The level at which the Great Northern Development Corporation meets the criteria established by the Montana Department of Commerce's Certified Regional Development Corporation Program.
- The level at which the SBDC program meets the annual counseling and training goals established jointly by the SBA, Montana Department of Commerce and the SBDC.
- The level at which the Brownfields Program meets the annual goals established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- The level at which each staff associated with specific programs meets performance goals.

### *Annual GPRA Report*

In order to provide for strategic planning and performance measurement in the Federal Government, Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. The purpose of the GPRA was to improve the confidence of the American people in the capability of the Federal Government, by systematically holding Federal agencies accountable for achieving program results and improve Federal program effectiveness and public accountability by promoting new focus on results, service quality and customer satisfaction.

The Great Northern Development Corporation has prepared and submitted to the EDA an annual GPRA report that includes the following information.

- Number of economic development initiatives from the CEDS process implemented during the prior investment award project (fiscal year) that led to private investment and jobs.
- Category of each project: facility construction/rehab, technical assistance, infrastructure, planning, or other.
- How many of the projects were classified either as technology or brownfields.
- Number of investment funded by any source.
- A list of the economic development initiatives/projects.
- Estimated number of jobs created or retained as a result of the initiatives/projects.
- Estimated amount of private sector investment generated by initiatives/projects.
- Estimated amount of public sector investment generated by initiatives/projects.

### **C. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Great Northern Development Corporation compares the annual work plan to actual accomplishments on a monthly basis with the Board of Directors. Periodic reports are submitted to partner funders. Annual reports are submitted to the U.S. Economic Development Administration. An annual audit is completed in the years that the Single Audit Act applies to the expenditures of the organization. Annual financial reviews are completed in the years that the Single Audit Act does not apply.

## **VII. Economic Resilience**

### *Disaster and Economic Recovery and Resiliency Strategy*

Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 10-3-103 defines the following:

*(3) "Disaster" means the occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, or loss of life or property resulting from any natural or artificial cause, including tornadoes, windstorms, snowstorms, wind-driven water, high water, floods, wave action, earthquakes, landslides, mudslides, volcanic action, fires, explosions, air or water contamination requiring emergency action to avert danger or damage, blight, droughts, infestations, riots, sabotage, hostile military or paramilitary action, disruption of state services, accidents involving radiation byproducts or other hazardous materials, outbreak of disease, bioterrorism, or incidents involving weapons of mass destruction.*

*(7) "Emergency" means the imminent threat of a disaster causing immediate peril to life or property that timely action can avert or minimize.*

In the event of a disaster, the Great Northern Development Corporation (GNDC), in conjunction with its regional partners, is prepared to facilitate planning and recovery efforts as outlined in the following strategy document. However, this brief strategy is in no way intended to undermine or replace existing federal, state, or local disaster plans. This document simply establishes the District’s role in both pre- and post-disaster planning and recovery.

**Phase I: Pre-disaster Preparedness**

The GNDC supports and encourages its communities to:

- Engage in pre-disaster recovery and mitigation planning
- Regularly assess the community’s risks and vulnerabilities
- Inventory and organize the community’s recovery resources
- Engage in business continuity planning
- Ensure resources are available for the elderly and those with special needs
- Identify shelters
- Identify recovery partners, as well as the type of assistance and resources they can provide
- Establish a timeline for recovery activities (immediate, short-term, intermediate, and long-term)
- Develop and disseminate a community evacuation plan
- Establish a communication chain
- Engage the community’s residents in the planning and recovery process

*Regional Risks and Vulnerabilities*

The GNDC region is vulnerable to a wide variety of disasters including, but not limited to, fires, flooding, chemical/biological warfare, dam failure, drought and extreme heat, freeze events and extreme cold, earthquakes, hazardous materials, landslides, nuclear attack, tornadoes, vector-borne diseases, volcanic fallout, violence, and terrorism.

<b>Recovery and Mitigation: GNDC Regional Challenges</b>
Small population dispersed over a large area
Lack of comprehensive services
Isolation/lack of access
Limited options for transmitting information
Possibility for widespread interruption of services
High percentage of stationary, at-risk population (elderly)

Lack of economic diversity
Limited transit options
Limited incomes
Few liquid assets, significant amount of money tied up in land and equipment
Vulnerable infrastructure
Reliance on imported materials and food

### *Recovery and Mitigation Planning*

Without being prepared for the complexity of redevelopment in a compressed timeframe following a major disaster, local officials may struggle with recovery decisions and miss opportunities for public participation in reshaping the community’s future. To become more disaster-resilient, local governments should plan for what must happen after rescue and recovery operations are completed in order to return the community to normal or perhaps rebuild an even better community. Through a Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP or Plan), local governments can collaboratively create a long-term recovery and redevelopment strategy in pursuit of a sustainable community.

Plans identify policies, operational strategies, as well as roles and responsibilities for implementation that will guide decisions affecting long-term recovery and redevelopment of the community after a disaster. They emphasize seizing opportunities for hazard mitigation and community improvement consistent with the goals of local and regional comprehensive plans, with full participation from the area’s citizens.

There are three principal benefits to having a well-developed Plan:

#### 1) Faster and More Efficient Recovery

Without a comprehensive, long-term recovery plan, ad hoc efforts in the aftermath of a significant disaster will delay the return of community stability. Creating a process to make smart post-disaster decisions and prepare for long-term recovery requirements enables a community to do more than react, prompting post-disaster action rather than time-consuming debate. By identifying appropriate planning mechanisms, financial assistance, and agency roles and responsibilities beforehand, a community begins the road to recovery more quickly. Being able to show efficient and effective use of taxpayer dollars after a disaster is incredibly important for the public’s perception of the recovery.

#### 2) Opportunity to Build Back Better

A disaster, while tragic, can also create opportunities to fix past mistakes or leap forward with plans for community improvements. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, local officials are under significant pressure to restore the community to its pre-disaster condition. Without a guiding vision, short-term decisions may inadvertently



restrict long-term, sustainable redevelopment and overlook opportunities to surpass the status quo. A Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan strengthens the recovery process, and communities benefit from assessing their risk levels and crafting a long-term redevelopment plan under “blue skies.” Local officials and the public can thoughtfully analyze and debate issues, linking redevelopment goals with other important community plans. Careful thought and planning achieves a more sustainable and resilient outcome than decisions made under emergency circumstances, compromised budgets, and political pressures.

### 3) Local Control Over Recovery

Developing a PDRP provides local government officials, residents, and businesses the opportunity to determine long-term redevelopment goals and develop policies and procedures that will guide redevelopment before well-intended outside agencies and non-government organizations rush to aid the community. While outside resources are needed and welcomed in a major or catastrophic disaster, a locally developed Plan will best channel those resources to effectively meet the community’s specific needs and goals. A Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan will show outside agencies and donors that the community is prepared to play an active role in the recovery process and promote its capabilities to wisely use donated and loaned resources. There will always be rules and, occasionally, strings attached to external sources of funding, but a community that has researched the allowable uses of federal and state assistance can better work within their boundaries in an effort to fund projects that further local and regional redevelopment goals.

PDRPs can identify disaster scenarios in which opportunities may be present to advance already-stated visions for these communities in a compressed timeframe.

#### Opportunities to Consider During Post-Disaster Redevelopment

- Disaster-resilient land use patterns
- Hazard mitigation construction techniques
- Energy-efficient buildings
- Healthy community design
- Affordable or workforce housing
- Alternative transportation networks
- Environmental preservation and habitat restoration
- Sustainable industry recruitment
- Regionally collaborative response systems

Tornadoes, wildfires, floods, and other disasters do not confine themselves to jurisdictional boundaries. Displaced residents, compromised infrastructure, changes in economic conditions, hazardous materials contamination, and degradation of sensitive environments are some of the impacts that can affect an entire region after a major disaster.

When recovery is slow, neighboring communities also experience these impacts for an extended period of time.

A PDRP is designed to be used in any disaster, regardless of type, as long as the damage will require long-term redevelopment efforts. It is an all-hazards plan addressing disasters identified in each county's Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) and each community's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). As an economic development organization serving Carter, Dawson, Fallon, Prairie, and Wibaux Counties, the GNDC will respond accordingly, utilizing the resources and information outlined in the region's CEDS document. Therefore, counties are encouraged to incorporate PDRP strategies into their disaster planning documents.

### *Disaster Phases and Redevelopment*

Disaster management is typically viewed as a cycle with overlapping phases: 1) pre-disaster mitigation and emergency management preparedness; 2) emergency response; 3) short-term recovery; and 4) long-term recovery and redevelopment.

***Pre-Disaster Phase*** – Mitigation and recovery planning occurs during the pre-disaster phase (unless a community is struck by a disaster before planning is complete). Once a mitigation and recovery plan is adopted, preparatory activities should be implemented on an on-going basis during normal operations, which are sometimes referred to as “blue skies.” Plans should be tested prior to a disaster event, so that all stakeholders with a post-disaster implementation role are familiar with their responsibilities.

***Emergency Response Phase*** –Emergency response activities are specifically addressed in a municipality's EOP and include immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs. This is the shortest phase of the cycle, lasting only a few days in minor disaster conditions.

***Short-Term Recovery Phase*** – The role of any plan during the short-term recovery phase is to begin organizing for long-term redevelopment activities and guiding short-term recovery decisions that may have long-term implications (e.g., placement of temporary housing or debris sites). Short-term recovery operations are addressed in EOPs, but a recovery plan can provide direction for transitioning to long-term redevelopment during this phase. The short-term recovery phase begins as the emergency response phase is winding down and will continue until critical services are restored. The duration of the short-term recovery phase depends on the severity of the disaster and the level of community preparedness.

***Long-Term Recovery and Redevelopment Phase*** – A recovery plan is used most during this phase. Long-term recovery and redevelopment includes efforts to reconstruct and enhance the built environment, as well as recover the economy, environment, and social systems. This phase begins as short-term recovery activities are accomplished and can last from a couple years for a minor disaster to five or more years for a major or catastrophic disaster.

### *Interaction with Other Plans*

The objective of this “Disaster and Economic Recovery and Resiliency Strategy” is to guide the redevelopment decision-making process following a disaster in a manner consistent with local comprehensive plans (especially Future Land Use maps, where applicable), Local Mitigation Strategies, Emergency Operation Plans, and other relevant plans or codes, such as land development regulations. Each of these plans, and potentially others, has pre-existing policies or procedures that affect post-disaster redevelopment. For instance, local comprehensive plans include many policies that determine where and to what extent redevelopment can occur. Ultimately, the GNDC will help its counties and communities access the information and resources necessary for making post-disaster redevelopment decisions.



## Phase II: Post-disaster Planning and Implementation

### *Disaster Assessment*

In the days and weeks following a disaster, the GNDC will be available to assist counties and communities:

- Assess the nature and magnitude of the disaster
- Assess the impact on both local and regional economies (business, industry sectors, labor market, etc.)
- Assess the impact on transportation and public infrastructure
- Assess the impact on housing, schools, and health care facilities

### *Develop and/or Implement Recovery Timeline*

Based on the results of the disaster assessment, the GNDC will help regional partners and community leaders move forward with:

- Listing and prioritizing recovery activities to be performed
- Identifying resources (federal, state, local, and private sector) needed for each activity
- Determining the level and type of assistance needed
- Identifying roles and responsibilities
- Determining the timeframe for each recovery activity (immediate, short-term, intermediate, or long-term)
- Establishing recovery benchmarks

### *Implementing the Recovery Plan (long-term recovery)*

In order to accomplish recovery activities quantified as part of long-term recovery, the GNDC is capable of:

- Identifying business, economic, and entrepreneurial rebuild initiatives
- Identifying and utilizing workforce initiatives to employ workers and rebuild the local economy
- Applying for funds from federal, state, and local programs
- Developing management plans to ensure the most effective use of funds

### *Prioritizing Areas to Focus Redevelopment*

Limited time, funds, and materials are going to make simultaneous redevelopment of all damaged areas difficult.

Communities may want to encourage redevelopment in areas that correspond to their vision for the future and those less vulnerable to disasters by prioritizing and incentivizing development in these areas. The best way to build resiliency to disasters is to direct future development to safe locations, while minimizing or mitigating highly vulnerable types of development in hazardous areas. After a disaster, targeted sustainable redevelopment areas can provide immediate opportunities for redevelopment since they will have sustained less damage and can be prioritized for infrastructure restoration and expedited permitting.

Allowing for rapid redevelopment in safe areas intended for increased future development will minimize vulnerable redevelopment and/or allow time to plan the sustainable reconstruction of areas severely impacted by the disaster. Designated priority recovery and redevelopment areas can also be used to locate temporary post-disaster facilities more efficiently that are consistent with future land uses.

### *Historic Preservation and Restoration*

The loss of historic resources due to a disaster can have a major impact on the community. Some losses may be unavoidable, but others could occur accidentally during recovery operations if procedures are not in place to watch for these concerns. Historic structures are particularly vulnerable to damage due to their age, and repair of these structures must meet certain requirements to maintain their character and historic designation. There may also be funding opportunities before or after a disaster for implementing mitigation measures to prevent further damage to historic resources. Engaging state and local historic preservation organizations in the planning and implementation process can ensure that the unique considerations involved with preserving and restoring historic structures and archeological sites are included in a community's recovery plan.

### *Reducing Disaster Vulnerability through Land Use and Development Regulations*

The best practice for post-disaster redevelopment is to restrict rebuilding in hazardous locations and require mitigation where vulnerable redevelopment cannot be precluded. While this plan of action would ensure optimal community resiliency to disasters, it may be very difficult to achieve and may not be a good choice for the first action to be tackled when implementing any recovery plan. However, with careful consideration of the legal implications concerning property rights and extensive public outreach, there are many regulatory tools for increasing disaster resiliency that may be a possibility for the region, especially if pursued during the post-disaster "window of opportunity" for future reductions in disaster vulnerability. Potential regulatory methods could include reduced intensity or density of use, special permit requirements, increased setbacks from hazard sources (e.g., a waterway or building, etc.), hazard-specific site design requirements, and/or increased structural mitigation requirements. These methods could be implemented through policies instituting lower damage thresholds requiring nonconforming uses/structures to meet current standards (in certain zones or throughout the jurisdiction), zoning overlay districts, post-disaster specific land development codes, and/or special assessment districts to fund mitigation projects that benefit more than one property.

## **ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT**

The ability of a local economy to rebound after a disaster dictates the success of the community's long-term recovery. The return of jobs, tourism, capital investments, and other indicators of economic health are dependent upon housing recovery, infrastructure restoration, environmental restoration, and social service provision. The involvement of the private sector in the post-disaster planning process is imperative for determining the priorities and actions that will be beneficial to restoring the local economy. Consideration must be given to the different obstacles that could potentially hinder economic recovery, such as those that small

businesses will face, decisions large employers will have to make about whether to relocate, opportunities for sustainable diversification of the economic base, and job training and workforce recruitment needed to meet altered market conditions after a major disaster.

### *Resumption and Retention of Major Employers*

Rapid resumption of existing major employers is key to a community's economic recovery after a disaster, especially as employment provides a reason for most residents to return and rebuild quickly. Typically, the major employers in the region are already going to have business continuity plans and will not need the basic disaster preparedness education necessary for smaller businesses. These companies are often able to work with local governments as partners in planning for post-disaster redevelopment and provide insight as to what government assistance they will need to ensure rapid resumption. Major employers may also have the means to assist in actions to support workforce retention if included in the planning process. While large company recovery assistance will vary, typically businesses located in hazardous areas or older structures may need assistance to reopen or relocate, temporarily or permanently, within the area.

If businesses do not feel a sense of connection to the community or fear that recovery will not be successful, there is a chance that they will relocate their company elsewhere after a disaster. This is especially the case for corporate headquarters and industries that are not location-dependent or whose location choice is tied to quality of life factors. Mitigation and recovery plans provide the private sector with confidence in the community's ability to continue providing the market environment necessary for conducting business. Some factors that may aid the retention of major employers include a high level of communication before and after a disaster about post-disaster redevelopment goals and expectations and/or incentives to ensure retention, if necessary.

### *Small Business Assistance*

A "small business" is often perceived as a family-owned business that provides services solely to the local community. Small businesses comprise the majority of businesses in the GNDC region. Small businesses are more likely than large businesses to either never reopen after a major disaster or fail shortly after reopening. Several factors may be involved in these failures, including the extent of damage to a community, timing of reopening, and lack of financial reserves.

Short periods without cash flow can be damaging, and small businesses often find restrictions and loan arrangements overwhelming. The region's SBDC Director will be on-hand to help guide businesses through the redevelopment process. The GNDC also has access to a variety of RLF funds that may be available to businesses during post-disaster redevelopment. Loans are typically based on the pre-event business and tax returns of the firm and require extensive collateralization. Post-disaster market changes, however, may mean the company isn't able to do as well as it did pre-disaster, and the loan, even at below-market interest rates, sometimes becomes a burden to the long-term survivability of the business.

### *Workforce Retention*

While trying to retain existing businesses, efforts must also address retaining the workforce that supports those businesses. Actions such as ensuring that schools reopen and childcare is available, allowing temporary on-site housing for employees, and communication of a community's post-disaster plan can assist in getting employees back to jobs as soon as the businesses have reopened.

After a disaster, the market for certain businesses may decrease or be eliminated due to financial troubles or customer demand changes. However, other industries may provide employment opportunities, such as the construction industry, which will boom temporarily due to rebuilding needs. Workforce training programs are important to provide residents with appropriate skill sets to fill newly available positions due to recovery efforts and to adjust workforce skills to other industries that may take a more permanent hold in the community due to post-disaster business recruitment efforts. Providing locals with first preference for temporary recovery work is important for keeping workers from moving out of the area.

### *Physical Economic Redevelopment Projects*

In some circumstances, opportunities may arise after a disaster to move forward with planned physical economic development projects or to create new projects that take advantage of post-disaster funding, available land, or public will. Economic development projects that are disaster-resilient and fill a need in the community after a disaster should be a priority for post-disaster funding. In addition, the community can prioritize projects that incorporate energy efficiency and other "green" building design considerations. Business districts can be prime locations to focus post-disaster redevelopment projects since these districts offer financial tools or incentives, such as tax increment financing, reductions on impact fees, and state tax incentives. Economic leaders can also consider ways to expand these business districts and leverage funding that would be available through disaster programs from several federal agencies, including the Community Development Block Grant program and Economic Development Administration disaster assistance program.

### *Opportunities to Sustainably Restore Economic Vitality*

Retaining existing businesses is the first priority after a disaster; however, post-disaster redevelopment may also present an opportunity for businesses to assess their long-term applicability in the local market and take advantage of any changes in demographics or business incentives that may occur due to disaster impacts and an influx in outside funding to the area. For instance, a business that was already struggling before the disaster may need to rethink its business plan and use the disaster as an entrepreneurial impetus unless it happens to be engaged in one of the few economic activities that benefit from a disaster, such as the development industry.

Inevitably, some large and small businesses that bear the brunt of significant damage or indirect losses are going to fail or choose to relocate after a major disaster. This can affect the unemployment rate of the county if new businesses do not replace those that relocate. Ideally, a community would have a diverse spectrum of businesses so that if one industry sector is severely impacted by a disaster, the majority of the workforce will not be affected.



Unfortunately, the GNDC region struggles with a lack of economic diversity, which means that in the event of a disaster the loss of one business could mean the loss of all the local benefits provided by that employer/industry. Efforts to diversify the local economy with industries that are less vulnerable to disasters should be integrated into ongoing economic development activities. Industries targeted for attraction and incentive programs after a disaster should be those that will provide a more disaster-resilient and sustainable economy for the community and are appropriate for the post-disaster circumstances.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

Restoration of infrastructure and critical public facilities after a disaster is a prerequisite for recovery – one that is addressed in local government and private utility and infrastructure companies' emergency response and short-term recovery plans. There are long-term redevelopment considerations for infrastructure restoration, however, that must be weighed in conjunction with land use, environment, housing, and economic redevelopment issues.

Taking advantage of opportunities to upgrade, mitigate, or even relocate infrastructure or public facilities after a disaster is critical. Advanced planning allows a community to make deliberate decisions about redevelopment that it may otherwise have had less opportunity to do during the post-disaster rush to rebuild. Decisions about infrastructure reconstruction will influence private redevelopment decisions, and using disaster repairs as an opportunity to include hazard mitigation allows a local government to lead by example.

There are many agencies, jurisdictions, and stakeholders involved in providing infrastructure, public facilities, and utility services. Before and after a disaster, these private and public entities need to establish communication and coordination procedures to ensure that long-term recovery and redevelopment occurs in an efficient and organized manner. Each agency or company should have its own recovery plan; however, if any opportunities for directing redevelopment are to be pursued then coordination and communication are critical.

### *Types of Infrastructure and Public Facilities to Address in Post-disaster Redevelopment Planning*

A community's infrastructure is made up of a number of different systems and structures, each of which should be considered carefully:

- *Transportation systems* – The repair of roads, bridges, railroads, airports, and public transit is essential to establishing normal operations within a community. The repair of these and other types of infrastructure is often necessary for other redevelopment efforts to take place. Post-disaster redevelopment can be used as an opportunity to modify, improve, and add to existing transportation networks. Incorporating hazard mitigation into the repair and reconstruction of transportation facilities can ensure that when disaster strikes again, the infrastructure is better able to handle the impacts.
- *Potable water, sewer, and stormwater systems* – Damage to potable water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure can weaken a community's ability to recover. Like with other infrastructure, the community can take the opportunity to include hazard mitigation or other improvements during repairs. In cases of severe damage to infrastructure in



highly hazardous locations, relocation could be considered. These opportunities may be missed if pre-planning is not conducted.

- *Power, natural gas, and telecommunications* – Recovery from a disaster cannot begin until major utilities, especially electricity, are restored.
- *Public facilities* – Rebuilding after a disaster provides an opportunity to mitigate future hazard impacts and build back a more resilient community. Public facilities, such as schools, libraries, and government offices must be rebuilt to current building codes. However, above-code hazard mitigation may also be a good investment, and post-disaster funding sources may allow these expenditures. Some public facilities in highly hazardous areas could potentially be targeted for relocation during pre-disaster planning.
- *Parks and recreation facilities* – While parks and recreation facilities are typically not a priority for recovery, they are important for regaining quality of life as part of long-term redevelopment. Park properties also are often used in staging recovery efforts, such as temporary vegetative debris storage.

### *Financing Infrastructure and Public Facilities Repair*

When a community starts to make decisions about which structures to relocate after a disaster or which mitigation projects it should invest in pre-disaster, they should consider funding availability. Knowing where to prioritize spending requires some basic knowledge of what is covered under insurance policies, which projects will be eligible for federal reimbursement through the Public Assistance Program, which projects can be funded through grant programs, and what financial reserves can be targeted for grant matching funds or local investment. When a community begins to address its infrastructure issues as part of the initial planning process or as a pre-disaster implementation action, it can launch an assessment of county or municipal insurance policies to determine which facilities are covered and for what extent of damage. They can then use this assessment to make decisions about increasing coverage or financing repairs to uninsured structures. They can also determine whether mitigation enhancements would be covered under current policies and Public Assistance or whether additional funding would be needed.

### *Public Assistance: Improved and Alternate Projects*

Occasionally an Applicant may determine that improvements should be made while restoring a damaged facility; or even that the public would not be best served by restoring a damaged facility or its function at all. FEMA refers to these projects respectively as improved and alternate. All requests for these projects must be approved prior to construction.

#### Possible Alternate Projects

- Repair or expansion of other public facilities;
- Construction of new public facilities;
- Purchase of capital equipment; and
- Funding of hazard mitigation measures in the area affected by the disaster.

### Possible Improved Projects

- Relocation of public facilities;
- Using improved materials;
- Expanding capacity, and
- Rebuilding to higher codes and standards

### *Conclusion*

In the event of a disaster, the GNDC is committed to:

- Providing local officials, business leaders, and other community partners with access to regional demographic, economic, and hazard vulnerability data
- Developing technical expertise and economic analysis tools for conducting initial disaster assessments and long-term economic impact analysis
- Establishing collaborative relationships with local government officials and non-government organizations that may provide data, funding, technical expertise, and other resources essential to intermediate and long-term economic recovery following a disaster event
- Offering grant writing expertise and technical assistance to regional and local entities, both for pre-disaster resiliency initiatives as well as post-disaster recovery efforts
- Establishing familiarity with traditional economic and community recovery funding sources, including resources for business development assistance programs, such as GNDC's existing Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) programs as well as private, nonprofit, and philanthropic resources
- Providing technical support to impacted businesses
- Encouraging concepts and principles of economic resiliency strategies into the existing planning and development plans and activities within the region
- Leveraging assets
- Offering a neutral forum to convene diverse stakeholders and facilitate discussion and planning initiatives around the issues of economic resiliency preparedness and recovery