

**5-YEAR CEDS UPDATE
OF
BALDWIN, ESCAMBIA, AND
MOBILE COUNTIES**

**REPORT BY
SOUTH ALABAMA REGIONAL
PLANNING COMMISSION**

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2022

COMPREHENSIVE
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY

**5-YEAR UPDATE
2022-2027**

South Alabama
Regional Planning
Commission



September 2022



EXHIBIT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) is a designated Economic Development District (EDD) through the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) and includes Baldwin, Escambia, and Mobile Counties, along with 29 municipalities. As the Region's EDD, SARPC is responsible for developing and maintaining a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) through a continuous planning process. Our CEDS must be updated at least every five years in order to qualify for EDA funding and is required for EDD designation. New EDA guidelines require that the CEDS incorporate economic resiliency as an influence on our strategic planning.

Good economic development happens when good economic development planning occurs. A strong CEDS means a strong Region. This 5-year update to the Region's CEDS takes an asset-based approach, which, in addition to identifying and analyzing SWOT responses in our Region, seeks to develop existing strengths into economic opportunities for our Region.

Our Region is currently experiencing growth at an exponential rate. Each year as we recruit and develop more industries, we continue to prove our Region is a strong, global economic competitor.

With our vast amounts of land available for development coupled with all the amenities our Region has to offer, it is my hope that we continue to recruit businesses to our Region, growing into the Southeast's economic epicenter.

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission is your partner in the development of our Region and will strive to do all we can to make sure our Region is successful.

John F. "Ricky" Rhodes

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SOUTH ALABAMA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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CEDS STRATEGY COMMITTEE

This 5-year update to the CEDS was developed by a CEDS Strategy Committee, which consists of the members of SARPC's Board of Directors as well as stakeholders representing various economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, tourism, entrepreneurs, education, workforce development, utilities, and local business owners throughout the Region.

The CEDS Strategy Committee includes representatives from the three counties within the SARPC Region and is comprised of both elected officials and representatives from the public and private business and education sector.

The purpose of the committee is to prepare input and information on the future direction of the Region and to offer guidance on potential future initiatives of SARPC.



Many thanks to SARPC's CEDS Strategy Committee for their time and talents in helping make this CEDS as effective and strong as it can be to build our Region to it's fullest capacity

CEDS CONTENT

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) defines the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as a regionally driven economic development planning process and document for regions to identify their strengths and weaknesses and develop a plan of action to spur economic growth in their regions. Per EDA requirements, the CEDS must contain the following required sections:

- **Summary Background:** A summary background of the economic conditions of the Region
- **SWOT Analysis:** An in-depth analysis of regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- **Strategic Direction/Action Plan:** The strategic direction and action plan should build on findings from the SWOT analysis and incorporate elements from other regional plans
- **Evaluation Framework:** Performance measures used to evaluate the organization's implementation of the CEDS and impact on the regional economy



MISSION

Continue to aggressively recruit growth to the Region. Utilize the unique assets each county offers to attract targeted development. Build a skilled and trained workforce. Serve the Region as an effective, contributing partner in economic development. Brand the Region as the Southeast's most economically diverse and competitive market.

VISION

"To promote long-term economic resiliency through economic growth and diversification by utilizing the Region's existing built and natural assets in efforts to provide competitive wages that will create a strong and prepared workforce."

GOALS

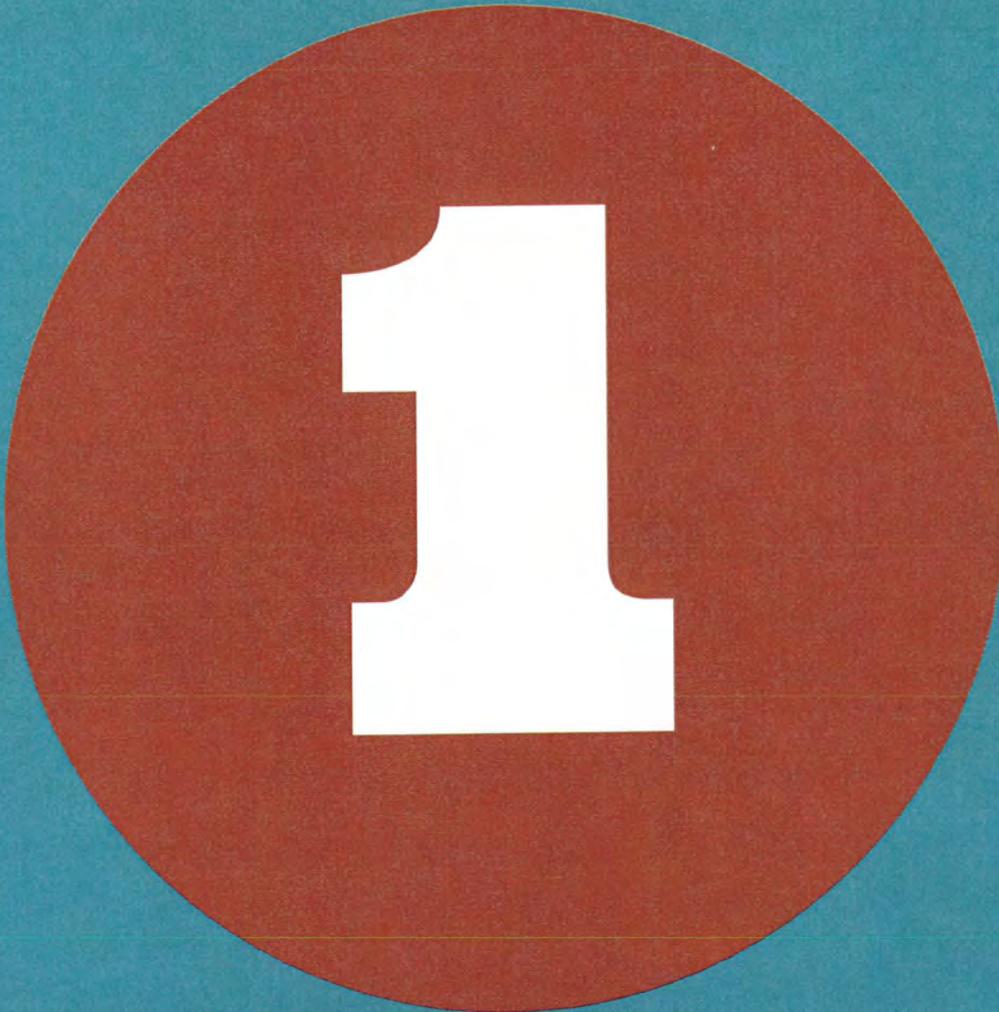
1. Improve and increase infrastructure to provide sufficient capacities to accommodate population growth & traffic circulation
2. Decrease underemployment by increasing wages to capture & retain workforce
3. Advance the Region's economy & invest in downtown development & community assets
4. Build a skilled & trained workforce to fill the needs our industries require
5. Protect and foster the utilization of our natural assets
6. Build a unified identity & brand for the Region



WHAT IS A CEDS?

**GOOD ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT STARTS
WITH GOOD ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING.**

**A CEDS IS A STRATEGY-DRIVEN PLAN FOR
REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.
IT'S A COLLABORATIVE PLANNING
PROCESS THAT INCORPORATES A BROAD
ARRAY OF PERSPECTIVES -- IT BRINGS
TOGETHER FIRMS, INSTITUTIONS, AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO BETTER
UNDERSTAND, POSITION AND LEVERAGE
REGIONAL ASSETS TO ENHANCE
ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS SO THE
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS CAN
SUCCEED. - CEDS IS THE FIRST STEP IN
BUILDING A REGION'S ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY; HELPS
DETERMINE WHAT IS CRITICAL FOR
ECONOMIC SUCCESS.**



INTRODUCTION

*An overview of the South Alabama Regional
Planning Commission (SARPC)*

1 Introduction

The Regional Councils

There are twelve Regional Councils within the State Alabama. The individual Regional Councils are referred to by a number of different names, such as regional commission, regional planning commission, regional planning and development commission, or regional council of governments. The generic term "Regional Council" is used to refer to all twelve.

Authorized by the legislature in 1935, the various Regional Councils were formed at different times over the years, in different forms with different service areas.

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) serves three counties in south Alabama. These counties are Baldwin, Escambia and Mobile counties. SARPC is designated as Region 8 and for the purposes of this plan, will hereafter be referred to as "the Region". SARPC along with the other regional councils serve as a resource for local governments.

SARPC serves as the Economic Development District (EDD) for Region 8 and is required to prepare a regularly updated Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Region. A "regional" CEDS acts as a guide for economic development for SARPC's multi-county region and is used to delineate public and private goals for economic development and unify them into a single "road map" of strategies.



The strategies are devised based on an analysis of the regional economy, the identified goals and priorities, and the actions required to achieve those goals and priorities. An effective CEDS should be the result of continuous planning and the participation of a diverse group of public and private interests.

Each Regional CEDS contains information regarding significant regional economic clusters. Each document differs in the degree of emphasis placed upon the importance of regional clusters as well as in the methodology employed to identify clusters.

SOUTH ALABAMA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission is one of 12 Regional Planning Commissions within the State of Alabama as provided for in Act 1126 of the 1969 Alabama Legislature. The Commission was first established in 1964 as the Mobile County Regional Planning Commission, and was renamed the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission in 1968 when the focus was expanded to include Baldwin and Escambia counties. SARPC works with federal, state and local entities through the provision of programs and services in community development, transportation planning, employment and economic development, grant administration and senior and social services.

In addition to being the designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for South Alabama and providing the administration of the Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Urbanized Area of Mobile County, SARPC provides programs and services in community planning, employment and staffing services, economic and workforce development, grant administration, senior and social services, and transportation planning. SARPC staff serves the Region as a resource for communication, coordination, advocacy, policy-making and technical assistance to member governments, elected officials, non-profits, and public/private-sector leaders throughout the Region.

