

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

**2020
UPDATE**

**REGION 4
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL**

**885 Broad Street, Suite 100
Summersville, West Virginia 26651**

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Region 4 Planning and Development Council Mission Statement

It is the mission of Region 4 Planning and Development Council to strategically and effectively plan for and facilitate the comprehensive development of Fayette, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pocahontas, and Webster Counties, West Virginia. Such planning includes, but is not limited to, infrastructure development, economic development, technical assistance, education, community development, health care improvement, resource development, intergovernmental coordination, social enrichment, transportation enhancement, and environmental protection. Inclusive and integral to the Council's comprehensive planning is the ultimate goal of ensuring that the Region's public services and facilities are maintained at acceptable levels with the goal of promoting the general health, safety, economic prosperity, and welfare of all its citizens.



I. BACKGROUND

The efforts of the Region 4 Planning and Development Council to comprehensively plan for the development of the Region and its member units of government are pursuant to the Regional Planning and Development Act (Article 25, Chapter 8 of the Code of West Virginia). The contents of this Plan are based upon data and studies of the economic, social, environmental, physical and governmental conditions throughout the region and builds upon all prior Regional Development Plans and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies and all studies of the Region's member units of local government.

Region 4 Planning & Development Council is funded in part by an Appalachian Regional Commission Grant (WV-2717-C39) and an Economic Development Administration Grant (01-83-08918-01) to provide the overall planning and development for the Region. The agency also receives funding from a yearly allocation from the State of West Virginia and local assessments from the Region's five-county membership based on per capita (Counties \$1/person and municipalities \$.36/person).

The 2020 Update is intended to guide economic development activities for Region 4 Planning and Development Council. Region 4 is made up of the counties of Fayette, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pocahontas and Webster. The Council will utilize this document as guidance to adhere to the goals, objectives and strategies set forth herein in the preparation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and in review of applications for Federal, State grant or loan assistance to implement policies the Council has set for regional growth and development. The CEDS Committee has developed a mission statement for the Council. The mission of the Council was developed from the creating legislation and will be reviewed by the CEDS Committee to ensure the Council's vision continues to meet the Region 4 counties' needs. The mission statement is on the previous page.

The plan illustrates recent trends in population (Table I), regional development, significant changes in economic conditions, progress in implementing the prior plans and the Region's most current prioritized project list of May 1, 2018.

This document will be submitted to Governor James C. "Jim" Justice II, Governor of the State of West Virginia; the Community Development Division of the West Virginia Development Office and the Economic Development Administration, United States Department of Commerce, to comply with the West Virginia Regional Planning and Development Act of 1971, the Appalachian Regional Development Act Amendment of 1965, and the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended. This document will also serve as the United States Economic Development Administration's requirement for a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Following completion of this document, it will be submitted to Region 4 Planning and Development Council's Executive Committee for approval.



TABLE I
POPULATION 1910 - 2010

AREA	Square Miles	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Fayette	661.55	51,903	60,377	72,050	80,628	82,442	61,731	49,332	57,863	47,952	47,579	46,039
Greenbrier	1,019.57	24,833	26,242	35,878	38,520	39,295	34,446	32,090	37,665	34,693	34,453	35,480
Nicholas	646.83	17,699	20,717	20,686	24,070	27,696	25,414	22,552	28,126	26,775	26,562	26,233
Pocahontas	940.28	14,740	15,002	14,555	13,906	12,480	10,130	8,870	9,919	9,008	9,131	8,719
Webster	553.47	9,680	11,502	14,216	18,080	17,888	13,719	9,809	12,245	10,729	9,719	9,154
Region	3,821.70	118,855	133,840	157,385	175,204	179,801	145,440	122,653	145,818	129,157	127,444	125,625

Source: Overall Economic Development Program
Region 4 Planning and Development Council
Bureau of Census



A. PROGRESS ASSESSMENT

As in the past, positive and negative events continue to have significant effects to the Region 4 area in terms of leadership and in the economic outlook of the region. The 2018 – 2023 Five-Year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy attempts to highlight some of the major events of the region.

B. STRUCTURE AND PROGRAMS

In November 1971, the West Virginia Legislature passed the Regional Planning and Development Act, designating the responsibilities of both the State and local governments to guide the orderly growth of the State of West Virginia. On May 3, 1972, the Governor designated the current eleven planning and development regions in the State to carry out the functions of Article 25, Chapter 8 of the State Code of West Virginia. Region 4 Planning & Development Council was designated to serve Fayette, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pocahontas and Webster Counties and the municipalities contained within. Region 4 consists of 3,847 square miles and a population of 125,625 (2010 Census). After a series of organizational meetings with the local officials of those counties and the adoption of its bylaws, the Region 4 Planning & Development Council began operations on July 1, 1973 in Summersville, West Virginia.

Region 4 includes five (5) counties and twenty-six (26) municipalities. According to the 2010 Census, the municipal governments range in size of population from five (5) persons in Thurmond, Fayette County to 7,730 persons in Oak Hill also in Fayette County. The municipalities range in age from Lewisburg, Greenbrier County, incorporated in 1782 to Gauley Bridge, Fayette County, incorporated in 1977.

The Council of the Region 4 Planning and Development Council is comprised of the Mayor from each municipality within the Region's five counties, a representative of each County Commission, as well as private sector members representing such areas as commerce, higher and secondary education and workforce.

The members of the Council elect from the membership a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. Elections are held on odd numbered years at the annual meeting of the Council. All officers elected serve for a term of two years and no officer holds the same office for more than two consecutive terms.

The Executive Committee of the full Council is comprised of the Mayor from the largest municipality in each of the five counties, a representative of each County Commission and a private sector member.

The full Council meets the third Wednesday in April, July and October, while the Executive Committee meets the third Wednesday in March, June and September. All actions of the Executive Committee are ratified by the full Council at the annual meeting of the Council held in July.



1. COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Executive Committee

Chairman:	Sam Felton, Mayor Town of Marlinton
Vice Chairman:	Lyle Neal, President Nicholas County Commission
Secretary:	Anna Carpenter, Webster County Commission
Treasurer:	Denise Scalph Fayette County Commission
Don McCourt	Mayor, Town of Addison
Beverly White	Mayor, City of Lewisburg
Robert Shafer	Mayor, City of Summersville
Lowell Rose	Greenbrier County Commission
William "Bill" Hannabass	City Manager, City of Oak Hill
Charles Smallwood	Private Sector
Walt Helmick	Pocahontas Count Commission

Full Council

Fayette

Kalispel "Bippy" Holcomb	Mayor, Town of Ansted
Sharon Cruikshank	Mayor, Town of Fayetteville
Bob Scott	Mayor, Town of Gauley Bridge
Tim Killen	Mayor, Town of Meadow Bridge
Greg Ingram	Mayor, City of Montgomery
Michael Kessinger	Mayor, City of Mount Hope
William Hannabass	Mayor's Designee, City of Oak Hill
William Hughes	Mayor, Town of Pax
Anne Cavalier	Mayor, City of Smithers
Melanie Dragan	Mayor, Town of Thurmond

Greenbrier

Travis Copenhaver	Mayor, Town of Alderson
Patrick Roberts	Mayor, Town of Falling Springs
Beverly White	Mayor, City of Lewisburg



Linda Sizemore
Jason Smith
David Smith
Stephen Baldwin
Bruce Bowling

Mayor, Town of Quinwood
Mayor, Town of Rainelle
Mayor, City of Ronceverte
Mayor, Town of Rupert
Mayor, City of White Sulphur Springs

Nicholas

Gary Johnson
Robert Shafer

Mayor, City of Richwood
Mayor, City of Summersville

Pocahontas

Mike Vance
Gail Siers
Sam Felton

Mayor, Town of Durbin
Mayor, Town of Hillsboro
Mayor, Town of Marlinton

Webster

Don McCourt
Lisa Prather Cutlip
Paula Carpenter

Mayor, Town of Addison
Mayor, Town of Camden on Gauley
Mayor, Town of Cowen

County Commissions

Denise Scalph
Lowell Rose
Lyle Neal
Walt Helmick
Anna Carpenter

Fayette County Commission
Greenbrier County Commission
Nicholas County Commission
Pocahontas County Commission
Webster County Commission

(c) Private Sector

Fayette

Charles Smallwood
Dr. Beverly Jo Harris
Eric Autenreith

Private Sector
Secondary Education
Private Sector

Greenbrier

Clifford Gillian
Doug Goodwin
Girionzo Scott

Private Sector
Private Sector
Real Estate



Randy Pendleton
Jim Campbell

Private Sector
Private Sector

Nicholas

Patty Neff
Judy Olson
Karen Mullens

County Government
Private Sector
Private Sector

Pocahontas

Joel Callison
Sue Helton
Joe Smith

County Government
County Government
Private Sector

Webster

Geary Weir
Sue Talbott

Private Sector
Private Sector

2. COUNCIL STAFF

John W. Tuggle
Lesley Taylor
Donna Norman
Amanda Smarr
Cassandra Hughart
Terri Kiser
Jamie Baker
Carrie Kidd
Donna Ward

Executive Director
Senior Project Specialist
Part-Time Employee
GIS Specialist / Project Assistant
Project Assistant
Financial Officer
Project Assistant
GIS Specialist
Administrative Assistant



3. CEDS COMMITTEE

Economic Development Authorities

Peggy Crowder	Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation
Joe Brouse	New River Gorge Regional Economic Development
Geary Weir	Webster County Economic Development Authority

County Government

Lyle Neal	Nicholas County Commission
Walt Helmick	Pocahontas County Commission
Lowell Rose	Greenbrier County Commission
Anna Carpenter	Webster County Commission
Denise Scalph	Fayette County Commission

Representatives of Large Municipalities in Region 4

Beverly White	Mayor, City of Lewisburg
William Hannabass	City Manager, City of Oak Hill
Robert Shafer	Mayor, City of Summersville
Sam Felton	Mayor, Town of Marlinton
Don E. McCourt	Mayor, Town of Webster Springs

Other Private Sector Representatives

Dr. Beverly Jo Harris	Secondary Education
Susan Rosshirt	Housing
Jim Gamble	Private Sector
Cara Rose	Pocahontas Convention and Visitors Bureau
Gabe Pena	Fayette County Assistant Resource Coordinator
Tammy Jordan	Fruits of Labor
Paula Brown	Department of Homeland Security
Robin Morgan	Workforce WV
Judy Olson	Early Childhood Education



II. SITUATION ASSESSMENT – THE AREA AND ITS ECONOMY

A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The Region 4 Planning & Development Council area is comprised of the counties of Fayette, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pocahontas and Webster and is located in the southeastern portion of West Virginia. The area is referred to as the Appalachian Ridge and Plateau region of the State. The geographic center of Region 4 is located sixty-six (66) miles from Charleston, fifty-two (52) miles from Beckley and eighty-seven (87) miles from Fairmont.

The Region encompasses a total land area of 3,821.70 square miles or 16% of the total land area of West Virginia. Region 4 is the largest geographical area of the State's eleven (11) planning and development council regions. The area is heavily forested, has many mineral deposits and has many natural scenic sites. A large portion of the land is undeveloped and is owned by the State or Federal government.

Region 4 is known for many tourist attractions such as white-water rafting, hunting, fishing, rock climbing, snow skiing, mountain biking, recreational boating, etc. The Region is also blessed with various state parks, as well as nationally recognized recreational areas.

B. PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The Region 4 staff works in conjunction with the other local economic development organizations to assist them in cultivating economic development activities within the Region. The economic development organizations that serve Region 4 are:

- New River Gorge Regional Development Authority
- Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation
- Webster County Economic Development Authority
- Upper Kanawha Valley Economic Development Corporation

The Region 4 staff strives to work with the economic development organizations, communities and counties to build infrastructure in those areas that are financially feasible to enhance Region 4's marketability.

The Region 4 staff continues to be intertwined in the success stories of the development throughout the Region. The staff continues to provide technical assistance and grant writing expertise to member units of government, assists in the development of funding packages, and often provides guidance and expertise when securing funds. Over the years, the staff has evolved into project administrators and/or coordinators during the actual implementation and construction of these projects.



C. THE REGIONAL ECONOMY BY SECTOR

1. Agriculture

In the last couple of years, the buy local food movement has grown substantially in the Region, as well as throughout the rest of the State. The downturn in the coal industry has forced Southern West Virginia to explore new, sustainable job opportunities. The goal is to help local and new farmers cash in on their crops. The focus is to help coordinate these efforts between buyers and growers.

Regions 1 and 4 Planning and Development Councils, the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority, the West Virginia University Extension Office and local growers have worked together in the past year to explore opportunities that meet the growing demand for locally grown food products.

In 2010, the Greenbrier Valley Local Foods Initiative was launched as an initiative of the Greenbrier Economic Development Corporation to assist communities in Pocahontas, Greenbrier, and Monroe Counties in facilitating the coordination of buyers and growers.

The Greenbrier Valley Local Foods Initiative works with farmers, markets, restaurants, distributors, schools, consumers, and food pantries to increase accessibility, availability, and affordability of fresh, healthy regional foods.

Local farmer's markets have sprung up throughout the Region. Local school districts are also joining in on the movement by providing students with agriculturally based classes, as well as purchasing locally-grown foods for school lunches.

The new Appalachian Farm and Research Center is continuing in its mission to seek input from West Virginia farmers and farm families regarding the buy local movement, as well as to actively facilitate the movement within local school districts.

Agri-Tourism has also started up in Pocahontas County with many farmers opening their farms to tourist coming into the area for recreation giving them the farm life experience as well. The Maple Festival in Pocahontas County is becoming very successful because of the Agri-Tourism.

The Committee also mentioned that HEMP growers are becoming popular throughout the region with a farm being opened in Hillsboro.

2. Broadband

Broadband or lack thereof has plagued West Virginia for many years. Many times, a resounding theme for the loss of population, businesses, and less incoming tourists has been traced to little or no reliable broadband service. Technology is becoming a large player in economic development every day. The world is becoming dependent upon highly reliable and efficient broadband service.



West Virginia is behind the curve when it comes to accessible, reliable and affordable broadband service. Our Mountainous terrain makes it difficult to provide these remote areas with reliable, fast internet service and it would be too costly for customers to sustain. All the while reliable internet is making its way up the ladder of necessities. The education system in West Virginia is beginning a program that uses tablets as the main source of textbooks. Additional resources and homework can be completed on the tablet. This program is meant to aid the loss of educational days due to snow or inclement weather, however if a family is not able to receive reliable internet, that student will remain behind others in relation to expanding their knowledge base.

Webster County has recently been awarded a Community Development Block Grant to allow an overall comprehensive broadband service study throughout the 5 County Region contained within the boundary of Region 4 Planning and Development Council. This study is being conducted in collaboration with Region 1 Planning and Development Council resulting in an overall analysis of broadband service within Southern West Virginia.

This study will include an overall needs analysis and compilation, a full listing of existing broadband providers and their respective services. The Broadband Initiative for Southern West Virginia should have a strong community impact, positively affecting many aspects of the region including but not limited to, schools, medical facilities and residential areas. With more than half of the Region 4 PDC area functioning on low-moderate income this initiative will allow an extensive study to be done that contains a main focus of helping this specific population. Economic need, sustainability and affordability will be the drivers of this initiative to bring high speed, quality, affordable broadband to Southern West Virginia.

This project will provide a strong knowledge base regarding the best location and means to place quality, affordable broadband internet service within the Region 4 PDC boundaries. This will provide a great benefit to low-moderate population within the study area.

3. Education

The CEDS committee expressed the importance of strengthening the education system throughout the region. The Workforce WV would love to see more trade schools and vocational schools as well as a strong partnership with the Community Colleges, so they can get people to work in the field where there are jobs available. In order to actively participate in the Region's educational system, Region 4 Planning and Development Council will liaison with the educational community in the development of the infrastructure to enhance educational opportunities for both lower and secondary establishments with regards to land acquisitions and facility additions, as well as water, sewer, broadband and transportation. The partnership between educational facilities and the Regional Planning and Development Council will provide for a more collaborative approach to facilitating an improved higher learning atmosphere for



nurturing college prep curriculum and place an increased influence on technical and manufacturing type workforce initiatives.

Region 4 also plans to more actively seek out opportunities that will further the growth of the workforce most needed by the area's growing industries. As mentioned in sections (1) Agriculture and (2) Broadband, Region 4 is actively involved in the growth of the buy local food movement and expansion of broadband in the area, which are both directly related to the area's educational needs.

Many of the secondary educational institutions in the Region are finding new ways to reach both rural and non-traditional students through technological advancements in telecommuting technology. In Pocahontas County, the New River Community and Technical College hosts a one room university which allows students attending at this site to have access to all classes which are available through the school's Interactive Virtual Network (IVN) system.

4. Industry / Workforce

Over the last several years, West Virginia has experienced a tremendous downturn in the coal mining industry as environmental permits become more challenging to obtain from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and as the nation's focus turns to cleaner, more sustainable methods of energy. All of Region 4's counties have been negatively affected by the loss of coal severance funds as they have pretty much disappeared from the counties budgets.

Another major problem that seems to plague the Region and the workforce is the opioid epidemic. We must fight this terrible opioid epidemic from all fronts and help those who have struggled successfully rejoin the workforce. Region 4 has partnered and supported Recovery efforts in our region to enable those recovering to get the training and skills needed to become viable citizens and successful in obtaining a lasting career.

In 2017, the West Virginia Forest Products Marketing & Manufacturing Cooperative was created to put displaced coal miners and other unemployed individuals to work by building capacity in value added forest products businesses and to make these businesses more efficient and profitable while strengthening market access for their products.

West Virginia produces some of the finest hardwoods and non-timber forest products in the country, but the production and marketing have not been fulfilled to its potential. We envision a thriving and diverse forest products industry that provides good jobs in the Region.

Region 4 Planning and Development Council, in coordination with the Region's economic development agencies, will strive to expand upon the area's economic strengths and will facilitate measures necessary to create and build upon current partnerships that will sustain and continue to grow the area's economy



5. Infrastructure and Services

A primary drive of Region 4 continues to be geared toward the adequate provision of public water and sewer to all areas of our five-county region. In the last year a push for adequate Broadband service has also become an important part of the Infrastructure around the Region as well as the State. Adequate infrastructure systems are necessary for the Region's economy to function. Public buildings and structures have become another basic need requiring the administrative expertise of Region 4. Emergency services facilities, fire stations, court houses, municipal buildings, public offices are examples of the Regions physical needs primarily due to age and deterioration. Consequently, Region 4 continues to work with State and Federal funding agencies with all aspects of infrastructure development so that the rural areas in our 5 counties will have adequate and affordable public services.

6. Natural and Environmental Issues

Region 4 is rich in natural resources such as coal, natural gas, hydroelectric, wind, timber, limestone, scenic beauty, wildlife, national rivers, national parks and recreational areas, whitewater rafting, rock climbing, snow skiing, etc. With the downturn in energy sector given the abundance of recreational type outdoor resources, the Region 4 counties are continuously drifting towards a tourism destination.

The air quality of the area is relatively good. The counties are rural in nature and do not have major industries creating significant air pollution. The only problem currently identified is a noise problem at the Greenbrier Valley Airport. The Kanawha Valley area of Fayette County does experience minor air pollution problems, however under the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) continued review the air quality remains in accordance with acceptable levels.

All rivers in Region 4 are part of the Kanawha River Drainage Basin except the Shaver's Fork which in a part of the Monongahela River Drainage Basin. The Greenbrier, Cherry, Elk, Gauley, Williams, Cranberry and Shaver's Fork Rivers all originate in Pocahontas County. The New River is the only major river in Region 4 that does not have its headwaters in Pocahontas County and is the only river to flow north, originating in North Carolina.

Region 4 is also home to the New River Gorge National River and Recreational Area as well as the Gauley River National River and Recreational Area. These natural recreational opportunities are considered some of the best of West Virginia's outdoor destinations.

Accordingly, the Region expends a significant measure of time and resources to maintain a safe and healthy environment to reside within and to visit. The positive image presented and perception of Region 4's great outdoors is critical to the economic stability of the area.



7. Natural Disasters and Emergencies (Resilience)

Region 4 has endured a number of large-scale natural disasters in recent years. In particular, the devastating flood experienced on June 23/24, 2016 as well as the June 29, 2012 derecho and Super Storm Sandy in October of 2012. The 2016 flood is considered one of the worst disasters in West Virginia' history. These events caused loss of human life, injury and negative health effects as well as severe damage to all types of infrastructure. Economic losses were staggering. Consequently, many of the Region's communities have taken significant steps to more actively plan for disaster and recovery relief efforts.

In an effort to facilitate a more collaborate approach to community planning efforts, the Region 4 2017 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) preparation. The HMP served as the mechanism to establish the much-improved initiatives of Region 4's communities. The HMP development also comes on the heels of the 2013 Disaster Summit held at the West Virginia Wesleyan College. The Summit was aimed at strengthening and building partnerships, capacity and resiliency and focused on developing a plan to help the participants identify their local capacities and capabilities. It also provided guidance on how they can effectively channel those strengths to assist and coordinate with other agencies and organizations during disasters and subsequent recovery efforts.

The HMP development process also provided a venue for Region 4 organizations to work together, identify their strengths, and understand that they could be vital collaborative partners during disaster and recovery efforts.

The West Virginia University Extension Service also provides information concerning disaster preparedness.

A notable example of a disaster within Region 4, occurring in November of 2013, was a fire which accidently ignited on Main Street in the Town of Marlinton destroying three buildings housing several businesses and an apartment complex. The fire caused a great loss for the community. The Town quickly formed the Rebuild Marlinton team to take on the task of addressing the situation. The Town, in coordination with the Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation, Region 4 Planning and Development Council and other State and Federal agencies quickly began exploring the opportunities and strategies needed to address the displaced businesses, residents and to move past and reestablish the space, despite the great loss. Just recently a new chain restaurant opened in one of the downtown lots within the area of the fire, which was a huge uplift to the downtown economy.

As far as the 2016 flood event, the entire Region is still reeling from its impact and will be planning and implementing physical, economic and social recovery efforts for many years to come. This disaster has forced unprecedented revitalization, recovery and comprehensive re-invention initiatives to be pursued throughout the entire Region. All aspects of the economy as well as the general way of life are being revisited. New visions and missions are being considered, drastic shifts in economic focus occurred.



The Disaster of 2016 caused Region 4 to re-think its overall mission and to consider mitigating initiatives in different arenas of the local and global economy.

8. Tourism and Culture

Region 4 is home to many forms of tourism. In Fayette County, the thriving whitewater industry and high adventure activities draw people into the area from all over. Several former rafting companies have merged to form "Adventures on the Gorge" to create more marketable products for guests to have a variety of choices of activities in one trip to the "Gorge". The individual rafting companies retain their identities by catering to a slightly different clientele; however, the marketing is designed to make the "Gorge" a destination.

The canopy tours, zip lines, Bridge Walk, enhanced rock climbing, fishing, kayaking and paintball are just a few of the opportunities offered. This marketing concept will cater to multigenerational families all participating in an outdoor adventure together.

Fayette County also hosts Bridge Day, serving as the largest gathering of base jumpers in the world. The New River Gorge Bridge is the longest single arch bridge in the Western Hemisphere and the event brings in an estimated 200,000 to the area every October.

Many trails can also be enjoyed in the areas of Fayette and Greenbrier Counties. The Greenbrier River Trail, once the home to the railroad, offers 78 miles of trail operated by West Virginia State Park system. The trail can be used for bicycling, backpacking, cross-country skiing and horseback riding. The trail closely mirrors its namesake, the Greenbrier River, for most of its length offers trail users countless opportunities for swimming and fishing.

The Greenbrier River Trail traverses one of the most remote areas in the State and lies adjacent to the Monongahela National Forest, Seneca State Forest and Watoga State Park.

The Meadow River Rail Trail, also a former railroad, has recently received the funding necessary to expand upon the project. The trail follows the Meadow River beginning at the area of Russellville and Nallen at the Fayette/Nicholas County line. The Greenbrier and Fayette County Commissions owns 16.4 miles of tract for use in the project. Another 6.4 miles have been purchased but not yet developed. Several miles of the trail have been built and bridges have been decked but were unfortunately destroyed in the June 23, 2016 Floods. The trail is currently closed but will be reopening as soon as it is repaired.

In Greenbrier County, the State Fair of West Virginia provides a great economic advantage for the County. The November 15, 2006 edition of the Beckley Register-Herald stated that the event had an \$8.9 million-dollar economic impact on the County. Greenbrier County is also the home to renowned Greenbrier Resort and Greenbrier



Classic golfing event, which has accommodated such guests as Tiger Woods and many other famous golfers. The Greenbrier is also a host to NFL teams at their newly constructed training facilities.

In Nicholas County, the Summersville Lake provides a great niche for tourism. Activities surrounding the lake include boat rentals, camping, scuba diving, rock climbing, and swimming. The lake also creates a unique residential experience which is highly sought after.

While Summersville is home to summer water-based sports, in Pocahontas County the Snowshoe Mountain Resort is a favorite destination for winter sport enthusiasts. Snowshoe is home to 251 acres of skiable terrain, 1500 vertical feet, 57 trails and the best snow around. The three ski areas include the Snowshoe Basin, Western Territory and Silver Creek. Atop Snowshoe Mountain is the Snowshoe Village which creates a unique dining and shopping experience. This makes Snowshoe Mountain Resort the number one employer in the County.

All of Region 4's counties hold festivals which are an inviting means of tourism and local economy boosters. In Webster Springs, Webster County, the Woodchopping Festival has been held since 1960, each Memorial Day weekend. The "Southeastern US World Championship Woodchopper" title is won at the annual Webster County Woodchopping Festival each year in Webster Springs.

This festival is a natural outgrowth of Webster County's timbering heritage. The sport of Woodchopping was born in the mountain logging camps as young men sought to entertain themselves showing off their skill and endurance.

With more than \$26,000 in prize money up for grabs, choppers come from as near as the scenic mountains of West Virginia and as far away as New Zealand. Their skills are put to the test in a variety of events including the Springboard, Jack & Jill Crosscut, Axe Throw, Standing Block, Hot Saw, and much more.

Nearly every municipality throughout the Region holds an annual festival. The Oak Leaf Festival in Oak Hill, the Feast of Rampson in Richwood, Potato Festival in Summersville and the Chocolate Festival in Lewisburg are just to name a few of the many diverse and attractive festivals which continue to draw crowds into the Region each year.

A major event in Fayette County, and southern West Virginia, in the summer of 2013, was the first National Jamboree of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) held at the new high-adventure base National Scouting Center located outside of the City of Mount Hope and Glen Jean areas of Fayette County. The area, known as the Summit Bechtel Family Reserve, compliments the three other existing high-adventure BSA bases located in New Mexico, Minnesota and Florida. The event drew in a crowd of an estimated 40,000 boy scouts and volunteers. The Summit Bechtel Reserve was the site of the 2019 World Scout Jamboree that was held in June 2019.



The highly anticipated event was surrounded by questions regarding economic impact and traffic issues. The event was well organized and little congestion occurred as result. The majority of the guests remained on the reserve during their stay and local business can now see that their challenge in cashing in on the influx of tourists will lay within their abilities to draw the crowds from the Summit and into the community.

A newly constructed JW and Hazel Ruby West Virginia Welcome Center is located on Route 19 between Oak Hill and Glen Jean. This welcome center serves as a first stop for the scouts as well as providing adequate parking for buses that transport the scouts to the Summit. The welcome center project was designed to decrease the increased traffic flow in the area and allowing the staff and volunteers more freedoms to be able to enjoy the local community which will bring in revenue to the area.

9. Transportation

The Fayette/Raleigh Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) held its first official meeting in July 2013. The MPO was formed as the transportation planning organization for areas of Fayette and Raleigh Counties upon the urbanized designation of the two-county area in 2012. The designation was based upon 2010 US Census data, signifying that the area now sustains a population of 50,000 or more.

The Town of Fayetteville, City of Mount Hope and the City of Oak Hill in Fayette County, and the City of Beckley, Town of Mabscott and the Town of Sophia in Raleigh County are found within the urbanized area. A representative of each municipality, (except Mabscott who is not actively participating in the Organization at this time) a representative of each County Commission, Region 1 and 4 Planning and Development Councils, and the West Virginia Department of Transportation comprise the Policy Board the MPO.

While only a portion of the two-county area is urbanized, the FRMPO planning area extends to the county boundaries in each county.

The MPO also hosts two subcommittees, the Technical Advisory Committee and Transit Committee, which assist the MPO in the planning process.

The MPO organized the New River Transit Authority, which is the entity responsible for managing transit in the area.

A spinoff issue resulting from the urbanized designation is the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, also known as MS4. All municipalities within the urbanized area are now required to adhere to MS4 regulations. Consequently, Region 1 and 4 Planning and Development Councils now share a MS4 Committee to consolidate efforts in satisfying the MS4 requirements.

D. THE REGIONAL ECONOMY BY COUNTY

Fayette County



Fayette County was founded in 1831. The municipalities of Fayette County are Ansted, Fayetteville, Gauley Bridge, Meadow Bridge, Montgomery, Mount Hope, Oak Hill, Pax, Smithers and Thurmond.

The American Community Survey 2012-2016 5-Year Estimate indicates the County's total population as being 43,018.¹ Fayette County is part of the Beckley Metropolitan Area. It has 661.5 sq. miles in land area and a population density of 68.9 per square mile. On the most recent census form, 99.1% of the population reported only one race, with 5.1% of these reporting African-American. The population of this county is 1.0% Hispanic (of any race). The average household size is 2.30 persons compared to an average family size of 2.90 persons.

In 2017 retail trade was the largest of 20 major sectors. It had an average wage per job of \$30,239. Per capita income grew by 14.6% between 2003 and 2013 (adjusted for inflation).²

People & Income Overview (By Place of Residence)	Value	Rank in U.S.	Industry Overview 2017 (By Place of Work)	Value	Rank in U.S.
Population (2019)	42406	1128	Covered Employment	10,293	1411
Growth (%) since 2010 Census	-7.9%	2848	Avg wage per job	\$39,245	1835
Households (2018)	17,795	1038	Manufacturing - % all jobs in County	3.8%	2317
Labor Force (persons) (2019)	16,286	1303	Avg wage per job	\$62,476	533
Unemployment Rate (2019)	5.7	294	Transportation & Warehousing - % all jobs in County	2.8%	1324
Per Capita Personal Income (2018)	\$34,577	2584	Avg wage per job	\$44,681	1953
Median Household Income (2018)	\$37,867	2842	Health Care, Social Assist. - % all jobs in County	17.1%	441
Poverty Rate (2018)	22.5	364	Avg wage per job	\$41,018	1180
H.S. Diploma or More - % of Adults 25+ (2007 ACS 5yr)	82.4%	2410	Finance and Insurance - % all jobs in County	1.9%	1787
Bachelor's Deg. or More - % of Adults 25+ (2018 ACS 5yr)	15.2%	2321	Avg wage per job	\$45,513	2169

In 2018, Fayette had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$34,577. This PCPI ranked 34th in the state and was 85 percent of the state average, \$40,873, and 64 percent of the national average, \$54,446. The 2018 PCPI reflected a decrease of 5.6 percent from 2017. The 2017-2018 state change was 5.8 percent and the national change was 4.9 percent. In 2008, the PCPI of Fayette was \$26,642 and ranked 32nd in the state. The 2008-2018 compound annual growth rate of PCPI was 2.6 percent. The compound annual growth rate for the state was 2.7 percent and for the nation was 2.9 percent.³

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, ACS

² http://www.statsamerica.org/profiles/us_profile_frame.html

Greenbrier County



Greenbrier County was founded in 1778. The municipalities of Greenbrier County are Alderson, Falling Springs/Renick, Lewisburg, Quinwood, Rainelle, Ronceverte, Rupert and White Sulphur Springs.

The American Community Survey 2012-2016 5-Year Estimate indicates the County's total population as being 35,580.⁴ It has 1,019.6 sq. miles in land area and a population density of 35.0 per square mile. On the most recent census form, 97.4% of the population reported only one race, with 2.5% of these reporting African-American. The population of this county is 1.0% Hispanic (of any race). The average household size is 2.30 persons compared to an average family size of 2.80 persons.

In 2017 health care and social assistance was the largest of 20 major sectors. It had an average wage per job of \$36,775. Per capita income grew by 14.6% between 2003 and 2013 (adjusted for inflation).⁵

People & Income Overview (By Place of Residence)	Value	Rank in U.S.	Industry Overview 2019 (By Place of Work)	Value	Rank in U.S.
Population (2019)	34,662	1309	Covered Employment	13,616	1224
Growth (%) since 2010 Census	-2.3%	1903	Avg wage per job	\$37,723	2142
Households (2018)	15,285	1181	Manufacturing - % all jobs in County	5.5%	2061
Labor Force (persons) (2019)	16,005	1316	Avg wage per job	\$45,603	1840
Unemployment Rate (2019)	4.6	777	Transportation & Warehousing - % all jobs in County	1.7%	1897
Per Capita Personal Income (2018)	\$38,098	2124	Avg wage per job	\$49,994	1028
Median Household Income (2018)	\$37,665	2861	Health Care, Social Assist. - % all jobs in County	20.7%	162
Poverty Rate (2018)	15.8	1184	Avg wage per job	\$41,783	1124
H.S. Diploma or More - % of Adults 25+ (2018 ACS 5yr)	85.0%	2066	Finance and Insurance - % all jobs in County	1.5%	2232
Bachelor's Deg. or More - % of Adults 25+ (2018 ACS 5yr)	19.9%	1466	Avg wage per job	\$46,276	2025

In 2018, Greenbrier had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$38,098. This PCPI ranked 22th in the state and was 93 percent of the state average, \$40,873, and 70 percent of the national average, \$54,446. The 2018 PCPI reflected an increase of 5.0 percent from 2017. The 2017-2018 state change was 5.8 percent and the national change was 4.9 percent. In 2008, the PCPI of Greenbrier was \$29,060 and ranked 21st in the state. The 2008-2018 compound annual growth rate of PCPI was 2.7 percent. The compound annual growth rate for the state was 2.7 percent and for the nation was 2.9percent.⁶

³ <http://www.bea.gov/regional/bearfacts/action.cfm>

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, ACS

⁵ http://www.statsamerica.org/profiles/us_profile_frame.html

⁶ <http://www.bea.gov/regional/bearfacts/action.cfm>

Nicholas County



Nicholas County was founded in 1818. The municipalities of Nicholas County are Richwood and Summersville.

The American Community Survey 2012-2016 5-Year Estimate indicates the County's total population as being 25,743.⁷ It has 646.8 sq. miles in land area and a population density of 40.1 per square mile. On the most recent census form, 98.9% of the population reported only one race, with 0.5% of these reporting African-American. The population of this county is 0.5% Hispanic (of any race). The average household size is 2.40 persons compared to an average family size of 2.80 persons.

In 2017 retail trade was the largest of 20 major sectors. It had an average wage per job of \$31,296 Per capita income grew by 21.1% between 2003 and 2013 (adjusted for inflation).⁸

People & Income Overview (By Place of Residence)	Value	Rank in U.S.	Industry Overview 2019 (By Place of Work)	Value	Rank in U.S.
Population (2019)	24,496	1623	Covered Employment	7,176	1694
Growth (%) since 2010 Census	-6.6	2707	Avg wage per job	\$37,314	2227
Households (2018)	10,472	1523	Manufacturing - % all jobs in County	10.0%	1472
Labor Force (persons) (2019)	9521	1768	Avg wage per job	\$51,501	1315
Unemployment Rate (2019)	6.3	175	Transportation & Warehousing - % all jobs in County	4.0%	828
Per Capita Personal Income (2018)	\$34,102	2639	Avg wage per job	\$46,931	1524
Median Household Income (2018)	\$38,572	2792	Health Care, Social Assist. - % all jobs in County	0.0%	2242
Poverty Rate (2018)	19.0	692	Avg wage per job	N/A	N/A
H.S. Diploma or More - % of Adults 25+ (2018 ACS 5yr)	86.7%	1779	Finance and Insurance - % all jobs in County	1.4%	2314
Bachelor's Deg. or More - % of Adults 25+ (2018 ACS 5yr)	15.2%	1,989	Avg wage per job	\$44,037	2208

In 2018, Nicholas had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$34,102. This PCPI ranked 37th in the state and was 83 percent of the state average, \$40,873, and 63 percent of the national average, \$54,446. The 2018 PCPI reflected an increase of 6.8 percent from 2017. The 2017-2018 state change was 5.8 percent and the national change was 4.9 percent. In 2008, the PCPI of Nicholas was \$29,172 and ranked 19th in the state. The 2008-2018 compound annual growth rate of PCPI was 1.6 percent. The compound annual growth rate for the state was 2.7 percent and for the nation was 2.9 percent.⁹

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, ACS

⁸ http://www.statsamerica.org/profiles/us_profile_frame.html

⁹ <http://www.bea.gov/regional/bearfacts/action.cfm>

Pocahontas County



Pocahontas County was founded in 1821. The municipalities of Pocahontas County are Durbin, Hillsboro and Marlinton.

The American Community Survey 2012-2016 5-Year Estimate indicates the County's total population as being 8,620.¹⁰ It has 940.3 sq. miles in land area and a population density of 9.2 per square mile. On the most recent census form, 97.19% of the population reported only one race, with 1.2% of these reporting African-American. The population of this county is 0.9% Hispanic (of any race). The average household size is 2.20 persons compared to an average family size of 2.80 persons.

In 2017 accommodation and food services was the largest of 20 major sectors. It had an average wage per job of \$23,871. Per capita income grew by 12.6% between 2003 and 2013 (adjusted for inflation).¹¹

People & Income Overview (By Place of Residence)	Value	Rank in U.S.	Industry Overview 2019 (By Place of Work)	Value	Rank in U.S.
Population (2019)	8248	2542	Covered Employment	3173	2342
Growth (%) since 2010 Census	-5.4%	2524	Avg wage per job	\$32,371	2944
Households (2018)	3579	2495	Manufacturing - % all jobs in County	7.9%	1721
Labor Force (persons) (2019)	3891	2526	Avg wage per job	\$34,565	2531
Unemployment Rate (2019)	5.7	294	Transportation & Warehousing - % all jobs in County	3.2%	1130
Per Capita Personal Income (2018)	\$38,172	2110	Avg wage per job	\$41,239	2489
Median Household Income (2018)	\$39,467	2725	Health Care, Social Assist. - % all jobs in County	0.0%	2242
Poverty Rate (2018)	17.5	898	Avg wage per job	N/A	N/A
H.S. Diploma or More - % of Adults 25+ (2018 ACS 5yr)	84.4%	2154	Finance and Insurance - % all jobs in County	1.1%	2523
Bachelor's Deg. or More - % of Adults 25+ (2018 ACS 5yr)	16.3%	2107	Avg wage per job	\$34,580	2628

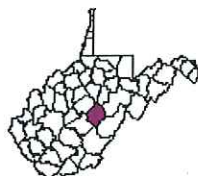
In 2018, Pocahontas had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$38,172. This PCPI ranked 20th in the state and was 93 percent of the state average, \$40,873, and 70 percent of the national average, \$54,446. The 2018 PCPI reflected an increase of 3.8 percent from 2017. The 2017-2018 state change was 5.8 percent and the national change was 4.9 percent. In 2008, the PCPI of Pocahontas was \$27,265 and ranked 28th in the state. The 2008-2018 compound annual growth rate of PCPI was 3.4 percent. The compound annual growth rate for the state was 2.7 percent and for the nation was 2.9 percent.¹²

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, ACS

¹¹ http://www.statsamerica.org/profiles/us_profile_frame.html

¹² <http://www.bea.gov/regional/bearfacts/action.cfm>

Webster County



Webster County was founded in 1860. The municipalities of Webster County are Camden-on-Gauley, Cowen and Webster Springs.

The American Community Survey 2012-2016 5-Year Estimate indicates the County's total population as being 8,820.¹³ It has 553.5 sq. miles in land area and a population density of 16.1 per square mile. On the most recent census form, 99.8% of the population reported only one race, with 0.0% of these reporting African-American. The population of this county is 0.0% Hispanic (of any race). The average household size is 2.40 persons compared to an average family size of 2.90 persons.

In 2017 health care and social assistance was the largest of 20 major sectors. It had an average wage per job of \$27,192. Per capita income grew by 18.9% between 2003 and 2013 (adjusted for inflation).¹⁴

People & Income Overview (By Place of Residence)	Value	Rank in U.S.	Industry Overview 2019 (By Place of Work)	Value	Rank in U.S.
Population (2019)	8,114	2560	Covered Employment	1657	2745
Growth (%) since 2010 Census	-11.4%	3029	Avg wage per job	\$35,303	2585
Households (2018)	3,811	2450	Manufacturing - % all jobs in County	11.9%	1241
Labor Force (persons) (2019)	3,326	2622	Avg wage per job	\$33,336	2581
Unemployment Rate (2019)	6.3	175	Transportation & Warehousing - % all jobs in County	3.9%	861
Per Capita Personal Income (2018)	\$27,816	3064	Avg wage per job	\$30,898	3069
Median Household Income (2018)	\$34,054	3028	Health Care, Social Assist. - % all jobs in County	15.3%	654
Poverty Rate (2018)	23.0	328	Avg wage per job	\$30,025	1915
H.S. Diploma or More - % of Adults 25+ (2018 ACS 5yr)	79.2%	2738	Finance and Insurance - % all jobs in County	0.0%	2683
Bachelor's Deg. or More - % of Adults 25+ (2018 ACS 5yr)	9.3%	3093	Avg wage per job	\$0.00	2685

In 2018, Webster had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$27,816. This PCPI ranked 55th in the state and was 68 percent of the state average, \$40,873, and 51 percent of the national average, \$54,446. The 2018 PCPI reflected an increase of 3.0 percent from 2017. The 2017-2018 state change was 5.8 percent and the national change was 4.9 percent. In 2008, the PCPI of Webster was \$23,995 and ranked 46th in the state. The 2008-2018 compound annual growth rate of PCPI was 1.5 percent. The compound annual growth rate for the state was 2.7 percent and for the nation was 2.9 percent.¹⁵

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, ACS

¹⁴ http://www.statsamerica.org/profiles/us_profile_frame.html

¹⁵ <http://www.bea.gov/regional/bearfacts/action.cfm>



III. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy establishes the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic problems and capitalize on the resources of the region. The projects, programs and activities identified are designed to fulfill these goals and objectives.

- Goals are broad and primary regional expectations.
- Objectives are more specific than goals. Clearly measurable and stated in realistic terms considering what can be accomplished over the five-year plan.

1. WATER

Congress originally passed the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) in 1974 to protect public health by regulating the nation's public drinking water supply. The law was amended in 1986 and 1996 and continues to regulate the naturally occurring and man-made contaminants that may be found in drinking water.

GOALS

To provide safe and dependable water supplies to all parts of the Region to meet existing demands and facilitate future growth and development.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To provide a public water supply to all areas of the Region where it is economically feasible, or where there is a demonstrated health hazard.
- (2) To ensure that public and private water systems meet all health standards.
- (3) To ensure that industrial development is not curtailed because of inadequate water supply.
- (4) To provide fire protection capabilities where feasible to provide for a more safe and secure living space, as well as reduce insurance rates for residents and businesses.

STRATEGIES

- (1) To offer technical assistance to municipalities and public service districts in the planning and upgrading of public water systems by the development of competitive financing packages. The staff assists the municipalities and public services districts in packaging numerous grant and loan applications requesting assistance.



- (2) To affect the status of the projects identified on the priority list toward implementation in funding and actual construction.

2. SEWER

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972, as amended in 1977, has become known as the Clean Water Act and established the structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into waters throughout the United States. The statute employs a variety of regulatory and nonregulatory tools to control the type and amount of discharges into waters. For many years, the focus was mainly on chemical aspects of the "integrity" goal. More and more physical and biological aspects are given more consideration. During the 1990s decade, the focus was more on protecting healthy waters and restoring impaired ones.

GOALS

To provide adequate public sewer service to all parts of the Region to eliminate health hazards and comply with the goals and objectives of the Federal Clean Water Act.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To provide a public sewer service to all areas of the Region where it is economically feasible or where there is a demonstrated health hazard.
- (2) Elimination of all health hazards resulting from inadequate private sewage disposal systems.
- (3) To provide assistance in securing funding for upgrades to the existing antiquated systems that are operating in Region 4's communities.
- (4) When necessary, provide nutrient removal to prevent further pollution of receiving streams and reduce any negative effects in the ecology in those streams.

STRATEGIES

- (1) To offer technical assistance to municipalities and public service districts in the development and upgrading of public sewage systems by assisting in preparing grant applications.
- (2) To work with the appropriate funding agencies to prepare feasible funding applications for the development of and extensions of wastewater collection systems.
- (3) To affect the status of the projects identified on the priority list toward implementation in funding and actual construction.



3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOALS

Work toward a strong, diversified economy with a mixture of industrial, tourism and commercial goods and services supported by a well-trained labor force.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) Work toward the development of adequate infrastructure throughout the Region to decrease the dependency on outside suppliers.
- (2) To promote tourism in existing recreational areas by planning and developing necessary facilities to increase tourist activities.
- (3) Encourage development of local industrial authorities and mini-industrial parks.
- (4) Increase the potential for local agricultural growth.

STRATEGIES

- (1) To encourage and provide technical assistance to local government entities and groups to promote project development and planning activities in industrial, commercial and tourist economic development activities.
- (2) To affect the status of the projects identified on the priority list toward implementation.
- (3) To assist the economic development authorities in their endeavors to encourage the location of industries that creates jobs in the Region 4 area.
- (4) Promote local food growers providing products to local residents and other entities.

The staff continues to participate in varying degrees with the local development groups to pursue development activities in a collaborative way.

1. New River Gorge Regional Development Authority
2. Upper Kanawha Valley Economic Development Corporation
3. Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation
4. Webster County Economic Development Authority
5. Nicholas County Building Commission
6. Central Appalachian Empowerment Zone of WV, Inc.
7. New River Gorge Trail Alliance
8. Fayette Raleigh Metropolitan Planning Organization



9. New River Transit Authority
10. Meadow River Valley Initiative
11. Fayette County Economic Development

4. TRANSPORTATION

GOALS

To provide safe and adequate public transportation to the citizens of Region 4, including modern arterial highways for all residents. To provide financial management/administration services to the Fayette-Raleigh Metropolitan Planning Organization. To develop and maintain sidewalks for pedestrian safety along those roads where needed in non-rural areas.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To provide increased accessibility of transportation systems to the citizens of Region 4, promote the use of public transportation as a means of energy conservation and move for the upgrading of primary and secondary roads throughout the Region.
- (2) To promote the development of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) projects in Region 4 that relate to surface transportation to be eligible for MAP-21 funds.

STRATEGIES

- (1) To serve as the managerial / financial staff for the Fayette Raleigh Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- (2) To serve as an advocate and provide liaison between local concerns and those Federal and State agencies involved in road construction.
- (3) To affect the status of the projects identified on the priority list toward implementation.
- (4) To assist in the development of MAP-21 applications.



5. SOLID WASTE

GOALS

To eliminate the practice of open dumping throughout the Region as well as eliminate the debris and trash along the highways and rivers.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To provide for sanitary collection and disposal of all solid waste with emphasis placed on recovery and recycling whenever possible.
- (2) To assist the county landfills in securing needed funding to operate.

STRATEGIES

- (1) To provide technical assistance to all local governments within Region 4 in the development of solid waste collection, recovery and disposal systems.
- (2) To cooperate with the appropriate State and Federal agencies in carrying out legislative mandates relating to solid waste.
- (3) To affect the status of the projects identified on the priority list toward implementation.

6. PUBLIC SAFETY - POLICE AND FIRE

GOALS

To provide professional police and adequate fire protection throughout the Region and to protect the lives and property of all citizens, with a minimum amount of suffering and damage.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) A reduction in the crime rate.
- (2) A reduction in the loss of lives and property damage.

STRATEGIES

- (1) To assist local law enforcement agencies and firefighting units in obtaining equipment necessary to carry out their functions.



- (2) To work for the adoption and enforcement of building codes designed to facilitate fire protection.
- (3) To provide water supplies, which will in turn, provide adequate fire protection.
- (4) To affect the status of the projects identified on the priority list toward implementation.
- (5) To assist in seeking funding to expand public safety facilities.

The public safety, police and fire protection of Region 4 are often not reflected in the Region 4 Project Priority List. However, sometimes Region 4 does provide technical assistance, information and/or grant writing for sources of funding for investment in the Region. Community Partnership applications have been written and Technical Assistance with USDA- Rural Development Community Facilities grants and loans have been provided.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES

GOALS

To provide every citizen of Region 4 with a wide range of human services including, not limited to health, education and social services, designed to meet the divergent needs of the various sectors of the regional population, especially the young and aged.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To assist health care providers in securing information that might increase the availability of social service agencies to perform needed social services throughout the Region.

STRATEGIES

- (1) To serve as a liaison between various interest groups and the providers of social services in matters concerning basic community facilities.
- (2) To monitor on a continuing basis the needs and desires of the Region and to make this information available to the appropriate agencies.
- (3) To promote activities of local health agencies in the development and dissemination of information regarding health matters and support programs for low and moderate-income persons.
- (4) To affect the implementation of the projects identified on the priority list.



The human resources of Region 4 are often not reflected in the priority list. However, Region 4 often provides technical assistance, information and/or grant writing for sources of possible funding for investment in the Region.

8. COMMUNITY/DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

GOALS

To develop viable downtown areas to attract and expand job opportunities throughout Region 4.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To increase the use of the downtown areas by expanding existing businesses and promoting new owners to locate in the area.
- (2) To promote downtown areas through the National Main Street Program.
- (3) To provide infrastructure improvements to enhance the available services.

STRATEGIES

- (1) To provide technical assistance to local governments in planning for the revitalization of downtown areas.
- (2) To assist in coordinating the efforts of local governments in rehabilitating the older structures in downtown areas.
- (3) To affect the status of the projects identified on the priority list toward implementation.

9. HOUSING

GOALS

To provide an adequate supply of acceptable and affordable housing for all residents of the Region.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To provide an adequate infrastructure to support efficient housing construction and assist housing development in any way possible.
- (2) To increase the available stock of low and moderate-income housing.



- (3) To assist the Region's entities in adopting and promoting Fair Housing practices.

STRATEGIES

- (1) To work with the West Virginia Housing Development Fund (WHDF) in providing new residential communities, multi-family living complexes and expanding the HUD Section 8 Program in all parts of the Region.
- (2) To work with municipal and county governments in the establishment of local housing authorities, the enactment of building codes where permitted by law and in providing the necessary infrastructure to support housing construction.
- (3) To provide technical assistance to local entities in utilizing existing State and Federal housing programs and assist in coordinating efforts to upgrade existing substandard housing.
- (4) To affect the status of all projects identified on the priority list toward implementation.

The West Virginia Housing Development Fund (WHDF) and the United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Rural Development, offer housing assistance. Therefore, if Region 4 receives specific requests, the agency refers them to the other agencies that have expertise and funding to assist in housing activities.

10. GOVERNMENT

GOALS

To adequately and responsibly perform the functions of government, representing and responding to the needs of the community.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To assist the counties and municipalities as much as possible to effectively assist in the continuity of government services to the citizens.
- (2) To be aware of the strategies identified in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and to coordinate and promote these strategies when feasible.

STRATEGIES

- (1) To work with each local unit of government in defining areas of need and to determine deficiencies in services and facilities.



- (2) To affect the status of all government projects identified on the priority list toward implementation

11. RECREATION

GOALS

To provide for all citizens of the region a variety of leisure opportunities which are easily accessible.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To introduce new and expand existing recreation facilities throughout the Region.
- (2) To promote the private development of non-athletic entertainment facilities.

STRATEGIES

- (1) To provide technical assistance to local governments in the development of recreational facilities.
- (2) To provide technical assistance to private developers utilizing existing State and Federal programs for the development of recreational facilities.
- (3) To serve as an advocate for local governments in promoting the expansion, development and maximum use of State and Federal facilities.
- (4) To affect the status of all recreation projects identified on the priority list toward implementation. Assist with the Scenic Byway and Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act Transportation Enhancement Fund applications.

The Region 4 staff often assists with many of these proposals in a variety of ways. Technical assistance, reviewing, and development of project eligibility criteria for funding, compiling and typing are of some of the many services the staff provides. Many times, these projects are never added to the priority list. Region 4 strives to provide assistance as needed to bring these projects to construction and completion.

12. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

GOALS

To preserve to the greatest extent possible existing buildings, sites monuments and other artifacts that exemplify past events of cultural and historical significance to the region.



OBJECTIVES

- (1) To increase public awareness of the Region's historical significance in the development of the State of West Virginia and of surrounding areas.
- (2) To prevent demolition and encourage the rehabilitation of historically significant sites and buildings.

STRATEGIES

- (1) To work with the State Historic Preservation Division in carrying out its program of historic preservation throughout the State.
- (2) To carefully review all projects submitted as part of the Intergovernmental Review process to ensure that proper consideration has been given to preserving and protecting places of historical significance.
- (3) To protect and restore historical properties in housing through housing rehabilitation.
- (4) To affect the status of all historic projects identified toward implementation.

13. ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

GOALS

To provide a clean, safe and protected environment for all citizens of Region 4.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To promote development and a harmonious relationship between the natural and the man-made environment through the development and implementation of wise land use practices.
- (2) To promote the wise use of effective flood control measures throughout the Region and effective measures among industrial interests in keeping air pollution to minimum levels.
- (3) To promote development in those areas identified as growth centers due to the availability of necessary infrastructure in these areas, and to continue to promote growth management practices through sound land use practices.



STRATEGIES

- (1) To identify existing land uses within the region and project future development needs.
- (2) Promote non-air and water polluting industry in all areas, especially those near residential concentrations.
- (3) To upgrade existing data regarding flood-prone areas, disperse the information to all citizens and local governments, and to assist when necessary in the coordination of flood disaster plans between flood-stricken areas and local, State and Federal agencies.
- (4) To affect the status of all flooding related projects identified on the priority list toward implementation.



IV. PLAN OF ACTION

A. PROJECT SELECTION AND PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

The purpose of the Council's prioritization process is to establish a consolidated priority list of active capital improvements which will implement goals, objectives and strategies set forth in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Prioritization is accomplished by computer software. The process is scientific and objective. Specific criteria have been developed to intelligently make comparisons among projects. Projects will receive points on how well they meet certain criteria.

The specific criteria utilized in the rating process include the Investment Policy Analysis. Each project is analyzed based upon the following:

- Is the proposed investment market based?
- Is the proposed investment proactive in nature and scope?
- Does the project look beyond immediate economic horizon, anticipate economic changes and diversify the local and regional economy?
- Does the proposed investment have private investment? Does the investment maximize private capital investment?
- The proposed investment must have a high probability of success. What is the level of local, State and private matching funds? What is the level of commitment of elected officials? Is there a commitment of human resources tied to project outcomes?
- Will the proposed investment result in the creation of higher skill and higher wage jobs?
- Will the proposed investment maximize return on the taxpayer's investment?

These factors have been given more consideration in the past few years and therefore, although the project priority list still reflects that infrastructure projects are of the highest importance to the Region 4 Planning & Development Council Board, the top priorities are focusing more on tourism and technology-based industry clusters.

The other project criteria are described as follows. Prioritization of functional categories is based on the latest community priorities observed by Region 4 and the community's priorities. The rating process also includes availability of funding, cost effectiveness, cost benefit, Intergovernmental Review, imminent threat to the health and safety, preparedness for funding and compatibility with overall development are important criteria. The consolidated priority list is the final product.

Upon the request of the Council's Executive Committee, the priority list can be updated. However, it is often updated once or twice per year to keep current with funded projects, current funding programs and changing priorities. The priority list is updated at a



minimum of once per year. The Region 4 staff has entered all the projects on the computer software and will continue to utilize the software program as projects are added.

B. The following is a list of acronyms used on the Consolidated Priority List spreadsheets.

G O S

G Goal
O Objective
S Strategy

Time Frame

L Long Term
S Short Term

Stage of Development

AS Application Submitted
D Design
LRP Long Range Plan
P Planning
PAAF Project Approved Awaiting Funding
DEV Development - Partial Funding Committed

Project Impacts

CI Community Investment
E Economic
EN Environmental
F Flood Control
HHS Housing and Human Services

Potential Funding Sources

SCBG Small Cities Community Development Block Grant
IJDC West Virginia Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council
DWTRF Drinking Water Treatment Revolving Fund (Water)
SRF State Revolving Fund (Sewer)
USDA RD United States Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
AML WV DEP Abandoned Mine Lands
EDA Federal Economic Development Administration
ARC Appalachian Regional Commission
LOCAL Local Entity Contribution
TAX, INC. Tax Increment Financing
COE US Army Corp of Engineers
FEMA Federal Emergency Management Agency
NTIA National Telecommunication Information Agency
WVAm WATER West Virginia American Water Company
MAP-21 West Virginia Department of Highways
PARTNERSHIP Governor's Community Participation Grant
EPA Environmental Protection Agency
WVHDF West Virginia Housing Development Fund



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