IV. GOALS, RESILIENCY AND PROGRESS

The CEDS identifies six principal goals under A thru F. To demonstrate consistency, goals are applied to the SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) Analysis followed by recent Activities and Progress. This section also integrates an economic resiliency component as suggested under new EDA guidelines. Resiliency in this context refers to the ability to respond or adjust to changes and vulnerabilities in the economy.

The SWOT Analysis identified weakness and threats applicable to the region’s six principal goals. In order to address these vulnerabilities, resiliency initiatives were developed and incorporated below under the SWOT Analysis.

A. GOAL: SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS AND NEW STARTUPS IN THE REGION

Real and permanent growth in any economy comes from within, based upon business formation within the region. Southeastern Massachusetts embraces the need to support and nurture indigenous local businesses as a high regional priority.

MEASURABLE INDICATOR: Increase the formation of new businesses in the region, from an annual average of 698 during the years 2011 to 2015 to over 900 per year for the period of 2016 to 2020.

SWOT (STRENGTHS-WEAKNESSES-OPPORTUNITIES-THREATS) ANALYSIS: The SWOT factors identified below are relevant to addressing GOAL “A”.
STRENGTHS

- A rapid increase in the number of adults completing Associate Degrees of education implies an adequate supply of trained workforce members who are most suitable for training in semi-skilled employment, particularly in the manufacturing sector;
- The region leads the state in manufacture of electrical equipment, primary and fabricated metals;
- Good sites for development in industrial and business park development are available in the region.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The region has a skilled workforce that is suited for employment in the region’s manufacturing sector, and the availability of Associate Degree holders are essential to this labor pool;
- There is growing Biomed and Biotech industry employment in the region, which can attract new graduates and workers with higher education and training;
- Business and industrial entrepreneurs have available development sites as well as cleaned brownfields to start and build their businesses in the area.

WEAKNESSES AND THREATS

- The low educational attainment of the majority of the adult population in the region lags behind the state and nation, which limits employment in higher–paying jobs in the Professional and Technical, Management and Finance sectors.

RESILIENCY INITIATIVE

Resiliency initiatives address weaknesses and threats to strength GOAL “A”.

- Facilitate and support opportunities or incentives for all individuals to improve educational attainment levels across the region, enabling greater access to higher wage employment opportunities.
ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS

1. Promote entrepreneurship: Support local and regional institutions that train entrepreneurs and assist startup businesses.

   a. CIE: The UMass Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Fall River acts as both a research facility and incubator for new business.

   b. SMAST: The UMass School for Marine Science and Technology in New Bedford supports the fishing and marine sciences sectors with basic research and support. (At right: photo of Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship, Fall River)

   c. Quest Center: New Bedford’s Quest Center offers a unique combination of entrepreneurial training, hands-on management expertise, and access to technical and business proficiency. Support services include financing assistance through state and federal funding procedures and access to angel/venture funding or loans.

   d. SEED Corporation: The South Eastern Economic Development (SEED) Corporation provides gap loans to small businesses and offers business technical assistance through monthly workshops and individualized assistance.

   e. MSBDC: The Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network’s Southeast Regional Office is part of a national network of more than 950 small business development centers. The MSBDC provides free and confidential business advice to existing or prospective small business people, plus training seminars on a variety of topics.

   f. MassBiologics SouthCoast Center is located in the South Coast Science and Technology Park in Fall River/Freetown: Mass Biologics overseen by UMass Medical School in Worcester is a bio-manufacturing facility that uses genes to provide vaccines and treatments for debilitating conditions such as Parkinson’s and Lyme diseases. It is expected that additional bio-manufacturing and life science companies may be attracted to the SouthCoast Science and Technology Park developing into an industry cluster.
g. Myles Standish Industrial Park (MSIP): The 50-acre business park development, Phase V, construction of Dever Drive is completed and private development is ongoing. Under Phase V, CONNECT, through the Mass Life Science Initiative committed to developing a $5.0 million training and education center to address the needs of life science industries. This portion of the EDA project is ongoing and expected to break ground in 2017-2018. Options for additional EDA funding may be available.

2. Education and workforce skills: Promote and support programs that improve the skills and education levels of the region’s workforce.
   a. Bristol Community College (Fall River) Center for Workforce and Community Education: The College provides training for the region’s business community and for individuals looking to upgrade their skills, as well as noncredit enrichment courses. Recently, BCC opened its newest facility, the Taunton Campus Center at the Silver City Galleria. The 26,000 square foot facility features computer labs, classrooms, high-tech biology and chemistry lab, nursing lab and a casino simulation lab including a library and student lounge. Currently enrollment is about 500 students.
   b. University of Massachusetts Dartmouth graduates thousands of graduates and undergraduates every year in critical fields such as engineering, marine science, nursing and law.
   c. Workforce Investment Boards in the region (Bristol, Greater New Bedford, South Shore and Metro South) strive to increase the occupational skill attainment, employment, retention and earning of the labor force, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce dependency on public assistance, and thereby enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the region.
d. Massasoit Community College has established a campus in downtown Middleborough, which has recently completed renovations to expand laboratory space in order to expand their curriculum to include STEM (Science-Technology-Engineering-Math) classes.

e. Bridgewater State University, UMass Dartmouth and CONNECT partnership continue with efforts to address skills and curriculum gaps in Southeastern Massachusetts. SRPEDD, OCPC, CCC, regional WIBs, Chambers of Commerce, and others are collaborating on the initiative. The partnership is currently refining an initial EDA funding proposal and seeking potential funding as a model project to address SE Massachusetts skills gap. Recently, the Mass Workforce Skill Cabinet convened a regional planning meeting of the Southeast Region at Bridgewater State University to initiate the process of identifying and prioritizing solutions to skill issues. Ultimately, the effort will lead to a Regional Labor Market Blueprint for the state on act by the end of the calendar year.

3. Financing for venture capital and micro loans

a. South Eastern Economic Development (SEED) Corporation: SEED Corp. assists and supports small businesses in their start-up phase to prepare them for traditional bank financing. SEED promotes the growth and expansion of existing businesses by working with banks and the Small Business Administration to provide the best possible financing package. In addition to SBA-supported and revolving loan funds, SEED Venture Finance manages SEED Ventures LP, a $20 million SBIC focused on investments in small and medium sized businesses in Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

B. GOAL: SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Private sector business formation depends upon the public sector to create and provide the physical amenities in the form of development sites, utilities, and transportation, to move goods and materials and enable workforce mobility.

MEASURABLE INDICATOR: Maintain a regional inventory of 2,000 acres of quality development and redevelopment sites available for immediate development for business that are accessible by transportation and transit and supported by basic utilities including broadband access. Maintain and/or increase the current rate of reclaiming and redeveloping brownfield sites.

SWOT (STRENGTHS-WEAKNESS-OPPORTUNITIES-THREATS) ANALYSIS:
The SWOT factors identified below are relevant to address GOAL “B”.

STRENGTHS
- Good sites for development in industrial and business parks are available in the region.

OPPORTUNITIES
- Business and industrial entrepreneurs have available development sites as well as cleaned brownfields to start and build their businesses in the area

WEAKNESSES AND THREATS
- Regional workers remain largely dependent on cars to commute to work, therefore the unpredictable supply and rising cost of gasoline can become burdensome;
• Working at home and working nearer home are not widespread in the region due to inadequate or lack of technical facilities including fiber optics, etc.;
• Traffic congestion exists in some portions of the region, especially during rush hours.

RESILIENCY INITIATIVE
Resiliency initiatives address weaknesses and threats to strength GOAL “B”.

• Continue to support and plan for South Coast commuter rail extension including expansion of regional transit authority’s (GATRA and SRTA) service areas to improve commute to work options and reduce gasoline cost burdens for region’s workforce;
• Support and facilitate expansion of broadband and digital technologies (Open Cape and MassBroadband) to increase telecommuting options and provide new employment opportunities;
• Support and facilitate transportation improvements to areas throughout the region, mitigating traffic congestion, circulation, access and safety issues.

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS
1. Create quality economic development sites
   a. Industrial parks – The region has a total of 32 business and industrial park including nine public and twenty-three private parks spread across fourteen municipalities. These parks have a total acreage of 7,790, which approximately 5,604 acres (73%) are developed, leaving the remaining 2,186 acres (27%) available for development. A full, detailed listing of these business and industrial parks can be found in Appendix 4.
b. Marine terminals – The multi-use terminal at the Fall River State Pier and the Marine Commerce Terminal in New Bedford will both benefit marine and cargo economic development opportunities (see below for detail).

c. Power Plant site(s) redevelopment and reuse – Somerset continues to review potential reuse and redevelopment options for two power plant properties including Montaup and Brayton Point Power Plants. Opportunities may exist for greater access to the waterfront, renewable energy industries including storage, manufacturing and assembly, mixed commercial and tourism.

2. Reclaim brownfield sites: The most recent Massachusetts DEP inventory of brownfield sites includes 3,615 total sites in the region. Of these sites, 2,888 (80%) have been cleaned, leaving 727 sites to be remediated. In 2016 an additional 83 acres have been cleaned with approximately 31.0% redeveloped. Over the past 10 years the majority of this activity has occurred in the District’s central cities however, recent activity has shift to smaller communities seeking to capture economic development opportunities (i.e. Freetown, North Attleborough, Seekonk and Wareham).

3. Transportation Projects: A multi-modal transportation network in good repair is an essential piece for a successful economy. Dozens of state and local transportation projects are in various stages of planning, design and construction, and all have some impact on the region’s economy. Some of the more crucial projects that have significant economic impacts include:

a. Middleborough: Fly-over or other improvements including the Middleborough Rotary. Traffic and capacity issues are causing congestion, which is hindering economic development in the immediate area.

b. Fall River: Ongoing construction and improvement including a $20 million capital improvement proposal at the Fall River State Pier for development of a south basin, demolition and/or rehabilitation.
of marine facilities at Battleship Cove, commercial fishing improvements, commercial marine transportation as well as other capital improvements.

c. New Bedford: New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal improvement project is completed. The $113 million improvement project consisted of harbor dredging and construction of a new bulkhead with deep-water access. The project built around the Cape Wind offshore wind development, stalled in 2013 due power purchasing agreements and terminal leasing contracts. However, the new terminal enhances cargo capacity to the port and offshore wind in the area has witnessed activity through Deepwater Wind and Dong Energy initiatives. New opportunities associated with offshore wind are expected to emerge for the marine terminal in the near future.

d. Regional: Recently, MassDOT filed a Notice of Project Change to advance the Middleboro Secondary line via the Middleboro Lakeville Commuter Rail Line to provide a quicker and more cost effective option for service to Fall River, New Bedford and Taunton. This option will provide interim service under Phase I, while MassDOT continues to advance the design, permitting and build full service for the “preferred alternative”, the Stoughton Electric Route as Phase II. A Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) is likely to be necessary as well as federal requirements to initiate Phase I service.

e. Regional: Upgrade all Route 24 interchanges to Interstate design standards and designate highway as a proposal continuation of Interstate 93.

f. Taunton: Replacement of the Route 24/140 Interchange in Taunton. This interchange is a bottleneck between the South Coast and Boston metro area.
g. New Bedford: Reconstruct the JFK Highway (Rte 18) in New Bedford to enhance pedestrian access between the downtown, historic district and the working waterfront. Construction for Phase III improvement is expected to commence spring/summer 2017.

h. Fall River: Study completed to convert Route 79 along the Fall River waterfront into a boulevard providing up to 10 acres for waterfront redevelopment. Request for Proposals of design/build under review. Initial design work up to 25% expected to commence summer of 2017.

i. New Bedford: Develop a Multi-modal facility at the Downtown New Bedford Railyard and adjacent Superfund Confined disposal facility (CDF) at the Herman Melville Shipyard.

j. Attleboro: Intermodal Facility (Commuter rail station, parking garage including housing and mixed-use opportunities) in downtown Attleboro completed in November 2013. Additional developments adjacent to the station and round the downtown are ongoing including brownfield cleanup and redevelopment initiatives.

k. New Bedford: Construct safety improvements at the New Bedford Regional Airport and reconstruction of existing runway pavement.

l. Wareham: Make improvements to Route 28 in Wareham to support developments located in the Business Development Overlay District (BDOD). SRPEDD recently completed a corridor study to provide recommendations on land-use, economic development and transportation. Primary economic development recommendations are in process.
m. Fall River: Make Fall River Interchange Improvements at I-195/Route 79/Route 138 (“Spaghetti Ramps”) consisting of reconfiguration to provide safety improvements and eliminate structurally deficient bridges. The project was completed in the fall of 2016.

Several of the above mentioned transportation projects that support economic development have progressed and are moving forward. Ongoing infrastructure improvement and private development is ongoing. Projects include Attleboro Intermodal Facility; improvements to Fall River State Pier, continued development at the South Coast Science and Technology Park in Fall River/Freetown; New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal allowing for increased freight, shipping and future opportunities for off shore wind development and, partial completion of the New Bedford (Route 18) JFK Highway reconstruction improving access to the waterfront.

4. South Coast Rail: The completion of a commuter rail link between Fall River, New Bedford and Taunton to the Boston inner core communities remains a priority for the region. The project is expected to create 3,800 new jobs within and outside the region, connect the only eastern Massachusetts cities without commuter rail service to metro Boston and provide greater mobility within the region for commuters and travelers. The final environmental impact report was completed in September 2013 initiating the permitting process. Currently, MassDOT is promoting the Middleboro Secondary and the Middleborough/Lakeville Commuter Rail Line as an option to provide interim service to Fall River and New Bedford while design and permitting continues along the Stoughton Route.

5. Utilities: Priority areas for extension of water and sewer and broadband service include:

   1. OpenCape, currently under construction, is a comprehensive, middle mile, communications network to support economic, educational, public safety and governmental needs of Southeastern Massachusetts. This core fiber optic backbone will serve
Cape Cod with extensions to major regional network centers in Providence and Brockton providing a robust, high capacity communications infrastructure for the region.

2. Water and sewer extensions will be necessary to facilitate development in Carver, Dighton, Fall River, Freetown, Lakeville, Seekonk and Westport.

6. **Casinos:** Currently the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe proposal to construct the $1 billion, First Light Resort and Casino on 151 acres in East Taunton continues to be on hold in U.S. District Court. The Court’s most recent decision to deny a motion by the Department of the Interior to reconsider their (DOI) 2015 decision placing 151 acres in Taunton in trust as sovereign-nation reservation land. This most recent ruling, calls into question the legitimacy of the government’s 2015 land-in-trust decision, based on a different category of legal criteria than previously cited by the plaintiffs. The DOI is now able to consider the criteria dealing with the government’s authority to take land in trust for Indian tribes under federal jurisdiction. The term federal jurisdiction was used in the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and sets a template for Indian tribes seeking reservation land. Although the government did not recognize the Mashpee Wampanoag as a tribe until 2007, the tribe was under U.S. jurisdiction in 1934, despite its not having been recognized at the time. Precedent has recently been set with a federal court decision in Washington State in favor of the Cowlitz tribe that was under federal jurisdiction in 1934 and therefore entitled to reservation land.

Casino development is already underway for Region A in Everett with Wynn Boston Harbor Casino and Region B in Springfield with MGM Springfield Casino. If the Wampanoag’s were to lose their court case, there would still be a license available for Region C covering SE Massachusetts.
C. GOAL: PURSUE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCE THE REGION’S QUALITY OF LIFE

Promote and support economic development that does not degrade natural resources and enhances the long-term environmental and economic health of the region. Plan for energy efficient development and LEED certified buildings and other structures. (At right: aerial of 20,000 panel solar farm project, Fisher Rd, Dartmouth.)

MEASURABLE INDICATOR: Shift up to 50% of projected development to designated Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and from designated Priority Protection Areas (PPAs); reduce GHG (Green House Gas) emissions and regional vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in 10 years.

SWOT (STRENGTHS-WEAKNESSES-OPPORTUNITIES-THREATS) ANALYSIS:
The SWOT factors identified below are relevant to addressing GOAL “C”.

STRENGTHS
- In the past 20 years, the regional population has grown more rapidly than the state thereby insuring a robust labor force;
- A rapid increase in the number of adults completing Associate Degrees of education implies an adequate supply of trained workforce members who are most suitable for training in semi-skilled and highly-skilled employment in the manufacturing sector;
- While employment in agriculture has declined in the region, the market value of products remains very high;
- New Bedford is the nation’s leading port with the highest value of seafood landing;
• Good sites for development in industrial and business parks are available in the region.

OPPORTUNITIES
• The region has a skilled workforce that is suited for employment in the region’s manufacturing sector, and the availability of Associate Degree holders are essential to this labor pool;
• There is growing Biomed and Biotech industry employment in the region, which can attract new graduates and workers with higher education and training;
• Business and industrial entrepreneurs have available development sites as well as cleaned brownfields to start and build their businesses in the area.

WEAKNESSES AND THREATS
• The low educational attainment levels of the majority of the adult population lags behind the state and nation, which limits their employment in higher-paid jobs in the Professional and Technical, Management and Finance sectors;
• Regional workers remain largely dependent on cars to commute to work, therefore the unpredictable supply and rising cost of gasoline can become burdensome;
• Working at home, and working nearer home are not yet widespread in the region due to inadequate or lack of technological facilities including WIFI and broadband, etc.;
• Traffic congestion exists in some portions of the region, especially during rush hour.

RESILIENCY INITIATIVES
Resiliency initiatives address weaknesses and threats to strength GOAL “C”.

• Facilitate and support opportunities or incentives for all individuals to improve educational attainment levels across the region, enabling greater access to higher wage employment opportunities;
• Continue to support and plan for South Coast commuter rail extension including expansion of regional transit authorities (GATRA and SRTA) service areas to improve commute to work options and reduce gasoline costs
burdens for region’s workforce;

- Support and facilitate expansion of broadband and digital technologies (Open Cape and MassBroadband) to increase telecommuting options and provide new employment opportunities;
- Support and facilitate transportation improvements to areas throughout the region, mitigating traffic congestion, circulation, access and safety issues.

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS

1. **Implement designated Priority Development and Priority Protection Areas (PDAs and PPAs):** SRPEDD completed the 5-year update in 2013 of locally designated Development Areas and Protection Areas for the region. Under the update, there were 181 locally approved PDAs, 168 PPAs, and 41 combined PDAs and PPAs designated and made part of the South Coast Corridor Plan. Priority Development Areas are areas that are capable of handling more development due to several factors, including good access, available infrastructure (primarily water and sewer and good access to transportation), an absence of environmental constraints, and local support. The update identified changes, reviewed and revised designations based on local input, in addition to reviewing how well designations aligned with Executive Order 525. As part of the update, SRPEDD working with municipals, RPAs, state, and other groups and agencies identified 38 regionally significant priority areas for designation. These areas offer the greatest potential for housing and economic development opportunities region wide. Currently, SRPEDD through District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) and other funding is working with a many of the regions communities on various studies/plans to address these opportunities.

2. **Support and promote agriculture:** Support and promotion of local agriculture incorporated into many of SRPEDD’s work program efforts including the designation of Priority Protection Areas, adoption of local right to farm bylaws and creation of local agricultural commissions.

3. **Support energy efficient development:** Zoning changes to support mixed-use development, LEED construction, Green Communities and/or walkable communities are actively being pursued in several communities (including Acushnet, Attleboro, Carver, Dartmouth, Dighton, Fairhaven, Fall River, Freetown, Lakeville, Mansfield, New Bedford, North Attleborough, Somerset, Taunton and Wareham). Several communities have adopted the “stretch code”, which sets standards for more energy efficient construction.
4. Reduce regional GHG (Green House Gas) emissions and VMT (Vehicle miles traveled): The cumulative impact of South Coast Rail, congestion improvement activities, more TOD and cluster development, fuel cost increases, and improvement in mileage of new vehicles will result in a reduction of both green house gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled.

5. Support clean, renewable energy alternatives and supporting industries including skills and workforce training for sector employment: Opportunities existing to redevelop and reuse Power Plant sites in Somerset for diversified, clean renewable energy, associated manufacturing and assembly, mixed commercial and tourism industries to generate investment, job creation, retraining and re-employment and to provide increased tax revenues.

D. GOAL: BROADEN THE REGION’S ECONOMIC PROFILE; PROMOTE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN EMERGING SECTORS SUCH AS MARINE SCIENCE, BIOTECH AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

Seek balance in the type of regional employers to avoid vulnerable concentrations of economic activity in a small number of sectors.

MEASURABLE INDICATOR: Balanced economic profile. Promote economic diversity and support development of employment opportunities in sectors where Southeastern Massachusetts lags behind the state so that the regional employment profile more closely mirrors the state profile. Encourage development of economic activity in those sectors where the region has a geographic advantage (marine science and technology).

SWOT (STRENGTHS-OPPORTUNITIES-WEAKNESSES-THREATS) ANALYSIS:
The SWOT factors identified below are relevant to addressing GOAL “D”.
STRENGTHS

- A rapid increase in the number of adults completing Associate Degrees of education implies an adequate supply of trained workforce members who are most suitable for training in semi-skilled and highly skilled employment in the manufacturing sector;
- The region leads the state in the manufacture of electrical equipment, primary and fabricated metals;
- Good sites for development in industrial and business parks are available in the region.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The region has a skilled workforce that is suited for employment in the region’s manufacturing sector, and the availability of Associate Degree holders are essential to this labor pool;
- There is growing Biomed and Biotech industry employment in the region, which can attract new graduates and workers with higher education and training;
- Business and industrial entrepreneurs have available development sites as well as cleaned brownfields to start and build businesses in the area.

WEAKNESSES AND THREATS

- The low educational attainment levels of the majority of the adult population in the region lags behind the state and nation, which limits their employment in higher-paid jobs in the Professional and Technical, Management and Finance sectors;
- Working at home, and working nearer home are not yet widespread in the region due to inadequate or lack of technological facilities including WIFI and broadband, etc.;
- Traffic congestion exists in some portions of the region, especially during rush hour.

RESILIENCY INITIATIVES

Resiliency initiatives address weaknesses and threats to strength GOAL “D”.

- Facilitate and support opportunities or incentives for all individuals to improve educational attainments levels across the region, enabling greater access to higher wage employment opportunities;
• Support and facilitate expansion of broadband and digital technologies (OpenCape and MassBroadband) to increase telecommuting options and provide new employment opportunities;
• Support and facilitate transportation improvements to areas throughout the region, mitigating traffic congestion, circulation, access and safety issues.

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS

1. **Expand Marine Science and Technology:** The UMass School for Marine Science and Technology (SMAST) will enable the region to build upon this built in geographic advantage.

2. **Support bio-manufacturing and product development:** MassBiologics in the SouthCoast Science and Technology Park in Fall River/Freetown is uniquely positioned to attract additional bio-manufacturing companies and grow the life sciences industry sector. New 200,000 SF manufacturing facility under construction by Alnylam Pharmaceutical in Norton. The operation at Alnylam facility will involve the manufacture of gene-manipulating medicines.

3. **Promote international trade:** Take advantage of the seaport location of both Fall River and New Bedford through the development of the Marine Terminal in New Bedford and the multi-use terminal at the Fall River State Pier. The closing of the Brayton Point Power Plant in Somerset could provide potential redevelopment opportunities that utilize access to the site deep-water port to expand trade.

E. GOAL: PROVIDE INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Support new job creation by assisting government agencies to streamline regulatory processes and assisting businesses with data and information.

**MEASURABLE INDICATOR:** At least 75% of SRPEDD municipalities will have in place some form of expedited permitting process for economic development projects (Massachusetts Chapter 43D or local process) by 2020.
SWOT (STRENGTHS-WEAKNESSES-OPPORTUNITIES-THREATS) ANALYSIS:
There are no SWOT factors identified to address GOAL “E”.

RESILIENCY INITIATIVES
No resiliency initiatives identified to address GOAL “E”.

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS

1. **Data & information (SRPEDD):** The SRPEDD Data Center is a resource for relevant information and data for economic development. The Fact Book is available at www.srpedd.org and is continually updated. SRPEDD also posts extensive census data and American Community Survey information, transportation data and statistics as well as Community Quickstats for each city and town.

2. **Expedited permitting procedures:** SRPEDD continues to provide assistance to cities and towns to adopt expedited permitting procedures under Massachusetts Chapter 43D that clarify the development process for economic development projects. These procedures address the process for reviewing and issuing permit applications and do not pre-determine the outcome. In the past SRPEDD has worked with New Bedford and Taunton as well as Carver, Dartmouth, Freetown, Lakeville, North Attleborough, Raynham, Westport, and Dighton. Currently, SRPEDD is assisting Wareham in establishing the 43D process for several areas identified under the Route 28 Corridor Study.

3. **Promotion:**
   a. The South Coast Development Partnership, a public/private organization sponsored by UMass Dartmouth is a designated Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) serving 14 communities in the South Coast. http://www.southcoastdev.org/
   b. Chambers of Commerce: The region’s many Chambers are active in promoting business and business-friendly policies.
F.  **GOAL: THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE, ADOPTION AND DIGITAL INCLUSION IN MASSACHUSETTS**

The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MassTech) is a public economic development agency collaborating with industry, academia, and government to foster growth of the Massachusetts innovation economy. MassTech has three major divisions - The Innovation Institute, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), and the Massachusetts eHealth Institute (MeHI). The primary mission of the MBI is to extend affordable, robust, high-speed Internet access to homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices and other public places across Massachusetts, with a focus on the hard-to-serve areas. In addition, MBI is working to promote statewide broadband adoption and digital inclusion particularly in low income and low adoption communities.

**MEASURABLE INDICATOR:** Access and use of high speed internet, technology, and digital knowledge serving SRPEDD cities and towns including state and regional infrastructure, economic and workforce development, business growth and development, educational attainment, delivery of governmental and essential services, and civic engagement.

**SWOT (STRENGTHS-OPPORTUNITIES-WEAKNESSES-THREATS) ANALYSIS:**

The SWOT factors identified below are relevant to addressing GOAL “F”.

**STRENGTHS**

- Good sites for development in industrial and business parks are available in the region.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- There is growing Biomed and Biotech industry employment in the region, which can attract new graduates and workers with higher education and training;
• Business and industrial entrepreneurs have available development sites as well as cleaned brownfields to start and build their businesses in the area.

WEAKNESSES AND THREATS
• Working at home, and working nearer home are not yet widespread in the region due to inadequate or lack of technological facilities including WIFI and broadband, etc.;
• Traffic congestion exists in some portions of the region, especially during rush hour.

RESILIENCY INITIATIVES
Resiliency initiatives address weaknesses and threats to strength GOAL “F”.

• Support and facilitate expansion of broadband and digital technologies (OpenCape and MassBroadband) to increase telecommuting options and provide new employment opportunities;
• Support and facilitate transportation improvements to areas throughout the region, mitigating traffic congestion, circulation, access and safety issues.

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS
1. Broadband Infrastructure
The Massachusetts Broadband Institute recently completed construction of MassBroadband 123, a 1,200-mile fiber-optic middle mile network that will bring high-speed internet access to over 1,200 community anchor institutions in more than 120 unserved and underserved communities in Western and Central Massachusetts. The project, funded through state and Federal funds, connects community facilities such as schools, town halls, public safety facilities, community colleges, libraries, and health care institutions to the open- access network. MassBroadband 123 is a long-term infrastructure project that will create a foundation for future growth. In 2013, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick proposed $40 million in bond funding for the MBI to help develop public-private last mile solutions. The legislative proposal has been approved by the Commonwealth’s House of Representatives, with funding increased to $50 million, and is currently under review in the State Senate. If authorized, build out of last mile projects is expected to span multiple years and will require matching private and public funds.
In addition, the OpenCape Network, a non-profit organization located on Cape Cod recently completed construction of a comprehensive middle-mile communications network, expanding broadband access throughout Cape Cod, the islands and the South Coast. MBI provided OpenCape with $5 million in state matching funds allowing them to leverage an additional $32 million in federal stimulus funds to extend a fully fiber optic, 350-mile network through 37 cities and towns, more than 72 community institutions including libraries, hospitals, colleges, schools, research institutions and thousands of businesses. This open access network will support the economic, educational, public safety and governmental needs of southeastern Massachusetts.

2. **Broadband Adoption, Technology Adoption, and Digital Inclusion**

MassTech also supports broadband adoption, technology adoption, and digital inclusion across the Commonwealth through the following initiatives:

a. **MassVetsAdvisor**: Launched by the MBI in 2012, MassVetsAdvisor is a web based resource portal, which connects Veterans to Federal, state, and non-profit benefit programs.

b. **The Small Business Technical Assistance Program**: Pilot program launched by the MBI in collaboration with regional Community Development Corporations, this program provides small businesses in all regions of the Commonwealth with financial assistance to incorporate internet technology to support business growth.

c. **Massachusetts eHealth Institute (MeHI)**: Works to drive adoption of critical health technologies, supporting the health care community to implement electronic health record and health information exchange technology. MeHI’s major initiatives include the Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Operations program, the Regional Extension Center (REC) program, the Health Information Exchange (HIE) program, and the eHealth Economic and Workforce Development initiative. Broadband access and adoption is essential to successful implementation of the Health Information Exchange and Electronic Health Records.

d. **The Broadband Adoption and Digital Inclusion Research Study**: A project initiated by MBI, which investigates internet and digital technology adoption trends across Massachusetts. Preliminary research indicates that 1.6 million Massachusetts residents do not use the internet, even in locations where high speed internet service is available. Low adoption rates correlate to educational attainment, household income, and age, with the
lowest rates of high speed residential internet and computer use primarily in urban and Gateway Cities (mid-sized municipalities in the Commonwealth, which have been provided special legislative-focus for economic development based on lower than average median incomes and educational attainment levels).

Target populations for broadband adoption and digital inclusion programs include: Low income households, adults with high school education or less, Hispanic and African American households, English as a second language learners, seniors, the disabled, small businesses, and municipalities. The Digital Inclusion Study completed in May 2014 includes recommendations for model programs to provide accessible, affordable internet access; affordable computer equipment, software, and tech support; digital education for residents, businesses, and municipalities; and assistive technology for people with disabilities.

Access to technology and digital education for all residents, businesses, and institutions is essential for success in a global economy and a digital world, influencing every aspect of daily life including:

- Educational Success and Lifelong Learning
- Workforce Readiness/Employment
- Business Development
- Health Care Information and Delivery
- Access to Governmental and Essential Services
- Social and Civic Engagement