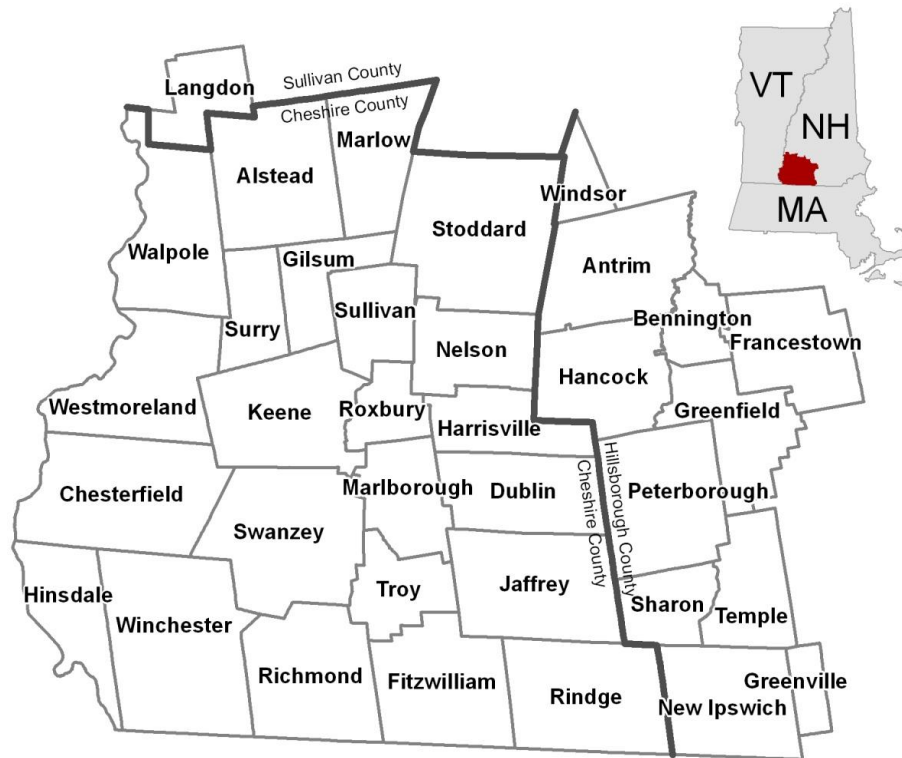
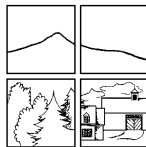


**APPENDIX 17B:  
SOUTHWEST REGION PLANNING COMMISSION, COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR SOUTHWEST NEW HAMPSHIRE (EXCERPT)  
(JANUARY 2015)**

# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest New Hampshire



**January 2015**



**SWRPC**

Southwest Region Planning Commission  
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Keene, New Hampshire 03431  
[www.swrpc.org](http://www.swrpc.org)

Prepared with the support of the U.S. Department of Commerce,  
Economic Development Administration  
and other partners

### **C. Community Survey**

A community survey was developed to better understand public attitudes with regard to economic development.<sup>1</sup> The survey used the issues of importance identified during the SWOT exercise as a starting point to develop questions and receive feedback from the public at large. Most respondents ranked Quality of Life, the Educational System and Labor Force as the three most important issues, whereas Transportation, Tax Structure and Housing were on the bottom of the scale. A majority of respondents chose the Natural Environment, Historic/Rural Character and Cultural Activities as the main reasons to live in the Southwest Region of New Hampshire. When asked about the future, of highest concern were Transportation, Housing, and Tax Structure – issues also responsible for the majority of suggestions for improvements. When asked to identify critical issues affecting the Region on their own, most respondents listed Labor Force, Tax Structure, Smart Growth and Historic Preservation.

### **D. External Forces**

The largest influence on the Southwest Region's economy is the larger U.S. economy. With the ongoing decline in manufacturing jobs, this Region's former pay-rate advantage is declining. Future concerns include the types of jobs being created and the rates of pay for these jobs.

Another issue impacting the Region is the high cost of energy, particularly electricity, gasoline and home heating oil. These costs place companies at a disadvantage in this Region because of high winter heating costs, generally long commute times of workers, and distance from more concentrated urban markets. Given the ongoing activities in the Middle East and the current lack of local, renewable energy alternatives, energy costs are likely to be of increasing concern in years to come.

A lack of housing puts this Region at a competitive disadvantage with other parts of New England by preventing the in-migration of well-trained and high-skilled workers. High housing costs in the economic centers of the Region also increase travel-to-work times for those in low-paying jobs and force them to pay more for gasoline. Once the Region starts to address the lack of housing, it will help address other, related problems.

### **E. Future Economic Development**

According to New Hampshire Employment Security projections, the highest increases will come from the health care and construction industries by 2010 (Table 44, Figure 33). The healthcare and social assistance sector includes Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) major groups like Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (18% growth), Healthcare Support Occupations (19.5% growth), and Community and Social Services Occupations (14.9% growth) (Table 45).

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<sup>1</sup> The questionnaire contained four substantive questions and several questions on the background of the respondents. The questionnaire was available online at the SWRPC website for 16 weeks and received 67 responses. The majority of the respondents lived in Keene and Harrisville (68%), was between the ages of 46 and 85, had been living in the Region for more than 11 years and did not have children in school. While the responses give some insight to opinions in the Region, due to the rate of response the information should be used only as a supplement to other findings.

## **IV. Vision, Goals, Objectives and Tasks**

### ***1. Vision Statement***

Today the Southwest Region is a prosperous, attractive place to live and work. The Region has a clear, unique identity and cohesive community within the larger central New England neighborhood. At the same time, the Region enjoys strong civic and economic connections with New England, the Nation and the rest of the globe. This is also the future envisioned in the CEDS.

Creativity, innovation, effectiveness, accountability, and adaptiveness will be hallmarks of both private and public enterprise in the Southwest Region. These attributes apply equally to cutting-edge technologies, the global market place and traditional New England lifestyles, including agriculture, forest industries and the arts. Private and public activity will foster equally economic enterprise, environmental protection, and conservation of our cultural heritage, seeking not to transform the landscape, but preserve our greatest assets.

Residents will enjoy a unique, prosperous and healthful quality of life characterized by diverse opportunities for employment, housing, education, and civic participation.

A strong Regional community is characterized by:

- low crime rate,
- diverse housing opportunities,
- volunteerism and participation in local affairs,
- honoring cultural and historical heritage,
- vitality of downtowns and village centers,
- coordinating community development efforts,
- cultural and recreational opportunities,
- preserving open space, and
- balancing preservation, conservation and development.

A competitive Regional economy is characterized by:

- cooperation among municipalities,
- quality infrastructure,
- strong educational and vocational opportunities,
- supporting and retaining local business,
- recruiting new business,
- promoting entrepreneurship,
- diverse job opportunities, and
- environmentally friendly business practices.

## **2. Goals, Objectives and Tasks**

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Southwest Region will accomplish this Vision by establishing eight goals—as well as related objectives and tasks—reflecting the results of the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis conducted by the CEDS Advisory Committee and additional public input. The goals, objectives and tasks are as follows:

**Goal A:** Maintain a high-quality labor force.

**Objective:** Provide workers with the skills to meet the needs of local business.

**Task:** Start an initiative to address workforce skills and to assess employer needs and provide required training.

Term: Short

**Task:** Strengthen programs for teaching basic technology skills to high school students.

Term: Medium

**Objective:** Ensure the availability of skilled workers to meet development demand.

**Task:** Recruit local youth and college students through apprenticeship and internship programs with Regional employers.

Term: Medium

**Task:** Recruit trained personnel in demand occupations from outside the Region.

Term: Long

**Objective:** Create employment opportunities that protect and raise workers' standard of living.

**Goal B:** Prepare for future development.

**Objective:** Ensure a healthy balance of residential, commercial, and industrial development, agriculture, forestry, and open space ("Smart Growth").

**Task:** Assist municipalities in reviewing zoning and other regulations regarding the location of potential future development.

Term: Short

**Task:** Promote the NH Main Street Program, including the principles of historic preservation and context-sensitive design.

**Term:** Medium

**Objective:** Provide information to municipalities about the costs and benefits of different types of development.

**Task:** Assist municipalities in updating their impact fee schedules.

Term: Medium

**Objective:** Support a quality transportation system, both locally and regionally, to provide capacity for desired economic development.

Task: In collaboration with NHDOT and other entities, support a system of diverse transportation modes by incorporating sidewalks and bicycle lanes into street and highway design, as well as by developing a regional public transportation system.

Term: Medium

Task: In collaboration with NHDOT and other entities, improve road conditions and access management to support safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

Term: Long

**Objective:** Modernize and maintain public and private infrastructure, including water, sewer, communications and schools, to meet future demand.

Task: Assess and inventory the capacity and quality of existing municipal infrastructure and facilities.

Term: Short

Task: Promote municipal infrastructure and facility capacity expansion and improvement where necessary.

Term: Medium

Task: Encourage the adoption of local capital improvement programs to upgrade and modernize municipal infrastructure and facilities.

Term: Medium

Task: Promote Tax Increment Financing districts as a means for improving and modernizing municipal infrastructure and facilities.

Term: Medium

Task: Encourage utility and telecommunication providers to participate in an infrastructure inventory for determining development need capacities.

Term: Medium

**Goal C:** Balance housing opportunities with trends in income, employment and community character.

**Objective:** Provide housing for all residents, considering type, location and cost.

Task: Assess Regional housing needs.

Term: Short

Task: Update master plans and zoning regulations to address housing needs.

Term: Medium

Task: Encourage the rehabilitation and construction of all housing types.

Term: Long

**Objective:** Support private and public housing development activities that provide affordable owner-occupied and renter-occupied homes and apartments.

**Goal D:** Strengthen the economic base.

**Objective:** Promote diverse types of economic activities.

Task: Promote the virtue of engaging in business activities.

Term: Short

Task: Strengthen programs that educate entrepreneurial start-ups about business planning, market research and other sound business practices.

Term: Short

Task: Establish business incubators and programs to provide low-cost rent, shared services, flexible financing and other appropriate services.

Term: Short

Task: Support and retain businesses, including innovative firms in export-oriented industry sectors.

Term: Medium

Task: Recruit businesses, including export-oriented companies, from outside the Region.

Term: Long

**Objective:** Strengthen the tourism industry.

Task: Create the position of a Regional tourism coordinator.

Term: Medium

Task: Develop marketing strategies to attract visitors to the Region.

Term: Medium

Task: Enhance opportunities for outdoor recreation (e.g. kiosks, markers, trail blazing system, bike and boat rentals etc).

Term: Medium

Task: Establish Regional visitor center.

Term: Long

**Objective:** Encourage creativity, innovation and cooperation in business and industry.

Task: Strengthen those individuals, organizations and businesses that help provide a creative environment and strengthen the Regional economy.

Term: Short

Task: Create working group of organizations such as economic development corporations, chambers of commerce and UNH Cooperative Extension for coordination of activities.

Term: Medium

Task: Encourage research collaboration between the Region's institutions of higher education and employers.

Term: Medium

Task: Establish an institution for focusing on research activities consistent with the economic goals of the Region.

Term: Long

**Goal E:** Support climate for helping business to create a diverse range of employment opportunities.

**Objective:** Remove unnecessary barriers for business development.

Task: Assist municipalities in reviewing zoning and other regulations regarding the location, required lot sizes and the diversity of business types permitted.

Term: Short

Task: Help municipalities in planning commercial and industrial development in areas with existing infrastructure (e.g. roads, water, sewer).

Term: Short

Task: Increase the number of shovel-ready industrial sites.

Term: Medium

Task: Strengthen organizations that provide business support, such as economic development corporations, chambers of commerce, Monadnock Business Incubator Network etc.

Term: Long

**Goal F:** Promote the concept of Regionalism.

**Objective:** Strengthen regional organizations and promote public awareness of regional issues and solutions.

Task: Coordinate work of regional organizations and agencies.

Term: Short

Task: Educate the public on the benefits of regional coordination and collaboration.

Term: Medium

Task: Create a point of reference that serves as a clearing house for Regional economic development activities and resources.

Term: Short

**Goal G:** Strengthen local governments.

**Objective:** Encourage a high level of volunteerism.

Task: Broaden the number of citizens involved in municipal government.

Term: Short

Task: Promote awareness among volunteers about their responsibilities.

Term: Short

**Objective:** Ensure responsible and effective municipal decision-making.

Task: Encourage municipalities to hire professional staff for particular municipal positions.

Term: Medium

Task: Provide technical training for elected officials and professional staff.

Term: Medium

Task: Promote inter-municipal resource sharing regarding staff, facilities, equipment and other municipal functions.

Term: Medium

**Goal H:** Strengthen the quality of health services.

**Objective:** Ensure access to and sufficient capacity of health services to serve citizens of all income levels.

Task: Support medical task forces for assessing the need for health services in the Region.

Term: Short

Task: Establish local branches of regional health providers, including doctors and registered nurses.

Term: Medium

## V. Action Plan

The Action Plan has been developed on the basis of the CEDS Advisory Committee's analysis of the Southwest Region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; the Committee's regional vision developing work; and the Committee's identification of goals, objectives and tasks. The Action Plan covers a period of five years wherein the goals are broken down into Short-Term, Medium-Term and Long-Term objectives and tasks. SWRPC solicited projects from communities and economic development stakeholders and reviewed the submitted projects based upon the criteria developed by the Advisory Committee. These projects were determined to contribute to the economic growth of the Region and to meet at least one of the goals identified. The aspiration is to receive project funding from a variety of federal, state, local, non-profit and private resources in order to move this Region toward accomplishing its vision.

The Action Plan describes the Task Ranking Criteria, the Project Ranking Criteria and includes the Project list.

### *1. Tasks Ranking*

The members of the CEDS Advisory Committee conducted a task ranking exercise. The results of that exercise are presented in the following two tables. The first table "Task Ranked by Goal" presents the tasks and the total score for each task. The second table "Tasks Ranked by Priority" presents Tasks in the numeric order of the scores, with the highest score being ranked the highest priority.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Methodology: Goals, Objectives and Tasks were printed on posters. In a first round, the CEDS Committee members attached up to ten "sticky dots" to those goals, objectives and tasks that they considered important. In a second round, the CEDS committee members attached up to ten additional "sticky dots" to those tasks that they considered instrumental for accomplishing the Vision.

The score for each task is the total number of "dots" allotted to the goal, objective and task. For example, hypothetically, if Goal A received four dots, the first Objective under Goal A received one dot, and Task 1 under that Objective received 10 dots and Task 2 under that Objective received 5 dots, the score for Task 1 would be  $4+1+10=15$  and Task 2 would be  $4+1+5=10$ .

**Table 47: Tasks Ranked by Goal**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Task</b>		<b>Points</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>1</b>	1	Start an initiative to address workforce skills and to assess employer needs and provide required training.	16
		2	Strengthen programs for teaching basic technology skills to high school students.	13
	<b>2</b>	3	Recruit local youth and college students through apprenticeship and internship programs with Regional employers.	11
		4	Recruit trained personnel in demand occupations from outside the Region.	10
<b>B</b>	<b>1</b>	1	Assist municipalities in reviewing zoning and other regulations regarding the location of potential future development.	17
		2	Promote the NH Main Street Program, including the principles of historic preservation and context-sensitive design.	11
	<b>2</b>	4	Assist municipalities in updating their impact fee schedules.	7
		5	In collaboration with NHDOT and other entities, support a system of diverse transportation modes by incorporating sidewalks and bicycle lanes into street and highway design, as well as by developing a regional public transportation system.	6
	<b>3</b>	6	In collaboration with NHDOT and other entities, improve road conditions and access management to support safe and efficient movement of people and goods.	5
		7	Assess and inventory the capacity and quality of existing municipal infrastructure and facilities.	7
	<b>4</b>	8	Promote municipal infrastructure and facility capacity expansion and improvement where necessary.	12
		9	Encourage the adoption of local capital improvement programs to upgrade and modernize municipal infrastructure and facilities.	7
		10	Promote Tax Increment Financing districts as a means for improving and modernizing municipal infrastructure and facilities.	7
		11	Encourage utility and telecommunication providers to participate in an infrastructure inventory for determining development need capacities.	8
		1	Assess Regional housing needs.	8
<b>C</b>	<b>1</b>	2	Update master plans and zoning regulations to address housing needs.	13
		3	Encourage the rehabilitation and construction of all housing types.	10
		1	Promote the virtue of engaging in business activities.	9

Goal	Objective	Task		Points
D	1	2	Strengthen programs that educate entrepreneurial start-ups about business planning, market research and other sound business practices.	21
		3	Establish business incubators and programs to provide low-cost rent, shared services, flexible financing and other appropriate services.	23
		4	Support and retain businesses, including innovative firms in export-oriented industry sectors.	17
		5	Recruit businesses, including export-oriented companies, from outside the Region.	14
		6	Create the position of a Regional tourism coordinator.	18
	2	7	Establish Regional visitor center.	18
		8	Develop marketing strategies to attract visitors to the Region.	18
		9	Enhance opportunities for outdoor recreation (e.g. kiosks, markers, trail maintenance, bike and boat rentals etc).	17
		10	Strengthen those individuals, organizations and businesses that help provide a creative environment and strengthen the Regional economy.	20
		11	Create working group of such organizations as economic development corporations, chambers of commerce and UNH Cooperative Extension for coordination of activities.	17
		12	Encourage research collaboration between the Region's institutions of higher education and employers.	21
		13	Establish an institution for focusing on research activities consistent with the economic goals of the Region.	15
		1	Assist municipalities in reviewing zoning and other regulations regarding the location, required lot sizes and the diversity of business types permitted.	14
	1	2	Help municipalities in planning commercial and industrial development in areas with existing infrastructure (e.g. roads, water, sewer).	11
		3	Increase the number of shovel-ready industrial sites.	8
		4	Strengthen organizations that provide business support, such as economic development corporations, chambers of commerce, Monadnock Business Incubator Network etc.	19
		1	Coordinate work of regional organizations and agencies.	13
F	1	2	Educate the public on the benefits of regional coordination and collaboration.	13
		3	Create a point of reference that serves as a clearing house for Regional economic development activities and resources.	8

Goal	Objective	Task		Points
		1	Broaden the number of citizens involved in municipal government.	4
G	1	2	Promote awareness among volunteers about their responsibilities.	2
		3	Hire professional staff for particular positions.	2
	2	4	Provide technical training for elected officials and professional staff.	7
		5	Promote inter-municipal resource sharing regarding staff, facilities and equipment.	2
		1	Support medical task forces for assessing the need for health services in the Region.	2
H	1	2	Establish local branches of regional health providers, including doctors and RNs.	1

**Table 48: Tasks Ranked by Priority**

Rank	Goal	Objective	Task	Term
1	D	1	Establish business incubators and programs to provide low-cost rent, shared services, flexible financing and other appropriate services.	Short
2	D	1	Strengthen programs that educate entrepreneurial start-ups about business planning, market research and other sound business practices.	Short
3	D	3	Encourage research collaboration between the Region's institutions of higher education and employers.	Medium
4	D	3	Strengthen those individuals, organizations and businesses that help provide a creative environment and strengthen the Regional economy.	Short
5	E	1	Strengthen organizations that provide business support, such as economic development corporations, chambers of commerce etc.	Long
6	D	2	Enhance opportunities for outdoor recreation (e.g. kiosks, markers, trail maintenance, bike and boat rentals etc).	Medium
7	D	2	Create the position of a Regional tourism coordinator.	Medium
8	D	2	Establish Regional visitor center.	Long
9	B	1	Assist municipalities in reviewing zoning and other regulations regarding the location of potential future development.	Short
10	D	1	Support and retain businesses, including innovative firms in export-oriented industry sectors.	Medium
11	D	2	Develop marketing strategies to attract visitors to the Region.	Medium
12	D	3	Create working group of such organizations as economic development corporations, chambers of commerce and UNH Cooperative Extension for co-ordination of activities.	Medium
13	A	1	Start an initiative to address workforce skills and to assess employer needs and provide required training.	Short

Rank	Goal	Objective	Task	Term
14	D	3	Establish an institution for focusing on research activities consistent with the economic goals of the Region.	Long
15	E	1	Assist municipalities in reviewing zoning and other regulations regarding the location, required lot sizes and the diversity of business types permitted.	Short
16	D	1	Recruit businesses, including export-oriented companies, from outside the Region.	Long
17	A	1	Strengthen programs for teaching basic technology skills to high school students.	Medium
18	F	1	Coordinate work of regional organizations and agencies.	Short
19	C	1	Update master plans and zoning regulations to address housing needs.	Medium
20	F	1	Educate the public on the benefits of regional coordination and collaboration.	Medium
21	B	4	Promote municipal infrastructure and facility capacity expansion and improvement where necessary.	Medium
22	E	1	Help municipalities in planning commercial and industrial development in areas with existing infrastructure (e.g. roads, water, sewer).	Short
23	A	2	Recruit local youth and college students through apprenticeship and internship programs with Regional employers.	Medium
24	B	1	Promote the NH Main Street Program, including the principles of historic preservation and context-sensitive design.	Medium
25	C	1	Encourage the rehabilitation and construction of all housing types.	Long
26	A	2	Recruit trained personnel in demand occupations from outside the Region.	Long
27	D	1	Promote the virtue of engaging in business activities.	Short
28	B	4	Encourage utility and telecommunication providers to participate in an infrastructure inventory for determining development need capacities.	Medium
29	C	1	Assess Regional housing needs.	Short
30	G	2	Provide technical training for elected officials and professional staff.	Medium
31	E	1	Increase the number of shovel-ready industrial sites.	Medium
32	B	4	Assess and inventory the capacity and quality of existing municipal infrastructure and facilities.	Short
33	B	4	Encourage the adoption of local capital improvement programs to upgrade and modernize municipal infrastructure and facilities.	Medium
34	B	4	Promote Tax Increment Financing districts as a means for improving and modernizing municipal infrastructure and facilities.	Medium
35	B	2	Assist municipalities in updating their impact fee schedules.	Medium
36	B	3	In collaboration with NHDOT and other entities, support a system of diverse transportation modes by incorporating sidewalks and bicycle lanes into street and highway design, as well as by developing a regional public transportation system.	Medium
37	B	3	In collaboration with NHDOT and other entities, improve road conditions and access management to support safe and efficient movement of people and goods.	Long
38	G	1	Broaden the number of citizens involved in municipal government.	Short
39	G	2	Promote inter-municipal resource sharing regarding staff, facilities and equipment.	Medium
40	H	1	Support medical task forces for assessing the need for health services in the Region.	Short
41	G	1	Promote awareness among volunteers about their responsibilities.	Short

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Term</b>
42	H	1	Establish local branches of regional health providers, including doctors and RNs.	Medium
43	F	1	Create a point of reference that serves as a clearing house for Regional economic development activities and resources.	Short
44	G	2	Hire professional staff for particular positions.	Medium

## ***2. Project Ranking Criteria***

The criteria were established by the CEDS Advisory Committee based upon the EDA Investment Policy Guidelines and additional criteria important to development in this Region. The additional criteria will help to develop as comprehensive a list as possible to address the eight goals and to support those projects that will be funded through sources other than EDA.

The EDA Investment Policy Guidelines form the larger framework for evaluating CEDS projects, particularly those seeking EDA funding. The guidelines are included in the CEDS Advisory Committee deliberations. The 2015 EDA Investment Guidelines are as follows:

### **1. Collaborative Regional Innovation**

Initiatives that support the development and growth of innovation clusters based on existing regional competitive strengths.

### **2. Public/Private Partnerships**

Investments that use both public- and private-sector resources and leverage complementary investments by other government/public entities and/or nonprofits.

### **3. National Strategic Priorities**

Initiatives that encourage job growth and business expansion related to advanced manufacturing; information technology (e.g., broadband, smart grid) infrastructure; communities severely impacted by automotive industry restructuring; urban waters; natural disaster mitigation and resiliency; access to capital for small, medium-sized, and ethnically diverse enterprises; and innovations in science and health care.

### **4. Global Competitiveness**

Initiatives that support high-growth businesses and innovation-based entrepreneurs to expand and compete in global markets, especially investments that expand U.S. exports, encourage foreign direct investment, and promote the repatriation of jobs back to the U.S.

### **5. Environmentally-Sustainable Development**

Investments that promote job creation and economic prosperity through projects that enhance environmental quality and develop and implement green products, processes, places, and buildings as part of the green economy. This includes support for energy-efficient green technologies.

### **6. Economically Distressed and Underserved Communities**

Investments that strengthen diverse communities that have suffered disproportionate economic job losses and/or are rebuilding to become more competitive in the global economy.