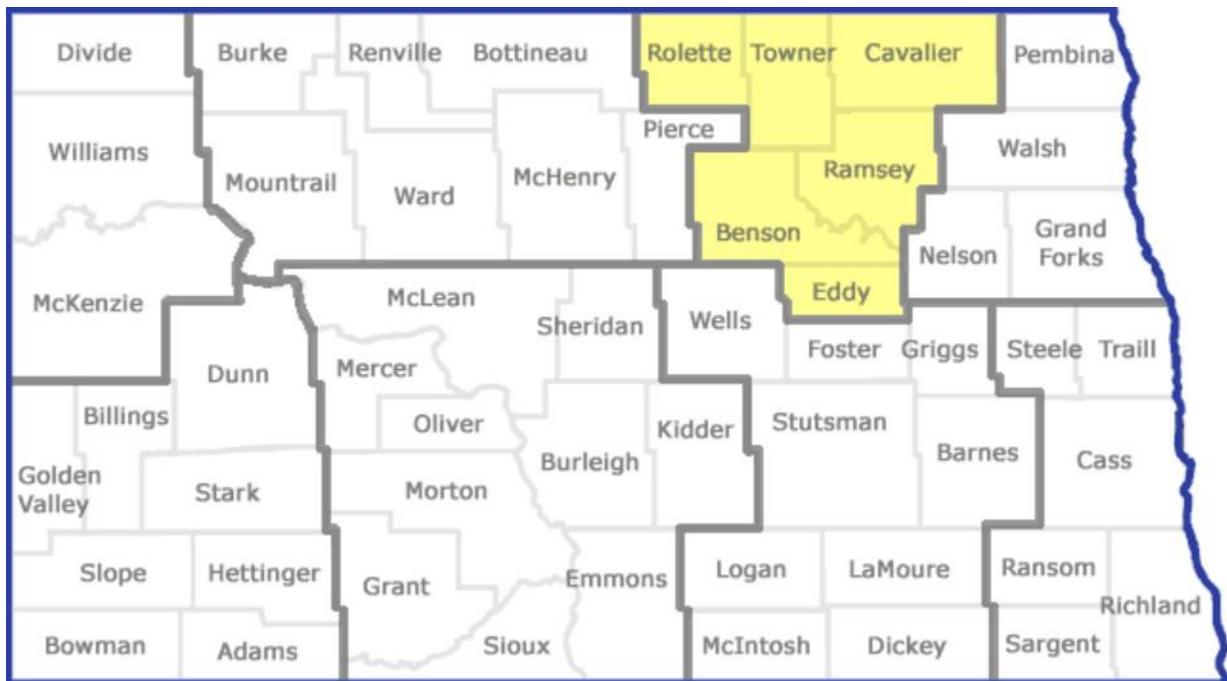


# COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

January 2023 through December 2027

## North Central Planning Council



**Serving the North Dakota Counties of Benson,  
Cavalier, Eddy, Ramsey, Rolette, and Towner**



# NORTH CENTRAL PLANNING COUNCIL

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*This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan was prepared under an award from the Economic Development Administration. The plan is an expression of the goals and intent of the Region III CEDS committee and North Central Planning Council. The statements, findings, conclusions and recommendations contained herein are those of the authors and do not reflect the view of the United States Department of Commerce: Economic Development Administration.*

*Submitted for Public Comment: August 15, 2022*

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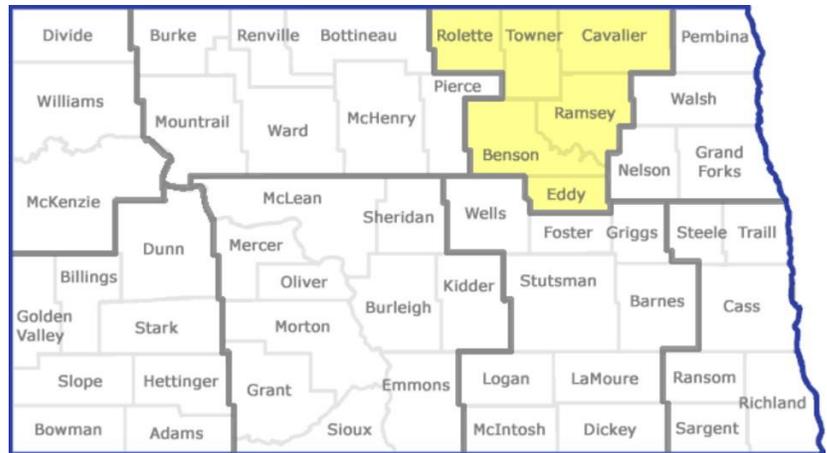
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

North Central Planning Council (NCPC) serves six counties in north-central North Dakota, including: Benson, Eddy, Cavalier, Ramsey, Rolette, and Towner Counties. It is identified as Region III and is one of eight planning regions in North Dakota.

North Central Planning Council has served the six counties, forty cities, and two Indian reservations of North Dakota, Region III since 1972. In October of 1978, the Council received designation as an EDA Economic Development District. Thus, work toward the economic revitalization of the Region began.



Every five years, the North Central Planning Council planning region develops the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which provides valuable information on the planning regions including the following:

- The current economic and demographic condition of the planning region;
- Analysis of regional strengths and weaknesses;
- Proposes action on issues affecting the Region; population decline, diversification of the economy, emerging industries, infrastructure needs and resiliency; and
- Provides the framework for the planning Region to be eligible for the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration funding.

In the past, CEDS efforts have included infrastructure development, housing development, solid waste, water quality, and planning the provision of transportation services. Community development will still be seen as a necessary precondition of economic development. However, North Central Planning Council's CEDS will principally be guided in the direction of business development in keeping with congressional intent and the needs of Region III.

Goals as defined and prioritized by the CEDS committee:

1. Business Development and Retention
2. Retain the Region's Population
3. Economic Development Coordination
4. Community Livability and Quality of Place
5. Disaster Mitigation, Response and Recovery
6. Provide EDA and Other Program Support

North Central Planning Council held a public meeting and conducted multiple surveys in each of the six counties for the citizens of the Region to participate in the CEDS process. An additional avenue for participation includes the Board of Director meetings for North Central Planning Council. Further, the Council also holds several public meetings each year either on specific projects or to disperse general information. At the close of each fiscal year, the Council prepares an annual report which is presented at the Annual Meeting and distributed throughout the Region through units of governments and direct mailing to stakeholders.



## **CHAPTER I: SUMMARY**

The North Central Planning Council planning region is North Dakota Sub Region III, located in North Central North Dakota. It is composed of Benson, Cavalier, Eddy, Ramsey, Rolette, and Towner Counties. In addition to the six counties, the area includes two sovereign Native Nations: The Spirit Lake Nation, located on the southern shore of Devils Lake in Benson County and the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa in Rolette County. The northern tier of counties Rolette, Towner, and Cavalier form a part of the international boundary between the United States and the Province of Manitoba, Canada.

North Central Planning Council is the designated sub-State planning unit for North Dakota Region III. It is charged with coordinating State service and delivering development assistance from State and Federal agencies and programs. This designation has assisted NCPC with fulfilling the goals of its mission statement as follows:

- North Central Planning Council exists in order to better coordinate and facilitate the provision of economic and social opportunities to residents within the counties of Rolette, Towner, Benson, Ramsey, and Eddy by assisting in planning for orderly development, improvement, and conservation of the planning region, its people and resources.

The Region encompasses 4,316,472 acres and as of 2020 has a total population of 41,040. The Region's population is dispersed as one would expect for a rural area, with many small communities and larger community hubs. Population centers include Devils Lake and a series of intermediate sized communities, these are: Belcourt, Rolla, Langdon, Cando, Fort Totten and New Rockford.

As agriculture historically has been and still is the primary industry for the Region, the economy is highly reactive to the volatile agricultural economy and its unpredictable factors, such as grain prices, technology, weather, disease, and pests. Land use in the Region is primarily agricultural. Approximately 75% of the land area is devoted to crop and other agricultural land uses. Less than 3% of the land is considered urban or built up.

Over the years, more efficient farm equipment, larger machinery, and better farming methods have seen the average size of the farms in North Central economic development region increase while simultaneously decreasing the demand for farm

labor. This in turn has led to an outmigration of the population from rural areas and a lessened demand for goods and services. As the economic viability of these rural cities diminished, stores and shops have closed; sources of income and employment have been lost; and general deterioration has set in. Buildings which were once centers of activity have fallen into disrepair, and many have been abandoned or demolished. The deterioration and abandonment of buildings has been paralleled by the deterioration and abandonment of the town themselves. As long as present trends in agriculture continue, small rural cities which owe their existence solely to agriculture expect to face stiff odds in obtaining the resources necessary for future growth and development.

Other factors that have contributed to reduced community population have been a continuous fluctuation of farm prices, lack of industry diversification, a four-year drought (1988-1991) followed by a wet cycle of over 24 years. This wet cycle caused sheet flooding and preventive planting from 1993 to the current time. The current wet cycle began in 1993 when the lake was at 1420 feet above sea level and had an area of 60,000 acres. The elevation of the lake on July 1, 2011 was 1454.5 feet above sea level and had an area of 180,000 acres. Industrial and economic development activities have been able to assist certain localities, yet the benefits were not widespread. The communities of Maddock, Dunseith, Fort Totten, Belcourt, and Devils Lake have had major employers close. These years have also witnessed a huge change in the Region's transportation system. Railroad lines in some cases have been abandoned while other lines were upgraded to be able to accept unit freight trains. Highways, county and township roads have had to be raised to accommodate the rising waters of Devils Lake. Secondary roads were abandoned creating longer routes to essential services for many of our rural residents. The subsiding of Devils Lake creates an additional problem of how to address emerging roads.

## **DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC DATA**

There have been many changes that have occurred in the Region over the past twenty-five years. One of the most significant demographic factors has been continued population decline. This population decline has caused many small towns to move from thriving communities to surviving communities. Other characteristics of the population of the Region and economic drivers that have been affected include labor force, educational attainment, per capita income, and poverty.

**Population Levels**

Exhibit 1 indicates the population changes that have occurred since 2000. Three of the six counties continue to show decreases in population although not at the same significant rate. Rolette, Benson, and Ramsey Counties have shown slight population gains since 2010, with Rolette County being the only county to maintain positive population gains over time. The State of North Dakota which saw a decrease in population in the 1980’s and 1990’s saw this reverse in the 2000’s and continues. The State of North Dakota saw an increase in population of 12.7% from 2010-2020 for a total 2020 population of 760,394.

<b>Exhibit I</b>					
<b>Population Change Region III of North Dakota</b>					
<b>Area</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2000-2010</b>	<b>2010-2020</b>
Benson	6,860	6,675	6,936	-3.8%	2.8%
Cavalier	3,769	3,982	4,785	-16.8%	-5.3%
Eddy	2,262	2,382	2,740	-13.1%	-5.0%
Ramsey	11,521	11,450	12,000	-4.6%	0.6%
Rolette	14,437	14,003	13,659	2.5%	3.1%
Towner	2,191	2,235	2,862	-21.91%	-2.0%
North Dakota	760,394	674,530	641,298	5.2%	12.7%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau					

**Labor Force and Unemployment**

The employed labor force has seen decline in all counties in the Region, with the exception of Rolette County. The employed labor for Benson, Cavalier, Eddy, Ramsey, and Towner counties had a sizable decrease during the time frame of 2015 through 2020, which corresponds directly with when the U.S. Census was taken during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

<b>Exhibit 2</b>					
<b>Size of Labor Force by County Region III of North Dakota</b>					
<b>Area</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2000</b>
Benson	2,068	2,499	2,356	2,113	2,362
Cavalier	1,662	2,077	1,457	1,514	2,220
Eddy	1,036	1,293	667	736	1,016
Ramsey	5,482	5,671	5,596	5,593	5,646
Rolette	4,901	4,858	4,615	4,772	4,945
Towner	944	1,271	828	933	1,247
<b>Region III</b>	<b>16,093</b>	<b>17,669</b>	<b>15,519</b>	<b>15,661</b>	<b>17,436</b>
Source: U.S. Census Bureau					

When retrieving the most recent unemployment data, it can be easier to see the true status of unemployment within the region versus the statistics gathered during the last Census. See the following table (Exhibit 3) for unemployment data as of July 2022.

<b>Exhibit 3</b>	
<b>Most Recent Unemployment Data Region III of North Dakota</b>	
<b>Area</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
Benson	3.5%
Cavalier	2.7%
Eddy	3.0%
Ramsey	2.5%
Rolette	11%
Towner	2.6%

<b>Region III (on average)</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
<b>State of North Dakota</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
Source: U.S. Census Bureau	

As previously mentioned, the rate of unemployment in the Region is very high. However, the incidence of unemployment does not fall equally upon each county. Two counties in particular are hard hit by unemployment. These include Benson and Rolette Counties. Much of the high unemployment rates in Benson and Rolette Counties can be attributed to very high unemployment rates on the Indian reservations. Eddy County has historically had stable employment levels; however, the latest statistics do show an increase in unemployment.

**Labor Market**

The availability of labor in the Region depends to a large extent upon the skill level and education attainment of young people entering the labor force. There are 18,945 people between the age of 25 - 64 in the Region, and of these 41.6% have attained some college and 21.2% have attained a bachelor's degree or higher.

**Education**

The U.S. Census Bureau, American Community, 5-Year Estimates information in the following table (Exhibit 4) shows the education attainment of persons age 25 and over within the Region. It can be seen that Cavalier, Ramsey, and Eddy Counties have the highest percentage of High School Graduates and Ramsey County has the highest percentage with a Bachelor's Degree at 19.5% and Graduate Degrees at 6.8%.

<b>Exhibit 4</b>							
<b>Education Attainment as Percentage of Persons Age 25 and Over</b>							
<b>Area</b>	<b>Less than High School</b>	<b>HS Diploma or GED</b>	<b>Some College or Associates</b>	<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	<b>Graduate or Professional Degree</b>	<b>HS or Higher</b>	<b>Bachelor's Degree or Higher</b>
Benson	13.7	29.8	39.3	13.1	4.1	86.3	17.2
Cavalier	6.7	26.7	43.8	18.4	4.3	93.3	22.8
Eddy	9.6	30.7	37.4	16.7	5.7	90.4	22.3
Ramsey	8.4	26.7	38.6	19.5	6.8	91.6	26.3

Rolette	11.3	24.8	44.9	14.3	4.7	88.7	19.0
Towner	10.9	29.9	44.8	11.8	2.7	89.1	14.5
Source: U.S. Census Bureau							

### Income

Income is one measure of the economic well being of a population. Another is the incidence of poverty. The Region's average median household income, shown in Exhibit 5, is \$51,135. This is lower than the State's level of \$65,315. Of the six counties, several made significant gains compared to the reported median household income in 2014. Of those making significant gains include Benson, Eddy, and Rolette Counties. Only Towner County reported a median household income lower than previously reported in 2014 (\$51,961 in 2014; \$49,464 in 2020).

<b>Exhibit 5</b>			
<b>Per Capita Personal Income Rank</b>			
<b>Area</b>	<b>Median HH Income 2020</b>	<b>Median HH Income 2014</b>	<b>Median HH Income 2010</b>
Benson	\$50,329	\$39,342	\$32,815
Cavalier	\$54,955	\$54,057	\$48,535
Eddy	\$52,895	\$45,726	\$37,475
Ramsey	\$52,688	\$51,097	\$47,821
Rolette	\$46,481	\$35,630	\$31,592
Towner	\$49,464	\$51,961	\$46,279
<b>State of ND</b>	<b>\$65,315</b>	<b>\$60,227</b>	<b>\$47,898</b>
Source: U.S. Census Bureau			

### Poverty

The incidence of poverty is well illustrated in the following table (Exhibit 6). It shows the number and percentage of persons below poverty for each of the Region's counties as well as for the Region. Overall, the Region has a poverty rate of 21.3% which is up from

the rate of 20.1% in 2010. Both Benson and Rolette Counties experience unacceptable high rates of 32.4% and 26.7%, respectively. The North Dakota poverty rate is 10.5%.

<b>Exhibit 6</b>			
<b>Poverty by County</b>			
<b>Area</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Persons in Poverty</b>	<b>%</b>
Benson	6,860	2,206	32.4
Cavalier	3,769	461	12.6
Eddy	2,262	234	10.7
Ramsey	11,521	1,877	17
Rolette	14,437	3,773	26.7
Towner	2,191	194	9.1
<b>Region III</b>	<b>41,040</b>	<b>8,745</b>	<b>21.3</b>
<b>State of ND</b>	<b>760,394</b>	<b>77,491</b>	<b>10.5</b>
Source: U.S. Census Bureau			

**Economic Base**

Agriculture has long been the primary economic driver in North Dakota and in Region III. North Dakota benefited from an increase in the agriculture economy from 1990 to 2013 growing by over \$700 million. The following table shows the economic base by industrial category in Region III from 1990 to 2016. Agriculture is consistently the single largest economic sector for Region III. The Region does not have any mining or oil exploration/ extraction or refining.

<b>Exhibit 7</b>									
<b>ND State Region 3's Economic Base, by Industrial Categories, Selected Years, 1990-2016</b>									
<b>Year</b>	<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>Coal Mining &amp; Conversion</b>	<b>Oil/ND Exp., Ext. &amp; Refining</b>	<b>Tourism</b>	<b>Exported Services</b>	<b>All Primary Industries</b>	<b>Federal Payment</b>	<b>Total</b>

Million Current Dollars									
1990	312.8	25.9	-	-	30.2	-	368.9	293.7	662.6
1995	325.4	37.5	-	-	69.2	-	432.5	374.1	806.6
2000	281.7	53.6	-	-	243.3	16.0	594.6	413.3	1007.9
2005	414.1	70.1	-	-	309.9	20.1	814.2	573.5	1387.7
2010	816.1	82.5	-	-	397.2	34.1	1329.9	792.1	2122.0
2015	757.3	123.8	-	-	477.6	32.7	1391.4	817.0	2208.4
2016	878.0	119.2	-	-	469.9	34.3	1501.4	859.2	2303.6
Million Constant 2020 Dollars									
1990	498.7	41.3	-	-	48.2	-	588.2	468.3	1056.5
1995	459.9	53.0	-	-	98.4	-	611.3	528.8	1140.1
2000	366.6	69.8	-	-	316.7	20.8	773.9	537.9	1311.8
2005	479.9	81.2	-	-	359.1	23.3	943.5	664.5	1608.0
2010	859.5	86.9	-	-	418.3	35.9	1400.6	834.2	2234.8
2015	767.1	125.4	-	-	483.8	33.1	1409.4	827.6	2237.0
2016	878.0	119.2	-	-	469.9	34.3	1501.4	859.2	2306.6
North Dakota State University - latest data available is 2016									

## ENVIRONMENTAL GEOGRAPHIC, CLIMATIC, CULTURAL & NATURAL RESOURCES

Business development and environmental protection may at first appear to have little in common, but in reality, it is important that developers, planners, zoners, and local government officials attend adequately to environmental protection at the time of business development.

### Plant and Wildlife Resources

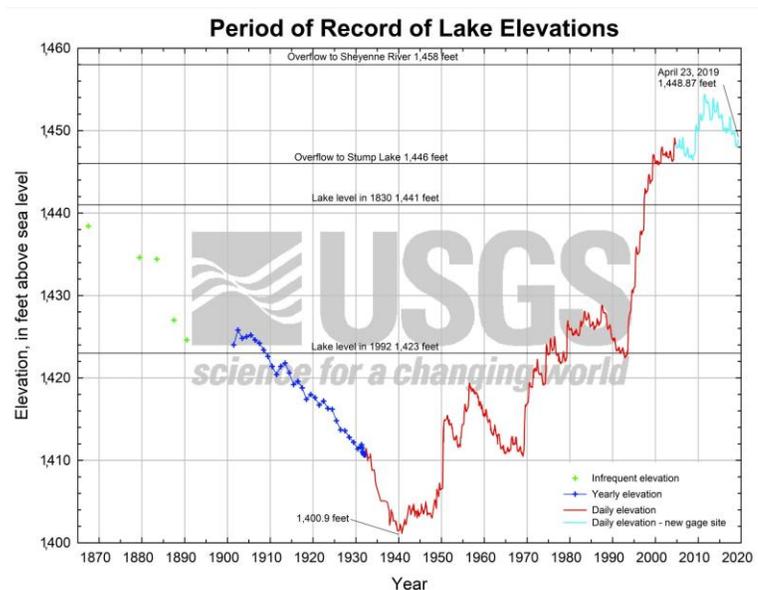
Region III is located in the prairie pothole region of North America. As such, its wetlands contribute significantly to waterfowl production. Much of the wetland acreage under production is controlled by the Federal Programs such as Federal Refuge Fee Title, Federal Refuge Easement, Waterfowl Production Area, Game Management Area, Wetland Under Easement and Waterbanks. Because of their remote locations, many of these areas are not threatened by economic development activities. However,

development activities in certain communities such as Devils Lake must be cognizant of wetland locations. The existence of a significant waterfowl population contributes to the tourism economy with a significant number of hunters coming to the Region each year for hunting.

### Surface and Groundwater

In a semi-arid area like North Central North Dakota, the integrity of water resources is a significant concern. These water resources include surface water (both lakes and streams) as well as groundwater aquifers. The following graph illustrates the change of surface water for Devils Lake over time.

**Period of Record of Lake Elevations**



### Historic/Cultural Resources

North Central Planning Council’s region has a colorful and vivid history. Given the low level of development in recent times, much of the areas still contain resources of local historical significance. Every economic development project, prior to construction, must be reviewed by the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Officer to ensure that the development does not adversely affect such resources.

Finally, the environmental concern of architectural origin presents itself in older buildings that are suitable for development. Many of the Region’s institutions (schools and hospitals) have closed during the past 20 years. Community leaders often consider such vacant buildings viable resources for economic development. Most of these buildings, however, contain asbestos and other hazardous materials. Removal and disposal of those materials present a problem in rural areas.

### Infrastructure

The infrastructure of the Region can impose environmental constraints on economic development. Of particular concern in some communities are the sewer lagoon’s capacities. Some of the intermediate sized communities do not have the excess lagoon

capacity or water supply to make large scale economic development without adjusting their systems.

### **Natural Resources**

The most significant natural resource in economic terms is the Region's soil (agriculture). Other natural resources of importance would be the water and natural features that lend themselves to tourism development.

- Agriculture is the main activity in the area. Crops raised from the soil account for 85% of all agricultural crops sold.
- Water Resources – Water resources in the Region are divided into two categories – surface water and groundwater. Surface water consists of natural and manmade lakes, marshes and rivers, ground water consists of aquifers.

Four major rivers provide drainage from the Region including the James River, Sheyenne River, Souris River, and Pembina River. Most of the Region, approximately 3,800 square miles, are in the closed Devils Lake Basin which is the ultimate collecting point for the majority of the basin's surface run-off.

Devils Lake, one of the largest natural freshwater lakes contained solely within the contiguous United States, is located in the North Central Region. Because Devils Lake is a closed basin, the elevation and the area of the lake tend to vary as to the climate wet and dry cycles. The current wet cycle began in 1993 when the lake was at 1420 feet above sea level and the elevation of the lake on July 1, 2011, was 1454.5 feet above sea level and had an area of 180,000 acres. Devils Lake, as well as numerous wetlands and smaller lakes, provides ample recreation potential. The area is known for its excellent fishing and waterfowl hunting.

### **Recreation**

Recreation activities in the Region emphasize activities which utilize the area's resources and environment.

Because of the presence in the Region of numerous wetlands on the central flyway for migratory waterfowl, goose and duck hunting are extremely popular in the fall when hunters from within and from outside of the area gravitate to Devils Lake and surrounding area to hunt.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service presently controls over 50,000 wetland acres in Region III designated as waterfowl production areas and over 35,000 acres designated as national wildlife refuges. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department maintains an

additional 12,000 acres throughout the Region designated as game management areas; most of the latter are open to public hunting as are numerous acres of privately owned land

During the late fall and winter months, deer hunting, trapping, and ice fishing provide outdoor recreation as do snowmobiling, cross country skiing and downhill skiing. Frost Fire Ski Resort in Cavalier County provides snow skiing. Numerous ice skating and hockey rinks are located around the Region; Langdon, Cando, and Devils Lake all have indoor multi-use ice rinks.

Fishing, boating, camping, and other forms of lake based recreation are available throughout Region III during the summer months. Devils Lake has an abundant supply of northern pike, walleye pike, bass, and perch. Other lakes, rivers, and ponds also provide good fishing.

Other recreational activities include community parks, pools, and golf courses.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES**

### **Water Systems**

There are twenty-seven cities in the Region which have municipal water supply systems. These cities' combined population represents about 90% of the total population of the six county area. The remaining eight cities depend on private wells. Of the cities which



have municipal water supply systems, five utilize surface water with the remainder utilizing groundwater supplies.

Rural water systems have expanded to cover the rural and unincorporated cities. The rural systems are: Greater Ramsey Water District, Cavalier County Rural Water, All Seasons Rural Water, and Pierce County Rural Water.

The City of Devils Lake has completed upgrading the service lines for their water supply and a new source, and completed construction on a new water treatment plant.

### **Sewage Disposal Systems**

Twenty-six cities accounting for more than 90% of the combined population of the Region have municipal sewage systems. Those cities which lack municipal sewage systems depend upon private septic systems. There is also a rural sewer system in the area around Devils Lake which is connected to the City of Devils Lake system and uses the excess capacity of the city lagoon system.

Sewage treatment, in cities having municipal systems, is accomplished with stabilization ponds or lagoons having from one to four cells. During summer months, organic matter entering a stabilization pond normally is oxidized through interaction of air and waste water. During winter, however, the lagoons freeze over and become anaerobic. This substantially reduced their efficiency by curtailing the rates of oxidation and evaporation. The City of Devils Lake uses a lagoon along with a Lemna system where the waste, after spending time moving through the lagoon system, enters a series of canals where plants take additional nutrients from the waste before discharge to the lake system. This enables the system to process additional waste during the warm months to give added capacity during the cooler periods.

### **Drainage and Storm Sewers**

Of the Region's forty cities, ten are served by municipal storm systems. All other communities use a series of surface drains and culverts.

### **Solid Waste Disposal**

The solid waste disposal system throughout the Region has gone through a very significant change. The system has been substantially redesigned in response to directives promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency and the North Dakota Department of Health. The system is being designed in order to address ground water pollution standards.

Presently the Region is served by six public landfills that can only accept inert material. The Region is also served by two transfer stations, one at Langdon and one at Devils Lake. All materials hauled to these transfer stations are either transferred to Sawyer or Grand Forks.

## EMERGING INDUSTRY SECTORS

### Tourism and Recreation

Tourism and recreation were not considered a major industry in the area for so many years, but this concept has changed. Greater efforts are being put forth by both State and local entities to attract and accommodate tourists.

Although expenditure figures are not available for the six county Region, it is known that Devils Lake, with excellent hunting, fishing and associated tourist attractions, brings 40 to 60 million dollars into the local economy annually. For example, in 1995, there were 42,000 fishing hours, in 1998 94,000 fishing hours. For the same time period in 2001, it had risen to 315,000 fishing hours and in 2008 1,026,000 fishing hours. The same type of usage has increased proportionally for the waterfowl hunting season. (Source: ND Game & Fish Department)



Over the past few years, casinos, convention centers, restaurants and hotels have made their effect felt on the two Indian reservations. The Spirit Lake Casino on the Spirit Lake Nation and the Sky Dancer Casino on the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa attract thousands of tourists from North Dakota, Minnesota and Canada.

There are many historic, scenic and recreational areas in the Region that attract tourists. These include Fort Totten, Devils Lake, Devils Lake Heritage Center, the International Peace Garden, Turtle Mountains, Hawk Museum, Pembina Gorge and Frost Fire Mountain Ski Resort.

The Region also supports several festivals and events that draw tourists and participants. These include Fort Totten Pow Wow, Fort Totten Little Theater, Frost Fire Mountain Little Theater, Turtle Mountain Pow Wow, Devils Lake ShiverFest, Devils Lake Devil's Run, Egeland Small Engine Show, New Rockford Steam Threshers, New Rockford Summer Theater, summer musicals, and others that are not on an annual schedule. However, because the tourism industry is relatively new, there remains substantial room for growth.

## Agriculture Technology

Agriculture like many industries has become more reliant on technology that affects both producers and dealers. Proper utilization of farming technology can result in better yields, decreased costs, and decreased environmental impacts. The Region has seen a need for trained technicians and operators and there is an opportunity at the community college level to train people for this industry.

## OTHER FACTORS

### Housing

Throughout the community opinion intake process and over the years at several economic development-based meetings, the needs of the Region surrounding affordable housing continue to rise to the surface. In 2021, North Central Planning Council commissioned a study on housing in the Region based on ESRI and EMRI data. The following exhibit includes the six county-based housing summaries that resulted from the housing study.

<b>Exhibit 8</b>				
Housing Market Demand Model Benson County				
	2010	2016	2021	2026 Projected
Population	6,660	6,840	6,936	7,158
Group Quarters Population	15	16	16	17
Percentage of Population in Households	99.77%	99.77%	99.77%	99.77%
Household Population	6,645	6,824	6,920	7,141
Average Household Size	2.97	2.98	2.96	2.96
Number of Households	2,328	2,233	2,297	2,259
Housing Unit Occupancy Rate	79.40%	75.70%	75.70%	73.80%
Number of Housing Units	2,932	2,950	3,037	3,062
Estimated Number of Vacant Units	604	717	738	802
Estimated New Units 2010-2021; (proj. 2026)		18	87	25
Demolitions/deconversions 2010-2021; (proj. 2026)		54	56	56
Net Gain in Housing Units		-36	31	-31
Demand for New Units: Based on Household Growth		-95	64	-38
Total new units needed (2021-2026)		-41	119	18

**Housing Market Demand Model Cavalier County**

	2010	2016	2021	2026 Projected
Population	3,993	3,824	3,811	3,881
Group Quarters Population	73	70	70	71
Percentage of Population in Households	98.16%	98.16%	98.16%	98.16%
Household Population	3,920	3,754	3,741	3,810
Average Household Size	2.34	2.15	2.1	2.08
Number of Households	2,017	1,818	1,876	1,821
Housing Unit Occupancy Rate	74.00%	78.70%	80.10%	78.90%
Number of Housing Units	2,725	2,309	2,343	2,307
Estimated Number of Vacant Units	709	492	466	487
Estimated New Units 2010-2021; (proj. 2026)		-416	34	-36
Demolitions/deconversions 2010-2021; (proj. 2026)		42	43	42
Net Gain in Housing Units		-458	-9	-78
Demand for New Units: -Based on Household Growth		-195	57	-54
Total new units needed (2021-2026)		-153	100	-12

**Housing Market Demand Model Eddy County**

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2026 Projected</b>
Population	2,385	2,288	2,357	2,455
Group Quarters Population	85	82	84	87
Percentage of Population in Households	96.44%	96.44%	96.44%	96.44%
Household Population	2,300	2,206	2,273	2,368
Average Household Size	2.3	2.18	2.14	2.13
Number of Households	1,164	1,057	1,021	982
Housing Unit Occupancy Rate	82.10%	79.80%	77.20%	74.80%
Number of Housing Units	1,418	1,323	1,323	1,313
Estimated Number of Vacant Units	254	267	302	331
Estimated New Units 2010-2021; (proj. 2026)		-95	0	-10
Demolitions/deconversions 2010-2021; (proj. 2026)		24	24	24
Net Gain in Housing Units		-119	-24	-34
Demand for New Units: -Based on Household Growth		-103	-35	-38
Total new units needed (2021-2026)		-79	-10	-14

**Housing Market Demand Model Ramsey County**

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2026 Projected</b>
Population	11,451	11,557	11,565	11,518
Group Quarters Population	440	444	444	442
Percentage of Population in Households	96.16%	96.16%	96.16%	96.16%
Household Population	11,011	11,113	11,121	11,076
Average Household Size	2.34	2.21	2.17	2.16
Number of Households	4,957	4,955	5,011	4,895
Housing Unit Occupancy Rate	86.50%	88.30%	88.40%	86.30%
Number of Housing Units	5,729	5,615	5,673	5,675
Estimated Number of Vacant Units	773	657	658	777
Estimated New Units 2010-2021; (proj. 2026)		-114	58	2
Demolitions/deconversions 2010-2021; (proj. 2026)		103	104	104
Net Gain in Housing Units		-217	-46	-102
Demand for New Units: -Based on Household Growth		-2	54	-112
Total new units needed (2021-2026)		101	158	-8

**Housing Market Demand Model Rolette County**

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2026 Projected</b>
Population	13,937	14,716	13,846	13,182
Group Quarters Population	123	130	122	116
Percentage of Population in Households	99.12%	99.12%	99.12%	99.12%
Household Population	13,814	14,586	13,724	13,066
Average Household Size	2.97	2.89	2.86	2.85
Number of Households	4,556	4,783	4,888	4,827
Housing Unit Occupancy Rate	90.60%	89.00%	88.30%	86.00%
Number of Housing Units	5,027	5,372	5,534	5,612
Estimated Number of Vacant Units	473	591	647	786
Estimated New Units 2010-2021; (proj. 2026)		345	162	78
Demolitions/deconversions 2010-2021; (proj. 2026)		98	101	103
Net Gain in Housing Units		247	61	-25
Demand for New Units: -Based on Household Growth		225	104	-60
Total new units needed (2021-2026)		323	205	42

Housing Market Demand Model Towner County				
	2010	2016	2021	2026 Projected
Population	2,246	2,249	2,179	2,129
Group Quarters Population	33	33	32	31
Percentage of Population in Households	98.53%	98.53%	98.53%	98.53%
Household Population	2,213	2,216	2,147	2,098
Average Household Size	2.31	2.1	2.09	2.08
Number of Households	1,218	1,048	1,016	984
Housing Unit Occupancy Rate	78.20%	72.30%	70.40%	68.70%
Number of Housing Units	1,558	1,449	1,445	1,432
Estimated Number of Vacant Units	340	401	428	448
Estimated New Units 2010-2021; (proj. 2026)		-109	-4	-13
Demolitions/deconversions 2010-2021; (proj. 2026)		27	26	26
Net Gain in Housing Units		-136	-30	-39
Demand for New Units: -Based on Household Growth		-168	-32	-32
Total new units needed (2021-2026)		-141	-5	-5

Each of the six counties in Region III has a housing authority which serves as a liaison between local communities and Federal agencies, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development and USDA Rural Development, which sponsor housing programs. Infrastructure and services are adequate for growth. Perhaps the only exceptions are a few small communities that have aging water and sewer systems, and also lack the ability to furnish adequate jobs to attract new residents.

### **Educational Facilities**

There are fifteen public high schools, three parochial grade schools, seventeen public grade schools, two middle schools and two tribal operated schools in the Region. Most students attend schools which combine elementary and high school grades in the same building. North Dakota School for the Deaf located in Devils Lake.

Lake Region State College located in Devils Lake offers courses leading to vocational certificates or academic programs that may qualify for Associate of Applied Science Degrees. LRSC has partnered with Mayville State University to offer some Bachelors programs. Cankdeska Cikana (Little Hoop) College located at Fort Totten operated by the Spirit Lake Nation and Turtle Mountain Community College located in Belcourt and operated by the Turtle Mountain Tribe is mainly aimed for vocational studies.

### **Medical and Health Care Facilities**

There are five hospitals located within the Region with a combined capacity of over 300 beds. They are Cando, Devils Lake, Langdon, Rolla, and Belcourt. Nine nursing homes are also located in the Region. Health care facilities and health manpower are concentrated in Ramsey and Rolette and to a lesser extent, Cavalier and Towner Counties. Health care facilities and manpower are least available in Benson County. Dental services are available in all counties except Benson. There is planned growth in the area for the healthcare sector, specifically in Towner County with a new hospital being built in Cando. The new hospital will also include an on-site daycare facility to support their workforce.

## **CHAPTER 2: SWOT ANALYSIS**

North Central Planning Council convened public workshops in each of the six counties in the Region, in addition to undertaking electronic surveys and one-on-one leadership interviews. The meetings were held in April, May, and June 2022 to engage stakeholders in a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis. The meetings were organized with assistance from the economic development professionals in each county. Included within each County's SWOT summaries includes the number of participants in electronic surveys. Comments were recorded and organized and presented to the CEDS committee. The committee then evaluated them and formulated goals and a strategy. The following is a summary of the general themes that came from the workshops regarding the Region; each County's full SWOT analysis is published in Appendix C.

### **STRENGTHS**

Within the Region, it became clear that natural resources are the area's best assets, both with the Region's robust hospitality sector due to hunting, fishing, and other tourism-based businesses, as well as agriculture continuing to be the anchor of the area. If the Region were to continue to capitalize, yet diversify, on natural resources, communities could continue to survive and thrive. Frost Fire is a key tourism destination in North Central Planning Council's northeast area, and the Turtle Mountains are located within its northern border, while Devils Lake continues to serve as an engine for growth in its central area.

The Region has three higher education institutions including Lake Region State College in Devils Lake, Turtle Mountain Community College in Belcourt and Cankdeska Cikana Community College in Fort Totten. As workforce has become a major issue in the Region having three higher education institutions to provide education and training is an obvious strength to the Region.

The Region has safe communities that have sufficient utilities and other services. The Region has strong broadband provided which can provide many small business opportunities and options for remote work or work from home. Natural gas is not provided to all communities, although there has been talk of expansion. The cost to deliver natural gas to a community has become cost prohibitive without outside resources. The Region has policies and programs to meet the needs of underserved communities and populations. State and local entities have programs to address areas

such as healthcare, unemployment, poverty, childcare, nutrition, education, and physical and mental health.

Additional strengths noted came from individual communities and county-based efforts, which highlighted the connectivity within and across the Region, and it also reinforced the Region's strong volunteerism efforts.

Finally, the Region has a number of economic development offices with programs for small business incentive and the State of ND has business development programs to encourage development in the state. The continued support and implementation of local economic development organizations was highlighted as the Region's continued focus on supporting small businesses, farmers and ranchers, and individual communities.

## **WEAKNESSES**

Several categories of weaknesses were identified throughout the community input sessions, including the aging demographics of current municipal and county leadership, aging demographics of current anchor business owners, a lack of workforce, and difficulty recruiting workforce due to quality of life and affordable housing issues.

Within each county, workforce and housing ranked as both #1 and #2, respectively, in terms of the most-pressing challenges. Workforce and rural housing issues are pervasive across the state, leaving many individual efforts to be in competition with one another.

Along with workforce needs comes an aging demographic in leadership, with many counties reporting a difficulty in filling critical positions in their communities, whether it be individuals to serve on the county commission, on regional boards of directors, or on local boards of directors. Many individuals find themselves wearing multiple hats and succumbing to burnout.

Anchor businesses within the Region are also at risk - whether it is an aging farmer or rancher or an aging lawyer or teacher. There is a need to recruit and retain more young families into the Region to provide for vacant workforce and leadership positions, as well as to serve as a transitional point for exiting small business owners.

## OPPORTUNITIES

The following is a list of opportunities that were identified through the analysis. These opportunities, if enhanced, could help the Region reach its goals.

- The system of well-organized local development organizations presents an opportunity to make economic development efforts more effective throughout the Region. An economic development effort organized at the Region level such as that conducted by North Central Planning Council requires significant project input at the community level. Local development organizations provide such input.
- The Region is significantly an agricultural area. There are opportunities in production agriculture, value-added agriculture and precision agriculture technology.
- Diversification of the economy and subsequently the expansion of housing and community-based facilities. There is a growing demand for whole foods, organic food, community kitchens and local food systems.
- Quality of place - The Region has significant marketing opportunities in its high quality of life. Factors in this opportunity include a very low crime rate, recreation opportunities, lack of congestion, and a pace of life that people find pleasing. The communities would like to see expansion of walking and biking trails and access to the lakes and camping. Significant efforts need to be invested and coordinated to support new resident recruitment, as well as homecomer recruitment (recruiting past residents) to live and work in the Region.
- Tourism - The Region contains a number of tourism related businesses and opportunities. There are opportunities around Devils Lake, the Pembina River/Gorge, and Turtle Mountains. The opportunity to develop recreational tourism is endless because the lake is a year around facility.
- Investing in leadership development is much more of a critical need than an opportunity. With the recognition of a lack of leadership capacity comes the potential interest and momentum to re-engage citizens in economic development.
- Workforce is a resounding need. With the State of North Dakota's new Learn Everywhere legislation, there may be an opportunity to work in a coordinated fashion to extend learning opportunities for youth, while also mitigating workforce shortages.
- Many communities are seeking investment, yet they are not able to support investors to maximize their tax benefits. There is an opportunity to support more Renaissance Zones to be established and re-established throughout the Region.

## **THREATS**

Incomes throughout the Region are low by almost any standard. Much of this is due to low farm income. Also, the Region's businesses pay a low average wage and seldom offer more than minimal benefits. This results in employee turnover which is in turn costly to businesses. The cost of providing benefits has become a burden to the small business owners. Both low farm income and low wage/benefit payments are difficult for the Region to change as they are governed by outside forces. Commodity prices are determined by market action. Wage/benefit packages are perhaps slightly more controllable in that Federal minimum wage legislation periodically offers some relief. In addition, several State economic development programs strongly suggest that a reasonable higher minimum wage be enforced on projects using these funding sources.

Devils Lake (the lake) is a great asset for the Region. Its potential for year-round tourism is endless. However, the lake, as promising as it is, without a stabilization mechanism, is also one of the biggest obstacles for future development. When the lake is on the rise, as it has been for the past seventeen years, infrastructure necessary for development cannot be maintained because of the rising water and ever-expanding lakeshores. When the lake is on the decline, the moving shoreline also prohibits development because you could soon find your development miles from the lake.

Other natural disasters significant to the Region are blizzards, wildfire, drought, summer storms, spring run-off overland flooding. Winter blizzard can result in significant snow fall and high winds that reduce visibility. Blizzards effect the economy of the Region as they shut down highways, schools and businesses and the cost of snow removal is excessive to the municipalities. The Region has seen drought disaster declarations in recent years causing hardship and economic loss to farmers and ranchers. Drought reduces the grain crop yields and lack of hay has caused full dispersions of cattle herds. Wildfire is a threat in the late summer as lack of rainfall elevates dry conditions. Summer storms with lightning, tornados and hail damage personal property and can wipe out whole crops. The snow melt in the spring brings significant run-off and overland flooding. The Region each year see's the destruction of numerous roads, mostly gravel, that are expensive to repair.

The aging population of the Region is a concern. When a significant segment of the community chooses to leave the state in the winter months the effect is a significant hit to the small town economy. As the population retires there is a concern that the labor force will shrink and there will be less people available to fill vacant jobs

## **CHAPTER 3: STRATEGY**

### **VISION STATEMENT**

*The vision of North Central Planning Council is to be a collaborative resource as the Region strives to obtain economic vitality and healthy communities for its businesses and citizens.*

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **Business Development and Retention**

Business development and retention efforts need to concentrate on two areas, the development of new companies that are able to use the resources in the area, and to expand and enhance existing businesses with new product lines or cooperative products with other new or existing businesses.

In order to diversify the economy, the Region needs to look to new opportunities in agriculture and opportunities exist in several other areas including:

- **Value Added Agriculture:** The area provides a very significant supply of raw materials in crops and animal production. The Region's population has a natural affinity with this type of development.
- **Precision Agriculture:** There has been a massive shift in technology in agriculture that affects both ag equipment dealers and producers. There is a national shortage of trained technicians and operators which results in an underutilization of technology which reduces yield, increases cost, and damages the environment.
- **Primary Sector:** The Region does already have several operating plants that do have excess capacity and are capable of building complete products from beginning to the finished product. The other type of primary sector product that is extremely successful in the Region is the making of components for larger products built elsewhere. The area has two concentrated areas of highly skilled workers on the Turtle Mountain Reservation and the Spirit Lake Nation.
- **Tourism:** The increased level of Devils Lake due to flooding has given the Region a bonus for tourism development. The lake has developed into one of the best fisheries in the upper Midwest with an increased interest in waterfowl hunting and winter ice fishing. The difficulty in the development of infrastructure to support the new tourism is the uncertainty of the lake. The lake has the capability

of varying the depth some 30 feet over and given a 15-20 year period. Without that stability tourism in the Region may never be fully developed.

- **Retail:** The Region contains five cities that represent over 80% of the retail trade conducted in the Region. The cities are New Rockford, Rolla, Cando, Langdon, and Devils Lake. The latter being the largest and considered the Region growth center. The continuation and growth of retail in the communities are highly dependent on the other elements of this goal

### **Retain the Region's Population**

Retention of the Region's population is a widely held desire among the Region residents. Consistent population outmigration since the 1980's has been the demise of small towns in the region. Of the forty cities in the Region, thirty have populations below 200 residents. Now the Region is struggling with workforce. Positions remain open for long periods of time or remain unfilled and turn-over is a chronic condition. Higher wages/benefits and better employment opportunities are obtainable with the utilization of employer sponsored job training programs, career and technical education programs, internships and apprenticeships. Diversifying the economy to provide job opportunities and creating a quality of place to live will help to attract and keep residents.

### **Economic Development Coordination**

There are a number of economic development organizations in the Region. It is in the best interest of the Region that all of these organizations work together and coordinate efforts to accomplish the goals of the Region. North Central Planning Council is the central regional development organization that has been able to help coordinate that effort.

### **Community Livability and Quality of Place**

Maintaining the viability of existing communities depends to a great extent upon economic development. Many of the Region's intermediate sized communities have active local development corporations that can pursue community betterment, inclusive of engaging in the creative economy and placemaking, quality of life programming, and other community development activities. The Region's residents now understand the need for community growth beyond production agriculture and have engaged in technology-based development, microbusiness development, and tourism. The population understands that each community cannot stand alone in economic development and that cooperation with other communities is essential if they are expecting to spur growth.

### **Disaster Mitigation, Response and Recovery**

The North Central Region in North Dakota has seen Devils Lake, a closed basin lake, rise

thirty-four feet since 1993. The area of the lake has increased from 40,000 acres to 180,000 acres. This additional 34 feet of depth and additional 140,000 acres of water have raised havoc with the economy of the Region. This flooding has caused economic problems in several ways including flooding of roads and land resulting in the need for a number of homes, businesses and whole communities needed to be relocated. As the imminent danger of flooding is subsiding the efforts are more focused in the Region on the mitigation of disasters.

The COVID-19 disaster has shown that disasters can come in many forms. The impact to businesses, small and large, and to the residents of the Region was significant. The Region would be better prepared for this type of disaster should it occur in the future.

#### **Provide EDA and Other Program Support**

The North Central Regional Council maintains communication with a number of State and Federal programs as needed to assist with the development of plans and projects in the Region. The staff through continuing education and membership in professional organizations maintains the level of knowledge needed to be a regional resource.

### **COURSE OF ACTION: STRATEGIC PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES**

The following strategies will meet the Region's need for a multi-year development program. As such, assistance will be sought from Federal, State, local and private sources.

#### **Goal: Business Development and Retention**

*\*Provide technical and development assistance to new and existing businesses.*

**Responsible Agencies:** Regional Council, local development organizations, Tribes, Counties, Cities and Private Developers.

**Potential Funding Source:** ND Agricultural Products Utilization Program, ND Department of Commerce, Bank of North Dakota, Electric and Communications Cooperatives, local development organizations, Tribes, Counties, Cities, lenders and private developers.

**Timeframe:** Immediate and Long term

**Evaluation:** Number of businesses assisted, and jobs created

*\*Provide technical assistance and support business succession for retiring business owners and interested future owners.*

**Responsible Agencies:** Regional Councils, local development organizations, SBA-SBDC, and Private Consultants.

**Potential Funding Sources:** ND Department of Commerce, ND Agricultural Products Utilization Program, Bank of North Dakota, Electric and Communications Cooperatives, local development organizations, Counties, Cities, Tribes, lenders and private developers.

**Timeframe:** Immediate and Long Term

**Evaluation:** Number of businesses assisted, and jobs created.

*\*Be an active partner with the CONAC/REAP Zones, REAP Investment Board, Strike Force Communities and other entities targeted toward businesses development and job creation.*

**Responsible Agencies:** Regional Council, Cities, Counties, Tribes and local development organizations

**Potential Funding Source:** EDA, USDA-Rural Development, local funds.

**Cost:** Approximately \$5,900 per year.

**Timeframe:** Immediate and Long Term

**Evaluation:** Number of meetings attended.

### **Goal: Retain the Region's Population**

*\*Be a partner with local economic development organizations in their efforts to retain and build the population through workforce and housing strategies and homecomer recruitment.*

**Responsible Agencies:** Regional Council, Cities, local development organizations, ND Department of Commerce, Counties, School Districts, and Tribes.

**Potential Funding Source:** EDA, USDA-Rural Development, local funds.

**Cost:** To be determined.

**Timeframe:** Immediate and Long Term

**Evaluation:** Number of customized strategies developed per county; Number of homecomers taking up residence in the region.

*\*Provide technical support to Region III developers and stakeholders to support job navigation for the underemployed population and to ensure adequate career exposure and support for students in Region.*

**Responsible Agencies:** Regional Council, local development organizations, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, local school districts, small businesses, and

youth groups.

**Potential Funding Sources:** EDA, ND Department of Commerce, ND Department of Agriculture, USDA Rural Development, and local funds.

**Cost:** To be determined.

**Timeframe:** Immediate and Long Term.

**Evaluation:** Number of participants in the mobile career exposure unit.

### **Goal: Economic Development Coordination**

*\*Collaborate with economic development organizations, tribal planning agencies, cities and counties to facilitate economic development, development projects and operations in the district.*

**Responsible Agencies:** Regional Council, local development organizations, their staff, and boards.

**Potential Funding Sources:** EDA, ND Department of Commerce, Bank of ND, and local funds.

**Cost:** 8,000 per year.

**Timeframe:** Ongoing.

**Evaluation:** Number of meetings attended; number of organizations assisted.

*\*Continue to provide public information on NCPC programs and projects; local, state and federal resources; and local, state, and federal plans.*

**Responsible Agencies:** Regional Council.

**Potential Funding Source:** EDA, Tribes, Counties, Cities and local development organizations.

**Cost:** \$500 per year.

**Timeframe:** Ongoing.

**Evaluation:** Number of meetings held; Number of projects completed.

### **Goal: Community Livability and Quality of Place**

*\*Assist communities and development organizations that continue to plan for the future of the region, create a quality of place, and to address problems or opportunities that face each community.*

**Responsible Agencies:** Regional Council, local development organizations, Tribes, Counties and Cities.

**Potential Funding Source:** EDA, USDA-Rural Development, HUD, local development organizations, Tribes, Counties and Cities.

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**Cost:** To be determined by project.  
**Timeframe:** Immediate and Long Term.  
**Evaluation:** Number of projects assisted.

*\*Assist local units of government in applying for funds related to infrastructure, housing, childcare, workforce and healthcare.*

**Responsible Agencies:** Regional Council, Tribes, Counties, Cities, local development organizations and private engineers.

**Potential Funding Sources:** EDA, HUD-CDBG, USDA-Rural Development, ND DOT, Federal DOT, FEMA, ND Health Department SRF Program, Tribes, Counties, Cities and Townships.

**Cost:** To be determined by project.  
**Timeframe:** Immediate and Long Term  
**Evaluation:** Number of projects supported.

#### **Goal: Disaster Mitigation, Response and Recovery**

*\*Assist Counties and Communities in developing mitigation plans and programs.*

**Responsible Agencies:** Regional Council, North Dakota Department of Emergency Services, FEMA, Tribes, Counties and Cities.

**Potential Funding Source:** EDA, FEMA, HUD-CDBG, Fed. DOT, ND-DOT, BIA, ND Department of Health, ND State Water Commission, Tribes, Counties and Cities

**Cost:** \$20,000 per community.

**Timeframe:** On-going.

**Evaluation:** Number of projects or communities assisted.

*\*Provide technical assistance or serve in an advisory role to local units of government and businesses that are adversely affected by natural or economic disaster.*

**Responsible Agencies:** Regional Council, FEMA, BIA, ND State Water Commission, ND Health Department, ND Governor's Office, Tribes, Counties and Cities, SBDC, local development organizations and Chambers of Commerce.

**Potential Funding Source:** EDA, SBA, local financial institutions, ND Water Commission, FEMA, ND Department of Commerce, HUD-CDBG and Bank of North Dakota.

**Cost:** To be determined.

**Timeframe:** On-going.

**Evaluation:** Number of communities assisted, jobs retained.

## **Goal: Provide EDA and Other Program Support**

*\*Maintain contact with EDA, North Dakota economic development agencies, local offices and other federal agencies on economic development programs/projects.*

**Responsible Agencies:** Regional Council, Potential Funding Source: EDA, Local, Regional Council.

**Cost:** n/a.

**Timeframe:** On-going.

**Evaluation:** Number of projects assisted.

*\*Maintain professional standing of council staff through: a) Continuing Education, b) Membership in professional organizations, C) Participation in workshops.*

**Responsible Agencies:** Regional Council

**Potential Funding Source:** EDA, Local, Regional Council, ND Department of Commerce, ND Department of Emergency Services.

**Cost:** \$2,000 per year

**Time Frame:** Yearly and ongoing.

**Evaluation:** Number of trainings.

The cost associated with many of these objectives is hard to determine as the work for these objectives is integrated into other aspects of the work of NCPC staff.

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

Performance measures will be tied to the long-term goals in the CEDS document. The following criteria will be used to measure the Region's performance as an EDA Economic Development Region:

- Number of jobs created.
- Number of jobs retained.
- Number of businesses assisted.
- The number and types of investments undertaken in the region.
- The private investment leveraged through projects.
- Number of projects assisted.
- Population trends by county.
- Median household income by County.
- Diversification of the economy.
- Number of meetings attended.
- Number of communities assisted.
- Number of trainings attended.
- Number of people assisted with career exploration.

## **ECONOMIC RESILIENCE**

The North Central Planning Council supports and encourages communities in the Region to engage in pre-disaster, post-disaster, and mitigation planning. This document establishes the role of NCPC in the event of a disaster. This document is not intended to undermine or replace existing federal, state or local disaster plans. It identifies how the Regional Council will work in conjunction with its partners. The Regional Council is prepared to facilitate planning and provide assistance as outlined in this strategy document.

The North Central Planning Council works closely with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services, the six county emergency managers, and city leaders. In Region III of North Dakota, the counties take the lead in pre-disaster preparedness and post-disaster planning and implementation through the development and continued updating of countywide multi-jurisdictional multi-hazard mitigation plans that are approved by the State of North Dakota and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Staff at North Central Planning Council work with emergency managers and state emergency services staff to assist in updating the mitigation plans, identification of mitigation projects, writing of grants, administration of grants, and gathering, compiling and analysis of data, resources, and impacts.

Pre-disaster Preparedness - Disasters can strike at any time in any place. In many cases, actions can be taken before disasters strike to reduce or eliminate the negative impacts, these actions, called mitigation, often protect life, property, the economy, and other values. When actions before disasters are not taken or the actions are ineffective, disasters can create havoc on life, property, infrastructure and the economy. This begins another phase of the disaster called recovery. Recovery is the actions taken by the area affected by the disaster to revive the property, infrastructure, and the economy back to pre-disaster condition or greater.

Each of the counties of Benson, Cavalier, Eddy, Ramsey, Rolette, and Towner and the Spirit Lake Indian Reservation, and the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation have a Multi Hazard Mitigation Plan approved by FEMA that is required to be updated every five years.

The purpose of these multi hazard mitigation plans are to:

- Serve as a consolidated, comprehensive source of hazard information.

- Educate the communities, including the government leaders and the public, on their vulnerabilities.
- Fulfill Federal, State and local hazard mitigation plan responsibilities.
- Prioritize and promote pre and post disaster cost mitigation measures.
- Promote short and long range strategies that minimize suffering, loss of life, and damage to property resulting from hazardous or potential hazardous conditions to which citizens and institutions within the jurisdiction are exposed.
- Minimize conditions which would have an undesirable impact on our citizens, the economy, environment, and well being of the country.
- Support for grant funding.
- Encourage long-term community sustainability.

The Multi Hazard Mitigation Plans identify 12 hazards and their variations to be the most critical for the North Central North Dakota area. Hazards identified are:

1. Communicable disease including human, animal, and plant disease.
2. Dike and embankment failure, including dikes, levees, dams, embankments, and roads acting as dikes.
3. Drought.
4. Flood: including closed basin, ice jam, riverine, and flash flood.
5. Hazardous material release.
6. Homeland security incident.
7. Shortage or outage of critical materials or infrastructure
8. Summer storms: including tornadoes, hail, downbursts, lightning, and strong winds.
9. Transportation accidents, including vehicular, railway, and aircraft accidents.
10. Urban fires and structural collapse.
11. Wildland fire: including nature or human caused.
12. Winter weather: including blizzards, heavy snow, ice storms, and extreme cold

Mitigation capabilities by jurisdiction are broken down into four categories: Administrative and Technical, Education and Outreach, Financial, and Planning and Regulatory.

Administrative and technical capabilities include city and county staff, their skills and tools for mitigation capabilities. Education and outreach mitigation capabilities include programs and methods already in place to implement mitigation activities and communicate hazard-related information. Financial mitigation capabilities include access to or eligibility to use funding resources for hazard mitigation for jurisdictions. Most jurisdictions funding streams are primarily based on local property tax. Planning

and regulatory capabilities include jurisdictional plans, policies, codes and ordinances adopted and in place that prevent and reduce the impacts of hazards. North Central Planning Council serves as a planning and regulatory mitigation capability through planning services it provides and through grant writing and grant administration.

The North Central Planning Council Region is no stranger to disasters. The Region has been a part of numerous presidential disaster declarations over the last twenty-four years due to Devils Lake flooding. During these disasters the council staff has developed knowledge of disaster recovery programs and a working relationship with Federal, State, and local agencies.

North Central Planning Council planning Region's plan to increase the region's resilience to disasters includes the following strategies:

- Assist in grant writing and grant administration to obtain funding to maintain current plans and data.
- Facilitate the updating of plans to assess and address hazard mitigation issues in all nine-counties.
- Assist in grant writing and grant administration to obtain funding for mitigation projects.
- Assist local units of government to adopt and enforce ordinances.
- Work with local emergency managers and jurisdictions to secure financing for repair of infrastructure.
- Encourage business owners to work with the Small Business Development Center, Small Business Administration and local financial institutions to secure financing to reopen and repair after a disaster.

# APPENDIX A

## ADDITIONAL REGION ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC CONDITION

As would be expected for an area located in the upper Great Plains, the Region's economy is heavily dependent upon agriculture. However, pockets of light industry do exist along with communities that provide a large service industrial base.

This element of the plan will be used to examine the Region's economic sector, its employment and income as well as analysis of recent trends in economic activity. Finally the availability of financial resources (both public and private) will be considered as well as the potential impact of reduced military expenditures on the Region's economy

### Economic Sectors

The table below (Exhibit 9) shows the wages for 2021 for the key industries in the Region. This table indicates the number of total business establishments throughout the region, along with their average annual employment, total wages, weekly wages, and annual wages. As stated earlier, the Region's economy is dominated by agricultural activity, and it is relatively lower in terms of its socioeconomic output. Further, the agricultural field is no longer labor intensive so the percentage of earnings has dropped dramatically over the past several years.

**Exhibit 9: Job Service North Dakota**

REGION 3	NAICS Code	Total Business Establishments 2021	Average Annual Employment				Total Annual Wages (\$)				Average Weekly Wage (\$)				Average Annual Wage (\$) 2021
			2021	2020	Year/Year Change Number	Percent	2021	2020	Year/Year Change Number	Percent	2021	2020	Year/Year Change Number	Percent	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	11	65	272	286	-14	-4.9%	12,417,957	12,525,007	-107,050	-0.9%	878	842	36	4.3%	45,654
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	21	4	31	28	3	10.7%	2,021,207	1,833,668	187,539	10.2%	1,254	1,259	-5	-0.4%	65,200
Utilities	22	10	88	88	0	0.0%	8,166,922	8,154,380	12,542	0.2%	1,785	1,782	3	0.2%	92,806
Construction	23	149	611	600	11	1.8%	25,086,347	26,689,212	-1,602,865	-6.0%	790	855	-65	-7.6%	41,058
Manufacturing	31-33	19	359	357	2	0.6%	16,307,011	14,894,712	1,412,299	9.5%	874	802	72	9.0%	45,423
Wholesale Trade	42	105	802	843	-41	-4.9%	54,358,071	53,800,396	557,675	1.0%	1,303	1,227	76	6.2%	67,778
Retail Trade	44-45	171	1,604	1,552	52	3.4%	50,963,301	46,038,705	4,924,596	10.7%	611	570	41	7.2%	31,773
Transportation and Warehousing	48-49	47	233	257	-24	-9.3%	12,239,445	12,931,094	-691,649	-5.3%	1,010	968	42	4.3%	52,530
Information	51	19	203	210	-7	-3.3%	12,206,885	11,517,732	689,153	6.0%	1,156	1,055	101	9.6%	60,132
Finance and Insurance	52	86	510	535	-25	-4.7%	33,433,081	33,904,975	-471,894	-1.4%	1,261	1,219	42	3.4%	65,555
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	53	24	88	73	15	20.5%	2,355,004	2,168,549	186,455	8.6%	515	571	-56	-9.8%	28,761
Professional and Technical Services	54	63	145	143	2	1.4%	7,392,105	7,103,197	288,908	4.1%	980	955	25	2.6%	50,990
Management of Companies and Enterprises	55	4	38	38	0	0.0%	4,654,829	4,625,658	29,171	0.6%	2,356	2,341	15	0.6%	122,496
Administrative and Waste Services	56	34	170	179	-9	-5.0%	8,001,426	5,992,484	2,408,942	43.1%	905	601	304	50.6%	47,067
Educational Services	61	3	10	6	4	66.7%	210,576	178,105	32,471	18.2%	405	571	-166	-29.1%	21,058
Health Care and Social Assistance	62	139	1,838	1,791	47	2.6%	82,980,117	76,858,161	6,121,956	8.0%	868	825	43	5.2%	45,147
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	71	20	121	101	20	19.8%	2,845,367	2,282,469	562,898	24.7%	452	435	17	3.9%	23,515
Accommodation and Food Services	72	110	1,004	970	34	3.5%	16,557,211	14,792,552	1,764,659	11.9%	317	293	24	8.2%	16,491
Other Services (except Public Administration)	81	61	212	215	-3	-1.4%	5,793,441	5,597,135	196,306	3.5%	526	501	25	5.0%	27,328
<b>TOTAL PRIVATE OWNERSHIP</b>		<b>1,133</b>	<b>8,335</b>	<b>8,271</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>357,990,303</b>	<b>341,488,191</b>	<b>16,502,112</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>42,990</b>
Federal Government		68	1,214	1,209	5	0.4%	80,104,544	77,317,678	2,786,866	3.6%	1,269	1,230	39	3.2%	65,984
State Government		39	475	472	3	0.6%	23,227,799	22,942,078	285,721	1.2%	940	935	5	0.5%	48,901
Local Government		106	4,312	4,148	164	4.0%	198,427,224	176,126,008	22,301,216	12.7%	885	817	68	8.3%	46,017
<b>TOTAL GOVERNMENT</b>		<b>213</b>	<b>6,001</b>	<b>5,829</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>301,759,567</b>	<b>276,385,764</b>	<b>25,373,803</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>967</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>50,285</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>1,346</b>	<b>14,337</b>	<b>14,099</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>659,749,870</b>	<b>617,873,955</b>	<b>41,875,915</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>46,017</b>

**Age**

The North Dakota median age is 35.2. Four counties in the Region, Cavalier, Ramsey, Eddy, and Towner have a median age higher than the State. Benson and Rolette Counties have median ages below the North Dakota median. See Exhibit 10.

<b>Exhibit 10</b>			
<b>Median Age</b>			
<b>Area</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2000</b>
Benson	31.2	30.1	31.4
Cavalier	49.5	50.5	45.2
Eddy	42.4	44.7	43.8
Ramsey	40.2	42.5	39.5
Rolette	31	29.1	28.9
Towner	49.2	48.1	44.4
<b>North Dakota</b>	<b>35.2</b>	<b>36.6</b>	<b>21.3</b>
Source: U.S. Census Bureau			

**Race**

The Region's population racial makeup is predominately white with a significant minority population (32.1%). This compares with the State's minority percentage of 17.3%. The Region's minority population consists almost exclusively of American Indian people.

The following table (Exhibit 11) illustrates the racial characteristics of the Region's population. Benson County's population is 53.9% American Indian while Rolette County's population is 76.7% American Indian. Very significantly, Rolette County's American Indian population no longer constitutes a minority within the County.

<b>Exhibit 11</b>						
<b>Population Disbursement by Race (%)</b>						
<b>Area</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Native</b>	<b>Asian/</b>	<b>Two or</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>

			<b>American</b>	<b>Pacific Islander</b>	<b>More Race Groups</b>	
Benson	31.2	.2	53.9	.2	5	3.6
Cavalier	93.8	.1	1.4	0	4.8	2.4
Eddy	87.8	0	5.5	.1	5.9	2
Ramsey	82.8	.5	9.6	1.5	4.8	3.1
Rolette	18.1	.6	76.7	.1	4.2	2.3
Towner	87.5	.5	7.4	.2	.8	3.6
<b>North Dakota</b>	<b>83.7</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4</b>
Source: U.S. Census Bureau						

## RECENT TRENDS IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The best indicators of recent trends in economic activity are arguably, taxable sales and basic sector businesses openings and closings. The table below (Exhibit 12) indicates the taxable sales from 2001 to 2020. As can be noted throughout the table, taxable sales dipped in 2015; however, they have rebounded for all counties into 2020, with the exception of Rolette County, which saw a decrease of approximately \$4M.

<b>Exhibit 12</b>				
<b>Taxable Sales by County</b>				
<b>Area</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>
Benson	\$8,938,439	\$17,033,546	\$11,174,801	\$16,748,503
Cavalier	\$25,321,603	\$34,519,264	\$31,257,131	\$34,565,507
Eddy	\$7,654,250	\$10,628,036	\$11,090,659	\$11,711,613
Ramsey	\$121,013,319	\$155,086,848	\$166,919,946	\$175,455,026
Rolette	\$23,961,291	\$28,372,013	\$34,969,548	\$30,996,214
Towner	\$7,752,793	\$10,775,876	\$9,761,583	\$11,559,593

Region III	\$194,641,695	\$236,415,583	\$265,173,668	\$281,036,456
Source: North Dakota State Tax Commission				

Most of the Region's banks make primarily agriculture loans. Financial institutions in Devils Lake, New Rockford, Langdon, and Rolla have experience with commercial loans. The Region, as well as the remainder of North Dakota, is well served by the Nation's only State-owned bank, the Bank of North Dakota.

The Region's small but active industrial sector has been undergoing significant change. This change is being initiated by the Nation's redirection of resources away from military priorities. Four of the Region's largest employers were heavily dependent upon military contracts. These include Dakota Tribal Industries, Fort Totten; Turtle Mountain Manufacturing, Belcourt; Sioux Manufacturing, Fort Totten, and Microlap Technologies (formally William J. Langer Jewel Bearing Plant), Rolla.

Finally, the Region's largest city, Devils Lake, will also be affected by military cutbacks. The community is the home of Camp Grafton, a training facility for the North Dakota National Guard. United Airlines serves the Devils Lake Airport, which provides flight service for Camp Grafton. The Lake Region State College also trains students in a flight simulator maintenance program directed towards both military and civilian aircraft.

To a certain degree, most of these businesses and organizations have been making the shift to be less dependent on military contracts; some have been more able to make the adjustment than others.

**DEVILS LAKE FLOODING**

Three of the Region's counties, Ramsey, Benson, and Towner, have been greatly affected by over twenty years of continuous flooding from Devils Lake. Although the lake elevation has decreased a small amount, no significant amount of farmland has emerged from under the water.

The three Counties have been affected by several factors. They are:

1. All of the State and Federal roads have had to be raised several times, and many secondary roads have been abandoned. This has created a problem for the retail sector when the normal market area is having trouble traveling to their business because of road closures or long construction waits.
2. Approximately 130,000 acres of prime farmland has been flooded which has raised havoc with the local farm economy.

3. Local cities and counties have had to expend a great deal of money to match Federal funds to try to keep the transportation lines open to the cities, and also to construct a levee to protect the City of Devils Lake.
4. The flood has caused the Cities of Church's Ferry and Penn to be totally bought out and many of those residents left the immediate area.

In April 2016 the National Weather Service estimated that there would be a 50% chance that the Devils Lake elevation would be at 1,451.3 feet. At that level the North Dakota State University Research Center estimates that there will be 130,878 acres of cropland out of production that would have been in production in 1993. At that level the estimated total direct losses were \$36.2 million due to crop losses and \$133.7 million from direct and indirect business activity losses. After rising about 3.5 feet in the spring of 2022 due to significant snowfall in the basin the elevation sits at 1,449.93ft.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **COMMUNITY & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

A number of different organizations participate in economic development activities and implementation of the CEDS in the Region. North Central Planning Council is the only organization that provides planning on a regional level. Both the Turtle Mountain and Spirit Lake Tribes provide planning on their prospective reservations, and some of the local development corporations do some local planning.

At the local level, fourteen corporations pursue economic development goals. Of these, six have paid part-time or full-time staff. See Exhibit 21 for a listing of local development corporations.

At the regional level, economic development service is provided by North Central Planning Council located in Devils Lake. The Council provides a complete line of services that work hand in hand with developers, local development corporations, financial institutions, and other support organizations to ensure the best quality of service. In the past the Regions' developers have formed an alliance to perform specified tasks which benefit all, such as housing surveys and community needs assessments.

Utility companies provide economic development services to the Region. These include Otter Tail Power Company and several rural electric cooperatives through the Mandan-based North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives. The local telephone companies, Polar Telephone, United Telephone Mutual Aid Corporations and North Dakota Telephone provide limited economic development services to the Region.

At the State level, organizations that provide business services or incentives include the North Dakota Department of Commerce which contains the Department of Economic Development and Finance and the Division of Community Service. The North Dakota Universities offer a number of business assistance programs. The University of North Dakota hosts the Center for Innovation and the North Dakota Small Business Development Center which has offices in all eight regions of the State. North Dakota State University Extension Service offers business assistance and is home to North

Dakota Compass Center for Social Research. All of these offices have outreach capabilities

Finally, at a Federal level the Region is well-served by the Economic Development Administration, Housing and Urban Development, Small Business Administration and USDA Rural Development.

<b>Exhibit 13</b>	
<b>Regional Economic Development Contacts</b>	
New Rockford Area Betterment Club	117 1st St. South New Rockford, ND 58356
Towner County Economic Development Corporation	PO Box 608 Cando, ND 58324
Dunseith Development Corporation	PO Box 99 Dunseith, ND 58329
Rolla Job Development Authority	PO Box 1200 Rolla, ND 58367
Cavalier County Job Development Authority	901 3rd St. Langdon, ND 58249
Forward Devils Lake	PO Box 1048 Devils Lake, ND 58301
Tribal Planning, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa	PO Box 900 Belcourt, ND 58316
Tribal Planning, Spirit Lake Nation	PO Box 359 Fort Totten, ND 58335
Northern Plains Electric Coop Inc.	PO Box 608 Cando, ND 58421
Otter Tail Power Company	1055 North 2nd Carrington, ND 58421
TrainND - Lake Region State College	1801 College Drive Devils Lake, ND 58301
USDA Rural Development	706 8th Ave. SE

	Devils Lake, ND 58301
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# **APPENDIX C**

## **REGIONAL SWOT NOTES**

### **Food Service**

- Restaurants that are open past 8pm; not bars.
- More eating establishments.
- We need staffing in restaurants to keep the hours viable.
- Food industry could use assistance attracting people into town.

### **Retail**

- Downtown shopping, more competition. Large sporting goods store.
- More retail establishments.
- Women complain there are not enough shops and clothing stores in the Devils Lake area.
- We need staffing in all retail establishments.
- Need more grocery stores, bait shops, food services.

### **Tourism Attractions**

- More Beaches!
- Things for the younger people to do while they are on vacation in the area.
- We need more attractions to entertain those that are here.
- Devils Lake tourism focuses primarily around the lake. We must invest in these areas.
- An example I think that ND could benefit from is winter carnivals that include snow sculpting and special activities to include kids and women while the men are fishing.
- Our direct area focuses largely on our fishing and hunting industry to draw people. It would be nice to draw people for other reasons like our car show that draws people from all over the United States and Canada, when the border is open. We have recently started an art festival in town, I think it will grow to a great attraction!
- Add more state parks on Devils Lake.
- Getting the ND game and fish to stock Devils Lake with Perch on an annual basis.
- Lake access needs major improvement.
- Turn off pumps that are draining Devils Lake of its valuable water.
- The lake needs a public beach.
- Additional grants to build better facilities.

- More funding to develop more tourism options
- We are also in dire need of a meeting space to hold larger gatherings.
- Hopefully Devils Lake continues to be a great fishery... that and hunting is the big draw to the area.

### **Marketing and Promotions**

- More marketing for the area.
- Help with attracting proprietors, and entrepreneurs.
- Better support for fishing and recognize that tourism is a major contributor to this regions' economy.
- Open the Canadian border.

## **BENSON COUNTY**

Through a widely distributed electronic survey, the leadership of Benson County sought to understand residents' perception of the area, their thoughts about current opportunities and challenges, and their thoughts about what leadership should focus on in the future. Below is an abbreviated summary of the results obtained from current respondents.

### **County-Wide Survey Highlights**

- 32 respondents
  - 94% have lived in Benson County for greater than 5 years;
  - 42.4% live in rural Benson County, 6.1% live in Minnewaukan, 6.1% live in Leeds, 45.5% live in Maddock;
  - 97% are homeowners;
  - 36.4% are aged 31-45; 33.3% are 46-64; 18.2% 65+; 12.1% 18-30
- Facilities Added to be Vibrant
  - Walking and biking trails; indoor pool; indoor walking path
- What is needed?
  - Grocery store
  - Hardware store
- Future Growth Needs:
  - Pharmacist
  - Childcare
  - Business succession planning
  - Business recruitment and retention, including trades
  - Housing
- Potential Entrepreneurs' Challenge
  - Start-up capital

To better assess and understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Benson County, as well as to validate or invalidate the responses of the electronic survey, a community roundtable with the Benson County Job Development Authority was held. Below is a summary of the issues identified and discussed in the community roundtable.

Issue	Description
<b>Workforce</b>	Workforce is holding back several communities in Benson County; however, unique strategies will have to be deployed to leverage the available resources of each community.
<b>Health Services</b>	Of continued concern is the inability for a local pharmacist, especially in a county with an aging population.
<b>Great Plains Frozen Food</b>	There seems to be a missed opportunity with regard to the use of the building and the potential to support the sale of the business for more economic growth.
<b>JDA Promotion</b>	The Benson County Job Development Authority has many great incentives to support business growth in its communities; however, some are not being fully utilized.
<b>Housing</b>	Affordable housing has to be a focus moving forward for future workforce needs and community quality of life.
<b>Business Transitions</b>	An opportunity exists to provide business succession planning support and services for local anchor businesses in Benson County for long-term community viability.

**CAVALIER COUNTY**

Through a widely distributed electronic survey, the leadership of Cavalier County sought to understand residents' and homecomers' (alumni's) current perception of the area, their thoughts about current opportunities and challenges, and their thoughts about what leadership should focus on in the future. Below is an abbreviated summary of the results obtained from 133 current residents and 123 potential homecomers:

- Childcare: Many survey respondents indicated that a lack of childcare was holding back available workforce and inhibiting individuals and families from moving to the area.

- **Activities for Families & Youth:** There is a perceived gap in activities for families and youth.
- **Food:** Whether it was a commercial kitchen/food incubator, need for more restaurants, food festivals, or grocery lockers in rural areas, food came out as a clear priority for individuals in the area.
- **County Aesthetics:** Many respondents to the survey expressed concerns around the visual appeal of the county and the communities within it.
- **Economic Diversification:** Tourism was identified as an opportunity for economic growth for Cavalier County. One survey respondent referred to Cavalier County as “North Dakota’s recreation hub”.

To better assess and understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Cavalier County, as well as to validate or invalidate the responses of the electronic surveys, a community roundtable was held. Below is a summary of the issues identified and discussed in the community roundtable.

Issue	Description
<b>Childcare</b>	Many survey respondents indicated that a lack of childcare was holding back available workforce and inhibiting individuals and families from moving to the area. During the roundtable discussion, childcare came forward as a very complex issue; however, it is an issue needing to be addressed.
<b>Activities for Children &amp; Families</b>	A perceived lack of activities for young families and youth is inhibiting county-wide growth - both for recruitment and retention. Much discussion was had during the roundtable regarding whether this is perception or reality. Potentially, a solution may be to consolidate information into an app.
<b>Food</b>	Whether it was a commercial kitchen/food incubator, need for more restaurants, food festivals, or grocery lockers in rural areas, food came out as a clear priority for individuals in the area.
<b>County Visual Appeal</b>	Many respondents to the survey expressed concerns around the visual appeal of the county and the communities within it, particularly when it comes to individual properties and their treasures.
<b>Tourism</b>	Tourism was identified as an opportunity for economic growth for Cavalier County. One survey respondent referred to Cavalier County

	as “North Dakota’s recreation hub”.
<b>Workforce</b>	Workforce in Cavalier County, like in many other counties, is of huge concern. With the potential for large-scale projects in Cavalier County’s near future, workforce has to be a top priority.
<b>Community Leadership</b>	Community leadership - finding individuals to fill boards and government positions - is concerning. Many of the county’s activities are sustained through volunteer support. If there aren’t volunteers, the county may suffer. Further, legislative redistricting is of concern.
<b>Homecomers</b>	Of the potential Homecomers that responded to the survey, 21.8% indicated an interest in returning to Cavalier County to live, while 2.6% indicated they would like to return to Cavalier County. For Homecomers to return, housing and competitive salaries were highlighted. Competitive salaries were marked at greater than \$65,000 annually. Other incentives, like student loan repayment, were not highly favored. If the high-paying jobs are available, they may come back, if marketed to.

**EDDY COUNTY**

Through a widely distributed electronic survey, the leadership of Eddy County sought to understand residents’ perception of the area, their thoughts about current opportunities and challenges, and their thoughts about what leadership should focus on in the future. Below is an abbreviated summary of the results obtained from current respondents.

**County-Wide Survey Results**

- 65% of respondents indicated they lived in New Rockford; 20% in rural Eddy County; 10% in Sheyenne; 5% outside of the county.
- 41% of respondents were between the ages of 46 and 64; 10% were 65+; 18% were between 18 and 30; and 31% were 31-45.
- Most receive their information on what is going on in the county from Facebook and the New Rockford Transcript.
- When visiting the county, people patronize retail and grocery stores; restaurants; community events, and the theater.
- A quick food restaurant is a highly sought after new amenity, followed by a plumber and an eye doctor.

- More community enrichment opportunities were also identified as in demand, including food festivals, cooking classes, and painting classes.
- Biking and walking paths, indoor recreation space, community events for youth and families would make the county more vibrant.
- Biggest obstacle facing the county: workforce.
- Dilapidated and/or vacant buildings and homes are of HUGE concern to folks in the county. Respondents cited not only the aesthetics and potential health hazards of the space, but they also cited parts and pieces of the buildings blowing off in high winds.
- Open Season Lodge was identified as a space with huge potential. Respondents would like to see the space utilized for cooking and baking classes and community education classes. If a commercial kitchen was available, respondents indicated that they would utilize it. Childcare was also cited as a need within the county, and many thought that it would be an ideal space for a childcare facility. Another highly rated use for the space would be as a center for technical education (CTE).
- Business Succession is a need throughout the county. Business owners cited their number 1 barrier as a lack of access to professional resources (attorneys, accountants, etc.).

### **Homecomer Survey Results**

- Most of the respondents left for economic opportunity;
- Most still have ties to the county;
- Jobs - even the ability to work remotely - would pull them back in....if the salary was right (\$65,000);
- Affordable, quality housing was cited as the #2 barrier to coming home;
- Lack of healthcare was also cited as a barrier;
- What was missing in high school? Career counseling. Most survey respondents indicated that they would have liked greater counseling to help them identify careers available for them.

### **RAMSEY COUNTY**

Through a widely distributed electronic survey, the leadership of Ramsey County sought to understand residents' current perception of the area, their thoughts about current opportunities and challenges, and their thoughts about what leadership should focus on in the future. Below is an abbreviated summary of the results obtained from 269 respondents:

- There is a need to invest in youth;

- An indoor recreation center and biking and walking trails are a gap;
- There are not enough activities for youth and families to do (would like the movie theater and bowling alley brought back; art, music, and community classes);
- The aesthetics of Downtown could be improved;
- There is an opportunity to boost the regional tourism economy by building a convention center;
- Childcare and affordable housing are workforce gaps;
- The community would like to see something done with vacant buildings in Devils Lake; and
- There is an opportunity to position the resulting county-wide plan as a “next generation” investment.

Through a widely distributed electronic survey, the leadership of Ramsey County sought to understand youth’s current perception of the area, their thoughts about current opportunities and challenges, and their thoughts about what leadership should focus on in the future. Below is an abbreviated summary of the results obtained from 164 respondents:

- Youth need something to do - classes, indoor recreation center cited often;
- Youth are thoughtful about Downtown Devils Lake and the number of bars and liquor stores throughout town;
- Youth want to be involved in designing the future of the county - including the aesthetics and community-based activities. There may be an opportunity to engage them in co-designing the outcomes of the plan.

To better assess and understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Ramsey County, as well as to validate or invalidate the responses of the electronic surveys, three (3) 90-minute community roundtables were held. The three (3) roundtables held featured the following topics:

- Small Business Goals & Strategies
- Community Development
- Property Development & Aesthetics

## **ROLETTE COUNTY**

Below is an abbreviated summary of the results obtained from interviews with the Rolla Job Development Authority (Rolla JDA) and individual Rolette County leaders.

## **Rolla JDA**

- Housing is a need within the county. Rehabilitating empty lots (infill) for housing should be a focus.
- The county has the highest unemployment rate in the state, which means folks are underemployed and there is potential to work within the county for more workforce. Not only are entry level jobs available but also mid-level jobs.
- A hotel with an extended stay option would be beneficial to the county.
- Wraparound services - especially transportation services - may be needed to transition unemployed individuals into the workforce.
- Youth internship programs were successful at one time, and there may be an opportunity to revive them.

## **Rolette County Leaders**

- Housing is a need; housing with services, including congregate housing.
- Healthcare and care for those with addictions is a need.
- Health and nursing facilities are suffering from a lack of staffing.
- Daycare is a large need; there are only 2 facilities located within the county.
- Marketing for tourism is an opportunity, as the county has great outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Homecomer Strategy: If jobs and homes were available, people would come back.
- The wind farm that was pursued and is still an option is a missed opportunity. It may be worth revisiting it for broader economic impact.
- Community Leadership and civic engagement needs to be further cultivated within the county. Right now, there are a few people with many hats leading multiple charges.

## **TOWNER COUNTY**

Through a widely distributed electronic survey, the leadership of Towner County sought to understand residents', homecomers' (alumni's), and youth's current perception of the area, their thoughts about current opportunities and challenges, and their thoughts about what leadership should focus on in the future. Below is an abbreviated summary of the results obtained from current residents, youth, and potential homecomers.

### **County-Wide Survey Highlights**

- 58 respondents
  - 88% have lived in Towner County for more than 5 years;
  - 70% live in Cando;
  - 53% were aged 31-45; 28% were 46-64; 16% were 65+; 3% were 18-30.

- Identify as a very outdoor recreation-focused community.
  - Would like MORE!
    - Walking paths; biking trails
- Indoor Recreation was identified as a gap.
  - Indoor playgrounds; community center for youth; indoor workout space (larger than existing space)
- Farmers Market is prioritized.
  - Community identified the need for more advertising and a designated space, potentially downtown.
- Aesthetics played heavily into responses.
  - Buildings, homes, yards, “beige”
- Filling Vacant Storefronts was identified as a great opportunity.
  - Laundromat
  - Coffee shop/quick lunch option
  - Dental/vision services
  - Youth center
- Future Growth Needs
  - Childcare
  - Business retention
  - Housing

### **Youth Survey Highlights**

- 56 respondents
  - 75% live in Cando;
  - 56% were aged 15-16; 30% were 17-18; 14% were 13-14.
- Youth want:
  - Things to do in the winter;
  - Restaurants;
  - A space of their own.
    - Indoor recreation space and/or a study/hangout space.
    - Youth-only activities
- Youth access/utilize:
  - Bowling alley!
  - Youth sports
  - Outdoor recreation
- Art came forward as a need.
  - Art classes in the high school;
  - Community art projects;
  - Aesthetics of the county.
- What would cause them to boomerang?
  - “A good job, a nice house, and things to do.”
- Youth Leadership
  - The vast majority of respondents are interested in helping improve the county.

- Including:
      - Fundraisers
      - Community art projects
      - Park projects
      - Community clean-up and restoration projects.
  - They indicated that they would be involved....if given the opportunity for leadership.

**Homecomer Survey Highlights**

- 19 respondents;
  - ~50% still live in Towner County
  - 47% were aged 31-45.
- ~60% indicated an interest in returning to Towner County to live and work.
- Issues Identified to Return:
  - Salary/Compensation
    - \$45,000 to \$65,000 ideal
  - Housing
  - Activities for Children & Families
- Why did they leave?
  - Simply.....economic opportunity.

To better assess and understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Towner County, as well as to validate or invalidate the responses of the electronic surveys, a community roundtable with the Towner County EDC was held. Below is a summary of the issues identified and discussed in the community roundtable.

Issue	Description
<b>Workforce</b>	Not only is workforce difficult across the state, it is particularly difficult in Towner County, especially with the new hospital being built, as well as the needs of the current rehabilitation and treatment facility.
<b>County Beautification</b>	Opportunities exist to create programming and efforts that could be replicable and scalable across the county for small towns to improve their Main Streets. Whether it is an “Adopt-a-Planter” program or highway pick up, volunteers and local business support can be leveraged.
<b>Missed Opportunities</b>	Cando used to have a Renaissance Zone, which has since lapsed. Further, potential anchor businesses, like a hotel, vet, and coffee

	shop weren't identified within the surveys as gaps.
<b>Daycare</b>	With the new hospital coming forward, additional daycare capacity will be added.
<b>Housing</b>	Affordable housing has to be a focus moving forward for future workforce needs and community quality of life.
<b>Business Transitions</b>	An opportunity exists to provide business succession planning support and services for local anchor businesses in Towner County for long-term community viability.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Community and Private Sector Participation**

The CEDS Committee is responsible for the updating of the CEDS plan and represents the economic interests of the Region. The North Central Planning Council board members serve as CEDS Committee members.

- Rob Hach, Devils Lake, Ramsey County
- Allan Nord, Minnewaukan, Benson County
- Mike Connor, Devils Lake, Ramsey County
- Neal Rud, New Rockford, Eddy County
- Ryan Hager, New Rockford, Eddy County
- Robert Hanson, Sheyenne, Eddy County
- Doris Griffen, Oberon, Benson County
- Glenn Hoffmann, Leeds, Benson County
- Matt Odermann, Perth, Towner County
- Joseph Parker, Cando, Towner County
- Greg Goodman, Langdon, Cavalier County
- Roxanne Hoffarth, Langdon, Cavalier County
- Merle Boucher, Rolette, Rolette County
- Scott Mitchell, Rolla, Rolette County
- Nathan Neameyer, Rolla, Rolette County
- Ole Nowatzki, Langdon, Cavalier County
- Anita Blue, Belcourt, Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation
- Lisa Mosser, Cando, Towner County
- Randi Anfinson, Devils Lake, Ramsey County
- Elsie Magnus, Langdon, Cavalier County

North Central Planning Council works with both public and private sectors to accomplish the goals of the CEDS. Participants were invited to community meetings in the six counties where NCPC gathered comments. The comments were organized and used in the creation of the goals and strategies. Exhibit 13 is a list of people in attendance.

**Exhibit I4****Community Meeting Participants****Benson County**

- Gary Elfman - Benson County JDA
- Paul Kallenbach- Benson County JDA
- Bruce Terpening - Terpening Construction, Owner, Benson County JDA
- Laura Winson - Benson County JDA, Benson County Housing Authority

**Cavalier County**

- Jerry Nowatzki - Mayor, City of Langdon
- David Zeis - Cavalier County Commission
- Stanley Dick - Cavalier County Commissioner
- David Monson - Representative 10<sup>th</sup> District
- Carol Goodman - Consultant for Nekoma Site Redevelopment
- Duane Otto - Retired, Cavalier Rural Electric, Cavalier County JDA
- Susal Fay Crockett - Realtor, Cavalier County JDA Chairman
- Daren Christianson - Superintendent of Schools
- RoxAnne Hoffarth - Auditor, City of Langdon
- Shannon Duerr - Cavalier County JDA
- Anita Chirumamilla - NDSU Extension

**Eddy County**

- Stuart Richter - Mayor New Rockford, President NRABC
- Amanda Hegland - New Rockford Area Betterment
- Amy Ellingson - James River Dentistry, Dentist, NRABC
- Jill Louters - New Rockford Sheyenne School Superintendent, NRABC
- Chelsey Zeltinger - Nurse Practitioner, CHI Clinic, NRABC
- Melinda Martin - Fesenden CO-OP, NRABC
- Robert Hanson - Mayor City of Sheyenne, Farmer
- Bonnie Deegan - Housewife
- Dianne Hanson - Retired lender, Farmer
- Jill Louters - New Rockford School Superintendent

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Patti Larson - Farmer/Rancher, Sheyenne ED Board</li> <li>● Wanda Bouret - Retired, Massage Therapist</li> <li>● Sandy Hanson - Retired Clerical, Farmer</li> <li>● Jan Loe - Retired Teacher, Warwick School</li> <li>● Tara Hanson - New Rockford School Psychologist</li> <li>● Renae Alfstad - Pharmacy Technician, Farmer/Rancher</li> <li>● Dean Wallace - Dean Wallace Construction</li> <li>● Patti Clifton - Housewife</li> <li>● Liz Swenson - Nurse Indian Health Services</li> <li>● Chick Fine - Sheyenne ED Board</li> </ul>
<b>Ramsey County</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Brad Barth - Forward Devils Lake</li> <li>● Nancy Conkins - Slumberland, Owner</li> <li>● Lisa Crosby - Lake Region Heritage Center</li> <li>● Steve Britsch - Britsch &amp; Associates,PC</li> <li>● Steve Zimmer - Planning Consultant</li> <li>● Mike Grafagaard - Devils Lake City Engineer</li> <li>● Suzie Kenner - Tourism Director Devils Lake Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>● Paula Vistad - Executive Director, Devils Lake Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>● Kale Stromme - Western State Bank, Devils Lake Park Board</li> </ul>
<b>Rolette County</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nathan Neameyer - Farmer, Rolla JDA</li> <li>● Kevin Juntunen - Mayor, City of Rolla</li> <li>● Paula Munro - Rolla JDA</li> <li>● Dawn Fitzgerald - Dacotah Bank, Rolla JDA</li> <li>● Bethany McCloud - Rolla JDA</li> <li>● Josh Munro - Munro Motor Co.</li> <li>● Danielle Mickelson - Rolla JDA, Executive Director</li> </ul>
<b>Towner County</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Doug Berg - D&amp;R Tire &amp; Repair, Owner, Towner County Commission</li> <li>● David Lagein - Farmer, Towner County Commission</li> <li>● Matt Odermann - Turtle Mountain Communications, Towner County Commission</li> <li>● Bob Hallaway - Farmer, Towner Co. Commission</li> <li>● Lance Teubner - Johnson Brothers Distribution, Towner County Commission</li> <li>● Joni Morlock - Auditor, Towner County, Towner County EDC</li> </ul>

# APPENDIX E

## Opportunity Zones

A Qualified Opportunity Zone (QOZ) is an economically distressed community where new investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment. Localities qualify as QOZs if they have been nominated for that designation by a state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory and that nomination has been certified by the Secretary of the U.S. Treasury via his delegation of authority to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).



Opportunity Zones were created under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 ([Public Law No. 115-97](#)). Thousands of low-income communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories are designated as Qualified Opportunity Zones.

North Dakota Region III has four designated opportunity zones:

- Benson County - Designated QOZ 38005940100
- Rolette County - Designated QOZ 38079951600
- Rolette County - Designated QOZ 38079951700
- Rolette County - Designated QOZ 38079941800

Benson County, North Dakota has 1 designated Opportunity Zone. In total the OZ has population of approximately 2,600. That represents 38% of the county’s total population of 6,900. The median household income for this Opportunity Zone is approximately \$39,000.

Name	County	Median Household Income	Below Poverty Line	Median Home Value	Edu High School	Median Age
<a href="#">38005940100</a>	<a href="#">Benson</a>	\$39K	47%	\$75K	87%	23

Rolette County, has 3 designated Opportunity Zones. In total these OZ’s have a population of approximately 12,000. That represents 86% of the county’s total population of 15,000.

The median household income for Rolette County Opportunity Zones ranges from approximately \$37,000 to \$52,000.

Name	County	Median Household Income	Below Poverty Line	Median Home Value	Edu High School	Median Age
<a href="#">38079941800</a>	<a href="#">Rolette</a>	\$37K	27%	\$84K	88%	28
<a href="#">38079951600</a>	<a href="#">Rolette</a>	\$52K	18%	\$108K	89%	33
<a href="#">38079951700</a>	<a href="#">Rolette</a>	\$48K	31%	\$74K	86%	32

Taxpayers can invest in these zones through Qualified Opportunity Funds. OZs are designed to spur economic development by providing tax incentives for investors who invest new capital in businesses operating in one or more QOZs and to encourage the public/private partnerships needed to drive private investment to distressed areas.

More information about Opportunity Zones can be found at: <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/businesses/opportunity-zones>