



Sierra Institute
for Community and Environment



NORTH STATE

REGIONAL STRATEGIES

REGIONAL PLAN PART 2
SEPTEMBER 2024

Acknowledgments

This report was completed to satisfy regional requirements for the California Jobs First Regional Investment Initiative, formerly the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF). The North State Planning and Development Collective (the Collective) and the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment (the Sierra Institute), as co-conveners for the North State High Road Transition Collaborative (HRTC), curated these regional strategies with input and feedback from regional stakeholders. The North State region consists of 10 counties in Northern California: Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity.

The Convening Team would like to extend its appreciation to the following individuals in assisting with the development and production of this work: Ben Vandersluis, North State Planning & Development Collective; Gwen Evans, Sierra Institute for Community & Environment; Vincent Vitale, Sierra Institute; Zach Browning, Sierra Institute; Alyssa Nelson, University of Davis; Jeff Borchers, Consultant; Beth Rose Middleton Manning, Professor of Native American Studies.

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About the Conveners

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The North State Planning and Development Collective (the Collective) comprises the Center for Economic Development (CED, established 1986) and the Geographical Information Center (GIC, established 1988), which merged in 2018. The two centers function under the leadership of Executive Director Jason Schwenkler to expand the services and resources offered to the region's businesses, governments, and residents by pairing GIS mapping services and broadband infrastructure support with economic development research, surveying, analysis, planning, and implementation throughout the state of California. The Collective provides professional resources to Chico State's 12-county territory and beyond. The Collective's mission is academic, community-focused, and service-oriented.

The Sierra Institute for Community and Environment (Sierra Institute) is dedicated to promoting healthy and sustainable forests and watersheds by investing in the well-being of diverse rural communities and strengthening their participation in natural resource decision-making and programs. Recognizing the direct relationship rural communities have with forest landscapes, Sierra Institute has advanced integrative programs that support rural environmental, economic, and community health at local, regional, and national levels for the past 30 years.





North State CA Jobs First Region



Sierra Institute
for Community and Environment



California State
University **Chico**



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2024

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Glossary of Strategy Codes

Code	Meaning
AG	Agriculture
AR	Arts and Culture
BR	Broadband
CH	Childcare
ED	Economic Development
EDU	Education
EJ	Environmental Justice
H	Health
HS	Housing
L	Labor
NR	Natural Resources
SB	Small Business Development
T	Tourism
TED	Tribal Economic Development
TR	Transportation
WK	Workforce Development

1. North State Vision

The North State region of California is defined by stunning beauty, a wealth of natural resources, and scores of small towns along streams, railroads, and highways dotted with historical markers. These communities, despite mining and timber booms and busts, are home to the region's greatest asset: overwhelmingly self-reliant and entrepreneurial people, who typically begin self-introductions with, "I wear many hats."

Surprisingly to many, this picturesque landscape is integral to more populated and urbanized parts of California, who are highly dependent on the North State's water and rely upon its wood products, food production, and recreational opportunities.

The future of California's urban regions is even more entwined with the North State as its expansive forests—which sequester carbon while providing oxygen—are ground zero for climate-related catastrophic wildfires that increasingly foul urban air hundreds of miles away.

In the North State, social, economic, and ecological dynamics cannot be separated. Future businesses and jobs need to be fully integrated into strategies to better manage the landscapes for food, wood production, water supplies, and ecological health and resiliency. Literally everyone needs a path to economic security, health, and wellbeing.

Our vision is for a thriving and resilient North State economy that produces climate-adaptive forests and watersheds, healthy and financially-secure communities, and growing and innovative local businesses linked to regional markets.

The region strives to inspire a **mission-driven economy**. Private enterprise and entrepreneurialism are cornerstones of who we are as Americans and Northern Californians. Public policies reflect shared values and the future we want for our communities, including policies that enable and encourage businesses large and small that are the primary means for producing that future.



The region strives to produce a **regenerative economy**. Forests and wildernesses, farms and ranches are foundational to our economic well-being, and to the well-being of residents beyond the North State and future generations. Supportive public policies, directed innovation, private investment and employment are essential elements of a resource-based economy that is healthy, productive and resilient.



The region strives to create an **opportunity economy**. All residents need access to education, training, and mentoring, and access to jobs that pay well enough for individuals and families to be economically secure. Career pathways and high road jobs need to be adequate and available for all.



The region strives to nurture a **caring economy**. Quality health care, support for young families, and care for seniors and disabled neighbors are critical to our individual and collective pursuit of happiness. The jobs related to these services are more than jobs. They reflect our interdependence and are an expression of the respect and compassion we have for each other.



The region strives to model a **recovery economy**. While enduring repeated disasters and climate impacts, the region builds coordination and communication networks that support faster recovery, such as financial resources to businesses and communities, inventories of assets for insurance payments and rebuild plans, modified training and



outreach efforts to displaced workers, and immediate assessment of environmental impacts to mitigate greater challenges in the near and long-term future.

The region strives to leave a **stewardship economy**. We inherited a history that includes the consequences of short-term thinking and overriding self-interest. We seek to bequeath a vibrant, dynamic and resilient economy in which increasingly more people can prosper, communities are healthy and vibrant and able to take care of residents, and ecosystems are recovering and adapting.



This regional economic strategy describes a path forward grounded first in what local public agencies, community organizations, and businesses within the region can do to grow the number and diversity of enterprises, to increase production, markets, revenue, and family-wage jobs. The strategy also includes actions where the state and federal governments need to align their authority, expertise, and resources to see that these goals are met—for the sake of the North State and the rest of California and the West.

2. The North State Defined

The North State's two most valuable assets are its people and its natural resources. Geographically, the 10-county North State region covers 31,000 square miles, from the Oregon border to deep in the heart of the Sacramento Valley, from the volcanic peaks of Shasta and Lassen to vast undulating forests and the cultivated patchwork of rice fields and orchards. While this rich landscape covers nearly 20% of California, fewer than 2% of Californians live here, and most of them are in Butte and Shasta counties.

The region shares many of the social, demographic and economic trends of the rest of California, while also experiencing the trends associated with other rural regions. Over several decades, the wood products businesses that were the foundation of many communities fell silent. The Great Recession of 2008-09 exacerbated economic decline and job losses, and recovery took far longer than other parts of California. In the ensuing years, personal income has not risen as fast in the North State as in the rest of California or the United States as a whole. Median incomes are significantly lower than the state or national averages. The region's life expectancy and other health outcomes are lower than the state average, while the incidence of behavioral health issues is higher.

The 2019-22 period—marked by the pandemic and several significant wildfires—further eroded the socio-economic foundations:

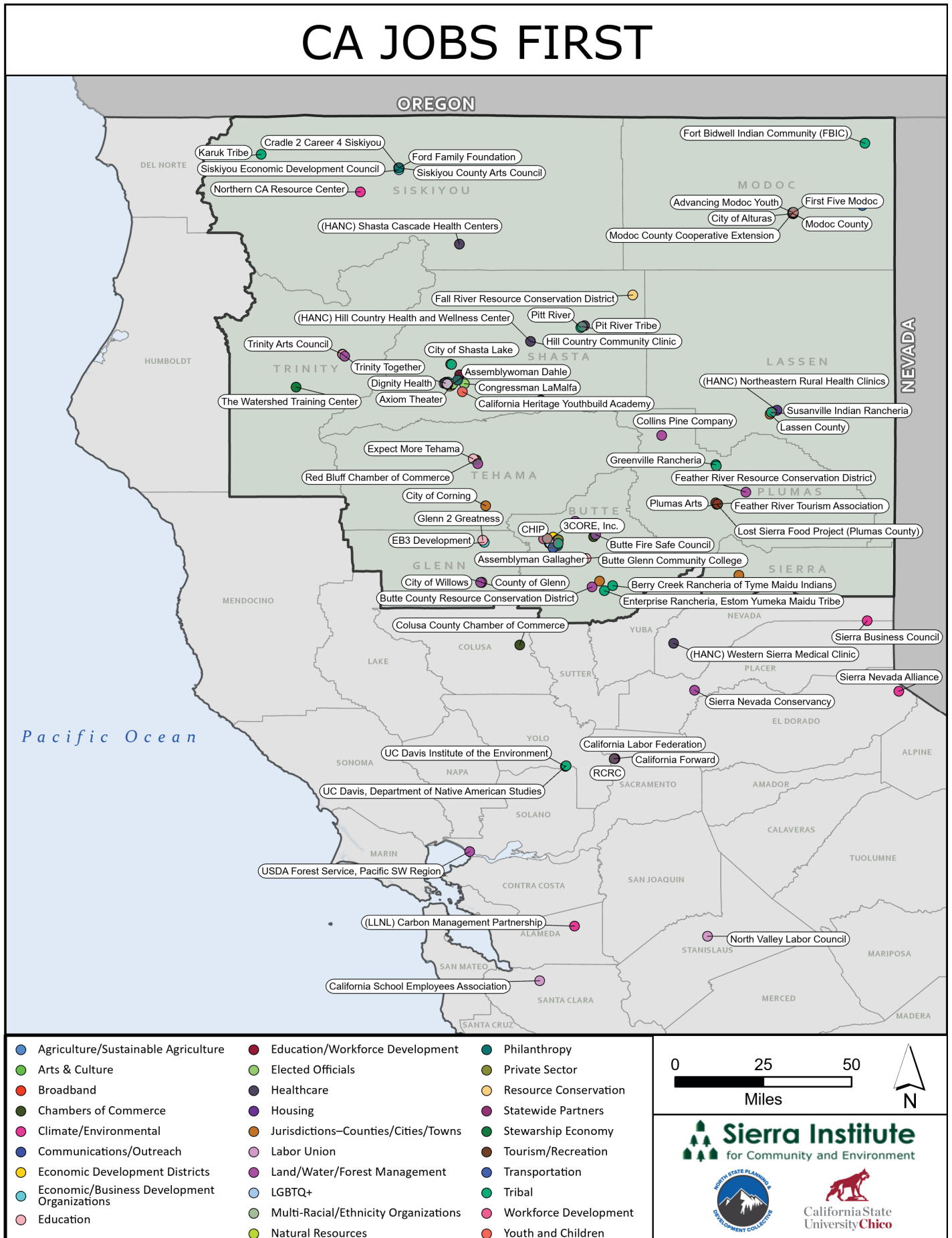
- The region's population declined by 11,000 people – 2.4%.
- The portion of persons living in poverty increased from 15% to 16.2%.
- While median household income grew by 7%, median gross rent increased 12.4%.
- While the number of housing units increased by 3.9%, the median value of owner-occupied housing increased 29.2%.
- Annual inflation in those years in Butte and Shasta counties averaged 5.3% and six other North State counties saw their cost of living rise even faster. By comparison, the statewide inflation rate was 3.6% and the national average was 4.3%.

This paradox—the harsh rural realities among natural and renewable bounty—are both the imperative and the inspiration for a coherent strategy that builds upon the innate strengths of individuals, families, and communities as repeatedly witnessed by the world in the region's responses to economic busts, wildfires, floods, droughts, and extreme weather.

Economic analysis suggests the best opportunities lie in innovative clusters focused on the region's competitive advantages: construction, healthcare, craft food and beverage manufacturing, energy products and services, cannabis and related production, travel and tourism, and natural resource-management-related sectors. The region might also be able to take advantage of shifts toward remote work to attract younger professionals.

This strategy, informed by an active citizenry, is predicated on the explicit ambition to work better together across the region as much as the analysis of emerging technologies, market demands, and a global urgency to invest in forests and watersheds to slow emissions and adapt to a changing climate.

Figure 1. California Jobs First North State HRTC Members Map



North State HRTC Governance Structure

Public Input

Public HRTC meetings will take place no less than twice a year to provide opportunities for public input.

Co-Conveners

North State Planning & Development Collective and the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment.

Regional Representatives

Subregional representatives will vet data and regional plan documents in order to increase regional collaboration and ensure each county has representation in plans and recommendations. Due to a 10-county geography and historic under-investment, regional and sector-specific knowledge is a priority for North State HRTC members.

High Road Transition Collaborative

Regional representatives representing all stakeholder groups and having signed on to the HRTC will develop North State CERF goals and objectives and set regional priorities. A subgroup representing all required stakeholder groups will vet plans and data.

Advisory Group

An advisory group that comprises sector leaders who are also members of the HRTC will help vet processes and set agendas.

Subcommittee Leaders

Representatives will be responsible for subcommittee deliverables and championing each sector/stakeholder group. They may work in either integrated multi-sector working groups, or in sector/stakeholder-specific working groups to advance regional planning efforts and project identification.

HRTC Voting Members

Nominations for voting members from each of the required stakeholder groups will be taken in early January. The HRTC at large will vote on the nominations to elect the final voting group. Letters of support from respective subcommittees will be encouraged to increase regional collaboration, but will not be required. Final voting members will be established no later than January 31, 2024. Regional decisions will be based on a consensus model. If consensus agreement cannot be reached based on regionally identified priorities and planning documents, a voting process will be undertaken with a supermajority (75% agreement) vote.

North State HRTC

Roles & Responsibilities

Advisory Committee

A group of HRTC members with leadership capacity.

Meets every other month.

- Provides support to the Co-Convening team
- Helps guide the process and purpose of the effort.
- Guides agenda development for HRTC Meetings.
- Balances regional priorities, not just specific sectors.
- Identifies leaders (or serves as lead) for topical subcommittees.
- Supports development of project evaluation criteria for HRTC.
- Serves as Catalyst Program funds scoring committee.

Topical Subcommittees

Led by advisory committee members, conveners, or assigned topical experts.

Meets every other month (off months from the advisory committee).

- Identifies industry/ topical priorities and conducts outreach across the region to relevant entities.
- Proposes projects to move into development.
- Presents (as subject matter or industry experts), to the HRTC to guide regional planning priorities.

High Road Transition Collaborative

100+ members from the 10-county region.

Minimum of 3 working meetings with a final meeting, all in person, public is invited to attend and comment, but not vote.

- Each member of the HRTC serves on a subcommittee.
- Discusses regional priorities, ground truths regional plans and research findings.
- Comments on proposed projects from the region.
- Votes on 3-5 projects to move into implementation.

Project Selection and Strategies Timeline

Project Submissions through 30 April 2024

HRTC members submitted projects for Catalyst funding consideration through the end of April. Project submissions were solicited and received by the conveners.

Revised Rubric by Conveners 17 May 2024

Conveners completed a draft of the scoring rubric that the Advisory Committee will use to score projects for Catalyst suitability.

Advisory Committee Meeting 21 May 2024

Conveners share agenda and plan for HRTC virtual meeting where the final rubric and funding distributions and parameters will be discussed.

HRTC Virtual Meeting 6 June 2024

Conveners share rubric for final comment, reflecting the synthesis of subcommittee input, advisory committee input, and state criteria changes. Comments accepted through June 12.

Catalyst Fund Proposals 14 June 2024

Additional project information for Catalyst funding requested from regional project sponsors who submitted preliminary information. This information was due June 17.

Technical Review of Revised Catalyst Proposals 17 July — 13 August 2024

Submitted project information reviewed for completeness.

Scoring by Committee 14 August — 30 August 2024

All projects scored by a minimum of three Advisory Committee members.

Regional Plan Part II, Strategic Plan (Draft) 31 August 2024

Draft strategies due to EDD by August 31. Draft to be discussed at the in-person meeting in Anderson. Final strategies due to EDD by September 30.

HRTC In-Person Meeting 4 September 2024

In-person HRTC meeting held in Anderson, CA. Conveners shared components of the regional strategies draft with HRTC and solicited feedback and input. Discussed Catalyst next steps.

Catalyst Fund Award Process October 2024

Project awards will be made during the month of October.

3. Sector Strategies

Measuring Progress

The North State's strategy aims to be more than a sum of its recommendations by designing actions and measuring progress toward three overarching goals. Each of the four priority sectors—natural resources, agriculture, tourism, and health—has the potential to advance these goals. Metrics will be developed for each sector to inform activities and assess whether and how those activities are moving the region toward diversity, resiliency, economic health, and environmental equity. The three overarching goals:

1. **Increasing Economic Diversification and Responding to Economic Shocks.** Within each of the four sectors, the types of enterprises, products, and services can be expanded to generate more opportunities, particularly in disinvested communities and those with lower levels of well-being, and to reduce reliance on limited and cyclical markets highly sensitive to volatile economic conditions. Growing the diversity of businesses within sectors will increase overall growth potential as well as the ability to adapt to changing conditions, and even capture the growth opportunities associated with natural and economic shocks. The metrics will be designed to capture impacts by geography, income, and race.
2. **Increasing Economic Equity and Job Quality.** The region lacks both the enterprises and the skilled workforce required to advance the four sectors, limiting the growth of family-sustaining jobs. The best way to achieve the region's and the state's health, environmental, and climate goals is with high-value businesses capable of providing careers for residents in historically marginalized and disinvested communities. Diverse and robust agricultural, natural resources, tourism and health sectors require skilled and professional workers, a demand best met with pathways for training and development that can provide economic security for individuals and families. Metrics will focus on developing the skills, opportunities, and economic security of communities in all parts of the region.
3. **Increasing Health and Environmental Equity.** Given the importance of sustainable natural resource management to the future of the region, sector strategies and the health and safety of every community is dependent on efforts to adapt forests and watersheds to climate change. Public health outcomes and the social determinants of health—particularly in disinvested and low-well-being communities—are equally interdependent on restorative and sustainable forest management. Metrics reflecting health and environmental equity will shape and encourage economic activities to have the desired impacts.

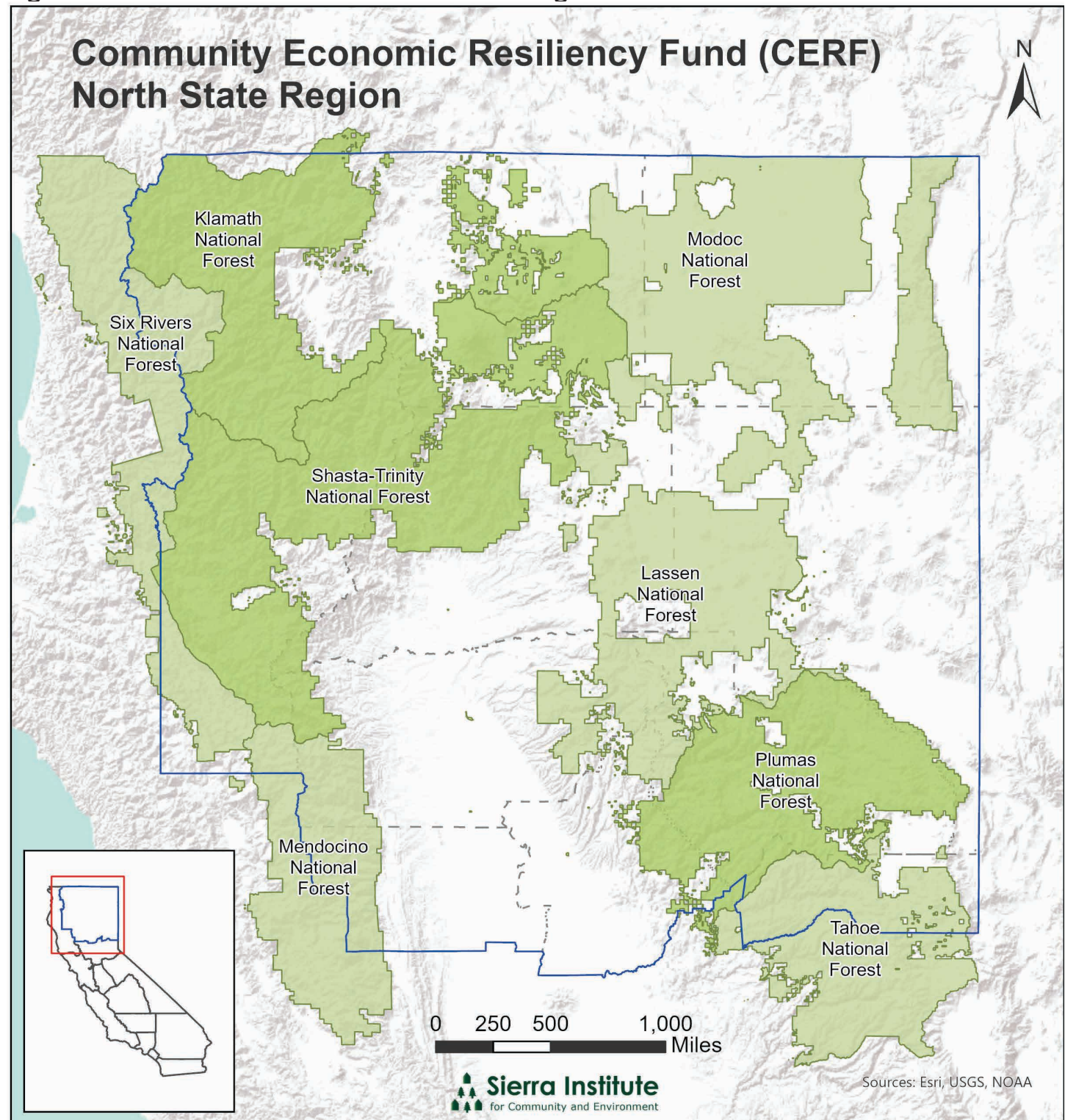
3.1 Natural Resources Sector



The forests and watersheds of the North State encompass the Northern Sierra and Cascade, provinces providing unique aesthetic and cultural values to residents and visitors. These provinces support diverse habitats, a vibrant recreation and tourist economy, an essential wood products industry, and diverse ecosystem services that are vital to all Californians. The Upper Sacramento, McCloud, Pit, and Feather watersheds are critical water sources for California's multi-billion-dollar agricultural sector and provide water to a major portion of California's population. North State streams host some of the last of the free-running salmon populations in California. All or portions of eight national forests lie in the region, encompassing a majority of the North State landscape,

with three of the forests (Klamath, Plumas, and Shasta-Trinity) recently receiving priority funding from the federal government for wildfire mitigation.

Figure 2. National Forests in the North State Region



Source: Esri, USGS, NOAA

Note: Darker green forests are where historic investment of congressional funding is dedicated to address the wildfire crises.

Catastrophic wildfires in the North State are burning forests faster than they can be maintained or restored, with high-severity burns damaging vegetation, soil, and ecosystem processes. The 21st century has seen a dramatic increase in fire severity, acres burned, and destructive fires.

Smoke and fires affect all communities in the North State. The impact of large-scale wildfire affects urban areas throughout California, threatening the health of all Californians.

Forest Sector activities are a key growth area for the North State. In response to wildfire events and drought, ongoing investment in healthy forest management is expected to continue. Expansion of fire management and fire training centers is also expected. In addition, forest product businesses, such as biomass energy and innovative wood products, are expected to increase as a result of forest health work and provide areas of growth for the region. The North State is also a key region for renewable and clean energy generation, including biomass energy, solar energy, geothermal, and more, which build on the region's space, infrastructure, and natural resources while striving toward the State's climate goals. Innovations in carbon capture and energy storage technologies are also well suited to the region.

VISION

A thriving and resilient North State is based on a regenerative economy that produces climate-adaptive forests and watersheds, healthy and financially secure communities, and growing and innovative community-scale businesses linked to regional markets.

Strategy NR-1

Restoration activities must be increased and prioritize both burned landscapes and remaining green forests. Time is of the essence.

- State and federal agencies must work together and with community and regional collaboratives to prioritize landscape needs and blend resources. The California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force has stimulated essential interagency thinking and cross-boundary work with collaboratives, but support for collaboratives and tribes in the North State remains uneven, and their engagement is critical for identifying and working on landscape and community priorities.
- Effective landscape management involves anticipatory approaches to landscape fire. One risk management approach utilizes potential landscape control features, like roads and ridgetops, that are blended with information on forest conditions, ecological priorities, and fire potential to pre-plan for wildfire and reduce impacts. These spatial areas are called Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) and represent new and needed work in advance of landscape fire.
- Consistent forest restoration and watershed health requires new revenue sources to avoid “boom and bust” allocations and natural resource employment. (These are discussed further below.)
- Reintroduction of fire, including cultural fire, into landscape restoration work must be supported. This will require reducing liabilities for private landowners associated with managed fire, better informing the public about the importance of managed fire, supporting research on prescribed and cultural fire, and supporting the organizations that are building the workforce to do this work. Support for a diverse fire practitioner workforce is key for successful reintroduction of fire and is an essential pathway to job creation and landscape restoration.

Strategy NR-2

Train and support workers to conduct environmental analyses and produce environmental documents (NEPA required for federal land projects and CEQA for private land) to ensure projects are tied to prioritized restoration projects and timber and biomass is made available

for community scale producers. Federal agencies lack personnel to complete timely analysis of needed projects. Assistance from non-governmental organizations, Resource Conservation Districts, and private companies can speed project documentation and landscape work. There are numerous examples demonstrating successful public and private partnerships getting work done, but it is uneven across the North State.

- To grow this educated and needed workforce, build with existing North State organizations and continue to develop regional public-private partnerships. Focus on these organizations and partnerships to create jobs and grow the regional economy, and resist the temptation to outsource to out-of-area contractors.

Strategy NR-3

Create a regenerative (circular) economy that produces value-added wood products that are sold locally, regionally, statewide, and beyond.

- Facilitate public and private investment. Invest in community-scale wood utilization facilities (e.g., sawmills, cross laminated timber manufacturing, bioenergy production, and other value-added products) to utilize logs and biomass from forests and create high quality, family-wage jobs.
- Support developers of wood utilization campuses that process a diversity of logs and less valuable biomass and contribute to California's net zero goals. Numerous California executive orders, plans and policies call for this work. Regional assets include entrepreneurs interested in refining and building community scale operations and wood utilization businesses. Support programs that link entrepreneurs in peer learning groups and joint marketing and development programs.
- Identify, prioritize and clean up sites that historically supported manufacturing and industrial operations for reuse. Utilization of these sites avoids creation of new sites that require clearing and development, and can contribute to remediation of environmental hazards. The U.S. EPA Brownfields program focuses precisely on this work, funding non-governmental and other organizations to identify and clean up old industrial sites for reuse. Historic sawmill sites are often in central locations that lend themselves to remediation and redevelopment. There are numerous locations where old operations existed and where interest is high in utilizing these sites.

Strategy NR-4

Create value-added marketing consortia for small- and mid-scale producers. Network producers for efficient and effective marketing and sale of products.

- Explore the feasibility of partnerships with ADU companies and disaster rebuild.
- Create a certification/brand for community-based regenerative products and partner with a network of hardware stores for each.
- Dedicate funding to assess value-added products produced, volumes sold, logs and lower value biomass used, and acres treated, among other measures to assess and adaptively improve consortia value.

VISION

The region strives to create an opportunity economy serving all counties and communities. All residents need access to education, training, mentoring, and jobs that pay well enough for individuals and families to be economically secure. Career pathways and high road jobs are available, satisfying, and offer opportunities for achievement.

The natural resource sector faces chronic workforce shortages, in part because those jobs have been denigrated, businesses have left the region, and many involved in the sector are paid non-family-supporting wages.

Strategy NR-5

Develop safe, family-wage jobs to attract and maintain workers. This should be done with both in-woods and manufacturing jobs, with support for training and work experience, and should be responsive to the needs of those who have been out of the workforce or marginalized.

EXAMPLE

Considerable success has been achieved with the High Roads Training Partnership focused on Tribes and forest restoration. This program mixes basic skill training, advanced skill training, and Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK) with tribal trainers and pays for training, work experience, and advancing understanding of securing contracts and managing crews. All trainees are from underinvested communities and the program has growing interest.

VISION

Long-term forest and watershed health is supported by a more reliable decades-long funding plan and not just a one-time influx of funds. Maintaining healthy, lower-density forest structures over time requires consistent and landscape scale treatment, which is to ensure the benefits of the North State's natural infrastructure. By facilitating a more diverse portfolio of funding streams into upper watershed health, the State can effectively reduce the risk of severely degrading the most important sources and safeguard freshwater in the State.

Strategy NR-6

Advance payments for the ecosystem services and invest these payments in landscapes and community business that use the byproducts of restoration work to create jobs and improve forest and watershed health.

For decades, payments for ecosystem services that include habitat, clean air, flood attenuation, healthy water flows, hydropower, and carbon storage (among others) have not been supported

at anything close to the levels needed to sustain these services, benefits, and the integrity of the systems that produce them. Climate change, drought, reduced forest restoration, and fire suppression have all contributed to the increase in destructive catastrophic wildfire. Considering fires statewide, California Air Resources Board reported that between 2017 and 2021, roughly 45,000 fires burned almost 10 million acres and released an average of 53 million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent annually. Many of these—most notably the largest fires—occurred in source watersheds of the North State, compromising reservoirs, hydropower production, transmission lines, human health, and fundamentally undermining the State’s carbon goals and water security. California’s water users rely on North State watersheds: 75 percent of California’s rain and snow is received in the watersheds north of Sacramento, and 80 percent of California’s water demand comes from the southern two-thirds of the state (California Department of Water Resources 2024).

Strategy NR-7

Establish permanent allocations to integrated regional water management, expansion of upper watershed accounting, and coalition-building between headwaters and downstream representatives to address the disparity between the regions of high-elevation water sources and beneficiaries. This will require a commitment from the State of California and include hydropower operators and downstream water users.

Strategy NR-8

Declare source watersheds as integral components of the state’s water infrastructure. This expands on Assembly Bill 2480, signed by Governor Brown in 2016, addressing source watersheds as integral components of the state’s water infrastructure that is now restricted to reservoir and conveyance infrastructure. This will help link upper watershed improvements to reliable and quality water supplies and make eligible forest and watershed improvements for the same forms of financing as other water infrastructure projects.

Strategy NR-9

Establish a bipartisan coalition to advance source watershed funding that is linked to wildfire mitigation, forest health, salmon recovery, and water quality monitoring that is standardized and consistent.

EXAMPLE

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, serving 19 million people, recently agreed to invest in a Forest Resilience Bond designed to create a revenue stream that will finance upfront forest restoration work in the Feather River and Sacramento River watersheds. The bonds are offered by Blue Forest and will provide the Butte Resource Conservation District and the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment support for forest restoration projects.

Strategy NR-10

Base funding for watershed protection, water supply, flood control, and water infrastructure on watershed acreage or other values and not on population totals, which is the current practice. The political power and votes in California reside in largely coastal urban centers

along with some major population centers in the Central Valley. Changing this formula will help avoid embedding regional inequities in new funding. Passage of Propositions 1 and 68 demonstrated that California voters support watershed health and restoration, but because funding was based on population, they privileged smaller watersheds near population centers at the expense of vital North State watersheds that serve and affect all of California.

Proposition 4 authorizes bonds for Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, and Protecting Communities and Natural Lands From Climate Risks. Like its predecessor watershed health and restoration bonds, Proposition 4 is favored to pass in November. While the formula for distribution of some of these dollars are fixed, the amount of downstream benefit provided with upstream restoration and recovery warrants continued attention and monitoring to assure investment in headwaters regions. Bonds can fill important funding gaps, but long-term, thoughtful stewardship requires durable and consistent sources of funding for upper watershed health and building economies to support this work over the long term.

Strategy NR-11

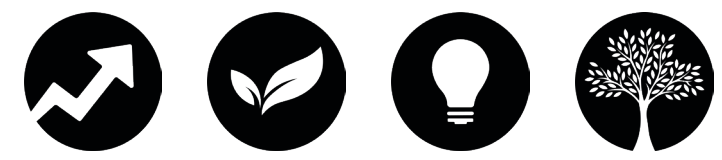
Explore the potential of the North State for CO₂ storage and commercialization of storage in mafic and ultramafic rock.

The North State region is recognized by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) as critical for California’s new carbon economy largely through utilization of biomass and conversion technologies, including carbon storage. Jobs First funding supported a preliminary assessment of the North State by LLNL (2024) that examined more traditional sedimentary storage along with storage in igneous and metamorphic rocks through carbon mineralization. Glenn and Butte counties hold the most potential for sedimentary geologic CO₂ storage, with a capacity of 1.6–29 billion tons of CO₂. LLNL reported that the wide range reflects uncertainty in key parameters used to estimate storage potential in the North State sedimentary layers. The North State contains an abundance of ultramafic and mafic rocks, such as serpentinite and basalt, in which storage of CO₂ can be achieved through carbon mineralization, which is akin to rock weatherization. LLNL identified the potential CO₂ storage capacity in this rock in the North State at hundreds to thousands of billions of tons (Gt). This process is less scientifically advanced than CO₂ storage in sedimentary rock requiring additional research and policy support. One example of this work is Department of Energy funding for an exploratory well in Lassen County for CO₂ storage. Efforts elsewhere are underway to better characterize the resource and commercialization processes. See LLNL report on Carbon Storage available on the North State Jobs First website.

Natural Resources Sector	
Increasing Economic Diversification and Responding to Economic Shocks	Regional natural resources (NR) strategies would establish new and innovative businesses with multiple products, services and markets. NR Strategies would establish the true value in forests, land, water and carbon sequestration, transforming and diversifying the North State’s core economic drivers, encouraging innovations in technology and high quality jobs and making those businesses and jobs more resilient to shocks.
Increasing Economic Equity and Job Quality	NR Strategies focus on building local economies and supporting community scale businesses. NR Strategies outline economic development in industries with a diverse set of job types, opportunities for cross training to ensure year-round work and multiple career ladders.

Increasing Health and Environmental Equity	<p>NR Strategies would increase forest health, reduce damage to ecological assets, and promote ecosystem adaptability to climate change.</p> <p>NR Strategies would reduce risk of wildfire, harmful smoke, the loss of personal property and income, and individual and community trauma.</p> <p>NR Strategies would increase wages and benefits and economic security.</p>
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3.2 Agriculture Sector



The North State region is home to significant agricultural productivity for California and beyond. While large-scale farm and ranch operations control a large portion of the market, small- to medium-sized producers and manufacturers are the backbone of many communities in the region, especially those that are geographically isolated.

Agricultural operations are adapted to the wide diversity in the region’s terrain, weather, and land use—from expansive and highly productive valleys that drain to near sea level, to rolling foothills and upland meadows. Much of Northeastern California has been developed around the Sacramento River, the state’s largest river and lifeblood for agricultural production and value-added processing. Total value of agricultural production in 2019 was roughly \$4.5 billion (\$4,453M), a 35% increase from 2010.

Most recently, agricultural production increased 6.2% from 2022 to 2023 (Houk report). The highest-valued commodities in Northern California were rice (\$900.4M), almonds (\$773.0M), and walnuts (\$719.3M). The highest valued commodities in the mountain dominant counties were hay (\$202.9M), cattle (\$158.6M), and nursery plants and products (\$158.2M). While farm production expenses increased by some 15% between 2010 and 2019, net farm income increased by 27%.

The agricultural industry is making significant contributions to the economy in terms of employment, wages, and value added (Table 1). The overall agriculture industry, including indirect and induced effects, is responsible for an estimated 70,164 jobs or 17.8% of total employment in the region (21% of total private sector employment). That is, around one in five jobs in the region are linked to agriculture. This includes 51,337 jobs directly within agricultural production, processing, and related sectors, and an additional 18,827 jobs through the indirect and induced effects. The total value of labor income as a result of the agriculture industry was estimated at \$3.2 billion, or 17.7% of all labor income in the region. In terms of total value added, \$5.6 billion was added to the Northeastern California economy as a result of the direct, indirect, and induced effects of the agricultural industry. This represents 15.8% of all economic value that was created by the Northeastern California economy in 2019.

While agriculture continues to be a backbone industry for the North State, it is faced with challenges particularly as extreme weather, disasters, and other climate implications increase each year. Access to capital and other financial resources are limited, adding to the barriers for solutions. For small-scale producers in the North State region, the burden and expense of distribution and accessing markets often rests on the already stressed, under-resourced producers. For industrial-scale agricultural producers, the challenge is that processing and distribution is fossil-fuel-dependent and is subject to (and contributes to) climate change vulnerabilities.

Table 1. The Contribution of Agriculture to the North State Economy 2019

	Employment		Labor Income		Value Added	
	# Jobs	% Jobs	Million \$	% Income	Million \$	% Value Added
Direct Impacts	51,337	13.0%	\$2,197	12.3%	\$3,897	10.9%
Production Direct	30,660	7.8%	\$1,122	6.3%	\$2,293	6.4%
Processing Direct	10,828	2.7%	\$588	3.3%	\$1,042	2.9%
Ag Related Direct	9,849	2.5%	\$487	2.7%	\$562	1.6%
Indirect Impacts	7,742	2.0%	\$436	2.4%	\$739	2.1%
Induced Impacts	11,085	2.8%	\$519	2.9%	\$1,003	2.8%
Total Contribution of Agriculture	70,164	17.8%	\$3,152	17.7%	\$5,639	15.8%

Source: IMPLAN.

Notes: Number of jobs includes full-time and part-time jobs. Total jobs in the North State are estimated at 394,809 for 2019. Total labor income in the North State is estimated at \$17,814 million for 2019. Total value added in the North State is estimated at \$35,656 million for 2019.

Integrating more technology into the sector may offer solutions to challenges in supply chain logistics, food safety, climate implications, and workforce expansion. Barriers for broadband infrastructure, cost of technological improvements, and upskilling workforce still need to be addressed.

Agriculture in Northern California faces challenges with succession planning, filling farm-field positions, integration of technology and related training, and marketing other jobs that can sustain and grow this sector. Overall jobs for this sector are projected to increase by 2.4% from 2024-2029. From January to March 2024, 154 unique jobs were posted within the North State. Of those postings, 132 did not list education requirements.

Expanding the types of jobs within this sector is important for recruiting younger, skilled employees. Younger workers may be more interested if they were aware of positions in accounting, marketing, technology, and regenerative practices. Many farmers have requested hands-on training that allows for internships, apprenticeships, and best practices for small and large-scale farm production. As regenerative and climate-mitigation practices increase in the agricultural sector, training needs will increase.

VISION

To develop a supportive ecosystem for mission-driven, food-focused organizations (for profit and nonprofit) that enhances financial viability, community vitality, and resiliency against economic and climatic shocks. To improve connectivity and collaborative opportunities to support the small- to medium-sized agricultural sector that includes producers, farmers, ranchers, and value-added operations throughout the North State region by developing and scaling farmer-producer networks to build the full value within the sector.

Strategy AG-1

Develop and scale regional food systems collaboratives to improve efficiency, sustainability, and productivity of the local food systems.

- Convene and connect sub-regional food producers.

- Develop a value-based brand promoting the North State's geography and producers as stewards of natural resources and essential contributors to the health of individuals, families, and communities.
- Assess capital needs for small- to medium-sized producers, and work with local, regional lenders to enhance Revolving Loan Funds and other financial resources to access affordable financing, create business resilience, and secure land for farming and ranching. Explore and build relationships with potential statewide partners like California Farmlink to connect established resources like trainings and financial services to the North State.
- Increase access to and flexibility of capital for land acquisition, technology upgrades, equipment purchases, and other expenses (e.g., consider loan guarantees, modifying eligibility criteria for existing governmental financial assistance programs).
- Expanding partnerships (like the USDA Southwest Regional Food Business Center) with technical assistance providers and community-based organizations to provide resources to smaller, historically underserved farmers and ranchers.

Strategy AG-2

Build a vibrant market that internalizes the costs and benefits of local, regenerative production systems.

- Explore the best model for connecting producers with customers: farmers markets, community markets, food hubs (different types of food hubs including retail-driven, nonprofit-driven, producer-driven, and consumer-driven models), and cooperatives. Work to better understand and overcome barriers and increase the likelihood for long-term success.
- Develop consumer partnerships with durable organizations, such as schools, hospitals, housing facilities, and community colleges and universities.
- Assess employer needs and cross-walk with existing curriculum, training, and available workforce to address worker shortages and challenges with succession planning and increased outreach for all agricultural positions.
- Utilize regenerative agricultural best practices to expand consistent year-round crop production, mitigate climate challenges, and determine appropriate crops to withstand changing weather conditions and other challenges such as extreme heat, drought, flood, and fire.

Strategy AG-3

Pursue economies of scale and operational resiliency by coordinating procurement and supply chains and the transportation of inputs and products.

- Identify a lead organization or consortium of organizations that can facilitate these activities.
- Conduct a feasibility study to assess supply chain and logistical challenges.
- Assess technology opportunities and identify barriers for implementation.
- Develop action plan to improve supply chain logistics: transportation, cold storage, technological advancement/integration, and disaster preparedness.
- Integration of technology to improve food safety, reduced application of crop inputs, increased profits, and environmental benefits such as less chemical usage and soil runoff.
- Develop and adopt uniform standards to support interoperability between different precision agriculture technologies where applicable.

Strategy AG-4

Coordinate across sectors to connect steward-based producers to travelers and visitors.

- Develop agritourism activities to bring travelers and visitors to the region while highlighting local food production
- Identify opportunities to bundle, package and market products from each subregion and distribute throughout the North State to cross market products and the area it originated for destination experiences.
- Support efforts to modernize fairgrounds and develop Community Resilience Centers to provide continuous community benefits that enhance community resilience through civic, social, educational, and economic development programming.

Strategy AG-5

Promote sustainable production practices and scale across small, medium and large-sized farms.

- Develop subregional networking and mentoring cohorts supporting small, local producers.
- Encourage farming practices and diversify crop production to reduce dependency on single commodities.
- Support farmers in adopting technology for efficient water use and soil conservation to enhance productivity and environmental sustainability.
- Encourage collaboration between large producers to mitigate transportation challenges, increase export opportunities, and promote worker trainings and educational curriculum.

EXAMPLE

The Eastside Producers Informational Collaborative (EPIC) is a collaborative project that pioneers a critical initiative to strengthen the rural regional food system across Plumas, Sierra, Lassen, and Modoc counties in Northeastern California. Leveraging the region's shared challenges and strengths – remote landscapes, tight-knit communities, and economic hardship – EPIC seeks to enhance market access for local producers and bolster food security during times of crisis.

Agriculture Sector	
Increasing Economic Diversification and Responding to Economic Shocks	Regional agricultural strategies (AG) focus on creating, connecting, and expanding producer networks to leverage resources, close the supply chain gap, and share best practices. Producers are encouraged to diversify crops and incorporate technology to reduce financial risks, mitigate climate challenges, and withstand market shocks.
Increasing Economic Equity and Job Quality	AG Strategies focus on increasing and improving awareness of and access to the variety of positions within the sector. Educational institutions in the North State continue to increase the availability of curriculum and trainings beginning in high schools. Diversification of crops supports year-round production cycles and reduces employment seasonality.
Increasing Health and Environmental Equity	AG Strategies support streamlining supply chain components such as transportation and technology to mitigate climate impacts. AG Strategies support sustainable agriculture practices that can minimize air and water pollution, build healthy soil and prevent erosion, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase farms' resilience to extreme weather events, support water management, and integrate livestock and crops to make farms more efficient and profitable.

3.3 Tourism Sector



Visit California reports the state's tourism economy generated \$150.4 billion in travel spending last year, surpassing the prior record \$144.9 billion spent in 2019 before the pandemic halted travel. Tourism created 64,900 new jobs in California in 2023, bringing total industry employment to 1.15 million (98% of pre-pandemic employment levels).

In 2022, 168.1 million Americans engaged in outdoor recreation, marking a 2.3% increase since March 2021 (Outdoor Foundation, 2022). This surge in outdoor activity has had a profound economic impact, with the outdoor recreation economy contributing a staggering \$1.1 trillion to the U.S. economy in 2022, surpassing industries such as mining, utilities, farming and ranching, and chemical products manufacturing. In California, the outdoor recreation economy generates \$73.8 billion and accounts for 568,000 jobs (Outdoor Recreation Roundtable - ORR). In addition, the Bureau of Economic Analysis found that the 2022 outdoor recreation economy grew three times faster than the U.S. economy as a whole.

The Tourism Sector has the opportunity to engage with the agriculture and natural resources sectors through guided tours; biking, hiking, and equestrian trails; and other outdoor activities. Outdoor activities contribute to the overall health of North State residents by promoting physical activity, awareness of the natural lands and conservation strategies, plant and animal knowledge, cultural forest management practices, and mental health activities. The Tourism sector also has the opportunity to expand the industry's workforce by partnering with Tribal leadership to enhance connection between Indigenous resource management practices and climate- and market-based solutions. Tribal-led tourism activities can increase employment, reduce poverty, empower local communities, spur cultural revival, and allow for a sustained relationship between land, nature, and Tribal partners.

The Tourism sector can operate as the nexus between hospitality services, visitor experiences, and climate and natural resource preservation. Tourism can put stress on local land use, including the depletion of local natural resources and increased pollution and waste. Eco-tourism is a rapidly growing industry, with potential benefits for both the environment and the economies of tourist destinations.

Training can take a cross-sector approach integrating transferable skills: customer service, biology and biological assessments, GIS mapping, arts and culture, Tribal representation, public administration, restaurants and hospitality, recreation, and management-track positions.

VISION

To create a vibrant network among a growing number of diverse businesses offering recreational, cultural, culinary, educational, and other life-enhancing experiences, effectively marketing those destination-based experiences to all demographics.

EXAMPLE

The Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship's Connected Communities Trails Master Plan (TMP) offers a powerful example of how to capitalize on the growing trend of outdoor recreation and focuses on revitalizing disadvantaged mountain communities using trails as a tool. The TMP provides the steps to create a sustainable economy for local communities by promoting tourism, new job creation, and outdoor activities while preserving the natural environment and cultural heritage of Northern California's Sierra Nevada and Cascade Range, a region commonly referred to as the Lost Sierra.

The TMP will serve the needs of recreational users by creating a new shared-use trail network capitalizing on the growing demand for singletrack trails in the Lost Sierra region. Trails included in the TMP are planned and designed around the IDEA: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access for all users, with the goal of providing world-class shared-use opportunities for motorcycles, Class 1 Ebikes, mountain bikes, hiking, and equine use.

Strategy T-1

Develop a regionwide network to strengthen and coordinate the marketing of the full diversity of visitor experiences to all demographics.

- Connect and convene North State subregions: Far North (Siskiyou, Modoc, Lassen), Eastern Sierra (Plumas, Sierra), Trinity, and the Valley (Butte, Shasta, Tehama) to identify collaborative opportunities and provide for more comprehensive visitor experiences.
- Develop a regional tourism marketing plan in coordination with Visit California and establish a champion/owner to drive implementation.
- Develop an asset inventory and map of travel experiences, events, and cultural experiences throughout the North State. For example, Connected Communities in the Sierra Buttes, the Downieville races in Sierra County, the Wildflower race in Butte County.
- Create an interactive regional website with strong social media components. Integrate wayfinding, geocaching, videos, storytelling, and cultural resources (i.e., Tribal, arts). Expand from Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to include TikTok and other viral video content.
- Promote the region's natural beauty, smaller populations, destination experiences, and varied landscapes and climates.
- Hold focus groups with a variety of demographics to tailor outreach based on desired activities. Harness the spending power of Gen X and Boomer travelers, which is a significant portion of North State residents.
- Elevate the voices of the North State's Tribal partners to expand their role in and benefits from regional tourism. This may include (when Tribes feel it is appropriate to do so): sharing of projects, unique cultural practices, and land management (e.g., Tribal greenhouse and food security programs, indigenous plant restoration, and cultural burning).
- Engage Tribal partners in identifying connections within Tourism projects for story telling, events, and the integration of their knowledge and experience on trail maps, historical markers, and electronic platforms.

Strategy T-2

Connect, grow, and promote community-based businesses that together provide a full destination-based experience to visitors.

- Identify supporting businesses in the hospitality industry such as restaurants, hotels, sport equipment rentals, and agricultural businesses to create packages focused on current recreational events.
- Identify methods for promotion and distribution of packages domestically and internationally.
- Coordinate master agreements between federal, state, and local landowners for better access and shared mutual benefit.
- Explore entrepreneurial and small business opportunities.
- Develop regional, multi-day travel package opportunities.
- Support efforts to modernize fairgrounds and develop Community Resilience Centers to provide continuous community benefits that enhance community resilience through civic, social, educational, and economic development programming.
- Identify and promote large-scale attractions and events that are unique to the North State beyond outdoor experiences.
- Assess and develop a plan for infrastructure improvements to support attractions in smaller towns: marketing, expanded Wi-Fi availability, rental car facilities, EV infrastructure, transportation systems, insurance solutions, and sanitary/waste disposal.
- Demonstrate through the diversity of strategies described how the North State region is coming together to connect communities, build a more resilient economy, and advance the opportunity and caring economy that provides great visitor experiences and compels visitors to return and even relocate.

Strategy T-3

Develop ecology-based experiences to increase understanding, support, and stewardship for the North State's natural landscape, efforts to adapt to climate change, and reduce carbon emissions.

- Preserve and promote cultural heritage by including Tribal partners in planning and implementation phases. Leverage the [Visit Native California](#) initiative.
- Inventory infrastructure needs to support climate adaptive activities (charging stations), trails systems, informational signage, and shared ride systems.
- Highlight resilience and recovery of North State region post wildfires: ecological mitigation, land restoration, and habitat protection.
- Address community concerns about the impact on outdoor resources as a result of increased tourism with PR campaigns, town halls, and other marketing efforts.

Strategy T-4

Build resilient tourism projects that integrate and celebrate the North State's rural landscape and culture.

- Promote rural tourism by highlighting unique cultural and natural attractions, supporting local artisans, and developing sustainable tourism practices.
- Invest in tourism infrastructure while preserving the natural environment and cultural heritage.
- Leverage existing tourism partnerships similar to Connected Communities and other trail/bike systems in the eastern side of the region.

Tourism Sector	
Increasing Economic Diversification and Responding to Economic Shocks	Regional tourism strategies (T) support diversification of the sector to improve income and balance seasonality, increase the multiplier effect on demand for other goods and services, and promote the North State's agricultural, natural resources and rural culture.
Increasing Economic Equity and Job Quality	The T Strategies support the expansion of this industry through leveraging existing projects and providing access to entry-level training that leads to pathways for upskilling and transferring to higher-wage jobs either within the tourism or natural resources sectors. Additionally, integrating tourism with the arts and culture sector encourages economic growth, job creation, and entrepreneur development increasing job access and quality for North State residents.
Increasing Health and Environmental Equity	The T Strategies focus on creating economic development activities that preserve the natural resource landscape while honoring its cultural heritage. The T Strategies offer opportunities to educate local residents and tourists about the need for land management, fire mitigation, cultural stewardship, and climate challenges.

3.4 Health Sector



Healthcare is a top employer in the North State region and is a top industry for growth and innovation. However, the region lacks a sufficient health workforce and must increase health workforce supply to meet the needs of its residents, especially as the North State has an aging population with an acute need to meet workforce shortages in nursing and residential care. The region experiences extreme climate impacts, such as those from catastrophic wildfire and extreme heat, which has highlighted the limitations of the region's health-supporting infrastructure, especially outside of its few urban areas.

Health outcomes in the North State are below the California average across nearly all markers, with lower life expectancy, more preventable disease, and more substance use and mental health issues than the state average. The North State region also has higher rates of accidental deaths (unintentional injuries), drug-induced deaths, motor vehicle accidents, liver disease, suicides, and firearm-related deaths compared to state averages.

VISION

A healthy North State population, with preventable health outcomes above the state average by 2040, and a robust, adaptive healthcare workforce focused on prevention in parallel with treatment.

To achieve this vision, strategies must center the strengths of the people and geography of the North State. A place-based approach to filling workforce shortages (rather than an outside-in approach) will result in a workforce more resilient to challenges of life in the North State including frequent and

catastrophic wildfire, limited broadband, frequent road closures due to flood and extreme weather, high heat, and harsh winters. A workforce built to be flexible and responsive to the true context of the region will also be more responsive to North State health needs and have better results working with the people in the region. Across the U.S., some rural areas are adopting community health approaches successfully used in rural areas internationally. These models focus on training community members to be health and wellness workers, bringing a level of understanding and trust to help rural people access healthcare services and get health and wellness information delivered in a contextually and culturally competent way.

Table 2. Top Industries (NAICS 3) for Economic Development Activities, North State

NAICS 3	Industry
623	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
115	Agriculture & Forestry Support Activity
23	Construction of Buildings
311	Food Manufacturing
622	Hospitals
112	Animal Production and Aquaculture
445	Food and Beverage Stores
562	Waste Management and Remediation Service
221	Utilities
531	Real Estate
713	Amusement, Gambling & Recreation Ind
327	Nonmetallic Mineral Product Mfg.
624	Social Assistance
312	Beverage Manufacturing
561	Administrative and Support Services

The North State medical community has substantial expertise and creativity. Supporting the existing health leaders and health infrastructure in the region, and targeting plans and partnership expansions toward these existing healthcare services and training efforts will serve the region far better than starting new programs. Statewide acceptance that flexibility and tailored approaches surrounding program expectations in the North State context will help achieve desired health outcomes.

The North State region’s population is considerably older compared to the state average. The region’s oldest populations are concentrated in the more sparsely populated and isolated counties of the region, while the more populous Butte, Shasta, and Tehama counties have relatively younger populations. Due to this aging population, healthcare services for chronic diseases and elder care will continue to increase, with high demand on skilled nursing and assisted living facilities. Nursing and residential services is a top leading industry for the region for economic development activity (North State Regional Plan Part 1, 2024). As healthcare facilities expand to meet regional needs, job opportunities in nursing, medical technology, and administrative roles are expected to increase. Telehealth is also a growth area for the North State, with increased innovation opportunities and capacity to provide care across the region and expand industry partnerships to implement this growth.

Strategy H-1

Build a robust local health workforce pipeline for the North State.

- Standardize, formalize, and expand certificate programs to create pathways to employment in health-supporting jobs and to fill health workforce shortages, especially focused on elder care, rural community health work, case management, substance use treatment, and behavioral health.
- Expand incentive programs for mid-level professionals along with MDs and specialists. Mid-levels are essential for healthcare organizations but North State wages are lower than the state overall, and recruitment incentives often go to the highest level medical professionals. Partnership Health Plan offers a mid-level incentive program that can serve as a regional model (see health section notes).
- Advance partnerships between health organizations and the workforce development entities that can provide funds for on-the-job training and internship program wage offsets. This can ease the burden on hospitals, health centers, and primary care providers and encourage them to provide internships and on-the-job training without shouldering the full financial burden. For example, SB 525 requires all healthcare workers to make \$25 an hour by 2027 (2033 for hospitals in rural areas and those predominantly providing care to Medi-Cal and Medicare patients). For already strained healthcare facilities, this will have a large impact on budgets and capacity to staff. Workforce development offsets would help ease the financial burden and encourage upskilling and hiring new workers.
- Centralize a platform to showcase job opportunities and market North State health jobs to K-12 individuals living in the region to grow a pipeline of health workers from within the region, thus increasing likelihood of retention.
- Expand medical education in the North State through extension programs (e.g. nursing education) and a North State medical school (currently the closest is UC Davis) that is focused on rural and Tribal health.
- Explore partnerships with organizations like Futuro Health, which combines soft skill development, technical skills development, and job placement on hybrid programs tailored to communities and suited for rural areas.

Strategy H-2

Build on regional assets and advance a culture of health, while using technology to bridge health care access gaps.

- Pilot innovative strategies that mesh locally responsive healthcare personnel with professional and technical expertise to increase cost efficiency and provide social support and connection for individuals seeking healthcare. For example, matching a local community health worker to host a telehealth visit with a specialist, giving North State patients both professional expertise and human connection and care. This approach can help alleviate challenges like social isolation and loneliness, and build community cohesion.
- Focus on place-based assets and use them as anchor points for health innovations. Consider the practical application of some innovative strategies like telehealth and ensure appropriate backup plans, and the infrastructure to support them, are in place. This includes ensuring there are adequately equipped resilience centers, local community centers, hospitals, or other locations that can serve medical needs in emergencies. In some cases, small infrastructure upgrades like air conditioning or a single additional generator are all that are needed to turn an old school site or fairgrounds into an emergency evacuation center or community resilience center. Small upgrades such as these can have major implications for health support. Properly

equipped, these locations can serve as main community hubs for connecting to a variety of services that meet both medical and community health needs.

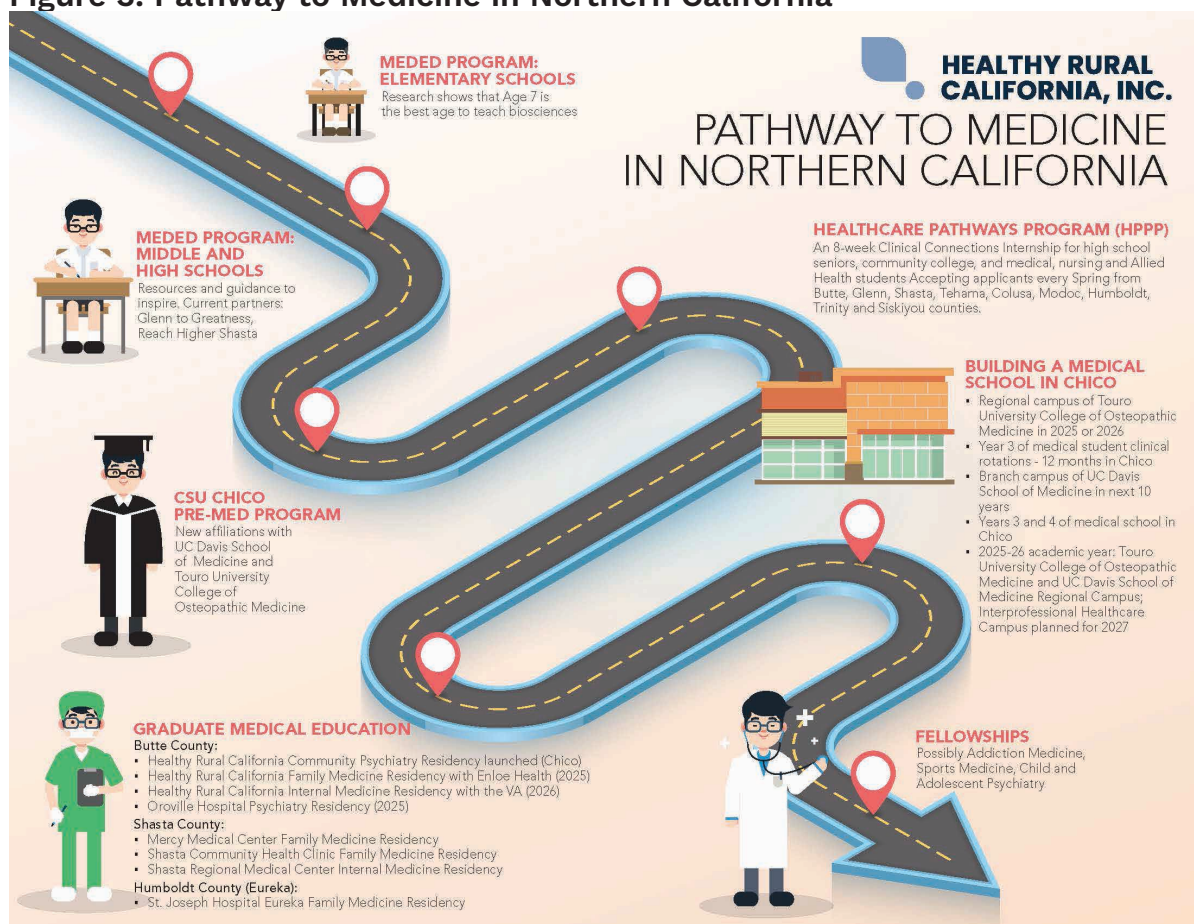
Strategy H-3

Consider health implications and health promotion opportunities in all economic development and regional planning efforts.

- Make strategic and place-based investments in health supporting infrastructure like community resilience centers, schools that serve as community hubs, wellness centers and health centers to serve community connections, social support needs and serve as resource locations and communication centers in disaster response.
- Consider the impact on public health across all new infrastructure and planning. This includes development or expansion of parks, highway maintenance (e.g., bike lane/walking lane development), public transportation, food systems efforts, housing solutions and more. Develop partnerships to increase health-supporting efforts like after school care, cooling centers, tourism initiatives, and more.
- Develop a cross county health promotion partnership and link to efforts across all sectors, including healthcare, tourism, agriculture, transportation, housing, and more to support regional health-supporting successes and share lessons learned toward a comprehensive health promotion strategy.

An example of a North State Medical Education pathway as outlined by regional organization, Healthy Rural California, in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Pathway to Medicine in Northern California



Source: Healthy Rural California, Inc.

Health strategies and alignment with objectives of job quality and access, climate and equity:

A healthy workforce is essential for a thriving economy. Healthy communities require skilled and responsive healthcare professionals, and healthcare is a leading employer across all the 10 counties in the North State. There are robust regional organizations with goals to enhance the health sector in the North State. These visions include increasing medical education, increasing and diversifying the rural health workforce, and creating a more diverse set of job types and approaches to healthcare to meet the health needs of the North State population. This includes preventative care, social support, mental health, wellness, primary care, specialty care, and emergency services. Increasing preventative services and a health-supporting workforce will provide jobs and increase population health for North State residents. Partnerships that advance specialty care and high-level medical needs will attract professionals to the region and reduce the need for North State residents to travel to the Sacramento or Bay Area regions for advanced medical support.

The North State health sector will continue to employ a large portion of the North State population. Increasing medical education opportunities within the North State will allow residents to obtain training and education needed for professional jobs and stay in their home communities, thereby improving chances of retention and job satisfaction for these professionals. Increasing flexibility for the health workforce overall is considered a top priority for retaining and attracting a health workforce. Examples include programs for community health workers that are adapted for those in need of flexible schedules or part-time work. Investments in certificate programs that don't have high barriers to entry can provide jobs for workers without advanced education filling workforce shortages. Career pathway development for youth and young adults in the region is an additional opportunity to invest in the workforce that exists and currently either leaves the area for work or is under or unemployed. With the closest medical school at UC Davis, a rural health-focused medical education hub is a need for the region to increase recruitment, retention, and increase opportunities for professional careers within the region.

Increasing opportunities for entry-level workers to access careers in health and healthcare settings will improve overall employment outcomes for the region. Increasing opportunities to train within North State communities and not have to leave the area will reduce barriers for those without the family and social support to take career-advancing opportunities. Investments in North State rural health and regional health infrastructure, like community health centers, wellness centers, community centers, job training centers, and primary care clinics and hospitals increases access in a medically underserved region. The region experiences acute needs for substance use prevention, counseling, and mental health services, along with primary care providers and more. Ensuring there are local physical locations for individuals to get care, or at minimum get connected to professional care through a paraprofessional, is essential. Many North State communities note the importance of local centers that are community resource hubs for a variety of social supports, and which can often serve as a landing zone for resources in emergencies like recent wildfires or the COVID pandemic. In many cases a fully equipped hospital or medical center may not be feasible, but ensuring a staffed hub for these resources with some capacity for medical care is essential for meeting the needs of underinvested and highly remote communities in the North State.

The North State region has experienced multiple large catastrophic wildfires over the past 10 years and already has a population with more vulnerabilities to stressors, with higher rates of chronic disease and preventable disease than the state overall. Additionally, the North State has an aging population and continues to exceed projections for high heat days and smoke days. Overall, the North State lacks infrastructure to properly manage climate impacts. Drought, heat, and wildfire remain key issues across North State communities. Many North State residents lack homes that are hardened for wildfire resilience and many lack air conditioning or air purifiers for high smoke

days. Public transportation is also limited in North State communities, increasing vulnerabilities for those without vehicles or those who cannot drive. Cooling centers and spaces for unhoused individuals during extreme heat days are also critically needed for climate responsiveness in the North State.

Across the North State, practical and multi-benefit ideas—like maintaining out-of-use schools that have closed due to population decline, or maintaining fairgrounds facilities and keeping them open year round for use—are rural infrastructure supports that in turn can provide cooling areas during high heat, shelter in evacuation, and much more. These infrastructure supports can provide both improved social cohesion and play a critical and specific role in disaster response.

Investing in regional health centers and health infrastructure is an essential component of reaching state climate goals. Likewise, investing in regional landscapes is essential for limiting negative impacts to the North State population from climate challenges and increasing accessible clean water, clean air, and space to recreate safely outside. Investing in forest health and stewardship of lands to mitigate impacts of extreme heat, reduce frequency of catastrophic wildfires, and mitigate the extreme impacts of smoke days on communities across the North State is essential to the State's economic future. As the North State seeks to grow its tourism economy, the negative impacts of climate disasters have large implications for the regional economy. Meanwhile, the productivity losses from an unhealthy workforce limits economic potential as well. Further, the cost of climate disasters in healthcare spending is high and continues to grow. And health is not the only sector impacted by a reduced workforce or unhealthy workforce during events like wildfires or extreme poor air quality days. Reaching State climate and natural resource goals is critical to reduce burdens on the North State health sector and public health systems and to support a healthy population.

Health Sector	
Increasing Economic Diversification and Responding to Economic Shocks	Health sector strategies (H) focus on restoring, maintaining, or improving infrastructure for both daily community health, wellness support, and disaster and emergency response scenarios. H Strategies recommend improved roads and support for local clinics and community centers where North State residents get care and can access help in disasters.
Increasing Economic Equity and Job Quality	H Strategies highlight local workforce development programming focused on pathways to the profession for local individuals to access good paying medical jobs. They also focus on contextually driven strategies, like extension nursing education and a regional medical training center to keep talent local. To improve job quality and build in workforce standards in a practical, contextually specific way, H Strategies recommend partnering with organizations like Futuro Health that provide context-based training with clear pathways for career and wage progressions.
Increasing Health and Environmental Equity	North State H Strategies focus on building up a local community health and health services workforce and health-supporting infrastructure, including basic infrastructure like roads and critical evacuation routes, which currently limit health and safety for some of the region's most remote populations including elderly residents.

4. Foundational Elements

4.1 Job Development and North State Career Pathways

The North State has a multitude of robust, cross-county organizations working to advance job development and create long-term career pathways in high quality jobs for North State residents. Across education, workforce development entities, child and family organizations, and labor organizations, there are opportunities to link and leverage programs to train and sustain a North State workforce, grow and maintain jobs available, and improve both job quality and quality of life for North State residents.

4.1.1 Economic Development Capacity

The North State is supported by two Economic Development Administration (EDA) Economic Development Districts: 3CORE, Inc. and Superior California Economic Development (SCED). Both districts also function as regional financial institutions managing Revolving Loan Funds (RLFs) with 3CORE holding the CDFI designation. Additionally, the region is served by the Shasta EDC and Siskiyou EDC, the Butte-Glenn Small Business Development Center, the JEDI Women's Business Center, and six Community Foundations: North Valley Community Foundation, the McConnell Foundation, the Community Foundation of the North State, the Mercy Foundation North, the Ford Family Foundation, and the Almanor Foundation. The Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC), also known as the Workforce Development Board or WDB, was formed through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) serving the 10 counties in the North State. The region also includes over 29 Tribes and tribal groups with many located in some of the most remote and underserved/under-resourced communities.

While these partner organizations serve their own subregions, cross-region and cross-sector collaboration has proven to be a successful model to move economic and workforce development initiatives forward. Lack of funding, staff capacity, and time prevent or limit the ability of these jurisdictions and small community-based organizations to find solutions when they act independently. This collaborative network approach also provides opportunities to share best practices between agencies and organizations. Often the partner organizations act as an intermediary to identify opportunities for industry experts, for leveraged funding opportunities, for shared staffing capacity, and for improved communications and transparency. The more the region can respond and act in a coordinated way, the potential for greater investments and impacts increases. Examples of successful collaborative models include California Jobs First, the K-16 Grant Collaborative, EDA Good Jobs Challenge, Regional Climate Collaboratives, CAL FIRE grants, the High Road Training Partnership, and Community College agreements with California State University, Chico. The North State Planning & Development Collective and the Sierra Institute for Community & Environment will continue to serve as conveners to support collaborative efforts and leverage regional resources.

Strategy ED-1



Link regional organizations to leverage funds and resources and plan for North State climate-focused economic transformation.

- Convene cross-jurisdictional discussions to identify ways to work together on policy and permitting policies (e.g., broadband, construction development, roadways).
- Create regional forums with space for philanthropic, state, and federal funders to listen to pressing needs for North State economic development

- Host regional North State climate economy planning sessions, especially surrounding North State water resources and future energy projects (wind, geothermal, biomass conversion, etc).
- Support local entrepreneurship by providing access to training, funding, and resources for small businesses.

4.1.2 Education

Education in the North State is uniquely affected by various geographical, economic, and community-health-related factors. To add to the complexity of serving students in this region, the region is characterized as an educational desert. For instance, while more than 100 school districts serve the North State—some are the only district in their county or serve fewer than 100 students, while others serve thousands—only 4 of the 10 counties have standalone community colleges. Three out of 10 counties do not have higher education institutions within them at all, and only one public university exists in the southernmost county. This results in many students leaving their home county or the region to earn a college degree or certificate.

The North State region is also characterized by higher poverty rates than the state average, which directly affects student achievement, educational attainment, and course completion, with around 18% of the regional population living below the federal poverty level. For instance, the third-graders in only one county in the North State exceeded the state average for English Literacy in the 2022–2023 academic year, and students in only four counties exceeded the state average score for 8th grade math proficiency. At least 51% of students in all counties are below standard in 3rd grade reading and 8th grade math according to the Common Core State Standards assessment. Low A–G completion rates in the North State CERF region also illustrate early barriers high school students face that limit future opportunities and choices. During the 2022–2023 academic year, only 29.7% of North State high school graduates completed all of the A–G courses necessary to enroll directly into a four-year university, significantly lower than the state rate of 50.8%. Enrollment in UC/CSU correlates with low A–G completion rates in the North State, with only 12.3% of high school students from the North State enrolled in a UC or CSU directly out of high school, compared to 28% of their peers statewide. This means that more than twice the percentage of students across the state enroll in a CSU or UC as compared to students in the North State. In some counties, that rate is significantly lower. As most of the higher education institutions in the North State are community colleges, these “two-year” colleges serve as economic anchors and drivers in their communities. Given that middle-skill jobs make up the overwhelming majority of job openings in the North State (according to the Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research), community colleges are heavily relied upon to respond to local labor market needs to provide in-demand training opportunities.

Despite these challenges, educators and their partners are optimistic about the momentum in mitigating geographical and economic barriers. As the North State has historically lacked external investment, a culture of collaboration has developed among educational institutions to effectively mobilize existing resources and infrastructure. For instance, North State Together—which encompasses all Offices of Education in the region, key leaders at every higher education institution, workforce development organizations, nonprofits, and community leaders—are working collaboratively to improve educational outcomes. North State Together’s pursuit and acquisition of the Regional K–16 Education Collaboratives grant—which featured letters of commitment from the Presidents of every higher education institution and every county superintendent—is developing new occupational pathways across several counties in the North State. Initiatives like the California Community School Partnership Program and Golden State Pathways, led by regional technical assistance centers (which comprise local Offices of Education, North State Together, and nonprofits like Partners for Rural Impact and Linked Learning), are being deployed to add holistic supports to schools across the region, improve student retention and success, and develop pathways responsive

to local workforce needs. The High Road Transition Collaborative, which is leveraging the California Jobs First initiative to promote collaboration across sectors including educational institutions, is another example of educational organizations collaborating across segments to advance economic vitality and address regional challenges. This regional collective impact is essential to addressing and overcoming educational challenges and providing a foundation for mobilizing resources across county lines that will be strengthened in the region over time.

Strategy EDU-1



Encourage continued support of region-wide partnerships that include all levels of education and training from K-12 through higher education and industry sector leaders to ensure that the needs of employers are met by educational curriculum and vocational training that improve and increase the skill level of North State residents.

- Aligning TK-12, postsecondary, and workforce training opportunities so it is easier to build skills in a variety of settings
- Support state and regional coordinating bodies that make it easier to access information, funding, and support (e.g., North State Together)
- Create incentives and improve coordination so that more people can participate in hands-on learning and access wrap around services for greater access and affordability

Figure 4 shows an example of a regional education network that is leveraging expertise, partnerships, and best practices through regional grants.

Figure 4. North State Together Networks



Source: [North State Together](https://www.northstatetogether.org/)

4.1.3 Workforce Development

Workforce development efforts across the North State are expanding and gaining flexibility to meet the acute needs across all sectors in the region. Regional workforce development organizations and champions note the importance of creative strategies like support services, credit for work, on-the-job training, mentorship, formal and informal apprenticeships, and place-based learning. Additional avenues like credit for prior learning or competency waivers (i.e., advancing through a technical program due to knowledge/skills), are also helping reduce barriers to entry into the workforce across job types.

A key challenge for North State workforce development entities is job quality, and ensuring training programs are onramps to true career pathways. Not all jobs projected to grow in the North State earn a living wage (e.g., home health aids). Coordinating with organized labor organizations, workforce training entities, and employers to develop wage floors and map out pathways to professions are needed across sectors.

Small business development and entrepreneurship are cornerstones of the North State economy and support for these enterprises, both through entrepreneurship training and by supporting both individuals and businesses in workforce development partnerships, is key to reaching the North State workforce.

A strategic approach to ensuring that employers' workforce needs are satisfied is through the formation of industry sector partnerships. Establishing industry sector partnerships is one of the most effective methods of bolstering workforce resiliency. Industry sector partnerships are created among businesses from the same industry and labor market region that work with economic development, workforce development, educational, and community organizations to address the workforce needs of the targeted industry. In an industry sector partnership, business leaders work together to determine and define a common goal based on the issues that impact their shared industry. In addition to bringing industry leaders together, an industry sector partnership relies on a coordinated team of support partners in economic development, education, and workforce. Industry sector partnerships act as a shared space for industry leaders to collaborate with one another and public partners to ensure that regional industries have what they need to keep the local economy strong. A successful industry sector partnership builds the relationship between industry and education to support a prepared workforce. NoRTEC, the North State's Workforce Development Board, supports this model because industry sector partnerships support training and credential attainment, increased wages, talent recruitment, networking and collaboration across an industry, and increased career and industry awareness, among other benefits. NoRTEC currently leads partnerships in manufacturing, technology, and rural healthcare.

Strategy WK-1



Access the workforce available here in the North State, and design programs for those individuals and the unique lives they live. This includes a focus on rural workers with long commutes and limited childcare, elder workers or retirees on fixed incomes looking for supplemental income, Tribal individuals, and youth seeking summer or part-time jobs as well as professional-track careers.

- To diversify the workforce, create low barriers to entry and provide support services upon entry into the workforce, making entry-level jobs the gateway to a career.

- Train-in-place to mitigate transportation challenges, childcare costs, and other barriers to access, and to increase awareness of different positions within the identified sectors.
- Build support services into workforce solutions such as stipends for equipment, childcare, and transportation.
- Leverage the “Learn and Earn” model by providing stipends or full pay for training and education programs

Strategy WK-2



Support North State business development along with workforce development to strive for long-term employment and a North State business community invested in training and hiring locally and continuing to invest in their workforce with high quality family-supporting-wage jobs.

- Utilize programs through partners like the Employment Training Panel to offset training costs for employers, including small businesses.
- Leverage existing training programs to grow models that support businesses in tandem with workforce development such as the High Road Training Partnership in Tribal Forest Restoration and Stewardship which supports tribal individuals through training, skills development, and work experience wages while also supporting tribal business development.
- Support North State businesses willing to hire local and provide offsets to minimize economic impacts when trainees are new until they add economic value to the business.

4.1.4 Labor

The North State regional Jobs First collaborative (HRTC) seeks to continue engagement with organized labor and elevate standards for job quality, worker voice, living wages, and more.

North State labor organizations suggest labor continue to engage across industry sectors to develop baseline labor standards to share with the region for wage floors, job quality standards, salary/wage steps, and targeting industries with growth potential across all sectors.

Advancing transparency between community organizations, labor organizations, employers, and regional leaders is needed across the North State. Building partnerships and creating trusting relationships with labor will help advance job quality across sectors. Open communication channels between labor partners and North State employers and a stepwise approach to partnership building will benefit the North State economic trajectory.

Strategy L-1



Encourage the North State business community, economic development partners, education, and workforce partners to partner with local labor affiliations to leverage partnerships and provide maximum support to workers.

- Connect with organizations or programs that include labor partners and who are working to employ North State individuals, especially in the trades.
- Focus on the most local examples of labor partnership success, developing a from-the-inside-out approach to adopting labor standards and connecting with union principles. This

approach, rather than a top down approach that starts with standards but not with the jobs, is better suited to the North State.

Below are Cal Labor's Principles to Build California's New Economy in Climate, Manufacturing, and Infrastructure. The North State HRTC is eager to advance conversations around these principles to build a stronger workforce for all.

- **Support Union Job Creation:** There is no substitute for a collective bargaining agreement that gives workers a seat at the table. Investments in climate and infrastructure projects should include or support the negotiation of provisions that allow workers to unionize and negotiate higher standards without interference or intimidation. All public funds should require or incentivize mechanisms such as signed collective bargaining agreements, project labor agreements, labor peace agreements when allowed by law, or commitments to allow the free and fair decision to form or join a union.
- **Job Quality:** Public funding can support the creation of high-quality jobs that build a path to the middle class and spur economic development in regions across the state. Funding should prioritize applicants that can demonstrate they provide living or prevailing wages, if applicable, quality health care, retirement contributions, use of joint labor-management apprenticeship programs, skilled and trained requirements, full-time secure jobs, and proper classification of workers. The state should prioritize and coordinate funding for companies that have already demonstrated they meet these standards to set a high road industry standard for all employers.
- **Workforce Equity Standards:** The communities hardest hit by climate, racial, and economic injustice have historically been left behind when new industries emerge. To address inequity, the state must have requirements that companies do targeted recruitment, hiring, and retention of disadvantaged, underrepresented, and marginalized workers, and have local hire policies to foster careers and prevent turnover. The benefits of projects should stay in communities and create an equitable path to the middle class for workers historically excluded.
- **Community Benefits:** The best way to create good union jobs that benefit, rather than harm, communities is to engage unions and communities from the beginning of the project. The state should require companies to submit community benefit plans that outline how they will engage labor and community in project planning and job quality and community benefits goals, including how they will meet federal Justice40 Initiative goals. The plans should be specific, measurable, and enforceable, and serve as a roadmap for how the company will make them a reality. These plans also serve as an important compliance and accountability tool to ensure public funds are not wasted. Companies that sign binding community benefit agreements to formalize partnerships should be given priority or bonus funding.
- **Transparency, Implementation, and Enforcement are Essential:** Without scoring and enforcement, labor standards and community benefits are meaningless. The state can safeguard public money by using scoring that assigns weight or points to meeting or exceeding labor standards. Data submission and public transparency are necessary to monitor compliance and enforce standards with real penalties such as claw back of funding or other mechanisms. Companies also need a clear process and support to meet standards and engage meaningfully with labor and community. Pre-award disclosure and technical support for companies allows unions to connect and engage with companies to develop community benefit agreements.
- **Build on Existing Models:** There are already labor standards models at the federal, state, and the local level that California can build on and expand on public funding. Federal funding requires a range of labor standards and community benefits using various tools to achieve the goals of building a new economy through infrastructure and climate jobs, and other tools have been used for decades to ensure labor standards on public projects. Models include the ARCHES community benefit agreement, Department of Energy's community benefit plan

template, and the federally approved U.S. Employment Plan, among others. Many of these tools are flexible and can be shaped to fit the funding type, industry, and agency. Whether investments in climate, infrastructure, and manufacturing projects create good union jobs and advance economic and climate justice is up to us. It is urgent that the state act now to support a new economy that builds a road to the middle class and a clean energy future.

4.1.5 Childcare

Children rely on childcare services for safe, enriching, early-learning environments; parents rely on the services of childcare providers so that they can pursue work or school and build financial stability to provide for their families; and businesses rely on the childcare sector to ensure a stable workforce and consumer base. Childcare supports children's health and economic outcomes, providing massive returns over time. It also acts as a family stabilizer and indirect economic driver, enabling parents to work or go to school, while directly employing hundreds of thousands of providers and early childhood educators.

Addressing the fractures in the childcare system that plague families and businesses across the country will take more than a return to the pre-pandemic status quo. Childcare has been underfunded far too significantly for far too long, hurting both families and businesses. Saving childcare and putting the North State economy back on track will take significant, sustained investment, as the sector has been unsustainable for many families for decades and increasingly untenable for businesses.

Strategy CH-1



Partner with employers, community stakeholders, and local organizations with expertise in administering childcare to create effective solutions to address childcare needs.

- Devise solutions responsive to the specific needs of workers such as during non-traditional hours and per regional market dynamic (supply, price, household).
- Work with community stakeholders, including state and local governments and local groups with expertise administering childcare, to create effective solutions.
- Design and roll out a concrete menu of practices, policies, and partner types that can meet the diverse childcare needs of workers.

4.1.6 Small Business Development

Small businesses are job creators for the North State and serve as innovators for rural communities. Small businesses are important to the North State economy and to its local communities. Small businesses are a driving force behind job creation, especially for young firms and entrepreneurs. In the first quarter of 2022, 45% of all private-sector jobs were held by firms with fewer than 50 employees. Overall, small businesses contribute to 44% of the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP).

Small businesses are a driving force behind innovation and competitiveness while providing jobs, products, revenue, and services to local economies. 68% of dollars spent at local, small businesses stay within the local economy. Small businesses are woven into each community's people, organizations, culture, and health.



Support and expand existing network of small business technical assistance providers to increase access to resources, encourage small business development, and create and retain jobs.

- Invest in workforce development supports for small businesses and entrepreneurs to increase capacity to take on risks (i.e., offsets for apprentices or interns).
- Provide creative support to small businesses to grow market opportunities, especially in land stewardship and restoration (e.g., carbon, biomass, etc).
- Support small business networks and provide space and resources for collaboration: incubators, shared workspaces, remote options, and on-site childcare and medical care.
- Increase access to capital by supporting more intermediary lenders for increased technical assistance for financial literacy, bookkeeping, business planning, succession planning, and other resources to move businesses to the next level including commercial banking readiness.

4.2 Physical Infrastructure

4.2.1 Broadband

Over the past few years, stakeholders in the North State have been working hard to bring broadband connectivity to hard-to-reach communities. Despite the successes, barriers to deployment and adoption persist. Rural areas, especially in the Sierras and the foothills, remain disinvested and under-connected due to three key barriers: coordination, terrain, and cost.

Table 3. Rural Barriers to Broadband

Coordination	Since projects do not stop at county lines, lack of coordination between jurisdictions can delay projects.
Terrain	Terrain poses a barrier to building infrastructure, and natural disasters such as fires and winter storms can destroy existing infrastructure.
Cost	Cost remains a barrier due to the terrain and the sparse population density makes revenue generation difficult for internet service providers to sustain service. Cost is also a barrier to households subscribing to broadband, as the lack of ISP choices in the North State results in high-cost plans that are inaccessible to much of the population.

The North State continues to work to close the digital divide throughout its region. Jurisdictions and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are working with the Northeastern and Upstate California Connect Consortia to improve access, quality, and adoption of broadband services. The data provided in Table 4 and Table 5 come from these consortia regions, which mostly overlap with the California Jobs First North State region, but not entirely.

Table 4. Percentage of Households without an Internet Subscription

Modoc County	20.7%
Colusa County	19.4%
Tehama County	16.3%
Lake County	16.1%
Plumas County	15.4%
Siskiyou County	15.4%
Glenn County	14.0%
Lassen County	13.7%
Shasta County	11.1%
Butte County	10.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2022.

Note: The counties shown represent the Northeastern and Upstate California Connect Consortia, which include most counties in the California Jobs First North State region.

Table 5. Percentage of Unserved Population by Broadband Speed

	Speed: 25/3	Speed: 100/20
Modoc County	69%	100%
Lassen County	29%	44%
Siskiyou County	26%	86%
Tehama County	13%	50%
Colusa County	12%	64%
Lake County	12%	14%
Plumas County	10%	63%
Glenn County	8%	35%
Shasta County	8%	25%
Butte County	7%	15%

Note: The counties shown represent the Northeastern and Upstate California Connect Consortia, which include most counties in the California Jobs First North State region.

Strategy BR-1

Develop and expand workforce training programs to support deployment projects for the Middle-Mile project, CASF- and NTIA-funded projects, and private- or municipal-owned networks.

Strategy BR-2

Continue funding application and mapping support through the Northeastern and Upstate California Connect Consortia

Strategy BR-3



Continue building equity access and digital literacy training programs focused on English-Language Learners, Justice-Involved Re-entry Employees, and other barriered populations.

4.2.2 Transportation

The North State strives to address its transportation needs and barriers by providing safe, affordable, and reliable methods. As stated in other sections, the vast geographic distance between communities, combined with the region's varying topography between valley and mountain ranges, contributes to the challenge of interconnectivity among the subregions. Since many rural residents rely on personal automobiles as their main means of transportation, maintenance of rural roads is crucial for daily travel. The quality of existing roadways in rural areas is also of concern. Travel throughout the region not only supports daily activities, but also supports travel and tourism to parks and other natural resources, supports regional food systems, and supports access to healthcare.

As a social determinant of health, access to high-quality, affordable transportation is fundamental to mental, physical, and emotional well-being. For individuals with disabilities, those with low incomes, older adults, and others who may not have reliable access to a vehicle or be able to safely drive themselves, public and private transportation is critical to access health services, obtain food and other necessities, and engage with their communities. Even when transportation options are available, limited door-to-door services are available.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration estimates that 40% of roads in rural areas are "inadequate for current travel," while nearly 50% of bridges over 20 feet long are currently considered "structurally deficient." The Federal Highway Administration also reports that in 2012, 54% of all road fatalities occurred in rural areas.

Strategy TR-1



Engaging the North State's rural communities, stakeholders, and government leaders to better understand the region's transportation needs and work together to identify solutions, increase regional mobility and safety, and leverage federal and state resources.

4.2.3 Housing

California continues to face a housing shortage that has caused increased rents, poverty, and homelessness. This problem is not unique to urban regions, but rather is shared with rural communities, particularly regarding affordable housing. Shared challenges include lack of skilled and available workforce, gaps in infrastructure, limited power access, and the inability to support large-scale developments due to higher construction costs.

The State of California has a goal of 2.5 million new homes by 2030. Of those, 1 million are set aside for low-income residents with an emphasis on planning for infill housing, infrastructure, and community investments that increase the housing supply and choice, reduces vehicle miles traveled, and furthers housing equity.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD/Department) (Health and Safety Code Section 50515.05), in collaboration with the Governor's Office of Planning and

Research (OPR), and after engaging in stakeholder participation, developed recommendations to improve the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process and methodology that promotes and streamlines housing development and substantially addresses California’s housing shortage.

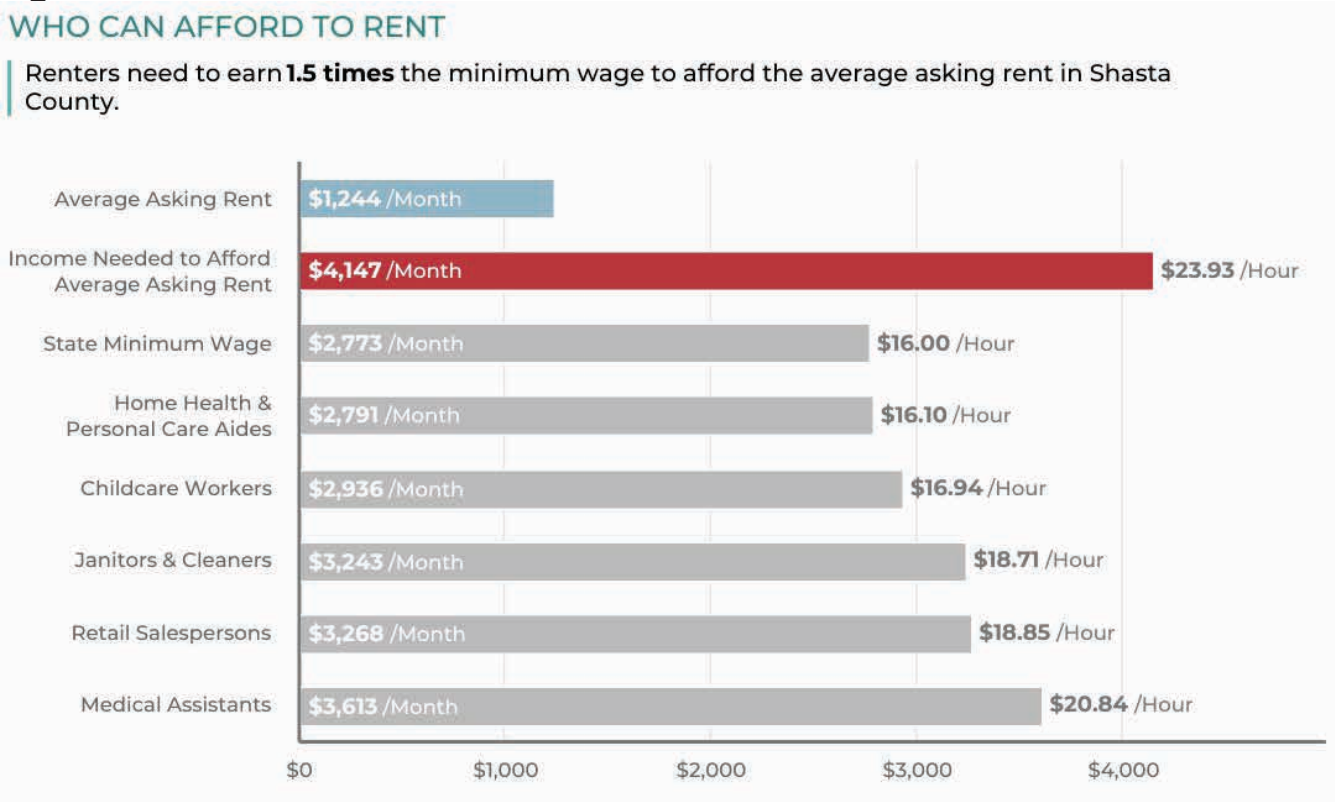
As the North State tackles its housing shortages, it continues to navigate recurring fires and Wild-land Urban Interfaces (WUIs), lack of workforce, limited capital access, and the need for integrated social services. The North State should consider a regional approach tailored to each county to meet their housing needs. The North State should strive to find a balance between housing that is affordable, meets worker needs, and meets other quality of life needs with second homes or rental homes.

The California Coalition’s mission is focused on the following and could be incorporated into the North State’s housing goals:

- To educate and encourage public support on a wide array of housing issues, focusing efforts to promote and preserve affordable housing in rural California.
- To assert the importance of developing and preserving safe, healthy, and adequate housing as an integral part of building sustainable rural communities.
- To ensure quality of life for rural families and their neighborhoods through smart growth land use principles.
- To actively participate at all levels of government to achieve policies for the production and preservation of affordable housing.

For the North State specifically, housing shortages and unhoused North State residents are pressing issues across counties and communities. For Shasta County, as one telling example from the region, a May 2024 report from the California Housing Partners notes that 69% of extremely low income renters spend over half their income on rent, and must make 1.5 times minimum wage to afford average rental prices.

Figure 5. Who Can Afford to Rent



Source: California Housing Partnership, May 2024. ([Shasta County report.](#))

Strategy HS-1



Develop partnerships with employers to build workforce housing and build multi-family units when possible.

Strategy HS-2



Develop integrated solutions with land stewardship and wood utilization efforts to build fire safe housing using California sustainable wood products.

4.3 Social Infrastructure

4.3.1 Tribal Economic Development

North State economic development and planning efforts must include strong, trusting partnerships with the many Tribes and Tribal organizations in the region. Tribes across the North State are leaders in taking care of the landscape, using fire as a cultural and ecological stewardship tool, and supporting their families and communities through stewardship and restoration of homelands.

Tribes in the North State are entrepreneurial and many have thriving enterprises that support services provided to their membership. These include restoration workforces, casinos, service stations, and much more. Across much of the highly rural region of the North State, tribal infrastructure and business have filled critical access gaps for basic services.

The North State has many strong Tribal leaders and individuals with deep commitment and vision for their communities who are working to engage with economic development, land stewardship, and community development partners and efforts.

To expand partnerships with North State Tribes and develop trusting working relationships, transparency and accountability are key to success. Thoughtful roll out of funding opportunities, and locally specific capacity-building supports and partnerships, can make funding opportunities more impactful, where funding and expectations without capacity and staffing to manage and implement projects can cause challenges. The same is true across both rural and Tribal communities in the North State.

Land stewardship is a key growth area for North State Tribes and Tribal business development, and must be a key priority area of investment in the region. Exploitation of Tribal communities and their natural resources has led to severe underinvestment in Tribal and rural communities, and led to contracting mechanisms that favor large corporations in the forestry and restoration industries that generally do not hire locally, treat and pay employees poorly, and do not produce year-round jobs or healthy communities. Ground-up community and economic development, focused on Tribes as leaders, can help reimagine land stewardship practices that build on historical cultural stewardship and advance sustainability.

Economic development plans for several regional Tribes highlight strategies and key goals common to communities across the region. These include green energy development, small businesses and entrepreneurship development, and growth of their stewardship economies, along with needs surrounding basic infrastructure like roads, water systems, water treatment, and broadband. Economic development efforts must be tailored to meet Tribes as sovereign nations. Meanwhile,

in much of the North State, successful economic development will require partnership between rural communities and Tribal governments, such as the partnership currently underway between the City of Susanville and Susanville Indian Rancheria, who are co-sponsoring a city economic development director and managing economic development activities through partnership.

Strategy TED-1



Engage with North State Tribes to learn about Tribal-specific economic development interests and successes.

Strategy TED-2



Expand opportunities to learn from Tribal leaders on land stewardship practices to improve North State land management.

Strategy TED-3



Build on Tribal strengths in community development, social services, and community health and wellness initiatives to share best practices across other tribal communities and in other rural communities as appropriate.

4.3.2 Environmental Justice

For too long, North State communities have not been sufficiently represented in commonly used tools for representing disadvantaged communities or environmental justice concerns. This is often due to low population levels, but also because of the mismatch of indicators appropriate for representing urban cores (like traffic) with indicators appropriate for the more rural regions of the state (like wildfire risk). In partnership with UC Davis and their Institute for the Environment, Native American Studies Department, and Environmental Policy and Management Department, a North-State-specific environmental justice tool is currently under development.

Along with the Data Lab at UC Davis, North State demographics will be layered with health, fire, transportation, socioeconomic, and other vulnerabilities in order to make visible the hidden environmental justice issues in the rural North State. This effort is confirming critical areas of concern, such as the overlap between Native population density and shortages in health care availability. Maps will be available in September 2024.

Additional environmental justice work includes community research on youth environmental justice issues and relating climate resilience with long-term economic development. UCD researchers are developing a project to engage North State youth in envisioning equitable, sustainable, economic development. The primary purpose of this part of the project is to elicit input from groups of teens on topics that will inform the North State regional implementation regarding jobs/careers, rural economies, and related environmental and climate justice issues.

Further environmental justice case studies are in process with Environmental Policy and Management graduate students at UCD who have developed projects to better understand community

issues and needs in the context of the current water allocation system in an underserved area of the North State—Modoc County. Students are currently conducting interviews with diverse community members in different watersheds of Modoc County to understand the relationship between water allocation and sustainable economic development. Students are also working on projects surveying forest managers about the effectiveness of policy and economic incentives designed to mitigate the growing forest fire crisis in Northern California.

Strategy EJ-1



Identify environmental justices across the North State and utilize maps, visual aids and other dissemination tools to share with local residents, county planners, city officials, NGOs, and others to kickstart strategies to mitigate harms to North State communities.

Strategy EJ-2



Represent North State environmental justice (EJ) issues and inform community members and local, state, and federal level makers about the unique challenges and opportunities surrounding EJ in the North State, sharing EJ issues within the North State context, rather than in comparison to California statewide EJ issues.

4.3.3 Arts and Culture

The arts industry is increasing as an economic driver throughout the U.S. and California. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that arts and cultural production accounts for over \$290 billion and 7.97% of the California economy, contributing to nearly 850,000 jobs. Pairing arts with economic development activities to stimulate long-term growth both in financial and intellectual capital is an innovative strategy to celebrate the North State's cultural and creative attributes. As the North State works toward creating a unified brand and marketing strategy to highlight its natural resource assets and its varied demography, it is important to move creative placemaking from one-time experiments to reframing arts initiatives as long-term, consistent economic development components for planning and implementation. The arts can also have a significant impact on workforce development. The growth of creative and new media industries are providing new jobs that can retain skilled workers in the North State region; arts and culture can play a major role in community development and redevelopment by creating new jobs as well as fostering an environment and amenities that attract talented young workers; and tourism centered on arts and culture can contribute to state and local economic growth by providing a diversified and sustainable means for creating jobs and attracting revenue.

Strategy AR-1



Promote place-based initiatives to highlight cultural, environmental, and historical value of a community or the region.

Strategy AR-2



Explore opportunities for projects that integrate the arts across other regional sectors and amplify regional strengths, like linking to tourism initiatives or health care efforts (e.g., senior-living facilities incorporating music students to do performances for senior residents).

5. Alignment with State Strategies and Goals

North State Strategy Areas	State Program or Initiatives
Housing	Roadmap Home 2030
Housing	Statewide Housing Plan
Education	Master Plan for Career Education
Natural Resources	Roadmap to a Million Acres
Natural Resources	California's Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy
Natural Resources	2021 Climate Adaptation Strategy
Agriculture	CDFA Strategic Priorities
Tourism	CA Regional Strategic Tourism Plans (in progress)
Health	CalHHS Build a healthy California for all
Small Business	CalOSBA Inclusive Innovation Hub
Education	Master Plan for Career Education
Workforce Development	CA K16 Collaboratives
Workforce Development	CWDB High Road Training Partnerships
Agriculture	CDFA Strategic Priorities
Transportation	Climate action plan for transportation infrastructure

6. Rural Community Capacity, Socioeconomic Condition, Well-Being, and Rural Development Workshop Findings

6.1 Community Capacity

Capacity Workshops were conducted in North State counties to assess the capacity of individual communities. **Community capacity** is the ability of a community to take care of residents. This includes addressing diverse kinds of internal and external stresses, including heat events, wildfire, social discord, and more. Community capacity is made up of five types of capital: cultural capital, financial capital, human capital, physical capital, and social capital.

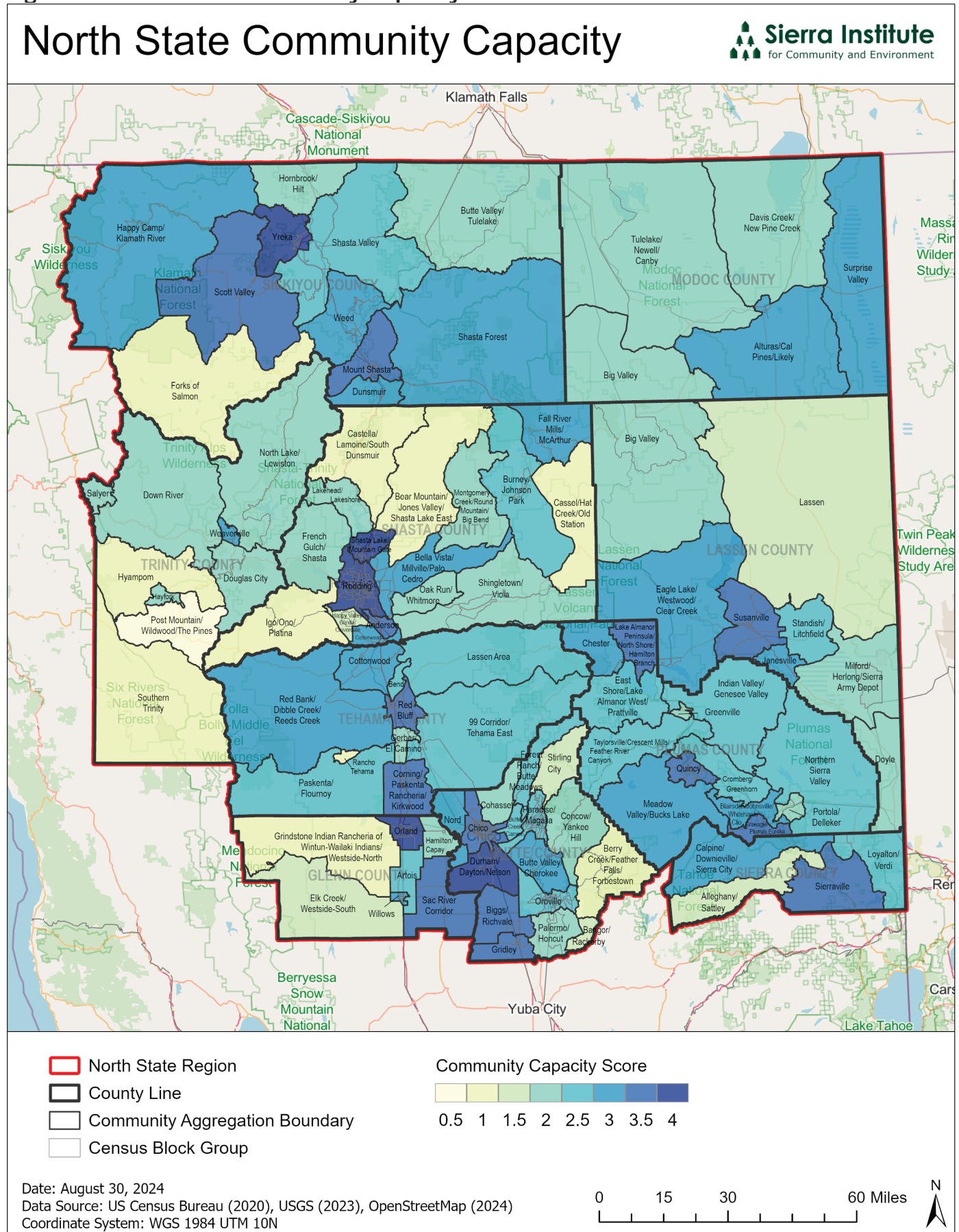
Table 6. Types of Capital that Constitute Community Capacity

Cultural Capital	The prevalence and strength of shared local bonds and ways of living, and the uniqueness of and identification with this.
Financial Capital	The availability of dollars for local uses and projects and to meet pressing needs.
Human Capital	The knowledge and ability to address issues of local concern, and the experience and capabilities of local residents and their willingness to use these locally.
Physical Capital	The “hard” infrastructure of a community, such as roads, sewers, schools, etc., including the quality of this infrastructure and its ability to meet local needs.
Social Capital	The ability and willingness of local residents to work together toward community ends and purposes beyond self-interested ends.

Local experts were convened to identify communities and community names based on the U.S. Census Block Group boundaries, and to write narrative assessments of communities in their county that they knew well. A total of 98 communities were identified. The narratives addressed the five capital dimensions and how these dimensions contributed to or limited overall community capacity. Based on this work, experts identified an overall capacity score for each community they evaluated. Capacity results for all the communities in a county were discussed with the full group without identifying the individuals responsible for the scores. A consensus capacity score for each community was then established. Workshop conveners recorded the conversations and narratives for each community were developed. Capacity scores for each of the communities are shown in Figure 6.

A capacity score of 1 is a community that struggles mightily to address internal and external stressors and meet the needs of local residents. There may be great disparities among different groups with little effort to address these disparities. A capacity score of 5 means that the various capitals are marshaled in ways to effectively respond to community stressors. For example, a community with this capacity is highly effective at evacuating residents from wildfire, invests in work to reduce wildfire, and works to engage youth and train them for needed work. They pull together in times of need and work to serve one another and the community at large with few individuals and groups left behind. Table 7 shows the distribution of community capacity scores for the 98 North State communities.

Figure 6. North State Community Capacity



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, USGS, OpenStreetMap.

Table 7. North State Capacity Scores

Capacity Scores	Number of Communities	Percentage of Total
5	0	0.0%
4.5	0	0.0%
4	5	5.1%
3.5	14	20.4%
3	20	18.4%
2.5	18	24.5%
2	24	6.1%
1.5	6	11.2%
1	11	11.2%

No community was identified with a capacity score above 4. A community with a capacity score of 4 is generally able to marshal resources to respond to most stressors, create opportunities, and take care of residents, but there are areas of weakness, or groups underserved, or both. The average capacity score for communities in the region is 2.5, which is not surprising given that no scores of 4.5 or 5 were determined. This suggests that community evaluators felt, on average, North State communities are challenged to address the needs of diverse residents and respond to stressors.

High capacity communities are more likely to be found along the I-5 corridor in Butte, Tehama, Shasta, and Siskiyou Counties. Some remote communities in Plumas, Siskiyou, and Modoc Counties had medium capacity levels that exceeded the capacity of many of the other more rural North State communities. This is largely due to established networks that continue to serve their communities in diverse ways. Outlying communities in Trinity and Shasta counties and the foothill communities of Butte County have comparatively lower capacity scores. These are some of the same areas that have had to contend with large wildfires in recent years, which underscores the challenge of responding to fire as well as recovering from them.

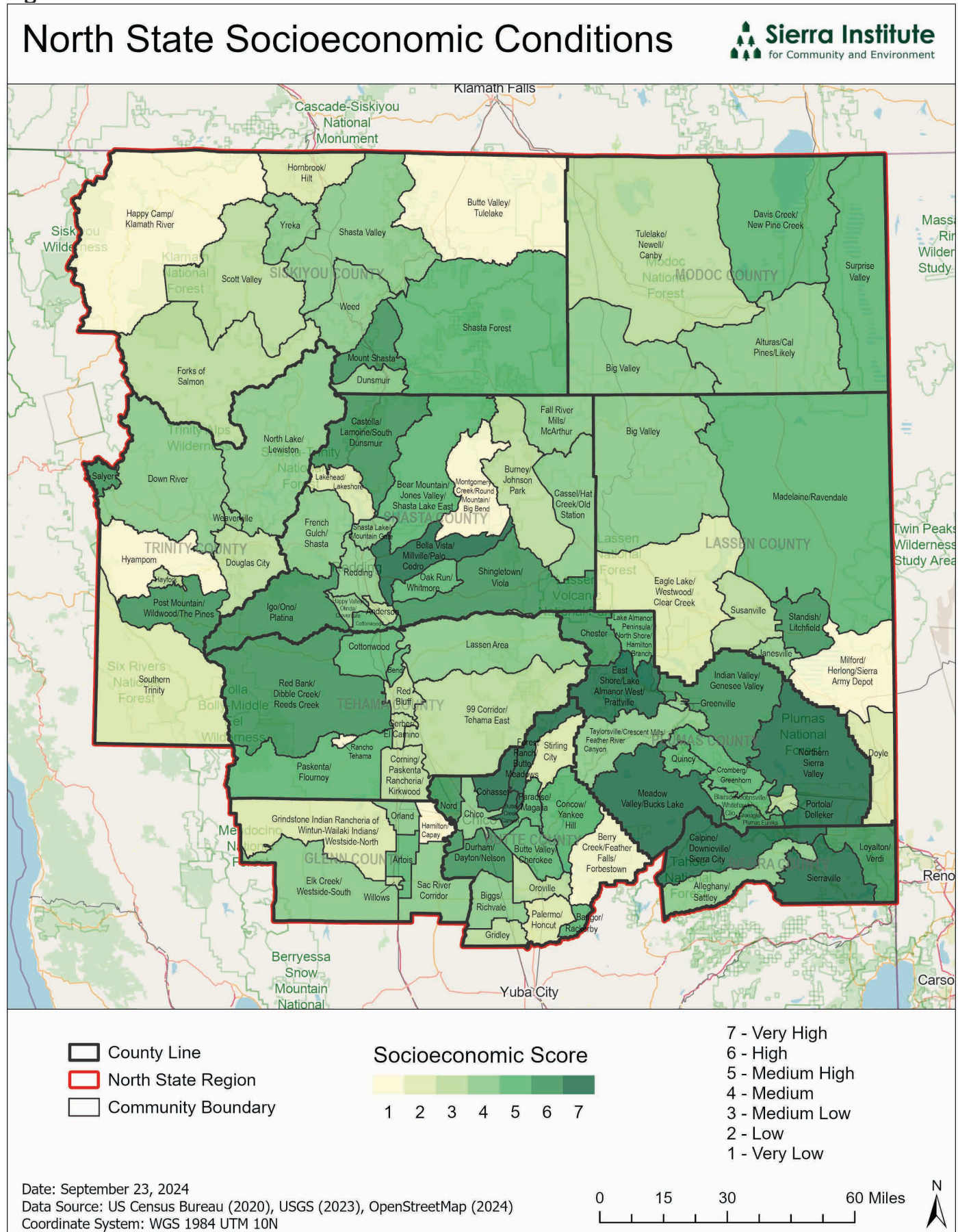
6.2 Socioeconomic Conditions

Census Block Groups are the smallest units for which comprehensive socioeconomic data are collected by the U.S. Census Bureau. Using Block Groups to delineate communities allowed the socioeconomic status of each community to be determined. A five-item scale reflecting socioeconomic condition was established consisting of housing tenure (the proportion of owner versus rental housing), poverty status, education level, employment status, and the proportion of children eligible for Free and Reduced Price school meals.¹ Reflecting an aggregate score for the five scale items, the lowest socioeconomic score is a 1 and the highest is a 7. Socioeconomic scores for each of the communities are shown in Figure 7.

Some of the lowest socioeconomic scores are found in the more rural areas of the region, although Sierra and Plumas Counties show a high concentration of communities with a higher socioeconomic condition. It is important to point out that these data precede the Dixie Fire and other fires that affected many of these communities. Further exploration of the data is needed.

¹ This community assessment methodology was first developed and peer reviewed favorably for the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (Doak and Kusel 1996). It was subsequently used to assess portions of the Klamath region and modified slightly and used in the greater Sierra Nevada for the Department of Water Resources and Integrated Regional Water Management program.

Figure 7. North State Socioeconomic Score



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, USGS, OpenStreetMap.

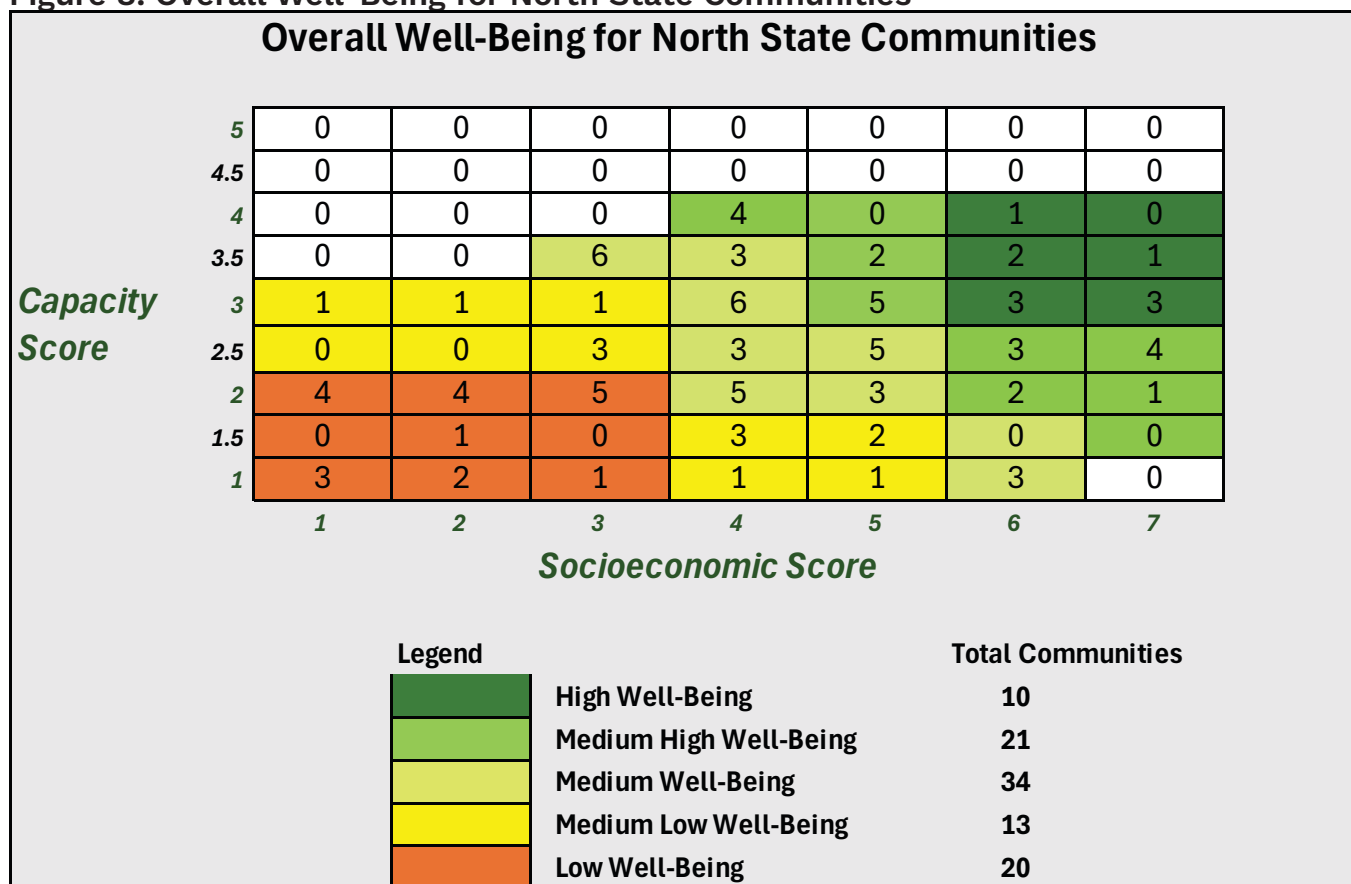
Table 8. North State Socioeconomic Scores

Socio-economic Scores	Number of Communities	Percentage of Total
7	9	9.2%
6	14	14.3%
5	18	18.4%
4	25	25.5%
3	16	16.3%
2	8	8.2%
1	8	8.2%

6.3 Community Well-Being

Capacity and socioeconomic scores are combined in Figure 8 as a measure of overall community well-being and disadvantaged status.

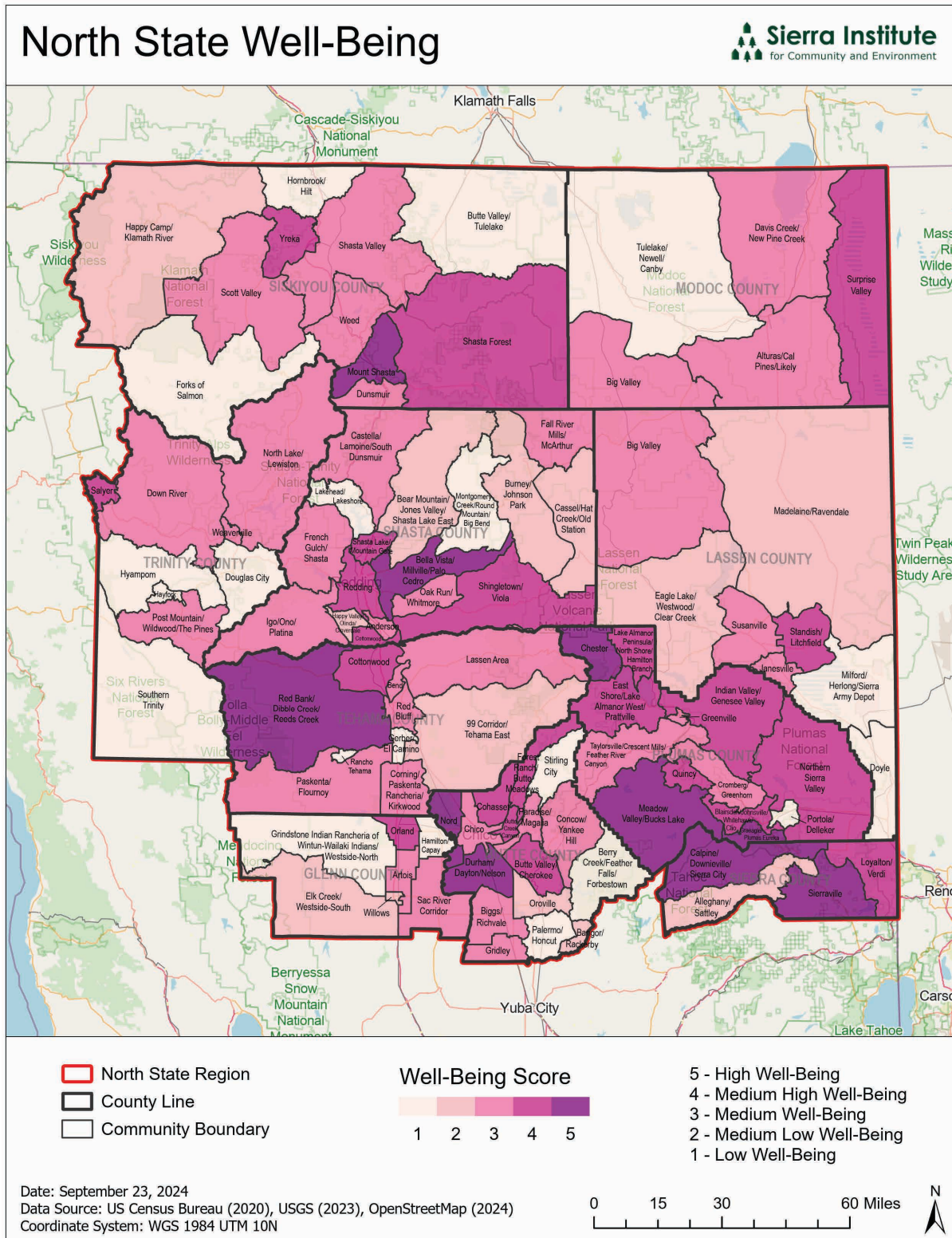
Figure 8. Overall Well-Being for North State Communities



Communities with a capacity score of 3, 3.5, and 4 and a socioeconomic score of 6 or 7 have a high level of well-being. Communities with a capacity of 2 or less and a socioeconomic score of three or less have low well-being. Communities with a capacity score of 2.5 and 3 and a socioeconomic score of 1 to 3 or a capacity score of 1 to 1.5 and a socioeconomic score of 4 or 5, have medium low well-being. These latter two categories, comprising just over one-third of the North State communities, are disadvantaged communities because of both low socioeconomic condition and lower capacity. Overall community well-being is shown in Figure 9. The darker the color, the higher the well-being. Identifying disadvantaged communities, shown in the lightest colors on the map,

is important given that a primary tool for assessing community condition, the CalEnviroScreen, classifies no communities as “disadvantaged” in the North State. This is due to methodological and data issues associated with the tool and not the fact that there are no disadvantaged or underserved communities in the North State. See also Cal Matters (2024). Figure 8 shows the other combination of capacity and socioeconomic scores that determine medium and medium high well-being.

Figure 9. North State Well-Being



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, USGS, OpenStreetMap.

Capacity, Socioeconomic, and Well-Being maps for each county are shown in Appendix A.

6.4 Rural Development Workshops

Workshops held in the 10-county North State region brought knowledgeable community members together to discuss key rural development issues associated with the North State Jobs First program. Many of the resident experts who participated in the capacity assessment workshops participated in and facilitated rural development focus group sessions.

Questions that guided discussions included (but were not limited to):

- What are the key economic and environmental issues affecting your community and county?
- What kind of economic development projects are needed?
- What kind of businesses and jobs would you like to see advanced in your area?
- How do we most effectively advance sustainable and equitable economic development and infrastructure projects?
- What are some of the most effective ways to link landscape and forest management to rural development?
- Are there specific projects that you have identified that can effectively address rural development challenges facing communities in the county?

The Park Fire delayed workshops, with the last one completed August 16. What follows are summary findings that emerged from the North State workshops. Examples of three county workshop findings are offered at the outset to provide a flavor of the issues discussed in the counties. Butte, Plumas, and Shasta Counties are profiled. The narratives are interspersed in the summary findings based on all the counties.

Participants in the workshops reported that many communities have declined over the last 10 to 20 years for a variety of reasons. The loss of a large portion of the wood products industry and lasting impacts from the Great Recession continue to be a challenge, as recovery is often long and slow. Many stated a key goal and challenge is holding on to what they have today. Catastrophic wildfire poses an entirely new and perhaps greater challenge.

Fire recovery continues in many rural communities across the North State.

Egress/safety/emergency services remain a challenge in numerous areas:

- There are multiple places, like Paradise and Cohasset in the Park Fire, that have one way in and out; fires create issues with transportation corridors being shut down; access to transportation (public and private) exists without fires; and limited access and egress constrains resource availability and services, particularly in emergency situations.
- In Butte County, there is a compromised bridge and road that is the only access and egress road for the Grindstone Indian Rancheria of Wintun-Wailaki Indians.
- In certain areas there has been a good OES response. Experts asked how this can be more broadly implemented?
- Paradise is now in the “in-between” place of recovery: lots of improvements but much more to go. Greenville is somewhat similar. Both destructive events made clear that everyone will not return.
- Many residents are building back the same or in remanufactured homes.
- Disaster pulls lots of money in but it typically it goes to large, out-of-area contractors; capacity is not built with out-of-area entities.
- Scale of the fires and some other challenges compel collaborative action, but large scale impacts can overwhelm counties and community-based organizations.
- There was recognition that there needs to be more experimentation with, and expanded programs for, forest fire management. This should include tribal collaborations and forest management technical educational programs. There has been, for example, “astounding”

progress with Yurok and Farmer collaboration. There needs to be more of such tribal co-management partnerships.

Water is a huge issue for the area. Upper watersheds are managed by State and Federal agencies with much of the work falling on local residents and crews. People see water management as something they have little control over but which can determine their destinies through water availability for agriculture, jobs, landscape work, and other obligations.

More support is needed for sustainable **agriculture**, including small farms/ranches to industrial scale. Local experts called for targeted, integrated support for local small farming and farm-to-table operations (e.g., help for starting out, ensuring adequate access to resources, support during economic challenges, workforce development, supporting FFA and 4-H, sharing what makes living in the region. During winter and fires, limited transport corridors can create food deserts.

Youth-to-Work Programs:

- There needs to be support for youth to stay home and with training to work productive jobs.
- There is a need for creating and sustaining jobs for youth under 18. Technical training programs are needed to support high school students.
- Transportation is a barrier for youth. There is limited public transportation or access to it because of school obligations. Longer distances and hazardous mountain roads preclude biking. Regular, reliable public and other transportation for the remote areas were called out with specific mention of the Grindstone Rancheria and Elk Creek areas to and from Orland and Willows.

Butte County

Many Butte County Communities have been affected by catastrophic wildfire in recent years (e.g., 2018 Camp Fire devastated Paradise, 2020 North Complex Fire, 2024 Park Fire, etc.), and fire impacts continue to play out long after a fire is out. Berry Creek, home of the Berry Creek Rancheria and Tyme Maidu Indians, has faced multiple fires. The Camp Fire burned six years ago, and while considerable progress has been made towards Paradise recovery, much more needs to be done. Recovery support is dwindling. Limited egress led to loss of life in Paradise and threatens other communities like Cohasset, which burned in the Park Fire in summer 2024. There are other communities facing this potentially life-threatening challenge.

Fire recovery dollars have come in for immediate after-fire work, but this money goes to out-of-area contractors and does not build local capacity.

There are spillover effects from fire devastation. There is both a shortage of housing and competition for existing housing that challenges residents. Fires destroyed housing, but the more well-to-do coming to the area limit housing opportunities for those less well off.

Fire rebuilding is challenged by costs. Too many residents are building manufactured homes that are not fire safe. Fire resistant homes are more expensive. The Butte Fire Safe Council has grown considerably and offers vegetation treatment programs but workshop participants pointed out that not all take advantage of this.

Fire recovery is more than rebuilding homes. There needs to be more support for small business development. Participants pointed out that smaller businesses that are the lifeblood of many smaller communities need support that differs from those with 100 or more employees, a category that they felt economic development programs target.

There was recognition of the need for the smaller rural communities to work more closely together to get things done and serve their populations. Broadband has largely fizzled and a robust system is needed to support residents engaging in remote work.

Greater access to health care was highlighted, and this is underscored by health challenges associated with wildfire, and asthma linked to smoke. Workshop participants pointed out that Adverse Childhood Experiences, drug use, and mental health issues are higher than state averages.

- There is a need for paid internships to create a pipeline of workers, helping youth understand what is possible (need in-community leaders and examples).
- Community succession training “to stop the ‘brain drain.’” This includes internships and visioning coupled with community organizing.
- Jobs need to have sufficient wages and benefits to keep the youth from leaving the area.

Schools:

- There are some great schools and some that are not so great. High suicide rates were mentioned in a few areas, with many students lacking a vision of future possibilities.
- There needs to be support as well to encourage young professionals to return home. This includes ensuring housing for existing residents and potential returnees.

Plumas County

Workshop participants declared that there remains an economic “hangover” from the one-million-acre Dixie Fire of 2021. Trauma is a non-tangible but real impact of wildfire. This includes a number of other fires that have hit Plumas County hard. Participants agreed that PTSD is now woven into the fabric of communities.

Workshop participants recognized that government jobs are the largest employment sector in the county, and they pay reasonably well. There is a missing “ladder” locally, however, because training for these jobs requires workers to go out of the area. Additionally, many of these jobs, particularly introductory or early career jobs, are seasonal, and there are few opportunities to tide these workers over during the winter months.

More diversity of jobs and business opportunities are needed. Resource extraction, recreation, and tourism are mainstays of the local economy, but workshop participants questioned how these sectors can be expanded to do more and provide more opportunities. There is a need for more workers: fire fighters, police, and paraprofessionals for mental health and substance abuse programs.

The lack of health care providers—particularly specialists—compels residents to go out of area for needed services, when weather allows. Limited services represent a missing puzzle piece of economic development and employment, and further underscores local education and training needs. Broadband limitations in the country compound these needs. Lack of home internet access has put local students further behind.

Youth is a critical demographic that has seen some novel attention, like the establishment of mountain bike teams, but such efforts are limited and insufficient. As the next generation of stewards, more programs that target youth and landscape work are needed.

Plumas County recognizes the importance of utilizing green waste but there are simply too few viable alternatives for dealing with it. Waste disposal options for woody biomass generated from defensible space projects around homes and in the woods has not come close to meeting needs. As an added challenge, part of the county regularly has burn bans because of air quality problems. With no good green waste solutions, residents of Plumas County are challenged to establish and maintain defensible space around their homes.

Because of the devastating fires that have hit Plumas County over the last half dozen years, particularly the Dixie Fire, the need for new businesses and workers is challenged by lack of housing. Like other communities, but perhaps worse because of the 1,100 structures lost in the Dixie Fire, building housing is challenged by the lack of workers to build houses and businesses to serve and employ workers of all stripes.

Adding to the worker attraction problem, too many local jobs do not pay well enough for workers to enjoy a standard of living to meet local costs. Insurance rates are challenging home ownership.

Workshop attendees recognized the need for greater collaboration and integration of county-wide community events. This includes information-sharing and networking to leverage opportunities and work.

Networking more cross-sector collaborations, vertical integration between local industries, and development of circular economies:

- In almost every county workshop there was recognition of the need for increased networking among vital social service agencies and groups that often hold counties, workers, and families together, like Glenn Grows and Glenn2Greatness as locally-led hubs for collaboration and information.
- Networking involves both intra- and inter-county networking efforts. This is a fruitful area for additional work that can improve local and regional learning, expertise, and outcomes.
- Workshop participants called for expansion of support for community based organizations. Many are carrying out functions of budget-stricken local governments; how can they be supported?
- Participants identified that the towns of Dunsmuir, Mount Shasta, Weed, and Yreka want to work together to create “industrial jobs” and they need support to do so.

Across the region, and in every workshop there was mention of a desperate need for **housing**.

- More multi-family, higher density housing is needed.
- Housing in a number of areas is compromised with large federal land ownership limited private development opportunities. Trinity County reported, for example, that federal agency employees are based in Redding. These and other workers need local housing options.
- Fire insurance is the latest threat to those who want to build along

Shasta County

Like Butte County, Shasta County continues to be challenged by fire recovery from the 2018 Carr Fire, the 2020 August Complex Fire, the Park Fire (which was still burning at the time of this workshop) and others. Assuring safe egress routes from wildfires in communities like Igo/Ono/Platina is a continuing challenge. There are multiple causes of wildfire and forest health issues; it is not only a climate change problem.

Lack of available housing is acute in the Redding area. Local businesses in need of workers have resorted to buying houses for them. There are a number of rural communities with housing shortages, due either to poor housing stock or home-seekers being priced out of the market. All agreed that more diverse housing is needed. Workshop participants pointed out that people experiencing houselessness elsewhere come to Shasta County and Redding thinking housing costs are affordable, but they aren't.

Wells are running dry in some communities and some residents cannot afford to dig a new well. There are private systems, like one in Johnson Park that provides very expensive water for customers. Residents of Shasta County recognize they “sit” at the top of the federal water system of California over which they have considerable responsibility but little control. Drought affects lake levels, fire runoff, and lake water quality, among other things, which affect the tourism and recreation economy of the whole region.

Other natural resource issues involve salmon population collapse due to drought, dams, water temperatures in a warming environment, water quantity and quality in drought, fire and sediment, pollution, etc.

Shasta County is a rural county and many view communities as “frontier” communities. However, since the town of Redding has a population over 50,000, the county is disqualified from being officially “rural” and eligible for federal programs that support rural areas. A number of communities are challenged by lack of access to resources and emergency services. There are acute needs in rural communities involving roads and school repair, and fire departments and water system improvements. There are a number of good programs, but they are not accessible or equitably distributed across this sprawling county.

Youth education needs are too often unmet; more career technical educational, apprenticeship opportunities, and professional tracks are needed. Shasta College is launching a variety of programs to serve communities, including a heavy equipment operator training program for forestry

with those who live locally but can't afford the insurance.

Local planning is needed and there are few resources to do this.

- There is a legacy of development without planning that has led to a hodgepodge of properties and dwellings that lack good access roads. The problem of emergency fire egress is not restricted to Paradise. There are a number of other communities that face this same situation. Current planning needs are typically underfunded or lack funding altogether.

There remain many areas across the region without **internet and broadband services** or very limited capacity.

- Residents in many areas have to drive to find cell service. It is in some instances an emergency issue.
- It is impossible for some youth as well as adults to work remotely because of the absence of service.
- Limited service also compromises telehealth medical services.

There are many wonderful **recreation** options in the North State with little integration of travel marketing and offering travel experiences. It is largely untapped as an economic development pathway.

Many people go outside of their counties for **healthcare**. Some simply go without in the winter months. Primary care providers, for youth especially, are often limited. This challenges young professionals who want to move to the region or to stay.

professionals. The many opportunities in Redding, however, are difficult to access for those that live in outlying communities. Workshop participants identified a number of areas within the county as educational deserts and the need for programs and opportunities to meet people where they are geographically and with needs-based programs. Transportation is inadequate to ensure access. More family service centers and senior services are needed.

Recreation and tourism is a cornerstone of the county and bring vibrant growth opportunities. The Sundial Bridge in Redding, the construction of which was initially questioned by many, is now a major draw. The county is a gateway to Lassen Volcanic National Park and tourism in the Highway 44 corridor, which is a National Scenic Byway, and the Shasta region has renown fishing. Participants in the workshop identified the connection between murals, public art, and how both contribute to people working together can strengthen communities. The Tribal nations, including the Pit River Tribe, Redding Rancheria, Winnemem Wintu, and others, bring unique strengths and opportunities to the county and region.

Shasta County is a leader in the development of 21st century energy projects with the potential wind project in Montgomery Creek/Round Mountain/Big Bend, along with a battery storage project, and the nearly completed West Biofuels bioenergy project in Fall River Mills.

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