

A Path Forward: Institutionalizing Community-Led, Climate Forward Planning

The Redwood Region has embraced the opportunity to build a shared agenda for an equitable, prosperous, healthy, and sustainable future for all our residents. The 130-plus organizations involved in the Collaborative have worked to create a common vision, define priorities and goals which unite the diverse communities of the Region, and get real and actionable on steps we can take to make that future manifest. At the heart of the Collaborative's vision is the recognition that creating stronger working relationships across the region and between traditional and non-traditional economic development players is the catalytic ingredient to move the needle on the goals we share. To realize a future of shared prosperity and ecological health, the Collaborative will advance key components:

Shifting False Narratives Paternalism and Divested Communities

By RRRISE Equity Council Members, Pathways of Purpose and Black Humboldt

Paternalism = the act of limiting a person's or group's autonomy or liberty to promote their own good. It can also imply that the behavior is done against or without the will of the person, or that it expresses an attitude of superiority.

Narrative Shifts

BIPOC and priority community founders and entrepreneurs commonly deal with issues of inequity for competitive regional funding. They experience a lack of opportunity as dominant, and often white-led organizations monopolize the funding landscape.

These entities frequently get funded on behalf of BIPOC and priority communities, to solve issues for them. As a result, BIPOC led nonprofits are frequently at risk for not having funds to operate and are often unable to pay staff living wages to do their cultural placemaking and provide critical community programs and services.

The culture of paternalism towards underserved communities must be flipped and the narrative shifted locally—"capacity issues" do not exist due to race, gender, class, ability or otherwise, they are assigned and imagined limitations of divested communities created systemically. The false narratives excuse the continuation of historical extraction, economic and social oppression of BIPOC and priority communities in our area and beyond. Divested communities need access to equitable and direct investments that are self-directed and sustainable.

Suggested Community Investments:

- ◆ Accessible BIPOC led educational opportunities and workshops
- ◆ Accounting, business automation and financial literacy
- ◆ Building credit and understanding the credit system
- ◆ Creative workspaces, and brick and mortar commercial properties
- ◆ Culturally competent strategic management and grant writing support
- ◆ Equitable access to grants, lines of credit, capital, no and low interest loans
- ◆ Fiscal sponsorship by BIPOC organizations (perhaps outside the area)
- ◆ Free and lower cost legal services
- ◆ Incorporation, fee waivers, IRS and CA State forms, board development etc.
- ◆ Marketing, branding, and communication support
- ◆ Online business support and remote work opportunities
- ◆ Paid internships and apprenticeships
- ◆ QuickBooks training courses
- ◆ Strategic partnership development, with oversight and accountability
- ◆ Support getting certifications
- ◆ Translation and bilingual services for business
- ◆ Universal Design, Subtitles, Transcriptions and Accessibility for People with Disabilities

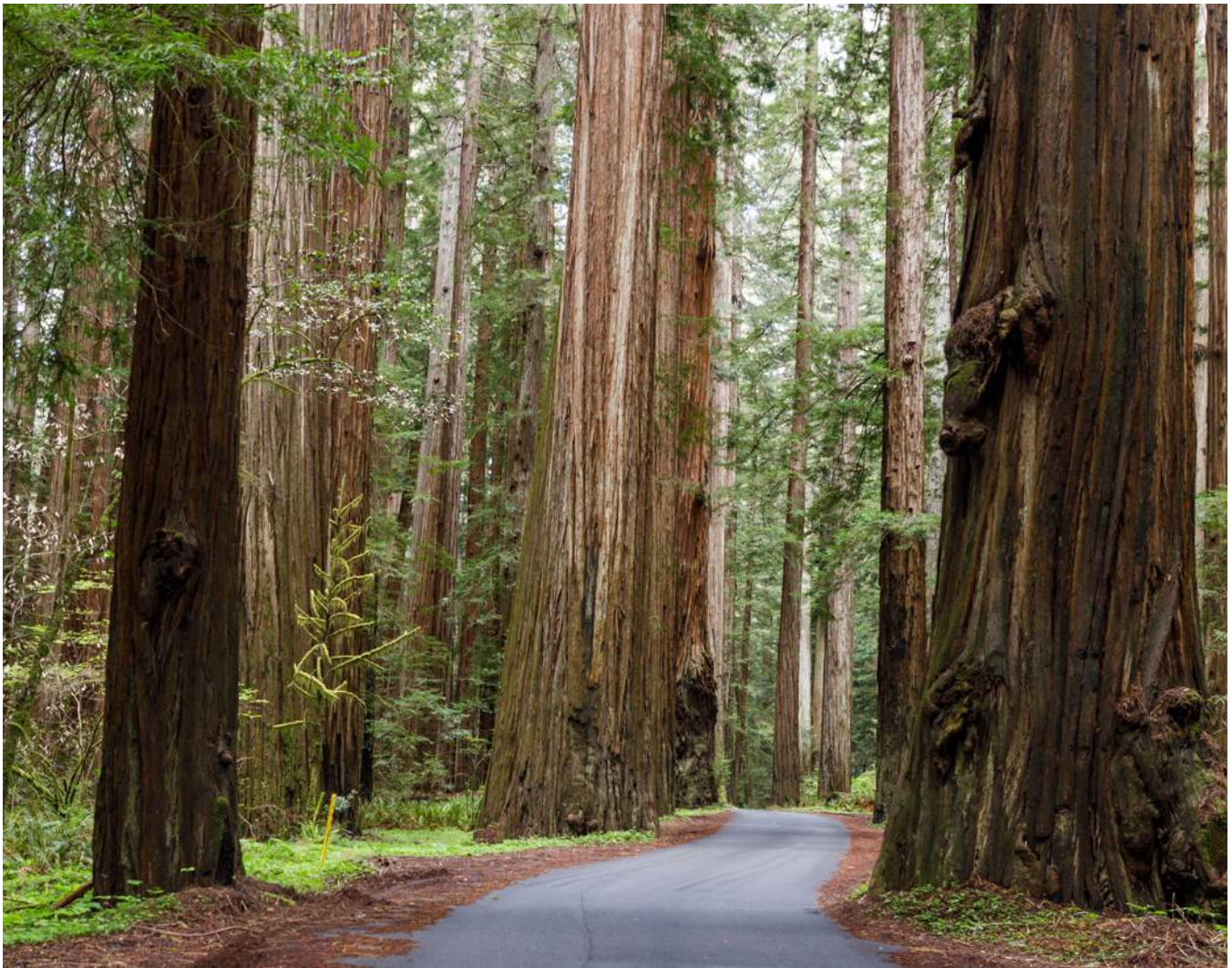
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- ◆ **Inclusive Economic Growth:** Our collaborative governance structure ensures that historically marginalized voices are integral to decision-making processes. Cross-cutting strategies address systemic barriers, creating pathways for equitable participation in economic opportunities.
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- ◆ **Sustainable and Resilient Economy:** Focus on four key sectors aligns with the region's strengths and future opportunities, moving beyond boom-and-bust cycles. Emphasis on renewable energy and climate resilience prepares the region for a carbon-neutral future.
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- ◆ **Community Well-being:** Strategies for housing, food security, and healthcare address fundamental needs of all residents. Investment in arts, culture, and tourism celebrates and leverages the region's rich cultural heritage.
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- ◆ **Improve Inclusion of Tribal Communities:** The Tribal Planning Table promotes the centering of Tribal priorities in the plan. Specific strategies address unique needs and opportunities of Tribal Nations.
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- ◆ **Building Regional Capacity:** Use catalytic partnerships to overcome resource and staffing constraints.
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- ◆ **Strengthening avenues to partnering with industry:** Focus on workforce development and entrepreneurship creates a skilled local workforce and nurtures innovation.
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- ◆ **Building out inclusive project investment paths with a longer-term horizon.** Infrastructure improvements, especially in broadband, lay the foundation for long-term growth.
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The success of the initiative moving forward will hinge on continued embrace of a collective impact model in which diverse organizations in our change ecosystem remain aligned and motivated on purpose, and serious about tangible results at the program and population levels.

Actions we will take to ensure sustainability and impact of this initiative include:

- 1** Retain an eye on the key metrics named throughout Regional Plan Part 1 and in this document. Ensure that our community of practice is paying attention to both program measures and population level effects, and hold ourselves accountable to moving the needle particularly for priority communities.
- 2** Continue to work with the Collaborative to explore sustainability of the initiative, and define a long term business model for RISE beyond October 2026.
- 3** Grow and evolve outreach and engagement methods. Deepen investments in youth leadership and grow the capacity of participating individuals and organizations to take on advocacy and policy work necessary to support RISE's vision.



Our diverse coalition of over 130 organizations provides the collective expertise and resources needed for successful execution. Through ongoing engagement and adaptive management, we will ensure continued community buy-in and responsiveness to evolving needs. Together, we are building a future where economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social equity go hand in hand, creating a model for regional development that can inspire and inform similar efforts across California and beyond. As we move from planning to implementation, Redwood Region RISE is poised to drive meaningful, equitable, and sustainable economic development. This plan is not just a roadmap, but a commitment to our communities. By fostering collaboration, leveraging our unique assets, and centering the needs of all residents, we will create a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable economy that benefits generations to come.



Appendix A: Report Contributors

Contributors to the Target Sector Strategies met consistently from January through June 2024 to analyze their sector and formulate the strategies in this report. RRRISE thanks:

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Working Lands Project Inventory. <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1j3xCV0d-iJQharOzYwQ-gU3nEHnXQIICQQTPpb5Cm7Q/edit?gid=1761302246#gid=1761302246>

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