

Regional Economic Strategy Update

March 5, 2025



Puget Sound Regional Council

Today's Discussion

- Background & Purpose
- Economic Context
- Update Process Overview
- Stakeholder Engagement & Inputs
- Timeline & Next Steps



Central Puget Sound Economic Development District (EDD)

- Authorized by the U.S. Economic Development Administration
- Housed at PSRC
- Board of Directors
 - Counties, cities, ports, tribes
 - Associate Development Organizations
 - Workforce development, labor
 - WA Department of Commerce
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Industry
- Responsible for development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)



Regional Economic Strategy

- Serves as the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
- Approved by the U.S. Economic Development Administration
- Enables regional access to federal EDA grants
- Blueprint for regional collaboration
- Current 5-year strategy covers 2022-2026
- **New strategy by end of 2026**



2022–2026 Regional Economic Strategy

Global Competitiveness

- Business Climate & Competitiveness
- Research, Commercialization & Entrepreneurship
- Recruitment & Retention of Businesses & Talent
- Trade Development
- Ports, Airports, Maritime Sites, Military Installations & Industrial Lands

Economic Opportunity

- Demographic Opportunity
- Geographic Opportunity
- Education & Workforce Development

Quality of Life

- Regional Growth
- Environment & Health
- Arts & Culture



Economic Context

2020-2021	2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COVID• Housing/Homelessness• Childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COVID Recovery• Housing/Homelessness• Cost of Living
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Federal Recovery \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reductions in Federal \$• New WA & Fed Admins.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business Recovery & Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tariff & Trade Uncertainty
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workforce Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Targeted Layoffs• Deportations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remote Work & School• Broadband	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Back to Office Push• Downtown Recovery
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equity Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Backlash to "DEI"



Development Phases & Requirements



Economic Analysis (Phase 1: 2025)

- ▶ Regional Profile
- ▶ SWOT Analysis



Strategy (Phase 2: 2026)

- ▶ Strategic Direction
- ▶ Action Plan
- ▶ Evaluation Framework



Strategy Development Roles



2022 RES Strategy Input & Communications

Stakeholder Discussions

Discussions with more than 60 leaders and organizations

- Industry Organizations
- Chambers of Commerce
- Associate Development Organizations
- Regional Ports
- Workforce Development
- Labor
- Health Departments
- Equity Partners
- Broadband
- Arts & Culture, Tourism

Communications

- Social Media ads
Reached 18,000+ people
- PSRC newsletters and blog
Reached @4,000 people

Public Input

- Online Engagement Tool
800+ visitors, 140+ provided input
- Public Comment Period



2022 RES Online Engagement Tool

- Made strategy available to board members, stakeholders, and the public
- Provided an opportunity for input on challenges, opportunities, strategies, and implementation
- Open for 3 months

Help shape the Regional Economic Strategy
Learn more about this project and how to use this site.
[Start here](#)

Economic Opportunity for the Region's Residents
[Learn more](#)

Higher Education & Workforce Development

Despite very low unemployment in many parts of the region, the regional economy has gaps in middle income jobs, a graying workforce in key manufacturing industries, and employers in need of more workers.

Challenges and Opportunities

The following have been identified as the key issues, opportunities, and challenges our region faces related to expanding demographic opportunity in economic development.

Workforce gaps exist in high demand occupations and industry sectors

Each industry faces different challenges in meeting demand for workers, and a lack of qualified candidates has resulted in unfilled jobs because of skills gaps. Education and training programs need clear alignment with employer needs to meet demand for workers.

A network of workforce development organizations to meet the needs of the region's workers

Increased collaboration is needed among government, local employers, training providers and educational institutions, service and advocacy groups, and other local organizations to make sure the workforce system succeeds in strengthening the talent pool, expanding economic opportunities, and serving displaced workers.

COVID-19 related recession is accelerating employment shifts

The jobs added during recovery periods are often different from the jobs lost during the preceding recessionary periods. The region needs to ensure that workforce development programs are focused on future workforce needs.

Strategic Response

Coordinate programs in education and training to address workforce gaps and advance economic opportunity.

Regional education and training providers produce high-quality workers for industry employers. Workforce gaps, however, persist in a variety of sectors. Students and job seekers need to see – and complete – pathways through education and training that prepare them to succeed in meaningful occupations.

Identified near-term actions:

- Help students, beginning in elementary school, develop better awareness of the careers that will be available, inspiring them to think about their futures, the skills necessary for the jobs that interest them, and the pathways to attaining those skills
- Invest in data systems that show gaps in workforce systems and hiring needs
- Expand investment in current programs to help bridge expected workforce gaps filling job openings in the state and providing meaningful careers to the state's citizens, including underserved communities
- Expand recruitment efforts to potential students into workforce training programs (P-SCC)
- Embed racial equity goals in workforce development plans and programs and develop strategies to achieve these goals. (GGP)
- Compile and track statewide data on occupations and skills needed across key industry sectors to develop local workforce for available and future jobs. Collaborate to identify changing workforce needs in the post-pandemic economy and tailor curricula and programming to meet identified needs. (GGP)

[Survey](#)

Who's Listening

Jason Thibodeau
Principal Economic Development Manager

Email: jthibodeau@parsi.org

Timeline

- Scoping
Summer through Fall 2020
- Strategy Review and Recovery Effort Engagement
Fall 2020 through Spring 2021
- Online Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement
Spring 2021 through Summer 2021
- Draft Strategy and Public Comment Period
Summer through Fall 2021
- Finalization and Adoption
End of 2021

Other Strategy Topics

Live Projects

- Public Education
- Economic Opportunity for the Region's Residents
- Economic Opportunity Throughout the Region
- Regional Culture & Diversity
- Business Climate

2025 Economic Analysis Inputs

Content Review & Issue Tracking

- Recent economic strategies & analysis
- Changes to state and federal policy and funding

Stakeholder Input

- PSRC boards and committees
- Targeted group discussions
- Individual interviews
- Online engagement tool

EDD Board Member Discussions

- Group discussions on key topics



Proposed EDD Board Member Discussion Groups

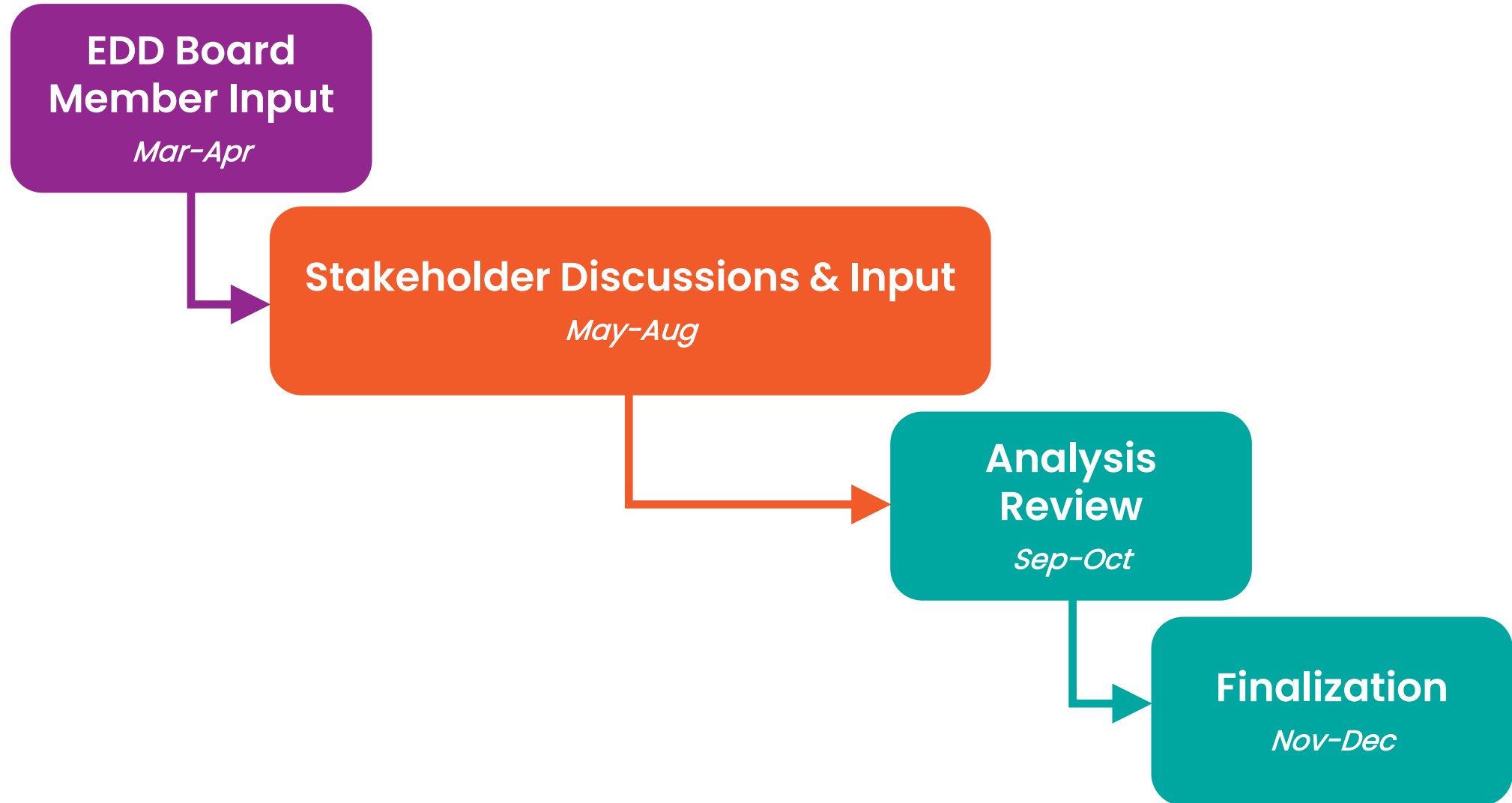
- Focus on areas of EDD Board Member expertise and interest
- Board members are asked to participate in one or more of these discussions
- May include other stakeholders as appropriate
- Document challenges and opportunities to inform the SWOT

Discussion Groups

- ADOs & Chambers
- Industry Opportunities
- Trade & Ports
- Regional Geographies
- Education & Workforce
- Arts & Tourism



2025 Economic Analysis Timeline



Next Steps



EDD Board Member Input

- Mar 5: EDD Board Meeting
- Mar-Apr: Board Member Discussions

Stakeholder Discussions & Input

- May-Aug: Discussions, interviews, online engagement tool

Analysis Review

- Review updated SWOT & plan for strategy discussions



Thank You!

Jason Thibedeau

Economic Development Program Manager
jthibedeau@psrc.org