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## 2021 Economic Development Legislative Priorities

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Communities across the central Puget Sound region are working to sustain their economies and recover jobs lost as a result of COVID-19. The Central Puget Sound Economic Development District Board has identified the following priorities for legislative support in 2021 to help in regional and state recovery efforts.

### Sustain Economic Development Funding

Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will require a strong commitment from state, regional, and local institutions that support economic growth. The Washington Legislature will face difficult budgetary decisions in the upcoming 2021 legislative session. It is important to sustain financial support for programs that drive economic development including business recruitment, retention and expansion efforts, education and workforce development programs, brownfield development, and others.

- **Support** efforts to preserve state funding for programs that will help drive economic recovery.

### Expand Economic Development Financing Tools

Washington State is limited in comparison to other states for financing tools to help support economic development. Other states have tools such as tax increment financing (TIF), research and development tax credits, and a state banks to publicly finance infrastructure and other public benefit projects. The Legislature should expand the tools available to local governments and agencies to fund infrastructure that enables economic development and encourages private investment.

- **Support** efforts to expand Washington's limited financing tools for economic development.

### Expand Broadband Infrastructure

Access to stable and reliable broadband supports economic development for regional communities, businesses and workers, and is increasingly a necessity to provide for public safety, health care, and education. Expanded broadband infrastructure is needed to reach areas in the region with limited access as well as to improve capacity in rapidly developing urban areas. COVID-19 has impacted work patterns, and the region must prepare for a future where remote work requires broader broadband connectivity.

- **Support** efforts to grow broadband capacity in the region, including expansion of public authority to provide broadband service.