

**GREEN HILLS
REGIONAL
PLANNING
COMMISSION**

2024

**COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Green Hills Regional Planning Commission (GHRPC) is designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) for the 11-county region of North Central Missouri by U.S. Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration (EDA).

The GHRPC was formed in 1967 as a multi-county planning organization headquartered in Trenton, Missouri. As the administrative arm of the EDD, the regional planning commission is authorized to receive partnership planning monies from EDA and is an eligible entity for contributing to the development and direct administration of EDA-funded projects in applicable portions of the region.

Organized with 11 counties, today GHRPC serves those counties plus 74 member cities and villages and extends its services to non-profit organizations and businesses. The region includes the following counties in North Central Missouri: Caldwell, Carroll, Chariton, Daviess, Grundy, Harrison, Linn, Livingston, Mercer, Putnam, and Sullivan

GHRPC's mission is to facilitate economic growth utilizing the district's professional staff, and local, state and federal agency partners, to ensure that the District maintains its rural heritage while enhancing development capacity, infrastructure, and opportunity for economic growth.

As the mission statement reflects, the Green Hills District is dedicated to growing the diverse economy of the region. The district is pleased to again be involved in EDA's planning grant program and to have the opportunity of going through the CEDS process to further the district's goals. The CED's Committee and the GHRPC Board of Directors provided most of input compiled to complete the CEDS.

Jackie Soptic, Transition Director, is responsible for preparing the CEDS document and will be providing progress reports to EDA. Jackie serves as the District's Economic Development Director and works with economic developers, communities, and counties in all aspects of their economic development initiatives. Additional District staff that will be responsible for the implementation of the CEDS includes Lisa Colson, Community Developer and Corinne Watts, Executive Director. Lisa specializes in infrastructure and community development, and Corinne provides support and overall supervision to ensure the objectives set forth in this document are addressed and reported on in a timely matter. Angela Shoultz provides NEPA approved Environmental Assessments and prepares Hazard Mitigation Plans along with other Emergency Services plans. In addition, GHRPC maintains experienced grant administration support staff that also assist with implementation of the CEDS.

Citizen input was gathered from representatives on the Board of Directors and from Town Hall meetings throughout the region.

Who is GHRPC?

GHRPC employs professional staff to meet the needs of our counties, cities, and non-profits. We contract with several different state organizations to provide programs and policies for the benefit of the region. Project development, administration and planning services are ongoing. Our many services include:

Infrastructure needs are addressed by coordinating funding options to approach water, wastewater, and community facilities improvements in the region. Staff members develop projects, write grants, and administer several state and federal grant programs for the region.

GHRPC houses the **Missouri Jobs Center**. The purpose of the **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act** is to provide workforce activities that increase employment, retention and earning of participants which, in turn, increases the economic self-sufficiency of the region. Staff assists walk-in participants, job fairs, dislocated workers, and youth programs.

Green Hills Rural Development, Inc. was formed in 1981 as a non-profit corporation as a non-bank lender providing loans to small businesses using a variety of local and regional revolving loan funds. The purpose of these fund is to promote economic development in the region.

North Missouri Solid Waste Management District was formed in 1992 to reduce the amount of waste being deposited in landfills. Staff performs recycling collections, education and sponsors projects to provide access to solid waste services.

GHRPC serves as the leading voice for **regional transportation planning** in north Missouri. The **Transportation Advisory Committee** meets quarterly to identify regional needs in infrastructure, public education, and safety.

Hazard Mitigation Plans, required by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, are created for the 11-county region to help local jurisdictions develop and adopt long-term plans to reduce or eliminate the risk to human life and property. Plans are updated by staff every 5 years.

Grundy County E 911 approached GHRPC regarding the creation of an E 911 GIS dataset for use in their upgraded mapping system. This process allowed GHRPC staff to develop capacity valuable to the region as they seek to upgrade their 911 systems.

Staff performs **Environmental Reviews** and/or Assessments for all projects subject to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as well as other local, State or Federal laws related to environmental clearance.

Comprehensive planning services are provided to communities in the region upon request. GHRPC encourages our region to create a vision for their communities.

Summary Background

Introduction to the Region



The Green Hills Region includes 11 counties located in north central Missouri: Caldwell, Carroll, Chariton, Daviess, Grundy, Harrison, Linn, Livingston, Mercer, Putnam, and Sullivan encompassing 6,413 sq. miles or 4,104,320 acres.

Population

The population distribution throughout the Region is uniform, with the greatest numbers of persons living within 10 miles of U.S. Highway 36 running east/west across the Region and in and near communities along the Interstate 35 corridor.

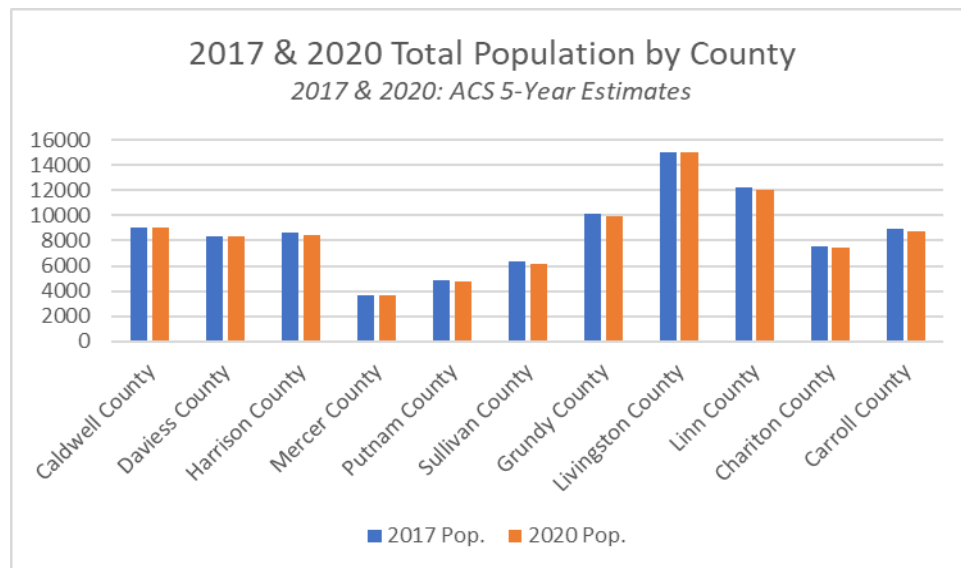
The counties within the Region are small and rural with a combined **population of 93,335**. The regional population decreased by 1,402 persons since 2017.

Population by Age, 2020	Value	Pct. of Total	U.S.	Pct. of Total
Total	93,335	100%	326,569,308	100%
Preschool (0 to 4)	5,788	6.20%	19,650,192	6.00%
School Age (5 to 17)	15,936	17.10%	53,646,546	16.40%
College Age (18 to 24)	7,061	7.60%	30,435,736	9.30%
Young Adult (25 to 44)	20,612	22.10%	86,831,842	26.60%
Adult (45 to 64)	24,014	25.70%	83,642,175	25.60%
Older Adult (65 plus)	19,924	21.30%	52,362,817	16.00%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates

47% of the population in the region is 45 years of age and older, as referenced in the table above. Young adults ages 25-44 are the next largest category of population at 26.6%. Ages 0-17 make up 20% of the population in the region.

Based on the 2017 data in the population chart below 46% of the 2017 population was 45 years of age and older.



As the graphic above reflects, the population of the Region has not had any growth.

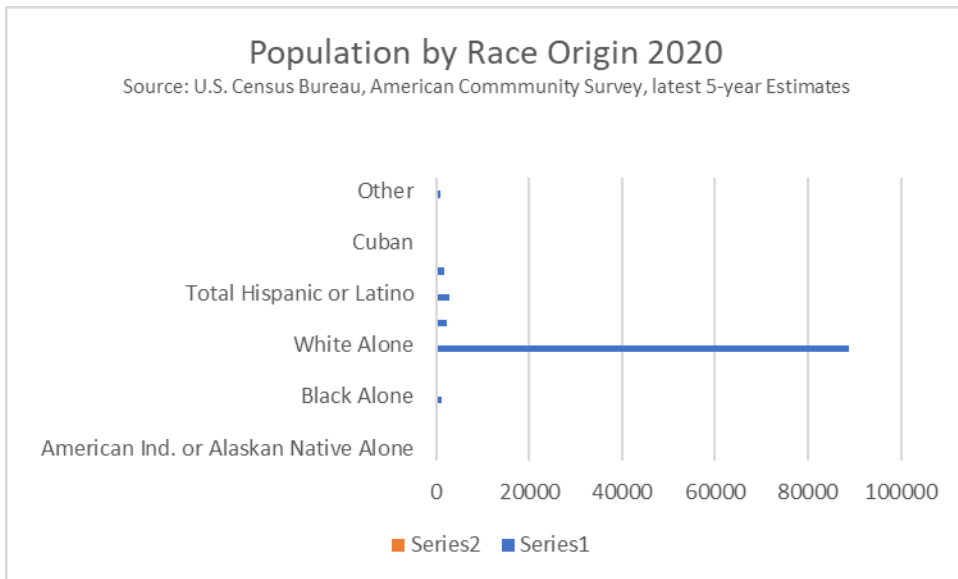
Counties with the most population are those that boarder the Kansas City Metropolitan area: Caldwell and Daviess; and those that are dissected by US Highway 36: Livingston and Linn.

Missouri’s urban and suburban counties captured most of the population increase between 2010 and 2020.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates.

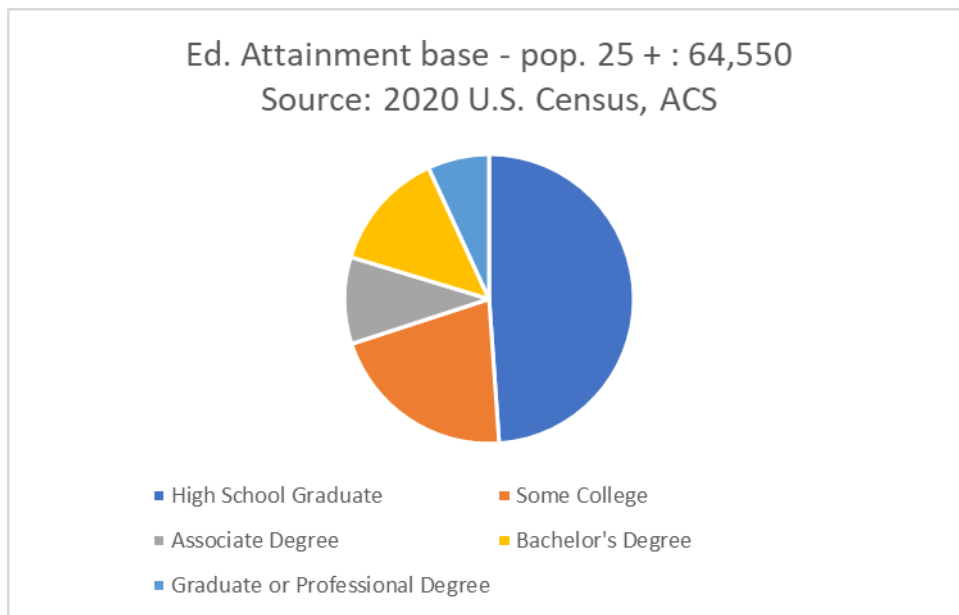
Race and Ethnicity

The region has a growing Hispanic population which provides diversity in a region that is **70.4% white**.

The growth in minority population is in relation to Smithfield Foods Swine Operation and Smithfield Farmland Foods workforce, both of which are located in the northeast portion of the region in the counties of Mercer and Sullivan Counties.



Educational Attainment



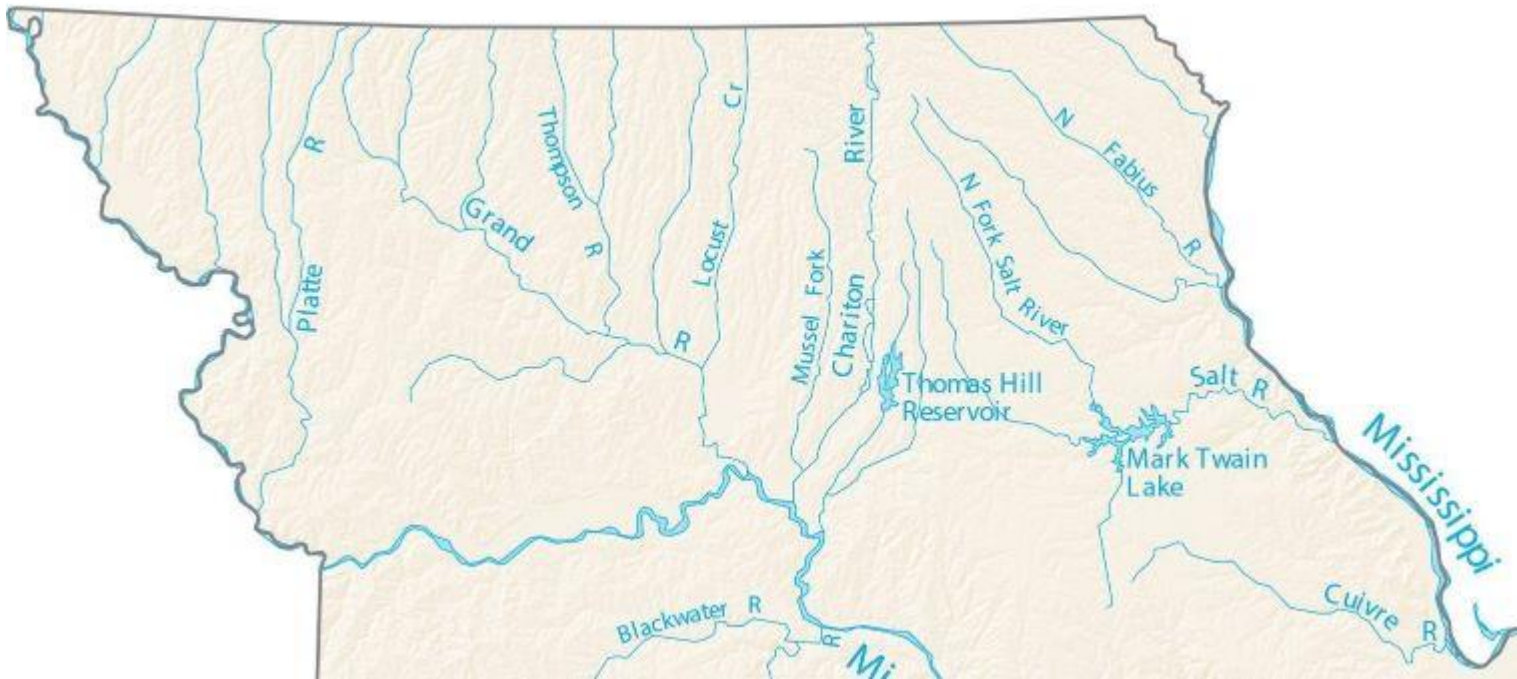
52.6% of the region’s workforce has some college or higher. 20.9% of the workforce has a bachelor’s degree or advanced degree.

Geography and Environment

Missouri is near the geographical center of the United States. GHRPC is in the prairie region of the Interior Plains’ Central Lowland known at the northern plains which is the portion of the state north of the Missouri River. The region is a beautiful, rolling country, with a great abundance of streams.

The Green Hills Region is geographically uniform in the north, with portions of the southern counties differing from the rolling uplands and stream valleys of the northern counties. The southern counties open onto a wide expanse of floodplains meandering along the Missouri River and its tributary, the Grand River (of the North).

Water Resources and Quality



North Missouri averages about 40 inches of precipitation annually.

GHRPC is located in the drainage system of the Missouri River Basin. The Grand River is the largest watershed serving the Missouri River in Northern Missouri. * The Thompson River is the largest tributary of the Grand River in the central United States; it's drainage basin is 1,111 square miles in Missouri.*

*"[Missouri Department of Conservation Grand River Watershed Inventory Assessment](#)". Archived from [the original](#) on 2008-06-15. Retrieved 2007-02-05

*"[Thompson River Basin](#)". Missouri Watershed Information Network. Retrieved 2011-03-29.

Much of the water sourced for drinking water systems in the region comes from these rivers and their drainage systems. Larger communities have constructed reservoirs as a supplemental water supply. These reservoirs also serve as camping and fishing areas to provide added revenue for tourism and recreation. F. ()

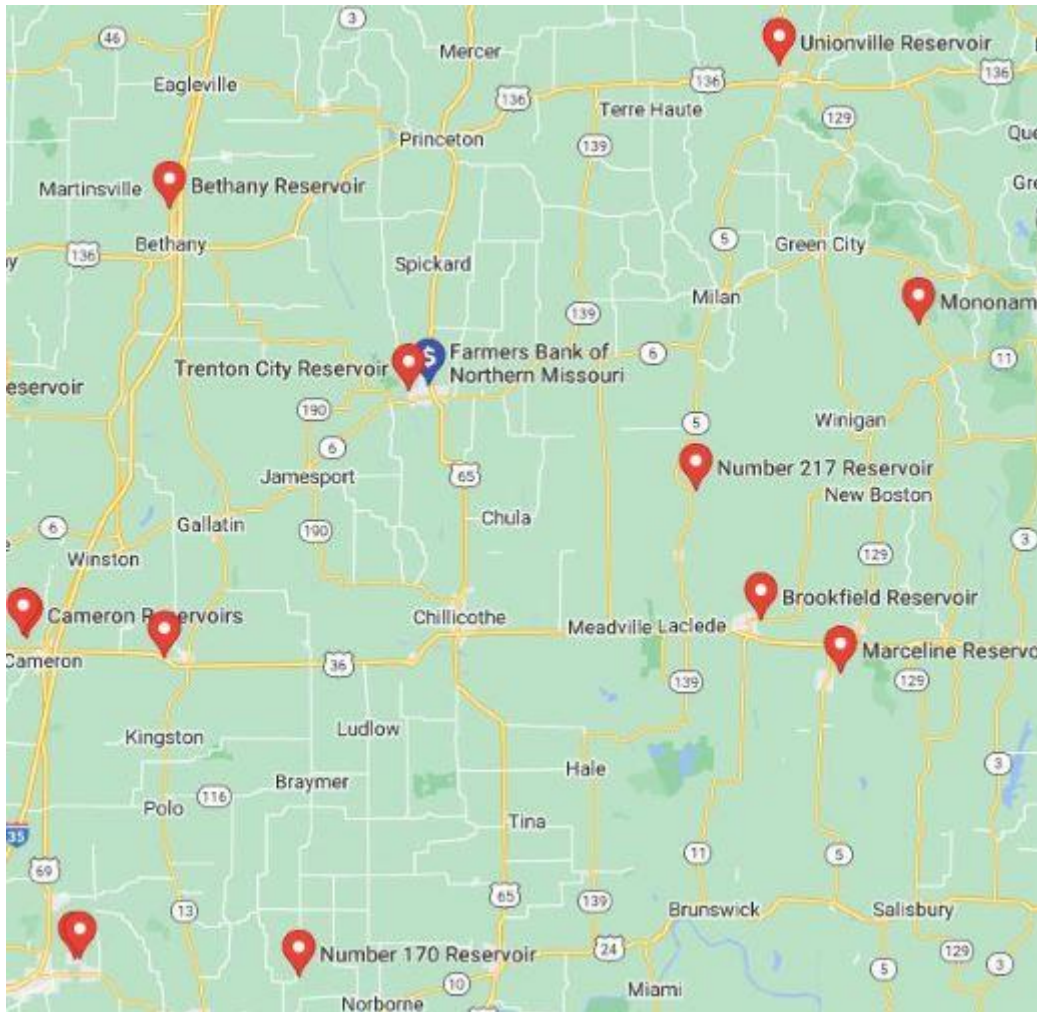
East Locust Creek Reservoir, a 2,300-acre lake, is being built in Sullivan County as a primary source of drinking water that can supply a 10-county region. Many smaller communities and public water districts in the region are planning to utilize this reservoir as their water source. The East Locust Creek Reservoir will also provide recreation to the region.

Little Otter Creek is another lake project being constructed in the region. It is located in Caldwell County and is estimated to provide a minimum 1,200,000 gallons of water per day to the county and surrounding areas.

Both reservoirs were precipitated due to severe and ongoing drought affecting the region.

E.coli contamination is becoming an issue for the Thompson, Weldon River and creeks in the area. Possible sources of contamination are improper or failing septic systems, run-off from livestock pastures, or even livestock using the rivers or creeks as a drinking water source. <https://dnr.mo.gov/document/thompson-river-draft-total-maximum-daily-load-implementation-strategies>

An Environmental Baseline report is located in Appendix A.



Historic Places

GHRPC has historic and cultural places which many communities utilize to hold festivals and encourage tourism in the region. Whether it is an historic person born in the area, like Calamity Jane in Princeton, Missouri or banks and jails that the Jesse James Gang visited in Daviess County; the communities of GHRPC enjoy their cultural heritage.

Historic places can be found throughout the region:

- Chillicothe, Livingston County is the Home of Sliced Bread.
- General John J. Pershing's boyhood home is an historic site in Laclede, Linn County.
- The Lewis and Clark trail followed the Missouri River and one of their encampments was in Chariton County near the village of Dalton at a cut-off of the river.

Many of the communities in the region got their origin from railroad growth in the 1850's which accounted for an era of industry and growth.

Agricultural Landscape

GHRPC is predominantly an agricultural landscape. Missouri's terrain and environment greatly contributes to agricultural diversity. Fertile soil and high annual precipitation is great for growing crops. Many of the farms in the region are family owned and operated.

Corn, soybeans and cattle are the top commodities for farmers in the region.

Smithfield, America's largest hog producer, with regional headquarters in Mercer County, has hog production sites throughout the GHRPC region. Hundreds of thousands of hogs are grown in facilities throughout the northern counties of our region. Sullivan county is home to Smithfield's pork processing facility.

Natural Hazards

Storm systems that occur in the region can cause flooding in the southern counties of the region or those areas along rivers and streams. Due to the hilly terrain many communities have problems with storm water run-off that can affect water and wastewater systems by creating infill and infiltration of the transmission lines and treatment and collection facilities. Homes in low lying areas can become flooded and many have pumping systems in their basements.

Hail, strong winds, and tornados that can occur with storm systems cause damage to homeowners and farmers in the region.

Drought has affected the GHRPC region in previous years. The result of drought can lead to pasture and row crop delayed or growth stunted. River and surface water levels are low and water activity can be restricted.

Extreme heat is a current risk to northern Missouri. Currently, Missouri averages 15 days a year with temperatures reaching extreme and dangerous levels. By 2050, the state is projected to see more than 60 such days a year. Source: States at Risk, America's Preparedness Report Card 2015.

Infrastructure

The region's infrastructure contains a network of roads, rail, airports, and waterway ports.

Roads

The infrastructure assets of the region include upgraded 2-lane state highways that traverse the region and four-lane Highway 36 which runs from the Mississippi River to the Missouri and intersects two Federal interstates (I- 35 and I-29).

Highway 65 bisects the region North to South and is a main corridor to southern Missouri.

Highway 136 travels across the northern part of the region as a main route of travel between communities.

Rail

Railways in the area primarily serve as transportation of cargo and agricultural commodities. Rail-lines that traverse the region include Union Pacific, Burlington Northern and Santa Fe, Norfolk Southern, and Canadian Pacific Railway.

Amtrak has expressed interest in creating a passenger rail connection in Carrollton, Carroll County along the Norfolk Southern railway. This would greatly enhance multi-modal transportation within the region.

Airports

Kansas City International Airport is the closest commercial airport to the region.

There are 6 small general aviation or public-use airports in the region. Brookfield, Linn County; Carrollton, Carroll County and Trenton, Grundy County are performing upgrades and expansions to their airports to support regional economic development.

Waterway Ports

A private business in Chariton County owns the largest port on the Missouri River. This port transports agricultural commodities via barge, rail and road.

City and County Infrastructure

GHRPC staff constantly works to address infrastructure needs of the region. Many of the municipalities and county governments in our region do not have the financial capacity to address the major infrastructure needs surrounding water, wastewater, roads, street, and drainage improvements. GHRPC assists our region with project development, coordination and grant writing to access crucial funding streams to improve infrastructure to ensure the health and safety of our residents.

Renewable Energy

Two communities in the region have created solar farms to provide power for their municipal system.

- Trenton, Grundy County has built a 15-acres solar farm.
- Chillicothe, Livingston County has built a 23-acre solar farm.

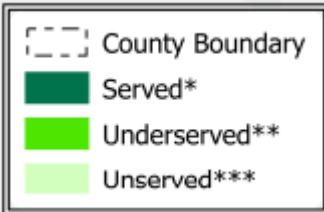
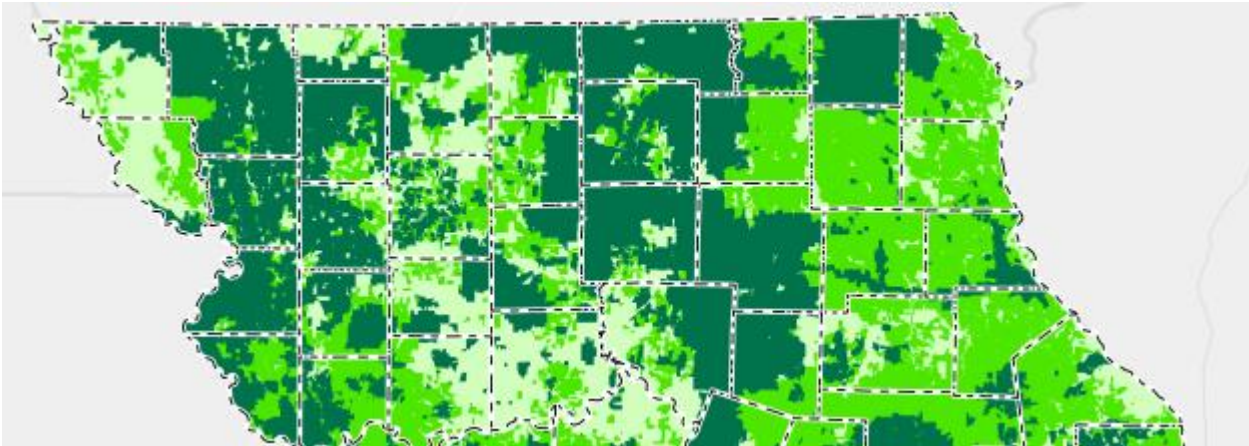
Some communities have shown interest in constructing electric vehicle charging stations. This activity will be part of the CEDS Action Plan for transportation enhancement.

Broadband Internet

USDA Rural Development has provided grants throughout the region to Rural Cooperatives and Internet Service Providers to connect homes, farms and businesses with high-speed internet. Providers will use funds to assist with construction costs for new broadband expansion to households with citizens on telework, students or vulnerable populations.

Upon completion of these projects, much of the region should have access to broadband internet.

Wireline or Fixed Wireless Broadband Speeds Coverage



Source: FCC Form 477 data - December, 2020

***Served area: census blocks with wireline or fixed wireless broadband internet service of speeds of at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload.**

****Underserved area: census blocks without wireline or fixed wireless broadband internet service of speeds of at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload.**

*****Unserved area: census blocks without wireline or fixed wireless broadband internet service of speeds of at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload.**

Missouri DNR, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, NPS

Business and Industry

Per Capita Personal Income Growth

1. Per Capita Personal Income, by County, 2018-2020							
	Per Capita Personal Income				Percent change from preceding period		
	DOLLARS			Rank in State	Percent change		Rank in State
	2018	2019	2020	2020	2019	2020	2020
Caldwell	37,272	38,677	41,488	60	3.8	7.3	67
Carroll	42,295	46,568	50,990	10	10.1	9.5	35
Chariton	41,120	43,955	49,650	13	6.9	13.0	10
Daviess	32,190	33,941	37,380	87	5.4	10.1	32
Grundy	34,037	35,358	39,098	77	3.9	10.6	27
Harrison	34,937	36,562	41,238	61	4.7	12.8	12
Linn	38,548	39,244	42,456	50	1.8	8.2	52
Livingston	37,653	39,489	43,804	41	4.9	10.9	23
Mercer	30,926	31,725	35,358	101	2.6	11.5	19
Putnam	34,489	35,844	39,308	76	3.9	9.7	34
Sullivan	36,809	38,963	44,877	29	5.9	15.2	6

1. Per capita personal income was computed using Census Bureau midyear population estimates. Estimates reflect county population estimates available as of March 2021.

Personal income estimates were impacted by the response to the spread of COVID-19, as governments issued and lifted “stay-at-home” orders. The full economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be quantified in the local area personal income estimates, because the impacts are generally embedded in source data and cannot be separately identified.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

What is personal income? Income that people get from wages, proprietors’ income, dividends, interest, rents, and government benefits. A person’s income is counted in the county, metropolitan statistical area, or other area where they live, even if they work elsewhere.

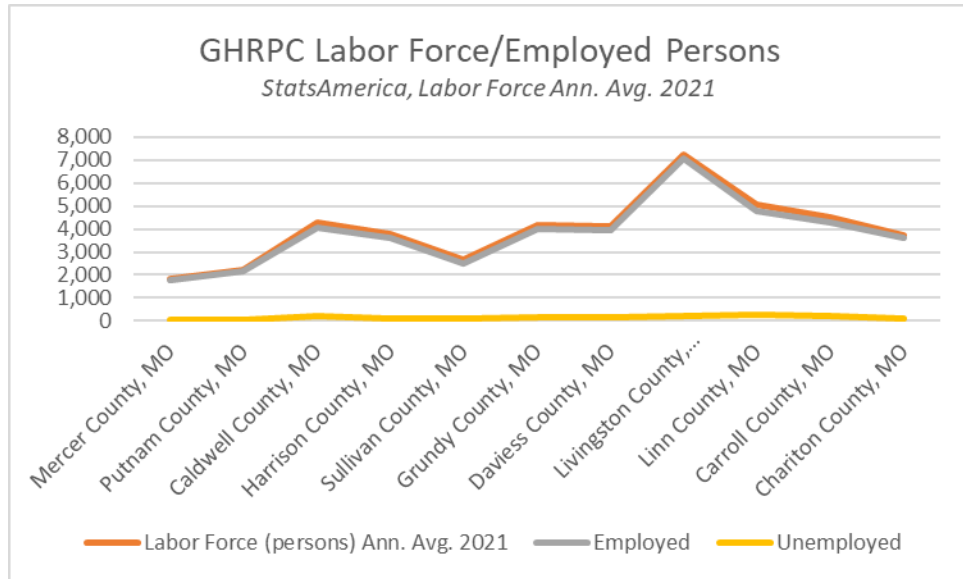
Per capita personal income growth rose throughout the region between 2018-2020.

Median household income

The median household income for the region is \$48,995. State of Missouri median household income is \$57,290. *Source: U.S. Census, 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.*

According to the Census, household income generally is defined as the total gross income before taxes, received within a 12-month period by all members of a household above a specified age (census specifies age 15 and older).

Labor force



As the chart above reflects; GHRPC labor force is approximately fully employed. The unemployment rate for the region is 3.9%, below the state average of 4.4%.

The labor force total for 2021 is 43,608 which reflects the regions population of persons aged 25-64.

Issues the region faces is a shortage of available labor force and an aging labor force without replacements. Continuing to support existing businesses and business creation in addition to adequate housing supply are crucial items in the CEDS Action Plan and will help grow labor force in the region.

Commuting patterns

Due to the rural nature of the region, the majority of the workforce commutes to work. American Community Survey Commuting Flows data reflect much of the population travels throughout the region for work. Commuting patterns flow to economic clusters from small communities or rural areas for employment. There are some patters of outflow to other states or out of the region, but commuting patterns mainly occur within the region.

There has been growth in people working from home due to the emergence of this trend during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ag

The Region's economy has undergone extensive change in the past 50 years because of agricultural consolidation and restructuring, and to a lesser extent due to the growth of corporate farms and vertically integrated agricultural production systems. The Region still has a high percentage of residents living outside of incorporated places. While family farms and corporate farms are not the main source of employment in the area; it supports and affects the road, rail and waterway economies of the region. Pg. 12

Agriculture activity is widely evident in the region. Based on USDA 2017 Census data there are a total of **9,103 farms** in the region totaling **3,371,268 acres** accounting for **\$76,252,000 total income** from farm-related sources.

The main agricultural activities are corn and soybean production, cow-calf operations, and hog production. Hog production mainly takes place in concentrated animal feeding operations owned by Smithfield Hog Production division. Smithfield is the main employer and tax base support for Mercer County.

The agricultural sector also supports the transportation industry in the region, requiring seasonal transportation to market during harvest. Smithfield employs drivers as well as contracts owner/operators to transport feedstock to the hog barn locations and transport animals between locations and to the processing facilities.

The need for transportation of agricultural goods and services has also led to growth in waterway shipping in the region. The port in Dewitt, Chariton County transloaded 237 barges of grain and fertilizer and was at capacity during the fertilizing season and again during harvest.

The ethanol industry is also supported by corn production in the region. Show Me Ethanol (SME) located in Carrollton, Carroll County is a corn dry-mill distillery that operations 24 hours a day and produces over 70 million gallons of alcohol annually. SME's feedstock is 20 million bushels of corn purchased from local farmers.

Economic Clusters

Clusters play a fundamental role in driving regional economic competitiveness by encouraging higher rates of job growth, wage growth, new business formation, and innovation in the regions they are located. Economic clusters in the region exist where manufacturing sectors, suppliers, service providers, labor force and main transportation routes have emerged and provide mutual benefit to the economy. The smaller communities in the region have minimal services and are bedroom communities and residents commute to regional employment hubs or clusters.

Chillicothe, Livingston County, is the largest community in the GHRPC region and is a major center for manufacturing and retail commerce, food service and entertainment venues. It is located along Hwy 65 and Hwy 36 which is a four-lane highway.

Brookfield, Linn County is located 25 miles to the east of Chillicothe along Hwy 36. In addition to offering employment in manufacturing, FedEx is building a shipping terminal in the city.

Located 25 miles North of Chillicothe is the City of Trenton, Grundy County, also along Hwy 65 offers employment in manufacturing and has the supportive industries of retail and food service.

Average Wages

County	Avg. Annual Wages	Avg. Hourly Wage
Caldwell	\$40,038	\$17.91
Daviess	\$29,193	\$14.26
Grundy	\$33,808	\$16.30
Harrison	\$31,738	\$16.03
Linn	\$37,869	\$17.68
Livingston	\$36,713	\$17.80
Mercer	\$43,945	\$20.31
Putnam	\$31,766	\$16.11
Sullivan	\$50,516	\$23.18
Carroll	\$40,175	\$18.72
Chariton	\$37,118	\$17.16
Region	\$37,534	\$17.77
Statewide	\$54,746	\$25.96

These figures are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, a cooperative program between the US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development.

These wages represent an average for all industries, both public and private.

Average Hourly Wage is calculated by dividing Total Wages by Average Employment by 2,080 hours (52 weeks x 40 hours) across all industries.

Average Annual Wage is calculated by dividing Total Wages by Average Employment across all industries.

Top employers

The top employers for the region are:

1. Hospitals and healthcare.
2. Schools and Government
3. Hog Production
4. Manufacturing

The largest volume of workforce is located at these top employers in the economic clusters of the region. School and Government employers are evident in each county and enhance the regions annual wage rate

Employment by Industry

Employment by industry as of 2023 from the Bureau of Economic Analysis:

1. Farm employment
2. Government and government enterprises
3. Retail trade
4. Construction
5. Manufacturing

Smithfield Hog Production and Pork Processing facility are the largest employers in the northern region of GHRPC. Their operations are spread throughout Mercer, Sullivan, Putnam and Daviess Counties.

Grundy County is home to Nestle Corp. processing facility which employs residents throughout Grundy and Mercer Counties. Nestle is currently expanding their production line and hiring employees. The hourly rate of pay is above average for the region at \$21.00 per hour.

Government and government enterprises consisting of public schools, trades and community college provide stable employment for the region.

Housing

Creation of housing units is one of the most important action items to be addressed. There is a need for single family, multi-family, rental, and low-income housing in the region. Lack of housing greatly impacts the growth of the region and the ability for employers to attract workforce at all levels of employment.

21% of the single-family houses in the region were built prior to 1940 with a second surge of construction occurring between 1970-1990. 54.5% of the housing units are owner occupied, 20.1% are renter occupied and only 7.1% of the housing stock is multi-family units.

Innovation Index

The Innovation Index includes both innovation inputs and outputs to measure both innovation capacity and innovation outcomes.

The innovation index for the region is low. Two areas that fair slightly better in the region is our business profile index regarding proprietorship. Many of the businesses in our region are family-owned or sole proprietor businesses, resulting in greater income to total wage and salary ratio.

The region's economic well-being has grown as measured by per capital personal income growth and residential internet connectivity.

The areas of measure which are lower in the region are working age population growth (work force), business competitiveness, and diversity of the economic activity. The data in the Business and Industry section supports these results. GHRPC has actively worked to encourage growth in entrepreneurship, the creation of Main Street programs to develop business diversity and family-owned businesses. The focus on these areas has enhanced the innovation index of the region.

The action plan will continue to focus on business development in the region and incorporate efforts to increase our workforce.

SWOT Analysis

Stakeholder Participation

Town Hall meetings were held at 6 different locations throughout the region to obtain input for the SWOT Analysis. Participants represented a cross section of community stakeholders.

March 28, 2022	Bethany, Harrison County	28 attendees
April 5, 2022	Salisbury, Chariton County	26 attendees
April 7, 2022	Carrollton, Carroll County	39 attendees
April 18, 2022	Gallatin, Daviess County	45 attendees
May 10, 2022	Milan, Sullivan County	42 attendees
June-July, 2024	Unionville, Putnam County	120 attendees

The CEDS was posted on the website GHRPC.org from December 30, 2024, through January, 2025 for public comment.

One of the greatest assets of GHRPC is the longstanding relationships the district has developed over its many consistent years of service to the region. District staff partners with numerous Federal, state, local, and regional organizations and Boards. These partnerships enable staff to constantly evaluate the needs of the region and to measure the outcomes of the projects and programming. These partnerships enhance the services of the district in the areas of economic and community development, workforce development, transportation planning, hazard mitigation planning, solid waste management. Maintaining these relationships and partnerships are considered key components of the district’s service delivery to the region and feel the benefits are realized in the outstanding success of the district as it excels in meeting the needs of the region.

The comments and notes collected are summarized in the SWOT table below.

STRENGTHS		WEAKNESSES	
History	Medical Care	Lack of capital	Lack of Broadband
Work Ethic	Recreation	Population	Infrastructure Costs
Self-reliant		Costs of goods and labor	
Cost of living		Lack of living wage jobs	
Infrastructure	Nat. Resources	Lack of housing	
Agriculture	Leadership	Youth out migration	
Education systems		Failure to communicate regionally	
Local Incentives			
Farmers Market			

OPPORTUNITIES		THREATS	
Entrepreneurs	Location-Center of US	Federal regulations	Attitude
Lakes-recreation	Collaboration	Loss of transitioning businesses	
Tourism	Distribution Centers	Population/Workforce	DNR-EPA
Logistics	Agriculture	Drug use	Family breakdown
Use Tax-Internet Sales	Taxed	Loss of large manufacturers	
Technology	Beef Production	Lack of economic diversity	
Growth in work-from-home jobs		Over regulation	Internet sales
Regional branding		Lack of Planning and Zoning/Code Enforcement	
Historical Buildings/Façade Improvements			
Improve Housing Stock			

Action Plan

GHRPC has identified 4 main visions that will assist in strengthening the human capacity and economic prosperity of the region. It is the mission of GHRPC to advance our rural region through comprehensive planning and development services.

The top 4 issues impacting our region are:

1. **Planning - performing comprehensive plans**
2. **Community and Economic Development Outreach**
3. **Infrastructure**
4. **Quality of Life/Sense of Place**

This Action Plan was chosen to emphasize the regions strengths and opportunities while working to mitigating the weaknesses and threats.

Vision, Goals, Objectives & Evaluation Framework

By defining our vision and outlining our goals, objectives, and forms of measurement to evaluate performance; GHRPC can better focus on implementing the necessary services, programs, relationships, and timeframes for the region.

1. Planning

In order to identify areas of opportunity in each county and regionally, the District will need to perform in depth county 'inventories' to understand the strengths, weaknesses and capacity within each county. This information will allow elected officials, economic developer and District staff to engage resources and direct the marketing and growth of the region.

With this data, District staff will be able to begin comprehensive planning with elected officials and representative of counties and municipalities to. This process will allow elected officials and economic development staff to plan for improvements and development that must be implemented in order to achieve resiliency and growth.

GOAL 1- Work as a convener/facilitator with each county and their municipalities to compile an inventory of assets, infrastructure, data and overall review of the county to understand their current capacity.

Objective 1.1 – Create worksheet and distribute to elected officials, and area economic developers, public water supply districts.

Objective 1.2 - Work with economic development resources such as Missouri Partnership, Missouri Department of Economic Development to align local capacities to development.

GOAL 2- Comprehensive Plans

Objective 2.1-The District will begin working with counties to expand upon the inventories to develop a comprehensive plan.

Objective 2.2 - Utilize the plan to seek funding that align with capacity needs.

GOAL 3- Improve and develop housing stock throughout the region to allow population growth and a pathway to economic security and growth for low-income residents.

Objective 3.1 – Performance of regional housing study by the Housing Assistance Council. (GHRPC was the recipient of a technical assistance grant due to the lack of staff capacity to perform housing study and the needs of the region).

Objective 3.2 – Build relationships with state and federal organizations that fund housing programs and financial assistance.

Objective 3.3 – Build capacity within GHRPC’s community development department to staff, educate and initiate implementation of housing activities.

MEASUREMENT:

Completion and availability of comprehensive plans, inventories and housing study will be utilized to attract resources to the region. Meeting with funding agencies and industry will be documented. Funds accessed for infrastructure and housing improvement and new construction will be measured by funding awards. Improvement of housing stock can be measured by an increase in county tax assessment base.

2. Community and Economic Development

Providing professional economic and community development resources to the region’s cities, counties, and regional economic development groups is considered the cornerstone of the district’s purpose and function. Through the funds provided through the District’s Planning Grant, staff is made available to provide support in this area in communities where otherwise there would be no presence of economic development.

GOAL 1 – The District staff will continue to provide direct coordination support to the District’s Northwest Roundtable of Economic Developers.

Objective 2.1 -The Northwest Roundtable will continue to provide education, training, and a network for economic development in a 18 county area. The district provides the communication and meeting coordination for the organization and emails educational and informational articles to the membership. This organization is vital to maintain the quality of economic development professionals and support agencies throughout the region.

Objective 2.2- The District will continue to provide outreach and direct technical assistance to the region. The District will work to rebuild relationships with funding agencies and regional economic developers to bring addition resources to the region.

Objective 2.3 -The District will continue to provide support and direct assistance to communities and counties involved in economic and community development activities. Services include strategic planning, assisting with ED Boards, meeting directly with businesses leads and existing businesses and assisting businesses in ownership transition and entrepreneurial startups.

MEASUREMENT:

Measurement in this category will be based on observation, feedback, and District collected data rather than on state or federal data sets. Factors such as retention and capacity building of the region's Economic Developers, progress as they work to retain or attract industry and numbers of entrepreneurs who seek assistance are all measurements that will be retained and reported on. In addition, transitioning businesses that successfully turn their businesses over to new owners will be an important factor to measure in this category.

3. Infrastructure

Throughout the SWOT process and survey responses the need for infrastructure upgrades was identified as an area keeping rural areas behind the growth curve. In response to this overreaching need throughout the region the district considers this area of work to go hand-in-hand with the region's economic and community development needs.

GOAL 1: Maintain and upgrade the districts infrastructure including roads, bridges, and water distribution and sewer systems.

Objective 3.1 The District will continue to serve in a planning partner role with the Missouri Department of Transportation and the District's Transportation Advisory Committee. This partnership coordinates the identification and communications of the region's transportations most immediate needs as well as planning to address future transportation issues.

Objective 3.2 The new governance administration in the state is applying attention and resources to the rural needs of the state. Top of their list is to provide high speed fiber and Broadband to the rural areas in Missouri. The district staff has been invited to have a seat at the table as this important work is taken on. Currently the District is serving with the Missouri Rural Development Partners, Great Northwest Missouri initiative, the Northwest/Northeast Economic Development Partnership efforts as they work to bring focus, attention and solutions to this very important infrastructure issue facing rural Missouri.

MEASUREMENT:

Measurement in this area will come from a variety of methods. The district will report annually concerning the number of infrastructure projects funded and will also provide reports about the number of projects in the development/prefunded stages. The District’s Transportation infrastructure progress will be measured and reported on by the District’s Transportation Advisory Board. The district is heavily involved in both lake projects and will report on the status of those important developments. The district will provide staff dedicated to be involved in the statewide rural Broadband initiative and the improvement in that area will be measured by the amount of public/private investment made in this area as well as the number of persons able to connect to that vital last mile of infrastructure.

4. RURAL QUALITY OF LIFE -SENSE OF PLACE

As previously discussed in the introductory section of this CEDS the region has embraced the value of the rural tourism attractions, uniqueness, charm, and quality of life aspects rural areas offer. That belief was clearly stated in the rural survey response to the question *What are the very best things about your community...* responses included: rural lifestyle, natural resources, good people, low crime rates, quality schools, and low cost of living.

GOAL 1 – Provide support, technical assistance and connection opportunities to capitalize on the positive quality of life attributes celebrated in the rural areas.

Objective 4.1 -Support and participate in initiatives to develop quality of place within the region. Continue to make connections with resources outside the region to provide assistance to niche projects, for example: butterfly habitats, biking trails, resources for community festivals.

Objective 4.2- Continue to serve as a coordination point of the three county Stronger Economies Together (SET) region. The counties of Daviess, Grundy, and Sullivan were selected by USDA to participate in the SET planning process which was recently funded and has formed a regional tourism organization. GHRPC will continue to provide technical assistance to move the initiative forward.

Objective 4.3 The District plans to develop an inventory of art organizations, individual artisans, and craftsman that are active in their trade throughout the 11-county region. The purpose of this objective is to develop an informal network and inventory of these assets and to provide coordination services for them to meet and network to expand their offerings and improve the economy of the region. Marketing, supply chain, markets, distribution educational offerings and the development of festivals and shows centered on the arts are outcomes anticipated in this Objective area.

MEASUREMENT:

The impact of the SET initiative will come from a variety of sources such as increased sales tax revenues, numbers of museum visitors, motel booked nights, and increase in festivals and their attendees. An increase in art/culturally based activities will be used to measure the impact of developing the resources of the arts communities throughout the district

Economic Resilience

Regional economic resilience is an area's ability to prevent, withstand, and quickly recover from major disruptions to its economic base. These disruptions can be significant events in the national or international economy; downturns in a particular economy that directly affects the region; or an external shock that is unforeseen or unplanned.

Each of the 11 counties in the District have had a declared climate disaster in the past 5 years. These disasters directly effect the region's agriculture economy. There is a growing interest in Ag-tech and renewable energy infrastructure to diversify the region's economy and provide alternative revenue streams for local governments.

Based on the 2020 Census Urban and Rural data, Eight (8) of the counties in the District are 100% rural which support the role of agriculture as the main industry.

Population, per capita income, employment rates - across the board the District remains stagnant due lack of economic development growth. The risk to the key economic asset, agriculture, would cause a huge shock to the regions economy and devastate not only personal incomes but also effect the ability of local governments to provide basic resources.

As the District provides assistance throughout the region developing plans and marketing our resources, building capacity for economic resilience will be evaluated by providing education and technical assistance to economic developers and business owners in the region.

The Economic Development Administration has outlined two approaches to build economic resilience into the CEDS: Steady-state and Responsive initiatives. Steady-state is defined as planning for and implementing resilience through specific goals or actions to bolster the long-term economic durability of the region.

As listed in the Executive Summary, GHRPC has established staff and programs and policies to be responsive to the region and implement steady-state initiatives:

1. Comprehensive planning efforts are undertaken at the county and community level. Hazard mitigation plans are funded by SEMA in order to prepare for environmental incidents that may occur.
2. EDA, USDA RD and other resources are accessed to fund economic diversifications efforts.
3. Missouri Department of Transportation and Missouri Department of Economic Development is utilized to upgrade and improve the infrastructure of the region.
4. Environmental Assessments are utilized to ensure safe development practices are being developed and implemented.

Responsive is defined as establishing information networks among the various stakeholders in the region to encourage active and regular communications between the public, private, education and non-profit sectors to collaborate on existing and potential future challenges.

GHRPC has established information networks in the region and performs regular communication between the private, public, education and non-profit sectors:

1. Key stakeholders are identified and belong to GHRPC's Board of Directors whose make-up is from public and governmental entities.
2. Relationships are built with key state and federal organizations to coordinate and develop programing to enhance economic vitality and collaboration when addressing future challenges.

Climate Resilience

Understanding the region's vulnerabilities of climate-related hazards will be important as the District implements several strategies to encourage economic growth. The dominant stressors to the region from the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit are:

1. The pattern of increased rainfall as it impacts spring planting, increased soil erosion, and flood risk, disruption to sewage systems, transportation networks and property.
2. Daily minimum temperature increases and rising humidity affect not only agriculture but health and wellness of certain populations.

The District provides Hazard Mitigation planning funded by the State Emergency Management Administration and assists jurisdictions in developing plans to mitigate future climate related impacts.

Due to our significant aged population there has been a greater need to diversify county senior centers, fire departments and health departments to serve as heating and cooling stations.

When creating comprehensive plans, District staff also must look to the regions demographics and understand the economic adaptations that will need to be considered to ensure sustainable economic growth and create a sense of place that will encourage population growth.

District Actions to enhance climate resilience:

The District will create an Emergency Planner Position in 2025. This position will be utilized by the 11 county's to perform and update the Local Emergency Planning Committee's for the Missouri Emergency Response Commission. Staff will also serve as the region's liaison to the Statewide Regional Coordinators Program for Region B and H. These efforts will ensure the District receives much needed services and equipment to support emergency responders and law enforcement.

Staff will assist the region with pre and post- disaster efforts funded by FEMA.

Equity

Comprehensive plans performed in each county will assist the District with understanding the underserved populations in our region and the barriers that exist across race, ethnicity and income.

Due to the stagnation in our region, we must understand what has prevented populations from building wealth and creating a desirable environment where people will want to relocate.

Increasing our facilitation with community groups outside of boards and jurisdictions will assist District staff by collecting feedback from community members that may not have an opportunity share information. Incorporating these resources into the planning process helps ensure the District understand the needs of the communities and that jurisdictions are serving those needs appropriately.