

MARIPOSA COUNTY ECONOMIC VITALITY STRATEGY



May 2017



**MARIPOSA COUNTY
ECONOMIC VITALITY
STRATEGY**

**PREPARED BY
CRAFT CONSULTING GROUP**

May 2017



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INTRODUCTION

Economic development can be defined as *“a sustained community effort to improve both the local economy and the quality of life by building the area’s capacity to adapt to economic change.”*¹ Economic development efforts seek to improve the economic well-being of a community by creating jobs and expanding the local tax base. *“Economic development activities undertaken by counties range from workforce development, business recruitment and retention, regional marketing and branding, entrepreneurship and small business support to infrastructure investment.”*² A strategy-driven plan for economic development helps *“build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region. It is a key component by which the public sector, working in conjunction with other economic actors (individuals, firms, community and business organizations, educational institutions, and industries), creates the environment for regional economic prosperity.”*³

Small towns and rural communities across the United States are struggling because they were built largely on a single economic sector such as agriculture, logging, mining, or manufacturing, all of which have changed significantly over the past several decades due to market forces, technology, or changing circumstances such as resource depletion, globalization, or shifts in consumer preference. Changes in the economic foundations of rural communities often leave local residents without jobs and the community without a healthy tax base. Rather than just simply seeking to attract major employers to replace these lost jobs, different approaches are being adopted to overcome some of these challenges. *“This emerging shift toward place-based approaches to economic development can go by various names, such as “smart growth economic development” to refer to a strategy that builds upon existing assets, takes incremental actions to strengthen communities, and builds long-term value to attract a range of investments.”*⁴

¹ Loveridge, Scott and George Morse, *“Implementing Local Business Retention and Expansion Visitation Programs”*, Pennsylvania State University, Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, NERCRC publication 72, 1998

² National Association of Counties, *“Strong Economies, Resilient Counties: The Role of Counties in Economic Development,”* July 2014

³ U.S. Economic Development Administration, *“Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Content Guidelines”*

⁴ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Sustainable Communities, *“Framework for Creating a Smart Growth Economic Development Strategy: A Tool for Small Cities and Towns”*, January 2016

BACKGROUND

Economic Development in Mariposa County is guided by several policy documents including the Economic Development Element of the 2006 General Plan and the 2007 Economic Vitality Strategy. A goal of the General Plan was the development and implementation of an ongoing Economic Development Strategy. In 2007 an Economic Vitality Strategy and Implementation Plan (EVS) was produced, but never implemented or reviewed annually. The EVS, which had two goals: strengthen the tourism industry and diversify the county's economy, was *"intended to guide future activities for public-private partnerships to enhance and diversify Mariposa County's economy while preserving the values, assets and quality of life cherished by Mariposans."*⁵

An update of the 2007 EVS is necessary in order to address evolving economic conditions and to ensure that proposed actions and initiatives are relevant and in sync with today's economic realities and opportunities. In the ten years since the 2007 EVS was prepared the national and local economies have gone through a recession and post-recession recovery period. Economic conditions have changed and much of the language in the 2007 EVS is dated. The Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau is now a separate entity, previously being under the auspices of the county at the time the 2007 EVS was prepared, thus the strategies pertaining to tourism should be revised or re-delegated. In addition, regulatory processes need to be streamlined and land use and zoning laws should be reviewed so that they reflect current conditions.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH/ EXISTING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

On December 8th, 2015, the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors considered the 2007 EVS and 2006 General Plan Economic Development Element and charged staff with soliciting community input regarding an update of the 2007 EVS. County staff conducted an extensive community outreach process during the spring of 2016 and received numerous comments and input from 48 community organizations, businesses, and residents. This input was used to guide the update of the EVS.

Subsequent to receiving an in-depth report on the community outreach process, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to implement several follow-up actions, including the hiring of an economic development consultant to assist in the update of the ten year-old EVS plan. Craft Consulting Group was hired to review and assess current conditions and trends as they relate to opportunities and challenges in attracting and expanding job-creating businesses, and prepare an updated EVS for Mariposa County. The consultant team reviewed existing reports, planning studies, data, and documents to develop a thorough understanding of Mariposa County's economy and economic development goals and objectives. During four separate visits to Mariposa County, the consultant team interviewed and received input from a number of key stakeholders involved in economic development in Mariposa County to learn how they felt about the economic opportunities and challenges facing Mariposa County and what the future direction should be in updating the existing EVS. Key issues and opportunities were also identified during the community

⁵ Chabin Concepts, "Economic Vitality Strategy and Implementation Plan for Mariposa County," November 2007

outreach process conducted by county staff in early 2016. The Board of Supervisors held a public workshop on the EVS update regarding goal setting and actions in March 2017.

A comprehensive assessment of Mariposa County’s economy⁶ was conducted by the consultant team to better understand the current economic climate and trends, competitive advantages, challenges, and opportunities for future expansion and diversification. A separate report⁷ includes an in-depth analysis of the county’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) that will impact the development of a strategy and implementation plan to expand and diversify the local economy. The SWOT analysis (see Appendix B) highlights the county’s current assets, competitive positioning, capabilities, and capacity for economic development. It also identifies internal and external factors that can keep the county from realizing its potential.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Mariposa County’s economy is highly concentrated and dependent upon seasonal tourism.
2. The majority of employment is located primarily in and around the town of Mariposa and Yosemite National Park.
3. Yosemite National Park (YNP) is a unique asset that will continue to draw tourists, but there is a need to more rigorously identify and promote other Mariposa County tourism assets in addition to YNP.
4. The economic outlook for Mariposa County (2016-2026) is positive with projected job growth of 583 net new jobs (1.4% Average Annual Growth Rate).
5. Tourism represents a huge market for many local businesses that could not otherwise survive based solely on spending by local residents.
6. Growth in the property tax base is constrained due in part to public ownership, which makes up 52 percent of the total land area in Mariposa County.
7. Opportunities for future job growth beyond the baseline forecast include expansion of the tourism sector, targeted industry cluster development, new business formation, expansion of the healthcare sector, and growth of small businesses.
8. Opportunities also exist for diversification of the county’s economic base with the expansion of target industry clusters and growth sectors.
9. The lack of commercial office and industrial building space and sites, housing, and infrastructure act as a constraint on economic growth.

⁶ Craft Consulting Group, “Mariposa County Economic Vitality Strategy: Background Conditions & Opportunities”, January 2017
⁷ Craft Consulting Group, “Mariposa County SWOT Analysis”, February 21, 2017

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Located in the central Sierra Nevada mountain range, Mariposa County is situated between the Central Valley on the west and Mono Basin to the east. Surrounding counties include Merced, Madera, Tuolumne, and Mono. Mariposa County is geographically diverse and extends from the Sierra Nevada foothills on the west to the high mountain peaks of Yosemite National Park on the east with elevations ranging from 300 feet above sea level to heights of 11,000 feet in Yosemite. The town of Mariposa, the county seat, has an elevation of approximately 2,000 feet. The climate in the western portion of the county is generally mild, characterized by warm summers and cool mild winters with little rainfall during the late Spring, Summer and early Fall and heavier rainfall during the winter months. Mariposa County experiences four distinct seasons, and with its diverse terrain, many locations enjoy regular snowfall with opportunities for cross-country and downhill skiing, as well as snowboarding and sledding.

Publicly owned land makes up 52 percent of the total land area in Mariposa County. These lands include Yosemite National Park, the Sierra and Stanislaus National Forests, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) holdings. The National Park Service alone owns 26.4 percent of the county's land, while national forests constitute about 16.5 percent, and the BLM owns and manages 5.8 percent. The remaining 3.3 percent of publicly held land is owned by the State of California, Mariposa County, Mariposa Public Utility District, Mariposa County Unified School District, and other federal agencies.

A significant portion of the privately owned land is under a Williamson Act contract,

which protects agricultural lands from premature urban development, and is therefore unavailable for development over the near term. The contracts are voluntary agreements entered into by landowners that vest local governments with conservation easements to keep their lands in agricultural or other open space uses for a 20 year period. These contracts are automatically renewed annually unless a property owner files a notice of non-renewal. The Williamson Act is considered an important tool for ensuring that agriculture operations remain economically viable. As of the end of 2014, there were 207,959 acres of land (representing 22.2% of the county) under such contract in Mariposa County.⁸

Being located within a reasonable travel distance from major metropolitan areas makes Mariposa County a viable tourist destination for California residents, national, and international visitors alike. Travel time from urban centers in San Francisco and Los Angeles average from 3 to 6 hours, while traveling from large metro areas in the Central Valley such as Sacramento or Fresno takes only 1 to 2 hours. There are a wide variety of outdoor recreational opportunities available, making Mariposa County one of California's most popular year-round vacation destinations with more than five million people visiting Yosemite National Park in 2016.

Mariposa County's economy is highly concentrated in a few industry sectors. While Mariposa County has a variety of businesses spread across many different industries, a single industry—tourism—dominates the county's economy. Tourists represent a huge market for local businesses, many of which could not survive based solely on spending by local residents alone. Consequently, tourism drives much of the county's economy and

⁸ California Department of Conservation, "The California Land Conservation Act 2014 Status Report", March 2015

is the largest employment sector. Virtually all local businesses are affected, directly or indirectly, by the money that tourists spend. Such dependency might be acceptable if the tourism industry remained vibrant throughout the year. Due to the seasonal nature of tourism, Mariposa County faces higher than average unemployment during the off-season months (Nov. – April). While tourism is expected to remain the major focus of the county’s economy, Mariposa County needs to be promoted as a year-round tourist destination and outdoor recreational center to increase off-season visitation and avoid the annual seasonal business slump and layoffs from November thru April. The hospitality sector (which includes hotels, restaurants, and bars) accounts for the vast majority of the jobs in the tourism industry. Public sector employment, including county

government, local public schools, federal and state government (national forests, BLM, national park, CalFire, and Highway Patrol), makes up the second largest employment sector. The next three largest industry sectors, retail trade, healthcare/social assistance, and construction, round out the top five largest employment sectors in Mariposa County. These five industry sectors account for 81.2 percent of all local employment. The lack of good-paying, year-round jobs forces a large percentage of residents (28%) to seek work outside of Mariposa County. While diversification is an important goal, tourism is expected to remain the foundation of Mariposa County’s economy for the foreseeable future with Yosemite National Park attracting 5+ million visitors annually.

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ECONOMIC VITALITY STRATEGY

Mariposa County's economic development strategy is structured around a set of strategic initiatives that describe specific actions the county will take to expand and diversify the local economy. These actions are primarily the responsibility of the County's Office of Economic Development, and will be acted upon over the short-to long-term depending upon funding availability. The strategic framework for the Economic Vitality Strategy includes vision and mission statements, goals, objectives, and actions. The Strategic Framework is based on the findings from the economic assessment of existing conditions and trends, the SWOT analysis, and community input. An accompanying Implementation Program provides specificity about what will be done, by whom, with what resources, and in collaboration with which partners. An annual review process

will ensure that the EVS is implemented, while maintaining the flexibility to respond to opportunities and challenges as they arise. The Strategic Framework and associated Implementation Program constitute the EVS Strategic Action Plan. The strategies and actions are based on best practices as identified by the California Association for Local Economic Development (CALED), the U.S. Economic Development Administration, and others. It builds on the ongoing work of the County's Economic Development Specialist and organizations such as the Yosemite/Mariposa Tourism Bureau, Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau, Mariposa County Economic Development Corporation, and others. The Strategic Framework answers the questions "Where does Mariposa County want to be economically in the next 10 years?" and "How are we going to get there"?

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STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

MISSION STATEMENT

"Mariposa County in partnership with its residents, business community, and non-profit organizations, will advance our core values and common vision to build a vibrant economy by recognizing our past, taking action to meet the needs of the current generation, while ensuring a prosperous and sustainable future for the next generation consistent with our established goals and objectives."

VISION STATEMENT

"Mariposa County strives to be a unique place widely known as a forward planning community with a strong tax base and employment opportunities, where individuals, families, and businesses can thrive and prosper, while keeping with our rural values and traditions of community, family, and hard work, in a beautiful natural setting."

CORE VALUES

- A **Visionary Community** that cultivates collaborative relationships, incorporates equity and sustainability in decision-making, fosters partnerships to further local and regional goals, and thrives through active citizen engagement and participation.
 - A **Healthy, Diverse Economy** with a strong tax base, stable businesses, and expanding employment opportunities that benefit our citizens, the surrounding rural area, and the region as a whole.
 - A **Distinctive Sense of Place** based on a commitment to place-making, quality design, and construction that complements the beauty of our natural and built environment, valued historic and cultural assets, and unique local character.
 - A **Vibrant Community** where our citizens can live, work, socialize, and recreate in a safe, attractive, and healthy environment.
-

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL #1: STRENGTHEN AND ENHANCE THE TOURISM SECTOR

Strategic Initiative #1: Continue to enhance, expand, and diversify the **Destination Mariposa County Brand** to make Mariposa County a year-round destination of choice for those seeking outdoor recreational experiences, a weekend getaway, business retreat, or the simple pleasures of a rural small town environment.

OBJECTIVE 1.1: POSITION MARIPOSA COUNTY AS A YEAR-ROUND INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED TOURIST DESTINATION.

Action 1.1.1: Conduct a **Market Segmentation Study** of visitors/tourists to Yosemite National Park and Mariposa County.

ACTION STEPS

- Based on the market segmentation study, identify and create a **Detailed Visitor Profile** of the target audiences for each market segment and target those with the ability to optimize revenue for Mariposa County businesses.
- Update **Marketing Mix** to attract individual, group and business visitors' offering the best opportunity for longer stays and increased spending.

OBJECTIVE 1.2: EXPAND AND DIVERSIFY THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF TOURIST ACTIVITIES TO CAPTURE A GREATER SHARE OF THE TOURISM MARKET

Action 1.2.1: Identify and evaluate the existing **Inventory of Tourist Assets/Attractions/Activities** to determine what may be missing from the current offerings.

ACTION STEPS

- Inventory existing **Tourism Assets/Attractions/Activities/Events** by category and make available to the Visitor Center, Tourism Bureau, local hotels, restaurants, and stores to promote tourism in Mariposa County.
- Conduct a **Visitor Tracking Survey and Needs Analysis** to identify visitor characteristics, length of stay, reasons for visit, overnight lodging, activities engaged in, month of visit, sources of information, gaps in current tourism product offerings and identify new attractions/activities/events that will draw additional visitors and tourists to Mariposa County for longer stays, especially during the non-peak season.
- Continue to promote and work with others in developing seasonal activities to attract more visitors and tourists during the spring, fall, and winter months.

Action 1.2.2: Continue to work with community partners and stakeholders to explore opportunities for expanding the number and variety of visitor/tourist attractions, activities, and events based on a gap analysis.

ACTION STEPS

- Investigate opportunities to attract a **Wildlife Sanctuary** featuring bears, butterflies, and/or other local wildlife.
- Consider **Multi-Day Activities and Events**, such as a week-long winter festival and Christmas market, bicycle tours/races, and fishing tournaments to enhance the county's attractiveness as an extended stay destination.
- Research and identify opportunities to **Host Business Meetings/Conferences and SMERF Events (Social, Military, Education, Religious, & Fraternal)**.
- Explore opportunities to **Host Night Events** at the fairgrounds similar to the Cody Night Rodeo and Stampede.
- Investigate opportunities for holding unique **Art and Cultural Events**, such as a Salon des Refusés exhibition.
- Investigate opportunities for becoming a **Glamping Resort** destination (glampinghub.com/types-of-glamping).

Action 1.2.3: Continue to work with community partners and stakeholders to develop additional **Tourist Attractions, Events, and Activities** to increase tourism and maximize visitor options/experiences.

ACTION STEPS

Expand and promote the agriculture and agri-tourism sectors

- Explore opportunities to expand **Agri-Tourism**, especially during the fall and spring seasons, based on input from local farmers, the Mariposa Agri-Nature Association, the Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner, the University of California Cooperative Extension Small Farm Program, and other stakeholders.
- Investigate and adopt **Agri-Tourism Best Practices**, such as a small farm program, farm tours, and on-site sales, by researching and visiting successful agri-tourism programs in other counties to better understand what works and how they are operated.
- Adopt a **Farm-to-Fork Program** that serves as a year-round platform to highlight the farms, restaurants, organizations and individuals that contribute to the local culinary and agricultural landscapes.
- Organize, promote, and sponsor **Agriculture Festivals and Events** specifically targeted for the fall and spring seasons that attract visitors from outside the county.
- Develop an **Agri-Tourism Marketing Campaign** that promotes awareness of the county's agricultural heritage, farm tours, local wineries, and locally grown and raised agriculture products.

Increase the number and type of Fairground Events and Activities particularly during the off-season

- Hire an **Event Planner/Recruiter** to expand the number and type of festivals and events at the Fairgrounds, and actively recruit multi-day events, which bring visitors into the county especially during the off-peak season.
- Organize a countywide Ag Fair to educate and display farm products and practices, including a home and garden show.

Develop and promote Cultural and Recreational Activities and Events

- Develop and expand the number of **Visual and Performing Arts Events** during the spring and fall.
- Develop and link **Cultural and Culinary Programs** into a year-round tourist attraction strategy.
- Develop and market **Recreational Activities** available in the county (e.g. hiking trails and nature walks, bike trails, snow skiing, boating, fishing, rafting, rock climbing, spelunking, flora/fauna/geologic tours, horseback riding, etc).

Develop & promote Activities & Places of Interest in each of the county's subareas and communities

- Initiate discussions and work with the U.S. Forest Service to **Re-Open Bower Cave** to the public.
- Promote and upgrade the **Merced River Trail** by working with the Bureau of Land Management.
- Develop **Mini-Storefront Visitor Centers/Kiosks** in gateway communities along major routes into Yosemite (SR 41/120/132).
- Update location data on each of the Internet mapping services (such as MapQuest, Yahoo, and Google) for the SR 132 connection to SR120. Navteq North America and Tele Atlas North America provide geocoding data for map content.

OBJECTIVE 1.3: REDUCE SEASONALITY BY MAKING MARIPOSA COUNTY A YEAR ROUND DESTINATION OF CHOICE FOR VACATIONS, FAMILY/GROUP OUTINGS, WEEKEND GETAWAYS, AND BUSINESS RETREATS/CONFERENCES.

Action 1.3.1: Continue to develop and promote Mariposa County as a year-round **Destination of Choice for Visitors** based upon its cultural/historical heritage, outdoor recreational opportunities, and special attractions and events.

ACTION STEPS

- Develop and launch an **Explore Mariposa County** marketing campaign to promote Mariposa County as a family-friendly, year-round outdoor recreation destination.
- Leverage **Key Tourism Assets**, including natural, historical, and cultural assets, to attract visitors throughout all four seasons, particularly during the off-peak tourist season.
- Develop a consistent **Brand Identity** and prepare a **Marketing Plan** to promote Mariposa County as a destination of choice for visitors based upon its cultural/historical heritage, outdoor recreational assets, and special attractions and events.
- Develop or acquire a **Promotional Video/Software Application/Mobile App** to inform visitors about local tourist attractions, activities, & events by month, and make available in the Visitor Center and local hotels, on the Chamber/Visitor Center and Tourism Bureau websites (ExploreMariposa.com, yosemite.com), and on mobile devices.
- Encourage **Tour Operators** to expand tour offerings to include historical & heritage tours, horseback riding, fishing trips, ziplining, sunset/stargazing dinner tours, wildflowers/birds/animals, and other activities in Mariposa County in addition to Yosemite.

Action 1.3.2: Focus on providing **High Quality Visitor Services and Hotel Accommodations**.

OBJECTIVE 1.4: ENSURE THAT THERE IS ADEQUATE CAPACITY TO ACCOMMODATE A GROWING TOURISM INDUSTRY

Action 1.4.1: Expand **Meeting Space Venues and Hotel Accommodations** to address market gaps.

ACTION STEPS

- Conduct a **Hotel Market Survey** to identify the supply and demand for hotel rooms; number and size of lodging facilities, amenities, and occupancy rates by month to identify current capacity and market gaps.
- Investigate potential market demand for a **Conference/Event Center** by event type and assess potential competition from other facilities and comparable venues within the regional market.
- Develop preliminary **Building Program Requirements** to define the type and amount of space required for a high quality conference facility that meets IACC standards for venue design, support services, technology, and equipment with the potential to attract meetings, training courses, and conferences year-round.
- Identify all **Potential Hotel/Conference Center Development Sites** in the town of Mariposa that have sufficient land area with the proper zoning and access to sewer/water infrastructure.
- Prepare and distribute a **Hotel/Conference Center Development Prospectus** including market study, potential sites, and local tourist assets to developer prospects to determine the level of interest by the private sector in developing and operating a conference center and what it would take for them to move forward.

Action 1.4.2: Develop and expand **Tourism Infrastructure** to capture and support growth in tourism, making it easy and convenient for visitors to find destinations and get around by car, foot, and bicycle.

ACTIONS STEPS

- Develop a **Transportation Hub** at the intersection of Highways 49 and 140 in the town of Mariposa that includes YARTS, bus and car parking, the Visitor Center, a tour operator, a car rental agency, and related uses. At the very least, encourage YARTS to pickup from the existing Visitor Center.
- Install **Electric Vehicle Charging Stations** in key locations throughout Mariposa County. Investigate Tesla's program to provide and install free electric wall chargers at motels, restaurants, and shopping centers in downtown Mariposa and Coulterville.
- Build a strategically located **Public Parking Structure** in downtown Mariposa to accommodate both local customers and visitors.
- Develop a **Way Finding Signage Program** to welcome visitors at the north, south and west entrances to the county and the town of Mariposa.
- Actively recruit and encourage **Tour Operators** to expand local operations and open local offices.

GOAL #2: BUILD AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY, BALANCED ECONOMY WITH A DIVERSITY OF BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Strategic Initiative #2: Launch a **Strong Economy, Resilient County Initiative** to expand and diversify the county's economic and employment base by adopting a targeted approach to business attraction and expansion based on local assets and competitive advantages.

OBJECTIVE 2.1: DIVERSIFY AND EXPAND MARIPOSA COUNTY'S ECONOMIC BASE

Action 2.1.1: Launch a **Cluster Initiative** focused on one or more target industry clusters.

ACTION STEPS

- Facilitate **Industry Cluster Development** by mapping cluster boundaries and linkages, identifying core companies, engaging key stakeholders, fostering on-going relationships, supporting industry-led actions; engage in cluster branding and promotion, workforce training, infrastructure investment, and business support activities.
- Take specific action steps identified below to expand and strengthen target industry clusters.

Food & Beverage Production, Processing, Packaging & Distribution Cluster

- Provide farmers with information about **Value-Added Agriculture**, such as locally grown, sustainable, and organic grass-fed beef, outdoor-raised pork, free-range chicken, on-farm processing, and vertical integration to assist small farmers interested in diversifying into new markets.
- Recruit one or more **Micro-Breweries** to locate in Mariposa and promote festivals and events such as an Oktoberfest and local food, wine and craft beer events throughout the year.
- Expand the **Taste of Mariposa** event during the Butterfly Festival to showcase Mariposa County restaurants and locally grown and produced agricultural products.
- Explore opportunities to attract a local **Wholesale Distribution Operation** to serve local hotels, restaurants, and YNP.
- Research and develop a **Mariposa Grown** trademark certification program to help local farmers distinguish their products as being grown, harvested and/or processed in Mariposa County.

Small Scale Advanced Manufacturing Cluster

- Establish a **Business and Technical Assistance Program** in partnership with the local SBDC and Workforce Development Board, which provides specialized assistance to small manufacturing firms.
- Research and develop a business case for attracting a recreational products company.

Construction/Green Building/Solar & Building Materials Cluster

- Hold a **Green Building/Solar Informational Workshop** for contractors, design professionals, realtors, builders, and lenders.
- Establish a Green Building informational web page on the county's website.

Action 2.1.2: Ensure that an adequate supply of **Buildable Sites and Infrastructure** is available to meet business growth and employer needs.

ACTION STEPS

- Develop a plan to designate the **Airport Area as an "Employment Hub"** for light industry.
- Work with MPUD to identify and invest in infrastructure and support systems that foster and facilitate business growth.
- Work with local ITC providers to expand communication services for both mobile phone/data coverage and wired/wireless Internet access across the county to support business and tourism needs.
- Identify commercial/industrial development opportunity sites and promote shovel ready sites to attract new investment within each of the town/community planning areas (Mariposa, Coulterville, Catheys Valley, Fish Camp, and Wawona) consistent with the adopted plans for each area.

Action 2.1.3: Maintain a **Business Friendly Climate** that encourages ongoing business investment by proactively addressing business concerns and reducing regulatory complexity and uncertainty.

ACTION STEPS

- Update **Land Planning/Zoning Regulations** to streamline the development approval, permitting, and inspection process to reduce costs and uncertainty for businesses and ensure development predictability.
- Update **Zoning Regulations** to reflect modern business definitions and market conditions to ensure the viability of businesses in each of the targeted industry clusters/sectors.
- Establish a **Permit Assistance Center** to assist businesses with the permit approval process.
- Create a **Business Solutions Team** to assist businesses with site selection, permitting, and business assistance programs.

OBJECTIVE 2.2: ATTRACT NEW AND COMPLEMENTARY BUSINESSES TO LOCATE IN MARIPOSA COUNTY

Action 2.2.1: Launch a **Business Attraction/Recruitment Campaign** to promote Mariposa County's competitive advantages and attract new and complementary businesses in growth industries and target industry clusters including supply chain vendors and specialized service providers that are part of the supply chain.

ACTION STEPS

- Establish a **Brand Identity** that positions and promotes Mariposa County as a business friendly community offering a high quality of life, excellent weather, and other amenities to attract new businesses.
- Actively monitor and strategically respond to **Business Leads/Requests for Proposals** from GO-Biz, commercial R.E. brokers, and other sources.
- Investigate and adopt a **Business Incentive and Financing Program** to support business attraction, retention, and expansion efforts, such as sales and use tax exclusions; workforce hiring and training credits; industrial development bonds; California Competes tax credit; and sales tax exemptions on manufacturing equipment purchases offered through GO-Biz.
- Incorporate a GIS-based **Property Locator Application** on the county's Economic Development webpage to promote office/industrial zoned sites & buildings for lease and make economic/demographic information readily available to developers and businesses looking to locate in Mariposa County.

OBJECTIVE 2.3: PROMOTE AND DEVELOP BUSINESS RESILIENCY TO AVOID, WITHSTAND, AND RECOVER FROM ECONOMIC AND NATURAL DISASTER DISRUPTIONS.

Action 2.3.1: Develop a long-term response recovery strategic plan in conjunction with local Central Sierra Economic Development District (CSEDD) regional partners.

ACTION STEPS

- Work with regional CSEDD partners to implement key regional objectives including workforce development, business resiliency, infrastructure, and disaster planning that will create a stronger, more resilient region, able to withstand and recover from economic and natural disaster disruptions.
- Identify and address the vulnerabilities that Mariposa County may face.
- Work with state/regional agencies such as CALFire and CALTrans to address fire protection/management and highway maintenance/repairs to minimize impact of natural disasters and drought on the local economy including residents, tourists, and businesses.
- Incorporate the cost of wild-land fire insurance requirements into land use planning considerations.
- Proactively monitor planning activity and operational changes in YNP that may adversely impact tourism spending and the health of the local economy.

GOAL #3: MAINTAIN, STRENGTHEN & GROW LOCAL BUSINESSES

Strategic Initiative #3: Establish a **Think Local Campaign** to identify and address the needs of existing businesses and provide access to local resources and services to enhance their performance.

OBJECTIVE 3.1: RETAIN AND EXPAND EXISTING BUSINESSES

Action 3.1.1: Establish a **Business Assistance Program** for local businesses to help them succeed and thrive.

ACTION STEPS

- Establish a **Coordinated Business Visitation Program** with the local SBDC and Workforce Board to assess the needs of existing companies and connect owners/managers with the resources needed to grow their business.
- Establish an **Economic Gardening Program** to provide business and technical assistance to growth-oriented businesses with the desire and capability to expand and create jobs.
- Offer an annual **Business Tune-up Class** or similar program to small business owners through the local SBDC.
- Adopt a **Local Vendor Preference Purchasing Policy** for the public purchase of goods and/or services, to give some preference to local businesses.
- Work with the Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce to promote and support programs that educate and encourage all county residents and businesses on the importance of buying goods and services from local businesses.
- Establish a **Small Business Loan Program** in coordination with local banks, the Small Business Administration, and venture networks to improve access to capital for start-up and small businesses.

Action 3.1.2: Develop an **Early Warning System** to identify businesses at-risk of closure or job layoffs.

ACTION STEPS

- Partner with the Mother Lode Workforce Board to develop and implement an **At-Risk Business Identification and Assistance Program**.

Action 3.1.3: Strengthen and expand the **Retail Sector****ACTION STEPS**

- Conduct a **Retail Market Demand Study** to quantify market demand, identify the types of retail shopping and dining opportunities that currently exist, identify gaps in retail services for residents and tourists, and quantify the amount of retail sales leakage to adjacent counties.
- Continue to promote the **Shop/Buy Local Campaign** to encourage residents to purchase from local retailers and for retailers to sell locally grown/manufactured products.
- Launch a **Business Referral Campaign** that encourages local businesses to refer customers to other businesses in town to keep the money circulating locally.
- Hold annual **Retail Boot Camp** seminars for local retail business owners and managers.
- Implement a **Targeted Retail Recruitment Program** to expand the existing retail and restaurant base by strategically recruiting retailers and restaurants that address the shopping and dining preferences of local residents and tourists.
- Investigate the opportunity to attract an **Outdoor Recreation Store** (such as Royal Robbins) that sells camping, climbing, paddle sports or travel equipment and apparel for outdoor activities.
- Investigate the opportunity to attract a rock climbing school like Vertical Adventures or a playground/park with RockCraft climbing boulders.

Action 3.1.4: Support the expansion of **Primary and Specialized Healthcare Services** to meet the medical/dental healthcare needs of local residents.

ACTION STEPS

- Conduct a **Hospital and Community Healthcare Needs Assessment Survey** that includes hospital services, quality of care, community health clinics, workforce training, technology needs, financial constraints, & local doctor/dental offices.
- Work with the Hospital District to **Expand Healthcare Services** including the attraction and recruitment of primary care physicians and construction of a new modern hospital with emergency care to benefit residents, tourists, & businesses.

GOAL #4: FOSTER RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Strategic Initiative #4: Launch a **Rural Entrepreneurship Initiative** to encourage and support new business formations.

OBJECTIVE 4.1: EXPAND LOCAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND NEW BUSINESS FORMATION THROUGH TARGETED SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE.

Action 4.1.1: Develop a **Pipeline of Entrepreneurs** by supporting potential entrepreneurs start and launch a business, nurturing entrepreneurial aspirations in youth, and fostering an entrepreneurial environment.

ACTION STEPS

- Create a simple step-by-step **Business Startup Guide** that is made available on the county and chamber websites and in the county permitting center with links to local business, financial, legal, and accounting resources that can assist with the start-up process.
- Establish a **New Business Start-up Program** that connects entrepreneurs and start-ups with the essential resources for starting a new business.
- Offer **NxLevel™ Entrepreneurial Training** classes, through the Valley Sierra SBDC, to start-ups and rural home-based businesses helping entrepreneurs achieve the *next level* of growth with business assistance and entrepreneurship training programs.
- Set up an **Entrepreneurial Competition Program** to award small prizes to the top three local entrepreneurs with innovative businesses who are creating jobs and expanding into new markets outside Mariposa County. Hold an awards ceremony to recognize these successful up-and-coming entrepreneurs.
- Set up a **Mixed-use Business Incubator** targeted at growth oriented businesses to overcome hurdles that confront start-ups.
- Develop an **Entrepreneurship Career Pathway Course** at Mariposa County High School to promote youth entrepreneurship and hold annual **Business Plan Competitions** with cash prizes awarded for the best business plans.

Action 4.1.2: Provide support and assistance to innovative companies and local entrepreneurs to facilitate their transition from the initial start-up phase to becoming a successful established business.

ACTION STEPS

- Support and promote the **Made in Mariposa Program** to help grow and diversify the local economy by assisting companies producing locally manufactured or grown products thrive in markets outside Mariposa County by supporting buyer tours, trade shows, and marketing programs.
- Establish **Made in Mariposa Retail Sales Outlet(s)** where local products can be displayed and sold, and where teaching programs and demonstrations could be held.

GOAL #5: PROMOTE VIBRANT COMMUNITIES & TOWN CENTERS IN WHICH TO LIVE, WORK, & PLAY

Strategic Initiative #5: Develop and adopt **Placemaking Principles** to create authentic, vibrant town centers consistent with the community's heritage that will strengthen existing businesses, attract new investment, and provide residents and visitors alike a high quality of life with a variety of cultural, entertainment, shopping, culinary, and recreational experiences.

OBJECTIVE 5.1: PROTECT AND ENHANCE MARIPOSA COUNTY'S QUALITY OF LIFE AND HERITAGE THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF VIBRANT COMMUNITIES AND TOWN CENTERS THAT ATTRACTS NEW BUSINESS INVESTMENT, FACILITATES JOB GROWTH, AND ENHANCES ECONOMIC PROSPERITY CONSISTENT WITH LOCAL CULTURE AND AESTHETICS.

Action 5.1.1: Extend and complete the **Mariposa Creek Parkway** trail system for walking and biking from the existing segment to the cemetery near Joe Howard Street and the Highway 49/140 intersection with connections to the Stockton Creek trail preserve on the north side of Mariposa extending to the fairgrounds on the south and into downtown Mariposa.

Action 5.1.2: Maintain **Attractive Streetscapes and Public Area Appearances** in town centers by making targeted investments in key infrastructure, making improvements to storefronts, and maintaining attractive, well-maintained streetscapes.

ACTION STEPS

- Develop and implement **Downtown Specific Plans** for the towns of Mariposa and Coulterville, which include a land use and building survey, conceptual plans and design guidelines. The plans should be in keeping with their historical character to create unique and identifiable downtowns that are economically vibrant, pedestrian-oriented, and serve as a destination for local residents and visitors alike.
- Utilize the County Public Works Department and volunteers to clean and maintain public areas in the downtown areas of Mariposa and Coulterville. Hold annual clean-up days with the support of local businesses and community organizations.
- Adopt and implement a **Main Street Program** for historic town centers in Mariposa and Coulterville that create an authentic look and feel consistent with the community's heritage to attract residents and visitors alike for socializing, relaxing, shopping, dining, exploring, and entertainment. Investigate funding sources including grants from the National Trust Preservation Fund.

Action 5.1.3: Work to increase the **Diversity of Recreational Opportunities** in the county to expand and enhance the quality of life for local residents and visitor experience as identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and the Conservation and Open Space, and Regional Tourism Elements of the General Plan.

Action 5.1.4: Improve resident and tourist mobility through **Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway Connectivity** by forming complete pedestrian, hiking and bikeway systems that connect bike/hiking trails to town centers and places of interest with a way finding system to help guide visitors to points of interest.

Action 5.1.5: Recognize that the county’s advantages as a place to live, work, and visit flow from high quality natural amenities and small town rural culture. Promote **Environmental Sustainability**, recognizing that the interface between the built environment and natural environment is a major attraction for visitors and local talent.

Action 5.1.6: Recognize the role that arts and culture play in county life, tourist experiences, and the local economy. Explore opportunities and demand for additional facilities to support the performing and visual arts.

OBJECTIVE 5.2: IMPROVE AND EXPAND THE COUNTY’S HOUSING STOCK TO ACCOMMODATE THE DEMAND FOR WORKER HOUSING AND THE NEEDS OF A GROWING POPULATION.

Action 5.2.1: Expand the **Supply of Workforce Housing** across all income levels by working with residential developers to meet the needs of a growing workforce.

ACTION STEPS

- Establish a **Seed Fund for Home Improvement Loans** for contractors and homebuyers to increase the supply of workforce housing to support business growth, as well as to provide more options for residents as they age.
- Identify and provide adequate housing sites with sewer and water infrastructure to meet the needs for worker housing (Housing Element Objective 3).
- Require operators of transient rental occupancy units and vacation rentals to have an annual **TRO Permit/Business License** to maintain a balance between the long-term housing needs of the community and visitor oriented uses and to ensure that sufficient rental housing is available for people who live and work in Mariposa County.
- Conduct a **Housing Condition Study** to evaluate and implement programs that address preservation and maintenance of the existing housing stock (Housing Element Objective 4).
- Adopt a **Weatherization Program** to minimize housing costs and reduce energy consumption through energy efficient building and site design, proper heating and cooling systems, public education on existing incentives, and water efficient and properly located landscaping (Housing Element Objective 6).
- Increase **Homeownership Opportunities** to support a growing workforce (Housing Element Objective 7).
- Conduct a **Housing Demand Study** to identify the need for additional worker housing and potential housing opportunity sites within each of the town/community planning areas consistent with the adopted plans for each area.

GOAL #6: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF MARIPOSA COUNTY'S WORKFORCE TO SUPPORT BUSINESS GROWTH, ESPECIALLY IN TARGET INDUSTRY CLUSTERS AND GROWTH SECTORS

Strategic Initiative #6: Facilitate a strong **Workforce Development Partnership** among education, workforce development, industry, and economic development that targets in-demand and priority occupations to meet industry needs for a skilled workforce.

OBJECTIVE 6.1: DEVELOP, RETAIN, AND ATTRACT TALENT TO BUILD A SKILLED WORKFORCE THAT MEETS INDUSTRY'S NEEDS

Action 6.1.1: Build a **Workforce Pipeline** of qualified workers to fill in-demand jobs

ACTION STEPS

- Convene a workshop to discuss the development and refinement of **Career Pathways & Career Technical Education Programs** to align with target industry sectors/clusters and in-demand and emerging occupations by partnering with the Mariposa County Unified School District, local/regional employers, the Mother Lode Workforce Board, and community colleges in the region (Merced College, Madera Community College, Modesto Junior College, and Columbia College).
- Investigate opportunities and the need for development of **Education Pathways for Low Skilled Adults** in conjunction with the Mother Lode Workforce Board, Mariposa County High School, and the Fresno Regional Occupational Program (ROP) which serves Mariposa County.
- Encourage development of **Internship/Pre-Apprenticeship Training Programs** between local employers, Mariposa County High School, and Merced College, designed to help students gain practical work experience.
- Identify and address employer needs for **Workforce Training and Skills Upgrade**, including incumbent worker training, skills upgrade, on-the-job training, and customized training by partnering with the Mother Lode Workforce Board on sector strategies, job training, and business visitation programs.

4

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

The Strategic Framework sets forth the desired goals of the Economic Vitality Strategy for improving the economic well-being and quality of life for Mariposa County with measurable objectives and specific actions necessary to achieve the stated goals. The Implementation Program includes a detailed approach, success measures and benchmarks, milestones and deadlines, order of magnitude cost, potential funding sources, and implementing entities in order to offer a clear path for execution of each strategy. The Implementation Program has three major elements: (1) **Specific Tasks:** what will be done and by whom. (2) **Time Horizon:** when will it be done, and (3) **Resource Allocation:** (i.e., money, staff) needed to carry out the specified tasks and activities.

The key outcomes that can be expected from implementation of the EVS include:

1. Diversification of the local economy
2. Providing a foundation that promotes economic prosperity and quality of life
3. Creating desirable places and economic opportunity
4. Partnering for success

Implementing the Strategic Plan

Implementation of the Economic Vitality Strategy will require a coordinated effort among all Mariposa County economic

development organizations – from county government, local business organizations, the Tourism Bureau, the Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center, the Economic Development Corporation, education, the hospital district, workforce development, the Arts Council, and the media.

While Mariposa County will be primarily responsible for implementing the EVS, the success of the EVS will also require the engagement and participation of key partners engaged in economic development related activities, including the County of Mariposa, the Economic Development Corporation of Mariposa County, Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center, Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau, the business community, and specialized expertise that can be sourced from UC Merced, the Mother Lode Workforce Board, Valley Sierra SBDC, consulting firms, and other expert organizations. Each participant should commit to and accept responsibility for specific actions and their results.

Implementation will also require financial resources beyond the current level. Potential funding sources include the Transient Occupancy Tax, State/Federal Grants, WIOA Funds, Business Improvement District, CDBG, Business License Fees, California ETP, USDA Rural Communities Program, U.S. Economic Development Administration

Planning, Technical Assistance, Public Works Programs, Public/Private Partnerships, and other sources.

A number of actions involve the continuation of work already in progress or are in the process of being implemented as a result of the EVS update or ongoing efforts by other organizations. Work in progress includes:

- tourism marketing programs to promote Mariposa County as a year-round destination;
- planning efforts to address infrastructure issues;
- efforts to expand and diversify tourist activities and attractions;
- regional collaboration;
- business support activities;
- Formation and branding of Made in Mariposa; and
- Workforce programs.

Actions that are currently in progress are identified in Table 1: Strategic Initiatives and Actions.

Organizational Responsibilities

Once the EVS has been approved by the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors, individual actions will need to be completed in order to achieve the six goals. An implementation matrix is provided indicating the proposed lead entity and

supporting partners for each action. The Lead Entity is responsible for taking the lead in implementing the specific action. This does not necessarily mean they will do all of the work, but they will be responsible for overall organization, coordination and tracking of progress. Supporting Partners will provide important support to the Lead Entity in implementing the Action. It will be up to Mariposa County and the individual organizations to reach agreement on assuming the proposed responsibilities for “getting the job done”. Responsibilities for the specific projects and actions defined in the plan must be clearly understood and accepted.

The actions proposed require a collaborative working relationship among the various entities involved with economic development in Mariposa County. The recommended actions are not a comprehensive solution to all of the issues that the county may face in the future, but rather have been identified as actions that may play a catalytic role in the transformation of the county’s economy.

Prioritization of Actions

Recommended actions are not in priority order and will depend on funding availability, staff capacity, the state of readiness, and community support. Potential criteria for prioritization of action items by the county are shown in the table below.

TIMEFRAME

Actions are considered as Near-term, Short-term, Mid-term, Long-term, or Ongoing depending on the anticipated timeframe required to complete the action.

Short-term actions typically are at a state of readiness or serve as the foundation for implementation of mid- or long-term actions. Mid-term actions typically require support from other entities to implement

and/or require a greater level of resources or outside expertise. Long-term actions are important to the overall health of the county economy, but require a longer timeframe to accomplish.

Near Term: tasks that can be accomplished within 6-12 months

Short Term: tasks that can be accomplished within a 1-3 year period.

Medium Term: tasks that can be accomplished within a 4-7 year period.

Long Term: tasks that can be accomplished within an 8-10 year period.

Ongoing: activities which are continuous over the term of the EVS.

CRITERIA FOR PRIORITIZATION OF ACTION ITEMS

The following criteria can be used as a guide for prioritization of the specific actions and action steps. Priorities may change over time due to funding available and staff capacity.

Criteria	Considerations
Focus	Is the project well defined? Does it require other actions to be completed first? Can the county implement it, or are other parties involved?
Economic Impact	Does the action enhance the tax base, diversify the economy, spur private investment, or expand community assets?
Funding Availability	Is sufficient funding readily available? Does it align with potential funding sources? Is there a likelihood of securing outside funding?
Local Considerations	Is there political and community support?
Schedule	Can it be achieved within a reasonable timeframe?
Resource Capacity	Are there adequate resources, including staff capacity, readily available to implement the proposed action?

TABLE 1: STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS: STRATEGIC INITIATIVE # 1

Continue to enhance, expand, and diversify the **Destination Mariposa County Brand** to make Mariposa County a year-round destination of choice for those seeking outdoor recreational experiences, a weekend getaway, business retreat, or the simple pleasures of a rural small town environment.

GOAL #1: STRENGTHEN AND ENHANCE THE TOURISM SECTOR

Objectives/ Actions	Action Steps	Estimated Cost	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Completion	Expected Outcome(s)	In-Progress
<i>Where do we want to be?</i>	<i>What steps must be taken to implement the strategy?</i>	<i>What specific supports are needed to implement this action step?</i>	<i>Who is most closely responsible and accountable for taking each action step?</i>	<i>By when will the step be completed?</i>	<i>What can be expected when the step is complete?</i>	
Objective 1.1: Position Mariposa County as a year-round internationally recognized tourist destination.						
Action 1.1.1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Conduct Market Segmentation Study » Create Detailed Visitor Profiles » Design Marketing Mix/Target Market 	Staff and partner time Budget: \$40,000	Lead: Tourism Bureau Supporting Partners Visitor Center Chamber of Commerce	Near Term (6-12 months) Timeline: FY17-18	Provides information for target marketing Increased hotel occupancy rates	X
Objective 1.2: Expand and diversify the number and type of tourist activities to capture a greater share of the tourism market						
Action 1.2.1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Inventory tourism assets/attractions » Conduct visitor tracking survey/gap analysis » Continue to promote and develop additional seasonal activities 	Staff, partners, and volunteer time Budget: \$25,000	Lead: Visitor Center Supporting Partners Tourism Bureau Volunteer & Non-profit Organizations	Near Term (6-12 months) Timeline: FY17-18	Creates inventory of current tourist attractions to market and identifies gaps to address.	
Action 1.2.2:	Investigate opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Wildlife Sanctuary » Multiday activities and events » Business/SMERF conferences » Night events at fairgrounds » Art & cultural events » Glamping resort 	Staff and partner time Budget: \$10,000	Lead: County Economic Development Office Supporting Partners Agri-Nature Association Fairground staff Arts Council Tourism Bureau Visitor Center	Short Term (1-3 Years) Timeline: FY17-20	Identifies opportunities for expanding tourist attractions and activities	

Objectives/ Actions	Action Steps	Estimated Cost	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Completion	Expected Outcome(s)	In-Progress
Action 1.2.3:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Expand agri-tourism » Increase the number and type of fairground events and activities » Develop additional cultural and recreational activities & events » Develop & promote activities & places of interest in each of the county's subareas and communities 	Staff and partner time Budget: \$25,000	Lead: County Economic Development Office Supporting Partners Visitor Center Farm Bureau Agri-Nature Association Fairground staff Arts Council	Medium Term (4-7 Years) Timeline: FY18-24	Expands and diversifies the number and type of tourist activities	X
Objective 1.3: Reduce seasonality by making Mariposa County a year round destination of choice for vacations, family/group outings, weekend getaways, and business retreats/conferences.						
Action 1.3.1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Promote key tourism assets » Develop brand identity/marketing plan » Develop/acquire promotional video » Encourage tour operators to expand tour offerings 	Staff and partner time Budget: \$50,000	Lead: Visitor Center Supporting Partners Tourism Bureau Chamber of Commerce	Short Term (1-3 Years) Timeline: FY18-20	Increased hotel occupancy rates during non-peak season Increased job opportunities in tourism industry	X
Action 1.3.2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Focus on high quality visitor services and hotel accommodations 	Staff time	Lead: County Economic Development Office	Short Term (1-3 Years) Timeline: FY18-20	Increased tourist spending	
Objective 1.4: Ensure that there is adequate capacity to accommodate a growing tourism industry.						
Action 1.4.1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Conduct hotel market survey » Investigate market demand for conference/event center » Develop building program » Identify potential hotel/conference center development sites » Distribute hotel/conference center development prospectus 	Staff and partner time Budget: \$40,000 for feasibility study if there is a demonstrated need	Lead: Mariposa County EDC Supporting Partners Tourism Bureau Visitor Center	Short Term (1-3 years) Timeline: FY18-20	Clear understanding of market potential, facility needs, and next steps to pursue development of resort hotel and conference center	X
Action 1.4.2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop transportation hub » Install EV charging stations » Build public parking structure » Recruit Tour Operators to expand locally » Develop wayfinding signage program 	TBD – additional planning and design required	Lead: County Economic Development Office Supporting Partners YARTS County Public Works County Community Development Department	Long Term (8-10 Years) Timeline: FY19-28	Expands tourist capacity and makes it easier for tourists to explore the county	

Launch a **Strong Economy, Resilient County Initiative** to expand and diversify the county’s economic and employment base by adopting a targeted approach to business attraction and expansion based on local assets and competitive advantages.

GOAL #2: BUILD AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY, BALANCED ECONOMY WITH A DIVERSITY OF BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Objectives/ Actions	Action Steps	Estimated Cost	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Completion	Expected Outcome(s)	In-Progress
<i>Where do we want to be?</i>	<i>What steps must be taken to implement the strategy?</i>	<i>What specific supports are needed to implement this action step?</i>	<i>Who is most closely responsible and accountable for taking each action step?</i>	<i>By when will the step be completed?</i>	<i>What can be expected when the step is complete?</i>	
Objective 2.1: Diversify and expand Mariposa County’s economic base						
Action 2.1.1:	Facilitate Cluster Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Map cluster boundaries/linkages » Identify core companies » Engage in cluster branding & promotion » Engage in workforce training » Invest in Infrastructure » Provide business support activities » Recruit businesses in priority clusters » Engage industry experts to assist cluster businesses » Implement specific actions to expand & strengthen target clusters identified below 	Staff and partner time Budget: \$40,000	Lead: County Economic Development Office Supporting Partners Chamber of Commerce Business Association Mother Lode WDB SBDC	Ongoing Timeline: FY 17+	New business investment Job growth Diversification of the local economy	X
	Food & Beverage Production, Processing, Packaging & Distribution Cluster <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provide farmers with information about value-added agriculture » Recruit micro-brewery » Expand Taste of Mariposa » Attract wholesale distribution » Develop Mariposa Grown trademark 	Staff and partner time Budget: \$10,000	Lead: County Economic Development Office Supporting Partners Visitor Center County Agriculture Commissioner Agri-Nature Association UC Cooperative Extension Small Farm Program	Medium Term (4-7 Years) Timeline: FY18-24	Strengthens and expands food production cluster to help diversify the economy	X

Objectives/ Actions	Action Steps	Estimated Cost	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Completion	Expected Outcome(s)	In-Progress
	<p>Small Scale Advanced Manufacturing Cluster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Establish business and technical assistance program » Develop business case for recruiting recreational products company 	<p>Staff and partner time Budget: \$15,000</p>	<p>Lead: County Economic Development Office Supporting Partners SBDC Chamber of Commerce Industry Organizations</p>	<p>Long Term (8-10 Years) Timeline: FY17-26</p>	<p>Strengthens and expands manufacturing cluster to help diversify the economy</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">X</p>
	<p>Construction/Green Building Cluster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Hold green building workshop » Add green building information webpage 	<p>Staff and partner time Budget: \$5,000</p>	<p>Lead: County Economic Development Office Supporting Partners Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>Medium Term (4-7 Years) Timeline: FY18-22</p>	<p>Strengthens and expands construction cluster to help diversify the economy</p>	
<p>Action 2.1.2:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Designate airport area as an employment hub » Expand infrastructure » Expand broadband services » Identify commercial/industrial development opportunity sites 	<p>Staff and partner time Additional planning required Budget: \$20,000 Construction cost TBD</p>	<p>Lead: County Community Development Department Supporting Partners MPUD ITC Providers</p>	<p>Long Term (8-10 Years) Timeline: FY19-28</p>	<p>New business investment Job growth Diversification of the local economy</p>	
<p>Action 2.1.3:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Update development regulations to reduce costs and uncertainty » Establish permit assistance center » Create a business solutions team » Update zoning regulations to reflect market conditions 	<p>Staff and partner time Budget: \$20,000</p>	<p>Lead: County Community Development Department Supporting Partners County Economic Development Office</p>	<p>Short Term (1-3 Years) Timeline: FY18-24</p>	<p>Promotes business expansion Improves regulatory environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">X</p>

Objectives/ Actions	Action Steps	Estimated Cost	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Completion	Expected Outcome(s)	In-Progress
Objective 2.2: Attract new and complementary businesses to locate in Mariposa County						
Action 2.2.1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Establish a brand identity » Respond to business leads/RFPs » Investigate and adopt business incentives » Add GIS Property Locator to website 	Staff and partner time Budget: \$15,000	Lead: County Economic Development Office Supporting Partners Chamber of Commerce Mariposa County EDC	Short Term (1-3 Years) Timeline: FY18-20	New business investment	X
Objective 2.3: Promote and develop business resiliency to avoid, withstand, and recover from economic and natural disaster disruptions.						
Action 2.3.1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Implement regional objectives that will create a more resilient region. » Identify and address vulnerabilities that Mariposa County may face. » Work to address fire protection/management & highway maintenance/repairs. » Incorporate cost of wild-land fire insurance requirements into land use planning. » Proactively monitor planning activity and operational changes in YNP. 	Staff and partner time	Lead: County Economic Development Office Supporting Partners CSEDD members County Community Development Department MPUD County Public Works CALFire & CALTrans	Ongoing Timeline: FY19-27	Stronger, more resilient economy	X

Establish a **Think Local Campaign** to identify and address the needs of existing businesses and provide access to local resources and services to enhance their performance.

GOAL #3: MAINTAIN, STRENGTHEN & GROW LOCAL BUSINESSES

Objectives/ Actions	Action Steps	Estimated Cost	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Completion	Expected Outcome(s)	In-Progress
<i>Where do we want to be?</i>	<i>What steps must be taken to implement the strategy?</i>	<i>What specific supports are needed to implement this action step?</i>	<i>Who is most closely responsible and accountable for taking each action step?</i>	<i>By when will the step be completed?</i>	<i>What can be expected when the step is complete?</i>	
Objective 3.1: Retain and Expand Existing Businesses						
Action 3.1.1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Establish business visitation program » Establish economic gardening program » Offer Business Tune-up classes 	Staff and partner time Budget: \$60,000	Lead: County Economic Development Office Supporting Partners MLWDB, SBDC, Chamber	Ongoing Timeline: FY18+	Improved business performance and job growth	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Adopt local vendor purchasing policy » Encourage local purchasing » Establish small business loan program 	Staff and partner time Budget: TBD	Lead: County ED Office/ County Counsel/CAO Supporting Partners Local Banks, Chamber	Short Term (1-3 Years) Timeline: FY19-21	Strengthens local businesses	X
Action 3.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop an at-risk business identification & assistance program 	Staff and partner time	Lead: Mother Lode Workforce Board Supporting Partners County ED Office Business Association	Ongoing Timeline: FY18+	Reduced business closures and job loss	
Action 3.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Conduct retail market study » Promote shop local » Launch business referral campaign » Hold retail boot camp » Expand retail/restaurant base » Attract outdoor recreation store » Recruit rock climbing school 	Staff and partner time Budget: \$30,000	Lead: Chamber of Commerce Supporting Partners County ED Office Business Association	Short Term (1-3 Years) Timeline: FY18-20	Increased local spending and sales tax revenue	X
Action 3.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Conduct healthcare needs assessment survey » Expand healthcare services 	Staff and partner time Budget: \$50,000	Lead: JC Fremont Hospital District Supporting Partners County ED Office	Medium Term (4-7 Years) Timeline: FY19-25	Diversification of the local economy Expanded job opportunities	

Launch a **Rural Entrepreneurship Initiative** to encourage and support new business formation.

GOAL #4: FOSTER RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Objectives/ Actions	Action Steps	Estimated Cost	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Completion	Expected Outcome(s)	In-Progress
<i>Where do we want to be?</i>	<i>What steps must be taken to implement the strategy?</i>	<i>What specific supports are needed to implement this action step?</i>	<i>Who is most closely responsible and accountable for taking each action step?</i>	<i>By when will the step be completed?</i>	<i>What can be expected when the step is complete?</i>	
Objective 4.1: Develop a pipeline of entrepreneurs by supporting potential entrepreneurs to start and launch a business, nurturing entrepreneurial aspirations in youth, and identifying and fostering an entrepreneur-friendly environment.						
Action 4.1.1:	» Produce business start-up guide » Connect entrepreneurs with business resources » Offer Entrepreneurial Training	Staff and partner time Startup Guide: \$10,000 Training: \$10,000 annually	Lead: County Economic Development Office Supporting Partners SBDC Chamber of Commerce MLJTA	Short Term (1-3 Years) Timeline: FY18-20	Business creation Expanded job opportunities Diversification of the local economy	X
	» Set-up entrepreneurial competition » Set-up business incubator	Staff and partner time Competitions: \$5,000 annually Additional planning required for business incubator	Lead: County Economic Development Office Supporting Partners MCUSD SBDC Chamber of Commerce MLJTA	Medium Term (4-7 Years) Timeline: FY19-25	Promotes entrepreneurship Business creation	
	» Start an entrepreneurial pathway course and hold a business plan competition	Staff and partner time Budget: TBD	Lead: Mariposa County Unified School District Supporting Partners Mariposa County EDC County Economic Development Office	Medium Term (4-7 Years) Timeline: FY19-25	Promotes entrepreneurship	
Action 4.1.2	» Support Made in Mariposa » Establish MIM Retail Outlet	Staff and partner time Budget: TBD	Lead: County Economic Development Office Supporting Partners Chamber of Commerce	Short Term (1-3 Years) Timeline: FY18-20	Business expansion and job creation Diversification of the local economy	X

Adopt **Placemaking Principles** that create authentic, vibrant town centers consistent with the community’s heritage that will strengthen existing businesses, attract new investment, and provide residents and visitors alike a high quality of life with a variety of cultural, entertainment, shopping, culinary, and recreational experiences.

GOAL #5: PROMOTE VIBRANT COMMUNITIES & TOWN CENTERS IN WHICH TO LIVE, WORK, & PLAY

Objectives/ Actions	Action Steps	Estimated Cost	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Completion	Expected Outcome(s)	In-Progress
Objective 5.1: Protect and enhance Mariposa County’s quality of life and heritage through development of vibrant communities and town centers that attracts new business investment, facilitates job growth, and enhances economic prosperity consistent with local culture and aesthetics						
Action 5.1.1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Complete Mariposa Creek Corridor Parkway Extension » Establish Mariposa Creek Trail Foundation 	Staff time Design & Planning: \$60,000 Construction: unknown until plans are complete	Lead: County Public Works/Planning Dept.	Short Term (1-3 Years) Timeline: FY17-19	Enhances the quality of life for local residents and helps attract tourists	X
Action 5.1.2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Implement downtown specific plans for Mariposa and Coulterville » Improve Streetscape Appearance » Adopt Main Street Programs 	Staff, partner and volunteer time Budget: \$50,000	Lead: County Community Development Department Supporting Partners Merchants/property owners County Office of Economic Development	Medium Term (4-7 Years) Timeline: FY19-25	Improves downtown areas and helps attract tourists	
Action 5.1.3:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Increase diversity of recreation 	Staff time Budget: TBD	Lead: County Parks and Recreation Division	Long Term (8-10 Years) Timeline: FY17-26	Enhances the quality of life for local residents and helps attract talent	
Action 5.1.4:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Improve pedestrian/bicycle pathway connectivity 	Staff time Budget: TBD	Lead: County Public Works/Planning Dept	Medium Term (4-7 Years) Timeline: FY18-24	Enhances the quality of life for local residents and helps attract tourists	

Objectives/ Actions	Action Steps	Estimated Cost	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Completion	Expected Outcome(s)	In-Progress
Action 5.1.5:	» Promote environmental sustainability	Staff time	Lead: County Community Development Department	Ongoing Timeline: FY18+	Attracts visitors/talent	X
Action 5.1.6:	» Explore opportunities & demand for additional arts facilities	Staff and partner time Budget: TBD	Lead: Arts Council	Long Term (8-10 Years) Timeline: FY17-26	Attracts visitors/talent	
Objective 5.2: Improve and expand the county's housing stock to accommodate the demand for worker housing and the needs of a growing population						
Action 5.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Establish home improvement fund » Provide adequate housing sites » Require TRO business licenses » Adopt weatherization program » Conduct housing demand study 	Staff and partner time Budget: TBD	Lead: County Community Development Department Supporting Partners Board of REALTORS	Medium Term (4-7 Years) Timeline: FY18-24	Increase in housing supply and construction jobs	X

Facilitate a strong **Workforce Development Partnership** among education, workforce training, industry, and economic development that targets in-demand and priority occupations to meet industry needs for a skilled workforce.

GOAL #6: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF MARIPOSA COUNTY’S WORKFORCE TO SUPPORT BUSINESS GROWTH, ESPECIALLY IN TARGET INDUSTRY CLUSTERS AND GROWTH SECTORS

Objectives/ Actions	Action Steps	Estimated Cost	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Completion	Expected Outcome(s)	In-Progress
<i>Where do we want to be?</i>	<i>What steps must be taken to implement the strategy?</i>	<i>What specific supports are needed to implement this action step?</i>	<i>Who is most closely responsible and accountable for taking each action step?</i>	<i>By when will the step be completed?</i>	<i>What can be expected when the step is complete?</i>	
Objective 6.1: Develop, retain, and attract talent to Build a Skilled Workforce that meets industry’s needs						
Action 6.1.1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Convene workshop on aligning Career Pathways/ CTE Programs with target industry clusters » Investigate opportunities and need for education pathways for low-skilled adults » Encourage development of Internships/Pre-Apprenticeship programs » Address employer needs for Workforce training and Skills Upgrade 	Staff and partner time	Lead: County Economic Development Office Supporting Partners Mother Lode WDB MLJTA Business Association Chamber of Commerce Mariposa County High School/MCUSD	Ongoing Timeline: FY18+	Reduced unemployment Retention of younger generation Provides local businesses with well trained and qualified workers	X

ACRONYMS

- TBD – To Be Determined
- MLJTA – Mother Lode Job Training Agency
- MCUSD – Mariposa County Unified School District
- SBDC – Valley Sierra Small Business Development Center
- MPUD - Mariposa Public Utility District
- MLWDB - Mother Lode Workforce Development Board

5

IMPLEMENTING THE ECONOMIC VITALITY STRATEGY

ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In order for Mariposa County to successfully implement the Economic Vitality Strategy and Action Plan, **the county must adopt an organizational structure and develop the capacity** needed to undertake the program.

Goal: Maintain an environment that is conducive to economic development.

Objective: Realize sufficient revenue from expansion and diversification of the county's economic base to sustain and enhance the public services and infrastructure needed by local residential, commercial and industrial activities and social services.

ORGANIZING FOR SUCCESS

Establish an Organizational Structure

- Establish an **Economic Development Advisory Committee** to serve as an advisory board to the Board of Supervisors, comprised of two members from the Board of Supervisors, plus one representative from each of the following organizations: Chamber of Commerce/Visitor Center, Tourism Bureau, Business Association, Economic Development Corporation, and a representative from each of the Planning Area Advisory Committees.

- Set-up economic development as a separate department that reports to the County Administrator.
- Establish a **Business Development Team** consisting of key members from Economic Development, Planning, and Public Works.

Build Internal Capacity

- Expand **Economic Development Staff** to oversee economic development activities and implementation of the Economic Vitality Strategy. Staff should include 2-3 full-time equivalent staff (including a manager, marketing specialist/economic development analyst, and an assistant).
- Develop and implement an **Annual Work Program** for economic development to identify the scope of activities and set priorities and budget for the year.
- Consider hiring **Student Interns** from the high school and/or submit an application to AmeriCorps for economic and community development assistance (www.americorps.org).

Expand Budget/Funding Sources

- Increase the **Annual Operating Budget** for economic development to approximately \$250,000 - \$300,000. As necessary, gradually increase the budget to effectively implement annual work programs.

- Investigate state, federal, and charitable **Economic Development Grants**, including USDA Rural Business Development and Rural Community Development Initiative Grants (see <http://reconnectingamerica.org/resource-center/federal-grant-opportunities>).
- Establish a low cost annual **Business License Fee** for the purpose of tracking business statistics and funding economic development services.
- Conduct an annual assessment of **Transient Occupancy Tax** revenues to monitor monthly and annual trends regarding room nights from the different types of accommodations (motels, BnBs, vacation rentals) and locations.

Develop Collaborative Networks

- Collaborate with **Local and Regional Stakeholders** on common infrastructure needs, marketing, and economic development efforts to promote the community's mutual interests.
- Continue to **Building Partnerships** with local business groups, regional economic development organizations, workforce training providers, and industry groups.

BRAND IDENTITY AND PLACE MARKETING

Increase External Visibility and Awareness

- Prepare and implement a **Strategic Marketing Plan** to promote Mariposa County as a business friendly location for target industries. Promote on county website.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Develop and Utilize Tools

- Monitor and **Measure Progress** on accomplishing the goals and objectives set forth in the Economic Vitality Strategy.
- Continually evaluate and improve upon the current **Economic Development Website** so that it always provides the most current and useful information for businesses and links to technical assistance resources.
- **Utilize Databases** like California EDD labor market information or commercial sites such as Emsi to monitor economic and labor market trends.
- Create **Website Dashboards** of local economic indicators using free software applications like Tableau Public.
- Obtain and use **GIS Applications** like Zoom Prospector to offer up-to-date information on the economic development website about demographics, workforce, infrastructure, housing, commercial/ industrial development sites for lease or sale, employment, and the number and type of businesses and industry.

KEY PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS

The success of the Economic Vitality Strategy (EVS) will require committed county leadership and active community partners to implement specific actions that are coordinated by the county's Economic Development Department, working in conjunction with the Board of Supervisors and other county agencies. Active participation by community partners will be vital to the success of the EVS. An initial list of community partners for implementing the EVS includes the following organizations:

- Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau
- Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center
- Mariposa County Economic Development Corporation
- John C. Fremont Hospital District
- Mariposa County High School District
- Mother Lode Workforce Development Board
- Mariposa County Business Association
- Mariposa County Arts Council
- Mariposa Public Utility District
- SierraTel
- Mariposa County Board of REALTORS®
- YARTS

6

MONITORING SUCCESS

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are a number of indicators that can be used to measure the county's progress in achieving its economic development goals. Tracking these indicators on an annual or quarterly basis will provide insight into the health of the local economy and assist in monitoring the county's progress in accomplishing its economic development goals and objectives. The following economic indicators can be used as a yardstick for evaluating progress in improving the overall prosperity of the county:

Economic Indicators Report – a baseline Economic Indicators Report was prepared prior to updating the EVS. This should be updated annually to monitor changes and trends in the local economy. The economic indicators report should include:

- **Employment by industry and sector.** This information can be obtained from the California Employment Development Department Labor Market Information (see www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/county/marip.html).
 - **Tourism spending and revenue** including visitor spending by sales category, revenue generated and the amount of Transient Occupancy Tax collected. This information can be obtained from Dean Runyon Associates (see www.deanrunyan.com/doc_library/CAImp.pdf).
 - **Commercial office, retail, and industrial space availability & cost.** The Building Department can provide information about building permits. Office, retail and industrial vacancy and lease rates can be obtained from local commercial and industrial real estate brokers (see www.loopnet.com/California/Mariposa-County-Commercial-Real-Estate/).
 - **Retail sales and growth data** by retail category and sales per outlet. This information can be obtained from the California Retail Survey, which publishes an annual report (see <http://californiaretailsurvey.net/firms.com/>). Sales tax revenue data can be obtained from the California Board of Equalization (see www.boe.ca.gov/news/tsalescont15.htm).
-

Implementation Status & Outcomes Report – actions and expected outcomes were identified in the Economic Vitality Strategy. These should be monitored on an annual, quarterly, or monthly basis as to their status and success in accomplishing the goals and objectives set forth in the EVS. Strategic plan indicators include:

- **Business Outreach.** Number of businesses visited and assisted (BRE Program).
- **New Business Formations and Attraction.** Number of new businesses formed or relocating to Mariposa County. The county business license office can provide this information including the number of fictitious business name certificates filed and associated revenue as an indicator of new businesses formed or new businesses moving into the county.
- **Business Vitality and Growth.** Number of full and part-time jobs gained/lost due to business expansion, contraction, closure, and retention. This information can be obtained from the California Employment Development Department, Mother Lode Workforce Development Board, WARN Notices, and business visitation program.
- **Business Licenses and Revenue.** The county business license office can provide this information to the Economic Development Manager.

Economic Vitality Report Card - An annual business survey would provide feedback on how county operations and other factors are affecting the business climate.

RE-EVALUATING PRIORITIES OVER TIME

Using the indicators listed above, the county should evaluate progress in completing actions on an annual basis. The annual report provides a mechanism for county staff to recommend, if necessary, modifications to the Economic Vitality Strategy to improve its effectiveness. Over the next five years, economic conditions will change and new opportunities may arise. While the overall objectives of the Economic Vitality Strategy may not change over the next five years, the county should reassess its priorities in light of changing conditions and opportunities.

APPENDICES

A

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

WHAT IS A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM?

Strategic planning is **a process that communities can use to decide where they want to be at some future point in time and the steps that need to be taken to achieve that outcome.** The Strategic Planning Process starts with an assessment of existing conditions, including an analysis of the local economy's strengths and weaknesses, and community input about major issues and needs. The analysis answers the question "where are we now?" Once issues and opportunities are identified, a proposed strategy or course of action can be established. Strategies are then designed to address the vision of building a stronger, healthier economy. Clear and attainable goals and objectives are set based on the community's assets, competitive advantages, and capacity. Actions are then adopted that could be implemented to achieve the community's economic development goals. The strategic direction and associated actions address the questions "Where do we want to go?" and "How are we going to get there"?

Strategic Framework: The strategic direction includes a vision statement with prioritized goals and measurable objectives. The **Vision Statement** describes the desired end-state of where the community would like to be within the time horizon of the plan. A

community's vision is a broad statement about a long-term outcome that may, or may not be completely obtainable. **Goals**, on the other hand, are specific targets to be attained in achieving the vision. The goals should be realistic and limited to a manageable number. Some goals can be realized within a short period of time, while others require a longer period to be implemented. **Objectives** are measurable outcomes that when achieved help accomplish a desired goal. **Actions** are the specific activities that will be taken in meeting each objective and may involve a number of **Action Steps** in order to complete the action. Fiscal constraints, organizational capacity, and competing demands for scarce resources make it necessary to set priorities for which actions to take. The vision statement, goals, and objectives provide a strategic framework for public and private decision-making and serve as the basis for the formulation and focus of an action plan.

Implementation Program: Once the goals, objectives, and actions have been established, the question of how to implement each action must be addressed. An Implementation Program or plan outlines the specific steps that should be taken to accomplish the goals. The Implementation Program has three major elements: (1) **Specific Tasks:** what will be done and by

whom. (2) **Time Horizon:** when will it be done, and (3) **Resource Allocation:** (i.e., money, staff) needed to carry out the specified tasks and activities. The Implementation Program includes a detailed approach, success measures and benchmarks, milestones and deadlines, order of magnitude cost, potential funding sources, and implementing entities in order to offer a clear path for execution of each strategy.

Strategic Action Plan: The Strategic Framework and associated Implementation Program constitute the Strategic Action Plan. The Strategic Action Plan provides a vehicle for individuals, organizations, local governments, education institutions, and private industry to engage in a meaningful conversation about the issues, goals and objectives, and actions that would best serve economic development in the community. Finally, performance measures evaluate whether the goals and objectives were accomplished. The Strategic Action Plan documents the steps needed to ensure that the strategies are implemented in a timely manner.

B

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

A comprehensive assessment of Mariposa County's economy, its economic base, and how it functions, including existing conditions, historical trends and future growth opportunities was undertaken to provide a foundation for identifying important industries driving local economic and employment growth (see Existing Conditions and Opportunities report). The next step in updating the Economic Vitality Strategy for Mariposa County is the identification and mapping of community assets to determine what makes Mariposa County unique, special, or competitive relative to other communities. This step also includes a competitive assessment of Mariposa County as a business location based on industry site selection requirements, a SWOT analysis of the county's strengths and weaknesses, and an evaluation of the county's capacity, organizational capabilities, and leadership for implementation of economic development.

Community Assets/Strengths

Long-term, sustained economic growth and development builds on a community's economic, cultural, physical, and environmental assets. Asset-based economic development focuses on how a community's natural amenities; cultural and historical resources; and human capital can be leveraged into sustained economic growth

and productivity. Community assets can also include the presence of key institutions, such as a college or hospital. A community asset (or resource) is anything that can be used to improve the quality of life or economic competitiveness of a community. This approach to economic development involves identifying community assets and evaluating how preserving and strengthening them could contribute to overall regional and local economic competitiveness.⁹

Mariposa County is blessed with an abundance of assets including beautiful natural scenery, a rich and colorful heritage and identity, abundant outdoor recreational opportunities, strong and capable local leadership, and committed citizens who are more than willing to engage in making their community an even better place to live, work, play, and raise a family. Mariposa County also has numerous assets that make it an attractive place for tourism and as a place to locate a business. Accessible year-round, *Yosemite National Park* is world famous for its impressive waterfalls, meadows, granite rock structures, wildlife, and sequoia trees. Other tourist attractions include: the Sierra and Stanislaus National Forests; Lakes McClure and McSwain; Merced River; California State Mining & Mineral Museum; the historic communities of Mariposa, Hornitos, Bear Valley, and Coulterville; outdoor recreational

⁹ International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Center for Sustainable Communities, "Asset-Based Economic Development: Building Sustainable Small and Rural Communities", November 2012

activities such as fly fishing, hiking, camping, and river rafting; and activities and events such as the county fair, ziplining, art and music festivals, the Butterfly Festival, and Gold Rush and civil war days. Community assets also include the county's rural character and quality of life, family friendly atmosphere, low crime rate, local arts community, and mild climate. Many of the assets that make Mariposa County an attractive place to live and visit also make it attractive for businesses to locate and expand. In updating the EVS the objective is to leverage these assets in order to strengthen the tourism sector and to expand and diversify business development opportunities resulting in quality jobs for local residents, increased tax revenue for local government, and a healthier county economy.

Competitive Assessment

When considering locations for potential investment, site selectors evaluate a number of factors to determine the best fit. The level of importance of specific criteria varies based on the specific needs of the business, but there are several criteria that are common to most, if not all, business location decisions. Key site selection factors are tracked by Area Development Magazine, which conducts an annual survey of companies and site selectors, as to the key factors influencing business location decisions. Companies rank the importance of various factors impacting their location requirements on a scale of 1 ("not important") to 5 ("very important"). The most recent national site selection survey conducted by Area Development Magazine in 2015, found that the availability of skilled labor was the highest-rated factor, followed by highway accessibility and quality of life factors. Occupancy costs, the availability of buildings, and labor costs were also among the top ten site selection factors. Criteria listed in Area Magazine's annual site selection survey

were used to evaluate Mariposa County as a competitive location for business:

- Regional Transportation Infrastructure and Proximity to Major Markets:**
Surveys of site location requirements consistently rank highway accessibility near the top. The ability to move goods and supplies efficiently and cost-effectively is a key requirement for many companies who want to be in close proximity to their customers and suppliers. Businesses also look at where they can procure supplies, raw materials and other inputs efficiently and cost-effectively. One of the challenges facing Mariposa County is access to major domestic and international markets due to its distance from Interstate highways, ports, and rail facilities. FedEx, UPS, and DHL shipments and deliveries are available locally. Mariposa Shipping Company is an officially recognized UPS and *FedEx Authorized Shipping Center* and as such provides convenient access to *FedEx Ground*[®], *FedEx Express* and *FedEx International* products and service. Transportation costs and time to delivery are important considerations for many companies. The town of Mariposa is located within a 60-mile radius of major markets in the Central Valley (Modesto and Fresno) and over 150-miles to Sacramento and Oakland. The distance to major markets and the quality of the regional highway infrastructure limits the type of businesses that would find Mariposa County a competitive location. Mariposa County has no rail service and a single general aviation uncontrolled airport, that is currently undeveloped as a goods movement distribution facility. The county is served by several east-west highways that connect the county to metropolitan areas in the Central Valley

and Bay Area. State Highway 132 serves the northern portion of the county connecting Coulterville to Modesto and the Central Valley. SR-140 is the primary transportation corridor that connects the town of Mariposa to Merced and Highway 99 to the west. Highway 41 connects the southern portion of Mariposa County to Madera and Fresno counties.

- Available Buildings and Building Sites:** Mariposa County has a small commercial real estate market with a limited supply of office, retail, and industrial space available for lease. Having a sufficient supply of office and industrial space is crucial not only for companies looking to relocate, but also for existing companies that are looking to expand. Online searches of LoopNet.com, OfficeSpace.com, CommercialSearch.com, and MetroListPro.com as of February 21, 2017 found no vacant space of any size currently available for rent. According to OfficeSpace.com, Mariposa County has 33 office buildings, but no space for lease currently on the market. Shovel-ready development sites are just as scarce. A search of CommercialSearch.com found one commercially zoned parcel that was for sale.
- Quality of Life:** The ability to attract and retain talent is strongly influenced by a community's quality of life, which is composed of a number of factors including the quality of public schools, crime rate, parks and open space, climate, housing costs, healthcare facilities, cultural opportunities, and colleges in the area. Mariposa County's quality of life is considered to be one of its key assets by local residents.

Although Mariposa County lacks a community college, Merced College, Madera Community College, Columbia College, and Modesto Junior College are located nearby. UC Merced and CSU Stanislaus in Turlock are in close proximity (40-60 mile drive).

- Availability of Skilled Labor:** Labor availability consistently ranks at or near the top of the critical factors that are important in business site selection decisions. Most employers prefer to hire individuals with a minimum of a high school diploma and, in many instances, with vocational or technical training/experience, depending upon the type of position.

Mariposa County has an older workforce with a smaller proportion (40.4%) of its working age population age 16+ in their prime working years (age 25-54) than the state average (52.9%). The county's workforce population meets the minimum hiring standards with a higher percentage of residents age 25-64 in the labor force that graduated with a high school diploma (90.1%) than the state overall (82.6%). Approximately 41.0% of residents have an associate's degree or completed some college compared to the statewide average of 30.2%. Although Mariposa County has a higher percentage of workers that are high school graduates or have completed some college, as educational attainment reaches higher levels of post-secondary education such as a bachelor's or graduate degree, the county starts to fall behind the statewide averages. Local workforce training resources are limited to career technical education programs offered by the high school district and job training programs offered through the Mother Lode Workforce Board.

- **Labor Costs:** Average wage rates have a direct impact on the cost of doing business. Most employers would prefer a location where the average wages in the community are 10 to 15 percent lower than their wage rates in order to offer candidates a better employment opportunity. Average wage rates in Mariposa County, while competitive with other Central Sierra counties, are generally lower than adjacent communities in the San Joaquin Valley. Locations with lower labor costs are more competitive, assuming the same quality of workforce.
- **Energy Availability and Costs:** PG&E provides electric service to commercial and industrial customers in Mariposa County. To remain competitive in today's economy PG&E offers several incentives, rebates, and other economic development programs to assist small businesses. These programs include an Energy Efficiency Rebate, Targeted Rate Reduction program, and other incentives. PG&E recently announced that it will soon begin offering a competitive new electric rate aimed at promoting economic development by making it possible for eligible employers to keep, expand, or launch new operations in California rather than leave the state. The new rate, approved by the California Public Utilities Commission targets companies with power loads of at least 200 kilowatts that would otherwise locate operations out-of-state. The rate would provide a 12 percent rate reduction for five years for those who avow that they need it to stay, site new operations, or expand existing facilities in California.
- **Business Climate and Regulatory Environment:** According to a 2012 California Manufacturing and Technology Association (CMTA) survey, manufacturing companies do not stay in California because the state has a great business climate or ranked highly in important site location factors. The majority of companies stay because the state offers close proximity to customers and suppliers or they are a small business whose owners make a lifestyle choice to stay. Streamlining the regulatory and permitting processes, providing business assistance, and offering local financial incentives would help make Mariposa County a more attractive location for growing companies.
- **Financial/Business Incentives:** A statewide Business Incentives Program managed through the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) offers a number of financial incentives including a sales and use tax exemption for manufacturing equipment, a long-term unemployed tax credit for areas of high unemployment and poverty, and a recruitment and retention incentive to attract new companies to California and expand existing companies. The statewide business incentive program does not provide a local competitive advantage for Mariposa County.
- **Availability of Advanced ICT Services:** Advanced telecommunications are a critical piece of infrastructure in today's economy. Businesses now regard advanced ICT capabilities as another aspect of infrastructure along with factors such as reliable electricity and sound transportation systems. Cities across America are starting to install

their own Gigabit fiber networks as part of economic development initiatives to attract technology companies.¹⁰ Because of relatively low population density, topographical barriers, and greater geographical distances, broadband service may be more difficult to obtain in some rural areas. **SierraTel** has an extensive and robust fiber infrastructure as well as the fiber connectivity that is required to provide gigabit speeds in its service area in Mariposa County. SierraTel offers a variety of technologies for businesses including digital subscriber line (DSL), T-1, and Ethernet Transport Service (ETS) up to 250 Mbps. The **Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California (CENIC)** intends to deploy a 1,371-mile fiber backbone network through 18 Central Valley counties. The network, consisting of 720 newly constructed miles of fiber and the leasing of 164 miles of dark fiber, will provide Internet backbone service to Amador, Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Kings, Kern, Mariposa, Merced, Madera, Nevada, Placer, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tuolumne, Tulare, and Yuba counties. In addition, the project will construct 12 new wireless nodes in order to deploy WiMax last-mile service to the rural portions of Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern Counties.

- **Housing Availability:** According to the California Department of Finance there were 10,467 housing units in Mariposa County as of January 1, 2016, the vast majority of which are single family detached (7,034) followed by mobile homes (2,408). U.S. Census Bureau data, as of 2015, showed 2,967 vacant housing units in Mariposa

County with a 28.8% vacancy rate. The high vacancy rate within the county is mainly due to housing units that are for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, which account for approximately 50% of the vacancies. This is mainly a consequence of Yosemite National Park being a tourist destination, which attracts the majority of visitors during an 8 to 9 month period, resulting in seasonal work for most of its employees who seek employment elsewhere after the peak season ends. Other contributing factors include vacation homes and rentals, which tend to take away from the housing stock for potential full-time occupants. Another 27% of the vacancy rate is attributable to housing units that are for sale or were sold but not occupied. The remaining vacant units include 247 units for rent (8.3%). Statewide less than 2% of all housing units are held for occasional use, whereas in Mariposa County 16.4% are held for occasional use (second homes or transient occupancies). There are approximately 16 homes/condos for sale currently on the market with a median asking price of \$362,450.

¹⁰ Hesse, Markus, Access, "Location Matters", Fall 2002

Entrepreneurial Development System

Traditional economic development tools, such as business recruitment and business retention and expansion (BRE) programs target existing businesses. Entrepreneurship is about starting new businesses that do not yet exist. As such entrepreneurs play a vital role in economic development as key contributors to new business formation, technological innovation, and new job growth. Encouraging entrepreneurship is an effective path to revitalization of rural economies.

Having an Entrepreneurship Development System (EDS) in place to nurture and support entrepreneurs is an important mechanism for creating a viable, sustainable community. An Entrepreneurship Development System is centered around three common core goals:¹¹

- Creation of a pipeline of entrepreneurs by nurturing entrepreneurial aspirations in youth, identifying and supporting potential entrepreneurs and fostering an entrepreneur-friendly environment that attracts entrepreneurs;
- System of financial and technical support for all types of entrepreneurs of varying motivations and skill levels; and
- Fostering a supportive policy and cultural environment of entrepreneurship within the public, private and non-profit sectors.

Mariposa County currently does not have any formal EDS infrastructure in place to support entrepreneurship. A course in entrepreneurship should be established at Mariposa County High School and integrated into career programs in order to begin developing a pipeline of entrepreneurs early.

Organizational Capacity

Rural counties across the country are working hard to cultivate thriving local economies that are attractive to businesses and residents alike. Having an effective organizational structure with the capacity, resources, and clear policy direction will become increasingly more important in order to remain competitive and resilient. According to a 2014 report by the National Association of Counties, “more than 90 percent of county governments engage in economic development initiatives, but only 57 percent of counties have a county department managing economic development initiatives. Counties most typically focus on workforce training, business attraction and retention and regional marketing in their economic development partnerships. Additionally, counties collaborate with other stakeholders to promote broader resiliency goals.”¹²

Mariposa County has an Economic Development Office with a broadly defined mission that includes business attraction, retention and expansion; pursuing sustainable economic growth and expanding job opportunities; broadening support for recognition of the arts through the development of programs and partnerships, securing funding for infrastructure and “quality of life” projects, grant writing to launch projects/programs, marketing, and coordinating with local and regional partners. Having the right organizational structure with adequate staffing and funding is critical to the success of the county’s economic development efforts. The County Administrative Officer has oversight of the staff responsible

¹¹ W.K. Kellogg Foundation, “Entrepreneurial Development Systems in Rural America”

The Aspen Institute, “Revitalizing Rural Economies Through Entrepreneurship Development Systems”, December 2008

¹² National Association of Counties, “Strong Economies, Resilient Counties: The Role of Counties in Economic Development”, 2014

for these activities. Currently, economic development functions are performed by a single staff member. Implementation of the updated Economic Vitality Strategy will require 2-3 full-time equivalent staff (including a manager, marketing specialist/economic development analyst, and an assistant), an annual work plan, and an operating budget of approximately \$250,000 - \$300,000.

To be effective, county economic development efforts should continue to engage with adjacent counties and regional partners such as the Central Sierra Economic Development Corporation, Tuolumne Economic Development Authority, Madera County Economic Development Commission, Valley Sierra Small Business Development Center, and Mother Lode Workforce Board. In addition, Mariposa County should capitalize on the network of local business and non-profit organizations that support economic development in Mariposa County. These partner organizations include 1) the Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce, 2) Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau, and the 3) Economic Development Corporation of Mariposa County. These organizations can assist with implementation of the Economic Vitality Strategy programs.

The Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce promotes economic vitality in the community by providing low-cost, high-end business resources for companies operating in or planning to locate within Mariposa County. The Chamber also operates the Visitor Center for Mariposa County, hosts the Made in Mariposa initiative, and maintains the Explore Mariposa website.

The Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau is the official destination marketing organization for Mariposa County. Its

function is to manage the branding, sales and marketing efforts for the county to attract leisure and group overnight stays. The primary focus is on generating room nights during the off-season. The Tourism Bureau's funding comes from two sources: 1) an annual allocation from the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors and 2) a 1% levy on hotel room revenue collected from the Mariposa County Tourism Business Improvement District assessment. The Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau currently has four full-time staff and retains several vendors to help carry out its broad range of activities.

The Economic Development Corporation of Mariposa County is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to promote sustainable economic growth throughout Mariposa County. Since its inception the EDC's objective is to enhance and diversify the local economy in a way that improves the economic prosperity of county residents, while preserving the county's cherished quality of life. The EDC is governed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors and Advisory Council, and operates a Business Assistance Center that assists businesses with their plans for relocation, start-up or expansion.

Brand Identity and Place Marketing

Mariposa County has a reputation of being a rural community with good schools and limited jobs. The dominate attraction is Yosemite National Park which draws over 5 million visitors annually. Because Yosemite is so dominate, other attractions and parts of the county often go unnoticed. An updated image and identity is needed which portrays Mariposa County as both a place for doing business and as a location with an abundance of outdoor recreational activities. The value proposition should also

identify Mariposa County as a community that attracts top talent due to its quality of life. Place marketing and branding is about promoting a “*place’s values and image so that potential users are fully aware of its distinctive advantages*”.¹³

SWOT ANALYSIS

Economic development is competitive. There are 482 cities and 58 counties in California, each trying to attract new businesses, business relocations, and corporate expansions. Many of these local governments have full-time economic development staffs that are working to improve their competitive position in order to expand their employment base, diversify their economy, and strengthen their tax base. Critical to the development of a successful economic development strategy is a realistic assessment of a community’s suitability and competitiveness as a business location. An analysis of a community’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) identifies the internal and external factors that make the county a competitive location or that may constrain potential economic growth. A SWOT analysis also considers what factors and/or elements are in place (or need to be put in place) to ensure the community’s economic resiliency or long-term success. The SWOT analysis provides a framework for identifying local action items and priorities, and for creating a list of action items under each category help decision-makers: build on community strengths; address weaknesses; take advantage of opportunities; and prepare for threats.

SWOT Defined

- **Strengths** are a region’s relative competitive advantages (e.g., industry supply chains and clusters, extensive port, rail, and broadband assets, specialized workforce skills, higher education levels, regional partnerships) and often are internal in nature;
- **Weaknesses** are local issues or characteristics that limit or constrain a community’s economic growth. Weaknesses are internal limitations or constraints that make the local economy less competitive unless they are eliminated or minimized.
- **Opportunities** are conditions that if capitalized on contribute to improvement or progress in achieving economic development objectives.
- **Threats** are external factors or trends that if realized can threaten a community’s economic growth, leading to a weaker economy or decline (such as worker layoffs or local companies relocating to a lower cost location) due to global changes or shifts in consumer demand.

Sources of Input for SWOT Analysis

The evaluation criteria used for the SWOT analysis are based on ICMA *Asset-Based Economic Development for Building Sustainable Small and Rural Communities*, Area Development Magazine’s site selection requirements survey, review of background reports and regional plans and studies, EVS Community Outreach comments/feedback, and the consultant team’s analysis.

¹³ Kotler, P., Haider, D. H. and Rein, I. (1993), *Marketing Places: Attracting Investment, Industry, and Tourism to Cities, States, and Nations*, The Free Press, New York, p.18 www.placebrand.eu/pageID_8628845.html

WHAT DOES THE SWOT ANALYSIS TELL US ABOUT MARIPOSA COUNTY?

The findings of the SWOT analysis indicate that Mariposa County has a number of strengths upon which to build a robust economy. There is an abundance of natural amenities and cultural/historical resources to attract visitors and tourists. Opportunities exist for starting new businesses. Employers looking to locate in Mariposa County have access to a qualified workforce that meets the basic hiring requirements and a local workforce board and job center that can assist with recruitment and training assistance. The presence of core companies in key industry clusters, an emerging healthcare sector, and lower labor costs than in adjacent Central Valley counties. Local leadership including a Board of Supervisors and staff that recognize the importance of developing and maintaining a healthy economy

Challenges include a limited supply of office and industrial space, lack of shovel ready development sites for light industrial, proximity to Central Valley regional markets and suppliers. Other weaknesses include the need for infrastructure improvements, lack of affordable housing, limited range of tourism services, organizational capacity, and clear policy direction.

Strategic Issues:

Strengthen & Expand Tourist Economy:

- Need to extend peak season year-round and minimize unemployment during off-peak season;

- Keep visitors in town longer and capture greater percentage of tourist spending;
- Expand the number of tourist attractions, events, & activities; Prioritize other than YNP.

Diversify Economic Base:

- Lack of development ready building sites;
- Assist existing businesses and not focus exclusively on tourism and business attraction;
- Lack of good paying jobs for younger generation;
- Address economic development needs in all subareas of the county.

Strengthen, Expand & Diversity Local Serving Businesses:

- Need to assist existing businesses and not focus exclusively on tourism and business attraction

Foster Rural Entrepreneurship:

- Support entrepreneurship and start-up companies.

Enhance Quality of Life:

- Maintaining unique, historic, authentic culture & character of the county;
- Preserve County's Historic Value;
- Retain Rural Charm;
- Protect Aesthetic Value;
- Maintain Rural Lifestyle;
- Provide Services for Elderly & Youth.

Workforce:

- Need to develop, retain, and attract skilled workers.

TABLE 1: SWOT SUMMARY

INTERNAL FACTORS	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather • Proximity to Yosemite National Park • Proximity to UC Merced Innovation Center • Natural Landscape • Lakes & Rivers • Sierra & Stanislaus Forests • No Hassle Small Business Startup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined Industry Clusters • Shortage of skilled workforce • Lack of Employment Opportunities for Youth and Young Adults • Water Supply • Broadband/Fiber optic network • Lack of Affordable housing • Medical (hospitals) • High land prices preventing new business growth • Available Shovel-Ready Development Space • Proximity to suppliers and large regional markets • Limited local serving retail
EXTERNAL FACTORS	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor recreational opportunities • County Fairgrounds • Airport • Healthcare • Local agriculture • Local Artisans, Craftsman, & Hobbyist • Cultural events (performing arts center) • Cottage industries (start-ups) • Proximity to UC Merced Innovation Lab • Tourist Destination with Year-Round Activities & Events • Wood Resources • Capturing a higher percentage of Yosemite Visitors for overnight stays • Historical & Cultural Resources • Expanding & Diversifying the number & type of Outdoor Recreational Activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire, drought, and landslides • Dead trees from fire, drought, and insect infestation • Growth pressures that impact rural character and landscape of Mariposa County and gateway communities to Yosemite National Park • Contractions in the National Economy • Economic and demographic pressures affecting the viability of small farms • Demographic changes due to aging population and loss of younger generation due to a lack of local job opportunities • Difficulty in obtaining low-cost fire insurance in wild land areas. • Planning activities and changes in the operations for YNP may adversely impact the local economy. • Adverse changes in state and federal regulations and policy

TABLE 2: SWOT ANALYSIS

Indicator	Strengths	Weaknesses
Cultural, physical, and environmental assets	Abundance of cultural, physical, and environmental assets High quality landscape, outstanding natural and historic environment	Lack of complete inventory in one location that is promoted to brand image
Economic Assets	John C. Fremont Hospital	No institution of higher learning including a local community college
Pass-Through Visitor Services	Visitor Center	
Destination Tourism Services	Yosemite National Park Tourism Bureau	Limited offering of tourist attractions, events, activities, restaurants, and other tourist products and services
Access to Markets/Suppliers Central location with easy low cost access to major markets and suppliers	Relative proximity to urban population centers which provide markets for goods and services. Mariposa is located within a 60-mile radius (90-minute drive time) of major metropolitan areas in the Bay Area, Sacramento, and Central Valley.	Capacity and quality of highway infrastructure is a potential constraint for many large companies. Better connections to the Central Valley are needed to improve goods movement and facilitate job growth.
Transportation Infrastructure Highway accessibility Proximity to transportation infrastructure for goods movement, such as rail, major airport, or shipping port	Mariposa County is served by three east-west highways SR 140, SR 132, and SR 41, which connect the county with central valley communities and Highway 99. SR-49 is the major north-south route.	Existing road infrastructure to the east is limited due to topography and Yosemite National Park. There are no Class I rail lines, major airport, or seaport. Mariposa is located within a 60-mile radius of major markets in the Central Valley (Modesto and Fresno), but the distance to major shipping ports in Stockton and Oakland are over 100 to 150-miles away and the quality of the regional highway infrastructure limits the type of businesses that would find Mariposa County a competitive location.
Available Facilities/Land Available buildings Available land Occupancy costs	Mariposa County General Plan policies seek to ensure that development shall occur first where services are located. The General Plan seeks to designate land areas and establish siting criteria to enhance economic opportunities (Goal 5-4) Zoning shall include flexible standards for defining business and industry uses in a changing economy Implementation Measure 5-4b(1).	Mariposa County has a small commercial real estate market with a limited supply of office, retail, and industrial space. The challenge facing the county is finding locations with adequate sewer/water infrastructure that are consistent with the General Plan's policies to support new job-creating businesses. An online searches of LoopNet.com, OfficeSpace.com, CommercialSearch.com, and MetroListPro.com found no vacant space of any size available for rent and only one parcel for sale.
Advanced ICT Services Broadband/Internet Infrastructure	SierraTel offers a variety of technologies for businesses including digital subscriber line (DSL), T-1, and Ethernet Transport Service (ETS) up to 250 Mbps.	Low population density, topographical barriers, and geographical distances, make broadband service more difficult to obtain in some rural areas. Continued expansion fiber footprint may need to be encouraged to assist in business recruitment efforts.
Energy/Utilities Infrastructure Availability and cost of water; sewer; electricity, gas	The Mariposa Public Utility District provides water and wastewater treatment services. Power and gas are provided by PG&E.	Infrastructure has not been extended to all areas and parcels

Internal Factors

TABLE 2: SWOT ANALYSIS cont.

Indicator	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Labor Market Conditions Availability of Skilled and unskilled Labor Training programs Labor costs Proximity to technical college/training</p>	<p>Mariposa County has a higher percentage of workers that are high school graduates or have completed some college than the statewide average. The Mother Lode Workforce Board serves Mariposa County. Apprenticeship programs, short-term training aligned to third-party credentials, and incumbent worker training to upgrade skill sets in various industry sectors are available.</p>	<p>No community college Mariposa County has an older workforce with a smaller proportion of its working age population in their prime working years than the statewide average</p>
<p>Financial/Business Incentives State and local incentives Corporate tax rate Tax exemptions Availability of long-term financing</p>	<p>Statewide Business Incentives Program managed through the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development</p>	<p>Lack of a local incentive program</p>
<p>Business Climate Public policy/regulatory environment Environmental regulations Fast-track permitting</p>	<p>Business-friendly zoning code and permit assistance center</p>	
<p>Quality of Life Weather Housing Healthcare Public Schools Crime Rate/Public Safety Cost of Living</p>	<p>Desirable place to live with mild year-round climate with an average temperature of 60.92°F and 269 days of sunshine with an abundance of outdoor recreational activities including two National Forest, Yosemite National Park, Rivers and Lakes, and hiking trails. Quality public schools with proficiency exam scores above statewide average. Full-service Hospital and regional health clinics. Relatively low cost of living. Mariposa County (106) has a lower overall crime rate per 10,000 population than the statewide (170) and national (167) averages. Rural areas offer an important, complementary balance to urban areas for outdoor recreation and healthy living and tourism activities</p>	
<p>Brand Image/Perceptions</p>	<p>Business friendly community with a skilled workforce and critical mass of companies in target industries</p>	

Internal Factors

TABLE 2: SWOT ANALYSIS cont.

Indicator	Strengths	Weaknesses
Economic Development Capacity/ Leadership	Existing General Plan Economic Development Element policies with County Board of Supervisors committed to economic development	Lack of an annual work plan and strategic marketing plan
Value-Added Agriculture & Agri-Tourism	Growing demand for locally sourced and organic food Potential for on-farm processing and agri-tourism	Development pressure and potential encroachment of urban uses and the resulting loss of agriculture land and rural environment. Periodic droughts
Potential for Visitor Attraction & Expansion of Tourist Sector	The tourism industry includes many different market segments that can be more fully exploited including Local/Regional Tourism, Destination Tourism, Recreation Tourism, Nature Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Cultural Tourism, and business and SMERF conferences. Development of tourism around natural, historic and cultural assets and outdoor recreational activities.	Global and regional competition for business attraction. Competition from other communities in the region that have lower labor costs and an available supply of “shovel ready” buildable land for employment generating uses. Potential to better integrate tourism
Entrepreneurship Development	Potential for expanding rural-based businesses (e.g. local artist, craftsman & hobbyists, artisan & traditional trades) through the Made in Mariposa program. Home-based business and rural home industries zoning reduce start-up and operating costs. Proximity to UC Merced Innovation Center No Hassle Small Business Startup	There is no formal Entrepreneurial Development System (including infrastructure and support services) in place to support entrepreneurship.
Global and Regional Economic Trends	The reshoring trend of manufacturing industries returning from offshore to the U.S. could bring some businesses to the area. Inherent desirability of rural living can be used to attract newcomers and returnees and retain local populations The trend toward advanced manufacturing, flexible manufacturing, and emerging technologies represent potential opportunities for lower cost production areas.	Economic development organizations in the County have not taken a lead role in addressing the long-term opportunities. If neighboring regions are aggressive, these areas may attract a greater share of new business.

Internal Factors



INDUSTRY CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

In recent years, cluster strategies have become popular among economic development practitioners. Broadly defined, “*industry clusters*” are groups of similar and related firms in a defined geographic area that share common markets, technologies, supply networks, labor markets, consumers, buyers, and technical expertise and which are often linked by buyer-seller relationships. Firms in the cluster tend to be more productive and typically produce more than is needed for local use and sell primarily to markets outside the local economy. In order to compete more effectively, local economies need to understand their competitive strengths and target clusters. Research conducted by the Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at Harvard Business School indicates that areas with strong clusters produce more economic growth, more jobs, stronger wage growth, and increased entrepreneurial activity than other areas. Well developed industry clusters with a strong focus on external markets can also help to reduce economic volatility.

What makes clusters effective is not just the spatial concentration of core companies within geographic proximity to each other. It’s that an entire value chain exists within a cluster: suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, academic institutions, researchers, and workforce training, as well as those who provide relevant support services.¹⁴ Well-

developed industry clusters offer numerous advantages to cluster companies that include potential cost savings due to a greater availability of specialized vendors and business services; a larger pool of trained, specialized workers; financial markets familiar with the industry; ease of market entry for new firms who can tap into an existing specialized labor force; and increased innovation, collaboration, and information transfers.

Several nascent industry clusters have been identified based on Mariposa County’s assets and competitive strengths. These nascent clusters represent opportunities for diversification and expansion of the local economy. While there may be other clusters that local leaders wish to consider, they should not diffuse their efforts by trying to support too many clusters. Instead, local leaders should strategically focus on a few clusters that have the greatest promise for expanding and diversifying Mariposa County’s economy and employment base.

Cluster initiatives are considered long-term strategies that bear fruit over a period of time. The following clusters represent local strengths and opportunities for employment growth over the mid-to-long term. These clusters include a critical mass of firms that form the core companies and related businesses that drive these industry clusters. Target clusters include:

14 Bloomberg, “The Power of Industry Clusters”, October 22, 2012

1. Food & Beverage Production, Processing, & Distribution Cluster:

consists of enterprises whose principal activities are the growing and harvesting of crops and animals, and the processing and distribution of food and beverage products. The Food Production, Processing, & Distribution Cluster is comprised of all enterprises in the regional food and beverage production value chain, including: farms, food processors, packing and storage warehouses, transportation, and wholesale distributors. The cluster includes small farmers, agri-business, wholesale distributors, packagers, breweries, wineries, water bottling, and companies that provide equipment, support, and products used in processing and packaging. Geographical factors that give Mariposa County a competitive advantage include agriculture and ranch land, a mild climate, and proximity to urban population centers. Representative core companies include Butterfly Creek Winery, Casto Oaks Wine, Costa Livos Olive Oil, George Radanovich Wines, Open Space Meats, Sierra Cider, Raw Roots Farm, Silver Valley Ranch, Sierra Lands Beef, L-Arrow Ranch, Mariposa Coffee Company, Rauch Ranch Vineyards & Winery, Yosemite Ale Works, Kitty's Rocky Road, Mt. Bullion Vineyard, Silver Fox Vineyard, and Glenda's Cowgirl Candy.

2. Small Scale Advanced

Manufacturing Cluster: This cluster covers several manufacturing subsectors including fabricated metal products, machinery, nonmetallic mineral products, computer and electronic components, electrical equipment, and transportation parts and equipment. This cluster includes

both production and distribution of manufactured products. Core companies include Tavis Corp, SDM Technology, Eastwood Industries, Jerry's Custom Truss, High Sierra Manufacturing Company, Garland Machine Shop, McGrath Arts Metalworking, Raucina Cabinet Company, Dayhoff Cabinets, and Colonial Woodwrights.

3. Construction & Building Materials

Cluster: This cluster includes construction trades, component manufacturers, building and professional services, real estate, and financial services. Establishments in this cluster primarily provide local real estate services, general contracting, and specialty contracting for the building, purchasing, and renting of homes and related local infrastructure. This cluster also contains firms that support land development, concrete manufacturing, highway and street construction, as well as building equipment. Representative core companies in this cluster include over 100 firms such as Sierra Masonry, Offline Solar Electric, Ranch Fence, Randy Brower Construction, Richard Landy Plumbing, Mariposa Mechanical Services, S&S Electric, Jim Early Masonry, Mitchell Heating & Air Conditioning, and Stephen Ritter Painting.

A cluster initiative is an organized effort to increase the growth and competitiveness of a specific industry within a region.¹⁵ Cluster initiatives are public-private partnerships between industry, government, and economic development and workforce training organizations. Local government can 'prime the pump' by building broad-based support, funding coalition-building and strategic planning activities, and adopting supportive

15 Solvell, Orjan, et al, "The Cluster Initiative Green Book", August 2003, www.cluster-research.org

policies that promote cluster formation and growth.¹⁶ The public sector can also support cluster development through policies aimed at purchasing goods and services from local vendors. Local governments can help foster entrepreneurship and establish linkages between industry and the financial community. Local governments can also promote cluster identity, establish specialized training programs, and support export networks that benefit the companies in each cluster.

Cluster-based strategies generally involve the following four stages, all of which are designed to identify issues and develop stakeholder interest and commitment¹⁷:

Stage 1: Mobilization of Stakeholders

The mobilization stage requires that a community generate local interest and build participation among different constituencies needed to carry out the cluster initiative.

Stage 2: Diagnose Cluster Needs

Collect information about the attributes of the local cluster and economic infrastructure and analyze past growth and economic development infrastructure. Assess the needs and challenges faced by companies in the cluster and identify issues that affect cluster performance.

Stage 3: Regional Collaboration

Convene stakeholders (companies in each cluster, as well as public and private supporting institutions and organizations) into working groups to develop strategies for each cluster and identify priority issues and action items based on common needs.

Stage 4: Implementation

Requires an organizational structure that can sustain the effort over the long-term and obtain commitment from cluster participants to take action on implementation of the cluster strategy.

¹⁶ Osama, Athar, "Policy Should Cultivate, Not Design Industry Clusters", July 12, 2007, www.scidev.net.com

¹⁷ U.S Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration Study of Cluster Based Economic conducted by Information Design Associates and ICF Kaiser 1997

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TARGET INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

The process of identifying target industries focuses on local industries that have 1) the greatest potential to grow and expand given local circumstances, and/or 2) the greatest potential to attract new businesses by matching industry location requirements with community characteristics. Declining employment in an industry sector may be due to economic cycles, structural changes in the economy, lack of market demand, or to local companies becoming less competitive.

When companies consider new locations or look to expand, they generally consider a number of factors including access to growing markets, availability of skilled labor, supplier locations, transportation costs, utility infrastructure, availability and cost of space, productivity, taxes, government regulations, community attitudes toward business, quality of life attributes, and other operational requirements and location cost factors.

Knowing which industries are growing or declining is important to local economic

development decision makers. Appropriate policies can be established based on which industries are experiencing growth and prioritized according to their importance to the community. Identification of businesses within priority industries, which are at-risk of closure or layoffs, should be a key component of a business retention and expansion strategy. Emerging growth industries are important to a community's future while declining basic industries may identify weaknesses in the local economy that requires some intervention on behalf of local economic development officials.

Opportunities for job creation are presented by those industries that are growing and are expected to grow over the next 10 years. Growth oriented sectors and industry clusters important to the local economy and need to be supported (see Table 3). These industry clusters are projected to generate above average job growth that will help address Mariposa County's economic development goals.

TABLE 3: TARGET INDUSTRY ANALYSIS
CLUSTERS/SECTORS EMPLOYMENT, ESTABLISHMENTS, & SPECIALIZATION

	# Firms 2016	2016 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Baseline Projection			Accelerated Growth		Location Quotient
				Projected New Jobs	% Change	Avg. Annual Growth Rate	Projected New Jobs	Avg. Annual Growth Rate	
Total Private Sector	421	4,229	4,812	583	13.8%	1.4%	1,392	2.3%	
Total Targeted Clusters/Sectors	301	2,993	3,276	283	9.5%	1.0%	951	3.1%	
% Total Employment		70.8%	68.1%	58.3%			68.3%		
Total Clusters	138	2,606	2,791	185	7.1%	0.7%	813	3.1%	
Tourism, Hospitality & Leisure	47	2,024	2,177	153	7.6%	0.8%	631	3.1%	3.24
Food Production, Processing, & Distribution	17	69	80	11	15.9%	1.6%	22	3.1%	0.35
Construction & Building Materials	58	379	382	3	0.8%	0.0%	118	3.1%	0.93
Small Scale Advanced Manufacturing	16	134	152	18	13.4%	1.3%	42	3.5%	0.28
Fabricated Metal	1	12	22	10	83.3%	8.3%			0.44
Electronic Equipment	1	38	40	2	5.3%	0.5%			0.93
Furniture	2	<10	<10	-	-%	-%			0.28
Misc. Manufacturing	3	32	37	5	15.6%	1.6%			1.30
Non-Cluster Target Sector	163	387	485	98	25.3%	2.5%	138	3.5%	0.50
Healthcare & Social Assistance	163	387	485	98	25.3%	2.5%	138	3.5%	0.50
Balance of Industry Sectors	120	1,236	1,536	300	24.3%	2.4%	441	3.6%	

Source: Emsi 2016.4 QCEW Employees & Self-Employed, Craft Consulting Group analysis

E

TOURISM DEFINITION

All communities have some potential to help visitors linger longer in their town, and thus make local purchases and bring in outside revenue into the local economy. Tourism is the third largest industry in the United States and includes day trips, weekend visitors, friends and relatives, business travelers, and casual passers-by, mostly from within a three-hour drive. The types of tourism include:

Destination Tourism: Adjacent to National Park or national recreation area, presence of a nationally or regionally known event or attraction. Destination: quality hunting, fishing, skiing, etc for weeklong trips. A few communities have the natural or man-made attractions or some event that creates a destination for visitors.

Recreation tourism: This is when people go to a place that is very different from their regular day-to-day life to relax and have fun. Beaches, theme parks and camp grounds are often the most common places frequented by recreational tourists.

Nature tourism: For tourists that want to see wildlife or bask in the joy of just being in the midst of nature, is the answer. Ecotourism and nature treks are all part of this kind of tourism. Bird watching, for example, is one

activity that nature tourists are fond of doing. What marks this kind of tourism is that it is environmentally responsible, has low impact and advantageous to the local community.

Adventure tourism: is another type of tourism that is catered for those who want to do more than just visit regular tourist sites. These kinds of trips involve challenging activities like rock climbing, mountain climbing and wild water rafting.

Cultural Tourism: Number of cultural/historical attractions, number of arts businesses, community support, and presence of local arts council. Ethnic celebrations, B&B development, arts fairs, arts cooperatives, cross marketing in local stores. Historic recreations/living history exhibits. Develop e-commerce for arts products. Communities can systematically build on cultural/historical attractions and arts businesses to create jobs and build unique identity. If the objective of one's visit to a particular place is to get to know its history and culture then this type of tourism is known as. Tourists may visit different landmarks of a particular country or they may simply opt to focus on just one area. They may also attend festivals and ceremonies in order to gain a better understanding of the people, their beliefs and their practices.
