

# Greater Lowell Economic Development Visioning Session

January 21, 2020  
6:00-8:00 P.M.  
Tewksbury Public Library

Hosted by the Town of Tewksbury and the Northern  
Middlesex Council of Governments

## AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions – Steve Sadwick, Assistant Town Manager, Town of Tewksbury
2. Forum Overview and Background – Jay Donovan, Assistant Director, NMCOG
  - Five-Year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
3. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT) Analysis – Jay Donovan, Assistant Director, NMCOG
  - What are the strengths and weaknesses of doing business in the Greater Lowell region?
  - What opportunities should communities in the Greater Lowell region take advantage of to stabilize and expand private investment?
  - What future threats do you see to the business community in the Greater Lowell region?
  - Prioritizing SWOT responses through colored dots
4. Next Steps and Future Opportunities for Public Input – Jay Donovan, Assistant Director, NMCOG
5. Closing Remarks – Steve Sadwick, Assistant Town Manager, Town of Tewksbury

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Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Commerce*

# **What is a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)?**



# What is a CEDS and what are the benefits of participating?

- ▶ The CEDS is a regional economic development strategy that is developed through grassroots planning guided by these SWOT sessions; and
- ▶ The CEDS summarizes the economic resources of the region, lays out the economic development vision for the Greater Lowell region, identifies goals and establishes a Five-Year Action Plan with priority projects for the region.



# What is a CEDS and what are the benefits of participating?

## (continued)

- ▶ A CEDS is required by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) in order to maintain the region's eligibility for EDA stimulus, public works, revolving loan and technical assistance funding; and
- ▶ Input from you and other stakeholders, residents, business owners and property owners will help shape regional projects and priorities for the benefit of every community.



# Required CEDS Components

- ▶ Summary Background: A summary overview of the economic conditions of the region.
  - ▶ SWOT Analysis: An in-depth analysis of regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
  - ▶ Strategic Direction and Action Plan: Built on findings of the SWOT analysis, these lay out the vision, goals, objectives, and steps to achieve priorities.
  - ▶ Evaluation Framework: Performance measures used to evaluate the implementation of the CEDS and impacts on the regional economy.
  - ▶ The CEDS must also incorporate the concept of Economic Resilience – the ability to avoid, withstand and recover from economic shifts, natural disasters, man-made disasters, and the impacts of climate change.
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## Greater Lowell Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Timeline

November 2019

Date	Task	Description
October 3, 2019	1 <sup>st</sup> CEDS Committee Meeting	Review EDA's current CEDS content guidelines, the work program and timeframe for the CEDS planning process. Discuss approaches for gathering input from the business community, relevant organizations, municipalities and the public. Review previously identified issues, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in current municipal plans and EDSAT studies.
November 21, 2019	1 <sup>st</sup> Public Meeting Lowell City Hall	The first three Public Meetings will provide an overview of the CEDS Planning Process and utilize the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis exercise for the development of the overall regional SWOT Analysis in the final CEDS document.
December 5, 2019	2 <sup>nd</sup> CEDS Committee Meeting	Report on the results from the first SWOT session. Provide draft CEDS Summary Background section for review by the CEDS Committee. Receive feedback on additional public input. Identify critical infrastructure projects within the region that will foster private investment and economic development.
January 21, 2020 (1/28 snow date)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Public Meeting Tewksbury Public Library	The first three Public Meetings will provide an overview of the CEDS Planning Process and utilize the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis exercise for the development of the overall regional SWOT Analysis in the final CEDS document.
February 4, 2020 (2/6 snow date)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Public Meeting Chelmsford Police Department Community Room	The first three Public Meetings will provide an overview of the CEDS Planning Process and utilize the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis exercise for the development of the overall regional SWOT Analysis in the final CEDS document.
February 27, 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> CEDS Committee Meeting	Review draft SWOT, Action Plan and Evaluation Framework sections. Receive feedback on the initial draft documents.
March 2020	Notice of availability of draft CEDS document	Provide notice of the availability of the draft CEDS document for review.
April 3, 2020	4 <sup>th</sup> CEDS Committee Meeting	Review final draft document and recommend approval to the NMCOG Council.
April 16, 2020	NMCOG Council Meeting	Request NMCOG Council approval of the Five-Year CEDS document and submission to EDA.
May 1, 2020	Submit Five Year CEDS Document	Submit Five Year Greater Lowell CEDS document to EDA.

**What is a SWOT  
Analysis?**

**How will your  
input be used?**



# **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis**

- ▶ SWOT analysis is a tool utilized by private industry and public agencies at the outset of a planning process.
  - ▶ Designed to capture your personal thoughts about economic development issues.
  - ▶ There are no right or wrong answers, and everyone is encouraged to express an opinion.
  - ▶ Your response will be recorded on a flip chart.
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# What happens next?

- ▶ At the conclusion of the SWOT Analysis, there will be a 15 minute break.
- ▶ During this time, you will be asked to place color coding dots on each flip chart to prioritize the ideas that you feel are most important.
- ▶ NMCOCG staff will tally the results and summarize the findings for the CEDS Committee.



# How will your input be used?

- ▶ Results of this SWOT session, along with two other SWOT sessions and existing local planning documents, will be used to guide the development of Goals and Objectives for the CEDS.



# Color Coding Priorities

1<sup>st</sup> priority = **RED**

2<sup>nd</sup> priority = **GREEN**

3<sup>rd</sup> priority = **YELLOW**

4<sup>th</sup> priority = **BLUE**

