



# The Healing Power of Nature/

Generating personal, economic, and cultural well-being  
in Crescent City and Del Norte County.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING, June 2022**

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For: City Manager, Eric Wier

# ▶ **Process/**

**Discovery**

Research



**Visioning**

Strategy & Scenarios



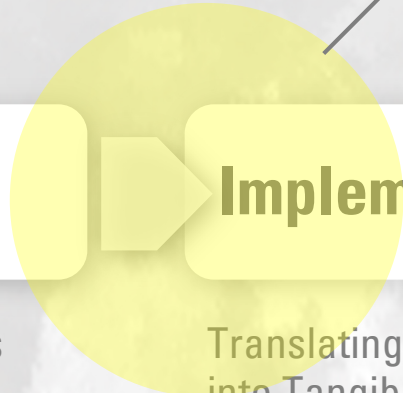
**Implementation**

Translating Strategies  
into Tangible Value



**Tactics**

Tying to EDSAP and  
Legacy Projects &  
Programs



**WE ARE HERE**



# ▶ **Objective/**

A forward-looking strategy that aligns and galvanizes the community—healing what ails us, inspiring well-being, sparking optimism, and rekindling our love of place.



# Thesis/

The transformation from an economy reliant on commercializing non-renewable resources to...

...A community that generates economic benefits and social well-being through **The** [PROFOUND AND UNDENIABLE] **Healing Power of Nature.**



# Thesis/Context

**Community Healing is Needed:** Mental health and collective despondence; underindexed in several key areas including wages, health and life expectancy; inequities; cultural and demographic divides; etc.

**Broader, Long-Term Trends:** Health, wellness, and wellbeing are aspirational.

**Common Ground:** The issues of well-being and the care for our natural resources are of prime relevance to all of our stakeholders ("common ground").

**Commercial Opportunities:** Gainful, fulfilling employment and business opportunities are key to individual and collective livelihoods, well-being, and optimism.

**Extraordinary Assets:** Our abundance is our differentiator.

**Enlightened Leadership:** The time seems to be now, based on the quality of talents (and ideas) gathering in administrations, key public services, and CBOs.

# Situation/Connecting Issues to Assets

Issues/Problems to Solve	Our Readiness (on a scale of 1-10)	Existing Assets to Leverage
<p><b>Housing</b> Short- and Long-Term Solutions</p>	<p>— 3</p>	<p>Considerable property and funding governed by City, County, and Tribal administrations.</p>
<p><b>Employment &amp; Industrial Readiness</b> New Manufacturing, Knowledge Working</p>	<p>— 2</p>	<p>Natural resources to fuel new industry and quality—of-life interest in the region.</p>
<p><b>Disenfranchised (disappearing) Youth</b></p>	<p>— 4</p>	<p>Industry-friendly policies and programs.</p>
<p><b>Tourism Appeal</b> (and appeal to prospective transplants)</p>	<p>— 5</p>	<p>A working harbor. Favorable micro-climate.</p>
<p><b>Agriculture</b> Statement of Intent &amp; Leadership</p>	<p>— 7</p>	<p>Cultural (and ancestral) value to be integrated into agriculture and manufacturing practices, (and exploited in storytelling).</p>
<p><b>Ailing Infrastructure</b></p>	<p>— 3</p>	<p>Momentum in regenerative agriculture.</p>
<p><b>Poverty, Inequities &amp; Food Insecurity</b></p>	<p>— 4</p>	<p>Relevant CBOs established.</p>
<p><b>Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles</b> (and support for mental health challenges)</p>	<p>— 3</p>	<p>Natural resources to platform diverse, world-class recreation.</p>



# Situation/Connecting Issues to Broader Trends

**Housing**



Decreased availability and escalating housing costs;  
Increase in un-housed populations;  
Inflation;

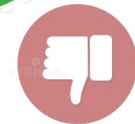


De-urbanization & remote working;

**Employment & Industrial Readiness**



Opportunities and sustainable futures connected with the New Economy and Green Economy;  
Investments in small business/communities;



Higher cost of entry (education/training) to New Economy;

**Disenfranchised Youth**



Long-term trend of younger generations leaving for opportunities (and acceptance);



Recent pattern of young workers returning to rural communities;  
Youth's tendency to lead social and environmental matters;

**Tourism Appeal**



Popularity of environmental, agritourism, wellness and nature-based tourism;  
Demand for safety and local experiences.



# Situation/Connecting Issues to Broader Trends

**Agriculture**

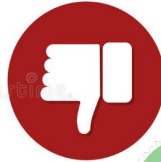


Accelerating changes in consumer behavior;  
Rising profitability from regenerative practices;



Cost of entry and narrower market;

**Ailing Infrastructure**



Opportunities and sustainable futures connected with the New Economy and Green Economy;



Opportunities (and available funding) to implement "Green" and "Resilient" Infrastructure projects;

**Poverty, Inequities & Food Insecurity**



Persistent disparities: urban and rural and race/ethnicities;  
YOY rise in food insecurity;  
Demographic challenges;

**Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles**



Popularity of authentic consumer experiences;  
Rising appreciation for Nature's role in personal well-being;



Demographic challenges.

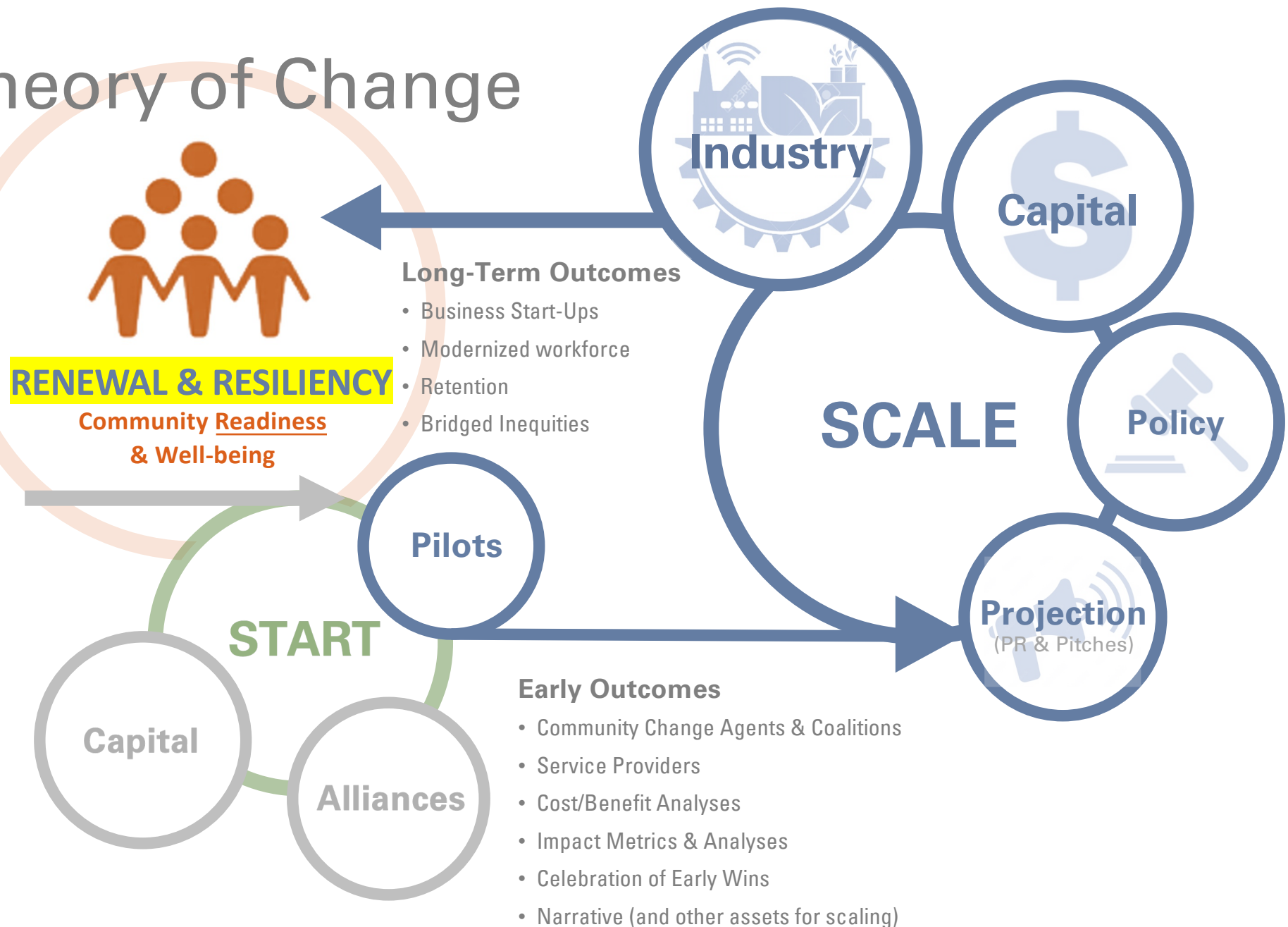
# ► Model/Theory of Change

## Assumptions

- **Nature** is valued by all of our constituents, BUT is not yet connected to industry/jobs in the New Economy (post timber/fishing);
- **Youth** is emotionally valued by all, BUT this group's fulfillment is not being addressed;
- **Employment** is a universal pain point, BUT Nature as a source/solution is not clearly connected to our participation in the New Economy.

## Dependencies

- **Willingness + Leadership and Change Agents** with abilities to navigate (and enroll) a range of groups, cultures, and initiatives;
- **Discipline**, to keep big capital projects (Housing & Infrastructure) out in front;
- **Timeliness**, to capture favorable climate for funding;
- **Investments** in pro Communications & Activation, to "bring the community along".





## **Approach/Pilot Program (12-18 months)**

Given the range of issues and the spectrum of stakeholders, the recommendation herein encourages the city, county, and tribal administrations to develop a simple first phase of cooperation(s) and funding to support a short list of strategic prototypes/pilots, as follows:

- **Agriculture:** Do more to bring ag—and its far-reaching effects—into the community's line of sight, e.g., better integration into city limits (and other high-profile sites) through farmers markets, restaurants, and other retail points, and community gardens used for education and serving the underserved;
- **Youth:** Deepen tie-ins to OST programming in areas of agriculture; stewardship; and recreation; and test internships, scholarships and residencies tied to local operators;
- **Housing:** A "tiny home" solution—in strategic sites on lands currently under city, county, and tribal control—*"The First 50"*.
- **Local Lifestyle:** Campaigns to connect people to nature (more thoroughly than beauty and recreation). These discrete campaigns would target different groups ("meeting them where they're at") and promote suitable types and levels of awareness, activity, and accountability.



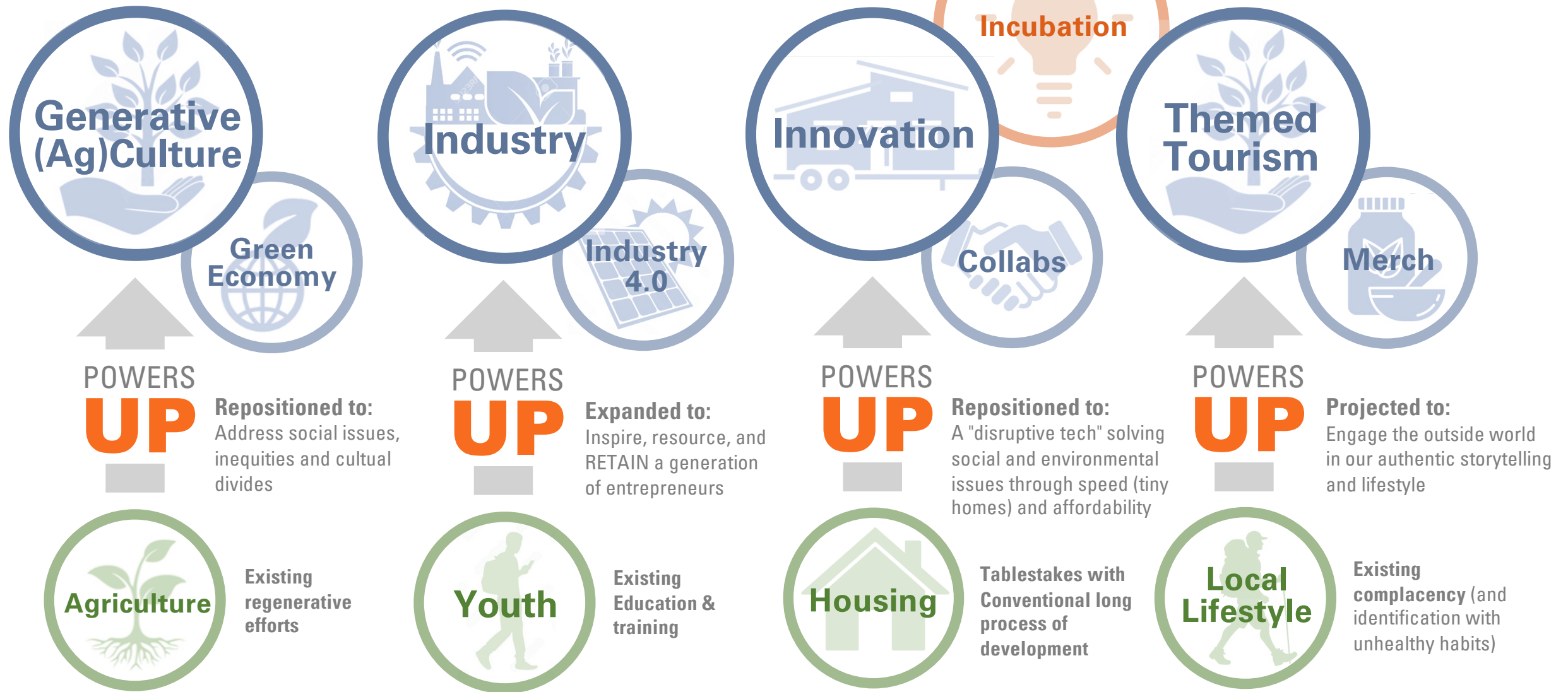
# Outcomes/Pilot Program

Within the first 12-18 months, the Pilots are expected to make measurable gains (mostly qualitative, at this stage), that look and sound like:

- **Agriculture:** As "**(Ag)Culture**", we've raised a bigger flag and have generated more interest, engagement and enrollment/conversion of existing and new farming operations. We've given trade clients and consumers more practical and emotional reasons to be patrons (and evangelists) for our special brand of cultivation and caring. Similarly, we've broadened our appeal to funding sources, sponsorship, and other forms of individual, institutional, and agency support.
- **Youth:** We've sparked the vocational and entrepreneurial enthusiasm that, if tended to properly, will secure our future participation in the economies emerging around tech and greening industries.
- **Housing:** By repositioning housing from tablestakes into a statement of deep commitment to people and design, we've laid an important foundational block in our transformation from a "a place to live" to "**a lifestyle to live**".
- **Local Lifestyle:** In creating an authentic narrative—in which we've tied our community, its personalities, products, services, and activities, all credibly to nature's "wellspring"—we're enjoying a related wave of quality visitors and new residents.

# ► Model/Pilot Program Impact

New ventures with "exportable" products and services based on "cred and competencies" developed in HPoN



# ► Model/Strategic Framework

## Community Development (Transformative)

### Identity Development (HPoN)

#### Social & Cultural Development

#### Capacity Development

#### Economic Development

##### Tribal Relations

##### Youth Programs

##### Workforce Dev.

##### Capital Dev.

##### Market Dev.

**Build**  
influence of indigenous populations.

Develop leadership and honor ancient practices in land management, agriculture, housing, and tourism.

**Claim**  
our relative advantage as a complex and healthy ecosystem.

Contrast our diverse natural setting to drought-stricken and mono-cropped rural communities in California.

**Generate**  
community connection and pride.

Facilitate Intellectual, emotional and physical cooperations, to address trauma, inequities (and other divides) AND opportunities.

**Integrate**  
natural beauty into the city.

Connect the City's (optimal) role within its natural setting, through rigorous design thinking leading to experiential consistency for residents and visitors..

**Invest**  
in a modern wellness" infrastructure".

Support experiences / celebrations of our food culture, recreation, mental/emotional health.

**Activate**  
in campaign formats

Connect our assets to environmental and human health, in communications:

- Capital campaigns, by initiative;
- Promotion of tourism and industry.



# Proposed Actions/

Finding Synergies within Integrated Pilot Projects



# ► Generative (Ag)Culture/

Transformation Expressed through Leadership in Areas of Enterprise, Tourism, Education, and Food Security.

**Transformation (for our purposes) can be defined as a,**

*“Deep and sustained, nonlinear systemic change, generally involving cultural, political, technological, economic, social and/or environmental processes”*

**(Linnér and Wibeck 2020)**



# Generative (Ag)Culture/

## (Re)Positioning

Building on the current regional momentum toward regenerative practices, the opportunity is to more fully **connect our already-evolving agriculture to the issues of economic resiliency (including the Green Economy) and social equity.**

Through cooperation (and co-ventures) among operators—and support from CBOs, funders, and policymakers—we can better integrate our agriculture and find more touchpoints with residents and visitors. We can make a solid statement/demonstration not only of our improving practices, but also of agriculture as the "common ground" shared by our diverse resident cultures, and as a bridge carrying us from old to new commercial opportunities.

Agriculture can be an area of true innovation, and made aspirational within and outside of the region through efforts that project our leadership through communications campaigns (content), agritourism, educational programming, and inventive wellness products.



# Generative (Ag)Culture/

## Pilot Objectives

- **A substantial, cohesive story** that can be leveraged into earned media; new forms and sources of funding; and our penetration of an emerging marketplace passionately aligned with the ethos;
- **A thread that ties cultures**, i.e., the farming and distribution philosophies (including community nourishment and workforce development) that are, or can be, shared by stewards including tribes; independent and larger-scale commercial operations; and advocacy groups focused on climate, biodiversity, soil and water, and inequities;
- **A means to engage in modern issues** connected to the environment while sidestepping unproductive debate, i.e., "climate "change";
- **A stage set for additional local industry start-ups** to support production, e.g., processing and distribution centers.

\*The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations defines FOOD SECURITY as existing when “all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”





# Generative (Ag)Culture/

## Specific connections to Econ. Dev. Plan:

- Support expansion of sustainable agricultural, forestry and fishery products;
- Enhance education, workforce training, housing and healthy lifestyle opportunities in the county to support existing residents and businesses as well as the workforce of the future
- Create a thriving small business environment which fosters entrepreneurship and innovation

## Case studies:

- **Paonia, CO:** Overcoming deficiencies (tax base, no resorts, etc.) to successfully reposition and celebrate its unique assets;
- **Todos Santos, MX:** Experiential agritourism; a demonstration of biocultural heritage;
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- 



# Generative (Ag)Culture/

## Actions & Dependencies:

- A more detailed audit of existing/planned developments in regional practices; commercial viability; and programs addressing food security;
- Outreach to operators/farmers to define areas of philosophical and operational common ground among farmers, downstream trade partners, orgs, and administrations;
- Identify additional partners, and apply insights end-to-end (and develop metrics), i.e., up- and downstream from the field to include schools, programming, processing, distribution/logistics, and retail points;
- Identify, sources of outside expertise and funding aligned with the transformation and end-state (re)positioning — resources suited to address rough spots in flow of goods from field to market, e.g., localized processing, dedicated flows to food banks, etc.



# Cultural Center/

The Heart (and "clubhouse") for  
Community Development





# Cultural Center/

## Positioning

Evolving the existing Cultural Center [**location**] into a base camp for the first phases of Community Development, this under-used site can become the first "flag in the ground" — **a multi-functional facility programmed 365 with "on strat" activities.**

In this redwood cathedral, we would constantly convene as a community to plan, perform, educate, celebrate and share our early stages of renewal.

## Primary Objectives:

- A single, physical, co-authored **statement of intent** for the Community Development initiative (high-profile and high-energy);
- **Accessibility and activities** for ALL groups;
- A substantial facility for forward-thinking, including **prototypical convening/conferences** — hosted gatherings of subject matter expertise on topics german to our development projects, e.g., community-lead change; regenerative ag; and resourcing stewardship.



# Cultural Center/

## Specific connections to Econ. Dev. Plan:

- Promote successful tourism industry expansion;
- Enhance education, workforce training, housing and healthy lifestyles opportunities in the County to support existing residents and business as well as the workforce of the future.

## Case studies:

- **Winter Park, CO:** A sustainable, non-profit gathering place for mountain weddings, entertainment, events, and water education in Winter Park.
- **Aspen Institute (Forum for Community Solutions):** Supports communities to come together to expand mobility, eliminate systemic barriers, and create their own solutions to their most pressing challenges.
- **Skoll World Forum:** An annual assembly of social entrepreneurship leaders.



# Cultural Center/

## Actions & Dependencies:

- Identify stakeholders, and establish some form of governance (subcommittee) to guide/drive programming and ensure it is informed by all groups;
- Elect administrator(s) to manage the daily;
- Calendarization through pilot phase (prime the pump with high-profile activities to correspond with key market events, holidays, project milestones);
- Determine phases of capital improvements for the Center and draft corresponding capital campaigns; and begin to source sponsors;
- Initial stage of communications in- and out-of-market (an invitation to participate).

A photograph of a forest trail. In the foreground, a wooden fence made of vertical posts and horizontal rails runs across the frame. To the right, a large, thick tree trunk with rough, textured bark dominates the scene. The ground is covered in brown leaves and dirt. In the background, more trees and green foliage are visible, creating a dense forest atmosphere. A dark grey sign is positioned on the left side of the trail.

# ▶ (Re)blazing Trails/

(Literally) Connecting the City  
to the Power of Nature

Boy Scout Tree  
Trail

TRAIL LENGTH 2.8 MI  
FERN FALLS 2.8 MI

PLEASE OBSERVE  
THE FOLLOWING:





# **(Re)blazing Trails/**

## **Positioning**

Through revitalization of the trail (and its relevance to community well-being) and the corresponding marketing message, we can illuminate an important existing pathway (Boy Scout Tree Trail) that ties Jedidiah Smith State Park to the City, bringing it into persistent foreground for residents and visitors.

By **building the trail into the behavioral "flow" of our community**—promoting its ease of access, recreational value, and health benefits—we would be in a position to **authentically live and market lifestyle to a world increasingly seeking authentic destinations and experiences**...a far more powerful tool to drive tourism than simply pointing people to a park.

The following phases can integrate other aspects of the local "experience", i.e., ties to Coastal Trail and innovative connections to our agriculture story through pasture trails.



# (Re)blazing Trails/

## Primary Objectives:

- **Healthier lifestyles** (physical and mental health benefits leading to purpose and productivity, and a reduction in local healthcare costs);
- **A clearer proposition for tourism** (and migration, including quality of life and new employment opportunities);
- Linking our biggest natural assets to downtown revitalization (**a single story**);
- Awareness, education, and **participation** in nature, leading to exemplary long-term stewardship;
- **Youth engagement** and empowerment, through the role this group plays in recreation and advocacy;
- **An early capture of a low-hanging (and sexy) opportunity** to build cooperation and excitement among our groups of stakeholders.



# (Re)blazing Trails/

## Specific connections to Econ. Dev. Plan:

- Promote successful tourism industry expansion.
- Invest in improving and maintaining a comprehensive transportation network that meets the needs of local industry, commuters and visitors.
- Enhance education, workforce training, housing and healthy lifestyle opportunities in the County to support existing residents and businesses as well as the fork force of the future.

## Case studies:

- **Nederland, CO:** Curriculum-based integrating outdoor recreation leadership, conservation, environmental science;
- **Bentonville, AR:** Considered the “Mountain Biking Capital of the World” by many local citizens, Bentonville (pop. 50,000) has been transformed from a town focused on agriculture to a place full of history, culture, and bike paths;
- **National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) Community Wellness Hubs:** A fully integrated public health system connecting access and activities to other drivers of community well-being.



# (Re)blazing Trails/

## Actions & Dependencies:

- Establish any needed cooperations with State Parks;
- Determine intersections at which to optimize existing Beachfront development;
- Confirm use case and design/features needed to fill out the experience for all users;
- Establish local organizations for any needed trail revitalization; access and equity advocacy; volunteerism; and message amplification;
- Sourcing and pitching/testing for funding of any capital improvements.

# ► Natural Habitat/

Turning the County's Biggest Pain Point  
into a Statement of Innovation.





# Natural Habitat/

## Positioning:

Parallel to the inevitable long arc of traditional housing development, the city, county and tribal administrations can engage in a (relatively) rapid roll-out of "tiny homes" to **build immediate capacity** and to project to stakeholders (including those would-be transplants to our community) our willingness to innovate and **prioritize human capital within the goals of economic development.**

In this initiative, we not only have the opportunity to directly address a problem affecting every private and public employer in this county, but also to speak to the red-hot issue of equity through the placement and pricing of housing solutions.

We can think of this as a "disruptive technology" and one that can contribute to our overall development narrative, as well to the plaguing issue of "poor curb appeal". This is where we set the stage for melding our habitats/lifestyles and natural resources through thoughtful design (Design Thinking).



# Natural Habitat/

## Primary Objectives:

- Create a **rapid and phased solution** that deploys units in place in a matter of months, and that puts a meaningful dent in the current  $\approx 1,000$  unit shortfall within 12-18 months;
- **Demonstrate a willingness to think out-of-the-box**, along with our commitment to solving problems for ALL constituents;
- A key is the **cooperation and co-venture** between city county, and tribal administrations that can then be scaled into additional priorities of Community Development;
- An early success in high-profile **public-private venturing**, leading to an ability to draw new talent to the area;
- A unit cost basis **that enables the solution to extend to our underserved/housed population**, as part of the Pilot.




# Natural Habitat/

## Specific connections to Econ. Dev. Plan:

- Partnership with Schools & Healthcare (these sectors are suffering from an inability to recruit resources to the region);
- Enhance Tribal Relationships;
- Optimize City/County owned and managed properties;
- Equity inclusions.

## Case studies:

- Bend, OR
- Las Vegas, NV
- 



# Natural Habitat/

## Actions & Dependencies:

- Segments and use cases;
- Identify properties;
- Identify funding sources;
- Source and vet units along a spectrum of use cases/price points;
- Source and vet partners for development and roll-out;
- Calendarization;
- Initial financial modeling and capital campaign.



# Thank You.

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