

# CEDS STRATEGY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, March 12, 2026

10:00 a.m.

In person at KVCOG- 17 Main Street, Fairfield, ME 04937

Zoom [Link](#) for those unable to attend in person

## AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. Approval of Minutes: 08/15/24
3. What is a CEDS?
4. Recruiting Committee Members
  - Looking for additional members from the following sectors within Kennebec, Somerset and Western Waldo Counties (Litchfield to Jackman and from New Portland to Troy)

<b><u>Banking</u></b> (Bangor Savings, Kennebec Savings, Skowhegan Savings, etc)	<b><u>Locally-Owned Retail Business</u></b> (brick and mortar shop)
<b><u>Industrial/Manufacturing</u></b> (Sappi, Hutamaki, New Balance, Timber HP, etc)	<b><u>Agriculture Community</u></b> (Johnny's Seeds, Fedco, Backyard Farms, Flood Farms, Timber Industry, etc)
<b><u>Healthcare</u></b> (Maine General, Northern Lights, etc)	<b><u>Higher Education</u></b> (Colby, KVCC, Thomas, UMaine Augusta, etc)
<b><u>Hospitality</u></b> (Lodging, Restaurants, etc)	<b><u>Transportation</u></b> (KVCAP)
<b><u>Tourism/Outdoor Recreation/Arts</u></b> KVTC, Guide Services, Northern Outdoors, Johnson Hall, Augusta Waterville Opera House, Waterville Creates, Snow Pond, etc)	

5. CEDS Required Components
  - Summary Background
  - SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)
  - Strategic Direction & Action Plan
  - Evaluation Framework
  - Economic Resilience
  - Workforce Development
  - Industry Clusters

6. Stakeholder Engagement

7. Regionals Goals

8. Transformative Projects

9. Timeline

- Draft available for 30-day public comment by December 1, 2026
- Draft to EDA for comments by January 31, 2027
- Adopted by KVCOG Board of Directors by March 31, 2027

10. Future Meeting Schedule

- Frequency
- Best Day/Time

11. Other Business

12. Adjournment

**CEDS COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES**

**Thursday, November 21, 2024 - 10:00 a.m.  
17 Main Street, Fairfield, ME 04937**

**1. Attendance**

In person:

Jessie Cyr, KVCOG & Joel Greenwood, KVCOG  
Erin Benson, Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board  
Kimberly Lindlof, Central Maine Growth Council  
Melissa Lindley, City of Gardiner

Via Zoom:

Celeste Banda, Main Street Skowhegan  
Brian Eng, Developer  
Tenley Skolfield, Main Street Skowhegan

Presenter via Zoom:

Laura Mitchell, Executive Director, Maine Housing Coalition

**2. Presentation by Kennebec Valley Community Action Program**

Laura Mitchell, Executive Director, Maine Housing Coalition gave an informative overview of the work they do, and the programs offered. To learn more about any of the programs, you can go to <https://www.kvcap.org/>. The contact information for Kirk Bellevance is 207-859-1680 or [kbellavance@kvcap.org](mailto:kbellavance@kvcap.org)

**3. Approval Of Minutes**

K. Lindlof, MOVED, E. Benson SECONDED, to approve the 8/15/24 minutes as written. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**4. Other Business**

K. Lindlof MOVED, E. Benson SECONDED, to add to the agenda under “Other Business”, Consideration of adding a significant “Transformative Project” to the Action Plan within Chapter 4, Entrepreneurship and Innovation. MOTION to add this to the agenda PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Members received a written summary of “The Kitchen at 185” project in their packet and Kim Lindlof reviewed the significance of this project for the region, and the need for a commercial kitchen space for small culinary businesses in the region. Upon completion of discussion, K. Lindlof MOVED, E. Benson SECONDED, to add “The Kitchen at 185” as a Transformative Project into the Action Plan within Chapter 4- Entrepreneurship and Innovation of the 2022-2-27 Kennebec Valley CEDS. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY by those in attendance and via zoom.

**Note:** Votes in favor via email received from M. Lindley and J. Hewitt on 8/27/24.

**5. Review and Discussion Regarding the Status of Identified Projects**

The lack of housing was discussed and was noted that it continues to be a barrier to the growth and success of our region and how it may prevent us from meeting some of our goals outlined in the CEDS.

**6. Round Table discussion**

A round table discussion began about the urgent need for housing to support the need of our region, noting that businesses can't attract and retain employees when there are no housing options to offer them. Members agreed that although we had MaineHousing at a meeting in May, given the urgent need of all types of housing in our region, that this should be discussed again at the next meeting.

**7. Next Meeting Agenda Items/Topics/Guests**

Our next meeting will be held on February 20, 2025 at 10am. In person at KVCOG or via Zoom.

**8. Other Business**

Christian Savage, Executive Director of Somerset Economic Development Corporation gave an update on the status of the Somerset Broadband Coalition, noting that construction is underway in Solon-West Forks and by next June all of Somerset will have access to Broadband, bridging the digital divide for the region. Access to reliable and affordable broadband for the residents and businesses in this rural region of Maine, will allow for expanded opportunities related to employment, educational, and tele-health. Members expressed their thanks to Christian for all his work to get this accomplished for Somerset County!

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessie L. Cyr  
Economic and Community Development Director  
Kennebec Valley Council of Governments

## What is a CEDS?

The **[Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\)](#)** is a locally-based, regionally-driven economic development planning process and document that creates the space for your region to identify its strengths and weaknesses and brings together a diverse set of partners to generate good jobs, diversify the economy, and spur economic growth. This process should engage a range of partners, including **[Economic Development Districts \(EDDs\)](#)**, community leaders and residents, tribes, the private sector, educational institutions, and other stakeholders in planning for your region's future.

An effective CEDS allows a region to maximize its economic development potential, as well as engage with the **[U.S. Economic Development Administration \(EDA\)](#)** and other federal partners to access infrastructure and technical assistance grants, such as EDA's **[Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs](#)**. The CEDS is a pre-requisite for federal designation as an EDD and must be updated at least every five years. Overall, an effective CEDS planning process identifies locally-grown strategies that will guide regional economic development, encourage partnerships and collaboration, and improve economic outcomes and overall quality of life in your region.

### **An Effective CEDS:**

- Identifies a region's competitive advantages
- Demonstrates the EDD's/regional organization's grasp of key trends
- Promotes cross-sector collaboration
- Commits to measurable success
- Tells a compelling story about the region's past, present, and future
- Motivates action and implementation

<https://www.cedscentral.com/ceds-101.html>

# Kennebec Valley CEDS 2027-2032

## Timeline

### Phase 1: Preparation & Planning (March 2026)

- **Establish a Strategy Committee:** Identify and convene diverse regional representatives, including local government, private sector, education, and non-profits.
- **Define Roles & Scope:** Determine the committee's structure, staff resources, and the scope of the project, including identifying data needs.
- **Adopt a Work Program:** Formalize a schedule for meetings, public engagement, and document drafting.

### Phase 2: Data Gathering & Analysis (April-July 2026)

- **Develop Summary Background:** Analyze the regional economic conditions, including demographic, socioeconomic, and labor force data (often using the past 5-20 years).
- **Conduct SWOT Analysis:** Analyze Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to understand the current regional economy.
- **Create Vision & Goals:** Develop a regional vision statement, goals, and measurable objectives based on the SWOT findings.
- **Identify Transformative Projects:** Submit new projects for consideration
- **Identify Resilience Factors:** Review the region's vulnerabilities to shocks and develop strategies to increase economic resilience.

### Phase 3: Strategy & Action Plan Development (August-November 2026)

- **Draft Action Plan:** Create a specific, actionable plan to achieve the goals, including designated owners, timelines, and funding sources for projects.
- **Establish Evaluation Framework:** Define performance measures to track implementation progress.

### Phase 4: Review, Approval & Submission (December 2026-March 2027)

- **Stakeholder Review:** Solicit public comments on the draft document (minimum 30 days) **by December 1, 2026**
- **Finalize Document:** Incorporate feedback from the public and the committee. **Draft must be submitted to EDA Rep for review by 1-31-2027**
- **Formal Approval:** Have the committee officially send the CEDS to the KVCOG Board of Directors for **adoption and submission to the EDA by 3-31-2027**