Benefit to the Community

Improving the public image of Central Arkansas will encourage economic growth, spur investment and improve the quality of life for District residents.

Issue

The District's public image has handicapped efforts to recruit businesses, industry and public and private investment needed for sustainable economic growth.

Strategy

Establish a systematic, collaborative and regional approach to reshaping the region’s image that conveys a positive investment climate and a unique and desirable quality of life.

Action Steps:

- Work with public and private businesses, chambers of commerce, local and county governments, and non-profit organizations to create a collaborative region wide approach to reshaping the area's public image.
- Systematically encourage websites focused on economic growth and investment and recruiting new businesses and industry to include more information on the positive aspects of the Region's economic and community life.
- Work with consulting company Development Consultants Incorporated (DCI) hired by Metro Little Rock Alliance (MLRA) to build a positive image of Little Rock Metro area.
- Locate and publicize economic success stories from cities, towns and local communities.
- Insure that the information and stories designed to reshape the image of the region reflect the concerns and interests of GenX, Millennials and Gen Z.
- Make systematic use of social media outlets to highlight economic success stories.
- Work with small businesses, local companies and industries interested in community profile stories that highlight economic growth and community development.

Responsible Parties:

- CAPDD staff
- City and county government officials and elected leaders
- DCI

Resources Needed:

- MLRA, chambers of commerce
- Selected innovative businesses and industries
- DCI
- Non-profit organizations that promote a positive image for the District

Estimated Completion Date:

- On-going
Benefit to the Community

Improving transportation will result in a better working environment for business and industry, increased job opportunities, a more stable workforce and a better quality of life.

Issue

A lack of effective and reliable transportation options limits the effectiveness of area business and industry and negatively affects job opportunities and work attendance.

Strategy

Increase transportation options for business, industry and area residents.

Action Steps:

• Explore regional mass transit options with Rock Region METRO.
• Extend Rock Region METRO’s innovative Van Pool program to rural areas of the region.
• Work with area employers to encourage them to provide low cost transportation options for transporting their employees to work.
• Publicize the number and nature of existing direct flights out of Little Rock Airport
• Encourage the airlines to establish more direct flights out of Little Rock Airport.

Responsible Parties:

• CAPDD staff
• State and local public officials

Resources:

• CAPDD staff
• Rock Region METRO
• Little Rock Airport Commission
• Airlines

Estimated Completion Date:

• On-going
Benefit to the Community

Improving health care will result in a healthier and more productive population with an improved quality of life.

Issue

Lack of access to effective health care outside more populated urban areas has resulted in a less productive workforce and a diminished quality of life for residents in many areas of central Arkansas.

Strategy

Improve access to effective health care.

Action Steps:

- Encourage the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) to place more medical residents into local area clinics.
- Increase the number of nurses and doctors in area medical facilities.
- Determine if the DRA’s “Delta Doctors” program can address medical personnel shortages.
- Increase access to mental health treatment for area residents.
- Promote use of new technologies that improve patient access to medical personnel and treatments.

Responsible Parties:

- CAPDD staff
- DRA

Resources:

- Area Hospitals
- Area universities and colleges
- DRA
- Medical clinics
- Medicaid insurance

Estimated Completion Date:

- On-going
Benefit to the Community

Increasing responsible and sustainable industrial development creates good paying jobs.

Issue

Lack of identifiable potential industrial sites with appropriate resources hampers attempts to recruit both large and small-scale industrial businesses.

Strategy

Work across jurisdictional lines and boundaries to acquire potential sites that could benefit residents in large segments of the region.

Action Steps:

• Identify and catalogue potential development sites within the region.
• Support and encourage the development of Brownfield sites.
• Educate local and county officials about the advantages of regional cooperation and investing in sites that lie outside their immediate jurisdiction.
• Acquaint city, local and county officials with the terms of Amendment 82 to encourage regional approaches to site development that require collaboration between cities, towns and counties.
• Convene community meetings to explain the benefits of regional economic cooperation to area residents.
• Make local officials aware of the need for public-private partnerships.
• Convince private property owners of the need to establish suitable development sites to attract industry.
• Establish a pool of state funds to help communities and regions develop suitable sites for industrial development.

Responsible Parties:

• CAPDD staff
• Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC)
• Local city and county officials
• County Economic Development Directors

Resources:

• Public and private utilities
• County economic development directors
• Relevant state legislators and senators

Estimated Completion Date:

• On-going
**Benefit to the Community**

Increased employment will encourage economic and community development, decrease out migration and improve the quality of life for District residents.

**Issue**

Many District employers consistently complain that a significant number of local residents lack the skills and motivation to succeed in the existing job market.

**Strategy**

Work with employers and educators to develop training programs and job placement strategies that reflect the rapidly changing job market of the region.

**Action Steps:**

- Foster incumbent worker training for occupations that are rapidly innovating or at increased risk for automation.
- Increase non-traditional and accelerated study programs for adults.
- Work closely with area community colleges and technical schools to develop training focused on skill-based certificates.
- Educate area business about Office of Skills Development (OSD) grants and the opportunities they provide for workforce training.
- Promote North Little Rock School District’s (NLRSD) ‘Center of Excellence’ as a potential model for career-based training for area high schools.
- Work with the new Saline County Technical Education Center to help area business see the Center as a valuable resource for training and recruiting future employees.
- Collaborate with the Arkansas Apprenticeship Pathway Initiative (AAPI) to help promote the 600 plus new apprenticeships available under the grant AAPI received from the Department of Labor.
- Collaborate with the Department of Workforce Services (ADWS) to develop and implement a survey of area businesses to determine their workforce needs.

**Responsible Parties:**

- CAPDD staff
- Local city and county officials

**Resources:**

- NLRSD
- Chambers of commerce
- Area technical schools, community colleges and universities
- Arkansas Department of Career Education (ACE), OSD
- ADWS
- AAPI

**Estimated Completion Date:**

- On-going
Benefit to the Community

More affordable housing will encourage economic and community development, decrease out migration and improve the quality of life for District residents.

Issue

A lack of affordable housing outside more populated urban areas makes it more difficult for new businesses or industries to locate in the region.

Strategy

Help communities understand affordable housing and the need for building more of it.

Action Steps:

- Develop a working definition of affordable housing linked to the housing market in each community.
- Meet with Rausch Coleman Homes to explore their approach to building low cost affordable housing.
- Compile a list of reliable builders and developers interested in providing low cost affordable housing, particularly multi-family and single family dwellings in rural areas.
- Work with area banks to raise awareness of the need for affordable housing and develop new and innovative methods for securing financing.
- Work with non-profit organizations, public schools and community colleges to establish (or enhance existing) financial education programs for area residents.
- Assist local housing authorities with pursuing resources and funding through the Arkansas Development Finance Authority (ADFA) and other agencies

Responsible Parties:

- CAPDD staff
- Local city and county officials
- Local housing authorities

Resources:

- Rausch Coleman Homes
- Arkansas Home Builders Association (AHBA)
- Area bankers
- Area title companies
- Area realtors
- Area high schools and community colleges
- Local city and county officials
- Relevant non-profit organizations
- Local housing authorities

Estimated Completion Date:

- On-going
**Benefit to the Community**

Greater safety enhances quality of life and improves community image.

**Issue 1**

Safety services, particularly in rural areas, need to be upgraded and modernized.

**Strategy**

Raise awareness of the need for towns and communities to assess and improve the effectiveness of their emergency services including police, fire and 911.

**Action Steps:**

- Research ‘best practices’ used by states that provide effective and comprehensive 911 services.
- Explore the options provided by new state legislation focused on establishing ‘Next Generation’ wireless/internet based 911 services.
- Secure funding for new 911 technologies.
- Secure funding for updating rural 911 services.
- Provide training support for rural police and fire departments.

**Issue 2**

Many area communities must be better prepared to respond and recover from natural disasters.

**Strategy**

Increase the availability and effectiveness of Emergency Management services.

**Action Steps:**

- Raise awareness of the need for towns and communities to improve their Disaster Recovery Preparedness plans and procedures.
- Work with County Emergency Directors and the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) to update or create Disaster Response and Recovery plans at the county and municipal level.
- Assist local communities with locating resources to pay for training of critically needed Emergency Management personnel.

**Responsible Parties:**

- CAPDD staff
- County Emergency Directors
- ADEM
- Local county, city and municipal officials

**Resources:**

- ADEM
- Local county, city and municipal officials
- AEDC Division of Rural Services

**Estimated Completion Date:**

- On-going
### Benefit to the Community

Economic growth, enhanced safety, increased mobility and an improved quality of life.

### Issue

Critical aspects of the District’s essential infrastructure need repair, updating or rebuilding.

### Strategy

Improve water, sewer, transportation and industrial infrastructure and extend broadband coverage.

#### Action Steps:

- Conduct an inventory of potential traditional and non-traditional funding for infrastructural needs available from state and federal sources.
- Convene all local, state and federal infrastructural professionals and policy leaders to identify priorities and develop a cost effective short term and long term approach to strengthening and expanding the district’s infrastructure.
- Extend utilities and improve roads to existing industrial sites, especially ports.
- Provide more rail sites.
- Educate county and local officials to the difficulty of convincing a company or industry to invest in a site without adequate infrastructure.
- Meet with region’s telecommunication providers to explore options for extending broadband coverage to underserved rural areas.
- Explore the feasibility of creating logistics parks.

#### Responsible Parties:

- CAPDD staff
- Local county, city and municipal officials
- District, state and federal infrastructure professionals
- Telecommunication providers

#### Resources:

- CAPDD staff
- Local county, city and municipal officials
- District, state and federal infrastructure professionals
- Telecommunication providers

#### Estimated Completion Date:

- On-going