

CEDS 2023-25



Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Comprehensive Economic
Development Strategy
2023 - 2025



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WHAT IS A CEDS?

“A CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. A CEDS is the result of a regionally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region.” – U.S. Economic Development Agency (EDA)

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) identifies strategies to enhance and improve the economic environment of the Southern Ute Indian Reservation in the Four Corners region of the United States. It is the result of an extensive strategic planning process that engaged Tribal members, Tribal staff, and regional partners to conduct research and provide input.

The CEDS is submitted to and approved by the US Economic Development Agency (EDA). A typical CEDS would serve as a guide to the Tribe’s economic development efforts for the next five years. The EDA has asked that the Tribe limit the scope of this CEDS update to a 2-year window. This request is being made to help the EDA get all Tribes on the same 5-year rotation for future CEDS updates. To accommodate this request the action plan items were filtered with a 2-year time horizon in mind. However, the Strategic Priorities were set with a longer 5-7 year outlook.

Having an EDA approved CEDS improves the Tribe’s eligibility for various Federal grants.

Executive Summary

This Tribal Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is based on the unique needs of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (Tribe) and is focused on enhancing and improving the economic environment of the Southern Ute Indian Reservation (SUIR). This is the first update to the Tribe's original CEDS that was developed in 2018. This update builds upon the work of the original, while incorporating new data and introducing new concepts to address the needs of the Tribe in a post COVID-19 pandemic economic environment.

The economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic are still being felt today. High inflation, low workforce participation, rising housing costs, and supply chain shortages continue to create new economic challenges. In addition to these challenges two key observations were made during the economic planning process:

First, the Tribe lacks an effective tax base. Most government entities rely on sales tax to fund their investments into economic development. By using tax dollars governments are able to subsidize and incentivize development that otherwise would not occur. In return these subsidized developments improve the quality of life for community residents by increasing the availability of local services and amenities, while subsequently expanding the tax base needed to help fund future investments. The taxing authority of the Tribe is limited to the sale of goods and services that occurs on Tribal trust land within the boundaries of Southern Ute Indian Reservation. The commercial infrastructure on that land is currently very limited with the casino and Thriftway (gas station/C-Store) being the only two entities who collect and remit a meaningful amount of Tribal sales tax. This lack of tax base and limited tax revenue takes away the primary tool most other government entities use to fund economic development efforts. This means for the Tribe to subsidize development in a similar manner as neighboring governments it must draw funding from its private business and investment revenues. Those business revenues are comparable to income from a family-owned business, and they are intended to be used to provide income and benefits for those family members. Those family members in this case are the Tribal members, and if they are going to use their private business income in ways that also benefit the broader local community that difference in funding mechanism deserves to be acknowledged and appreciated. These generous contributions to the community by the Tribe are key to sparking economic growth that will increase available amenities and improve the quality of life for residents of the Southern Ute Indian Reservation.

Second, the Tribe is seeing increases in net migration of Tribal members off the reservation with no plan or little incentive to return, especially amongst those members under the age of 55. The factors that appear to be driving this are based predominately on anecdotal evidence and interviews, however some of the recurring themes include: The number and quality of jobs for Tribal Members is limited as most tribal business expansion is off the reservation. The desire to live in a community with more amenities (shopping, restaurants, entertainment, etc.) is increasing. A rise in households with one or more non-tribal members is increasing the desire for non-trust land housing that earns equity and can be easily passed on to a spouse or descendants regardless of their

membership eligibility or blood quantum. A lack of housing options on the reservation that can meet those needs is pushing them to look elsewhere. This generational shift and emerging trends are things that must be accounted for and contemplated in the economic development planning process as they can have a significant impact on the future. As these individuals and families move away with no plans to return, it reduces the talent pool and workforce needed to grow the economy (“Brain Drain”). It also decreases engagement in cultural activities and opportunities for those traditions to be passed on to a younger generation.

These challenges are complex and unique. There is no perfect solution or strategy to address them. A strategy is also only as good as its implementation. The best strategies in the world have little value unless they are implemented, evaluated, and adjusted continually over time. The strategies developed by this CEDS are designed to take those first steps or actions to build a strong economic development foundation that emphasizes economic resiliency.

The Southern Ute CEDS Committee identified five strategic priorities focused on improving the foundation of the Southern Ute Tribal economy in areas that make it stronger and more resilient. The priorities were developed directly from insights gained through the SWOT analysis, internal surveys, interviews with Tribal Members/Staff, and CEDS Committee discussions. The five main priorities identified are:

Strategic Priorities

- 1. Improve the Availability of Diverse Housing Options**
- 2. Expand High-Speed Broadband Connectivity**
- 3. Increase Commercial Infrastructure & Community Amenities**
- 4. Improve Tribal Economic Development Capacity & Ability to Leverage Underutilized Resources**
- 5. Enhance Opportunities for Business Creation**

These priorities along with their accompanying goals and objectives are designed to facilitate implementation and action by identifying a range of opportunities from conservative initial steps to higher reaching long-term goals. This range is captured in the accompanying Community Development Action Plan (CDAP) which highlights how each objective or project aligns with the strategic priorities and goals. The CDAP projects were also linked to six resiliency strategies identified in the Colorado Resiliency Framework, which addresses potential and interrelated economic, social, and environmental risks and vulnerabilities. In addition to the CDAP each of the Strategic Priorities has been organized into a one-page roadmap showing the desired outcome, goals, action items/CDAP projects, and performance measures linked to each strategy.

The included Summary Background provides information and data on the environment, economy, demographics, history & culture, workforce, and infrastructure of the Southern Ute Indian Reservation. This data and information was used to inform the economic development planning process and provide insights to the CEDS Committee to develop the strategies covered within this plan document.

This document will serve to guide the Tribe's economic development efforts over the next several years. A typical CEDS would serve as a guide for the next five years. The US Economic Development Agency (EDA) has asked that the Tribe limit the scope of this CEDS update to a 2-year window. This request is being made to help the EDA get all Tribes on the same 5-year rotation for future CEDS updates. To accommodate this request the action plan items, and performance measures were filtered with a 2-year time horizon in mind. However, the Strategic Priorities were set with a longer 5–7-year outlook. It is expected that this plan will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis, with an update in two years (2025) and an overall reassessment every five years thereafter (2030 and beyond).

SWOT Analysis

This SWOT analysis assesses the state of the Tribal economy, including the opportunities and threats posed by internal and external trends and forces, and the availability of resources for economic development.

The SWOT analysis is a process that identifies an organization's **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats**. Using environmental data to evaluate the position of an organization, a SWOT analysis determines what assists the organization in accomplishing its objectives, and what obstacles must be overcome or minimized to achieve desired results: where the organization is today, and where it may be positioned in the future.



A subcommittee made up of members of the Southern Ute CEDS Committee reviewed and updated the SWOT Analysis from the 2018 CEDS. The work by the subcommittee found that approximately 75% of the prior analysis was still relevant to the current Tribal economic environment, so that information was retained with some minor revisions. Additional information was then added to fill any gaps and account for any changes since the prior analysis was conducted. The updated SWOT Analysis was then reviewed and adopted by the full CEDS Committee in March of 2023.

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats identified in that updated SWOT Analysis are as follows:

Strengths

- Southern Ute cultural identity and attachment to place
- Passion for Tribal best interest and future sustainability

- Tribal sovereignty with recognition of a system of governance based on self-determination
- Natural resources of the Reservation
- Priority Tribal water rights
- Human capital with knowledge and expertise on energy, development, finance, technology, and natural resources.
- Successful financial track record – Southern Ute Growth Fund diversified holdings, Tribe’s AAA credit rating, and Permanent Fund endowment
- Tribal campus telecommunications infrastructure
- Access to a growing Regional Airport
- Education model which has the Tribal Montessori Academy incorporating Ute culture and language
- Tribal financial support and willingness to fund higher education access and completion for Tribal Membership
- Tribal air and water quality programs

Weaknesses

- Emigration of Tribal members off reservation – particularly within the younger and more educated population (“Brain Drain”)
- Over reliance on oil and gas revenues
- Lack of on Reservation business development and diversification
- Consumer retail leakage - Internet and off-reservation sales into neighboring economies
- Lack of available housing – limited diversity of housing options
- Limited Tribal infrastructure for internal and regional economic growth
- Lack of funding and framework for on-Reservation economic development
- Limited community development and amenities
- Lack of local workforce – high percentage of Tribal employees commute from off-Reservation.
- Limited Tribal engagement with regional partners to create diversified economies of scale and economic infrastructure
- Limited collaboration among Tribal entities for economic diversification and growth
- Limited Tribal member skilled workforce on reservation
- Limited Tribal member entrepreneurial spirit
- Lack of Tribe marketing brand and intellectual property
- Lack of a Tribal Master Land Use Plan
- Underutilized land and water rights
- Cumbersome bureaucratic processes and lack of administrative authority delegation within Tribal Government (Permanent Fund)
- Limited Tribal member business and legal knowledge

- Limited Tribal member financial literacy and capacity with poor credit ratings, lack of capital, highly risk adverse
- Lack of Master Water Plan
- Limited local food supply chain – lack of a food sovereignty program
- High turnover and lack of succession planning (laddering) in Tribal employment
- Decline of Reservation agricultural sector
- Current dividend income of Tribal members may disqualify 8a disadvantaged business certification and other Federal incentives
- Aging population and declining cultural and historical knowledge

Opportunities

- Significant support for entrepreneurs through existing tribal, regional, federal, and state organizations
- Ability to develop and utilize relationships with regional economic development entities
- Ability to develop and utilize relationships with Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs, Colorado state agencies, Federal agencies, and local political entities in the region
- Strong public higher education and training availability in the region
- Availability of commercial and general aviation service with proximity of regional airport to Reservation
- Rural regional hub for value-added industry creation, light manufacturing or communications center
- Expanded First Net communication for first responders, lending to resiliency
- Comprehensive regional health care services for Tribal members, employees, and general public
- Business growth opportunities in medical industries and medical tourism
- Expanded regional airline and air freight services
- Public lands accessibility- National forests, BLM, national parks, and state lands in close proximity to the Reservation
- Increased tourism utilizing off and on reservation experiences that leverage the major tourist attractions in the Region
- Eco/cultural/educational tourism opportunities for Tribal member business creation
- Underutilized Reservation land and water
- Access to federal and state funding and resources
- Expanding resources for Native American economic development regionally and nationally

Threats

- Decreasing Tribal member population on the Reservation – increased net migration of Tribal members off-Reservation.
- Rising non-tribal member population on the Reservation – increasing number of split (member/non-member) households
- Limited acknowledgement of the value and impact non-tribal members have on the Reservation economy – lack of inclusion of non-tribal members in the Tribal community
- Tribal Sovereignty (false sense of independence and impediment to partnerships)
- Limited collaboration locally and regionally negating economies of scale and investment cooperation
- Volatility in energy and financial markets risks impact on Growth Fund investments
- Limited Tribal investment in local development
- Rising costs of land and home ownership in the region
- Region offers low entry-level compensation and relatively few “living wage” employment opportunities
- Federal and state funding cuts in higher education, transportation, public health and human service programs
- Limited multi-modal transportation options (ex. rail service) in region negatively impacting economic growth
- Distance from major interstates and rail lines limiting access to larger markets such as Albuquerque, Denver and Phoenix
- Limited distribution centers in proximity for transportation of goods
- Shortage of competitive telecom and broadband with higher costs/limited infrastructure
- Difficulty for risk mitigation due to lack of regional collaboration
- Electrical grid constraints
- Natural disaster – lack of resiliency in current regional economic structure to counteract economic ramifications
- Regional economy is seasonal and highly dependent on recreation and tourism
- Local, State, and Federal regulations can present regulatory barriers to economic diversification and sustainable growth
- Limited technical education opportunities from local colleges (blue collar AND white-collar skills)

Strategic Direction

The Southern Ute CEDS Committee identified five strategic priorities focused on improving the foundation of the Southern Ute Tribal economy in areas that make it stronger and more resilient. The strategic priorities identified were developed over the

course of several months, in a number of strategy sessions, with participation from members of the Tribal Council, Tribal Staff, and the Southern Ute CEDS Committee. These priorities are designed to leverage and respond to various aspects of the SWOT analysis that was conducted as part of the CEDS process.

Strategic Priorities

- 1. Improve the Availability of Diverse Housing Options**
- 2. Expand High-Speed Broadband Connectivity**
- 3. Increase Commercial Infrastructure & Community Amenities**
- 4. Improve Tribal Economic Development Capacity & Ability to Leverage Underutilized Resources**
- 5. Enhance Opportunities for Business Creation**

Each of these priorities has been organized into a one-page roadmap outlining the strategic direction developed through this CEDS process. Each roadmap details the desired outcome, goals, action items/CDAP projects, and performance measures linked to each strategy. They also identify the parties primarily responsible for implementing and executing each strategy and highlight the known resources and partners available to aid in the process.

Evaluation Framework

Each of the Strategic Priority roadmaps were specially designed to incorporate the evaluation framework directly into the one-page document. The action items and performance measures listed provide key benchmarks to evaluate the progress and effectiveness of each strategy. Had this been a typical 5-year CEDS a timeline would have been added to assess progress toward key milestones. Given the short 2-year scope of this CEDS milestones were omitted in favor of a focus on setting performance measures that were realistic and attainable within the 2-year window.

In addition to the roadmap framework the Tribe has also adopted the Community Development Action Plan format utilized by neighboring governments. Some modifications to the format were made to make it more relevant and better suited to the unique aspects of the Tribe. However, the goal is that the use of this more common format will aid in collaboration, as well as provide a mechanism to gauge progress on the successful implementation of the CEDS by tracking the completion of CDAP projects over time.

The Community Development Action Plan (CDAP) is included with this CEDS and highlights how each objective or project aligns with the strategic priorities and goals of the Tribe. The CDAP projects were also linked to six resiliency strategies identified in the Colorado Resiliency Framework, which addresses potential and interrelated economic, social, and environmental risks and vulnerabilities.



Improve the Availability of Diverse Housing Options

Desired Outcome – “Where Do We Want to Go?”

Housing is a critical need. A lack of available housing in all categories is driving an increase in net migration away from the reservation, and making it difficult to recruit and retain workforce including Tribal employees, teachers, and first responders. Several proposed projects have significant momentum. Seeing that momentum turn into results that increase the supply and diversity of the housing options available is critical to future economic growth and stability.

Goals

- Increase Available Workforce Housing
- Develop Housing that Prioritizes Tribal Member Equity Creation and Growth

Action Items (CDAP Projects)

- Construct Additional Units at Quichas Apartments
- Construct New Rental Homes at Tranquillo Ct
- Construct Multi-Family Units at Rock Creek on Town-owned 5.7-acre Parcel
- Construct Additional Rental Homes on Buckskin Charlie Dr
- Complete Cedar Point Infrastructure Project
- Evaluate use of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to Develop a Larger (40+ Unit) Multi-Family Apartment Complex
- Update Rock Creek Subdivision Plan for Tribe-owned 54-acre Parcel
- Develop New Lots in Rock Creek Subdivision
- Construct New Homes on Lots in Rock Creek Subdivision

Performance Measures – “What Does Success Look Like?”

In the 2-year outlook of this CEDS the following would be the vision of a successful outcome:

- Completion of plan documents & designs for 50% or more of the proposed projects
- Construction of six or more new housing units
- Creation of ten or more new fee-land lots
- Completion of a LIHTC feasibility analysis

Responsible Parties:

- Economic Development
- Growth Fund Properties Group
- Tribal Housing

Resources/Partners:

- Town of Ignacio
- La Plata County

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Expand High-Speed Broadband Connectivity

Desired Outcome – “Where Do We Want to Go?”

Reliable broadband infrastructure is critical in a modern world and key to the future economic growth of the Southern Ute Indian Reservation (SUIR). Two major projects are currently underway to improve the broadband infrastructure and capacity within the SUIR. Seeing those projects finished and become operational will play a major role in keeping the SUIR a competitive place to live and work, as well as a key factor in the Tribe’s ability to recruit and retain new businesses.

Goals

- Increase Access to High-Speed Broadband Internet Service Across the Reservation
- Provide Fiber Optic Internet to every Tribal Member Home

Action Items (CDAP Projects)

- SUSS Broadband Modernization Project, Phase I
 - Tribal Backbone Fiber/Middle Mile
- SUSS Broadband Modernization Project, Phase II
 - Fiber to the Home of 95% of Tribal Members & Native Americans on the SUIR
 - Fiber to an additional 1,000 non-native residents
- Identify Funding & Develop Plan to Expand Network to all Homes & Businesses within the SUIR

Performance Measures – “What Does Success Look Like?”

In the 2-year outlook of this CEDS the following would be the vision of a successful outcome:

- Completion of the Phase I Fiber Backbone
- Phase II underway and on-track for completion by December of 2025
- Activate the business and operation capability of the new network
- Seek additional funding to expand the network to all homes and businesses within the SUIR

Responsible Parties:

- Southern Ute Shared Service (SUSS)

Resources/Partners:

- Bonfire Engineering & Construction
- Bonfire Fiber Operations
- National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA)



Increase Commercial Infrastructure & Community Amenities

Desired Outcome – “Where Do We Want to Go?”

Surveys of Tribal members and employees ranked increased shopping, businesses, and restaurants as their most desired amenities to develop in the Ignacio area. A lack of commercial infrastructure on Tribal land also limits the sales tax base of the Tribe. Increased commercial development would benefit both categories while subsequently improving quality of life for Tribal members, employees, and the community.

Goals

- **Diversify the Tribal Economy by Investing in Commercial Development that Expands the Tribal Tax Base and Improves the Availability of Local Products & Services**
- **Develop Commercial Infrastructure that can be Leased to Potential Businesses**

Action Items (CDAP Projects)

- Update Site Plans & Designs for Development of Commercial District
- Renovate & Remodel SUT Fueling Station & C-Store (Thriftway)
- Substance Use Disorder Healing Village
- Develop a Retail Plaza
- Southern Ute Veterans Resource Center
- Renovate Casino Mini-Golf Course
- Expand Casino RV Park
- Casino Combined Heat & Power Project
- Electric Vehicle Charging Stations
- Develop a Business Park

Performance Measures – “What Does Success Look Like?”

In the 2-year outlook of this CEDS the following would be the vision of a successful outcome:

- Grand Re-Opening of a renovated fueling station & C-Store
- Completion of site plans and designs for Commercial District
- Complete design phase & start construction phase of SUD Healing Village
- Complete design & initiate construction of Phase I of Retail Plaza development
- Identify location & complete a feasibility study for a business park

Responsible Parties:

- Economic Development
- Sky Ute Casino Resort
- Tribal Health

Resources/Partners:

- Thriftway Marketing Corp.

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Improve Tribal Economic Development Capacity & Ability to Leverage Underutilized Resources

Desired Outcome – “Where Do We Want to Go?”

The Tribe has a very successful business unit in its Southern Ute Growth Fund. However, it would benefit from an entity dedicated to on-reservation development. Efforts to create a Tribal Economic Development Corporation were started in 2019. Completion of those efforts, along with updates to the Tribe’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan and other planning documents would provide the foundational structure and capacity needed to leverage underutilized resources in ways that strengthen the Tribal economy and improve quality of life for residents of the Southern Ute Indian Reservation.

Goals

- Revitalize Efforts to Form and Fund a Tribal Economic Development Corporation
- Create and Update Tribal Comprehensive Plans & Master Plans - i.e. Land Use, Water, Roads, etc.
- Create Program to Improve Tribal Food Sovereignty and Supply Chains

Action Items (CDAP Projects)

- Establish a Tribal Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to Serve as the Primary Implementation Entity for the CEDS
- Develop a Food Sovereignty Program
 - Commercial Greenhouses
 - Meat Processing Plant
- Update Comprehensive Land Use Plan
 - Phase I – Ignacio Corridor
 - Phase II – rest of SUIR
- Create Water Utilization Plan
- Update Campus Roads Master Plan

Performance Measures – “What Does Success Look Like?”

In the 2-year outlook of this CEDS the following would be the vision of a successful outcome:

- Complete & Adopt a Business Plan for a Tribal Economic Development Corporation
- Issue an RFP and execute a contract with a consultant to perform a Comprehensive Land Use Plan update in phases

Responsible Parties:

- Economic Development
- Department of Natural Resources
- Tribal Planning
- Construction & Project Management

Resources/Partners:

- USDA
- EDA



Enhance Opportunities for Business Creation

Desired Outcome – “Where Do We Want to Go?”

Fostering local talent and entrepreneurial spirit is key to economic growth and creating new career opportunities. By providing, training, resources, and space to aspiring entrepreneurs we hope to see an increase in the number of businesses operating within and from the reservation.

Goals

- Encourage and Support Tribal Member Entrepreneurship
- Improve Access to Capital for Small Businesses on the Reservation

Action Items (CDAP Projects)

- SERC - Southern Ute Entrepreneurial Resource Center
 - Co-working Space
 - Maker Lab
 - Business Training & Workshops
 - Entrepreneur Fellowship & Mentoring
- Develop & Launch a Small Business Lending Program

Performance Measures – “What Does Success Look Like?”

In the 2-year outlook of this CEDS the following would be the vision of a successful outcome:

- Complete SERC Business Plan
- Launch virtual SERC programs & resources
- Identify location and funding source to construct SERC facility
- Launch new business loan program through Tribal Credit

Responsible Parties:

- Economic Development Staff
- Tribal Credit Division Staff

Resources/Partners:

- Colorado Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Fort Lewis College
- Region 9

Economic Resiliency

The history of the Tribe is discussed in the CEDS document and is intended to not only provide a history of the Ute people and culture but also to relate the Southern Ute Indian endurance and success in adapting to change and the surrounding environment. The Tribe provides real examples of vision, strength, and resiliency which serve to continue to move the Tribe into the future.

Resiliency is inherent in Southern Ute culture as they have adapted and thrived through the Spanish conquest and the reduction of their land which in 1868 covered the western half of Colorado consisting of 56 million acres to the roughly 681,000 acres it consists of today. Also, in 1895 the Hunter Act enabled lands within the Ute Strip to be allotted to tribal members, and the surplus lands homesteaded and sold to non-Indians further reducing the lands held by the Tribe. It is the ability of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe to overcome this history, create the necessary pathways, and move into the future successfully, which underscores the CEDS development to continue this legacy.

C.S. Holling (2001) writes relative to resiliency that “periods of success carry the seeds of subsequent downfall, because they allow stresses and rigidities to accumulate. Organizations and institutions often fail to cope with these slow changes, either because the changes are invisible to them, or they are so complex and highly contested that no action can be agreed upon.” Ideas regarding resiliency as a platform for Native American economic development (Wilkerson 2014) have been addressed in the strategic goals and the objectives created through this planning process.

The CDAP projects were also linked to six resiliency strategies identified in the Colorado Resiliency Framework, which addresses potential and interrelated economic, social, and environmental risks and vulnerabilities.

Summary Background

The summary background includes information and data on the environment, economy, demographics, history & culture, workforce, and infrastructure of the Southern Ute Indian Reservation. *Data sovereignty is something that the Southern Ute Indian Tribe holds in high regard. Due to the public nature of this CEDS document some data and information used in the economic planning process has been omitted from this CEDS document to honor and respect the sovereignty of the Tribe and its data. Insights from that data are still captured within other parts of the plan including the SWOT Analysis and Strategic Direction.*

Environment

The Southern Ute Indian Reservation (SUIR) extends across the southern tier of southwest Colorado, and is situated in Archuleta, Montezuma, and La Plata Counties.

The Tribal headquarters are located near Ignacio, CO (La Plata County). The reservation is located near the juncture of four states (Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah – the Four Corners). The topography includes high mountain peaks and valleys, towering mesas, deep canyons, and deserts. The Southern Ute reservation consists of timberlands on high mountains with elevations over 9,000 feet in the eastern portion, and flat arid mesas on the west.

The present-day Southern Ute Indian Reservation roughly forms a rectangle 75 miles east to west by 15 miles north to south and is slightly more than 681,000 acres in total area. Often referred to as a "checkerboard" for its irregular pattern of land ownership, the reservation lands are divided among many interests, including primarily Tribal trust lands, allotted trust lands, U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Reclamation lands, and fee simple lands. Much of the Tribe's lands, with the exception of the Pine River valley, are rugged, upland and foothill areas, while non-Indian fee lands predominantly occur on the arable mesas within the reservation. U.S. Forest Service lands are those of the San Juan National Forest, while Reclamation lands are those immediately surrounding Navajo Reservoir and Lake Nighthorse.



Southern Ute Indian Tribe Economy

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe is the largest employer in La Plata County, Colorado, providing jobs for an estimated 1,600 people from across the region in its various governmental offices and business enterprises. The Tribe has been recognized as a leader in providing economic vitality with the development of the Southern Ute Growth Fund and the Sky Ute Casino Resort. The Southern Ute Cultural Center & Museum along with the SunUte Community Center round out the economic base of the Tribe's headquarters near Ignacio, CO. In 2001 the Tribe received (and still maintains) a AAA credit rating from S&P and Fitch.

The Growth Fund was formed in 2000 to operate and manage the Southern Ute Indian Tribe's businesses and business investments. The Growth Fund is charged with managing the Tribe's businesses effectively, building new businesses prudently, paying dividends and elder's pensions while reinvesting money to grow the businesses to provide for future prosperity for the Tribal Membership. The intent was to provide supplemental income to assure that no Tribal member would be in a state of poverty. Over the last 23 years the Growth Fund has grown substantially with assets and/or operations spread out over fourteen states and the Gulf of Mexico. It is a substantial, but

quiet economic driver for southwest Colorado serving the membership of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe.

Sky Ute Casino Resort employs more than 400 people in various capacities and offers competitive wages and excellent benefits (delivering nearly \$14 million annually back into the regional economy through employment). Approximately one-third of the workforce is composed of local Native Americans. While purchasing requirements are generally so large that local vendors cannot compete, the Casino Resort uses local vendors to the greatest extent possible for such needs as printing & advertising, equipment rental, cleaning services, electrical needs, vehicle purchases etc. Regional purveyors for food products see well over \$2.5 million in annual sales for resort's restaurant and banquet needs. The Casino Resort's impact on the surrounding community is often under-estimated. As the region's only sizeable conference center with the convention and banquet capacity for 500+ attendees, the property can attract conferences to the area that would otherwise have to find accommodations elsewhere. The property also doubles as a concert venue that has offered various genres of musical talent over the past several years. Local and regional entertainment can use this property as a "step-up" venue to expand their notoriety, performing as opening acts for larger scale entertainers.

The reservation is also home to the Southern Ute Cultural Center & Museum. The museum is a southwest cultural resource and regional tourist attraction. Designed by Jones & Jones Architects in Seattle, Washington, who fashioned the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, the exceptional architecture and beauty of the building and landscape incorporate cultural symbolism and a connection to the land. Visitors first encounter the beauty of the landscape when walking past plants important to native subsistence and when crossing a flowing stream. The symbolic Bear Dance corral sits below the iconic cone entrance. Once inside, guests are awed by Ponderosa pine poles rising 60 feet through a second story tipi-like loft and ending at a Circle of Life glass ceiling. Light floods the welcoming atrium where guests are greeted by seasonally relevant displays. All gallery spaces are self-guided so visitors can meander through the museum at their leisure. The Permanent Gallery chronicles the story of the Ute people, from prehistory to modern times.



In 2001 SunUte Community Center opened its doors. It houses a gymnasium, fitness center, rock climbing wall, and swimming pools. It also has plenty of areas outside that members can enjoy from trails, playgrounds, and open field space to an archery range, a softball field, and a baseball field. It even has a skatepark and a disc golf course that snakes through a wetland area by the river. SunUte provides an exceptional recreational facility to the Ignacio community and surrounding area. Memberships are provided at no charge to the tribal members, and at reasonable cost to the community at large. The center also houses meeting spaces, and the Southern Ute Boys and Girls Club.

Demographics

Southern Ute Indian Tribe Population – In 2018, the total population of enrolled Southern Ute Tribal Members was 1,506 and in 2023 the total population was 1,471 based on data from Southern Ute Tribal Information Services (TIS). This reflects a decline of 35 members or 2.3% over the five-year period. A closer look at the three age groups shows a striking trend. The number of members aged 0-17 declined by 21% and the number of members aged 18-54 declined by 1.45%. The number of members aged 55 and older, however, increased by 17.2%. The only age cohort that is growing is the 55 and older group. As this population continues to age, the Tribal population will likely continue to decline. This trend is the most pronounced among those living on Reservation where those aged 0-17 declined by nearly 15.28% and those members aged 18-54 declined over 2%. The number of members aged 55 and older living on Reservation, however, increased 14.2%.

Regional Population – The Southern Ute Indian Reservation (SUIR) stretches across Archuleta, La Plata County, and Montezuma Counties. La Plata County is the most populous with a total population of 56,278 based on the most recent estimates from the Colorado State Demography Office (SDO). The population for La Plata County increased by 2.21% compared to 3.7% for the state of Colorado over the five-year period from 2017-2021.

Ignacio Colorado is the only incorporated town within the boundaries of the SUIR. The total population of Ignacio was 811 in 2017, and the total population rose to 852 in 2021 based on estimates from the SDO. This reflects a population increase of 4.81% over the five-year period, above both the state and county.

Location			% Change 5yr
Southern Ute	2018	2023	
Total	1,506	1,471	-2.32%
La Plata, CO	2017	2021	
Bayfield	2,713	2,885	5.96%
Durango	18,262	19,271	5.24%
Ignacio	811	852	4.81%
Unincorporated	33,248	33,270	0.07%
Total	55,034	56,278	2.21%
Montezuma, CO			
Cortez	8,600	8,923	3.62%

Dolores	896	905	0.99%
Mancos	1,268	1,219	-4.02%
Unincorporated	14,793	15,182	2.56%
Total	25,556	26,229	2.57%
Archuleta, CO			
Pagosa Springs	1,593	1,645	3.16%
Unincorporated	11,165	12,162	8.2%
Total	12,758	13,807	7.6%
Total 3 County Region	93,348	96,314	3.18%
Total in Unincorporated areas	60,799	60,614	-0.3%
% in Unincorporated Areas	65%	63%	-2%

Source: Southern Ute TIS and Colorado SDO

History & Culture

(Source: www.southernute-nsn.gov/history)

The Ute people are the oldest residents of Colorado, inhabiting the mountains and vast areas of Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Eastern Nevada, Northern New Mexico and Arizona. According to tribal history handed down from generation to generation, Ute people lived here since the beginning of time.

Tribes living in this area, ancestors of the Utes were the Uto-Aztecs, who spoke one common language; possessed a set of central values, and had a highly developed society which are traits commonly attributed to people possessing a civilization. The Ute civilization spoke the same language, shared values, observed the same social and political practices, in addition to inhabiting and holding a set territory. The language of the Utes is Shoshonean, a dialect of that Uto-Aztec language.

The Utes settled around the lake areas of Utah, some of which became the Paiute, other groups spread north and east and separated into the Shoshone and Comanche people, and some traveled south becoming the Chemehuevi and Kawaiisus. The remaining Ute people became a loose confederation of tribal units called bands. The names of the bands and the areas they lived in before European contact are as follows:

The Mouache band lived on the eastern slopes of the Rockies, from Denver south to Trinidad, Colorado, and further south to Las Vegas, New Mexico.

The Caputa band lived east of the Continental Divide, south of the Conejos River and in the San Luis Valley near the headwaters of the Rio Grande. They frequented the region near Chama and Tierra Amarilla. A few family units also lived in the shadow of Chimney Rock, now a designated United States National Monument.

The Weenuchiu occupied the valley of the San Juan River and its north tributaries in Colorado and Northwestern New Mexico. The Uncompahgre (Tabeguache) were located near the Uncompahgre and Gunnison, and Elk Rivers near Montrose and Grand Junction, Colorado.

The White River Ute (Parianuche and Yamparika) lived in the alleys of the White and Yampa river systems, and in the North and middle park regions of the Colorado Mountains, extending west to Eastern Utah. The Uintah lived east of Utah Lake to the Uinta Basin of the Tavaputs plateau near the Grand and Colorado River systems.

Today, the Mouache and Caputa bands comprise the Southern Ute Tribe and are headquartered near Ignacio, Colorado. The Weenuchiu, now known as the Ute Mountain Utes are headquartered at Towaoc, Colorado. The Tabeguache, Grand, Yampa and Uintah bands comprise the Northern Ute Tribe located on the Uintah-Ouray reservation next to Fort Duchesne, Utah.

As the Utes traveled the vast area of the Great Basin, large bands would breakup into smaller family units that were much more mobile. Camps could be broken down faster making travel from one location to another a more efficient process. Because food gathering was an immense task, the people learned that by alternating hunting and food gathering sites the environment would have time to replenish. The Nuche only took what they required, never over harvesting game or wild plants. These principles were closely adhered to in order for the people to survive.

A primary event that marked the beginning of spring was the annual Bear Dance. The Bear Dance is still considered a time of rejuvenation by the tribe. It is in essence, the Tribes' New Year, when Mother Earth begins a new cycle, plants begin to blossom, animals come out of their dens after a long cold winter. The Bear awakens from his winter's sleep and celebrates by dancing to welcome the spring and this dance was given to the Ute people by the bear. The Bear Dance is the most ancient dance of the Ute people and continues to be observed by all Ute bands.

The routes the Utes established were used by other Native American tribes and Europeans. The Ute Trail became known as the Spanish Trail used by Spanish explorers as early as the fifteenth century when Alvar Nunez Caveza de Vaca (1488-1558) and Juan de Onate (1550-1630) were sent from Spain to explore the uninhabited areas of Texas and New Mexico, claiming vast lands for their Spanish rulers. During the sixteenth century Spaniards began to colonize New Mexico, establishing their domination wherever possible. As the Spanish advanced northward into Ute territory, the customs, livestock, and language they brought began to influence the Ute's way of life. When Santa Fe was established as the northern capital of the Spanish colonists they captured Utes and other Native Americans as slave laborers to work in their fields and homes. Around 1637 Ute captives escaping from the Spanish in Santa Fe fled, taking with them Spanish horses, thus making the Utes one of the first Native American tribes to acquire the horse.



Already skilled hunters, the Utes used the horse to become expert big game hunters. They began to roam further away from their home camps to hunt buffalo that migrated over the vast prairies east of their mountain homes and explore the distant lands. The Utes began to depend upon the buffalo as a source for much of their needs. It took only

one buffalo to feed several families, and fewer hides were required to make structures and clothing.

As westward expansion increased and eastern tribes were displaced and relocated to barren lands in the west, pioneers began to travel west. Gold and silver were discovered in the San Juan Mountains and the Utes soon found themselves in a losing battle to retain their homelands.

On December 30, 1849 a peace treaty was signed between the United States and the Utes at Abiquiu, New Mexico. The treaty forced the Utes to officially recognize the sovereignty of the United States and established boundaries between the U.S. and the Ute nation. In 1863 another treaty was signed at Conejos terminating all Ute claims to mineral rights and lands in the San Luis Valley that had been settled by Europeans. In 1868 the U.S. government began another treaty to terminate the rights of the Confederated Ute Indians to other lands; however, this effort failed as the Utes refused to relinquish their rights to the lands in question.

In 1873 the government began new efforts to negotiate for these lands and a new commission was appointed by the Interior in 1873 to enter into negotiations for a new agreement. The Brunot agreement of 1873 was negotiated with the Confederated Utes and the U.S. government, represented by Felix R. Brunot, at the Los Pinos Agency on September 13, 1873. Ute chiefs, headmen and other members of the Tabeguache, Mouache, Caputa, Weenuchiu, Yampa, Grand River and Uintah bands of Ute Indians were present when the Agreement was signed.

The Brunot Treaty was ratified by the United States in 1874 and is most often remembered by Utes as the agreement when their land was fraudulently taken away. The Utes were led to believe that they would be signing an agreement that would allow mining to occur on the lands located only in the San Juan Mountain area, the site of valuable gold and silver ore. About four million acres of land not subject to mining would remain Ute territory under ownership of the tribe. However, they ended up forcibly relinquishing the lands to the U.S. government.

In 1895 the Hunter Act was passed opening up the Ute strip to homesteading and sale to non-Indians. The Utes residing on the small strip of reservation land north of the New Mexico state boundary and into the four corners area became divided. The Weenuchiu under the leadership of Chief Ignacio agreed that land could not be owned individually, but instead was owned in commonality by the tribe. The Weenuchiu moved westward and settled on a dry arid piece of land now known as Towaoc. The Southern Utes (Mouache and Caputa bands) agreed to take land into ownership under the allotment process. Unfortunately, many allotments were either sold to non-Indians as well as the Tribe. Around the 1940s about 300 allotments were owned by Southern Ute Tribal heads of household. This number has dwindled considerably at present.

The tribe is governed by a seven-member Tribal Council elected by the membership. Principle officers include the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Treasurer, with all council members serving three-year staggered terms. Tribal government is based on a Tribal Constitution adopted November 4, 1936, that was revised in September 1975. Although the tribe strives to provide strong social welfare and education programs, they also

emphasize the importance of the traditional way of life. They sponsor the annual Sun Dance and Bear dance. Tribal members of all ages participate in Pow-wows. Tribal Council recognized the importance of traditional healing and has incorporated this method into the health services program.

Housing

In April of 2022, the Tribe through its Tribal Council, requested GF Properties Group (GFPG), the real estate business entity of the Southern Ute Growth Fund, in collaboration with the Southern Ute Permanent Fund's Executive Office, to oversee a new Ignacio Area Housing Needs Study. The study commenced in July of 2022 and involved the compilation and analysis of new demographic and GIS data, surveys of Tribal membership and employees, interviews with key Tribal Members, staff, and community leaders, and review of other recent regional housing studies conducted by others.

The final report completed in March of 2023 details the outcome of those findings and provides a set of recommendations to help the Tribe develop and implement solutions that will address the housing needs of its membership, workforce, and community residents. The key findings from the study are as follows:

1. The housing shortage in the Ignacio area is the single biggest factor impacting the ability to buy or rent a home.
2. All age cohorts and populations are in need of housing both rental and for sale, and the problem is not exclusive to one specific type of housing.
3. The existing stock of housing in the Ignacio area is old and outdated.
4. Housing affordability is another factor impacting the ability to buy or rent a home.
5. Housing costs (buying and renting) are outpacing median income.
6. Creating home equity is important to Tribal Members and employees alike.
7. People would move to Ignacio if suitable housing were available and affordable.
8. A challenge is identifying developable land with desirable lot sizes where affordable housing can be constructed.
9. A variety of desired amenities in Ignacio, especially shopping/business/restaurants, points to the opportunity for economic development, community engagement, and job growth.

The conclusion from the study is that a long-term investment (20+ years) in the Ignacio community is needed to address the items above. Additionally, the 2009 GFD Ignacio Master Plan should be updated to help identify suitable land parcels that can be feasibly developed for affordable housing. Last, opportunities exist to partner with other local, regional, and state agencies and organizations to obtain grant funding that supports housing development in the greater Ignacio area.

The following recommendations from the study are intended to help the Tribe improve on its existing land use, identify appropriate areas for new housing development, and ensure sound economic growth through a diversified and affordable housing stock. The

recommendations focus on a short-term plan (1 year), a mid-term plan (1-3 years), and a long-term plan as a pragmatic and timely approach to address the existing needs of Tribal Members, employees, and Ignacio area residents.

- Initiate Short-Term Plan (1 year):
 - Finding: There is a critical lack of quality rental housing. Recommendation: Add rental units at Quichas Apartments.
 - Finding: High quality homes are lacking in the area. Recommendation: Build units on remaining lots in Tranquilo Court.
 - Finding: Building homes for Tribal Members is a high priority. Recommendation: Continue Cedar Point home development projects.
- Initiate Mid-Term Plan (1-3 years):
 - Identify developable land with desirable lot size. Explore housing development opportunities with the Town of Ignacio at Rock Creek III (Town-owned 5.7-acre parcel) and Southern Ute Housing Authority.
 - Identify developable land with desirable lot size. Explore housing development opportunities with the Town of Ignacio and Southern Ute Housing Authority at the Tribe-owned Rock Creek parcel (54 acres).
- Strategize for Long-Term Plan (now-20 years):
- Update the current Tribal Comprehensive Plan and the 2009 GFD Ignacio Master Plan in coordination with the Southern Ute Housing Authority, the Town of Ignacio, and other organizations as appropriate.
 - Address needs for apartments, single-family homes, townhomes, large lots, and other alternative housing.
 - Address other items: commercial property for shopping, restaurants, and other amenities.

Workforce

The number and quality of jobs on the reservation for Tribal Members is perceived as an issue as most tribal business expansion is currently outside the region. The future for Tribal Members jobs may be maximized if the outside business earnings and Tribal Member dividends remain strong, and if Tribal Members reach their educational goals. Making sure Tribal Members have access to good jobs remains a leadership priority and concern.

The changing dynamic now observed is that tribal members are increasingly less motivated for education and careers with a perceived income for life. This perception leads to less tribal engagement in individual business or job attainment, tribal society and cultural involvement.

To help Tribal Members achieve their educational and career goals the Tribe offers an Academic Advising and Scholarship program. The program provides full-tuition scholarships, living stipends, and mileage reimbursements for enrolled members of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe to attend a non-profit college or university.

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe's Tribal Employee Rights Office (TERO) provides job placement for qualified Southern Ute Tribal Members as well as local Native

Americans. The Tribe’s Human Resources Department also offers apprenticeship programs to support employment and career development.

When it comes to workforce development the largest obstacle is the lack of available housing. A recent survey of Tribal employees found that the majority make long commutes from other communities to work for the various Tribal entities in the Ignacio Area. Of the employees surveyed 62% responded that they would move to Ignacio if housing were available and affordable. Opportunities and needs for additional workforce development programs exist. However, limited resources should be concentrated on the housing needs first as that is where they can have the greatest impact on growing and retaining the local workforce.

Infrastructure & Services

The available built infrastructure varies by community across the region, making some areas more, or less, attractive to potential economic growth and development.

The Tribe owns and operates its own utilities division providing water and wastewater treatment, and natural gas service to the Ignacio Area. Its Southern Ute Shared Services (SUSS) provides information technology-related services to the Tribe’s business and governmental entities. It is currently leading a large broadband project that will significantly improve capacity and telecommunications infrastructure for the Southern Ute Indian Reservation.

Regional Infrastructure

Location	¹ Electric	Telecom	² Natural Gas	³ Water	⁴ Waste Water	⁵ Solid Waste
Archuleta, CO						
Pagosa Springs	LPEA	Various	SourceGas	PAWS	PAWS	WM
Unincorporated	LPEA	Various	Propane	Wells	Septic	Various
La Plata, CO						
Bayfield	LPEA	Various	Atmos, Propane	Municipal	Municipal	Various
Durango	LPEA	Various	Atmos	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
Ignacio	LPEA	Various	SUIT	SUIT	SUIT	Various
Unincorporated	LPEA	Various	Atmos, Propane	RWD	RSD	Various
Montezuma, CO						
Cortez	Empire	Various	Atmos, Propane	RWD, Wells	Municipal	Municipal
Dolores	Empire	Various	Atmos, Propane	RWD, Wells	Municipal	WM
Mancos	Empire	Various	Atmos, Propane	RWD, Wells	Municipal	Various
Unincorporated	Empire	Various	Atmos, Propane	RWD, Wells	RSD, Wells	Various
San Juan, NM						
Aztec	AEU	Various	NMG,Propane	Municipal,RWD, Wells	Municipal	TW
Farmington	FEUS	Various	NMG,Propane	Municipal,RWD, Wells	Municipal	WM
Bloomfield	FEUS	Various	NMG,Propane	Municipal,RWD, Wells	Municipal	TW
Kirtland	FEUS	Various	NMG,Propane	RWD, Wells	RSD	WM
Unincorporated	FEUS	Various	NMG,Propane	RWD, Wells	RSD	WM

¹ Aztec Electric Utility (AEU); Farmington Electric Utility Service (FEUS); La Plata Electric Association (LPEA); Empire Electric Association (EEA); San Miguel Power Association (SMPA)

² Atmos Energy; New Mexico Gas

³ Rural Water District (RWD); Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT)

⁴ Rural Sanitation District (RSD); Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT)⁵ Waste Management (WM); Transit Waste (TW)

Education

The Southern Ute Indian Montessori Academy opened in August 2000. The Academy is a private school that provides education and day care for enrolled Tribal Members and 1st Descendants from the ages of six months to the sixth grade. Its curriculum includes a comprehensive Ute language program to engage Southern Ute children in Ute culture and language.

Southern Ute Indian youth living on or near the reservation are enrolled in middle and high school primarily in the Ignacio School District, with some attending neighboring schools in Bayfield and Durango School Districts. The Tribe also provides Ute language classes within the Ignacio School District. Data for the three school districts shows that Ignacio falls significantly below its neighboring counterparts:

	Ignacio	Durango	Bayfield
High School Graduation Rate	63%	95%	85%
Avg. SAT Score	822	1054	986

Source: GreatSchools.org

This data is linked to and prominently listed on popular real estate websites like Zillow and others. These sites are often some of the first sources of information people view when looking to move or accept a job in area. The impression this information leaves can have a significant impact on the ability to recruit those potential employees and residents to the area/reservation.

Post-secondary education is offered locally in the region through the accredited Fort Lewis College (a public four-year college in Durango, CO) San Juan College (a two-year community college in Farmington, NM), and Pueblo Community College Southwest Center (a two-year community college in Durango and Mancos, CO).

Fort Lewis College and San Juan College are both qualified Native American-serving, nontribal institutions which provides additional benefits to each institution for Native American students. The qualification for this distinction is that the institution must have a minimum of twenty-five per cent of its enrolled students as enrolled Tribal members. The existence of a four-year and two-year qualified Native American-serving nontribal institutions within the region has negated the need for the Tribe to pursue its own Tribal college. Fort Lewis College also has, through the State of Colorado, a provision for providing any enrolled Tribal member a tuition waiver regardless of which state they reside.

Public Comments

Public comments and input were sought throughout the strategic planning process in various surveys and interviews. An official public comment period on the final draft of the CEDS was open and advertised from August 25th through September 25th. Requests for comment were advertised via the Tribe's social media, website, and email, as well as published in the Southern Ute Drum.

Comments Received:

- 1) "Glad to see housing is a top priority. We need housing for workers most. Tribal employees do jobs that benefit the membership but to get them we need places for them to live."
- 2) "The Tribe spent money on the intake structure from Lake Nighthorse. How are we using that investment and water. Would like to see more plans for development on west side of reservation and ways to use that water."
- 3) "We are always asked about a project, and nothing is ever done. Or we start a project, and someone leaves, and it just sits there until someone decides to bring the project back again. This is a great area to live in. You are about 8 hours away or less from Denver, Phoenix, Albuquerque, Amarillo, or even Salt Lake City. If the Tribe would open up housing for everyone, they could make good money. But they have to build keeping in mind this is not just for the membership, but for others as well."
- 4) "We need more local stores, restaurants, and boutiques. Build a space for artists, jewelry makers, and other vendors to sell their creations like some of the other tribes have done."

Southern Ute Indian Tribe Community Development Action Plan (CDAP)

The *Community Development Action Plan* (CDAP) is a list of short-term projects (**defined as two years or less**). Initial drafts of the CDAPs are developed through review of current projects, planning documents, small group discussions and interviews with Tribal departments and stakeholders. The CDAPs are useful tools for organizations working with communities and have evolved into being the central source for listing the full range of projects that are in process or are desired. The CDAPs are used as the official community plan required for eligibility for many federal and state funding sources.

The 2023 Southern Ute Indian Tribe CDAP has a total of 29 proposed projects at various stages in the development process.

The CDAP projects were aligned with the Tribe’s Strategic Priorities; and,

The CDAP projects were also linked to six resiliency strategies identified in the [Colorado Resiliency Framework](#), which addresses potential and interrelated economic, social, and environmental risks and vulnerabilities. Numbers representing the resiliency strategies supported are listed next to each project in the CDAP. Please refer to the Colorado Resiliency Framework document for details.

1. **Future Ready Economy & Workforce**
2. **Climate & Natural Hazard Resiliency**
3. **Building & Infrastructure Sustainability**
4. **Agriculture & Food Security**
5. **Housing Attainability**
6. **Community Capacity**
7. **Internal to Community**

Currently, the CDAP list displays: Project #, Rank, Strategic Priority Link, Economic Goal Category, Colorado Resiliency Link, Funding Resources, Cost Estimate, Primary Partners, and Outcomes & Impacts.

CDAP Project Ranking Criteria

- Is relevant to economic or community development – aligns with community master plans and/or Tribal economic priorities.
- Is relevant to economic or community resiliency
- Is within the Tribe’s and primary partners ability to influence.
- Is feasible and sustainable
- Opportunities exist to partner with other entities (towns, counties, region, state, federal)
- Metrics address progress and impact.

Rank		
High	Medium	Low
Must meet at least 5 criteria	Must meet at least 3 criteria	Must meet at least 2 criteria

Strategic Priorities	#1 - Improve Availability of Diverse Housing Options	#2 - Expand High-Speed Broadband Connectivity	#3 - Increase Commercial Infrastructure & Community Amenities	#4 - Improve Tribal Economic Development Capacity & Ability to Leverage Underutilized Resources	#5 - Enhance Opportunities for Business Creation
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Develop Housing that Prioritizes Tribal Member Equity Creation and Growth (EH) > Increase Available Workforce Housing (WH) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Increase Access to High-Speed Broadband Internet Service Across the Reservation (IA) > Provide Fiber Optic Internet to every Tribal Member Home (FTH) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Diversify the Tribal Economy by Investing in Commercial Development that Expands the Tribal Tax Base and Improves the Availability of Local Products & Services(LS) > Develop Commercial Infrastructure that can be Leased to Potential Businesses (CI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Revitalize Efforts to Form & Fund a Tribal Economic Development Corporation (EDC) > Create and Update Tribal Comprehensive Plans & Master Plans - i.e. Land Use, Water, Campus, Roads, etc. (CP) > Create Program to Improve Tribal Food Sovereignty and Supply Chains (FS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Encourage and Support Tribal Member Entrepreneurship (SE) > Improve Access to Capital for Small Businesses on the Reservation (AC)

Southern Ute Indian Tribe Community Development Action Plan (CDAP) 2023

CDAP #	Project	Rank	Strategic Priority Link	Economic Goal Category(s)	Colorado Resiliency Framework Link	Funding Resources	Cost Estimate	Primary Partners	Outcomes & Impacts
1	Tribal Economic Development Corporation (EDC)	High	#4 - Capacity	EDC, LS, CI, LC, EH, WH	1,4,5,7	Tribal Investment, EDA, OEDIT	Outlined per Biz Plan	Outlined per Biz Plan	Dedicated capacity, structure, and funding for on reservation development
2	Quichas Apartments Additional Units	High	#1 - Housing	WH	1,5	Prop 123, Tribal Investment	\$2.25MM	GF Properties	Add 6 new rental units to Ignacio Area housing supply
3	Construct New Rental Homes at Tranquillo Ct	High	#1 - Housing	EH	1,5	Prop 123, Tribal Investment	\$1.06MM	GF Properties	Add 2 new rental units to Ignacio Area housing supply
4	Rock Creek Multi-Family Units on Town-owned 5.7-acre Parcel	High	#1 - Housing	WH	1,5,6	Congressionally Directed Spending(CDS)	\$7.5MM	GF Properties, Town of Ignacio	Add 25 new rental units to Ignacio Area housing supply
5	SUSS Brodband Project Phase I	High	#2 - Broadband	IA	1,3,7	State of Colorado HB21-1289 (\$10MM), and other ARPA and Tribal Investment	\$15MM	Bonfire Engineering and Construction, Bonfire Fiber Operations	Tribal backbone fiber routes. Target completion date Summer 2023, except for allotment routes.
6	SUSS Brodband Project Phase II	Med	#2 - Broadband	FTH	1,3,7	NTIA Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (\$43.7MM)	\$43.7MM	Bonfire Engineering and Construction, Bonfire Fiber Operations	Connectivity to 95% of Tribal Member homes. 2000 additional homes/businesses connected for non-Tribal Members. ~400 miles of fiber. New business capability for the Tribe. Target completion is Dec 2025.
7	Construct Additional Rental Homes on Buckskin Charlie Dr	High	#1 - Housing	WH, LC, LS,	1,5,7	Prop 123, Stronger Communities Grant	TBD	Tribal Housing	Design and construct up to 6 workforce housing units

8	Substance Use Disorder Healing Village	High	#3 - Amenities	LS	6,7	Opioid Settlement	\$55.4MM	Tribal Health	Provide local culturally inclusive substance use treatment
9	Renovate & Remodel SUIT Fueling Station & C-Store (Thriftway)	High	#3 - Amenities	LS, CI	1,7	Outside Contract	\$1.8MM	Thriftway Marketing Corp.	Improve Tribal image and tax base
10	Update Commercial District Development Plan	High	#3 - Amenities	LS, CI	1,3,7	TBD	\$50k	TBD	Create a plan to develop valuable highway frontage near Ignacio to expand the Tribe's tax base & incubate new businesses
11	Update Rock Creek Subdivision Plan	High	#1 - Housing	EH, WH	1,2,3,5	TBD	\$50k	TBD	Increase available fee land building sites near Tribal headquarters in Ignacio
12	Evaluate use of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to Develop a Larger (40+ Unit) Apartment Complex	High	#1 - Housing	WH	1,2,3,6	TBD	\$50k	TBD	Increase available rental housing options to support workforce
13	Develop a Tribal Food Sovereignty Program	High	#3 - Amenities	LS	1,4,7	USDA	TBD	TBD	Improve local food supply chains and resiliency. Encourage agricultural business development and growth
14	SERC - Southern Ute Entrepreneurial Resource Center	Med	#5 - Business	SE	1,6,7	EDA, SBA, OEDIT, USDA	Outlined per Biz Plan	Fort Lewis College, SBDC	Provide resources and space to help launch & incubate small businesses. Support Tribal Member entrepreneurs both on & off the Southern Ute Indian Reservation
15	Develop & Launch a Small Business Lending Program	Med	#5 - Business	AC, SE	1,6,7	Tribal Investment, EDA, USDA	TBD	TBD	Expand access to capital and encourage investment in Tribal trustland that is difficult to collateralize
16	Create SUIT Water Utilization Plan	High	#4 - Capacity	CP	2,3,5,6	USDA, BIA	TBD	TBD	Develop a plan to best use and preserve the Tribe's water rights
17	Update SUIT Comprehensive Land Use Plan	High	#4 - Capacity	CP	2,3,5,7	USDA, BIA	TBD	TBD	Reaffirm prior land use designations, and add new designations to better facilitate future growth and development
18	Develop New Lots in Rock Creek Subdivision	Med	#1 - Housing	EH	1,3,5,6	IHS, Prop 123, IJJA, Tribal Investment	TBD	TBD	Increase available fee land building sites near Tribal headquarters in Ignacio
19	Construct New Homes on Lots in Rock Creek Subdivision	Med	#1 - Housing	EH	1,3,5,7	Prop 123, Tribal Investment	TBD	TBD	Increase the availability of quality homes that create and build home equity near Tribal headquarters in Ignacio
20	Retail Plaza	Med	#3 - Amenities	LS, CI, SE	1,3,7	USDA, Tax Credits, OEDIT, Enterprise Zone, Tribal Investment	TBD	TBD	Develop retail space to incubate small businesses & artisans that increase local shopping & dining options
21	Commercial Greenhouses	Med	#4 - Capacity	FS, LS, CI	1,2,4,7	USDA, Tribal Investment	TBD	TBD	Strengthen local food supply chains & resiliency. Encourage agricultural business development and growth. Create a path for the creation of a Tribal brand of products.
22	Southern Ute Veterans Resource Center	Med	#3 - Amenities	LS	3,6,7	Congressionally Directed Spending(CDS), USDA, VA	\$2.5MM	TBD	Support Tribal and local area Veterans
23	Cedar Point Infrastructure Project	Med	#1 - Housing	WH, LC, LS	1,5,6,7	Prop 123, Stronger Communities Grant, IHS funding	TBD	Tribal Housing	Extend services to exiting lots to make lots developable/buildable

24	Casino RV Park Expansion	Med	#3 - Amenities	LS	1,7	TBD	\$3MM	Sky Ute Casino	Increase accommodation capacity of the casino resort
25	Renovation of Casino Minature Golf Course	Med	#3 - Amenities	LS	1,7	TBD	TBD	Sky Ute Casino	Increase/improve the local availability of family-friendly activities
26	Casino Combined Heat and Power Project	Med	#3 - Amenities	LS	1,2,3,7	IRA	\$2.2MM	Sky Ute Casino	Improve the efficiency and resiliency of the casino resort
27	Electric Vehicle Charging	Med	#3 - Amenities	LS	1,2,3	TBD	TBD	TBD	Support clean energy expansion and adoption
28	Meat Processing Plant	Med	#4 - Capacity	FS, LS	1,4,7	USDA	TBD	TBD	Support Tribal ag producers, improve local supply chains
29	Business Park	Med	#3 - Amenities	LS, CI, SE	1,3,4,7	TBD	TBD	TBD	Expand business and career opportunities on the Southern Ute Indian Reservation

[The CDAP projects were also linked to six resiliency strategies identified in the Colorado Resiliency Framework, which addresses potential and interrelated economic, social, and environmental risks and vulnerabilities. Abbreviations are listed next to the strategies in the CDAP along with a number representing the supporting strategy. Please refer to the Colorado](#)

1. Future Ready Economy & Workforce (EW)
2. Climate & Natural Hazard Resiliency (CN)
3. Building & Infrastructure Sustainability (BI)
4. Agriculture & Food Security (AF)
5. Housing Attainability (HA)
6. Community Capacity (CC)
7. Internal to Community (IC) - this was added for projects aligned more closely with local resiliency strategies

**RESOLUTION
OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE
October 10, 2023**

WHEREAS, authority is vested in the Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council by the Constitution adopted by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, and approved November 4, 1936, and amended October 1, 1975, and August 27, 1991, to act for the Southern Ute Indian Tribe; and

WHEREAS, under Article VII, Section 1(h)(1) of the Tribal Constitution, “[a]ll appropriations of tribal funds shall be expended in conformity with annual budgets subject to approval by the Secretary of the Interior, or his authorized representative;” and

WHEREAS, on January 15, 1999, Tribal Council adopted Resolution No. 99-07 approving a Financial Plan for the Tribe; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal Council previously authorized the creation of the Southern Ute Economic Development Program via an Internal Needs Assessment on October 3, 2017 to evaluate and implement projects related to small business development and Tribal commercial development; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal Council previously authorized the creation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee (CEDS Committee) to provide guidance to the Economic Development Program as required by the Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA); and

WHEREAS, in September 2018, via Resolution No. 2018-179, the Tribal Council approved the Southern Ute Indian Tribe’s first Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to act as the framework and planning tool for economic development for the Southern Ute Indian Tribe; and

WHEREAS, on April 27, 2021, Tribal Council approved, via Resolution No. 2021-060, the application for an EDA Partnership Planning Grant to continue work on the Tribe’s CEDS; and

WHEREAS, an update to the Tribe’s CEDS is required in 2023 to meet the requirements and maintain federal grant eligibility under the program administered by the EDA; and

WHEREAS, the CEDS Committee and the Manager of Economic Development have satisfied all the prerequisites for EDA approval of the updated CEDS, including completing an extensive strategic planning process that engaged Tribal Members, Tribal staff, and regional partners in a number of surveys, interviews and strategy sessions to conduct research and provide input regarding the contents and goals of the CEDS; and the CEDS was made available for the

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EDA mandated 30-day public comment period with all comments received incorporated into the final version of the CEDS; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal Council finds it in the Tribe's best interest to approve the CEDS document.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council approves and adopts the Southern Ute Indian Tribe Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to be effective October 2023 through September 2025, or until such time as a new CEDS is approved and adopted. A copy of the CEDS is attached as Exhibit A to this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council authorizes the Economic Development staff to take all necessary action to evaluate and pursue projects related to the Tribe's economic development goals as outlined in the CEDS.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Economic Development staff will submit new programs and/or projects related to implementing the CEDS to the Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council for approval prior to taking any additional action.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chairman of the Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council or, in his absence, the Vice Chairman, or, in the absence of both the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, a duly appointed Acting Chairman is hereby authorized to sign the necessary documents and take all necessary actions to carry out the intent of this resolution.

This resolution was duly adopted on the 10th day of October, 2023.



Mr. Melvin J. Baker, Chairman
Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council

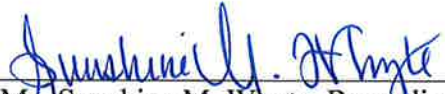
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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

This is to certify that there were (5) of the regularly elected Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council members present at the above meeting, at which (4) voted for, and (0) against, it being a quorum and the above resolution was passed, the Chairman not being permitted to vote in this instance due to a Constitutional provision.



Ms. Sunshine M. Whyte, Recording Secretary
Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council