Sonoran Desert Biosphere Region

Comprehensive Economic Development Study: Findings and Strategies



Meeting Agenda

Project Scope and Purpose

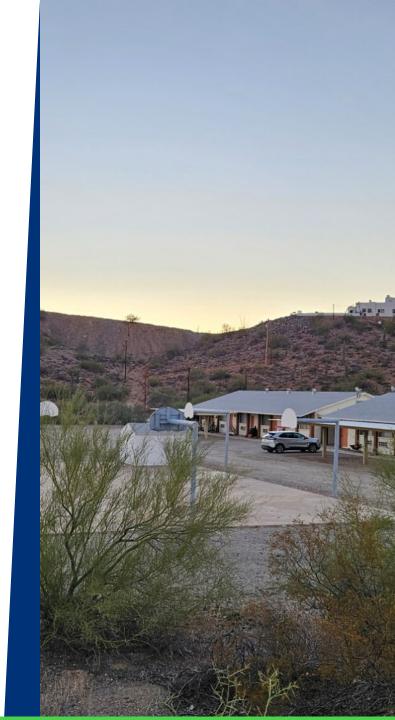
Interviews/Focus Group Report

SWOT Analysis

Insights and Strategy Topics

Project Scope and Purpose

- Sonoran Desert Biosphere Region
- 5-year timeline
- Rural-driven strategy
- Included Communities
 - Ajo
 - Gila Bend
 - Lukeville
 - Why
 - Tohono O'odham Nation
 - Other small I-8 communities



Interviews / Focus Group Report

- ~20 individual interviews
 - Ajo
 - Gila Bend
 - San Lucy
 - Pisinemo District
 - Gu Vo District
- 5 focus groups
 - Ajo Businesses
 - Gila Bend Elected officials
 - San Lucy District Leaders
 - Ajo Public land managers
 - GED Students Gu Vo District

Common Topics

- Economic Drivers: Tourism, energy, government & tribal jobs
- Quality housing
- Food access
- Workforce pathways
- Healthcare access
- Leadership / Business Succession



SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Dark skies	Jurisdictional mismatch	Hospitality	Dependence on border
ISDA and triple-focus (Environment, culture, economy)	Limited workforce skill	Tourism (incl. public lands)	Aging demographic
Self efficacy	Limited housing options	Diversification / Remote Jobs	Desertification
Broadband backbone	Challenges in educational outcomes	Regional collaboration	Climate change impacts
Unique cultural heritage (3 nation)	Transportation	Renewable energy development	
Natural beauty and biodiversity		Educational and research facilities	

- BusinessOpportunities
- Education
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Leadership & Regional Collaboration
- Quality Housing
- Tourism and Placemaking

- Port of Entry Impacts
 - 25-75% decrease in sales
 - 59% decrease in Park visitation
 - 43% decrease in retail foot traffic
- Green technologies

- BusinessOpportunities
- Education
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Leadership & Regional Collaboration
- Quality Housing
- Tourism and Placemaking

- Enhance entrepreneurial support
- Attract and developing high-skilled workers
 - Technology
 - Renewable energy
- Leverage regional offerings

- Business Opportunities
- Education
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Leadership & Regional Collaboration
- Quality Housing
- Tourism and Placemaking

- % Pop 18-24 HS Graduate or Equivalent:
 - SDBR 72.4%
 - AZ 85.6%
- Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate:
 - SDBR 46.8% (pop. weighted avg)
 - AZ 76.7%

- Business Opportunities
- Education
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Leadership & Regional Collaboration
- Quality Housing
- Tourism and Placemaking

- Regional workforce development plan
- Radio astronomy / green tech research center
 - UofA and CalTech
- Pima County Community College

- Business Opportunities
- Education
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Leadership & Regional Collaboration
- Quality Housing
- Tourism and Placemaking

- 10% of Ajo and 50% of those in the Tohono O'odham Nation are affected by type II diabetes (TOCA 2009)
- Insufficient number of groceries in region

- Business Opportunities
- Education
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Leadership & Regional Collaboration
- Quality Housing
- Tourism and Placemaking

- Food Access
 - Community/ backyard gardening
 - Traditional foods (fruits and veggies)

- Business Opportunities
- Education
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Leadership & Regional Collaboration
- Quality Housing
- Tourism and Placemaking

- Population without insurance
 - AZ 10.8%
 - SDBR 13.8%
- Senior services / health

- Business Opportunities
- Education
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Leadership & Regional Collaboration
- Quality Housing
- Tourism and Placemaking

- Improve telehealth options with specialty care support
 - Local nursing staff
- Develop career pathways in healthcare industry
- Strengthen IHS offerings

- Business Opportunities
- Education
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Leadership & Regional Collaboration
- Quality Housing
- Tourism and Placemaking

- CEDS project as pioneer model
- Concentrated leadership

- Business Opportunities
- Education
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Leadership & Regional Collaboration
- Quality Housing
- Tourism and Placemaking

- Economic
 Development District
- Youth council

- Business Opportunities
- Education
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Leadership & Regional Collaboration
- Quality Housing
- Tourism and Placemaking
- Ajo Governance

- Median year structure built
 - AZ 1993
 - SDBR- 1960-1975
- Workforce interest in construction occupations
- Value to income ratio
 - AZ 4.3
 - SDBR- 2.5

- Business Opportunities
- Education
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Leadership & Regional Collaboration
- Quality Housing
- Tourism and Placemaking

- New development of small(er) homes
- Workforce pathway in construction industry
 - Regional collaboration
- Short-term housing for gov't contractors and others

- Business Opportunities
- Education
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Leadership & Regional Collaboration
- Quality Housing
- Tourism and Placemaking

- Economic impact
- Hotel capacity

- Business Opportunities
- Education
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Leadership & Regional Collaboration
- Quality Housing
- Tourism and Placemaking

- Develop new hotel/resort,
 RV park spaces
 - Tours between touristic destinations
- Create destination amenities
 - Capture MX & international visitors

