

**Cher-Ae Heights Indian
Community of the
Trinidad Rancheria**

**COMPREHENSIVE
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY**



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Executive Summary & CEDS Background

The Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria (Trinidad Rancheria) has developed this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to guide the Tribe's economic development efforts over the next five years. The CEDS provides a strategic framework for advancing economic growth, community well-being, and workforce development, ensuring that future initiatives align with the Tribe's long-term vision for sustainability and prosperity.



This CEDS serves as a planning tool to help identify economic opportunities, prioritize investments, and strengthen the Tribe's ability to support a diverse and sustainable local economy. The document is accessible to regional partners, stakeholders, and funding agencies.

Through this planning effort, the Tribe seeks to implement strategies that build community capacity, enhance workforce development, and cultivate economic opportunities that benefit current and future generations. In doing so, the Tribe is also committed to building an economy that supports the living systems we depend on and advancing economic strategies that restore and sustain ecosystems as a foundation for long-term prosperity.

This plan reflects the Tribe's local priorities while emphasizing a regional, collaborative approach to achieving sustainable economic development. Completion of a CEDS is also a requirement for eligibility under the U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Public Works, Economic Adjustment, and Planning programs, and it is a prerequisite for designation as an Economic Development District (EDD).

The development of this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is the result of a collaborative effort among the Trinidad Rancheria's Tribal Leadership, the Trinidad Rancheria Economic Development Corporation (TREDC), the Tribal Harbor District Strategic Leadership Workgroup, Tribal Members' visions as shared through multiple planning initiatives, and the Tribe's Transportation and Land Use Department. This process underscores the Tribe's commitment to integrated planning that links transportation, land use, and economic development—laying the foundation for a resilient and thriving future for the Trinidad Rancheria community.

Vision Statement
*Honoring the
Past, Living
in the
Present,
Looking
Towards the
Future.*

Transportation infrastructure plays a critical role in supporting economic development, job creation, and improved quality of life within Tribal communities. Reliable and efficient transportation systems enhance access to markets, employment opportunities, healthcare, education, and essential services. Transportation infrastructure also strengthens connections to cultural sites, recreational resources, and tourism destinations that contribute to the regional economy. Conversely, inadequate transportation networks can restrict mobility, limit economic investment, and reduce overall community well-being. Continued investment in safe, resilient, and accessible transportation infrastructure is therefore essential to supporting sustainable economic growth and improving the quality of life for Tribal members.

Summary Background

Regional & Organizational Background

The Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria (hereafter referred to as the Trinidad Rancheria or Tribe) is a sovereign Tribal nation located in Humboldt County along the northern California coast, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The Rancheria was established in 1906 following an act of Congress authorizing the purchase of land for “homeless Indians.” Two years later, in 1908, sixty acres were acquired along Trinidad Bay for the Tribe. Federal recognition was formally acknowledged by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1917. The Tribe enacted its Articles of Association in 1961 and later adopted a new Tribal Constitution in 2008, reinforcing its commitment to self-governance and sustainable development.

The Tribe’s culture, including traditional fishing, subsistence harvest, gathering, and stewardship practices, is deeply rooted in the land and marine ecosystems of its ancestral territory, shaped by seasonal movement across riverine and coastal environments and the use of lagoons, estuaries, and sheltered waters to support fishing, foraging, hunting, and gathering across diverse landscapes. For the purposes of



Figure 1: Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria – Tribal Trust & Fee Land Properties

this report, the ancestral homelands of the Trinidad Rancheria membership, a Tribe of Yurok, Tolowa-Dee-Ni’, and Wiyot ancestry, are defined as encompassing a narrow strip of coastline and adjacent inland areas from Mattole Beach in Humboldt County to the Smith River in Del Norte County, including offshore islands, river tributaries, lagoons, and coastal streams connected to the places from which Tribal membership descends, encompassing both terrestrial and marine resources vital to cultural and community identity. The Trinidad Rancheria continues to invest in revitalizing the local economy while preserving its cultural heritage, advancing a model of development that integrates economic resilience, environmental stewardship, and cultural continuity, supported in contemporary times by ongoing Tribal Cultural Landscape (TCL) assessment and mapping that informs heritage revitalization, land-back advocacy, cultural education, and ecological stewardship

The Tribe currently owns approximately 108 acres of land in coastal Humboldt County. The primary Trinidad Rancheria parcel consists of 58.5 acres located west of U.S. Highway 101 and is used for a combination of rural residential, civic, administrative, recreational, and natural resource management purposes. This parcel includes key Tribal facilities such as the Tribal Administrative Center, Emergency Operations Center, Victim and Social Services Center, Library, The Heights Casino, and Sunset Restaurant. While the parcel provides exceptional coastal bluff views, steep terrain and underlying geological instability, exacerbated by climate change impacts including sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and changing ocean conditions, present ongoing infrastructure and safety challenges that require careful planning, adaptive management, and strategic investment.

Additional Tribal properties include the Westhaven Parcel, consisting of approximately 12.3 acres located east of the main parcel near the community of Westhaven; the Trillium Parcel; and the Dow's Prairie Parcels, a 28.3-acre property located to the south in the McKinleyville area. The Tribe also owns the Trinidad Pier and Harbor properties totaling more than 9.3 acres (see Figure 1). The Tribe owns the Trinidad Pier and Harbor properties totaling more than 9.3 acres (see Figure 1), which serve as a key economic, cultural, and recreational hub for both the Tribe and the broader community. The harbor is located within the Trinidad Bay Area of Special Biological Significance (ASBS), an ecologically important coastal area, and is one of five gateway locations to the offshore rocks and sea stacks of the California Coastal National Monument. Within this setting, the tribally owned Seascape Restaurant and Seascape Vacation Rental support the local economy by providing a coastal visitor experience on the working harbor, contributing to tourism and visitor spending while offering scenic bay views and access to nearby beaches and trails.

Governance of the Trinidad Rancheria is vested in the Community Council, which consists of all duly enrolled voting members who are eighteen (18) years of age or older and maintain continuous contact with the Trinidad Rancheria. The Community Council meets on a monthly basis to discuss Tribal affairs and community priorities. From this body, the Tribal Council is elected to serve as the Tribe's primary governing authority. The Tribal Council exercises authority over Tribal lands, resources, and governmental operations in accordance with the Tribal Constitution and applicable laws. The Tribal Council is composed of five elected members, including a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary/Treasurer, and two Councilmembers. The current Council includes Chairman Garth Sundberg, Sr., Vice-Chairperson Robert Hemsted, Secretary/Treasurer Trina Mathewson, and Councilmembers James Brown, Jr. (Seat #1) and Amanda Martinez (Seat #2).

The Trinidad Rancheria operates a range of programs and departments that provide essential services and perform governmental functions for its 281 enrolled Tribal members. All Tribal programs and departments include Tribal Administration; Tribal Programs, including Member Services, Cultural Resources and the Tribal Historic Preservation Office; Social Services and Victim Services; Economic Development; Fiscal and Human Resources; Tribal Court; Information Technology; the Tribal Library (which is open to both Tribal members and the public); Natural Resources Department; the Office of Emergency Services; and the Transportation and Land Use Department. Through these programs, the Trinidad Rancheria continues to strengthen self-sufficiency, preserve cultural traditions, and support the health and well-being of its community.

Building on the Tribe's vision for sustainable growth and community well-being, it is essential to understand the broader economic landscape in which the Trinidad Rancheria operates. The regional economy of the North Coast including Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Trinity, and Siskiyou Counties—provides both opportunities and context for local economic development initiatives. By examining key industry clusters, economic trends, and regional assets, the Tribe can identify strategic avenues for investment, partnership, and enterprise development that align with its long-term goals.

Regional Economic Overview

The North Coast regional economy includes several high-potential industry clusters identified by the Humboldt County Economic Development Division in collaboration with the Employment Development Department. These “Targets of Opportunity,” based on job growth, firm growth, wage improvement, competitiveness, and industry linkages, include Diversified Health Care, Tourism, Building and Systems Construction, Specialty Food, Flowers, and Beverages, Investment Support Services, Management and Innovation Services, Forest Products, and Niche Manufacturing. Between 2009 and 2019, these eight sectors experienced 37% job growth (compared to 4% for the overall region), 23% firm growth (versus 1.5% region-wide), and wage growth ranging from 10–26% (compared to 6% for the region), demonstrating their significance for future regional economic development.

Within this broader context, the **Trinidad area economy** (population 307) is primarily driven by tourism and commercial and recreational fishing, with subsistence harvest serving as a distinct and essential component of the local economy. Local businesses include motels, bed and breakfasts, RV parks, campgrounds, vacation rentals, restaurants, markets, gift shops, charter boats, and other small retail operations. The Tribe’s harbor businesses collectively generate approximately \$1.4 million in estimated direct gross annual revenue on an annual basis and support related economic activity throughout the region, including fish processors, marine service providers, lodging establishments, and local supply and retail businesses. This figure reflects direct revenue generated by harbor businesses rather than total economic value or broader regional economic impacts. The **Trinidad Pier and Harbor**, owned and operated by the Tribe, serves as the economic, commercial, cultural, and recreational focal point of the area. Established in 1946, the pier is the northernmost oceanfront pier in California and supports commercial, sport, and subsistence fishing for Dungeness crab, salmon, halibut, rockfish, and albacore tuna, as well as recreational and ecotourism activities including kayaking, whale watching, eco tours, sightseeing cruises, and general beach access. The pier also serves scientific research and educational functions through partnerships with the Cal Poly Humboldt University Telonicher Marine Lab and the California State University Center for Integrative Coastal Observation, Research, and Education, which monitor water quality and marine life in Trinidad Bay. In addition, Trinidad Elementary School utilizes the pier and adjacent rocky intertidal area for educational purposes, and colleges throughout Northern California utilize Trinidad Harbor as a site for hands-on learning and field-based education.

Emerging Regional Opportunities and Issues

The North Coast region continues to experience economic transition as communities adapt to changes in traditional industries, evolving environmental policies, and new economic opportunities. While the commercial fishing and timber sectors historically served as primary economic drivers for the region, shifts in regulations, resource availability, and global markets have resulted in declining employment in these industries over the past several decades. In response, regional economic development organizations, local governments, and Tribal nations have increasingly focused on diversifying the economy and strengthening emerging sectors, including blue economy development such as fisheries innovation, aquaculture, and restoration economies.

One of the most significant emerging opportunities for the region is the continued growth of tourism, recreation, and cultural heritage experiences. The North Coast’s natural landscapes, coastal environments, and cultural resources attract visitors from across California and beyond. For the Trinidad Rancheria, assets such as the Trinidad Harbor, coastal trails, marine resources, and cultural heritage provide unique opportunities to expand eco-tourism and visitor-oriented enterprises. The development of the Tribal Interpretive/Visitor Center, harbor revitalization efforts, and potential hospitality projects such as a hotel and revitalized restaurant further support the region’s expanding visitor economy.

Another emerging opportunity is the growing emphasis on environmental stewardship, conservation, and climate resilience. Partnerships with organizations such as the Bureau of Land Management, Cal Poly Humboldt, and the Tribal Marine Stewards Network are creating opportunities for collaborative research, coastal monitoring, and educational initiatives that support sustainable resource management while enhancing public awareness and tourism.

Beyond research, monitoring, and education, there are also economic opportunities associated with restoring terrestrial and offshore ecosystems, often referred to as the “restoration economy.” This is especially meaningful as restoration work can provide employment opportunities for individuals from logging and fishing communities, given the overlap in skills and equipment required, and can also contribute to improved ecosystem health that supports increased yields in those industries over time. Additionally, restored ecosystems can enhance tourism values and expand recreational opportunities, while also strengthening climate resilience.

Trinidad Rancheria, through its Natural Resource Department, has developed Climate Resiliency and Marine Programs that include marine restoration economy initiatives such as kelp restoration, ecological monitoring, and field crew employment opportunities. The Forestry Program focuses on habitat restoration through the introduction of native plant species, removal of invasive plant species, and hazardous fuels reduction, and has actively employed Tribal members to carry out this work. These programs are actively engaged in research, monitoring, and educational initiatives that further support the Tribe’s long-standing commitment to protecting cultural resources and marine ecosystems within Trinidad Bay.

At the same time, the region faces several ongoing economic challenges. Workforce shortages, limited housing availability, and infrastructure constraints can affect the ability of local businesses and Tribal enterprises to expand and attract employees. Transportation access, including improvements along the US 101 corridor and local road networks, remains critical for supporting tourism, commerce, and safe mobility for residents and visitors, as well as ensuring reliable access to harbor facilities, adequate boat launch capacity, and marine dependent infrastructure that supports commercial and recreational fishing, visitor services, and emergency response operations. Additionally, regulatory requirements affecting fisheries and coastal development continue to influence the viability of traditional economic activities. These regulatory barriers can delay Tribal-led projects and constrain sovereignty, subsistence, and cultural resource protection, while also limiting timely implementation of economic development, infrastructure, and resource management initiatives

Despite these challenges, the North Coast region has demonstrated resilience through collaboration among Tribal governments, local jurisdictions, educational institutions, and economic development organizations. By building on regional partnerships, investing in infrastructure, and expanding opportunities in tourism, small business development, and environmental stewardship, the Trinidad Rancheria is well positioned to contribute to and benefit from the region’s evolving economic landscape.

As the regional economy continues to evolve, the Trinidad Rancheria is actively advancing initiatives that align with these emerging opportunities. The Tribe is currently implementing the Trinidad Harbor Revitalization Plan and constructing a Tribal Interpretive and Visitor Center to expand cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities within the community. These initiatives are designed to enhance the harbor’s role as a sustainable tourism and ecotourism destination, while also balancing its function as a working waterfront and subsistence access point, and supporting Tribal sovereignty, economic growth, and the stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

The broader regional economic context, including strong tourism activity, a historic fishing economy, and an active and evolving landscape of opportunities in recreation, education, and environmental stewardship, provides an important foundation for the Tribe’s economic development strategy. The following sections outline the specific opportunities, needs, and strategic priorities that will guide the Tribe’s economic development efforts and the implementation of projects identified in this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Tribal Economic Overview

While the regional economy shapes the environment in which the Tribe operates, local economic conditions and Tribal enterprises are the immediate drivers of community prosperity. This section examines the Tribe’s key economic drivers, including tourism, harbor operations, marine-based economies (including commercial and subsistence fisheries), cultural enterprises, and transportation infrastructure, as well as potential risks to economic stability. Understanding these factors ensures that planning efforts address both opportunities for growth and vulnerabilities that may impact long-term resilience.

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) builds upon two major initiatives undertaken by the Trinidad Rancheria over the past three years: Tribal Transportation Planning and Harbor Development and Leadership. These efforts reflect the Tribe’s commitment to advancing safety, sustainability, Tribal sovereignty, and long-term economic opportunity through coordinated and community-driven planning.

Together, these initiatives support the Tribe’s broader economic development goals by strengthening infrastructure, improving regional connectivity, and advancing responsible development of Tribal assets that contribute to both community well-being and economic resilience.

Transportation Planning and Vision

The Trinidad Rancheria envisions a safe, sustainable, integrated, and efficient Tribal transportation system that serves all users while promoting equity and accessibility for the Tribal community. This vision is guided by community-driven goals and strategies designed to address the Tribe’s health, employment, economic, cultural, educational, and environmental needs while strengthening long-term economic resilience and regional competitiveness.

Beginning in late 2022 and formally adopted in 2025, the Transportation and Land Use Department—working in partnership with QK4, Inc. and Main Street America initiated three coordinated and complementary planning efforts:

- [Comprehensive Safety Action Plan \(CSAP\) based on Vision Zero principles](#)
- [Long-Range Transportation Plan \(LRTP\)](#)
- [Transportation Planning and Economic Development Analysis](#) (Main Street America Initiative)

The Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) identifies key transportation safety challenges and outlines implementable strategies to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities within the Tribal transportation network. The plan establishes measurable performance targets, prioritizes safety-focused capital improvements, and advances policy and programmatic actions. Developed through coordination with Tribal leadership, regional partners, and community stakeholders, the CSAP incorporates the nationally recognized “Four E’s” of transportation safety; Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and Emergency Medical Services, ensuring a comprehensive and outcome-driven approach to improving system safety and community well-being.

Complementing this effort, the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), adopted by the Tribal Council in 2025, provides a comprehensive multimodal assessment of the Tribe’s transportation system. The LRTP evaluates the National Tribal Transportation Facility Inventory (NTTFI), including roadways, trails, and supporting infrastructure that provide critical access to and within Tribal lands, as well as connectivity to regional assets such as harbor facilities and coastal destinations. The plan identifies short- and long-term infrastructure and policy strategies to improve mobility, accessibility, and safety, while advancing economic development opportunities. With a planning horizon exceeding twenty years, the LRTP establishes a clear implementation framework, including project prioritization and a funding strategy aligned with the Tribal Transportation Improvement Program (TTIP), positioning the Tribe to effectively compete for state and federal funding.

As a third initiative, the Transportation and Land Use Department partnered with Main Street America (MSA) through technical assistance funded by the United States Department of Transportation Thriving Communities Program to prepare a Transportation Planning and Economic Development Analysis, completed in April 2025. This effort included the development of a detailed visitor profile and traffic pattern analysis for the Trinidad Rancheria study area, providing a data-driven understanding of travel behavior, visitation trends, and market dynamics.

The resulting analysis strengthens implementation readiness by directly informing project development, prioritization, and funding strategies. Visitor and traffic data enhance the Tribe’s ability to develop competitive grant applications by demonstrating documented need, anticipated use, and economic impact. The data also supports business development and diversification by identifying peak visitation periods, seasonal fluctuations, and visitor characteristics, enabling more strategic alignment of services, operations, and investment.

In addition, the analysis advances regional competitiveness by informing targeted marketing and promotion strategies, identifying key origin markets, and uncovering opportunities to increase visitation and economic activity. When integrated with trade area and market data, these insights support business recruitment, retention, and expansion efforts, contributing to a more resilient and diversified local economy.

The data further supports resource leveraging by strengthening fundraising and sponsorship initiatives through clear documentation of visitor reach and economic influence. This enhances the Tribe’s ability to secure external funding, form strategic partnerships, and align investments with demonstrated demand.

Collectively, these three initiatives establish a coordinated, data-driven framework that integrates transportation planning with economic development objectives. This approach enhances the Tribe’s capacity to implement priority projects, respond to emerging challenges, and position Trinidad Rancheria for sustained economic growth, resilience, and long-term regional competitiveness.

Harbor Leadership and Strategic Vision

A second major initiative supporting the Tribe’s economic development strategy was the creation of the Tribal Harbor District Strategic Leadership Workgroup. This effort advances the Tribe’s guiding vision of “Honoring the past, living in the present, and looking toward the future.”

Working in collaboration with Strategic Earth, the Tribal Harbor District Strategic Leadership Workgroup developed the [Provisional Strategic Plan](#) for the Trinidad Tribal Harbor District, which outlines a vision for a vibrant and culturally grounded waterfront that honors Indigenous lifeways while establishing Trinidad Harbor as a premier destination along California’s North Coast. The plan follows a format similar to that of the CEDS, highlighting key opportunities and community needs while setting clear goals and actionable objectives.

It emphasizes sustainable economic development, enhanced recreational and tourism amenities, and the integration of environmental stewardship with cultural preservation. The plan identifies priority projects, implementation strategies, and performance measures to ensure accountability, guide resource allocation, and support long-term growth. By linking harbor development to Tribal priorities and broader regional economic opportunities, the Provisional Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for expanding commercial, cultural, and ecotourism enterprises; supporting fisheries; advancing restoration and research initiatives; strengthening workforce capacity; and enhancing the overall resilience and prosperity of the Trinidad Rancheria community.

The mission of the Trinidad Tribal Harbor District is to develop visitor-oriented enterprises that provide meaningful waterfront experiences while supporting Tribal sovereignty, cultural preservation, marine ecosystem conservation, community well-being, and sustainable economic growth. This mission will be achieved through responsible stewardship of the Tribe’s ancestral coastline, guided by traditional values, science-based resource management, and carefully planned enterprise development.

The Provisional Strategic Plan—anticipated to be formally implemented with the establishment of the Harbor District in 2027—was developed through collaboration between Tribal leadership, staff, and technical experts. The effort was led by the Tribal Council under the leadership of Chairman Garth Sundberg and supported by Executive Leadership and multiple Tribal departments, including Administration, Cultural Resources, Maintenance and Facilities, Natural Resources, and Transportation and Land Use. Additional input was provided by Seascape Restaurant management and technical consultants.

Integration with the CEDS

By incorporating these initiatives into the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the Trinidad Rancheria ensures that planning efforts related to transportation infrastructure, waterfront development, and economic enterprise are aligned under a unified economic development framework. These initiatives support not only economic growth but also workforce development, community resilience, ecological integrity, and long-term sustainability, including climate resilience and adaptation of coastal infrastructure. The CEDS process provides an important opportunity to integrate these ongoing strategic initiatives with Tribal leadership priorities, community engagement, and regional economic development efforts.

Through this coordinated approach, the Tribe is strengthening its ability to leverage infrastructure investments, cultural assets, and natural resources to support long-term economic prosperity for Tribal members and the surrounding region.

Key Economic Drivers of the Trinidad Rancheria Economy

The economy of the Trinidad Rancheria is shaped by a combination of Tribal enterprise development, natural resource stewardship, commercial and subsistence fisheries, restoration activities, tourism, government services, and infrastructure investment. These sectors collectively support employment opportunities, generate Tribal revenue, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Tribal community. Understanding these economic drivers helps inform strategic investments and guide economic development initiatives identified within this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

Tourism and Hospitality

Tourism plays a significant role in the regional economy of coastal Northern California and represents an important opportunity for the Trinidad Rancheria.

The Tribe's location along the Pacific coastline, overlooking Trinidad Bay and within the California Coastal National Monument gateway area, provides a unique setting that attracts visitors seeking outdoor recreation, cultural experiences, and scenic destinations. This includes marine-based and Tribal-led eco-cultural tourism, highlighting ocean and harbor-based experiences that are grounded in Tribal stewardship, cultural interpretation, and connection to place.

The Tribe currently operates hospitality and tourism-oriented enterprises, including The Heights Casino and Sunset Restaurant, which serve both local residents and visitors traveling through the region. In addition, the development of the Interpretive Center and expanded waterfront programming, including fishing, cultural activities, ecotours, education, research, and community events, will create opportunities to enhance eco-cultural tourism, educational programming, and visitor engagement, with an emphasis on Tribal-led interpretation and marine stewardship education.

By developing culturally grounded visitor experiences, the Tribe seeks to strengthen tourism while ensuring that economic development supports cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, marine ecosystem health, and protection of sensitive cultural and coastal sites, and community values.

Harbor and Marine Economy

The Trinidad Harbor and Pier represent a key economic asset for both the Tribe and the surrounding region, functioning as both a visitor destination and a working waterfront. The harbor supports commercial and recreational fishing, marine recreation, and tourism-related activities. It also provides a gateway to the offshore rocks and sea stacks that are part of the California Coastal National Monument. In addition, the harbor supports research and educational activities through partnerships with local Tribes, regional institutions, and organizations, creating opportunities for collaborative learning, scientific monitoring, and hands-on field-based education focused on coastal ecosystems and marine stewardship. Through the proposed Trinidad Tribal Harbor District and the Provisional Strategic Plan developed by the Harbor Leadership Workgroup, the Tribe is working to expand visitor-oriented waterfront enterprises while protecting the ecological health of Trinidad Bay, and maintaining the long-term viability of marine resources through stewardship and co-management approaches.

Planned initiatives will incorporate nature-based solutions for managing coastal weather and climate hazards, with green infrastructure providing cost-effective protection while enhancing tourism values and ecological integrity. These efforts include improved waterfront facilities, enhanced visitor amenities, and opportunities for Tribal businesses connected to marine recreation, cultural tourism, and coastal stewardship.

Strategic investment in harbor infrastructure and programming will support job creation, strengthen the local marine economy, and reinforce the Tribe's role as a steward of its ancestral coastal resources, while improving climate resilience of critical coastal infrastructure.

Tribal Government and Public Services

Tribal government operations are a significant source of employment and economic stability within the Trinidad Rancheria community. The Tribe administers a wide range of governmental programs and services that support community well-being, cultural preservation, and economic development. Departments including Tribal Administration, Cultural Resources, Natural Resources, Social Services, Information Technology, Transportation and Land Use, and the Office of Emergency Services provide critical services to Tribal members while also creating professional employment opportunities. These programs help build local capacity, support workforce development, and ensure that Tribal members can participate in the governance and management of their community.

Continued investment in Tribal governance and service delivery strengthens institutional capacity and contributes to the overall economic resilience of the Tribe.

Infrastructure and Community Development

Infrastructure investment is a foundational component of economic development for the Trinidad Rancheria. Improvements to transportation systems, utilities, public facilities, and community infrastructure create the conditions necessary for business development, housing opportunities, and public safety, while ensuring reliable access to essential services, employment centers, cultural and governmental facilities, and regional transportation networks.

Recent planning efforts, including the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) and Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), identify priority transportation improvements that will enhance mobility, improve safety, and support economic activity across Tribal lands. These investments are critical to reducing barriers to access, strengthening connectivity within the community, and supporting consistent access to schools, healthcare, workforce opportunities, and Tribal enterprises. Infrastructure development also supports long-term Tribal goals related to climate resilience, emergency preparedness, sustainable land use, and improved waste management and recycling systems.

Natural Resource Stewardship and Cultural Heritage

The stewardship of natural resources and protection of cultural heritage are central to the Trinidad Rancheria's economic and community development strategy. Tribal lands and surrounding marine environments provide important cultural, ecological, and economic resources, including fisheries, subsistence harvest areas, and culturally significant coastal sites. Through programs such as the Tribal Historic Preservation Office and Natural Resources Department, the Tribe works to protect traditional cultural landscapes, marine ecosystems, and culturally significant sites, while advancing Tribal leadership in monitoring, restoration, and marine and coastal stewardship. These efforts not only safeguard important resources but also create opportunities for education, cultural tourism, and environmental stewardship initiatives, as well as emerging restoration and blue economies opportunities. By integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern planning and management practices, the Tribe supports sustainable development that benefits both current and future generations.

Economic Resilience and Risk Factors

Economic resilience refers to the Trinidad Rancheria's capacity to anticipate, withstand, and recover from shocks or disruptions that could affect community well-being, infrastructure, and economic stability. Understanding potential risks and vulnerabilities allows the Tribe to implement proactive strategies that sustain economic growth, protect Tribal assets, and enhance community resilience over the long term.

Environmental and Natural Hazards

The Trinidad Rancheria's coastal location provides significant economic, cultural, and recreational opportunities but also exposes the Tribe to natural hazards that can impact transportation access, harbor and waterfront infrastructure, utilities, housing, and community facilities, potentially disrupting economic activity, limiting access to services, and affecting public safety, including:

- Coastal bluff erosion and landslides: Steep terrain along the main parcel presents ongoing safety and infrastructure challenges, particularly during heavy rainfall or seismic events, with implications for long-term land stability and infrastructure siting.

- Earthquakes and seismic activity: Humboldt County is located near multiple fault zones, creating risks for infrastructure damage and service disruptions, including impacts to harbor operations and emergency response systems.
- Tsunami and storm surge: The Tribe's proximity to the Pacific Ocean requires ongoing planning to mitigate coastal flooding and protect public safety, as well as safeguard harbor infrastructure and marine-dependent economic activities.
- Wildfire risk: Regional wildfire activity threatens Tribal lands, transportation networks, and community infrastructure, including air quality impacts and access disruptions that may affect tourism and workforce stability. Hazardous fuels buildup and invasive plant species further exacerbate wildfire risk by increasing fire intensity and spread potential across the region. Sea level rise, king tides, and beach erosion: Rising sea levels and increasingly severe king tide events heighten the risk of coastal flooding, beach and shoreline erosion, and infrastructure damage, with implications for long-term land stability, beach and facility access, and the protection of harbor facilities, cultural sites, and other coastal resources.

By integrating hazard assessment and mitigation into long-range planning, including the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Tribal Hazard Mitigation Plan 2026, the Provisional Strategic Plan for the Trinidad Tribal Harbor District, and future harbor improvements that incorporate green infrastructure approaches to mitigate coastal hazards while enhancing the ecological, cultural, and aesthetic values of the Harbor, the Tribe enhances its ability to protect assets, maintain economic activity, and ensure community safety during environmental events, while increasing climate resilience of coastal and marine infrastructure.

Infrastructure Vulnerabilities

Critical infrastructure, including transportation networks, harbor facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, utilities, and Tribal buildings are essential for maintaining economic activity and supporting daily life for the Tribe, including access to housing, employment, education, healthcare, cultural practices, and community services. Key vulnerabilities include:

- Aging roadways and steep access routes across Tribal lands and properties that are susceptible to erosion or extreme weather events, limiting reliable access to coastal and harbor facilities, as well as other Tribal facilities, housing areas, and community infrastructure throughout the Rancheria.
- Aging storm drainage systems and culverts with limited capacity and reduced efficiency during heavy rainfall and storm events, contributing to localized flooding and erosion.
- Coastal harbor structures exposed to storm events, sea-level rise, and increasingly severe king tides, requiring adaptation and long-term resilience planning.
- Wastewater treatment infrastructure with limited capacity to support future development and potential system constraints under increased demand, including impacts on water quality in Trinidad Bay.
- Limited redundancy in utility and communications systems, which could affect emergency response and business continuity, including real-time monitoring and marine operations.

Planned investments through the Tribal Transportation Improvement Program (TTIP), Harbor District development, Climate Adaptation planning, and Natural Resource Department initiatives incorporate resilience and sustainability measures to improve the reliability, safety, and long-term adaptability of infrastructure assets. These coordinated efforts include roadway repair and upgrades, wastewater treatment facility improvements, watershed and habitat restoration, stormwater management enhancements, coastal monitoring, and forest health activities, all of which support sustainable infrastructure systems, reduce environmental risk, and strengthen long-term community resilience.

Economic and Workforce Risks

The Tribe faces economic and workforce-related challenges that could affect long-term prosperity and impact the Tribe's ability to fully support existing enterprises and expand emerging economic opportunities. These challenges include:

- Seasonality of tourism and harbor-related enterprises – Visitor-driven revenues fluctuate throughout the year, which can impact employment stability and business sustainability, in addition to regulatory constraints and seasonal closures affecting harbor-related activities such as commercial and sport fishing.
- Housing availability and affordability – Limited on-Tribal housing constrains workforce recruitment and retention by reducing the ability of workers to live near employment opportunities, increasing commuting challenges, and limiting the Tribe's capacity to attract and retain employees for Tribal enterprises, government operations, and service-based industries.
- Workforce development and skills gaps – Ensuring that Tribal members have access to education, training, and employment opportunities in emerging sectors is critical for sustaining economic growth. This includes expanding pathways to technical training, certifications, and higher education aligned with Tribal priorities such as hospitality, marine and harbor operations, natural resource management, construction, and Tribal government services, while also addressing barriers to participation such as transportation, childcare, and access to supportive services.
- Limited local market size – While regional connectivity and tourism provide opportunities, the small size of the local population requires strategic diversification of Tribal enterprises to ensure stable and consistent revenue streams. This includes expanding into industries that draw from regional and visitor markets, developing year-round economic activities to reduce seasonality, and identifying opportunities for external partnerships, contracting, and service provision beyond the immediate local market.

Cultural and Environmental Stewardship Risks

Protecting cultural and environmental assets is essential for economic resilience, as these resources form the foundation for Tribal identity, community well-being, and key economic activities such as tourism, fisheries, and natural resource management.

Maintaining the health and integrity of these assets supports long-term sustainability, enhances climate resilience, and ensures that future development aligns with Tribal values while preserving resources for future generations:

- Overuse or mismanagement of natural and cultural resources could undermine tourism, fisheries, and marine-based enterprises, as well as long-term ecosystem health.
- Environmental degradation in Trinidad Bay, including water quality impacts and ecosystem stress, could affect the harbor economy and Tribal subsistence practices, including impacts to fisheries and culturally significant species.
- Underinvestment in ecological restoration and industries that support ecological health could perpetuate these conditions.

The Tribe addresses these risks by integrating traditional ecological knowledge, science-based management, and community engagement into planning, while maintaining Tribal data sovereignty and leadership in monitoring and decision-making, ensuring that cultural and natural resources remain a foundation for sustainable economic development.

Strategies to Enhance Economic Resilience

While this CEDS follows a standard economic development planning framework, it is intentionally grounded in the Tribe's relationship to coastal and marine resources, which are central to economic activity, cultural identity, and long-term resilience. Recognizing these place-based drivers ensures that strategies are both compliant with federal guidance and reflective of the Tribe's unique economic, environmental, and cultural context. To mitigate these risks and strengthen resilience, the Trinidad Rancheria is implementing coordinated strategies, including:

- Prioritizing hazard mitigation, infrastructure improvements, and climate adaptation in long-range planning documents, including sea-level rise and coastal hazard planning for harbor assets, in recognition of the Tribe's reliance on coastal and marine environments as critical drivers of economic activity and resilience.
- Diversifying economic enterprises, including Tribal government operations, tourism, hospitality, and harbor-based businesses as well as marine-based sectors such as fisheries, restoration, and research, to building a more resilient and locally grounded economy.
- Expanding workforce development programs and vocational training to address skills gaps, with a focus on building capacity across all sectors, including Tribal government operations, hospitality and tourism, construction and infrastructure, transportation, natural resource management, marine and harbor-based industries, and emerging economic activities such as restoration and research, while continuing to strengthen skills tied to coastal and marine-based economies.
- Integrating cultural and environmental stewardship into economic development and enterprise planning, reflecting the Tribe's long-standing relationship with land and marine resources as foundational to both economic sustainability and community well-being.
- Strengthening partnerships with regional agencies, technical experts, and neighboring communities and local Tribes to leverage resources, support collaborative research and education, and advance shared stewardship of coastal and marine systems, while also supporting coordination and investment across all sectors, including Tribal government operations, economic development, infrastructure, housing, workforce development, public safety, and community services.

By proactively addressing environmental, infrastructure, economic, and cultural risks, the Tribe enhances its ability to maintain economic continuity, strengthen community well-being, and promote long-term prosperity. Central to this effort is an understanding of the Tribe's demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, including population size and growth, age distribution, workforce capacity, educational attainment, income levels, and housing availability. These characteristics inform planning considerations for workforce development, housing, economic diversification, and community services, particularly in sectors tied to the Tribe's natural and cultural resource base. Integrating this knowledge into decision-making enables the Tribe to anticipate challenges, allocate resources effectively, and foster a resilient community that is prepared to thrive amid changing social, economic, and environmental conditions.

Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics

Socioeconomic analysis in most U.S. communities typically relies on federal and state data sources, including information from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and other agencies. These datasets commonly provide the foundation for evaluating population trends, employment conditions, housing availability, and economic performance. However, accurately capturing socioeconomic conditions within Tribal communities presents unique challenges.

Federal data collection methods have historically lacked the precision, cultural sensitivity, and frequency necessary to fully reflect the realities of Tribal economies and households, particularly where livelihoods are tied to natural resources, seasonal work, and non-market subsistence practices. Non-traditional employment patterns, extended family living arrangements, seasonal work, increased health related burdens that pull people out of the work force, and subsistence-based livelihoods are often underrepresented or mischaracterized in conventional datasets. In addition, historical mistrust of government institutions, stemming from past data collection practices, has contributed to lower participation rates in federal surveys. Geographic isolation and limited broadband connectivity in some Tribal areas can also create logistical barriers to accurate data collection. As a result, the most common data collection tools, including household surveys, employment statistics, and housing inventories, may produce incomplete or misleading results when applied to Tribal communities.

To address these limitations, the Trinidad Rancheria asserts data sovereignty by prioritizing locally collected information, Tribal administrative records, and direct community input alongside federal data sources. This approach ensures the Tribe maintains authority over how its data is defined, collected, interpreted, and used, resulting in a more accurate and culturally grounded understanding of demographic characteristics, workforce capacity, housing conditions, and economic challenges. By integrating Tribal data governance with available federal datasets, this CEDS provides a more comprehensive and self-determined picture of the Tribe's socioeconomic landscape and supports informed decision-making that advances sustainable and culturally aligned economic development.

Demographics of the Trinidad Rancheria

The Trinidad Rancheria currently has 281 enrolled Tribal members, with approximately 100 members residing on Tribal lands. However, the majority of members live outside the Main Tribal Parcel, creating additional considerations for service delivery, workforce participation, and engagement in Tribal economic initiatives. According to 2021 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), the population associated with the Reservation and Trust Lands is estimated at 116 individuals across approximately 40 households. Key socioeconomic indicators are summarized in Table 1 and compared with data for Humboldt County and the City of Trinidad. The data indicates that the Tribal population experiences lower median household incomes, lower educational attainment levels, and higher rates of disability than those observed in the surrounding county and nearby city. These disparities influence economic development outcomes, including workforce participation in tourism, hospitality, harbor and marine enterprises, housing availability, and access to educational and employment opportunities.

They also affect the Tribe's capacity to support and expand key economic development initiatives, including emerging sectors and Tribal enterprises such as visitor services, waterfront and marine-related businesses, and other community-based economic development efforts.

In later sections of this CEDS, Table 1 will be expanded to further compare demographic and socioeconomic indicators between the Trinidad Rancheria, the City of Trinidad, Humboldt County, and the State of California. These comparisons will help inform strategies that address economic disparities while supporting inclusive, sustainable growth that aligns with the Tribe's cultural values and long-term development goals.

Table 1: 2021 ACS Demographics Estimates

Metric	Trinidad Rancheria	City of Trinidad	Humboldt County
Population	116	307	137,014
Race: Native American	73%	8%	4%
Age: 65+ Years	14%	35%	18%
High School Graduate or Higher	83%	100%	91%
With a Disability	25%	20%	17%
Civilian Unemployment Rate	16.3%	7.2%	9.4%
Median Household Income	\$34,688 - \$46,964*	\$76,705	\$53,350
Per Capita Income	\$18,096 - \$21,220*	\$57,408	\$31,044
Zero-Car Households	8%	2%	7%

**Statistics reported separately for Reservation and Trust Lands*

Understanding the population, household, education, and housing characteristics of the Trinidad Rancheria is critical to guiding economic development priorities, workforce planning, and community infrastructure needs. The following analysis draws from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) 2008–2022 5-year estimates, supplemented by data from the Trinidad Census Tract to provide additional context due to the small sample size for the Tribe. The Trinidad Census Tract includes the Trinidad Rancheria, the City of Trinidad, and surrounding areas, extending north to the Humboldt/Del Norte County line, inland along Redwood Creek, and south to the Little River.

Population and Household Characteristics

The Trinidad Rancheria has 281 enrolled members, with approximately 116 residing on Tribal lands. The broader Census Tract population reflects a mix of affluent oceanfront residents in the City of Trinidad and lower-income communities such as Orick. Household structures on the Rancheria are diverse, with a combination of family and extended family living arrangements that are typical of Tribal communities, and which may not be fully captured in standard housing and occupancy metrics.

Income and Employment

The median household income on the Trinidad Rancheria (\$46,250) is lower than that of the Trinidad Census Tract (\$82,250), Humboldt County (\$57,883), and California (\$91,551) (Table 2). Poverty rates on the Rancheria are over three times higher than the surrounding area and State, with 24% of adults aged 18–64 living below the poverty line. Unemployment is also significantly higher at 21.1%, more than double the statewide rate of 10.1%.

These disparities underscore the need for economic initiatives that create local employment opportunities, diversify revenue streams, and strengthen workforce capacity, particularly in sectors that align with Tribal assets and geographic advantages.

Table 2. 2008-2022 Economic Characteristics

	Trinidad Rancheria	Trinidad Census Tract	Humboldt County	California
Median Household Income	\$46,250	\$82,250	\$57,883	\$91,551
Poverty – all persons	16.3%	14.0%	18.4%	12.2%
Under 18 years	0.0%	31.4%	20.2%	15.3%
Poverty – persons 18 to 64 years	24.0%	11.2%	19.8%	11.2%
65 years and over	6.7%	13.0%	12.5%	11.8%
Unemployment	21.1 %	10.5%*	7.8%*	10.1 %*

*ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Characteristics

Housing on the Rancheria exhibits notable disparities when compared to the Trinidad Census Tract, Humboldt County, and the State of California (Table 3). Owner-occupied homes are concentrated in three primary price ranges: less than \$50,000 (25%), \$150,000–\$199,999 (35.7%), and \$500,000–\$999,999 (40.0%). The median housing value on the Rancheria (\$360,000) is substantially lower than that of Trinidad (\$658,500), Humboldt County (\$386,000), and California (\$659,300). These patterns highlight the need for affordable housing solutions and supportive infrastructure, as housing constraints directly limit the Tribe’s ability to recruit and retain a stable workforce. Addressing these challenges is essential to strengthening workforce recruitment and retention and to informing strategic planning for future Tribal development initiatives.

Table 3. 2022 Housing Characteristics

	Trinidad Rancheria	City of Trinidad	Humboldt County	California
Cost of Housing for Owner-occupied Units:				
Less than \$50,000	25.0%	11.0%	5.0%	2.5%
\$50,000-\$99,999	10.0%	0.6%	2.7%	1.7%
\$100,000-\$149,999	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	1.6%
\$150,000-\$199,999	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	1.9%
\$200,000-\$299,999	0.0%	2.3%	14.6%	6.5%
\$300,000-\$499,999	25.0%	20.9%	45.8%	20.1%
\$500,000-\$999,999	40.0%	48.3%	23.4%	41.1%
\$1,000,000 or more	0.0%	16.9%	3.9%	24.6%
Median Housing Value	\$360,000	\$658,500	\$386,000	\$659,300

*American Community Survey 2022: ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles

Educational Attainment

Residents of the Trinidad Rancheria demonstrate a strong educational foundation (Table 4), while also reflecting gaps in higher education attainment that present opportunities for continued investment in training and educational pathways. High school graduation rates are higher than the Census Tract, County, and State, with 53.7% of residents completing high school, 16.7% completing some college, and 7.4% earning a bachelor’s degree. These outcomes provide a base for workforce development programs that can support Tribal enterprises in hospitality, cultural tourism, government operations, and infrastructure projects, while also presenting an opportunity to expand training pathways into technical and resource-based fields aligned with Tribal priorities, including natural resources, marine and environmental stewardship, and other emerging sectors.

Table 4. 2022 Educational Characteristics

	Trinidad Rancheria	City of Trinidad	Humboldt County	California
Less Than 9 th Grade	0.0%	0.3%	2.5%	8.7%
9 th -12 th Grade, No Diploma	16.7%	0.0%	6.2%	6.9%
High School Graduate, includes equivalent	53.7%	6.6%	23.7%	20.4%
Some College, no Degree	16.7%	17.3%	26.8%	20.1%
Associate’s Degree	5.6%	4.0%	9.8%	8.0%
Bachelor’s Degree	7.4%	40.1%	20.3%	22.1%
Graduate Degree	0.0%	31.7%	10.8%	13.8%

**American Community Survey 2022: ACS 5-Year Estimates (Population 25 Years and Over)*

Implications for Economic Development

The demographic and socioeconomic profile highlights several key considerations for the Tribe’s economic planning:

- **Income and Poverty:** Lower income and higher poverty rates necessitate workforce development, enterprise creation, and strategies to diversify Tribal revenue.
- **Housing:** Affordable and stable housing is critical to attract and retain a skilled workforce.
- **Education:** Existing educational attainment provides a foundation for vocational and professional training programs in tourism, hospitality, government services, and cultural enterprises, with opportunities to expand into additional high-demand sectors.
- **Workforce Capacity:** Higher unemployment and small population size indicate a need for targeted training, apprenticeships, and career pathways aligned with Tribal enterprise development and regional industry clusters.

Examining the Tribe’s population, workforce, and housing conditions highlights both strengths and gaps that inform strategic planning. The following section synthesizes these insights to identify the Tribe’s most promising economic development opportunities as well as unmet needs. These priorities, grounded in community vision and informed by regional and local conditions, will guide investments, enterprise development, and capacity-building initiatives over the next five years. This analysis informs the Opportunities and Needs section by identifying where interventions, such as housing improvements, workforce development, administration building modernization, enterprise support, and infrastructure investments can most effectively support sustainable Tribal economic growth.

SWOT Analysis

To ensure that the Tribe's economic development strategy is both actionable and sustainable, it is essential to evaluate internal and external factors that can influence outcomes. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis provides a structured framework to identify the Tribe's key assets, areas for improvement, potential growth opportunities, and external risks. By systematically assessing these factors, the SWOT analysis informs strategic goal-setting, prioritizes initiatives, and aligns Tribal resources with economic, cultural, and environmental objectives. Importantly, this approach also supports the Tribe's sovereignty by reinforcing self-determined decision-making and community-led development. It ensures that the CEDS is grounded in an understanding of both the community's unique strengths and the broader challenges and opportunities present in the North Coast regional economy.

STRENGTHS

- **Strategic Location & Natural Assets:** The Tribe's coastal properties, including the Trinidad Pier and Harbor, provide significant opportunities for tourism, cultural engagement, and marine-based economic activity, including commercial and subsistence fisheries, scientific research, ecological restoration related enterprises, and emerging blue economy sectors.
- **Cultural Heritage & Community Identity:** Strong preservation of Indigenous practices, stewardship of land and marine ecosystems, and commitment to cultural education enhance community cohesion, community resilience, and attract visitors, while reinforcing long-term resource sustainability.
- **Existing Tribal Enterprises:** Heights Casino, Sunset Restaurant, and other business operations provide revenue streams, workforce development opportunities, and experience in hospitality and tourism.
- **Committed Tribal Leadership & Governance:** The Tribal Council and Administration demonstrate strong strategic planning, interdepartmental coordination, and community engagement in economic development initiatives.
- **Collaborative Regional Partnerships:** Established relationships with federal, state, local, and academic organizations provide technical assistance, funding, contracting opportunities, and workforce support, including opportunities for applied research, monitoring, and resource management.

WEAKNESSES

- **Limited Workforce & Housing Capacity:** Small resident population and limited housing constrain workforce recruitment, retention, and community growth, particularly for specialized or technical positions.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Aging transportation networks, steep access routes, and harbor infrastructure require investment to support new and existing economic enterprises.
- **Limited Wastewater Capacity:** Existing wastewater treatment infrastructure has limited capacity to support current demand and constrains future residential, commercial, and infrastructure development.
- **Dependence on Seasonal Revenue:** Tourism, hospitality, and harbor-based enterprises experience seasonal fluctuations, creating potential revenue volatility and limiting year-round economic stability.
- **Limited Administrative Capacity:** Existing facilities and staffing levels may restrict the Tribe's ability to implement complex economic development projects without modernization and capacity-building initiatives, particularly where projects require coordination across multiple departments or regulatory frameworks.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Tourism & Ecotourism Expansion:** Development of a Tribal-owned hotel, revitalization of the Seascap Restaurant, and completion of the Interpretive/Visitor Center create opportunities to expand visitor services, cultural programs, and educational experiences.
- **Harbor & Waterfront Development:** Implementation of the Harbor Leadership Strategic Plan supports new businesses, recreational amenities, and eco-cultural tourism, while also creating opportunities to strengthen the harbor's function as a working waterfront.
- **Small Business & Entrepreneurial Growth:** Supporting Tribal members and regional partners in developing businesses can diversify revenue streams and strengthen local economic resilience.
- **Regional Economic Integration:** Leveraging high-growth industry clusters—such as tourism, diversified health care, specialty foods, and sustainable resource management—aligns Tribal projects with broader North Coast economic trends.
- **Environmental Stewardship & Cultural Integration:** Opportunities exist to integrate sustainability and traditional ecological knowledge into economic development, supporting long-term infrastructure, community, and environmental resilience, particularly where stewardship activities also generate economic and workforce opportunities.

THREATS

- **Environmental & Climate Risks:** Coastal erosion, sea-level rise, wildfires, threats to wildlife populations and ecological integrity, and other natural hazards threaten infrastructure, economic activity, and public safety, with increasing frequency and intensity posing long-term risks to coastal assets
- **Regulatory & Legal Constraints:** Complex state and federal regulations across multiple areas; including fisheries, harbor operations, coastal development, infrastructure, housing, economic development, and Tribal government services, may limit operational flexibility and increase compliance costs. Extended permitting timelines can delay project implementation and create uncertainty for planning and investment. In addition, consultation processes that are often “check-the-box” in nature may not fully reflect Tribal priorities, decision-making timelines, or the Tribe's role as a sovereign government across all areas of planning, development, and resource management.
- **Economic Volatility:** Regional dependency on industries such as tourism, sport fishing and commercial fishing exposes the Tribe to market fluctuations, regulatory changes, including season closures and seasonal revenue variability, reinforcing the need for diversification.
- **Demographic Challenges:** Limited population growth, aging workforce, and skills gaps could hinder expansion of enterprises and sustainable economic development.
- **Cultural Risks:** The long-term vitality of Tribal culture is at risk without consistent intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge and subsistence practices, including fishing, gathering, and marine stewardship, compounded by environmental degradation and constraints on physical access to the full extent of Tribal homelands and waters that affect the availability of traditional resources, with implications for traditional economic practices, cultural continuity, community identity, and traditional lifeways.

The SWOT analysis highlights the Tribe's significant economic assets—including its coastal location, cultural heritage, and existing Tribal enterprises—while also identifying challenges related to infrastructure, housing capacity, workforce availability, and environmental risks. Understanding these internal and external factors

provides an important foundation for strategic decision-making and long-term planning.

By leveraging its strengths, addressing identified weaknesses, and responding proactively to emerging regional opportunities and risks, the Tribe is well positioned to advance economic development initiatives that support community well-being, strengthen Tribal enterprises, and reinforce Tribal sovereignty, while maintaining long-term stewardship of its natural and cultural resources.

Tribal Economic Development Opportunities and Needs

The Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria has identified a range of economic development opportunities and needs that will guide the Tribe's efforts to strengthen economic resilience, diversify revenue streams, and expand employment opportunities over the next five years. These priorities build upon the Tribe's natural resources, cultural heritage, strategic coastal location, and existing Tribal enterprises while addressing infrastructure, workforce, and community development needs.

Through thoughtful planning and investment, the Tribe seeks to leverage its assets to support sustainable economic growth while preserving the environmental and cultural resources that define the Trinidad area, recognizing that these resources are themselves foundational to long-term economic viability. At the same time, addressing key infrastructure, housing, and organizational capacity challenges will be essential to ensuring that economic development initiatives can be successfully implemented and sustained over the long term.

Economic Development Opportunities

1. Harbor and Waterfront Development

The Trinidad Pier and Harbor represent one of the Tribe's most significant economic assets and provides opportunities to expand commercial, recreational, cultural, scientific, ecological, and tourism-related activities. Implementation of the Trinidad Tribal Harbor District and the Harbor Leadership Strategic Plan supports expanded economic activity along the waterfront, including commercial and recreational fishing, visitor services, scientific research, ecological restoration, and cultural tourism. Boat Launch Facility Upgrades, along with other improvements to harbor infrastructure and visitor amenities will enhance public access to the waterfront and create opportunities for new businesses, community events, and recreational activities that attract visitors from across the North Coast region. Integrating cultural interpretation and environmental stewardship into harbor operations further strengthens the harbor's role as both an economic driver and a community gathering place. The Tribe's location along Trinidad Bay also positions the community to participate in the region's growing coastal or "Blue Economy." This includes economic activities connected to oceans and marine resources such as fishing, maritime services, tourism, environmental education, and coastal recreation, as well as emerging opportunities in restoration, aquaculture, monitoring and research. By integrating harbor development with tourism, cultural interpretation, and resource stewardship, the Tribe can expand economic opportunities while protecting the natural resources that sustain the coastal economy.

2. Tourism, Cultural, and Heritage Enterprises

The Tribe's coastal setting, scenic landscapes, and rich cultural heritage provide strong opportunities to expand tourism, cultural education, and visitor experiences. Tourism initiatives are intended to enhance the visitor economy while supporting Tribal sovereignty, cultural preservation, ecological restoration, and sustainable economic development. A central component of this strategy is the revitalization and modernization of the **Seascape Restaurant**, a prominent waterfront dining destination overlooking Trinidad Bay.

As one of the Tribe's most visible hospitality assets, the Seascope Restaurant plays an important role in welcoming visitors to the harbor area and providing a gathering place for both residents and travelers. Planned improvements, including modernization of kitchen facilities, upgrades to dining areas, and enhanced visitor amenities, will strengthen the restaurant's ability to attract visitors, support events, and increase year-round economic activity, helping reduce seasonal fluctuations in revenue. The Seascope Restaurant will complement other Tribal tourism initiatives, including the new Tribal Interpretive and Visitor Center, which will provide cultural education, environmental interpretation, and community programming. Together, these facilities will create a cohesive visitor experience that highlights Tribal heritage, the coastal environment, and the cultural significance of Trinidad Bay. Additional opportunities include development of a Tribal-owned hotel to accommodate visitors and expand tourism capacity in the region. These hospitality enterprises, along with existing Tribal businesses such as the Heights Casino and Sunset Restaurant, provide a strong foundation for expanding tourism-related services, cultural programming, and visitor engagement.

3. Retail and Service Enterprises

The Tribe is advancing the development of a Tribal-operated gas station and fuel mart to serve Tribal residents and travelers along the US 101 corridor. A feasibility study completed in 2025 confirmed the project's viability, a site has been selected, and the project is currently in the design and engineering phase. This enterprise will strengthen local infrastructure, support tourism and transportation activity, and generate sustainable revenue to reinvest in Tribal programs and community priorities, while improving reliability of services for both residents and visitors. The gas station will complement existing Tribal businesses, enhance economic diversification, and improve access to essential goods and services while creating employment opportunities for Tribal Members.

4. Transportation and Infrastructure Improvements

Strategic investments in transportation and infrastructure are essential to supporting economic development and improving access to Tribal facilities, housing, and economic centers. Transportation improvements associated with the US 101/Trinidad Area Access Improvements Project, along with upgrades to Tribal roads, trails, and multimodal connections, will improve mobility and safety for residents, employees, and visitors. Enhanced infrastructure will also support future economic development projects, including tourism facilities, harbor operations, and new Tribal enterprises.

5. Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrades and Capacity Expansion

The Tribe is planning for upgrades to the existing wastewater treatment facility to support current needs and accommodate future development within the Rancheria. As additional housing, commercial enterprises, and infrastructure projects are implemented, increased system capacity and efficiency will be necessary. Improvements will focus on expanding treatment capacity, modernizing aging infrastructure, and ensuring compliance with applicable environmental regulations, particularly those related to water quality in coastal and marine environments where system performance has direct implications for the health of Trinidad Bay and the Area of Special Biological Significance (ASBS). This effort will enhance public health and environmental protection while providing the necessary infrastructure to support long-term economic growth and community development.

6. Tribal Enterprise and Small Business Development

Expanding Tribal enterprises and supporting small business development among Tribal members will diversify the local economy and strengthen long-term economic resilience, particularly where new enterprises are aligned

with market demand, Tribal assets, and existing capacity.

Providing technical assistance, entrepreneurial training, and improved access to capital can support Tribal members interested in developing new businesses or expanding existing enterprises, though targeted support and ongoing technical assistance will be critical to ensure long-term business viability. Encouraging entrepreneurship within the community also strengthens local employment opportunities and promotes economic self-sufficiency, especially when paired with clear pathways to market access and sustained operational support.

7. Workforce Development and Education

Developing a skilled Tribal workforce is essential to realizing economic opportunities across all sectors, tourism, harbor operations, cultural enterprises, government services, infrastructure and construction projects, natural resource management and Tribal stewardship initiatives. Workforce development programs that focus on vocational training, professional development, and partnerships with regional educational institutions will help prepare Tribal members for emerging employment opportunities across these fields, including specialized skills such as scientific SCUBA diving, environmental monitoring, coastal resource management that support Tribal stewardship and co-management efforts and technical and professional service industry skills.. These programs will ensure that Tribal members are positioned to benefit from new economic development initiatives and leadership opportunities within the community, while building long-term capacity for Tribal-led research, monitoring, and resource management and broader workforce participation across all sectors of the local economy.

8. Sustainable Land and Resource Management

The Tribe's stewardship of natural and cultural resources is a primary driver of economic development, creating opportunities where conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of lands and waters directly generate workforce, research, and restoration-based economic activity. Stewardship-based initiatives such as sustainable fisheries management, ecotourism programs, environmental education, and habitat restoration not only protect Tribal cultural resources and ecological systems but also function as active economic engines that support jobs, local enterprise development, and visitor engagement, while also protecting existing economic activity. In particular, maintaining and enhancing the ecological health of wild fisheries is essential to sustaining the fishing industry itself, as long-term economic viability depends on healthy and productive marine ecosystems.

The use of green infrastructure further strengthens this relationship by providing nature-based solutions that draw visitors, support ecological health, reinforce cultural connections to place, mitigate coastal and climate-related hazards, enhance overall community resilience, and protect economic activity tied to coastal and marine resources. By incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge alongside modern resource management practices and centering Tribal data collection and decision-making, the Tribe can advance a model of development where stewardship, sustainability, and economic growth are fully integrated and mutually reinforcing.

9. Strengthening Tribal Governance and Administrative Capacity

In addition to expanding economic enterprises and infrastructure, strengthening internal governance and operational capacity is an important component of the Tribe's economic development strategy, particularly as projects increase in scale and complexity. Modernization of the Tribal Administration Building will support expanded staff capacity, improve coordination among Tribal departments, and provide upgraded workspace and technology necessary to effectively manage economic development initiatives, infrastructure projects, and community programs. Enhancing administrative capacity ensures that the Tribe can successfully plan, implement, and oversee the projects identified in this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy while

reinforcing Tribal sovereignty and self-determined governance.

Economic Development Needs

While the Tribe has significant economic development opportunities, several key needs must be addressed to support sustainable growth and long-term community well-being.

1. Addressing Housing and Community Facilities Needs

Limited housing availability on Tribal lands presents challenges for workforce recruitment, retention, and community growth, directly affecting the Tribe's ability to support existing and planned economic initiatives. Investment in housing, utilities, and community facilities is needed to support a growing workforce and improve quality of life for Tribal members. Additional administrative and operational space is also needed to support expanding Tribal programs and economic development initiatives, including increased staffing and programmatic coordination.

2. Mitigating Infrastructure Vulnerabilities

Existing transportation networks, harbor infrastructure, wastewater treatment facilities, and utility systems are constrained by a combination of aging infrastructure, limited system capacity, steep terrain, and exposure to coastal environmental conditions, including sea-level rise, storm surge, and erosion. These conditions create specific limitations on development, including constrained wastewater capacity for new or expanded uses, limited harbor operational efficiency and vessel access, transportation access challenges to key facilities, and utility system constraints that reduce reliability and scalability for future growth. Strategic investments are necessary to improve infrastructure resilience, increase system capacity, and ensure reliable access to Tribal facilities and economic centers, particularly in coastal and harbor areas where risks and constraints are most concentrated. These improvements are essential to unlocking planned development, including the hotel, gas station, harbor infrastructure upgrades, and revitalization of the Seascape Restaurant, many of which are dependent on adequate utility capacity, transportation access, and system reliability to proceed.

3. Diversifying Revenue Streams

While existing Tribal enterprises provide an important economic foundation, expanding revenue sources will be critical for long-term financial stability. Tourism and harbor-related businesses may experience seasonal fluctuations, making diversification an important strategy for maintaining consistent revenue, as well as reducing exposure to market and regulatory variability. Priority sectors for diversification include hospitality and lodging, transportation services and fuel distribution, maritime and harbor-based enterprises, commercial and recreational fisheries, ecotourism and visitor services, and restoration and environmental stewardship economies, including related workforce development and contracting opportunities. Focusing diversification efforts within these defined sectors will help ensure strategies are both focused and achievable while building on existing Tribal strengths and assets. Development of new Tribal enterprises, including the hotel, gas station, and expanded tourism services, will help broaden the Tribe's economic base and reduce reliance on any single sector.

4. Enhancing Access to Capital and Technical Assistance

Local entrepreneurs and Tribal enterprises often face barriers to accessing financial resources, training, and technical assistance necessary to start or expand businesses. Strengthening partnerships with regional economic development organizations, financial institutions, and workforce development programs can improve access to funding and business development resources, particularly where support is tailored to Tribal enterprises and local

market conditions.

5. Strengthening Community Engagement and Planning Capacity

Continued community engagement and coordinated planning across Tribal departments will be important to ensure that economic development initiatives align with Tribal priorities, cultural values, and long-term sustainability goals. Investments in planning capacity, project management, and organizational coordination will help ensure successful implementation of economic development initiatives identified in this strategy.

Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Plan

Building on the economic development opportunities and needs identified in the previous section, the Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria has established a set of strategic goals and objectives to guide Tribal economic development over the next five years. These goals translate the Tribe's vision and planning priorities into actionable initiatives that support sustainable economic growth, strengthen Tribal enterprises, and enhance community well-being.

The strategic goals outlined below focus on expanding tourism and cultural enterprises, strengthening the harbor and waterfront economy, improving infrastructure and transportation systems, investing in workforce development, and ensuring that economic growth aligns with the Tribe's long-standing commitment to environmental stewardship and cultural preservation, particularly where these priorities intersect and require coordination across multiple departments. Together, these priorities support the Tribe's broader objective of building a resilient and diversified economy while reinforcing Tribal sovereignty and self-determined development.

The accompanying implementation framework identifies priority projects, responsible departments, timelines, and performance measures that will guide project execution and allow the Tribe to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes over time. This structured approach ensures accountability while providing flexibility to adapt to emerging economic opportunities and community needs.

Strategic Goal 1: Expand Tourism and Cultural Enterprises Diversification

Objective 1.1 – Establish a Tribal-Owned Hotel

- Description: Develop a hotel on Tribal lands to accommodate visitors, support tourism, and generate year-round revenue, with consideration of workforce housing, infrastructure capacity, climate resilience, and long-term operational sustainability.
- Responsible Party: Tribal Administration, Trinidad Rancheria Economic Development Corporation (TREDC), Planning & Construction Team
- Timeline: Planning & design (complete); construction (2026–2027); operations (2029 onward)
- Performance Measures: Hotel occupancy rates, annual revenue generated, number of Tribal jobs created

Objective 1.2 – Establish a Tribal-Owned Gas Station

- Description: Develop and operate a Tribal-owned gas station to generate sustainable revenue, create employment opportunities, and support increased traffic and economic activity within Tribal lands.
- Responsible Party: Tribal Administration, Trinidad Rancheria Economic Development Corporation (TREDC), Planning & Construction Team
- Timeline: Planning & design (2026); construction (2026–2027); operations (2027 onward)
- Performance Measures: Completion of design; securing of funding; construction completion; number of

jobs created; revenue generated; operational status of facility

Objective 1.3 – Revitalize the Seascape Restaurant

- Description: Modernize kitchen and dining facilities, improve visitor amenities, enhance operational efficiency and enhance resilience to changing environmental conditions to attract more visitors and increase revenue while strengthening the restaurant’s role as a central waterfront destination.
- Responsible Party: Harbor Development Team, TREDC, Maintenance and Facilities, Cultural Resources Department
- Timeline: Design and planning (2026); construction and upgrades (2027); fully operational (2028)
- Performance Measures: Annual revenue growth, visitor satisfaction surveys, number of Tribal staff employed

Objective 1.4 – Advance the Interpretive Center

- Description: Complete construction and operationalize the Interpretive Center to provide cultural education, tourism experiences, and community programming, with a focus on Tribal-led interpretation and integration with harbor and coastal initiatives.
- Responsible Party: Cultural Resources Department, Harbor Development Team, Natural Resources Marine Program, Transportation and Land Use Department.
- Timeline: Construction completion (2026); opening and programming (2027)
- Performance Measures: Number of visitors, educational program participation, community engagement metrics

Strategic Goal 2: Strengthen Harbor and Waterfront Economy

Objective 2.1 – Develop and Implement a Comprehensive Harbor Master Planning Effort

- Description: Develop a comprehensive Harbor Master Plan to guide future development, infrastructure improvements, economic opportunities, and environmental and cultural resource protection and enhancement, informed by Tribal Member input and stakeholder engagement.
- Responsible Party: Transportation and Land Use, Harbor Development Team, Natural Resources Department, Cultural Resources, Tribal Administration,
- Timeline: 2026–2027
- Performance Measures: Number of stakeholder and Tribal engagement meetings; completion of draft and final Harbor Master Plan; Tribal Council adoption; number of priority projects identified; funding secured or pursued for implementation

Objective 2.2 – Implement the Harbor Leadership Strategic Plan

- Description: Develop visitor amenities, harbor facilities, and support services in alignment with the Provisional Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Harbor Master Plan to grow economic activity, improve waterfront access, and support cultural tourism.
- Responsible Party: Harbor Development Team, Natural Resources Department, with coordination across other relevant departments, TREDC
- Timeline: Short-term improvements (2026–2027); long-term expansions (2028–2030)
- Performance Measures: Annual harbor revenue, number of visitors, harbor employment opportunities, environmental quality indicators

Objective 2.3 – Boat Launch Facility Upgrades and Capacity Expansion

- Description: Upgrade and expand the existing boat launch facility to improve safety, accessibility, and operational capacity, while supporting current and future demand for commercial fishing, recreational boating, emergency response, scientific research, and visitor use. Improvements will enhance harbor functionality, reduce congestion, and ensure continued safe and sustainable access to Trinidad Bay in alignment with environmental protection and stewardship goals.
- Responsible Party: Harbor Development Team, Natural Resource Department, Transportation and Land Tribal Administration, with coordination across other relevant departments
- Timeline: Ongoing 2026–2030
Performance Measures: Completion of engineering and design; securing of funding; completion of boat launch facility upgrades; increased launch capacity and operational efficiency; improved user safety and accessibility; compliance with environmental and permitting requirements; increased commercial, recreational, and research vessel use supported by the facility; revenue generated.

Objective 2.4 – Support Harbor-Related Enterprises

- Description: Encourage small businesses and Tribal enterprises that provide services related to harbor activities, tourism, cultural engagement, and environmental enhancement.
- Responsible Party: TREDC, Tribal Administration, Harbor Development Team, Natural Resource Dept.
- Timeline: Ongoing 2026–2030
- Performance Measures: Number of new businesses, revenue generated, Tribal employment levels

Strategic Goal 3: Enhance Transportation and Infrastructure

Objective 3.1 – Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrades and Capacity Expansion

- Description: Upgrade and expand the existing wastewater treatment facility to support current demand and accommodate future residential, commercial, and infrastructure development within the Rancheria, while ensuring compliance and environmental protection, particularly with respect to water quality in Trinidad Bay Areas of Special Biological Significance
- Responsible Party: Facilities, Natural Resource Department, Transportation and Land Use., Tribal Administration, TREDC
- Timeline: 2026–2030
- Performance Measures: Completion of engineering and design; securing of funding; completion of facility upgrades; increased treatment capacity; compliance with environmental regulations; number of new developments supported by expanded capacity

Objective 3.2 – Develop Infrastructure for New Enterprises

- Description: Construct supporting infrastructure for the hotel, gas station, and Seascape Restaurant, including utilities, parking, access roads, climate resilience, and safety improvements.
- Responsible Party: Planning & Construction Team, Transportation and Land Use Department, with coordination across other relevant departments
- Timeline: 2026–2029
- Performance Measures: Completion of infrastructure projects on schedule, operational readiness of facilities

Objective 3.3 – Complete Transportation Improvement Projects

- Description: Implement projects identified in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Tribal Transportation Improvement Program (TTIP) to improve mobility, access, and safety.
- Responsible Party: Planning & Construction Team, Transportation and Land Use Department., Tribal Administration, with coordination across other relevant departments
- Timeline: 2026–2030
- Performance Measures: Miles of road improved, number of safety projects completed, reduction in traffic incidents

Strategic Goal 4: Promote Workforce Development and Community Capacity

Objective 4.1 – Provide Vocational and Professional Training

- Description: Develop programs for hospitality, cultural tourism, transportation, environmental monitoring, resource management, marine services (including ocean and harbor operations supporting vessel use, fishing, research, habitat restoration, aquaculture-related activities, and other operations that contribute to economic development and sustainable resource use), and Tribal government operations.
- Responsible Party: TREDC, Tribal Administration, Human Resource Department, Community Partners
- Timeline: 2026–2030 (ongoing program updates)
- Performance Measures: Number of Tribal members trained, number of certifications completed, job placement rates within Tribal enterprises

Objective 4.2 – Strengthen Local Capacity for Economic Planning and Administration

- Description: Build administrative and technical capacity to manage and implement economic development projects efficiently. Modernize the Tribal Administration Building to provide upgraded facilities, workspace, and technology that support staff, improve operational efficiency, enhance climate resilience, and enable effective project management.
- Responsible Party: Tribal Administration, Transportation and Land-Use, TREDC, with coordination across other relevant departments
- Timeline: Ongoing 2026–2030
- Performance Measures: Staff trained, successful project completions, stakeholder engagement activities conducted, operational efficiency improvements, upgraded office infrastructure supporting CEDS initiatives

Strategic Goal 5: Ensure Sustainable and Culturally Aligned Economic Growth

Objective 5.1 – Integrate Environmental and Cultural Stewardship

- Description: Apply Traditional Ecological Knowledge alongside and in integration with contemporary Western science as complementary and co-equal knowledge systems to all economic development projects, particularly tourism, harbor activities, and natural resource management.
- Responsible Party: Cultural Resources Department, Natural Resources Department, with coordination across other relevant departments
- Timeline: Ongoing 2026–2030
- Performance Measures: Compliance with environmental standards, number of cultural preservation and stewardship programs implemented, participation of Tribal members in stewardship activities, trends in key environmental indicators (e.g., water quality, habitat condition), and community satisfaction metrics

Objective 5.2 – Diversify Revenue Streams and Strengthen Financial Stability

- Description: Expand Tribal enterprises across hospitality, retail, cultural, resource management, scientific, and marine sectors to reduce dependence on a single revenue source.
- Responsible Party, Tribal Council, Administration, Fiscal Department
- Timeline: 2026–2030
- Performance Measures: Annual revenue growth, enterprise profitability, proportion of revenue from diversified sources

By advancing these strategic goals and objectives, the Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria establishes a clear path toward sustainable economic growth, strengthened Tribal enterprises, and enhanced community well-being. The coordinated approach ensures that projects are culturally grounded, economically viable, and environmentally responsible, while supporting workforce development, infrastructure improvements, and expanded tourism and cultural opportunities.

Implementation Approach

To translate the Tribe’s strategic goals and objectives into tangible outcomes, a structured implementation approach is essential. This approach provides a roadmap for coordinated action, ensuring that initiatives across tourism, harbor development, infrastructure, workforce development, and cultural stewardship are executed efficiently, responsibly, and in alignment with Tribal values.

By clearly defining project oversight, community engagement, performance monitoring, and funding strategies, the Tribe can maintain accountability, measure progress, and adapt to emerging opportunities or challenges throughout the implementation period. Successful implementation of this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy will require strong coordination and collaboration among Tribal departments, supported by effective leadership, and ongoing engagement with Tribal members and regional partners.

- Project Oversight: Tribal Administration will coordinate with department leads and consultants to ensure timely project execution.
- Community Engagement: Regular communication and consultation with Tribal members will ensure that economic development initiatives remain aligned with community priorities and cultural values, with feedback incorporated into project design and implementation.
- Performance Monitoring: Progress toward strategic goals will be evaluated through measurable outcomes, annual reporting, and periodic updates to the CEDS implementation plan with responsibility for tracking assigned to implementing departments
- Funding Strategy: Projects will be supported through a combination of Tribal revenues, federal and state grant programs—including Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding—and partnerships with regional economic development organizations.

Evaluation and Performance Monitoring

Ongoing evaluation and performance monitoring are essential to ensuring that the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy remains effective, responsive, and aligned with the Tribe’s long-term economic development goals. The Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria will regularly review the implementation of the strategic goals and initiatives outlined in this document to track progress, measure outcomes, and identify opportunities for improvement.

Performance monitoring will focus on measurable indicators associated with each strategic goal, including job creation, revenue growth, infrastructure improvements, workforce development outcomes, visitor engagement, and environmental stewardship indicators such as ecosystem health, habitat restoration progress, water quality, and conservation outcomes where applicable. Tribal departments responsible for implementing projects will track progress toward these performance measures and provide periodic updates to Tribal leadership and administrative staff with expectations for consistency and completeness in reporting. These indicators will help the Tribe evaluate the effectiveness of economic development initiatives and determine whether adjustments to strategies or timelines are needed.

The Tribe will also use performance monitoring to assess broader economic trends affecting Tribal enterprises and the regional economy, including tourism activity, harbor operations, workforce participation, and infrastructure development, recognizing that these trends may require adjustments to implementation priorities. Tracking these trends will allow Tribal leadership to respond proactively to changing economic conditions and emerging opportunities.

An internal review of the CEDS implementation progress will be conducted on a regular basis, with updates provided to Tribal leadership and relevant departments. This review process will help ensure accountability, support coordination across Tribal programs, and identify implementation challenges early, and maintain alignment with the Tribe's economic development priorities.

In addition to ongoing internal evaluation, the Tribe will periodically engage with regional partners, economic development organizations, and community stakeholders to gather input on economic conditions and potential partnership opportunities. This collaborative approach helps ensure that the Tribe's economic development strategy remains aligned with regional initiatives and continues to support long-term economic resilience.

The Tribe will also conduct periodic updates to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to reflect completed projects, emerging priorities, and evolving economic conditions. Regular evaluation and updates ensure that the CEDS remains a living document that supports strategic decision-making, reinforces Tribal sovereignty, and advances sustainable economic growth for the community.

Regional Partners & Resource Providers

The success of the Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria's economic development strategy depends on strong partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies, as well as regional organizations and academic institutions. These partnerships provide technical assistance, funding opportunities, workforce development support, and coordination for infrastructure and economic projects, strengthening the Tribe's capacity to implement its strategic goals and sustain long-term economic growth.

Key federal partners include the U.S. Economic Development Administration, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Federal Highway Administration Tribal Transportation Program, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development programs. At the state level, the Tribe collaborates with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz), and other programs supporting infrastructure and economic development.

Local and regional partners play a critical role in advancing the Tribe's objectives. These include Humboldt County, the City of Trinidad, regional economic development organizations, workforce development agencies, and academic institutions such as Cal Poly Humboldt.

Additional regional partners and resource providers include:

- **Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians Economic Development Corporation (ATNI-EOC):** leverages federal, private and philanthropic capital to invest in Tribal enterprises and Native owned businesses across the Western United States.
- **Arcata Economic Development Corporation (AEDC):** Provides loans and financial support for entrepreneurial and innovative business opportunities in Northern California.
- **California Center for Rural Policy (Cal Poly Humboldt):** Conducts research to improve rural communities and informs policy recommendations that guide regional development decisions.
- **College of the Redwoods Community & Economic Development:** Supports workforce training, business development, and economic capacity-building programs.
- **County of Humboldt Economic Development Division:** Implements programs aligned with the Prosperity! economic development strategy for all county residents.
- **Humboldt Area Foundation (HAF):** Fosters social, economic, and environmental prosperity across the North Coast.
- **Humboldt County Office of Education:** Administers programs that promote educational enrichment, health, and well-being for children in 32 school districts.
- **North Coast Small Business Development Center (NCSBDC):** Provides technical support, training, and financial guidance for small businesses in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.
- **Redwood Coast Rural Action (RCRA):** A network of regional leaders focused on community, regional, and statewide action across Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, and Mendocino Counties.
- **Redwood Region Economic Development Commission (RREDC):** Supports countywide economic development, expands access to capital, and strengthens regional leadership capacity.
- **Workforce Investment Board (WIB):** Connects employers and workers to advance local workforce development and community prosperity.

As the Tribe implements the CEDS, continued coordination and the development of new or strengthened relationships with these partners will be essential. Key federal agencies, such as the BIA's Indian Reservation Roads program, support Tribal transportation infrastructure, including access to Tribal facilities and the Trinidad Pier. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is a critical partner in managing the California Coastal National Monument, which protects offshore sea stacks, rocks, and dependent wildlife habitats, supporting conservation and sustainable ecotourism.

At the state level, the California Coastal Commission provides guidance on coastal development and permitting, while Caltrans plays a vital role in transportation improvements associated with the US 101/Trinidad Area Access Improvements Project. Local entities, including the Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG), Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, and the Trinidad City Council, offer opportunities for coordination on infrastructure, planning, and economic initiatives. Collaboration with tourism-focused organizations, such as the Trinidad Chamber of Commerce, Trinidad Tourism and Lodging Association, and the Humboldt County Visitors Bureau, further supports promotion of the region's recreational, cultural, and coastal assets.

By maintaining and expanding these partnerships, the Tribe is positioned to leverage regional expertise, align initiatives with broader economic priorities, access funding and technical assistance, and advance sustainable economic development that benefits both Tribal members and the broader North Coast community.

Community Engagement and Participation

Community engagement is a cornerstone of the Trinidad Rancheria's economic development strategy. Active participation ensures that Tribal members are informed, empowered, and able to provide input on projects that directly impact their community, cultural heritage, environmental integrity, and economic opportunities. Engagement activities will include:

- **Regular Tribal Consultations and Community Council Meetings:** Ongoing meetings to share updates, solicit feedback, and discuss priorities for Tribal enterprises, tourism development, infrastructure, and cultural initiatives.
- **Project-Specific Advisory Workgroups:** Tasked with guiding planning and implementation for key initiatives such as the Harbor Revitalization Plan, Tribal-owned hotel, Seascape Restaurant modernization, and Interpretive Center programming.
- **Workshops and Training Programs:** Designed to build capacity among Tribal members in business development, workforce skills, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship.
- **Communication Platforms:** Use of newsletters, social media, and the Tribal website to provide transparent information, updates on CEDS projects, and avenues for member feedback.

By prioritizing engagement, the Tribe ensures that economic development aligns with community values, cultural preservation goals, and the long-term well-being of its members, while also supporting Tribal sovereignty and self-determination.

CEDS Maintenance and Update Process

The CEDS is a living document that will be actively maintained and updated to reflect changing conditions, new opportunities, and emerging challenges. The Tribe will implement the following maintenance and update process:

- **Annual Review:** Tribal Administration, TREDC, and relevant departments will assess progress toward strategic goals, evaluate performance measures, and update data on economic, demographic, and infrastructure trends. With clear documentation of outcomes and any required adjustments to strategy or timelines.
- **Five-Year Full Update:** Every five years, the CEDS will undergo a comprehensive review, including a reassessment of opportunities, needs, risk factors, and strategic goals. This process will include input from Tribal members, regional partners, and stakeholders.
- **Data Integration:** Updated economic, demographic, housing, and workforce data will be incorporated to ensure decisions are based on accurate and current information.
- **Reporting and Transparency:** Annual reports will summarize accomplishments, ongoing initiatives, and revisions to the CEDS. These reports will be shared with Tribal members and regional partners to promote transparency and accountability. With reporting formats that clearly communicate progress, challenges, and next steps.

This ongoing maintenance process ensures that the CEDS remains a relevant and actionable roadmap that supports sustainable economic growth, Tribal sovereignty, and community resilience.

The Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria is committed to fostering a resilient, diversified, and sustainable economy that supports Tribal sovereignty, cultural preservation, and the well-being of its members.

Through the strategies outlined in this CEDS, the Tribe will expand economic opportunities, strengthen workforce capacity, enhance Tribal enterprises, and protect natural and cultural resources. By leveraging regional partnerships, actively engaging the community, and implementing data-driven performance monitoring, the Tribe ensures that economic development initiatives are sustainable, inclusive, and aligned with the long-term vision of a healthy, prosperous, and self-sufficient community. This CEDS provides a roadmap for continued growth and resilience, enabling the Trinidad Rancheria to thrive while maintaining its cultural identity, governance authority, and connection to the North Coast region.