Informed by:

- **Local and State Plans / Local and State planning efforts**
  - Eagle County Comprehensive Plan Update/Vista Community Engagement Project (2021)
  - Eagle County Economic Development Plan (2016)
  - Basalt Strategic Plan (2018)
  - Elevate Eagle Comprehensive Plan (2020)
  - Gypsum Comprehensive Master Plan (2017)
  - Grand County Economic Resurgence & Resiliency Action Implementation Plan (2017)
  - Town of Grand Lake Comprehensive Plan (2020)
  - Fraser Valley Strategic Economic Development Plan (2015)
  - Town of Winter Park Master Plan (2018)
  - Jackson County Craft Studio 101 Plan (2019)
  - Pitkin County Strategic Plan
  - City of Aspen Policy Agenda (2021)
  - Town of Snowmass Village Comprehensive Plan (2018)
  - Summit Prosperity Initiative Community Assessment (2019)
  - Breckenridge Destination Management Plan (2018)
  - Town of Frisco Strategic Plan (2020-2021)
  - NWCCOG Regional Assessment of Childcare Industry (2021)
  - Colorado Resiliency Framework (2020)
  - NWCCOG/CAST Mountain Migration Study (June 2021)
  - Colorado Rural Economic Blueprint
  - Colorado Dept. of Labor & Employment / Office of the Future of Work / A Path Forward

- **Community & Stakeholder Engagement**
  - Summit County REDI Community Survey (2019)
  - Summit County Business Impact Surveys
  - Vail Valley Partnership Business Retention Survey (March 2021)
  - NWCCOG Regional Business Survey (April 2021)
  - Town of Minturn Community Survey (2020)
  - Town of Eagle Community Survey (2021)
  - Jackson County Town Hall with State Rep. Amabile and Sen. Rankin – Jan. 27
  - Grand County Town Hall with State Rep. Amabile and Sen. Rankin – Jan. 27
  - Summit County BOCC Town Halls
  - Breckenridge Tourism Office Community Update – Jan. 14
  - Mountain Roundtable Town Hall with Senator Michael Bennet – Jan. 8
  - Pitkin County Growth Management Plan Public Outreach (ongoing)
  - Input from NWCCOG CEDS Strategy Committee (SWOT session 3/25/21)
Strengths

• Public lands & open space: amenity for residents and attracts visitors, fuels tourism (National Forests; BLM Land; Rocky Mountain National Park; State Parks)
• Abundant outdoor recreation opportunities and amenities
• Natural beauty
• World-class, internationally known ski areas that offer year-round recreational opportunities
• Strong tourism sector
• Sense of Community
• Small Town Character
• Educated workforce
• Proximity to metro area/population center (Denver, Colorado Springs)
• Quality of place: desirable place to live; attracts talent, visitors, wealth
• Local government commitment to invest in workforce housing
• Quaint, historic downtowns
• Healthcare (hospitals, cancer treatment center, surgery centers, orthopedic care)
• Cultural amenities (theaters, events)
• Broadband (Project THOR)
• Airports (Eagle County Regional Airport; Aspen/Pitkin County Airport; DIA)
• Social services support infrastructure
• Numerous and diverse local non-profit organizations
• Small businesses; entrepreneurial spirit
• Higher Education: Colorado Mountain College (3 campuses in the region)
• Private investment in communities
Weaknesses

• Region’s economy dominated by a single, low-paying sector (tourism)
• High cost of living: housing, healthcare, childcare
• Infrastructure for a growing region: Inadequate transportation systems create congestion; safety issues (I70); lack of adequate parking in towns
• Lack of mental health and substance abuse services
• Lack of career pathways for much of the workforce
• Home ownership out of reach for many families looking to put down roots in the region
• Poor forest health may lead to wildfire
• Social/wealth inequity
• Differing opinions on what is just big enough
• Deed-restricted workforce housing prevents local families to build equity to move up to the next level
• Inadequate services to address increasingly culturally-diverse population
• Lack of strong support system typically found in economies with dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystems; access to capital is an especially key issue
• Lodging shortage (Jackson County)
• Three counties in one valley (Pitkin County)
• Lack of an economic development group in either town or county (Jackson County)
• Inadequate water resources/infrastructure
Opportunities

• In-migration driven by remote work, urban exodus
• Growth in location neutral opportunities
• More wealth moving in
• Move away from tourism/large events = diversification
• Cancellation of large events provides opportunity to recalibrate size and purpose of events
• Growth in new sectors (Healthcare, Professional/Technical)
• Surge in development inquires in “sleepy” towns like Walden, Hot Sulphur Springs, Grand Lake
• Thoughtful growth
• Entrepreneurship
• Job growth in higher paying sectors (Healthcare; Professional/Technical)
• Responsible tourism measures put into place during pandemic may continue
• Increased recreation usage on public lands, a major economic driver in the NWCCOG Region
• “Structurally Unemployed” - automation leads to reduced need for low wage workers, opportunity for retraining into higher paying job sectors
• Continuing to grow relationships between local Chambers of Commerce
• Immigration policy – creation of guest worker program could be an opportunity
• Increased air service at airports in the region – leveraging distribution opportunities with airports
Threats

• Pandemic: continued economic effects; long term recovery from; possibility of more in the future
• Loss of workforce due to pandemic
• Small businesses closing their doors due to inability to survive the pandemic
• Possible surge in permanent, year-round population due to pandemic (driven by remote work; remote school, internet connectivity) – could lead to increased demand in public services
• In migration driving up housing costs
• Overcrowding on public lands
• Climate Change
• Shift in environmental conditions and effects on travel demand and occupancy management
• Continued uncertainty impacts travel demand, especially international travel
• Ongoing inability of our service businesses and tourist economy to accommodate professionally and in a timely manner the demands of the ever-increasing number of tourist and second homeowners.
• Growth in wealth/permanent population creates more demand for low-paying service jobs to support growing permanent population (i.e. restaurant, recreation services, retail jobs)
• Continued capacity limits on large gatherings negatively impacting events which bring visitors which fuel tourism-based economy
• Drought
• Wildfires and subsequent threat of mudslides, flooding
• Impacts of increase in short-term rentals (loss of workforce housing)
• Mental health and substance abuse
• “Structurally Unemployed” – some low wage jobs will not come back due to automation; may lead to chronically unemployed portion of the workforce
• Differing visions for the community
• Immigration policy and its affect on the ability to get worker visas
• Federal and state policy changes affecting some key industries in the region (oil and gas; agriculture; hunting)