



MEMORANDUM

To: NWCCOG Council for October 12 Budget Workshop
From: Jon Stavney, Executive Director
Date: October 8, 2026
Re: Decisions from Retreat related to Budget

2027 Budget Pressures on Regional Business and Related Programs

1. Economic Development District Director, page 37

**\$100,000 in
Dues/RB
for Employee**

- Does the Council approve hiring the budgeted director in 2027? Link to [Updated White Paper](#) from the retreat.
- The current budget covers a hire at the midpoint of the 2027 wage range (\$105,000 plus benefits), not between the midpoint and the top of the range (\$125,763). Talks with potential candidates suggest that a director of the caliber we want would expect closer to \$150,000. Eagle County's new SBDC director has the same wage range as our current EDD range. A higher salary would require a larger match from member dues and a cut to another item in this memo.
- Through 2026, charging the Executive Director's time to the Economic Development grant eased pressure on two budgets that are in deficit for 2027 (Indirect and Regional Business).
- For the rest of 2026, the Executive Director's time will continue to be charged to Economic Development. The budget also includes \$10,000 in funding for a contractor in the EDD budget each year. At the September 17 EDD meeting, there was strong support in concept for hiring a contractor now.
- Which goals from the [adopted CEDS](#) economic development strategy get funded in 2027? The candidates are:
 - An outward-facing EDD Director who travels regularly and is present across the region (travel and vehicle budgeted – \$18,800)
 - Remain a regional source of economic data with regular reports, plus an online data dashboard (budgeted in RB without a digital CEDS – outside contract, \$15,000)
 - Housing assessments for Walden, Kremmling and Hot Sulphur Springs - item 5 from the CEDS (not budgeted).
 - Update to 2023 Workforce Housing Report has moved to Regional Business where there is a more flexible line item for Outside Contract, presuming work done internally, paying only for design).
 - Funding for a 2027 Regional Economic Summit (program expense – \$5,000 budgeted).

**\$20,000
Transfer from
EIP for Travel**

2. Broadband Director, page 59

**\$95,000 app.
from Dues/RB,
for an
Employee.**

- Does the Council approve continuing to fund the position from dues at the current rate, with the same 2027 raise as all other employees? Project THOR (page 61) is budgeted to cover \$184,296

of employee costs for the Regional Broadband Director in 2027. This is two years into a gradual shift that will move this position entirely to Project THOR in 2031 (page 62).

3. **Vintage: additional one-year bridge, page 65**

**\$110,000
Transfer
Dues/RB**

- Historically, NWCCOG leverages dues as matching funds for grant programs which require it. Does the Council approve using dues again in 2027 to cover reduced revenue and rising demand? Past years built up a reserve that is now being drawn down – not shown in budget. (Budgeted at \$110,000)
- The Vintage Reserve carryover built from RB contributions in past years was not expended in 2025. Note carryover amounts can be found on page 66 under Program Fund Projections.
- When will funding recover (2029, after the federal election)? What source will sustain current staffing and service levels over the long term?

4. **Regional Business: Behavioral health – start small**

**\$20,000 +/- in
RB 6520 for
grant match or
contract assist**

- Does the Council authorize the Executive Director and the consultant to carry out [Option A in 2027](#) in house, without adding a position and with minimal seed money? Option A is coordination: a resource database, a grant calendar, peer learning calls and if the group decides, a summit.
- Should the budget include a placeholder so NWCCOG can apply for grants from foundations such as Katz Amsterdam, Grand, Vail Health and Colorado Health?
- How much should be held aside in case a grant requires a local match?

5. **Regional Business: Update to the 2023 Workforce Housing Report** (currently budgeted for design only, with in-house research and input from the planners group)

**\$5,000 +/- for
Design in RB,
in house work**

- Who leads the research: the Executive Director or the new Economic Development Director? What other work would be delayed?
- Is the scope just the four-year comparison? Or does it also include the Walden, Kremmling and Hot Sulphur Springs assessments, a standard method for comparing county housing studies, and a regional housing dashboard?
- Publish in 2027, or start in 2027 and finish in 2028?
- Before the budget shortfalls were identified, \$30,000 was set aside for this project.

6. **Regional Business: Update to the 2004 study “Social and Economic Effects of Second Homes”**

**\$0 Budgeted,
discussed at
Economic
Summit**

- **Data Only:** Jodi Flory can provide base data at minimal cost; she is doing this now for Grand County
- **A full update:** a new impact study by a consultant (could be \$80,000), but the scope would need to be defined first.
- **A targeted update:** second homeowners’ philanthropy and civic role, the risk of the 1990s-era buyers aging out, vacancy rates (Eagle County 48%, Pitkin County 80%) and their effect on housing and vacancy taxes.
- **Interviews: interviews with the Study Group**
- **A short brief:** a staff-written summary of current data.
- Could a pilot study in 2027 help scope a full report in 2028?

7. **Regional Business: 2027 Council retreat:** Should there be another retreat in 2027? The August retreat cost approximately \$10,000. (not budgeted)

Member Services/Regional Business Items from the Retreat Not in the 2027 Budget

8. **Program report cards, impact reports:** How can we best show Member Jurisdictions the value of our programs? One option is a website dashboard for each program, which would cost money to design and

**\$110,000
Transfer
Dues/RB**

maintain. Should there be funding for yearly program report cards and summaries of value for each member community? Or is the upgraded budget document enough?

9. **Trial sub-regional meetings:** Should the Council fund a trial of sub-regional meetings that send issues up to the full Council, and should these be held in-person locally? This would involve staff time, travel cost and meeting space. (not budgeted)
10. **Speakers and outside experts:** Should there be a modest amount for travel or speaking fees for strong presenters and local subject-matter experts at Council meetings? (not budgeted)
11. **Member communications:** Should funding be added to improve communications about NWCCOG programs? If so, what improvements does the Council have in mind? Monthly newsletters are already funded at \$12,000 a year through RB. (budgeted)
12. **NWCCOG video: Should NWCCOG fund a professionally produced video?** (not budgeted)

Energy Program Items: See the memo on proposed 2027 changes to the Profit Sharing Plan

13. Note: The Training Center is expected to become a profit center in the next few years.
14. Fee-for-service programs are growing rapidly and producing strong “profits.” These have been distributed within the Energy program, with broad discretion, as “reserved for program use” and shared with employees to support hiring, retention and company culture. As these revenues grow, should they remain at the Energy program’s sole discretion while funding for most other programs is under intense pressure?
15. Does the Council approve how the program’s net earnings are split between program reserves and employee profit-sharing? Energy staff propose splitting it into thirds. If reserves are also meant to benefit NWCCOG as a whole, the Council may want to keep reserves at half of the total.

\$0 Budgeted for outside Energy

Elevator inspection: page 39

16. The Elevator Inspection program was in transition in 2026. It replaced experienced staff and added trainees while managing a two-year, rolling data-base transition with several consultants. This led to months of heavy overtime for admin staff and six months without enforcement, leaving the program at or below break-even through Q3. Staff expects 2026 to be an anomaly. In 2027, staff expects a full team of trained inspectors and a more efficient system that will speed up communication with owners.

(\$60,000) in Transfers in 2027 Budget. Zero in 2026.

Not in 2027: All programs

17. **Wage range analysis:** Any changes that come out of the analysis are not budgeted and will wait for the 2028 budget, unless there is a strong reason for an exception.

\$0 Budgeted for mid-year Wage Adjustments identified in analysis process