

The Hourglass Project

A Case for Bold, Collective Action
to Bolster the Central Coast Economy

DRAFT

February 24, 2019

Residents of the Central Coast:

Those of us signing this letter share the good fortune to live, work and play on the Central Coast. We are united in our love for the Central Coast, yet deeply concerned that the future, absent course correction, will leave too many residents behind. Put simply, the lifestyle we now enjoy will not be available to our children. Our Region's economy is not equipped to produce the opportunities necessary for the next generation to build a life and future here.

By some key measures, our Region's economy is strong. The private sector has fueled strong job growth since the Great Recession, with notable growth in tech and manufacturing. As a result, unemployment is at or near a record low.

But despite appearances, our Regional economy is not serving our residents as well as it could. Many of our hard-working friends and neighbors struggle to earn enough to afford raising a family here. For them, the American Dream - of having rewarding work that pays enough to meet the Region's high housing costs, with money left over to enjoy other satisfying pursuits - is effectively unattainable.

Additionally, the economic indicators are ominous. The closure of Diablo Canyon Power Plant will result in the loss of 1,500 high-paying jobs. Large, stable companies are considering moving from the region. Our middle class is being squeezed by increases in cost-of-living and dwindling career opportunities, for them and the next generation.

This does not have to be our future.

On the following pages, we outline a vision for change we have named "The Hourglass Project." We chose this temporary name because it reflects our belief that time is slipping by, that we must move quickly and take bold, corrective action on a Regional scale.

With colleagues from both the public and private sectors, we have spent the past year studying what it would take to create a better future. With cooperation, inclusion and diversity as core values, we have concluded the following:

1. While our economy has rebounded from the depths of the Great Recession, our Region's economy consistently underperforms because it is beset by numerous structural weaknesses, such as a high percentage of lower-paying jobs, insufficient and decaying infrastructure, and extraordinarily high housing costs.
2. In each of our communities, many good people are working hard to solve these weaknesses, but these problems are larger than any one community can solve.

3. We need to think holistically. Instead of competing for a bigger slice of the pie, we need to collaborate across all of our communities to create a bigger pie, one that better serves all residents.

Our overarching conclusion is that new approaches are necessary. We believe the Hourglass Project will initiate and drive these efforts. Our concept is simple: partner with people and organizations across the Central Coast Super Region who care to build an economy that works better for all. It is not only possible but imperative that we create a better future, one in which our economy is more resilient and inclusive.

Yet, the economic challenges that we face are complex; they require a vision that ignites action and inspires an “all hands” commitment to ensure lasting and sustainable change. Now is the time to come together as a Region and make a long-term investment in our economy to ensure that there are more opportunities for more people by creating and equitable, inclusive, and prosperous Central Coast Super Region.

That’s where you come in.

We encourage you to join us in our pursuit of a renewed Central Coast. Please review the following pages. Consider how you can contribute to this important work. Together, let’s discover what we are capable of achieving when we think bigger and act collectively. Let’s work to ensure that our children will have the opportunity to pursue their American Dream - *here*.

Sincerely,

Founders of the Hourglass Project

Ty Safreno, Founder & CEO, Trust Automation
Jeffrey D. Armstrong, President, Cal Poly
Mike Bouquet, Managing Partner, Santa Maria Honda
Tony Guy, Executive VP and Santa Maria General Manager of Zodiac Aerospace
Dee Lacey, Cattle Rancher, Lacey Livestock
Eric Schwefler, Partner, Caliber Accounting Group
Rick Stollmeyer, Founder and CEO MINDBODY
Nick Tompkins, CEO, NKT Commercial
Kris Yetter, President and General Manager, Promega Biosciences
Ryan Caldwell, CEO, Wacker Wealth Partners
Chuck Davison, CEO, Visit SLO CAL
Gina Fitzpatrick, CEO, Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce
Ed Halpin, Former Chief Nuclear Officer and SVP Generation, PG&E
Melissa James, Director, Economic Initiatives & Regional Advocacy, SLO Chamber
Ermina Karim, Former CEO, San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce
Derek Kirk, CEO, Atascadero Chamber of Commerce
Bob Linscheid, Senior Advisor for Economic Development, Cal Poly
Glenn Morris, CEO, Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce
Clint Pearce, CEO, Madonna Enterprises

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Introduction

The Hourglass Project is a new alliance of business leader's intent on building a resilient, inclusive and prosperous Central Coast economy.

The Hourglass Project arose out of a growing concern that the Central Coast Super Region - defined as Vandenberg to Camp Roberts encompassing northern Santa Barbara County, San Luis Obispo County and southern Monterey County - is on a glide path to economic stagnation. Several key metrics show that our local economy is underperforming. Additionally, several structural weaknesses make the Central Coast Super Region vulnerable to looming and unavoidable external challenges, such as automation, the increasing demand for renewable energy sources, and underfunded and decaying infrastructure.

Adding to the problem is the fact that the nation's public educational system, at all levels, is struggling to meet industry's demands for graduates with appropriate skills. This challenge is even more daunting because funding for public education is generally stagnant or in retreat.

The alliance's bedrock concern is that current economic trends project a future in which our community becomes attractive mainly to visitors, wealthy retirees and students. The alliance is intent on creating a future in which the middle-class thrives rather than shrinks, a future that attracts bright, diverse talents, and offers the next generation exciting career and job prospects.

The alliance has concluded that a new Regional approach is needed to effectively shore up the area's structural weaknesses and blunt the effects of unavoidable external forces. The alliance proposes a broader, more encompassing framework than any existing organization is designed for. Importantly, this framework reflects how residents actually live their lives, i.e., many people wake up in one community, work in another, and eat and play in several others. Their lives and their commerce take place across a Region that is home to nearly 500,000 people and stretches across 2 counties, 10 individual cities, and dozens of community service districts - from Vandenberg Air Force Base in Santa Barbara County to Camp Roberts in San Luis Obispo County.

The Region's individual communities face numerous economic and social challenges that they cannot solve on their own. But by leveraging the strengths and political power of the entire Region, supporters of the Hourglass Project believe it is indeed possible to change the trajectory and build a more resilient and prosperous economy that works better for all residents. At the core of the Hourglass Project is the concept of Regionalism, which has proven

effective in several communities across the nation.¹ Regionalism boils down to these three principles:

1. The needs of any one community are often common across multiple jurisdictions.
2. The odds of satisfying those needs are better when collective strengths and assets are leveraged.
3. To better serve all residents, local business and civic leaders must move past hyper-local rivalries and work together with discipline, humility and goodwill in order to build a more inclusive, resilient and prosperous economy.

¹ ["A modern case for Regional collaboration," Brookings, February 2018.](#)

The Need for Quality Jobs

Despite the fact that Central Coast businesses have done relatively well since the Great Recession, the Regional economy suffers several glaring structural weaknesses, as these data points attest:

- **Over-reliance on low-wage jobs:** The primary problem is the Central Coast Super Region's narrow job mix. The Region is a net exporter of talent in higher-paying occupations and a net importer of talent in lower-paying jobs such as sales and service position, which creates a [local jobs base](#) over-saturated with lower-wage, lower-productivity jobs. (BW Research Partnership jobs analysis, 2018, for Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo County)
- **A shrinking middle class:** Consistent with trends across the country, the Central Coast middle class [is smaller than decades past](#) ("What is middle class in San Luis Obispo County?" The Tribune, Nov. 9, 2018) Low-wage, low-productivity jobs are growing 30% faster than middle-income occupations.
- **Underemployment worse than California average:** At 9.1%, underemployment in local mid-level jobs is 9 times worse than California's statewide average of 1.1% for San Luis Obispo County. Data for northern Santa Barbara County is unavailable, but anecdotally appears to be a similar weakness. (2018 SLO County Workforce Development Board Report, BW Research Partnership)
- **Relatively low wages pitted against high living costs:** The Region's [cost of living](#) is substantially higher than the national average, while the median income is, at best, only marginally higher. As examples, consider the Region's two largest cities: [Santa Maria's](#) cost of living is 30% above the national average and [San Luis Obispo's](#) is 79% above. Meanwhile, [Santa Maria's median income](#) is 16% below% while [San Luis Obispo's median income](#) is only 16% above the [national](#) median, according to data from the U.S. Census, Statistical Atlas of the United States and from Best Places.
- **Exceptionally high housing costs:** High housing costs stress our workforce. Median home prices in the Region are substantially higher than the national average of less than \$300,000, according to [U.S. Census data](#) and [local media reports](#). The median home price for the Region's three largest cities are at least 80% higher than the national average with Santa Maria at [\\$385,000](#), San Luis Obispo at [\\$731,400](#) and Paso Robles at [\\$498,700](#).

Adding to these stressors are external forces coursing through the national economy that could further weaken our Region's economy unless we take corrective action, including the following:

- **Increased Technology and Automation:** Automation could affect 30% of the Region's workforce in the next 5 to 10 years, approaching 100,000 jobs, which is a far greater impact than the national average of 22% (2018 BW Research Partnership for the Workforce Development Boards of Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo County). The Hourglass Project asserts that we should anticipate the future and plan ways to leverage the benefits of automation to create new, better jobs, and to provide retraining and "re-skilling" for affected workers.
- **Changing Energy Landscape:** California's ambitious renewable energy goals have shifted the state's reliance away from nuclear power, resulting in the planned closure of Diablo Canyon Power Plant and the loss of 1,500 high wage jobs and 1,700 contractor jobs in our region. The Hourglass Project asserts that the community needs to proactively work with PG&E and regulators to ensure decommissioning of Diablo is done safely, expediently and with minimal disruptive impact on the economy and the environment. Further, we need to work diligently to cultivate new high-paying jobs within the growing renewable energy sector, leveraging assets our Region holds as an energy producer.
- **Financing of Government Services & Infrastructure:** A thriving community depends on government services for public safety, health and education. Government funding of public infrastructure has long been integral to the healthy functioning of the private sector. The Hourglass Project asserts the private sector can and should work creatively with government to ensure that government meets its obligations as efficiently as possible. Furthermore, the private sector needs to thoughtfully plan, advocate, and generate support for public investment in maintaining and modernizing essential infrastructure.
- **Shifting Paradigm for Public Education and Workforce Development:** Technology advancements amid an increasingly global and interconnected economy are constantly shifting the way we live, work and learn. Correspondingly, workforce preparation is increasingly complex, whether the focus is on today's students, retraining of disrupted workers, or the next generation of workers. The Hourglass Project asserts that we can proactively advocate and help the Region's K-12 districts, community colleges and four-year universities work in partnership with businesses to bridge the gap between the supply of available talent and the employees that industries need now and in the future.

Origins and Objectives of Hourglass Project

Primary Objective: Regional Collaboration to Create Jobs

The Hourglass Project's primary focus is to drive strategic collaboration that will exponentially enhance the private sector's ability to create head-of-household jobs. The Hourglass Project is being designed explicitly as a community unifier and force multiplier, focused on these two interrelated objectives:

- (1) Bridge the gaps that have prevented the Region from addressing the economic challenges effectively.
- (2) Drive measurable, strategic actions that foster a more prosperous economy that works for all residents.

Currently, no existing entity is designed to fill either need on the scale required.

Solving for Gaps in Regional Action

Furthermore, three crucial gaps hinder our Region's ability to think, plan and act Regionally in order to drive economic opportunity and progress:

We Operate in Local Silos

We compete among ourselves when we should be working together to stave off external disruptive forces. Too often we are fighting with one another for a bigger slice of pie, instead of working together to create a bigger pie. We should align our mutual interests and collaborate across jurisdictional lines on a strategic vision that recognizes the Regional nature of our commerce. **The Hourglass Project is designed to bring together diverse leaders from across the Region to proactively drive economic growth.**

We Are Stuck Admiring the Problem

We have plenty of research, data and studies that describe and quantify the problems we face. We know what we should be doing, and we have talked at great length about possible solutions. But we have not acted. The Hourglass Project has not been created

only to convene, inform or educate the community. **The Hourglass Project has been created to drive strategic action on a focused suite of initiatives that will yield measurable and meaningful progress.**

We Have Not Tapped Private Sector Leadership

The job creators in our region are brimming with ingenuity and drive. But until now, there has been no vehicle to harness their energy to develop and advocate for a cohesive set of actions to address our challenges. **The Hourglass Project is designed to unite and mobilize business leaders from across the Region for collective impact.**

Origins of the Local Regionalism Movement

Recognizing the fact that the Central Coast lacks the Regional leadership and capacity to shepherd this work, six organizations that focus on supporting and developing our local economy have worked diligently over the past nine months - investing considerable time, talent and money - to create the Hourglass Project. More than a dozen organizations have expressed support for the project, with several playing key roles in creating the Hourglass mission and purpose. Among them:

- ▶ **San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce:** Local interest in the concept of Regionalism began with a SLO Chamber-sponsored exploratory trip to Denver in August of 2017. Nearly three dozen local leaders traveled to learn how that metro area had transformed its economy by embracing the concept of Regionalism. Representatives from both the private and public sectors, including five elected officials, returned to the Central Coast inspired to put Regional thinking to work in their spheres of influences, resulting in the beginnings of a community-wide discussion.
- ▶ **Cal Poly:** University President Jeffrey Armstrong, who has made local economic development a priority of his administration, provided a pathway for Regionalism to gain traction through his Local Economic Development Committee (LEDC). Established in 2014, the LEDC consists of approximately 60 regional leaders from government, education and industry who meet several times a year to consider economic initiatives focused on talent development, business attraction and start-up culture. The LEDC appointed a subcommittee to create the framework outlined in this paper for making Regionalism a disciplined force for change.

► **Visit SLO CAL:** In fewer than four years, this San Luis Obispo County-wide destination marketing and management organization has been highly effective at leveraging the work of local communities to brand and promote San Luis Obispo County as a regional tourist destination. Visit SLO CAL also has provided the firepower on long-range strategic economic development initiatives with unprecedented success, most notably in increasing airline service routes to Seattle, Denver and Dallas. Recognizing the benefit of regional collaboration for the tourism industry, Visit SLO CAL has actively pushed for greater collaboration across all of the Region’s economic sectors.

► **Central Coast Coalition of Chambers:** The individual Chambers from throughout SLO County and Northern Santa Barbara County collectively represent a major cross-section of the Region’s employees and employers. Time and again they have proven to be effective advocates for businesses within their local jurisdictions. Recognizing the opportunity to work together to support the Region’s economic success, and inspired by the area’s nascent Regionalism, 13 Chambers came together to form the Central Coast Coalition of Chambers. Additionally, four of these Chambers’ CEOs worked on the development of Project Hourglass’ mission and purpose.

Evidence That Regionalism Can Work on the Central Coast

There is a growing appetite and aptitude for meaningful Regional collaboration. As these examples attest, Regionalism has been put into practice, and it’s making an impact:

Housing

Eight organizations from both the public and private sectors came together to craft, lobby and ultimately gain approval for a suite of policy prescriptions aimed at improving the housing market. The San Luis Obispo Tribune hailed it as a historic, bipartisan plan. (“SLO County leaders strike [landmark deal](#) to pump millions of dollars into affordable housing,” (Dec. 5, 2018). The organizations included the diverse interests of Peoples’ Self-Help Housing, the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo (HASLO), the Paso Robles Housing Authority, the San Luis Obispo County Housing Trust Fund, Habitat for Humanity, the Economic Vitality Corporation, the Home Builders Association and the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce.

The policy prescriptions addressed several controversial housing issues that the SLO County Board of Supervisors had been unable to agree upon for years, but thanks to the

collaborative work done in the spirit of Regionalism, the Supervisors unanimously approved the package 4-0.

The Coalition summarized the effort in a SLO Tribune [Viewpoint](#) (“Can’t find affordable housing? The Board of Supervisors just improved your odds,” Dec. 19, 2018):

“It is important to note that the formation of the Coalition of Housing Partners and the policy produced are uncommon, perhaps even unprecedented. This type of broad collaboration between business groups, for-profit homebuilders and nonprofit advocates is an unlikely partnership of varied and often competing interests. Therefore, it is important for us to ask ourselves – why did this happen here and now? For almost a decade, many previous supervisors tried and failed to find a fix this complex problem. Yet, this current board accomplished what others could not. Why? While the problem is complex, the answer is rather simple — collaboration.”

Infrastructure

A first-of-its-kind Regional Housing and Infrastructure Plan is under development. The collaboration is intended to coordinate planning efforts among the cities of San Luis Obispo County and northern Santa Barbara County to achieve optimal economic impact. Rooted in Regional thinking, the respective City Managers and the SLO County CAO convened a Regional Summit in November 2018 for City Managers, Planning Directors, and Chambers of Commerce to launch the planning necessary to co-create a Regional infrastructure blueprint.

Civility

Inspired by Regionalism, three SLO City Mayors and two SLO County Supervisors worked across party lines and political jurisdictions to create a Regional Code of Civility. Their goal was to cultivate an environment in which collaboration is an expectation, not an exception. The SLO County Board Chair, all seven SLO City Mayors and, by extension, all of their Councils, signed and championed a Code of Civility with the expressed goal of fostering collaborative dialogue to enhance Regional action. They also reached outside of government to partner with the county’s Chambers of Commerce and the League of Women Voters to further engage the community. As summarized in the San Luis Obispo Tribune (“[SLO County politicians want to work together. They're starting with a code of civility](#)” June 21, 2018):

“Political leaders from all seven San Luis Obispo County cities and the Board of Supervisors ceremoniously signed a code of civility Thursday afternoon, in what they say is the first step in working together toward a more Regional approach to governing....Faced with shared problems like a lack of affordable housing, homelessness and the impending closure of Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant, leaders have looked to Regionalism as a collaborative tool to help identify and implement shared solutions.”

Shared Services

Amid increasing unfunded mandates, local government budgets are continuing to be squeezed, prompting a renewed push to explore shared services. While such collaboration seems straightforward and common sense, it is difficult to achieve because every jurisdiction’s elected officials are responsible to their individual community’s constituency. However, as a sign of increased Regionalism, change is happening.

In addition to the first-of-its-kind Regional planning effort on housing and infrastructure, the public sector recently resurrected and approved an Animal Services Shelter plan that had come undone. In the end, this plan reflects the efforts of more than 40 elected officials agreeing on a shared, cost-effective solution to provide animal shelter services for all of SLO County and its seven cities. The agreement, the [Paso Robles Daily News](#) wrote, “reflects our spirit of Regionalism and working together to solve problems.” (“Council votes to participate in animal shelter,” Paso Robles Daily News, June 29, 2018)

Economic Development

Inspired by the practices implemented in the Denver Metro area, a group of regional leaders came together in a subcommittee of President Jeffrey D. Armstrong’s Local Economic Development Committee to develop a set of Guiding Principles (see appendix) which was adopted by the full committee of 60 leaders. The Guiding Principles serve as a code of ethics for how the region will cooperate to put the region before individual community interests to promote the success of business. An excerpt of the guiding principles states:

“As leaders of economic development initiatives serving Central Coast communities in San Luis Obispo and northern Santa Barbara Counties, we recognize that our economic destinies are interdependent and that we are more likely to grow our economies and

deliver economic vitality to our individual communities by working collaboratively as a region rather than in competition with each other. We acknowledge that each of our communities brings strengths and challenges to the economic development exercise, and recognize that by presenting our region as an integrated market, we maximize the strengths and minimize our weaknesses. Given this fundamental agreement, we are committed to a proactive, collaborative regional approach to economic development.”

Creating the Conditions for Quality Job Growth

Successful job growth will depend on an array of carefully linked initiatives, logically derived from an agreed-upon set of premises. In a spirit of transparency and accountability, the initiatives and their underlying premises will be continuously monitored and measured for effectiveness. The underlying premises must stem from the following:

The Goal

The Hourglass Project will provide the framework for bringing the Region’s stakeholders together in order to marshal the necessary resources and talent to achieve this **primary strategic goal**: Create quality jobs today and sustain opportunities for our children tomorrow.

Current State

Four fundamental and highly interrelated issues define the **current state of affairs**, which individual communities have tried valiantly within their silos to address. Collectively, the following four current-state issues constitute the **problem** that impedes growth of quality head-of-household jobs, and must be addressed Regionally:

1. Stunted business growth.
2. Insufficient talent pipeline.
3. Lack of housing.
4. Inadequate infrastructure.

Desired Future State

The future we want depends on achieving the following:

1. Conditions suitable for economic growth and business expansion.
2. An education pipeline that funnels well-prepared employees into the Region.
3. A housing supply adequate to meet workforce demand.
4. A vastly improved Regional infrastructure including, but not limited to, water security, clean energy and transportation.

How to Bridge the Gap

In order to achieve our future state, we need to collectively identify and act on initiatives that are logically aligned and will drive progress toward the overarching goal. These initiatives should fall within designated Lines of Effort - strategically important categories of activities aimed at creating the desired future state conditions. In order to create the conditions for job creation, Lines of Effort must persist through time, and initiatives must occur at all points on the continuum - short-, mid- and long-term. See Figure 1.

The purpose of this framework is to efficiently align Regional leadership capacity on efforts that will generate the most progress toward achieving the strategic goal. Time, resources and opportunity are limited and must be carefully planned for maximum impact.

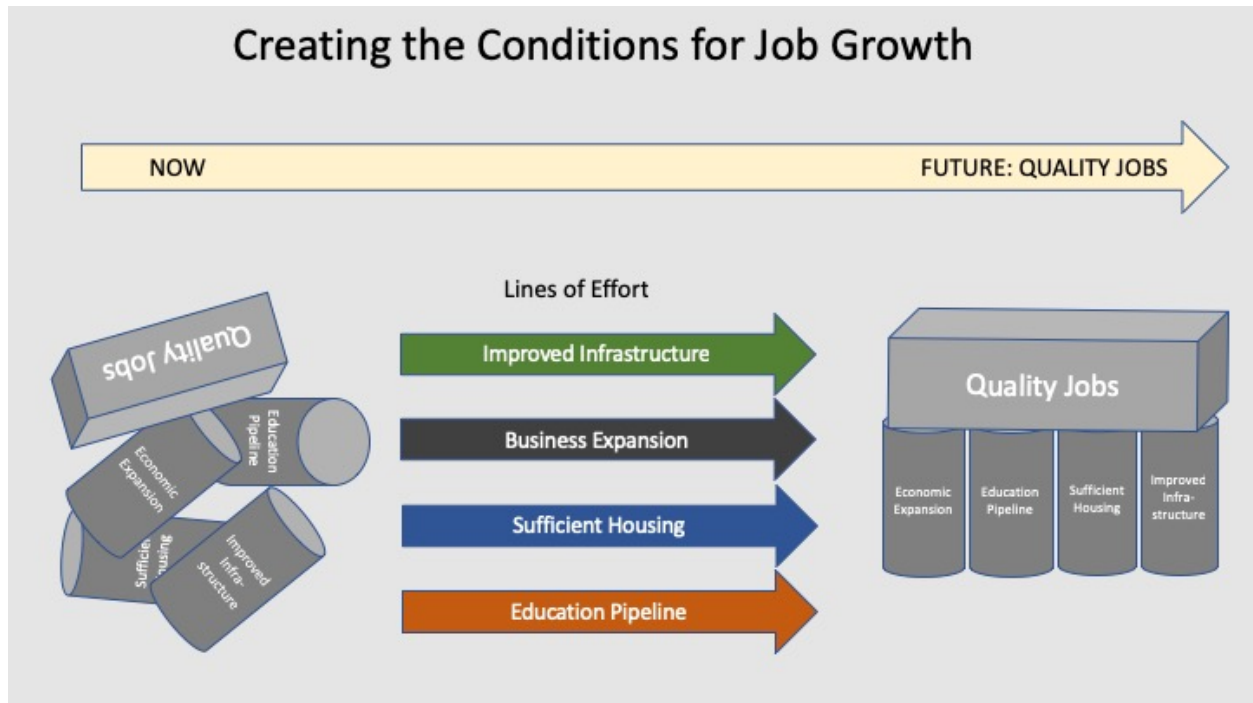


Figure 1

Lines of Effort

Line of Effort 1: Improved Infrastructure

Creating quality jobs hinges on improving infrastructure (water, roads, schools). Infrastructure planning and implementation are the keys to unlocking our ability to build houses and commercial structures, both of which are essential to retaining and attracting talent, which in turn leads to start-ups, expansion of existing companies and attraction of new businesses. **The Hourglass Project will work at the intersection of the public and private sectors to ensure that infrastructure planning and investments support economic growth and job creation.**

Line of Effort 2: Business Expansion

Risk takers and entrepreneurs create jobs. Prospective job creators need help overcoming barriers and faster access to the resources and talent necessary for startup, growth and expansion. **The Hourglass Project will work with companies of all sizes to support their growth and expansion and assist in attracting capital, talent and new businesses.**

Line of Effort 3: Sufficient Housing

An adequate supply of housing is crucial to companies' efforts to attract and retain a talented workforce. Due to a variety of factors, including insufficient housing supply and

relatively low wages, housing prices are now beyond the grasp of a majority of our workforce. As a result, job creation stalls. Three Central Coast companies [announced plans](#) in 2018 to move out of state. (“Another manufacturing [company leaves](#): Our employees can’t find a home” The Tribune, June 15, 2018). **The Hourglass Project will partner with the public and private sectors to ensure that housing and jobs are developed in tandem.**

Line of Effort 4: Education Pipeline

Without well-trained and talented people to fill available jobs, economic growth stalls. Our Region is fortunate to have high-functioning public education and workforce training programs at all levels from K-12 through advanced-degree programs. However, students’ pathways to success are not always as apparent or seamless as they could be. Moreover, the nature of work is rapidly changing, continuously requiring workers to learn new and different skills in order to meet industry’s needs. **The Hourglass Project will work at the intersection of education and industry to align efforts and ensure mutual success for students and business.**

Strategic Initiatives

Within the Lines of Effort, the Hourglass Team will work with Regional stakeholders to develop and act on integrated Strategic Initiatives.

These initiatives will occur over the short-, mid-, and long-term, and will be carefully linked to the strategic goal by cause-and-effect relationships. That is, the selection and implementation of a Strategic Initiative should create a cause that has a positive and provable effect on the strategic goal. See Figure 2.

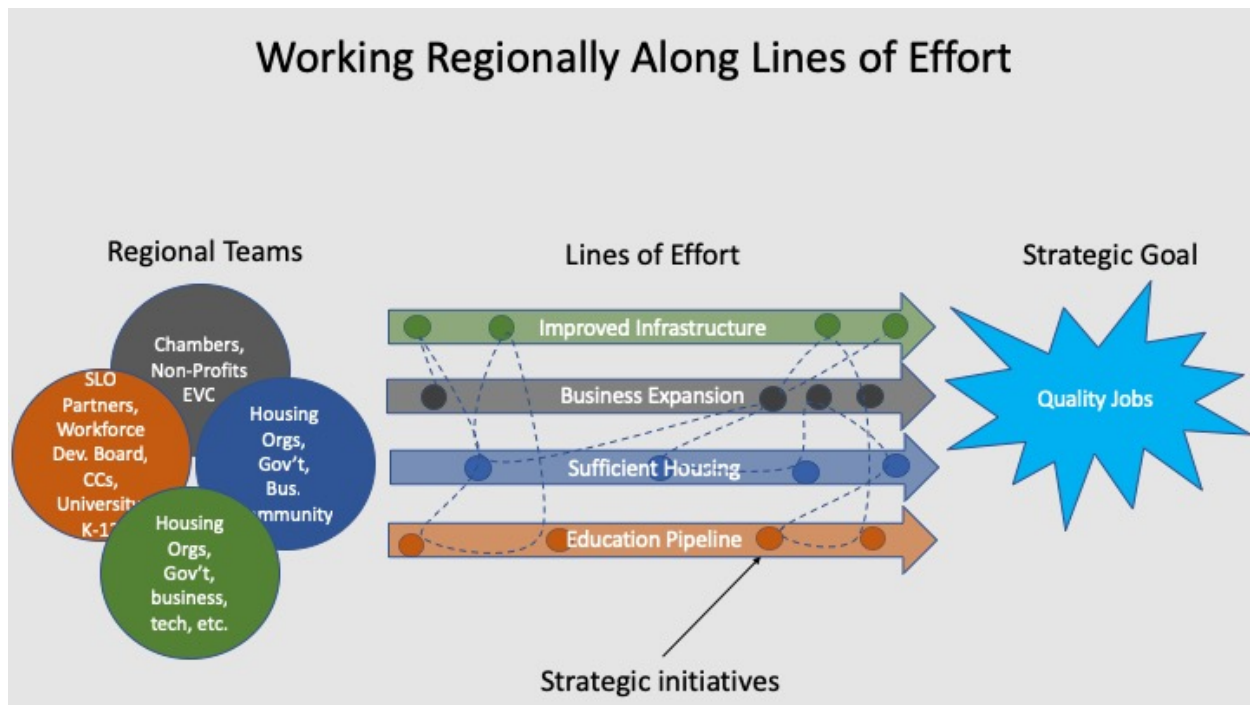


Figure 2.

Performance Measurement

Crucially important for success is transparency and accountability, achieved by publicly setting, tracking and measuring the effectiveness of selected Strategic Initiatives.

Done properly, performance measurement:

1. Is clearly linked to achieving the strategic goal.
2. Measures a minimum number of key performance factors.
3. Tracks performance over time.
4. Influences behavior. That is, if measurements fail to show progress, then halt the failing initiative and try another.

The Hourglass Team understands the interrelationships of these factors, particularly the power of performance measurement to influence behavior, and will implement a simple and logical performance measurement system to drive progress toward quality jobs growth.

Conclusion

We end where we began: Clear-eyed in our assessment of our Region's economic weaknesses, yet confident that we can create a better future. We know that no single organization, government agency, corporation or political party can solve the challenges or seize the opportunities we face alone. It will take a collective effort.

In the framework of the Hourglass Project, there are the seeds of success: A clear goal - more high-quality head-of-household jobs - and a clear pathway - Regionalism through disciplined collaboration.

The goal has unquestionable merit. The pathway - is simple in theory, yet very difficult in practice, requiring patience and persistence, time and resources.

The Hourglass project is looking for leaders across the Region who are up for the challenge. Leaders who are willing to look at our future with creativity and optimism. Leaders who are willing to work together to ensure our economy is more resilient and inclusive.

The Hourglass Project invites you to join this growing Regional movement focused on offering abundant opportunity for all residents to live the productive and satisfying lives that we all dream of.

Appendix

People Behind the Hourglass Project

Hourglass Champions

The champions are key and influential leaders who have leaned in with vision, guidance and financial support. They see clearly, not only the challenges we face, but also the tremendous potential our future holds, and as a result, they have enabled the creation of Hourglass.

- Jeffrey D. Armstrong, President, Cal Poly
- Ty Safreno, Founder & CEO, Trust Automation
- Mike Bouquet, Managing Partner, Santa Maria Honda
- Tony Guy, Executive VP and Santa Maria General Manager of Zodiac Aerospace
- Dee Lacey, Cattle Rancher, Lacey Livestock
- Eric Schwefler, Partner, Caliber Accounting Group
- Rick Stollmeyer, Founder and CEO MINDBODY
- Nick Tompkins, CEO, NKT Commercial
- Kris Yetter, President and General Manager, Promega Biosciences

Hourglass Working Group

The Hourglass working group is the team who has performed all the initial work over the last six months to make Hourglass a reality.

The Hourglass Project Founding Board includes:

- Ryan Caldwell, CEO, Wacker Wealth Partners
- Chuck Davison, CEO, Visit SLO CAL
- Gina Fitzpatrick, CEO, Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce
- Ed Halpin, Former Chief Nuclear Officer and SVP Generation, PG&E
- Melissa James, Director, Economic Initiatives & Regional Advocacy, SLO Chamber
- Ermina Karim, Former CEO, San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce
- Derek Kirk, CEO, Atascadero Chamber of Commerce
- Bob Linscheid, Senior Advisor for Economic Development, Cal Poly
- Glenn Morris, CEO, Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Clint Pearce, CEO, Madonna Enterprises
- Ty Safreno, Founder & CEO, Trust Automation

Endorsements

“Each of our individual communities faces difficult economic and social challenges, many of them common to all of us, but too difficult to solve within our individual local communities. What we need is the collaborative leadership and capacity to drive bold actions by leveraging the strengths and assets that exist across our region.”

RICK STOLLMEYER, FOUNDER & CEO, MINDBODY

“I couldn’t agree more with the Hourglass findings. Bold action is what we need today to be on a better path tomorrow. The time to act is now -- and we need to do it together.”

JEFFREY D. ARMSTRONG, PRESIDENT, CAL POLY

“The scale and complex nature of our economic challenges on the Central Coast suggest that we can’t simply do more of the same. We must step outside of our political and Regional silos and coordinate to create good jobs with family-sustaining wages and, ultimately, greater prosperity for all residents.”

CONGRESSMAN SALUD CARBAJAL

“The Hourglass Project solidifies a region-wide coalition formed to support the Diablo Canyon closure mitigation measures, and will help build a stronger, more resilient Central Coast economy.”

ASSEMBLYMAN JORDAN CUNNINGHAM

“By leveraging our collective strengths and resources, we have a much better shot at solving shared challenges and creating more opportunity for our communities and all our residents.”

TONY GUY, EXECUTIVE VP & SANTA MARIA GM, ZODIAC AEROSPACE

“Judging by the heartening fact that so many people from the diverse segments of our respective communities are coming together to support the concept of Regionalism, it’s clear that there is a strong need for greater collaboration focused on sustaining a high quality of life for the next generation.”

DEE LACEY, CATTLE RANCHER, PASO ROBLES- BASED LACEY LIVESTOCK

Hourglass Project in the News

Hourglass and the values of Regional collaboration are on the minds of our business leaders, elected officials and our senior local government leaders. The media has noticed:

LOMPOC RECORD/SM TIMES | [Our View: Together for sake of us all](#)

“The hoped-for outcome of the Hourglass Project is to get the chambers, individual businesses and government officials in all the cities and towns along the Central Coast to cooperate, supporting and capitalizing on individual strengths, instead of competing and being critical of neighbors. That is a tall order. Competition has been the core mission of every Chamber of Commerce we’ve encountered. Maybe it is because that happens to be the American way.

But this Hourglass Project may be different. The coalition’s success is critical to the future of everyone living here, from the Santa Ynez Valley to the upper end of San Luis Obispo County.”

SLO TRIBUNE | [Central Coast business leaders launch initiative to boost jobs, attract new employers](#)

Carbajal said the Central Coast is a prime location for wind and solar energy, and could become a “renewable energy hub.” Carbajal also cited White Fox, a local company that creates drone and counter-drones for defense purposes, as a thriving local technology company. “How exciting it is to be at this point in time with a region of a half-million people to work together toward a new and better Central Coast,” Carbajal said.

LOMPOC RECORD/SM TIMES | [Central Coast chambers of commerce join forces for Regional economic development](#)

“A coalition of 13 Central Coast chambers of commerce announced the launch of a new Regional economic development organization Monday to boost jobs, business investment, wages and, ultimately, the quality of life in two counties.”

ATASCADERO NEWS AND PASO ROBLES PRESS | [New Central Coast economic organization aims for cooperation](#)

“While the individual policies and attitudes of a governing body or Chamber of Commerce might sway some decision making,” said Morris, “big companies are far more likely to look at infrastructure and workforce amenities in a broader area than what specifically any one of those groups does alone.”

SANTA MARIA SUN | [Central Coast Chambers of Commerce announce new partnership](#)

“This is our opportunity to think outside of our own special interests and focus on how we are stronger as a region,” Rep. Carbajal said.

“We have tremendous potential on the Central Coast if we solve our water issues and we solve our housing issues,” Cunningham said. “There’s a lot of people that would love to come back here and raise a family but they need jobs,” he added.