

# REACH 2030 + BEYOND

IDEAS + ACTION FOR A THRIVING CENTRAL COAST

REACH

**Imagine** a Central Coast where families, communities and businesses all thrive. A place where people from all backgrounds have access to quality education and career pathways preparing them for fulfilling, good-paying jobs and a chance to not just get by but get ahead.

Where pioneering companies in aerospace, clean energy, high tech and beyond flourish, driving global innovation, creating thousands of high-quality jobs, and helping shape a more sustainable, equitable future. Where entrepreneurs find support to launch their ideas and local companies can secure the talent and resources to grow and scale.

Where diverse housing options make it possible for young professionals, growing families and everyone in between to find an affordable place to call home. Where new generations see a bright future—a place to build their careers, families, and lives.

This is a future we can create together.  
It's all within REACH.



## OUR THREE BIG BETS



### More opportunity for more people on the Central Coast

That's the heart of our mission to grow economic prosperity and ensure the people of the Central Coast share in that prosperity with opportunities to access quality education and training, build a meaningful career, and afford a place to live.

We are making big bets on the region's people and future, driving action + progress and spurring the system changes needed to realize our vision of a Central Coast where current and future generations have the opportunity to thrive.

#### 01. Jobs

##### Expand good-paying jobs

by spurring entrepreneurship and business expansion, and going big on three global industries: space + aerospace, cleantech + energy, and high tech

#### 02. People

##### Empower people with accessible career paths

by paving inclusive pathways into good-paying jobs and equipping people with the skills and education to build secure futures

#### 03. Housing

##### Enable housing for the region's workforce

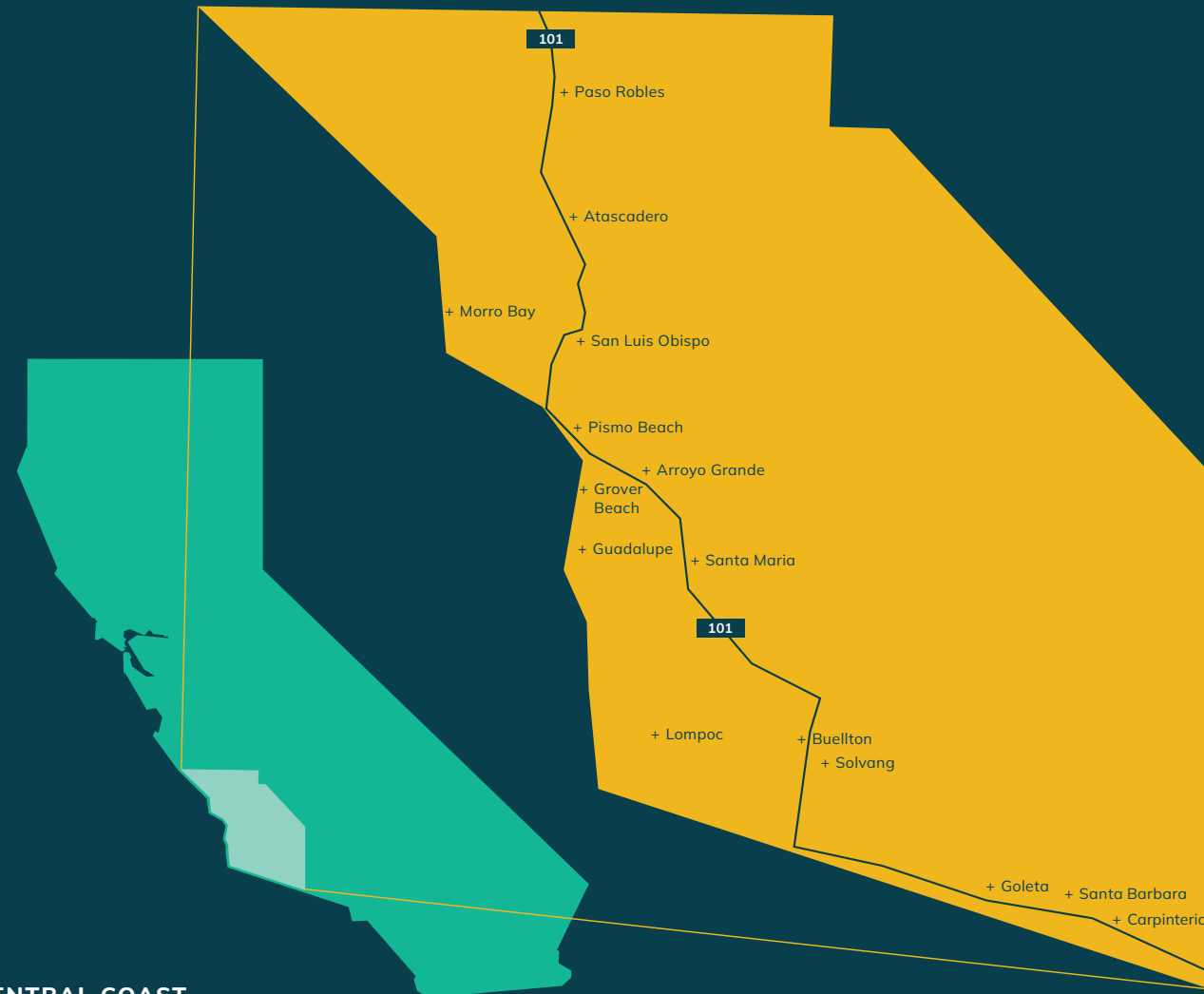
by spurring the creation of housing of all types to meet the needs of the region's workers and families

**OUR MISSION**

To increase economic prosperity through big thinking, bold action and regional collaboration

**OUR VISION**

A Central Coast where current and future generations have the opportunity to thrive



**THE CENTRAL COAST**

- + 2 counties
- + 15 cities
- + 3 community colleges
- + 2 public universities
- + 15+ Chambers of Commerce
- + 3 military installations
- + 35,000 businesses
- + 1000s of nonprofits
- + 750,000 people



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- Spur Entrepreneurship + Business Expansion
- Launch Space + Aerospace
- Fuel Climate + Energy Innovation
- Power the Future of High Tech

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# Five Years of REACH in Action



**Melissa James**  
Founding President + CEO



**Sue Andersen**  
Board Chair  
2023-2025

Dear Friends, Partners, and Central Coast Champions,

Five years ago, REACH began as a bold vision: to transform the Central Coast into a thriving hub of innovation, opportunity, and inclusivity. Today, that vision is a movement powered by a diverse coalition of leaders—state and federal partners, local governments, educators, businesses, nonprofits, and community organizations—united by a belief in what this region can become.

Together, we've secured investments, fostered partnerships, and advanced global opportunities in industries like space, clean energy, and high-tech innovation. These efforts are putting the Central Coast on the map while proving that regional coordination is not just an idea—it's a strategic imperative driving results.

At the heart of this work is a Central Coast where current and future generations can thrive, with vibrant communities, global innovation, and shared prosperity at its core. But opportunity must be accessible to all. To ensure this growth benefits everyone, we must address critical challenges: housing affordability, accessible education and career pathways, and broader roads to economic mobility.

The barriers are real: housing remains out of reach for too many, career pathways need to open wider, and the promise of upward mobility is still out of reach for far too many people. These interconnected challenges demand the same bold, collaborative spirit that has brought us this far.

This report, *REACH 2030 + Beyond*, marks the midpoint toward our 2030 horizon. It's a moment to reflect on what's been accomplished, recalibrate where needed, and recommit to the work ahead. At its core, this plan is about people—creating a Central Coast where innovation fuels opportunity, communities flourish, and everyone has the chance to succeed.

To everyone who has shaped, invested in, and lifted up this work—thank you. Your belief in this vision has brought us to this pivotal moment. And to those ready to join us, we're eager to work in partnership with you. This is long-term work, but it's also the work that matters most—creating a Central Coast where the next generation has the opportunity not just to get by but to get ahead.

Let's reach together for a promising Central Coast future—for everyone.

With gratitude and determination,

# Mobilizing People and Resources to Drive Results

People

**5000+**

people engaged in initiatives and conversations shaping our region's future over the last 5 years

**70+**

businesses investing in and guiding the REACH mission

**30+**

community, government and education partners working in concert

Resources

**\$5M**

private-sector funding raised to power regional efforts

**\$2M**

annual operating budget sustaining transformative work

**12**

professional staff focused on delivering results

Results

**7780**

jobs in pipeline\*

**\$342M**

in state and federal investment secured for the Central Coast

**400+**

growing, active regional coalition of Central Coast community leaders participating monthly

\* in direct, indirect and induced jobs identified in economic impact analyses of high-paying industries in space/aerospace, precision manufacturing, cleantech and renewable energy, agtech, and technology conducted as part of the region's comprehensive economic development strategy

## THE ROLE OF REACH

# Harnessing the Power of Regional Collaboration

What can we accomplish together? That question ignited a movement—a bold push to think, act, and collaborate regionally in ways that are delivering transformative results.

Long overshadowed, the Central Coast now speaks with a united voice on the issues shaping our future. Long underfunded, the region is now better positioned to attract public and private investment, with significant resources already flowing. Long underperforming, our economy is gaining new momentum in fast-growing global industries.

### HERE'S HOW WE DO IT:

#### Building Regional Muscle

has united businesses, civic leaders, and communities to align efforts and tackle shared challenges. Action teams and industry councils have provided critical insights, while roundtables have brought the region's city and county officials together to collaborate on shared priorities. Economic development networks have connected cities, chambers, and organizations to retain, attract, and expand businesses. Partnerships in aerospace and energy are driving innovation and job creation, supported by the region's first-ever unified economic strategy. This strategy aligns San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties with state and federal priorities, creating a roadmap for long-term competitiveness.

#### Fueling Data + Analysis

has empowered smarter decisions and strategies. Through partnerships with the Brookings Institution, Deloitte, and others, we've surfaced insights into industry growth, workforce needs, and opportunities. Tools like the REACH Data Center make this data accessible to policymakers, businesses, and community leaders, enabling informed action.

#### Fostering Inclusive, Cross-Regional Partnerships

has ensured that progress reflects the voices of the entire region. As a broker of solutions, REACH brings together diverse voices—from labor and industry to government and community groups—to ensure initiatives represent the full spectrum of regional needs. By fostering alignment and compromise, we unlock progress on the systemic challenges holding the region back. Collaborative governance frameworks, including advisory councils, steering committees, and active MOU partnerships, have brought together a cross-sector approach that ensures that initiatives and projects are deeply informed by the needs and priorities of the region's communities.

#### Raising the Central Coast's Profile

has positioned the region as a location for innovation and opportunity. By showcasing strengths at global events like the Space Symposium and Select USA Summit, the region has attracted attention, talent, and investment. Recognition from national organizations has further cemented the Central Coast's reputation as a hub for business and innovation.

#### Strengthening State + Federal Connections

has amplified the Central Coast's voice on the national stage. Through advocacy and collaboration, the region has secured millions in funding for transformative projects in industries like space and energy. Engagement with state and federal leaders has elevated regional priorities, while partnerships with agencies have boosted competitiveness for critical funding and resources.

**The work to date has catalyzed real progress, but it is only the beginning.**

Meeting the challenges ahead will require deeper collaboration, bold action, and a sustained commitment to building a thriving, inclusive future for the Central Coast.

## UPLIFT CENTRAL COAST

# Elevating Regional Impact

REACH is also at the helm of a bold new initiative, working alongside the state, the Economic Development Collaborative, and the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership to foster economic resilience and elevate the quality of life for more than 2 million people across six counties.

This groundbreaking collaboration showcases the strength of regional alignment with the state, already securing \$19 million for the region under the California Jobs First program—with the potential for millions more. This investment fueled unprecedented, inclusive outreach engaging thousands of voices in shaping economic strategies aimed at uplifting the entire region.

With \$9 million to seed community-driven projects that will strengthen the future for our region and its residents, the coalition is also advancing broad-based strategies to boost quality job creation and economic mobility. Core among the job creation strategies is capitalizing on the region's strengths in precision manufacturing and advanced business services, spanning sectors across aerospace, advanced air mobility, and microelectronics.

**This is more than a partnership; it's a unified movement. By aligning regional and state priorities, we're unlocking the Central Coast's potential and proving what's possible through collaboration and shared vision.**



# Everything is Connected

The ecosystem of opportunity depends on connected efforts for collective impact. Education shapes the workforce. Housing supports the community. Jobs power the economy. When one piece thrives, the others follow. When one struggles, the entire system feels the strain. That's why this work can't happen in silos. The future depends on us recognizing that we're all part of something bigger—a dynamic ecosystem where every role matters and every effort counts.

Our success hinges on the strength of our connections. Educators, builders, employers, policymakers—each of us holds a piece of the puzzle, and none of those pieces fit alone. The magic happens when we come together, united by a shared purpose, to create opportunities that ripple across the region and beyond.

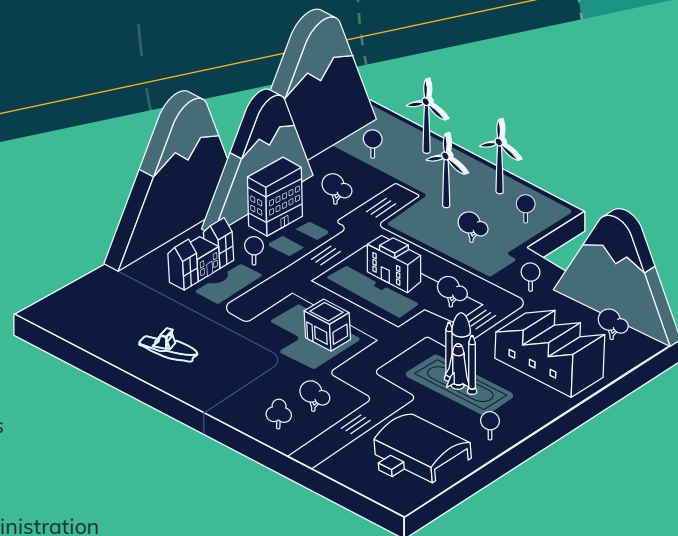
But let's be clear: there's no single hero in this story. Transformation demands all hands on deck. Education and workforce leaders must rethink how to prepare people for a world that moves faster every day. Local governments must prioritize real housing solutions—plans that go beyond paperwork and make a tangible difference. And businesses must step up as partners in building a future where innovation thrives and opportunity abounds for everyone.

**This is bigger than any one sector, and it's definitely not business as usual.** It's a shared challenge. A bold experiment. A chance to prove that when we align our strengths, we can create a future that's more inclusive, more prosperous, and undeniably better.

“ Education shapes the workforce. Housing supports the community. Jobs power the economy. When one piece thrives, the others follow. When one struggles, the entire system feels the strain.

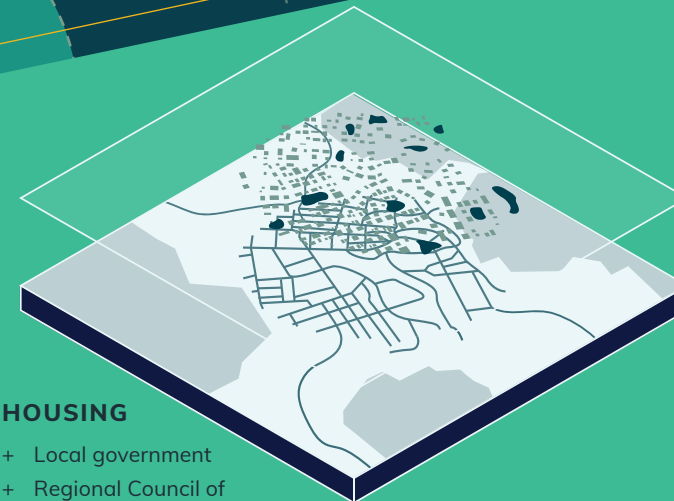
## JOBS

- + Business/industry
- + Economic development orgs
- + Startup accelerators
- + Small Business Development Centers
- + Chambers of Commerce
- + California GO-Biz
- + Federal Economic Development Administration



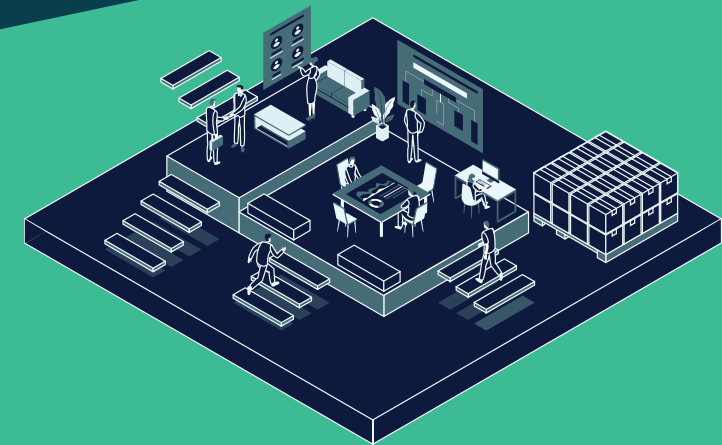
## HOUSING

- + Local government
- + Regional Council of Governments
- + Housing coalitions
- + Developers + builders
- + Nonprofit developers
- + State government



## PATHWAYS

- + K12 schools
- + Community colleges
- + Public universities
- + Private colleges and universities
- + Apprenticeship programs
- + Skills-based training programs
- + Workforce development boards





**LETTING THE  
MOMENT PASS  
IS A CHOICE.  
SO IS RISING  
TO MEET IT.**

# We Stand at a Crossroads

The Central Coast economy is at a critical juncture marked by both promising opportunities and sobering challenges. On one path lies a future of innovation, prosperity, and inclusion, where the next generation and beyond can live, work, and thrive. On the other path, complacency risks a future of mediocrity, where only the wealthy and short-term residents can afford to live.

Our region has experienced job growth and rising earnings over the past decade, but the gains fall short of state and national benchmarks, signaling an underperforming economy. The cost of living—especially skyrocketing housing prices—places tremendous strain on our workforce. **Nearly half of the region’s population belongs to families struggling to make ends meet**, with children disproportionately impacted. Without bold action, these affordability challenges will further erode our communities, forcing more workers, families, and businesses to leave.

**Doing nothing is a choice.** And that choice comes with consequences. Growing companies will relocate to regions better equipped to support them. Young people will seek opportunities elsewhere, leaving

behind communities unable to sustain vibrant, diverse economies. The Central Coast could become a region defined by extremes: a destination for retirees, transient students, and tourists, but unable to provide lasting opportunities for the people who live and work here.

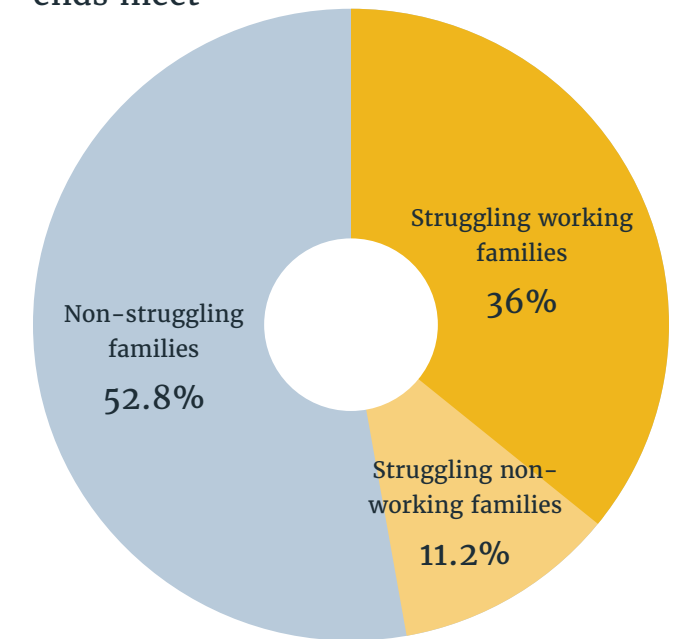
Yet there is another path—a path of promise. This region is home to **exceptional research and innovation capacity**, far outpacing state and national averages. Industries like aerospace, high tech, and clean energy are poised to drive global growth, bringing high-paying jobs and new wealth into the region. These bright spots present a transformative opportunity, but only if we act decisively.

We can choose to strengthen these globally connected industries, ensuring they provide onramps for local residents to access the high-quality jobs they offer. We can tackle the persistent barrier of housing affordability, creating homes that workers and families can afford. We can align education and workforce systems with industry needs, giving our people the skills to succeed in a rapidly evolving economy.

This is not just about economic growth—it’s about economic mobility. It’s about creating a Central Coast where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, not just a select few. The decisions we make today will determine whether we seize this moment or let it slip through our fingers.

**Two futures lie ahead. One where we shape a thriving, equitable economy—and one where opportunity continues to drift away. Will we meet this moment, or let it pass us by?**

Nearly half of the region’s population struggles to earn enough to make ends meet



Source: Brookings and Cities GPS analysis of University of Washington Sufficiency Standard and American Community Survey 1-year public-use microdata sample, 2019 – 2021.



“Even amid high-level growth, the region faces serious challenges to its ability to generate broadly shared prosperity.”

— *Strengthening Key Industries On California’s Central Coast, 2024*

## THE POWERHOUSE OF INNOVATION

The region’s exceptional research and innovation capacity presents significant opportunity for inclusive growth.

- + **\$5.95 billion** in growth capital invested in locally headquartered technology startups since 2013
- + **40,000** peer-reviewed articles produced from 2013 to 2022—2.5 times the national per-job average, and an extraordinary 6.5 times in Santa Barbara alone
- + **350** multinational companies engaged in regional research collaborations
- + Santa Barbara ranks among the **top 50** spots for venture capital investment nationwide, as well as a **top 10** Science Hub globally



# RISING TO MEET THE MOMENT.



## OUR BIG BETS

### Doubling Down on a Promising Central Coast Future

Why Big Bets? Because playing it safe doesn't create transformative change. Early champions stepped up to set the table with REACH 2030, crafting an ambitious plan to fuel job creation and build a sustainable, inclusive economy. Now we're all in, doubling down on what it takes to deliver a future where opportunity abounds for people to thrive.

# REACH 2030 is a blueprint for job creation—but jobs are only part of the equation.

The hard truth is this: jobs won't come, and they won't stay, if we don't have the housing to welcome workers or the education and training to prepare them. Without action on these fronts, we risk losing not just opportunities but people—forcing them to leave the Central Coast to find what they deserve elsewhere.

Housing affordability, access to quality education, and investments in innovation aren't side issues. They're the foundation. These priorities stand shoulder-to-shoulder with job creation in REACH 2030 + Beyond. When we act on them together, we're not just creating jobs—we're building a region where those jobs lead to lasting prosperity, where people can put down roots, and where opportunities grow for everyone.

This is a plan for people. Our charge is to ensure the opportunities are accessible to residents across all communities, creating economic prosperity that is broadly shared. When opportunity is accessible, the entire region rises. Together, we can shape a future where the Central Coast isn't just where people work—it's where they build lives, raise families, and find a community they're proud to call home.

01

## Expand Good-Paying Jobs

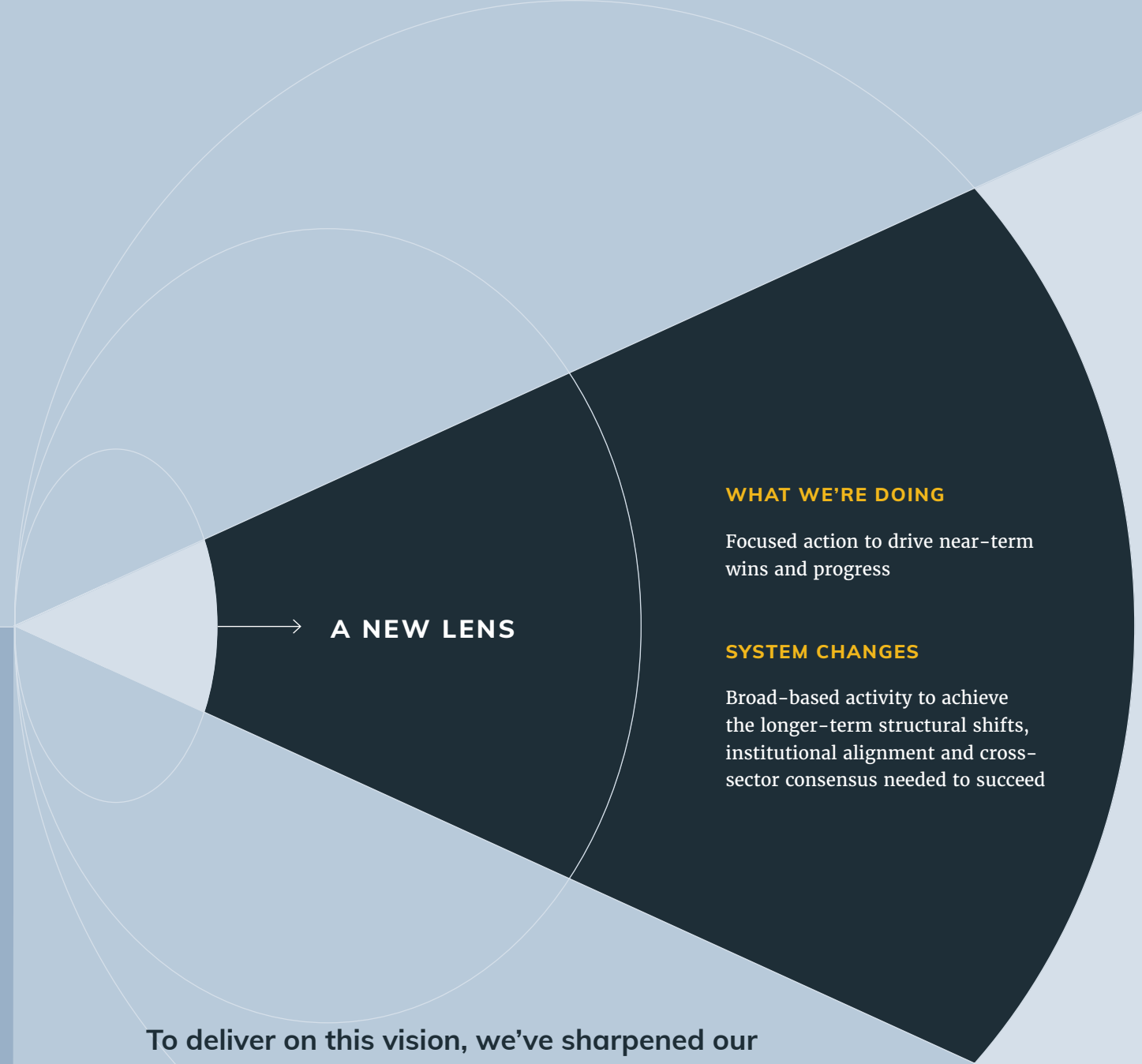
- + Spur Entrepreneurship + Business Expansion
- + Launch Space + Aerospace
- + Fuel Climate + Energy Innovation
- + Power the Future of High Tech

02

## Empower People with Accessible Career Paths

03

## Enable Housing for the Region's Workforce



A NEW LENS

### WHAT WE'RE DOING

Focused action to drive near-term wins and progress

### SYSTEM CHANGES

Broad-based activity to achieve the longer-term structural shifts, institutional alignment and cross-sector consensus needed to succeed

To deliver on this vision, we've sharpened our focus, mapping the road ahead into distinct but interconnected areas of action.

This approach reflects our mission's far-reaching nature, charting what we can accomplish in the next five years while addressing the systemic challenges that demand long-term commitment.

Delivering on these priorities will require all hands on deck. Success depends on integrating efforts across diverse stakeholders—building physical infrastructure, fostering institutional networks, advancing policy, and securing investment. When we work collectively, we create not just a vision for the Central Coast, but a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

# EXPAND GOOD-PAYING JOBS

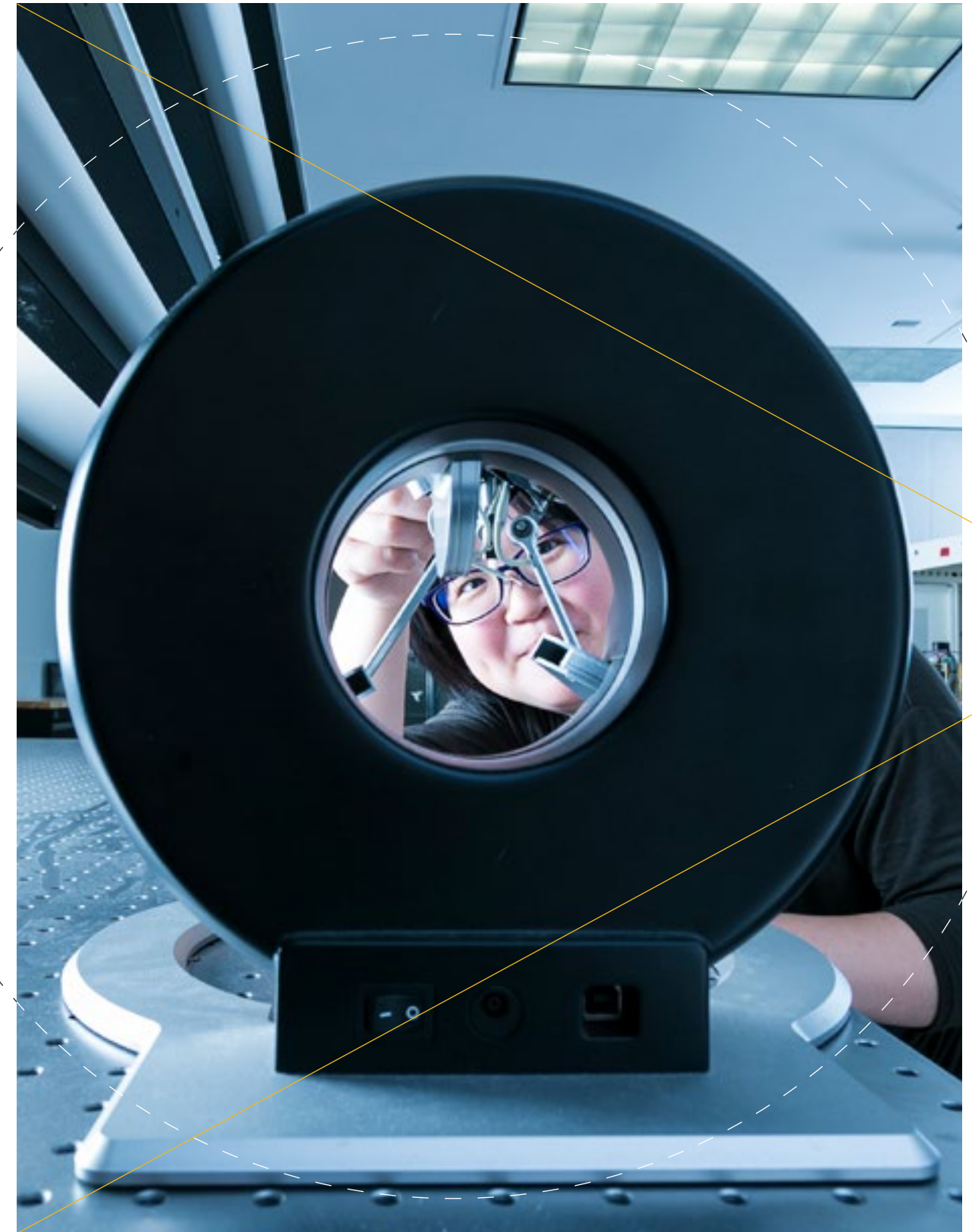
## Why Good-Paying Jobs?

Good-paying jobs are the backbone of economic mobility and regional prosperity. Defined as roles with annual wages of \$62,000 or more, this updated benchmark reflects inflation adjustments, ensuring a focus on financial stability in today's evolving economy.

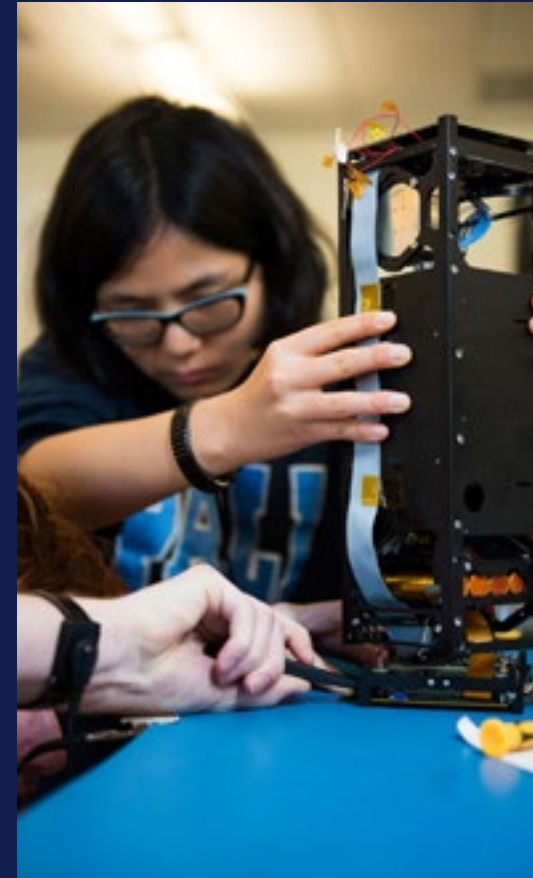
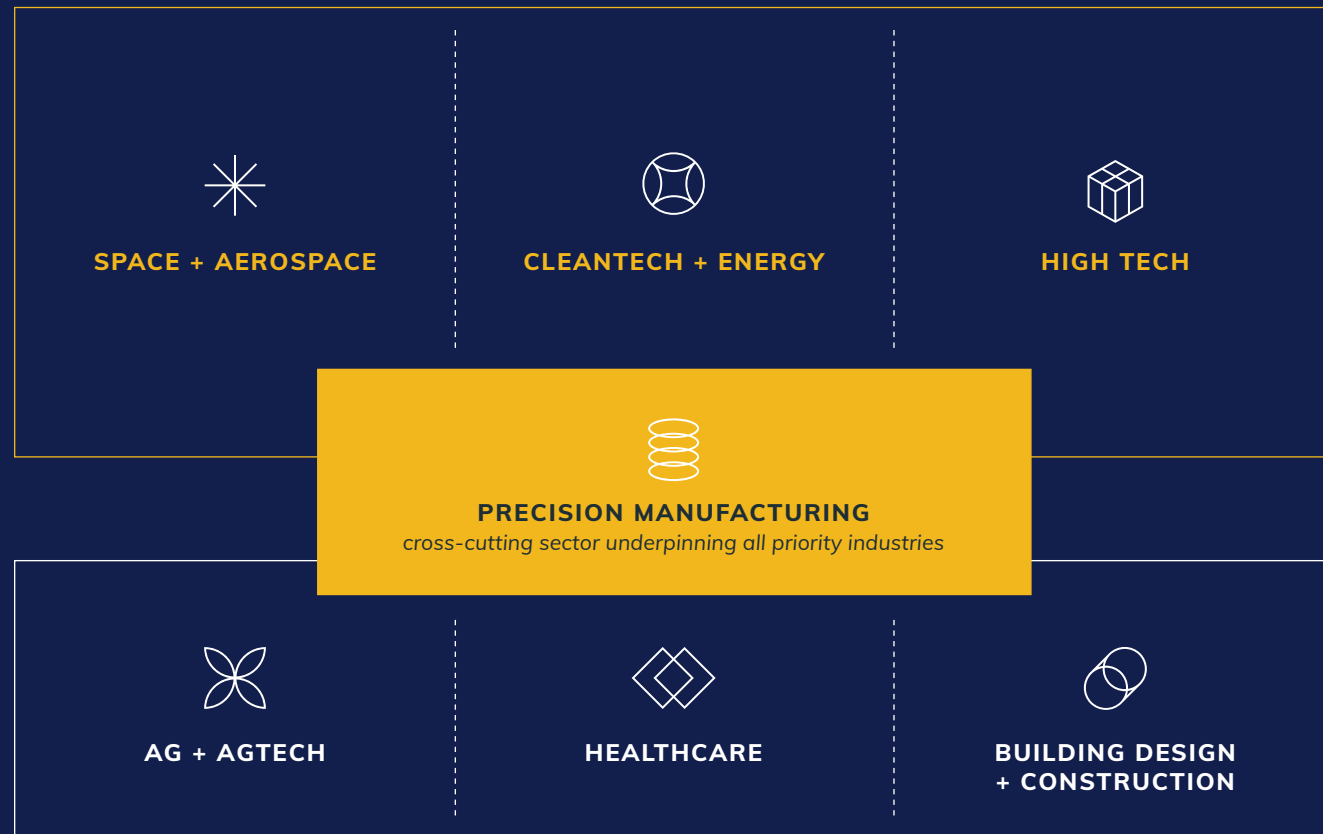
These jobs are more than a paycheck—they provide financial security, allowing families to build long-term stability. They offer career mobility, opening pathways for skill-building and advancement, while enhancing regional competitiveness by attracting and retaining talent that fuels local industries and innovation.

The ripple effects of good-paying jobs extend across the Central Coast. They sustain community vitality, as higher wages boost local businesses, housing markets, and essential services.

Focusing on good-paying jobs builds a future where opportunities are shared broadly, industries thrive, and families flourish. These roles are the foundation for sustainable, inclusive growth that ensures the prosperity of the Central Coast for generations to come.



## PRIORITY INDUSTRIES



## A Focus on Precision Manufacturing

A bedrock of regional competitiveness and stepping stone to economic mobility

Encompassing advanced and micro-scale manufacturing techniques, precision manufacturing is vital to the Central Coast's economy, underpinning and feeding the region's aerospace, agtech, high tech and clean energy industries.

Also identified as a priority by the six-county Uplift Central Coast collaboration, precision manufacturing offers accessible, good-paying career opportunities that don't require a four-year degree.

This rapidly growing wrap-around field provides pathways to economic mobility through jobs that often pay above the median wage, while powering regional innovation and meeting workforce demands in high-growth sectors. With its cross-cutting applications, precision manufacturing strengthens the region's globally competitive industries, ensuring the Central Coast remains a hub of innovation, opportunity, and prosperity.

## INNOVATION INDUSTRIES

### Space + Aerospace

Centered around Vandenberg Space Force Base, this sector encompasses satellite launches, space exploration, and advanced air mobility innovations.

**Why it matters:** Vandenberg Space Force Base powers approximately 16,000 jobs in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties.

### Cleantech + Energy

Focuses on renewable energy sources, including offshore wind development and advanced energy technologies addressing sustainability and environmental goals.

**Why it matters:** The clean technology sector is a growing area with potential to power millions of homes and create a robust supply chain.

### High Tech

Involves research and development in microelectronics, quantum computing, and artificial intelligence, leveraging regional academic institutions.

**Why it matters:** The technology sector is a significant contributor to the region's economy, with a focus on innovation and high-quality jobs.

## ANCHOR INDUSTRIES

### Ag + Agtech

With deep roots in the region, this sector spans traditional farming and cutting-edge technologies like precision agriculture and automation.

**Why it matters:** Ag innovation presents the opportunity to increase job quality and salaries in one of the region's largest expanding industries.

### Healthcare

Provides medical services, research, and development in biotechnology, meeting the healthcare needs of the growing population.

**Why it matters:** Healthcare is among the largest employment sectors, offering numerous skilled job opportunities.

### Building Design + Construction

Involves architectural design, engineering, and construction services, contributing to infrastructure development and urban planning.

**Why it matters:** The construction industry plays a vital role in regional development, providing numerous employment opportunities.

# Spur Entrepreneurship + Business Expansion

From all things tech to healthcare and building design and construction, our regional economy spans established and emerging industries with the potential to create thousands of new good-paying jobs

Our regional economy has a lot going for it. A diversity of businesses competing and thriving in global markets. Enviably education and innovation assets. An energetic spirit of community and entrepreneurship nurturing startups and scaleups.

Through targeted steps to better connect and strengthen these foundations, our region can spur the creation of thousands of new good-paying jobs and firmly establish the Central Coast as a place where innovation, startups and homegrown companies flourish.

Together with a network of partners, we've made impactful progress on enhancing and integrating a range of business startup, attraction and expansion efforts across the region. Our focus is sharpening on growing from within: connecting the businesses in our community to the resources they need to grow, bolstering the inventory of expansion-ready sites, and expanding existing programs and facilities to create a connected regional entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Research and analysis on our key industries underscores what we've learned working with companies in the region—they are ripe for growth. By supporting business needs on a regional scale, we can collectively unleash that growth as an engine for more high-paying jobs for our residents.



## WHAT WE'RE DOING

- + **Support the expansion of key industries** by convening industry and regional leaders to build on strengths, address challenges and seize opportunities to grow jobs
- + **Boost entrepreneurship** by scaling the existing network of incubators, programs and resources, while identifying gaps and catalyzing the development of new programs
- + **Catalyze university innovation** by strengthening connections between university-led R&D and industry partnerships to bring new products and technology to market
- + **Deliver tailored business expansion services** by providing concierge support to growing and prospective companies in areas including site selection, incentives, permitting, stakeholder engagement, and partnership development
- + **Establish a network of development-ready sites for business growth** by taking inventory of available sites, connecting business needs with site availability, and providing support to shepherd potential sites through the development process
- + **Promote the Central Coast's global innovation** by marketing and serving as front door to the region and amplifying the story of the Central Coast as a premier location for innovation, entrepreneurship, quality of life and attracting and retaining top talent

## SYSTEM CHANGES

- + **Catalytic public investment in economic development.** All levels of government must prioritize investment in the infrastructure, education, workforce development and other building blocks of economic growth, a cornerstone of our advocacy and collaboration with government partners.
- + **Regional commitment to collaboration over competition.** Combining our collective strengths, assets and efforts across jurisdictions, community segments and political aisles is the only way our region will reach the goal of greater economic prosperity. Galvanizing and stewarding this regional mindset and commitment is a core part of the REACH mission.
- + **Streamlined government processes.** Clarity and certainty in gaining permitting approval and utility service are needed to attract private-sector investment in the buildings and infrastructure to support industry growth. We advocate widely for these improvements.



## ACTION + REGIONAL PROGRESS

### Jobs

- + 7780 jobs in the pipeline

### Investment

- + \$900,000 in federal and matching funds to develop unified regional economic strategy and key industry insights
- + \$19 million in state funding through Uplift Central Coast and California Jobs First for inclusive economic planning and projects driving regional growth

### Planning + Collaboration

- + Development and adoption of the region's first unified economic strategy, opening doors to public and private funding
- + Publication of a dozen reports on key growth industries and opportunities
- + Convening of industry councils to provide feedback on key needs and pain points
- + Ongoing collaboration among 25+ entities on business attraction, retention, and expansion through the Practitioner Network
- + Ramp up of the six-county Uplift Central Coast coalition with state funding partnership

# Launch Space + Aerospace

Home to one of the nation’s primary space launch sites and a rich air and space legacy, the Central Coast is a competitive frontier for space and advanced air-mobility innovation

The REACH 2030 ambition of building a thriving space enterprise at Vandenberg Space Force Base has become reality. Vandenberg is now the second-busiest spaceport in the world, with major launch providers rapidly expanding operations, injecting millions of dollars in new investment in the region, and hiring hundreds of Central Coast residents. And our sights have widened to encompass the full universe of aerospace and emerging fields like advanced air mobility and horizontal space launch.

It’s an industry with a 100-year legacy on the Central Coast, and one that holds great promise for our future. The global space economy is projected to surpass \$1 trillion by 2040, nearly double its value today, while the next-gen urban aircraft and drones of the advanced air mobility sector are projected to soar four-fold to over \$40 billion in just 5 years.

Cutting-edge companies developing satellites, drones and electric air taxis and designing and building the components and systems behind space missions are expanding across the Central Coast. Forging the future of transportation, connectivity, scientific discovery and global challenges like climate resiliency, these companies also provide wide avenues into high-quality jobs that pay well above the region’s median wage.

By continuing to pair bold vision with strategic action and broad collaboration, we are establishing the region as a center of gravity shaping the future of these industries, employing thousands of Central Coast residents, and inspiring the next generation to look to the skies and dream big.



**\$1.5B**  
REGIONAL INDUSTRY

**7,000**  
JOBS

**16**  
AIRFIELDS

## WHAT WE'RE DOING

- + **Attract and expand space + aerospace companies** by actively engaging with companies in the sector, showcasing the region’s ecosystem and advantages, and providing concierge expansion and location support
- + **Drive development of space launch facilities** by coordinating with Space Launch Delta 30, commercial users and developers to establish office, industrial and payload processing facilities on and off base
- + **Leverage airfields for emerging aerospace technologies** by working with the region’s 16 private and public airfields to support testing and development of next-gen drones, air mobility innovations, space technology, and horizontal space launch

## SYSTEM CHANGES

- + **Transformative federal investment in spaceport and airport infrastructure.** Vandenberg SFB and the region’s airports need critical upgrades to support growing launch activity and air mobility R&D. We are building on successful advocacy with federal and state representatives to secure additional funding for these advancements.
- + **State commitment and investment in space launch.** To compete with states like Florida and Texas, California must stake out a global role in the rapidly growing space sector by prioritizing investment, industry development, and the creation of a statewide space entity to enhance agency coordination and support. We are collaborating with partners across the state to forge this opportunity.

## ACTION + REGIONAL PROGRESS

### Jobs

- + Launch companies and aerospace/AAM manufacturers hiring hundreds locally
- + Honda Research Institute established electric aircraft R&D operations in SLO County
- + Cuesta College-ACI Jet partnership training the next generation of aerospace technicians

### Investment

- + \$530,000 in federal funding for horizontal space launch development at Paso Robles airport
- + \$80 million in federal funding secured for space operations
- + \$600 million in planned federal spending to upgrade launch facilities at Vandenberg SFB
- + Millions more in private-sector investment to build out launch complexes

### Planning + Collaboration

- + Formalized partnership with regional, state and federal entities to advance the Central Coast space ecosystem
- + Close collaboration with federal congressional delegation and state leaders, with REACH serving as the Governor-appointed community support organization for Vandenberg
- + Space Master Plan for region developed and put into action
- + State Space Industry Task Force established following Master Plan recommendation
- + “Space Triangle” collaboration launched with Kern and LA Counties
- + Aerospace and advanced air mobility identified as priority growth sectors through Uplift Central Coast and California Jobs First, driving new strategies and resources aligned with regional strengths



# Fuel Climate + Energy Innovation

A longtime trailblazer of clean energy generation and environmental stewardship, the Central Coast is uniquely positioned to play a leading role in the global shift to more sustainable energy systems

Few issues have seen as many dramatic twists and turns in recent years as the regional energy landscape. Met with forward-looking vision and nimble urgency, the region has never been better positioned to capitalize on our distinctive assets and expertise to ensure that this industry remains a core driver of the Central Coast economy.

Diablo Canyon was still slated to close when REACH 2030 was released in 2020. Now it's at the forefront of energy transformation nationwide, with a vision to establish a hub of clean energy and climate innovation already gaining traction. Global companies and local startups pursuing cutting-edge new energy technologies in fusion, floating offshore wind and beyond are expanding and rooting down in the region.

Rising demand and ambitious clean energy targets are fueling historic levels of investment in research, development and deployment worldwide. Global clean energy investment reached \$1.7 trillion in 2023, overtaking fossil fuel investment for the first time. The U.S. set new targets to triple nuclear energy capacity by 2050, and California remains a global leader in clean energy, on track to achieve 100% carbon-free electricity by 2045.

Between new technology breakthroughs, shifting policies and evolving market demands, the energy landscape is likely to remain fluid in coming years. By remaining proactive in planning and adaptable in execution, we are positioning the region to capture emerging opportunities and sustain our role as a leader in energy and climate resiliency.



**\$2.3B**

REGIONAL INDUSTRY

**9,300**

JOBS

**500KV**

HIGH-POWER  
TRANSMISSION LINES  
AT DIABLO CANYON



## WHAT WE'RE DOING

- + Spearhead regional-state collaboration on extended Diablo Canyon operations by stewarding the region's long-term interests and involvement in decision making at the local and state level on the future of the plant and conservation of its surrounding lands
- + Develop the Central Coast climate/energy innovation hub by advancing the co-use and reuse of facilities at Diablo's Parcel P and other key sites through collaboration with regional stakeholders, supporting Cal Poly leadership to integrate energy assets with university strengths, and strategically directing SB 846 funds to attract R&D projects, partners and companies in clean energy and the blue economy
- + Attract and expand cleantech and renewable energy companies by engaging with innovators in energy generation, storage, and efficiency to expand the Central Coast's energy legacy in emerging areas such as floating offshore wind and fusion
- + Maximize community benefits and local job creation in the energy transition by championing policies, community engagement, and investments in infrastructure and workforce development to support local workers and communities

## SYSTEM CHANGES

- + Investment in public and private energy infrastructure. Reaching the state's ambitious clean energy goals will require billions in new infrastructure spending. We are coordinating closely at all levels to capture the economic benefits of right-sized projects, from waterfront infrastructure and transmission to innovative energy generation and storage solutions.
- + Coordinated and streamlined planning across sectors. A clear and efficient permitting process is essential to spur private investment in clean energy. We are advocating for such pathways with state, federal, and local agencies.

## ACTION + REGIONAL PROGRESS

### Jobs

- + 2,500 high-paying jobs at Diablo Canyon Power Plant retained through at least 2030

### Investment

- + \$160 million in state funding for land conservation and economic development at Diablo Canyon
- + \$1.7 million in state funding to support offshore wind planning
- + Clean Energy Terminals partnership with Port San Luis to explore developing a small-scale operations and maintenance dock to support offshore wind jobs

### Planning + Collaboration

- + Regional vision for a cleantech innovation park at Diablo Canyon developed and advancing
- + Formalized partnership with regional, state and federal entities to pursue future use opportunities at Diablo Canyon and offshore wind development
- + Detailed study on potential economic benefits of offshore wind on the Central Coast
- + Partnership with Counties of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara and the City of Morro Bay to evaluate infrastructure enhancements for offshore wind and space, with critical investments in progress

# Power the Future of High Tech

The Central Coast has long played a big role in developing leading-edge tech, an area ripe for inclusive job growth

The microelectronics that power modern life are being pioneered right here on the Central Coast. Chips and semiconductors, lasers and photonics, autonomous systems and quantum computing—our region is at the global forefront of technological innovation.

These fields require more than university lab breakthroughs and startup ingenuity. They need highly specialized equipment and clean-room facilities. They need trained technicians to fabricate and assemble micro- and nano-scale components. By delivering these essential resources, we can ensure that the technologies developed here remain anchored in the region, driving economic growth and creating good-paying jobs accessible to workers without a four-year degree.

The scale of opportunity is immense, driven by skyrocketing global demand for consumer electronics, advances in autonomous vehicles, and the proliferation of AI applications.

The semiconductor market alone is projected to grow from \$600 million to over \$2 trillion by 2032, while quantum computing is about to quadruple its market size from just a few years ago. Collectively, these fields represent a substantial portion of the global technology market, with combined valuations reaching well into the trillions of dollars.

These are the technologies shaping the future of our world, and we can harness the region's trailblazing assets and innovation ecosystem to also shape a more inclusive future for the Central Coast and its people.



**\$2.5B** | **10,000**  
REGIONAL INDUSTRY | JOBS

## WHAT WE'RE DOING

- + **Grow the high-tech innovation startup ecosystem** by capitalizing on university R&D horsepower to spin off and commercialize new technologies and create new companies
- + **Expand shared facilities for startups and growing companies** by identifying opportunities to establish new facilities and scale existing ones, increasing access to specialized spaces for research, prototyping, manufacturing and workforce training
- + **Elevate the region as a global high-tech hub** by leading cross-sector coalitions to showcase regional assets and boost competitiveness in emerging fields such as semiconductors, advanced computing and AI

## SYSTEM CHANGES

- + **Pipeline of industrial facilities and ready-to-build sites.** Expanding high-tech firms need ready-to-go facilities to scale R&D and manufacturing operations locally. REACH is collaborating with governments, developers and industry to address this critical bottleneck and keep businesses in the region.
- + **Game-changing investment in the region's high-tech ecosystem.** To compete with the many states and cities directly supporting their high-tech ecosystems, we are advocating for the Central Coast to adopt similar enabling policies such as start-up grants, expansion incentives, and streamlined permitting.

“The region's research in these areas has informed quite a bit of invention globally.”

— Economist Chad Shearer at the 2024 Ideas + Action Summit



## ACTION + REGIONAL PROGRESS

### Jobs

- + Regional companies signaling strong demand for hiring and expansion

### Investment

- + Millions in CHIPS Act funding for UC Santa Barbara and research partners
- + Millions in National Science Foundation funding for AI-powered cybersecurity research at UC Santa Barbara and a cleanroom training collaboration between UC Santa Barbara and Santa Barbara City College
- + Hundreds of millions in venture capital investment to regional high-tech businesses

### Planning + Collaboration

- + Formation of 35-strong tech hubs coalition to pursue funding opportunities
- + Deep-dive research to understand sector's growth potential
- + Designation as a priority growth sector through Uplift Central Coast and California Jobs First, with new strategies and resources to strengthen the region's core capabilities

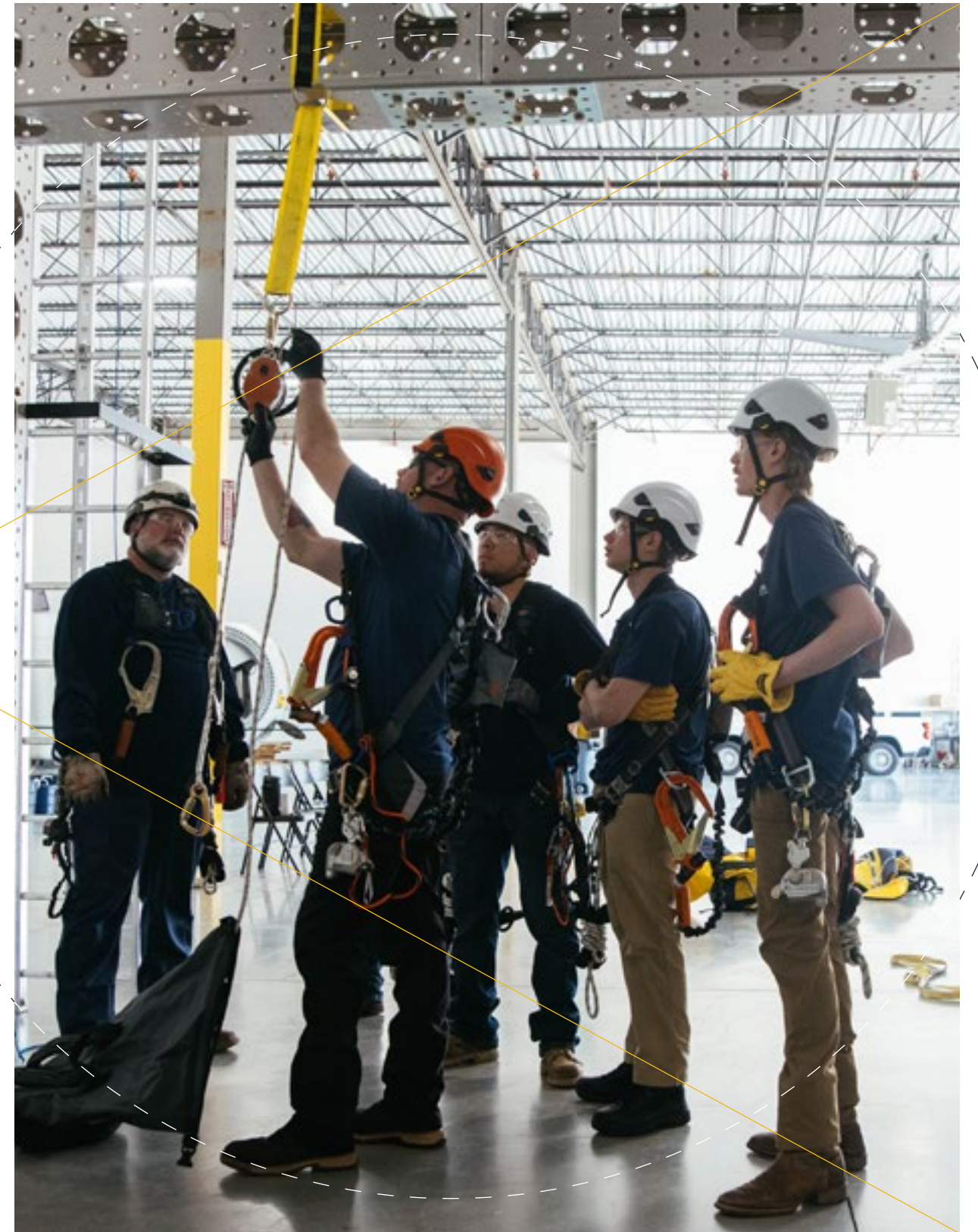


# EMPOWER PEOPLE WITH ACCESSIBLE CAREER PATHS

## A Critical Complement to Job Creation

Creating more good-paying jobs is only part of the equation. Equally important is creating inclusive pathways into those jobs, equipping people with the education, training and skills to build secure futures and ensure our region thrives by growing from within. This includes opening doors for underrepresented groups, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

The pace of technological change and the future of work are reshaping our world faster than ever. And the level of hardship and inequality in our region is unacceptable. Addressing these challenges demands that industry, education and community partners come together to uplift our residents and equip them for the jobs of today and tomorrow.



# The region’s robust educational assets provide a strong foundation for promoting economic mobility and security while building a diverse and talented workforce.

Providing more opportunity for more people is the heart of our mission. By working with industry and education to pave accessible pathways into the in-demand jobs of today and tomorrow, we are not just enhancing the region’s ability to grow from within, but also advancing economic mobility and security for our residents.

This imperative demands an across-the-board approach, expanding capacity and access across all types of degrees, certifications, training and “earn as you learn” programs to ensure everyone has the tools to succeed.

Empowering people means going beyond building skills and job-readiness. It also means inspiring the region’s youth to pursue the bright opportunities in industries growing in our region by providing exposure and hands-on learning that connects directly to the ideas and innovations shaping our regional economy.

Taken together, these efforts will ensure the region and its residents can compete and thrive in an increasingly complex global economy.



**Improving educational attainment and expanding workforce development options at all levels are essential to the region’s long-term prosperity.**

— Resilience Roadmap

## WHAT WE’RE DOING

- + **Align education and training programs with industry demand** by developing regional industry councils to provide critical data on in-demand jobs and skills needed in growing industries
- + **Scale network of precision technology and manufacturing training programs** by aligning industry needs with the network of community colleges and other training providers to equip more people with skills for in-demand and emerging jobs in a rapidly growing industry
- + **Inspire and engage the next generation** by raising awareness and engagement around career opportunities in growing industries and working alongside K12 educators and industry leaders to promote exposure to in-demand and emerging jobs, skills and industries
- + **Cultivate public-private partnerships to strengthen education and workforce training** by fostering collaboration across all levels of the education ecosystem—from K12 and community colleges to universities and apprenticeship programs—to support job creation and placement while equipping residents from all backgrounds with in-demand skills, particularly in growing industries.

## SYSTEM CHANGES

- + **Increased collaboration across the entire education-workforce continuum.** Preparing the region’s residents for career success requires a fully integrated, cradle-to-career approach. We are engaging in new and existing efforts to strengthen communication and coordination across education, workforce, and industry systems to build cohesive pathways for lifelong learning and career readiness. This approach ensures we retain talent from our universities and nurture a skilled workforce from the ground up.
- + **Expanded availability and accessibility of quality education and training opportunities.** The Central Coast simply doesn’t have enough degree, apprenticeship and certification programs to meet the needs of its residents. We are supporting a range of efforts to increase both options and access to associate, bachelors and advanced degrees as well as the career technical training needed to expand the skills and talent of the workforce.
- + **Widespread adoption of skills-based hiring to reduce barriers.** Traditional hiring practices and other systemic barriers can unintentionally exclude qualified candidates. We are working to champion more equitable hiring practices and expand opportunities for the region’s diverse workforce.



## ACTION + REGIONAL PROGRESS

### Planning + Collaboration

- + Developed in-depth analysis and actionable recommendations to strengthen the region’s talent pipeline for key industries
- + Convened regional education and workforce providers to put recommendations into action
- + Published detailed workforce data highlighting trends, labor supply, and in-demand jobs and skills
- + Facilitated the first-ever meeting between the region’s higher education leaders and Senior Newsom Advisor and GO-Biz Director to align on workforce development priorities

### Programs

- + Expansion of UC Santa Barbara and Santa Barbara City College cleanroom training collaboration
- + Cuesta College-ACI Jet partnership to train the next generation of aircraft technicians
- + New 2+2 programs enabling Allan Hancock and Cuesta College students to earn Cal Poly degrees without leaving their home campuses

# ENABLE HOUSING FOR THE REGION'S WORKFORCE

## A Community Imperative

Our first 5 years have reinforced again and again that the lack of housing affordable to workers is the single biggest barrier to job creation—and as a result, economic mobility and resilience region-wide. Businesses can't hire and workers can't afford to live here.

As we enter our next 5 years, we are elevating our focus on this fundamental threat to our economy and way of life—bringing new urgency to collaboration across business, government, nonprofits and education to enable a range of housing options so that workers, and families can put down roots and both contribute to and benefit from our shared future.



# Housing the workforce is a key building block of economic activity and job growth, as well as a thriving community and desirable quality of life.

And yet regional housing production has not kept pace with community needs, leading to a gap that has fueled the Central Coast's affordability crisis and eroded economic resilience.

On the bright side, recent years have seen some progress. Increasing regional recognition of the dire consequences of inaction has sparked fresh momentum. Local governments, builders and employers are exploring new approaches, from targeted programs to get people into homes to encouraging more multifamily housing development. The state has added new tools to the toolbox, including streamlined approval processes, zoning reforms, density bonuses, and incentives to build housing on surplus government land. New building projects are moving through the pipeline.

There's a long way yet to go. But by embracing these solutions in a systematic and collaborative way, our region can enable the housing our families, workforce and economy desperately need.



**A healthy housing supply includes a diversity of housing types across income types.**

## WHAT WE'RE DOING

- + **Spur regional coalitions to advance a range of housing options** by leading and/or supporting efforts to unite community stakeholders around important workforce housing projects
- + **Secure investment in critical supporting infrastructure** by collaborating with jurisdictions and developers to prioritize and spur funding for infrastructure—such as roads, water, sewer, and broadband—that enables cost-effective home construction
- + **Expand programs enabling the workforce to access homes** by exploring opportunities to launch or scale programs such as down payment assistance and employer-sponsored housing
- + **Launch pilot program to redevelop surplus public property** by partnering with school districts and public agencies to develop a portfolio of opportunities to build housing on underutilized property
- + **Cultivate private-sector leadership and collaboration with public sector** by regularly convening a Building Design and Construction industry council to identify trends, share best practices, and pursue innovative solutions
- + **Map and track workforce housing opportunities** by maintaining a real-time dashboard of proposed and potential projects to support advocacy and investment

## SYSTEM CHANGES

- + **A culture of regional collaboration on housing and infrastructure planning and investment.** A regional mindset is essential for identifying and advancing the most impactful opportunities to address housing needs. We are fostering the interagency planning, funding coordination, cross-sector engagement, and data-driven analysis needed to align efforts and resources.
- + **Increased certainty and speed in the housing project approval process.** Clear, predictable, and efficient timelines and requirements are critical to spurring private-sector investment in housing. We are engaging across the spectrum of stakeholders to champion best practices, streamline processes, and strengthen public-private collaboration to reduce delays and unlock housing development.
- + **Adoption of new policy tools to unlock potential housing.** Proactive land use, zoning reforms, creative funding mechanisms, and other policy innovations can create new opportunities to expand housing. As communities plan for future growth, we are advocating for evaluation and adoption of the strategies with the greatest potential for our region.



## ACTION + REGIONAL PROGRESS

### Planning + Collaboration

- + Advanced key regional conversations among local governments, the private sector, Vandenberg and nonprofits toward a united approach on housing solutions
- + Spearheaded SLO County Housing Coalition open letter to drive awareness and action
- + Supported development and adoption of SLO County's first Regional Housing + Infrastructure Framework to guide future growth
- + Created a real-time tracking system for proposed and potential housing projects to support advocacy and investment efforts

### Projects

- + Thousands of new homes, including multifamily developments, in the pipeline following recent approvals and groundbreakings
- + Pilot projects exploring solutions such as public surplus land redevelopment, employer-sponsored housing, and down payment assistance programs under development

15,000 JOBS + BEYOND

# Measuring What Matters for a Thriving Central Coast

When REACH set an ambitious goal of creating 15,000 good-paying jobs by 2030, it wasn't just about hitting a number. It was about transforming the Central Coast into a place where opportunity abounds — where every resident has a real chance to build a career, grow their family, and afford a place to call home. We're proud of the progress made so far, with thousands of jobs created and in the pipeline.

For those jobs to truly take root, however, we need to ensure the region is ready to support the people who will fill them. That's why we're taking a holistic approach to measuring the region's readiness to create economic opportunity and mobility. Each metric reflects a part of the bigger story: good-paying jobs that come with pathways to success, housing that keeps workers and families grounded in the region, and an ecosystem that nurtures ideas and talents.

These metrics represent the health of the major factors that impact our region's ability to create jobs and drive economic opportunity. While there's much we can't control, tracking these measures helps us understand trends and adjust our efforts, providing a critical foundation for shaping strategies that deliver meaningful change.



## OUR GOAL + INPUTS



### What We're Tracking and Why It Matters

At the center of this effort is the 15,000 good-paying jobs goal, supported by key inputs across the ecosystem:

## 01. Jobs + Innovation

- + **Economic Mobility:** Median household income, segmented by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, shows whether economic growth is translating into meaningful financial progress for all residents.
- + **Innovation Capacity:** Tracking patents, research articles and R&D investment per capita highlights the region's competitiveness in driving technological advancements and attracting business investment.
- + **Entrepreneurial Startups:** Measuring venture capital funding and jobs created through startups and expansion reveals how well the region fosters economic dynamism and innovation.

## 02. People

- + **Educational Attainment:** High school graduation rates and the percentage of the population with bachelors, associate's degrees, and certifications reveal how well the region is preparing its workforce for good-paying jobs and long-term career success.
- + **Inclusive Talent Pipeline Alignment:** Tracking degrees and certifications awarded in relevant fields, open positions in target industries, and participation of underrepresented groups in career pathways ensures education and workforce systems align with industry needs and provide equitable access to opportunities.

## 03. Housing

- + **Housing Affordability:** Median rent costs, home prices, and the share of cost-burdened households spending more than 30% of income on housing indicate whether workers and families can afford to live in the region—a critical factor in retaining talent.
- + **Housing Supply:** The number of building permits issued, RHNA housing target data, and segmentation by housing type and affordability level show whether the region is meeting the demand for diverse and affordable housing options.

These metrics help ensure that the benefits of economic growth are widely shared, accessible, and aligned with the conditions needed for success. They are not static; they will evolve as new initiatives emerge and new insights shape our work.



**POWERING A  
MOVEMENT  
FOR THE  
CENTRAL  
COAST'S  
FUTURE.**

**The future** of the Central Coast won't be shaped by waiting—it will be built by the bold, the collaborative, the relentless.

The challenges are real and the stakes couldn't be higher, but the opportunities are even greater.

Meeting this moment calls for visionaries who dream big, collaborators who put we before me, bridge builders who connect across divides, and doers who roll up their sleeves to turn ideas into impact. **It's going to take all of us**—thinking big, working together, and committing to a future that's better than today.

Let's build a Central Coast where opportunity abounds—for everyone.

Join us in creating a future where innovation drives progress, vibrant communities flourish, and prosperity is shared. The work is big, but so are the possibilities.

**REACH with us.**



## What's it going to take to move forward?

Here's what we believe in — and we invite you to stand alongside us, embracing the regional mindset needed to fulfill the promise of a Central Coast with innovation, opportunity, and a brighter future for all.

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### TAKING BIG SWINGS

We don't settle for the status quo. We're catalysts for bold ideas, turning ambition into action to create opportunity, break barriers, and unlock the Central Coast's potential as a hub of innovation, talent, and possibility. This is more than policy and plans; this is a movement for economic transformation.

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### THE POWER OF WE

Collaboration isn't just a buzzword for us. It's how we make real change. By uniting private-sector pioneers, civic leaders, educators, and communities across two counties, we ensure that diverse perspectives shape solutions that work for everyone. This is how we tackle the toughest challenges—from housing to workforce development—because no one gets left behind.

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### DRIVING RESULTS THAT MATTER

We're not just dreamers; we're doers. Whether it's growing global industries, building pathways into good-paying jobs, or tackling housing affordability, we're driving results that improve lives. Every initiative, every project, and every partnership is designed to move the needle where it matters most.

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### GOING ALL IN FOR THE CENTRAL COAST

We are relentless advocates for the region. We fight for the funding, policies, and attention the people of our region deserve. From Sacramento to Washington, boardrooms to global markets, we amplify the region's story far and wide to ensure the Central Coast's potential is not only seen but realized.

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### A MOVEMENT FOR MORE

We are building a future with more: more opportunity, more inclusion, more prosperity. This isn't just economic development; it's a movement to ensure that every person, every business, and every community on the Central Coast can thrive. Together, we're not just imagining a better tomorrow—we're creating it.

# REACH

Ideas + Action for a Thriving Central Coast

[reachcentralcoast.org](http://reachcentralcoast.org)

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