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East Range
Joint Powers
Board Update

Background

- Founded in 1984
- 4-member board
- Annual budget of approx. \$110,000
- Northspan became consulting staff in 2019
- Develops three-year strategic action plans
- Model for cooperative economic development





ERJPB

STRATEGIC PLAN

FISCAL YEAR 2024-2026

Vision & Mission

Vision: The region to live, work, and play.

Mission: To improve the lives of our residents by fostering collaboration among East Range communities.



Core Values



We are...

- **Collaborative.** We build bridges across the four East Range communities and with local and regional partners to promote comprehensive solutions for us all.
- **Supportive.** We share resources across our communities and acknowledge the success of one community brings benefits to the entire area.
- **Trusting.** We build deep relationships with one another and believe our tight-knit networks are the foundations for the future of the East Range.
- **Responsive.** We recognize the voices of community members and adapt our efforts to address our most urgent needs and challenges.

CREATING A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

DEFINITION

This strategic direction recognizes the East Range Joint Powers Board's central role as an agent in collaboration on the East Range, both over the past 40 years and as the communities move toward greater integration. It creates a forum for area leaders and residents to connect on shared issues and move toward common solutions. This East Range culture is a foundation for streamlined interconnection, efficient use of resources, and addressing issues at an appropriate scale.

ACTIONS

1. Consider updating the ERJPB By Laws to include non-voting, ex officio members such as ISD 2711
2. Establish the water agreement between Biwabik and Aurora
3. Present ERJPB activity to the four councils / boards once a year
4. Create a task force to define how each community is addressing adult-use cannabis (use, sale, distribution, current situation) and determine what collaboration could be possible.
5. Explore funding projects for paved trail connections
6. ERJPB hosts one all-council meeting each year
7. Create a task force to define how each community is addressing business permitting processes and determine what collaboration could be possible
8. Create protocol to feature a business of the quarter at the ERJPB meeting
9. Create a unified volunteer list of individuals and organizations including ISD 2711
10. Continue collaboration regarding emergency services (PD, EMS, Fire)

UNIFYING COMMUNITIES THROUGH COMMUNICATION

DEFINITION

This strategic direction works to improve the spread of information across the East Range. It seeks to explain the work of the Joint Powers Board, inform residents of regional activities and opportunities, and market the region more broadly. If successful, community members, elected officials, and visitors will better understand the amenities and opportunities provided by the East Range.

ACTIONS

1. Record ERJPB meetings and post on the website
2. Explore creating one 'blue book' for all 4 communities
3. Explore creating a quarterly East Range Snapshot feature for East Range Times
4. Reinstate regular city administrator meetings with ERJPB staff
5. Provide quarterly ERJPB snapshot for city councilors
6. Work with marketing committee to create unified marketing materials for visitors
7. Determine how best to get East Range events on the Iron Range Tourist Bureau calendar

ADDRESSING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

DEFINITION

This strategic direction works to tackle community challenges around shared needs, including child care, housing, water, broadband, emergency services, trails, and other areas of opportunity that may emerge. It recognizes these are shared issues, and that the Joint Powers Board offers the connections and scale to provide solutions that may be more effective than if communities acted on their own. It creates a framework to move the needle on all of these issues and takes concrete steps toward specific outcomes.

ACTIONS

1. Expand upon the “one stop shop” flow chart
2. Determine boots on the ground coordination with the Regional Food Business Center activities for the East Range
3. Explore and determine the School District’s child care space available, shared specifics, and amenities
4. Define each community's franchise fee situation and determine what collaboration could be possible
5. Implement the Housing Institute outcomes
6. Each community identifies a shovel ready housing project
7. Attract a housing development that will be under construction within the 3-year period

TARGETING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

DEFINITION

This strategic direction aims to expand the financial capacity of the East Range Joint Powers Board and provide more resources to its member communities. It improves information-sharing on financial resources, boosts efforts to access outside funding, and strengthens the ability of the Joint Powers Board to support local businesses. If successful, it will lead to cost savings, more funding from outside resources, and increased investment on the East Range.

ACTIONS

1. Stay informed and advocate for tax changes at state level including the impact of fiscal disparities
2. Relaunch ERJPB loan program and explore recapitalization
3. Compile and create an educational piece on financial resources
4. Explore increasing returns on ERJPB cash investments
5. Coordinate capital projects and resources across communities
6. Continue annual presentations from IRRR on available resources
7. Explore methods to bolster grant writing capacity