

## 4.0 REGIONAL NEEDS

The region has benefited from a dynamic economy and active planning efforts; nevertheless, the region has several unmet needs. Every year, GCEDD staff electronically surveys local economic development practitioners in the region to determine the underlying barriers and constraints to economic development. This process is performed in order to focus strategic planning for future economic development activities. The results were then compiled, prioritized based on perceived need, and are reflected in Table 6. In addition to traditional development tools, ancillary needs have been identified. Improved air quality, single family housing and telecom expansion and development serve as major factors in economic development, and will be prioritized in future planning initiatives. Comments received from GCEDD Board members during January 2008 and discussions during subsequent board meetings indicate that the original priority order needed to be revisited. As a result, the earlier numeric priorities have been grouped into three major priority categories (high, medium, low).

**Table 6: District-wide Needs by Priority**

Identified Regional Development Needs	
<b>High Priority</b>	Job Training and Workforce Development
	Job Retention and Expansion of Major Employers
	Disaster Recovery and Community Resiliency*
	Road Improvements or Expansion
	Small Business Retention and Expansion
	Improved Air Quality
<b>Medium Priority</b>	Single Family Housing
	Tax Abatements and Other Incentive Strategies
	Telecom Expansion and Development
	Flood Control Improvements
	Industrial Park Development
	Sewer and Wastewater Treatment Improvements
	Affordable Housing
<b>Priority</b>	Community Development and Revitalization
	Agricultural Conversion and Diversification
	Solid Waste Improvements

\* While Disaster Recovery and Community Resiliency were not included in the previous survey (summarized in Table 6, above), the widespread destruction and economic impacts associated with Hurricane Ike – and the inclusion of 12 of the 13 counties within the GCEDD region – clearly makes this a high regional priority. To ensure its inclusion as a priority within the CEDS, this item is included as Table 6 as a high priority.

Table 7 summarizes the needs identified of each of the region’s counties. These needs are primarily infrastructure related: water, sewer, drainage, and roadways. Housing is another need, both low- to moderate-income housing and, in the rural areas and smaller cities, works force and middle-class residences. The other listed needs are more general in nature.