



Carroll County Economic Development Corporation 2026 Strategic Plan Update

February 6, 2026





Acknowledgements

EDC Board of Directors

- **Town of Burlington:** Jay Bordner, Keith Schultz, and Mike Williams
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- **City of Delphi:** Anita Werling, Dr. Gregory Norman (T) and Kenneth Walton (VP)
- **Town of Flora:** Joe Moss, Laurie Brower and Bret Rinehart (P)
- **Corporate Partners:**
 - CWREMC: CEO, Cathy Raderstorf
 - NIPSCO: Public Affairs Manager, Karen McLean
- **Ex-Officio**
 - Delphi Mayor: Kamron Yates
 - Carroll County Redevelopment Commission President: Jack Begley
- **School Partners:**
 - Carroll Consolidated School Corporation, Superintendent Keith Thackery
 - Delphi Community School Corporation, Superintendent Dr. Pamela Moore

EDC Staff

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Plan Prepared by:



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Current Needs

TALENT ATTRACTION



Having a skilled and available workforce is a top priority for new employers. To remain competitive for jobs, we must maintain and grow the population.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT



To support business retention and attraction, we must work to upskill our existing workforce while increasing the number of residents with advanced credentials or college degrees.

QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF JOBS



Carroll County leaders have been clear in their desire to have more and better jobs available within the county. Meeting this expectation will require investments in talent attraction, educational attainment, quality of life, leadership, and other areas.

QUALITY OF LIFE



Carroll County must address barriers to quality of life. While we have made progress, we must continue to address our housing supply, which has decreased since 2019. We must also expand local healthcare access including basic services such as immediate care.

LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY



Addressing the challenges before Carroll County will take strong leadership, improved collaboration, and more capacity than ever before. We also need to find ways to identify and equip existing and future leaders.

Current Opportunities



**CAPITALIZE
ON CORE
AGRIBUSINESS**



**REINVEST IN
ATTRACTIVENESS**



**DIVERSIFY
THE ECONOMY**

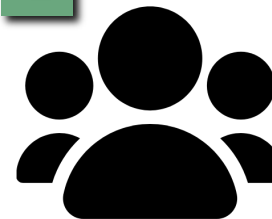
Current Strengths

1



**STRONG
AGRIBUSINESS
ECONOMY**

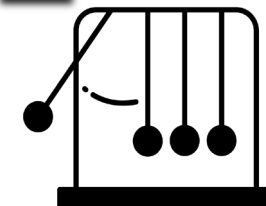
2



**POPULATION IS
GROWING**

(although many forecasts
predict a decline is coming)

3



**STRONG
MOMENTUM FROM
RECENT SUCCESS**

(Housing, Employment,
Broadband, Childcare)

Capitalize on Core Agribusiness



As one of the three top pork producers in the state, agribusiness is a cornerstone of our economy, supporting a significant portion of our workforce. We are committed to reinvesting in this strength while exploring innovative opportunities to capitalize on emerging trends in the industry.

Reinvest in Attractiveness



Carroll County's strong job market, schools, convenient amenities, rich culture, and unique charm position it as the most appealing rural community in the greater Lafayette region. As the region continues to grow, we can leverage these assets and more firmly establish Carroll County as the premier rural destination in the area.

Diversify the Economy



With billions in nearby investments underway at SK Hynix (Tippecanoe County), Samsung (Howard County), and LEAP (Boone County), Carroll County has a unique opportunity to diversify its economy. These developments not only provide local workers with access to jobs in neighboring markets but also create opportunities for the county to capture spinoff businesses to diversify and expand its economic base.

Vision

A DYNAMIC AND PROSPEROUS ECONOMY FOR ALL OF CARROLL COUNTY

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



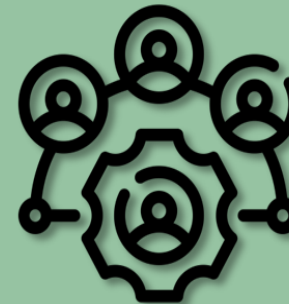
Drive dynamic business growth by attracting new, high-impact businesses (non-retail) while fostering the retention and expansion of existing enterprises. By building on our strong agribusiness foundation, we will actively seek innovative opportunities for expansion and diversification, positioning ourselves for long-term success.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY & QUALITY OF PLACE



Foster an environment that attracts and retains top talent by championing efforts to elevate our community's quality of life and vibrancy. This will involve collaborative efforts with local government and private-sector businesses to overcome key challenges—such as housing, childcare, and healthcare—ensuring that Carroll County becomes a place where people thrive and want to call home.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Carroll County leaders have been clear in their desire to have more and better jobs available within the county. Meeting this expectation will require investments in talent attraction, educational attainment, quality of life, leadership, and other areas.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Empower local governments by providing staffing support to drive impactful community development initiatives. Foster a culture of collaboration and cultivate leadership at all levels, uniting stakeholders around shared county-wide priorities to create lasting, positive change.

Action Plan



Business Development

By building on our strong agribusiness foundation, we will actively seek innovative opportunities for expansion and diversification, positioning ourselves for long-term success.

Drive dynamic business growth by attracting and fostering growth-oriented businesses (non-retail) while encouraging the retention and expansion of existing enterprises.

FOUNDATIONS

1. Strengthen business retention and expansion within Carroll County.
2. Attract and foster growth-oriented businesses.
3. Expand agribusiness opportunities.
4. Foster an innovation-friendly environment.
5. Evaluate opportunities to diversify the economy by attracting spinoff technology and agriculture businesses.
6. Expand inventory of development sites.



Business Development

FOUNDATION	STRATEGIES
<p>Strengthen Business Retention and Expansion within Carroll County</p>	<p>Expand the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program to include annual visits with the county’s top eight employers.</p> <p>Provide concierge service by customizing incentives, assisting businesses with permitting, workforce development, and expansion planning.</p> <p>Develop local supply chain initiatives to connect existing businesses with new customers and suppliers</p> <p>Develop ‘Red Flag Protocol’ to convene a rapid response team to identify business risks (e.g., layoffs, closures, etc.) to engage with company leadership and explore solutions.</p>
<p>Attract and Foster Growth-Oriented Businesses</p>	<p>Identify priority industries aligned with local strengths (e.g., agri-tech, logistics, advanced manufacturing, etc.).</p> <p>Develop a value proposition and launch a professional marketing campaign highlighting location advantages, workforce, incentives, and quality of life.</p> <p>Focus recruitment efforts on advanced sectors with existing momentum (e.g., manufacturing, agribusiness, food processing, and logistics).</p>
<p>Expand Agribusiness Opportunities</p>	<p>Support innovation in agribusiness through incubators, accelerators, and research partnerships (e.g., agri-tech startups, precision farming, value-added processing).</p> <p>Target and recruit food and beverage processing, logistics, and cold storage companies that complement Carroll County’s local agriculture.</p> <p>Evaluate emerging trends in agribusiness and identify a Carroll County agribusiness strategy. This should build upon work from the KIRPC Regional Ag Strategy and the Agrinovus Accelerate 2050 plans.</p>



Business Development

FOUNDATION	STRATEGIES
<p>Create an Innovation-Friendly Environment</p>	<p>Strengthen collaboration between business, government, and educational institutions to foster R&D and entrepreneurship - By focusing on shared innovation hubs, joint funding initiatives, and workforce development programs that translate R&D into scalable ventures.</p> <p>Advocate for modernized land use policies and streamlined regulatory processes to encourage desired development.</p>
<p>Evaluate Opportunities to Diversify the Economy by Attracting Spinoff Tech Businesses</p>	<p>Evaluate sites, infrastructure capacity, and workforce assets to determine Carroll County's readiness to attract complementary upstream/downstream industries associated with existing businesses in the region (e.g., SK Hynix, Samsung, Indiana Packers, etc.).</p> <p>Maintain involvement in Purdue Research Foundation Study for SK Hynix spinoff businesses.</p>
<p>Expand Inventory of Development Sites</p>	<p>Assess potential commercial and industrial sites for infrastructure, zoning, ownership, and development constraints.</p> <p>Expand available acreage of shovel ready sites, ensuring necessary infrastructure (roads, utilities, broadband) and clear zoning align with targeted industries.</p> <p>Expand site control for future development, including pre-approved zoning, and land options.</p>

Action Plan



Community Identity & Quality of Place

Foster an environment that attracts and retains top talent by championing efforts to elevate our community's quality of life and vibrancy. This will involve collaborative efforts with local government and private-sector businesses to overcome key challenges—such as housing, childcare, and healthcare—ensuring that Carroll County is a place where people thrive and want to call home.

FOUNDATIONS

1. Enhance quality of life in Carroll County.
2. Promote community identity.
3. Expand access to healthcare.



Community Identity & Quality of Place

FOUNDATION	STRATEGIES
<p>Enhance Quality of Life</p>	<p>Build upon recent housing investments by establish a housing task force to identify and promote the next phases of housing investment.</p> <p>Inventory existing childcare facilities and execute a plan to expand the availability of quality childcare throughout the County.</p> <p>Commission a county-wide Quality of Life plan to inventory existing cultural and recreational assets and invest in amenities to attract talent.</p>
<p>Promote Community Identity</p>	<p>Create and promote a distinct brand for Carroll County, highlighting the community’s story, quality of life, and economic potential.</p> <p>Commission the design of a user-friendly website as a central hub for businesses, residents and visitors.</p> <p>Develop and implement a targeted marketing campaign to build awareness, support local businesses, and attract new industries in target sectors.</p>
<p>Expand Access to Healthcare</p>	<p>Establish a healthcare task force to develop and execute a plan to expand the availability of quality healthcare in the community, including the recruitment of an immediate care facility.</p> <p>Collaborate with regional healthcare providers to broaden local healthcare options over the next five years.</p> <p>Work with county officials to launch a mobile integrated health unit to serve remote residents.</p>

Action Plan



Workforce Development

Forge strong partnerships with school corporations and local businesses to enhance education at every level, empowering individuals to achieve their fullest potential. By focusing on expanding access to advanced certifications and college degrees, we will cultivate a highly skilled workforce ready to meet the demands of tomorrow's economy.

FOUNDATIONS

1. Build and strengthen partnerships.
2. Expand educational attainment and skills training.
3. Enhance career pathways and workforce readiness.



Workforce Development

FOUNDATION	STRATEGIES
<p>Build and Strengthen Partnerships</p>	<p>Strengthen existing partnerships with local school corporations and businesses. Establish a partnership with Indian Trails.</p> <p>Create or join joint advisory councils to align primary and secondary educational programs with workforce needs.</p> <p>Facilitate regular meetings between businesses and educators to identify skill gaps and shape short-term training programs.</p>
<p>Expand Educational Attainment and Skills Training</p>	<p>Work with regional community colleges and workforce boards to offer satellite classes, mobile training units, or virtual hubs in the county.</p>
<p>Enhance Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness</p>	<p>Promote and encourage development of apprenticeships, internships, and job shadowing opportunities with local employers.</p> <p>Leverage IEDC’s Entrepreneurship Office to help startups and small businesses access funding, expand reach, and develop sustainable business models that drive long-term growth in Carroll County.</p>
<p>Expand Workforce Participation</p>	<p>Partner with employers, schools, workforce boards and social service agencies to identify workforce participation barriers (e.g., transportation, education, childcare).</p> <p>Collaborate with local and regional childcare providers to increase access to affordable, flexible options for parents.</p> <p>Promote employer-sponsored transit (e.g., CityVan) for businesses with 25+ employees.</p>

Action Plan



Community Collaboration & Leadership Development

Foster a culture of collaboration and cultivate leadership at all levels, uniting stakeholders around shared county-wide priorities to create lasting, positive change.

FOUNDATIONS

1. Foster a culture of collaboration across stakeholders.
2. Cultivate and strengthen leadership at all levels.
3. Advance regional representation and advocacy.



Community Collaboration & Leadership Development

FOUNDATION	STRATEGIES
<p>Foster a Culture of Collaboration Across Stakeholders</p>	<p>Establish semi-annual intergovernmental roundtables to strengthen communication and collaboration among County, municipalities, school districts, utilities and economic development agencies.</p> <p>Develop collaborative working groups or task forces around shared county-wide priorities.</p> <p>Create a central platform or tool for tracking and sharing progress on community initiatives across jurisdictions.</p>
<p>Cultivate and Strengthen Leadership at all Levels</p>	<p>Develop and promote annual economic development leadership training program for elected officials, department heads, and planning staff.</p> <p>Establish and promote clear metrics to evaluate the success and community impact of Leadership Carroll County.</p> <p>Develop a structured pathway for youth leaders to engage in local leadership roles, building on their experience in programs like the Carroll White REMC Junior Board, FFA, 4-H Junior Leaders, Student Council, and similar initiatives.</p>
<p>Advance Regional Representation and Advocacy</p>	<p>Represent Carroll County’s interests and advocate for resources in regional partnerships and initiatives.</p> <p>Build strategic partnerships with neighboring counties, regional agencies, and state organizations to leverage collective impact.</p> <p>Communicate the county’s successes and needs clearly to regional audiences.</p> <p>Evaluate recent participation in the Lilly Endowment Inc.’s GIFT Program and develop a strategy to better leverage the program to meet community needs.</p>

Appendix

Background

This plan was commissioned to assess the current position of the **Carroll County Economic Development Corporation (EDC)** and to establish updated strategies for its future operations. It serves as an update to the original plan completed in 2020. The plan is designed to provide vision and direction for the EDC over the next five years and beyond.

Online Survey

An online survey was made available from January 2 – January 15, 2025, with approximately 50 stakeholders completing the survey. Respondents provided feedback on current conditions and future desired for residential housing, new business attraction, workforce attraction and quality of life, community collaboration and leadership, broadband expansion, local and small business development. Education and workforce development, business retention and expansion, community development, childcare, healthcare, and overnight accommodations.

Conclusion

The 2026 Strategic Plan Update provides a clear, action-oriented playbook for advancing Carroll County's economic future over the next five years. Building on the County's strong agribusiness foundation and recent momentum, the plan prioritizes business growth, workforce development, quality of place, and collaborative leadership. Through targeted strategies, measurable performance metrics, and sustained partnerships, the Carroll County Economic Development Corporation is positioned to attract investment, strengthen local employers, enhance quality of life, and ensure long-term prosperity for communities across the County.

Workshops

January 23, 2025

The project team facilitated two workshops with progressively larger groups to analyze existing conditions, evaluate potential strategies, and prioritize initiatives for the EDC.

The first workshop was conducted on January 23rd, 2025, and included 13 key stakeholders. This meeting include a review of the stakeholder survey findings, a review of key economic and demographic data, and an interactive discussion on current and future priorities.

The primary conclusion from this meeting was that the priorities included in the 2020 plan were all still valid, but the level of importance of each is now different because of the progress made over the last five years.



April 17, 2025

For the second meeting, the EDC invited in a larger group of key stakeholders to collaborate on the plan. A total of 20 stakeholders participated in this workshop on April 17th, 2025. Background information was summarized, and a preliminary vision was presented for review.

The group generally agreed on the background assessment and high-level vision and mission. Edits were made to the strategies for each element of the organization's mission.

