

# THE BIG TABLE: GREATER PEORIA

2021-2025 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

## CEDS ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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### 2023 Annual Report

#### Introduction

The Greater Peoria Economic Development Council (GPEDC) is pleased to present the CEDS Annual Report on behalf of Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, Mason and Logan counties in Illinois. GPEDC formally adopted its new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy in March 2021. The [Big Table CEDS 2021-2025](#) was the result of nearly two years of work and the input of over one thousand citizens who participated in Big Table outreach sessions in 2019 (in person) and 2020 (virtual). In October 2022 the community gathered to hear an update on progress and to provide additional feedback on strategies and opportunities.

The strategic action plan of the Big Table CEDS is divided into four goal areas:

- **Jobs:** Promote adaptive economic development that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, supports existing businesses, and attracts employers.
- **Workforce:** Develop a more resilient, robust and equitable talent pipeline in Greater Peoria.
- **Quality of Life:** Foster diverse and inclusive communities where all residents and visitors enjoy active, secure, healthy and fulfilled lives.
- **Natural Resources:** Sustain and expand the economic value of the region's natural resources.

Each goal area is further broken down into three to five strategy areas. The report below describes the progress made within each goal and strategy. The report is reflective of any related activity from October 2022 through September 2023. Exhibit 1 at the end of this report includes the full list of Strategy Committee members, and indicates changes in the Committee's membership. Over the past year two members have left due to changes in career and/or location and three have been added.

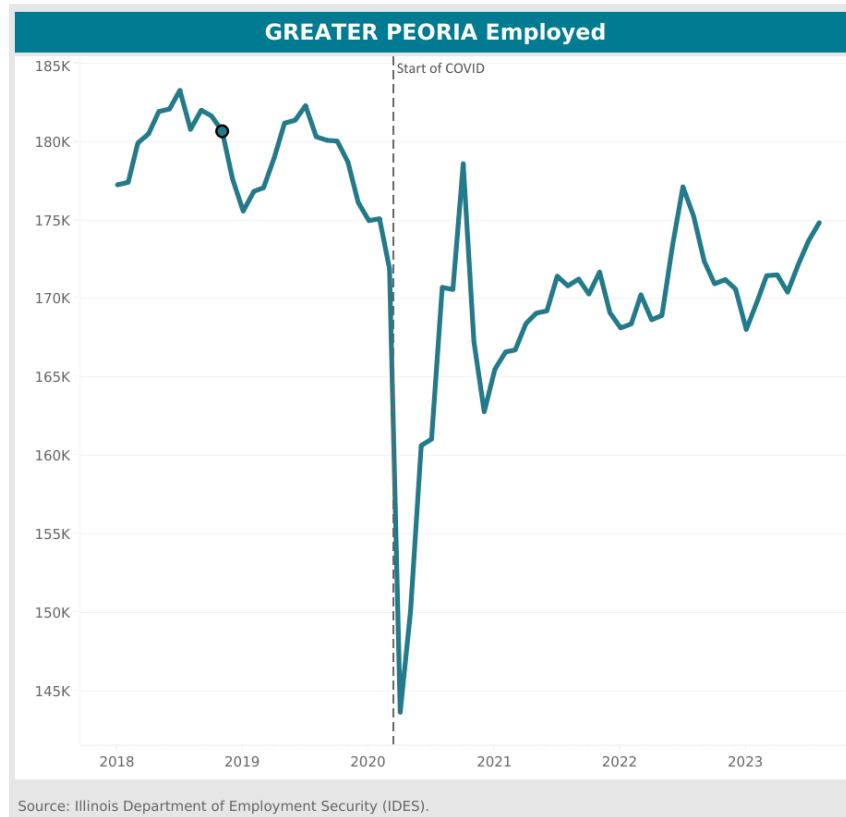
#### Changes to Regional Economy

The regional economy had some moderate growth over the past 12 months, particularly among people reporting themselves as employed. Local employers continue to report difficulties filling open positions and retaining employees, though both of these seem to have improved to some degree. By all accounts, municipal and county revenues have remained strong, a fair sign of local economic strength, though inflation can mask the reasons for strong consumer spending. The City of Peoria is the largest municipality in the region and good bellwether for regional economic performance. While they have reported strong revenues, they are also forecasting a mild recession in 2024.

The region continues to see investment by its major employers. Work is nearly complete on Precision Planting's new 550,000 square foot operation center. The three UnityPoint Healthcare hospitals in the region were acquired by Illinois-based Carle Healthcare. Carle broke ground on Trillium Place, its large investment in child and adolescent behavioral health. Peoria-based OSF Healthcare continued its expansion and is in the process of acquiring a hospital in La Salle, Illinois. Locally, construction on their Cancer Therapy Center is nearly complete and they announced the construction of a new, 100-bed mental health hospital for

adults in north Peoria. Maui Jim, a Peoria-based company, was acquired by Kerring, a French corporation that owns luxury eyewear brands across the globe. Kerring announced the construction of a new, \$80 million addition to their facility here. Other local major companies are in the midst of planning for expansions. On the agriculture front, an early season drought threatened crops but most farmers have seen normal yields at harvest.

One of the best measures of economic activity, though certainly flawed, is the local monthly unemployment figures. The graph below measures the number of employed persons in the five county region. The COVID low point in April 2020 certainly makes for a dramatic graph, but the region has seen a fair amount of volatility in employed persons over the past three years. For the period of this report, employment in Greater Peoria in October 2022 was 170,966. After a mid-period dip to 168,053 (January 2023), employment numbers have rebounded to 174,862 in August 2023 (the last available month).



The table below shows jobs by category in August 2023. (Note: This report is for the Peoria MSA which does not include Logan or Mason County, but does include Stark and Marshall counties.) As compared to the same time last year, the Peoria area had 300 more jobs (August 2022-August 2023).

<b>Peoria MSA Jobs Comparison Table</b>							
Updated: 9/26/2023 2:54:31 PM							
Industry	August 2023	July 2023	August 2022	OTM Change	OTM % Change	OTY Change	OTY % Change
<b>Education and Health Services</b>	<b>33,900</b>	<b>33,600</b>	<b>32,500</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
<b>Financial Activities</b>	<b>6,600</b>	<b>6,700</b>	<b>6,800</b>	<b>-100</b>	<b>-1.5%</b>	<b>-200</b>	<b>-2.9%</b>
<b>Government</b>	<b>19,800</b>	<b>19,100</b>	<b>19,800</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Information</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>-100</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>
<b>Leisure and Hospitality</b>	<b>16,800</b>	<b>16,900</b>	<b>16,400</b>	<b>-100</b>	<b>-0.6%</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>23,300</b>	<b>23,300</b>	<b>23,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>-200</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>
<b>Mining and Construction</b>	<b>8,800</b>	<b>8,800</b>	<b>8,800</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Other Services</b>	<b>7,900</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>7,900</b>	<b>-100</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Professional and Business Services</b>	<b>23,700</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>23,400</b>	<b>-300</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
<b>Retail Trade</b>	<b>17,500</b>	<b>17,700</b>	<b>17,600</b>	<b>-200</b>	<b>-1.1%</b>	<b>-100</b>	<b>-0.6%</b>
<b>Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities</b>	<b>6,200</b>	<b>6,100</b>	<b>6,300</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>-100</b>	<b>-1.6%</b>
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	<b>6,300</b>	<b>6,300</b>	<b>6,300</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	<b>172,500</b>	<b>172,200</b>	<b>171,100</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>0.8%</b>

As of August 2023 the regional unemployment rate was 5.8%, which is higher than the state and national averages. Behind the numbers tell a slightly different story. Except for one month (May 2023), the number of people reporting as employed has increased each month since the beginning of the year. Within the past three months the region has seen a dramatic increase in the labor force, with 7500 more people either working or looking for work. With a strong local job market, particularly in manufacturing and healthcare, there is confidence that many of these new job seekers will find work. Regional partners, including GPEDC, are working to address barriers to employment that are preventing low income workers from finding and keeping meaningful employment.

On the following pages, the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council is pleased to share the significant progress made on the strategies and goals outlined in the Big Table CEDS over the last year.

**Progress Report**

**Goal #1: Promote adaptive economic development that encourages entrepreneurship, supports existing businesses, and attracts new employers.**

*Strategy: Support economic innovation and digitization for the full range of businesses, from startups to legacy corporations.*

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hired full time Director for Distillery Labs and began construction on the facility.</li> <li>● Bradley formalized a partnership with T-Mobile to create a "Digitally Connected Campus" that will support innovation via 5G.</li> <li>● gBeta Distillery Labs graduated 10 companies through two cohorts of its accelerator.</li> <li>● Peoria County launched the "Start a Business GP" on-line portal for startups and created a micro-grant program, and also provided mentorship, business assistance benefits to business owners in the process.</li> <li>● Tazewell County included SmartStart and entrepreneur support in an awarded CEJA grant.</li> <li>● Developed and launched AgTech Connect program to host discussions and create interactions between farmers and innovators.</li> <li>● Pekin awarded a USDA RD grant to help support entrepreneurs in that community.</li> <li>● Hosted social and learning events, provided mentorship, advisory services, and referrals to small biz owners, startup founders through Distillery Labs programs.</li> </ul>	<p>After years of planning and a number of fits and starts, Distillery Labs is finally under construction. The hiring of a full-time Executive Director helped to provide leadership in a growing local ecosystem for startups. Programming and assistance across multiple partners increased. T-Mobile's partnership with Bradley will help accelerate opportunities for student entrepreneurship.</p>
	<p><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ramp up programming in advance of the opening of Distillery Labs to the public (early summer 2024).</li> <li>● Leverage opportunities presented by being members of the Illinois Innovation Network.</li> <li>● Fully roll out T-Mobile 5G Digitally Connected Campus at Bradley.</li> <li>● Improve coordination and partnerships between various aligned organizations.</li> <li>● Continue conversation with Community Foundation, Peoria Next, OSF and other partners on a seed fund to support startups.</li> <li>● Increase visibility and activity within the Central Illinois Living Laboratory.</li> <li>● Host an innovation event in partnership with a statewide venture capital association.</li> </ul>

*Strategy: Develop real estate and infrastructure to make it attractive for investment.*

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Initiated conversations with land owners in an area that could be an industrial "mega site." Investigated site advantages and limitations</li> <li>● Convened a task force to investigate options to increase commercial and industrial property</li> <li>● Investigated opportunities for creation of a "green" industrial park in Peoria.</li> <li>● Heart of Illinois Regional Port District (HOIRPD) awarded operational funding by the state of Illinois and joined the Illinois Waterways Port Commission.</li> <li>● Port plan for Havana Regional Port Authority completed.</li> <li>● First annual Illinois Waterways Port Commission held in Peoria</li> <li>● Tri-County Regional Planning Commission received funding for and began work on a Master Port plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Local governments continue to invest in local infrastructure and major arterials. The rebirth of the HOIRPD this past year will help position the region for commercial opportunities.</p>
	<p><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Completion of the Bob Michael and McCluggage bridge projects.</li> <li>● Complete port master plan initiative.</li> <li>● Advance plans for creating significant industrial property in southern Peoria county.</li> <li>● Finalize plans for a green industrial park.</li> </ul>

*Strategy: Grow existing businesses with a focus on ones that provide goods and services beyond the region.*

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expanded Enterprise Zones in Peoria County to accommodate development opportunities.</li> <li>● Participated in the Illinois Defense Manufacturing Communities Consortium and used DOD funding to connect local businesses with resources and opportunities.</li> <li>● Expanded membership in the GP Manufacturing Network and refocused marketing and networking strategies.</li> <li>● Through the Community Navigator program, a coalition of 12 local partners helped businesses receive \$4.7M in COVID relief grants.</li> <li>● Conducted business outreach visits to identify trends, discover opportunities, and make referrals.</li> <li>● Peoria NEXT partnered with the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center to support manufacturing startups by offering workshops and sponsoring labs/office space.</li> </ul>	<p>Strong work and collaboration across the region to ensure businesses could access state COVID relief funding. Work under the DMCC program commenced.</p>
	<p><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop and launch business outreach programs in rural and urban areas using ERC Fellow (rural) and funding from Energy Transition grants (urban).</li> <li>● Utilize "Community Navigator" network to help businesses access new DCEO programs</li> <li>● Develop new tracking method for BRE visits and capturing good news, investments</li> <li>● More fully market FTZ 114 so more businesses can be assisted</li> </ul>

Strategy: Attract investments to the region from national and international companies that lead to job growth.

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attended Select USA to showcase the region to foreign companies</li> <li>● Participated in an Advanced Manufacturing business recruitment trip to Germany and Austria to invite them to consider a new business location in Greater Peoria.</li> <li>● Developed "Soft Landing GP" program to support foreign startup businesses looking for an American location.</li> <li>● Marketed directly to and improved relationships with site selectors, foreign consulates, corporate decision makers, etc.</li> <li>● Early organization of a "Friends of Japan" effort to better connect with economic opportunities in that country</li> <li>● Organized and hosted a "familiarization visit" for three site selectors that focussed on opportunities in the biomedical manufacturing industry in Greater Peoria, engaging the community in a conversation about the efforts needed to attract businesses to the area.</li> <li>● Continue to promote the Havana Business Park and Havana's location to the Illinois River for barge transportation, access to US Route 136 and State Routes 78 and 97, for truck transportation and access to trains.</li> <li>● Awarded an EDA planning grant to conduct a targeted industry analysis.</li> </ul>	<p>Continued to make strides in best understanding the region's value proposition and communicating that message to external partners. Improved GPEDC website and social media reach. The site selector visit in fall of 2022 was very successful and well executed.</p>
	<p><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Host German delegation of business leaders (Oct 2023)</li> <li>● Complete targeted industry analysis</li> <li>● Utilize business outreach visits to develop opportunities to connect with external suppliers and customers</li> <li>● Develop messaging around bioprocessing and fermentation industries and opportunities</li> <li>● Restart Peoria Bio-Made initiative</li> <li>● Develop a strategy for engaging Japan FDI; organize a visit to Japan in fall of 2024</li> <li>● Continue identifying and understanding potential buildings and sites</li> </ul>

**Goal#2: Develop a more resilient, robust and equitable talent pipeline in Greater Peoria.**

*Strategy: Remove barriers that prevent people from connecting to family-sustaining employment.*

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Established framework to begin research &amp; data-gathering to create an online platform for job seekers &amp; employers to have visibility on all regional partners in training, upskilling, and removal of barriers to employment</li> <li>● Community Foundation directed \$50K in funding through their Community Works program to social service agencies that address employment barriers.</li> <li>● Joint Commission on Racial Justice &amp; Equity began developing pilot programs to remove transportation barriers for low-income workers.</li> <li>● Illinois Workforce Equity Initiative continued to provide earn-and-learn job training and wraparound services.</li> <li>● City of Peoria applied for an EDA Recompete grant to create two workforce training centers, hire case managers and provide wrap-around services to low income workers.</li> </ul>	<p>Though the labor shortage is easing, employers still report struggling to find people to take open jobs. Progress over the past year to develop solutions that overcome barriers to employment has been steady. Programs like the IT Workforce Accelerator and Illinois Workforce Equity Initiative are great examples of a comprehensive approach.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop data tracking and other initiatives for the RWA</li> <li>● Through the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity, develop a pilot program to address transportation barriers to work</li> <li>● If awarded, take next steps with EDA Recompete</li> <li>● Identify mechanism for social service agencies to share information on job seekers</li> </ul>

*Strategy: Develop opportunities and mechanisms to provide citizens with the skills they need to be gainfully employed.*

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Launched a Talent Pipeline Management initiative for the region's manufacturing &amp; logistics that will create an employer-centered understanding of hiring and training needs to help shape the workforce development system</li> <li>● Began recruitment of employer stakeholders to launch a second TPM initiative for the region's healthcare &amp; life science employers</li> <li>● Launched the IT Workforce Accelerator via EDA Good Jobs Challenge grant.</li> <li>● Partnered with the Caterpillar Foundation to develop and promote IT training programs in low income Peoria neighborhoods.</li> <li>● Created initial cohort of Talent Acquisition professionals to launch a talent-focused roundtable to share best practices, resources, and challenges to attracting, hiring, and retaining talent</li> <li>● Open Workforce Sustainability Center</li> </ul>	<p>The opening of the Workforce Sustainability Center at ICC was a milestone event, as well as completing the first full year of the IT Workforce Accelerator (Good Jobs Challenge). Increased community conversation around upskilling.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Complete first year of TPM for manufacturing and health care</li> <li>● Refine work of RWA around upskilling; catalog formal business partnerships with workforce initiatives</li> <li>● Complete second year of IT Workforce Accelerator; increase business outreach to market the program</li> </ul>



*Strategy: Increase the graduation rate for regional high schools and assist schools in meeting college and career expectations.*

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Facilitated CareerSpark, a hands-on career &amp; industry simulation experience to fulfill educator requirements for the PACE framework while providing 4,000+ eighth graders with insights to various career clusters to help plan electives and high school pathways</li> <li>● Expanded "CareerSpark You're Hired," an online hiring fair for high schoolers throughout the region. Over 5000 students registered and 54 companies participated, with 48 live Q&amp;A webinars to connect students to jobs.</li> <li>● Facilitated discussions between SkillsUSA and rural school districts.</li> <li>● Strategic Manufacturing Group hosted the Discovering Manufacturing Expo to showcase manufacturing careers to high school students</li> </ul>	<p>The return of CareerSpark to an in-person event was an excellent development with great outcomes. Expansion of You're Hired also helped to connect older youth with job opportunities. The Emerging Workforce committee of the RWA continued their strong work.</p>
	<p><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase participation in Career Spark and CS You're Hired.</li> <li>● Develop a working group of secondary school CTE programs.</li> <li>● Establish work plan and goals for Emerging Workforce committee.</li> <li>● Host manufacturing expos for high school students.</li> </ul>

*Strategy: Address talent gaps and population loss by positioning Greater Peoria as a desirable place for people to relocate.*

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Gilmore Foundation raised \$1.5M to develop and launch the Choose Greater Peoria talent attraction initiative to augment the previous work of GP2030</li> <li>● Hosted "Greater Peoria Tailgater" to celebrate Peoria's riverfront and highlight Greater Peoria assets.</li> <li>● Increased capacity and usage of GP jobs board to showcase job opportunities in the region.</li> <li>● Initiated discussions with DoD Skillbridge Program to make the region a hub for Skillbridge participants relocating to GP for access to VA, ANG base, and Skillbridge partners / employers</li> </ul>	<p>The region saw a major investment by the Gilmore Foundation and private sector transforming GP2030 to Choose Greater Peoria. Developed and executed messaging and media strategy. Created a process to identify and route potential transplants to area employers.</p>
	<p><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expand reach of Choose Greater Peoria.</li> <li>● Identify staffing plan for internal candidate routing process.</li> <li>● Host in-person Big Table to help highlight talent attraction work</li> <li>● Investigate use of financial incentives to attract relocation</li> <li>● Invest in placemaking efforts in downtown Peoria</li> <li>● Host quarterly "newcomer mixers"</li> </ul>

**Goal #3: Foster diverse and inclusive communities where all residents and visitors enjoy active, secure, healthy and fulfilled lives.**

*Strategy: Foster and facilitate healthy lifestyle choices for improved health outcomes and individual prosperity.*

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CFCI's ongoing Ending Hunger Together grants totaling \$250K to date. Most recent to HEAL Partnership and Peoria Grown.</li> <li>● TCRPC hosted a forum on urban walkability for local community and economic development officials.</li> <li>● Partnership for Healthy Community conducted a needs assessment and developed and adopted its three year action plan. Regional health priorities include mental health, healthy eating active living, and obesity</li> <li>● The Healthy Eating Active Living Action Committee hosted various regional campaigns and events to increase healthy food access and physical activity such as "Walk Wednesday's" and organization food drives for pantries</li> <li>● The Central IL Breastfeeding Network has conducted a series of community events and presentations to promote breast/chestfeeding and maternal health and has established lactation rooms in organizations and businesses throughout the region.</li> <li>● Peoria City County Health Department developed a Social Determinants of Health Accelerator plan funded by the CDC to improve active transportation, housing and social connectedness for the Southside of Peoria.</li> <li>● Peoria County broke ground on a \$15M health &amp; community services campus.</li> <li>● Renovations commenced to create Trillium Place, a behavioral health facility for children and adolescents.</li> <li>● OSF Healthcare continued to construct its cancer therapy center and announced the construction of a 100-bed in-patient behavioral health facility.</li> <li>● The Elmwood Community Wellness Center earmark funding set the stage for their capital campaign for development of a Community Wellness facility in partnership with Graham Medical Group and Peoria YMCA.</li> </ul>	<p>Continued expansion of specialty healthcare in the region will improve quality of life and health outcomes. Strong work by a collaboration of local county health departments in creating a new strategic plan around mental health, obesity, and healthy eating/active living.</p>
	<p><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Completion of OSF cancer therapy center.</li> <li>● Completion of Carle's Trillium Place facility for child and adolescent behavioral health.</li> <li>● Develop and launch programming within Partnership for Healthy Community strategies.</li> <li>● Utilize municipal funding streams to develop and launch gun violence prevention programs.</li> <li>● Launch police co-responder programs in Peoria and Pekin.</li> <li>● Develop an initiative to measure the local food gap and continue to align local partners to establish a formalized Peoria-area hunger network.</li> </ul>

*Strategy: Increase investment in the region's town centers.*

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Completed TIF redevelopment projects that will support downtown investment in Chillicothe, Peoria, Pekin, Havana, Washington and other cities</li> <li>● Havana and Pekin created a business development district to provide revenue stream for downtown development</li> <li>● Germantown Hills began construction on MTCO Park, a recreation and sports complex.</li> <li>● Planning and improvements to bike trail system (Bob Michel, Morton, GTH to metamora, Rock Island, East Peoria, Chillicothe)</li> <li>● Completed renovation of Logan County Courthouse</li> <li>● Improvements to public parks in Chillicothe, Lincoln, Eureka, El Paso, Peoria, East Peoria, Washington</li> <li>● Tri-County Regional Planning Commission began developing an active transportation plan for the region.</li> <li>● Continued efforts to secure passenger rail to Chicago</li> <li>● Construction &amp; completion of downtown sidewalk &amp; streetscape improvements in a number of communities, including Tremont, Pekin &amp; Peoria</li> <li>● Eureka awarded congressional earmark for downtown streetscape</li> </ul>	<p>Continued emphasis by communities large and small on the importance of downtown/Main Street development. Significant federal, state and local investments in infrastructure.</p>
	<p><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Begin reconstruction of downtown Peoria one-way streets.</li> <li>● Aggressively pursue DCEO Revitalizing Downtown and Main Street grants when they become available</li> <li>● Share Havana's story of conversion of downtown vacant units to short-term rentals with other rural communities</li> <li>● Develop "pop-up retail" opportunities in vacant spaces to demonstrate potential viability</li> <li>● CFCI to develop strategic plan around arts and culture in Peoria</li> </ul>

*Strategy: Actively promote the region's assets to residents to improve perceptions of quality of life in the region.*

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discover Peoria has launched three new guides to highlight downtown Peoria attractions for visitors and residents discovering downtown Peoria, a "Play in Peoria" guide that outlines those "playing" in our backyard, and a Tazewell County guide showcasing gems across Tazewell County.</li> <li>● Executed the second year of the "Pop-Up Shop" at the Shoppes at Grand Prairie, of which sells and promotes the region through retail sales and promoting small business products at the Pop-Up Shop. Small business goods are sold at the store to expand opportunities for sales.</li> <li>● Peoria Chamber hosted the RISE Summit to showcase the region.</li> <li>● Mapping of creative and cultural assets in and around Peoria to help propel evidence-based opportunities to strengthen community vitality.</li> </ul>	<p>The Choose Greater Peoria initiative was launched in part to combat negativity of the local population and provide examples to advocates.</p>
	<p><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create visitor guides for Mason and Woodford counties.</li> <li>● Host Big Table in October 2024.</li> <li>● Continue work of Choose Greater Peoria to share information about region's assets to citizens</li> <li>● Create "good news" channel to capture regional successes and communicate to general public</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Choose Greater Peoria effort launched to help positively rebrand the region and highlight assets.</li> <li>● Shared incredible success of Peoria Civic Center's performance in local media.</li> <li>● GPEDC and Tri-County RPC created a public mural map</li> </ul>	
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*Strategy: Provide high-speed internet to every home, business and institution.*

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Getting Connected: Expanding Broadband Access in Coal Impacted Regions pilot initiative funded by Just Transition Fund. The funding supports planning &amp; feasibility studies to guide prioritization of local funding, support public/private partnerships, and inform pursuit of funding opportunities.</li> <li>● Continued partnership with PCs for People to conduct computer distribution events.</li> <li>● i3 Broadband continued its implementation of fiber-to-the-home services in Lincoln</li> <li>● Bradley partnered with T-Mobile to provide unlimited 5G data access on iPads to all degree-seeking students and full-time faculty that can be used on campus and at home, including during breaks and between semesters.</li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="1125 500 1900 560">Continued strong work in planning and preparing to take advantage of state and federal funding opportunities to expand broadband</p> <p data-bbox="1125 592 1386 620"><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Complete and deliver Peoria County feasibility study</li> <li>● Launch and complete studies in Tazewell and Mason counties</li> <li>● Utilize JTF funding to assist ISPs apply for funding</li> <li>● Continue and expand partnership with PCs for People</li> <li>● Assist Logan county with early broadband planning work</li> </ul>

*Strategy: Ensure residents have quality, income-appropriate housing choices.*

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tax credit funding awarded to develop 47 units of quality affordable housing in Peoria's Southside neighborhood. Construction start May 2024.</li> <li>● Tax credit funding awarded to develop 55 units of quality, affordable housing near OSF Medical Center. Target population is homeless families. The development will include a healthcare clinic. Construction start May 2024.</li> <li>● Mason County completed a Housing Stock Survey as part of a planning process.</li> <li>● Multi-family projects announced or completed in East Peoria, Peoria Warehouse District, Pekin, and Morton</li> <li>● Logan County has an collaborative effort in place to turn an abandoned Nursing Home into a homeless shelter with services onsite</li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="1125 1013 1900 1138">A number of projects, both market rate and subsidized, announced. Lack of sense of "shared responsibility" across the region for supporting affordable housing. Housing market is very tight and prices are rising.</p> <p data-bbox="1125 1170 1386 1198"><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Complete Taft redevelopment</li> <li>● Begin construction on subsidized housing projects by Peoria Opportunity Fund and Phoenix Community Development Services</li> <li>● Develop strategies to encourage construction of new single family homes to combat housing shortage</li> </ul>

**Goal #4: Sustain and expand the economic value of the region's natural resources.**

*Strategy: Develop a supportive and equitable business development environment for beginning farmers and other enterprises sustainably utilizing or enhancing the region's agricultural, water, or other natural resources.*

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Local Food for Schools aims to increase purchases of domestic, locally grown foods from local producers, and small businesses.</li> <li>● Local Food Purchasing Cooperative Agreement (LFPA) will allow the State of Illinois to purchase produce, proteins and fresh processed foods directly from underserved farmers at fair market value. Food will then be distributed to communities in need, including schools, nonprofits and the food bank system.</li> <li>● USDA NCAUR in Peoria conducted research on commercial uses for locally grown products like corn and soybean</li> <li>● District 27 in Lincoln has a farm to school program to bring local produce to local schools.</li> </ul>	<p>Continued operationalization of the Port District will help attract funding and commerce to the region. Regional Fresh Food Council continues to work in support of developing a strong network of connections in our local food network.</p>
	<p><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create programming opportunities connecting farmers to local food purchasing outlets such as food pantries, schools, and restaurants.</li> <li>● Continue activating Port District and seek out funding opportunities</li> <li>● Expand regional promotion of Copi</li> <li>● Advance work on finding beneficial uses of river sediment and seek commercial applications and related businesses</li> </ul>

*Strategy: Implement existing conservation and sustainability plans for the region's key natural resources to maintain their availability for responsible economic development uses.*

Activities	Evaluation of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Heart of Illinois Regional Port District investigating funding opportunities for river conservation</li> <li>● Continued conversations regarding impact of coal plant closures; Peoria, Tazewell and Mason counties and local governments awarded Energy Transition grants from state of Illinois</li> <li>● Increase in solar and wind farm developments</li> <li>● Local governments working to better understand the local impacts of carbon sequestration (land use, property rights, public health, finances)</li> </ul>	<p>Coordination around funding opportunities stemming from coal plant closures was good, but need better leadership on environmental issues. Need better understanding of new issues like carbon sequestration.</p>
	<p><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Implement programs made possible by funding from Energy Transition Communities grants in Peoria, Tazewell and Mason counties</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Laid the foundation to apply for a US EPA Brownfield Assessment grant that would help identify and study potential brownfields in Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford counties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Promote use C-PACE program and other energy efficiency/conservation tools</li> <li>● Quantify and promote investments in sustainable development</li> <li>● Apply for a US EPA Brownfield Assessment grant.</li> <li>● Create partnerships with the newly established hydrogen fuel development centers in Illinois.</li> <li>● Work to support development of EV and Hydrogen fueling stations throughout the region.</li> <li>● Pursue funding and consultative services to support energy conservation and efficiency development for businesses throughout the region.</li> </ul>
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*Strategy: Create and promote commercial opportunities and experiences connected to the region's natural assets that are valued and used both by residents and visitors.*

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Evaluation of Progress</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discover Peoria developed visitor guides that highlight natural recreation opportunities within the region.</li> <li>● Rural tourism development project to capitalize on rural Illinois tourism and grow local economies.</li> <li>● Local volunteer group created <a href="http://www.peoriaoutdooradventure.com">www.peoriaoutdooradventure.com</a> to catalog and showcase outdoor recreation opportunities.</li> <li>● Peoria area communities hosted festivals to celebrate local agriculture, including Morton (Pumpkin), Tremont (Turkey), Manito (Popcorn), Elmwood (Strawberry) and Spring Bay (Watermelon)</li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="1157 756 1885 850">Discover Peoria continued to do strong work in promoting outdoor activities. Nice emergence of local advocates using social media to promote same.</p> <p data-bbox="1157 883 1415 911"><b>Schedule for Next Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pursue funding for Havana IRBS</li> <li>● Continue pursuit of funding to create bike-walk paths within the region and connect paths to create a system</li> </ul>

### Diversity Equity and Inclusion

The Big Table CEDS 2021-2025 committed to applying an equity lens to all of its goals and strategies to ensure that economic success is equally available to all people in the region. Greater Peoria, particularly the more urban areas of Peoria County, has pockets of persistent poverty, often among its Black population. In late 2021, the City of Peoria and Peoria County created the Joint Commission on Racial Equity and Justice (RJE). Their mission is to accelerate efforts to institutionalize racial justice and equity through policy and program recommendations. The Commission is broken into eight subcommittees: Economic Development and Jobs, Justice, Child and Youth Development, Quality Housing, Transportation and Mobility, Information Technology, Health and Human Services, and Environment and Climate. As strategies and tactics emerge from the RJE and its subcommittees, the Big Table CEDS will be amended to reflect them.

Many of the members of the CEDS strategy team are active participants within the RJE and its subcommittees, and the wider network of agencies represented by CEDS partners are very involved. The individual mandates of the subcommittees overlap with broader CEDS goals. A major outcome of the most recent year of the RJE Commission's work was the production of their [2022 Annual Report](#) which outlined the sobering differences in outcomes between racial groups in Peoria County. A snapshot of some of the stark differences is in the table below:

Indicator	White	Black
Median Household Income by Race	\$63.1K	\$30.4K
Poverty Rate by Race	11.0%	40.3%
Unemployment Rate by Race	4.9%	15.6%
Overall Life Expectancy, Years	79	64
Homicide Death Rate, Age 15-24, per 100K People	6.8	161.9

The data in the report creates a baseline of understanding conditions that will be used to measure progress as the work of the Commission and Big Table CEDS unfolds.

In addition to this work, the City of Peoria launched its strategic planning process to help guide its local priorities over the next five years. While not yet adopted by its Council, the plan emphasizes the value of diversity and inclusion. The Minority Business Development Center built out more robust programming to help individuals start new businesses. Peoria County prioritized funding under-represented entrepreneurs in its Start A Business GP micro-grants.

**EXHIBIT 1: BIG TABLE CEDS 2021-2025 STRATEGY TEAM MEMBERS**

*Deletions and Additions*

Chair: Clint Heinold, CORE Construction

Amanda Beadles, City of Chillicothe

~~Dave Blankenship, Logan County Board~~

Bill Blessman, Mason County

Leigh Ann Brown, Morton Economic Development Council

**Doug Cruitt, Distillery Labs**

Rueben Cummings, Nerevu Group

JD Dalfonso, Peoria Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

Jimmy Dillon, West Central Illinois Building Trades

Jim Drew, Logan County Farm Bureau

Matt Fick, ~~City of Pekin~~ and Village of Delavan

Nicole Frederick, Heart of Illinois United Way

Jane Genzel, Peoria Opportunities Foundation

Patti Gratton, Community Workshop Training Center

Mike Hinrichsen, Private Citizen

Curt Jibben, Mason County Health Department

Jim Johnson, Private Citizen

**Autum Jones, Woodford County Board**

Michael Joseph, UnityPoint Health

Audrey Kamm, ~~CEO Council~~ Midwest Food Bank

~~Paul Leamon, Distillery Labs~~

Ray Lees, Tri County Regional Planning Commission

Yvonne Long, Hawk-Attollo, LLC

Leslie McKnight, Peoria County Health Department

Denise Moore, Minority Business Development Center

Paula Nachtrieb, Illinois Central College

~~Chuck Nagel, Woodford County Board~~

Rachael Parker, Sweet Cakes by Rachael

**Kimberly Richardson, City of Peoria**

Mark Roberts, Community Foundation of Central Illinois

**Andrea Runge, Lincoln Economic Advancement & Development**

Ann Sasso, Village of Germantown Hills

~~Fred Stewart, LISC Peoria~~

**Michael Stubbs, Bradley University/Peoria NEXT**

~~Cesar Suarez, City of Peoria~~

David Vaughn, CareerLink

~~Jonathan Williams, Commerce Bank~~

Mike Waight, Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center

\* Names in **bold** represent new members of the Strategy Team since adoption of the CEDS. Strikethrough represents former members