



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION



- **LGBTQ+ Community Support:** Central Illinois Friends acquired a building to establish Greater Peoria's first LGBTQ+ clinic and community center. A \$75K grant from the City of Peoria is funding critical renovations, paving the way for enhanced healthcare services and expanded community support for the LGBTQ+ population.
- **Minority Business Development:** The Minority Business Development Center hosted grant writing classes to empower individuals, businesses, and nonprofits to secure funding opportunities.
- **Women's Business Development Center:** The SBA launched a Women's Business Development Center in Peoria, providing resources and support for female entrepreneurs.
- **Transportation Pilot:** The Racial Justice & Equity (RJE) Commission designed a transportation assistance program to provide vouchers to individuals seeking higher paying jobs that was funded by the City of Peoria.
- **Public Feedback:** RJE Commission hosted public forums to solicit input and feedback.
- **South Side Redevelopment:** The demolition of Harrison and McKinley schools in Peoria marks a step forward in creating new development opportunities on the city's South Side.

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THE BIG TABLE : COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

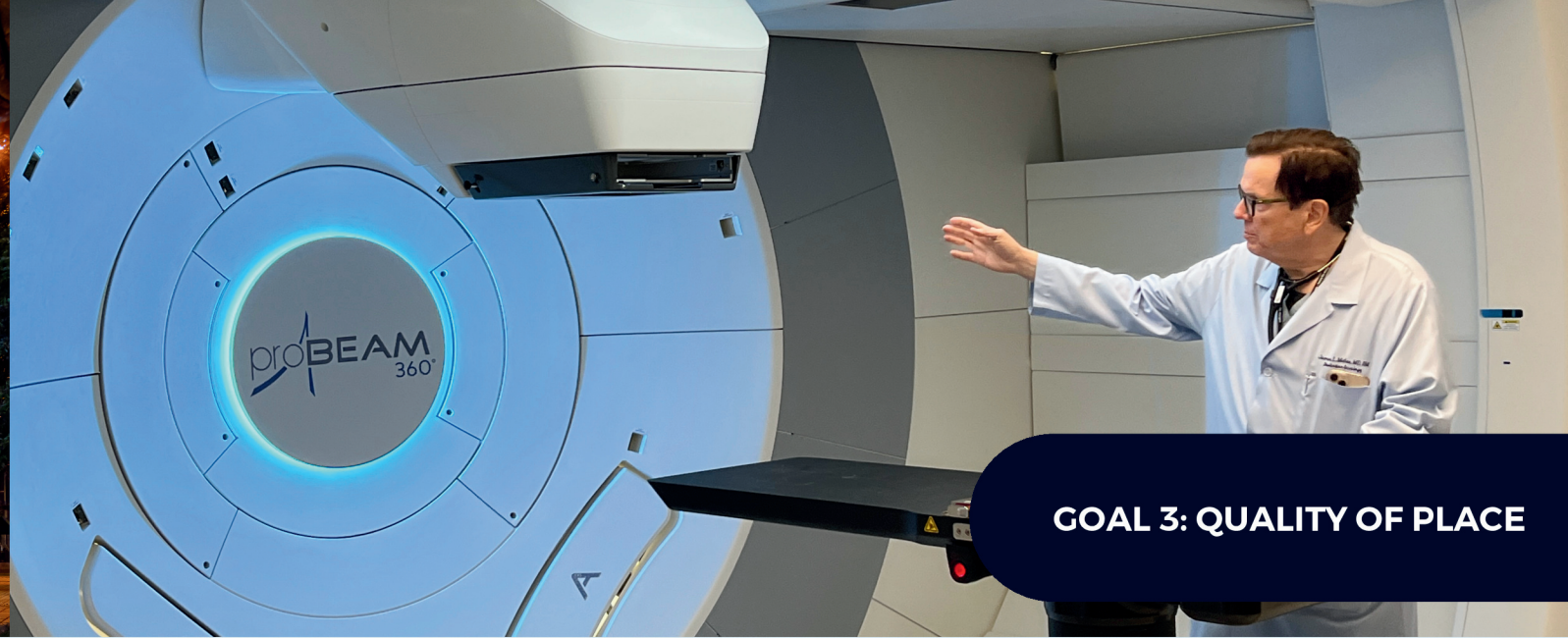
GREATER PEORIA REGIONAL PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

2024 Edition



This report highlights this year's progress in implementing *The Big Table: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)*. It showcases the collective efforts of community organizations, businesses, individuals, and governments at the local, state, and federal levels in advancing the CEDS goals, fostering collaboration, innovation, and regional growth.

GOAL 1: ECONOMY & JOBS



GOAL 3: QUALITY OF PLACE

GOAL 2: WORKFORCE

GOAL 4: NATURAL RESOURCES

- **Distillery Labs Milestone:** Opened as the first hub in the Illinois Innovation Network, serving as a catalyst for innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **Economic Development Forum:** Hosted a high-impact forum featuring renowned site selector Jay Garner, who shared insights on positioning the region for investment.
- **Global Partnerships:** Strengthened international relations by hosting delegations from Germany, Brazil, Mexico, Canada, and Australia.
- **Business Outreach:** Broadened and formalized the Business Retention and Expansion program to connect with more companies, address challenges, and analyze economic trends.
- **ERC Fellow:** LEAD and GPEDC awarded an Economic Recovery Corps Fellow to expand rural business outreach.
- **Small Business Support:** Twelve partners served as Community Navigators and assisted 35 small businesses in securing \$660K in COVID relief through B2B New Business grants.
- **Economic Empowerment:** The Minority Business Development Center was selected as an Economic Empowerment Center to better support minority entrepreneurs.
- **Targeted Industries:** Completed a Targeted Industry Analysis (funded by EDA) to shape business attraction strategies.

- **OSF Cancer Healthcare Expansion:** Opened a state-of-the-art cancer therapy center featuring cutting-edge proton beam therapy.
- **Carle Health Expansion:** Opened Trillium Place, a comprehensive in- and out-patient behavioral health care center serving children and adolescents.
- **Substance Abuse Improvements:** Logan County increased substance abuse services, including needle exchange and naran vending.
- **Play in Peoria Festival:** Weeklong celebration of Greater Peoria including Go Day 2024, a free celebration of the region's arts, sports, events, and dining offerings for the community.
- **Public Art Enhancements:** Increased public art installations across the region, featuring highlights like the Sculpture Walk and Big Picture projects.
- **Destination Commercial Series:** Discover Peoria completed a dynamic series promoting regional attractions, distributed across social and traditional media platforms.
- **Broadband Development:** Completed planning and feasibility studies for expanding broadband in Logan, Mason, and Tazewell Counties to improve connectivity.
- **Affordable Housing Investment:** City of Peoria awarded a \$1.25M HUD grant to the \$14M Churchview Garden Homes project on Peoria's south side.
- **Neighborhood Revitalization:** Peoria Housing Authority secured a planning grant for the Choice Neighborhood initiative, focusing on revitalizing Peoria's South Side.

- **CareerSpark Initiative:** Facilitated a hands-on career experience for over 4,000 8th-grade students and the You're Hired virtual platform for over 5,000 high schoolers.
- **Lincoln CareerSpark:** The CareerSpark initiative expanded to Logan County in 2024 with a local program that served over 200 middle school students.
- **Workforce Strategies:** Utilized state funding to conduct a comprehensive Labor Shed and Workforce Development Analysis to inform workforce strategies.
- **Choose Greater Peoria:** Marketing efforts attracted over 3,500 leads from individuals interested in relocating to Greater Peoria. Launched Talent Concierge program.
- **Energy Transition Hub:** Heaven's View Community Development Corporation received a \$480K CEJA grant to serve as an Energy Transition Navigator hub.
- **Housing & Employment Support:** The Peoria Housing Authority secured funding to provide job training, placement, and education referrals for residents.
- **Employ Central Illinois:** Led by ICC, this initiative created pre-apprenticeship programs in collaboration with Peoria Public Schools, Pekin, and Illini Bluffs to support career readiness.
- **Workforce Legislation Advocacy:** The Community Foundation of Central Illinois and partners successfully advocated for the Workforce Development Through Charitable Loan Repayment Act.
- **Community-Based Childcare:** PCCEO launched a daycare center within the main bus transit center to address childcare needs for working families.

- **Environmental Grant:** Tri-County Regional Planning Commission secured a U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment grant to support environmental revitalization efforts.
- **Illinois River Collaboration:** The Heart of Illinois Regional Port District is fostering stronger connections among stakeholders along the Illinois River to enhance regional logistics and trade.
- **AgTech Innovation:** AgTech Connect continues its Quarterly Convenings, driving collaboration and innovation in agricultural technology.
- **iFAB Biomanufacturing Leadership:** Built connections with iFAB in Champaign-Decatur, which was awarded a \$51M EDA Tech Hubs grant, which will help propel Central Illinois to the forefront of biomanufacturing excellence.
- **Carbon-Free Schools:** Ameren Illinois is providing schools with free Carbon-Free Assessments to promote sustainable practices and energy efficiency.
- **Placemaking Improvements:** The Audubon Society constructed a new trailhead in Chillicothe; Pekin and Germantown Hills developed new multi-use paths; multiple investments in downtown infrastructure across the region.