

# Cuyahoga County's 5- Year Economic Development Plan

2025-2029



# 2025-29 Plan

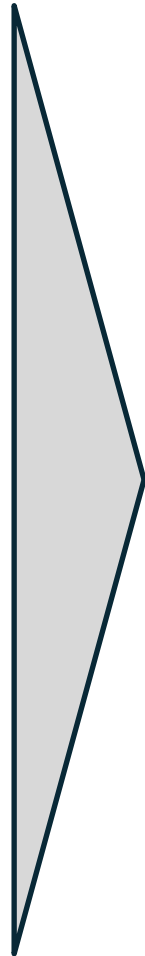


# PROBLEMS & OPPORTUNITIES SUGGEST AREA OF FOCUS

## PROBLEM & OPPORTUNITY

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While we may not yet be aligned on the definition of a high-performing economic development system, we are aligned on challenges that hold us back collectively: Few clear priorities (sectors; site location; kinds of incentives), little alignment on a unifying regional blueprint, limited collective understanding of mega-trends including Artificial Intelligence



## STRATEGIC PILLAR

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#1 Promote economic development ecosystem alignment and business growth

## STRATEGIES

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- Support a unified regional economic development approach
- Encourage shared incentives and metrics across organizations
- Foster innovation and adaptation to mega-trends, including AI
- Align county functions and priorities

## EXAMPLE "DO NOW" ACTIVITIES

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- Meet and coordinate with county economic development partners. Share insight, inform economic development priorities
- Listen and work with adjacent counties towards collaborative economic development, and avoid siloes
- Have a point of view on emerging tech, including AI
- Create an inter-departmental economic development task force

# PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM ALIGNMENT AND BUSINESS GROWTH

*What will it take (beyond funding) to execute?*

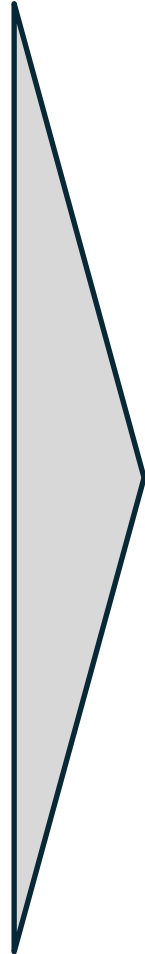
Pillar		Strategy	Activities	When to Start		
				NOW	Yr 2-3	Yr 4-5
Promote economic development ecosystem alignment and business growth	1	Support a unified regional economic development approach	Meet with county economic development partners	x		
			Be a hub of information for the business community, building on Office of Small Business	x		
			Share the intelligence gathered. Guide and inform investment. Consider incorporating these insights into tools such as county RFPs or a “county ordinance” framework		x	
	2	Encourage shared incentives and metrics across organizations	Understand partner goals and objectives and how Development can best be a resource to them.	x		
			Examine structural barrier to collaboration. Cultivate an understanding of opportunity and potential solutions		x	
			Discuss federal level changes, and identify any implications for local development	x		
	3	Foster innovation and adaptation to mega-trends, including AI	Become a producer of AI, not just a consumer	x		
			Partnering with the higher ed and business community, disseminate consensus views on the role of AI, along with its benefits and risks		x	
	4	Align county functions and priorities	Create an inter-departmental economic development task force	x		
			Use intelligence from the business community to shed light on ways sister functions can drive economic growth		x	
			Enable a review of the resource capacity of the regional collaboration team		x	

# PROBLEMS & OPPORTUNITIES SUGGEST AREA OF FOCUS

## PROBLEM & OPPORTUNITY

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Our 59 municipalities are not fully prepared to retain, expand and attract business. They are not equally resourced to rise to the challenge. Municipalities highly value their partnership with county government. There is opportunity for county government to help municipalities prepare the way for future, equitable economic growth



## STRATEGIC PILLAR

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#2 Be the resource to the 59 municipalities

## STRATEGIES

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- Create a coalition of economic development leaders
- Prepare municipalities with the tools and insight to build strong local economies
- Improve access to essential services in all areas of the county

## EXAMPLE "DO NOW" ACTIVITIES

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- Coordinate County DEI Office, County Regional Collaboration, CDCs, city-provided Neighborhood Ambassadors regularly to identify municipality goals, gaps and challenges
- Segment municipalities to more effectively provide the right services to the right stakeholders

# BE THE RESOURCE TO THE 59 MUNICIPALITIES

***What will it take (beyond funding) to execute?***

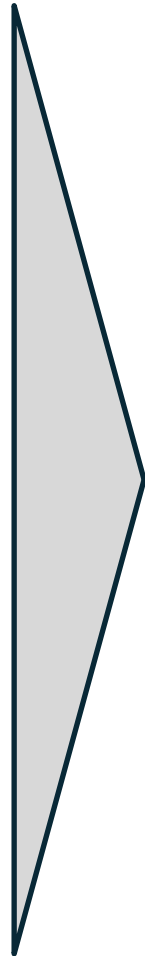
Pillar		Strategy	Activities	When to Start		
				NOW	Yr 2-3	Yr 4-5
Be the resource to the 59 municipalities	5	Create a coalition of economic development leaders	Coordinate County DEI Office with a Community Engagement Team and ground DOD in what the community wants and needs	x		
			Meet with city, township, county council district leaders regularly understand their goals, gaps and challenges	x		
			Discover opportunity in areas such as Land Use, Zoning, Masterplanning		x	
	6	Prepare municipalities with the tools and insight to build strong local economies	Segment municipalities to more effectively provide the right services to the right stakeholders	x		
			Advise on investments that will strengthen economic competitiveness		x	
			Coordinate with districts to determine county investment and support in these areas			x
	7	Improve access to essential services in all areas of the county	Offer assistance in accessing county resources for local economic development	x		
			Share information about special initiatives like the microgrid program	x		
			Support the Department of Housing and Community Development's planning for how the county will help expand access to market-rate and middle-income housing		x	
			Complete an asset & sector map to illustrate high impact sectors			x
			Use municipality feedback to refine the county's city-focused programs			x

# PROBLEMS & OPPORTUNITIES SUGGEST AREA OF FOCUS

## PROBLEM & OPPORTUNITY

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Cuyahoga County investment in economic incentives has paid dividends in our ability to attract and retain businesses that drive economic growth



## STRATEGIC PILLAR

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#3 Support regional business retention, expansion, attraction

## STRATEGIES

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- Improve long-term planning and investment
- Fund physical development including real estate
- Prioritize and support new development in key industry sectors
- Strengthen business support

## EXAMPLE "DO NOW" ACTIVITIES

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- Promote transparency and equity in County financing. Understand the specific needs of local businesses and champion right-sized, right-timed, and right-targeted financing options
- Coordinate with employer-facing partners to identify and understand needs of thriving businesses and residents
- Identify and prioritize OSB high-impact services for small business retention, expansion, and attraction



# SUPPORT REGIONAL BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION, ATTRACTION

*What will it take (beyond funding) to execute?*

Pillar		Strategy	Activities	When to Start		
				NOW	Yr 2-3	Yr 4-5
Support regional business retention, expansion, attraction	8	Improve long-term planning and investment	Leverage insights from County Planning, which reviews the intersection of land use and economic growth and recommends investment opportunity	x		
			Leverage external resources. Connect with the Funding Hub and other community-wide funding intermediaries to align on economic development funding priorities. Explore opportunities for new public-private partnerships to stimulate economic growth (coordinated fundraising)	x		
			Monitor effectiveness and return on investment of current county financing programs including Lending, and scale programs delivering high return on investment	x		
	9	Fund physical development including real estate	Provide support for site prep, demolition, and environmental remediation to facilitate new development. Conduct and share an inventory of available sites	x		
			Invest in physical development that will strengthen economic competitiveness, including market rate Housing, Downtown Apartments, Real Estate, Sites		x	
	10	Prioritize and support new development in key industry sectors	Complete an Employment Location Quotient exercise to quantify Cuyahoga County's Comparative Advantage by sector	x		
			Communicate insights. Emphasize that while all sectors matter, there are industries in which our community sees potential for out-size growth and impact, including Manufacturing, Healthcare, and emerging potential in Sustainability and Freshwater as a competitive advantage. Encourage attraction and support for developers who construct affordable housing		x	
	11	Strengthen business support	Identify and prioritize OSB high-impact services for small business retention, expansion, and attraction	x		
			Promote transparency and equity in County financing. Understand the specific needs of local businesses and champion right-sized, right-timed, and right-targeted financing options	x		
			Coordinate with employer-facing partners to identify and understand needs of thriving businesses and residents	x		

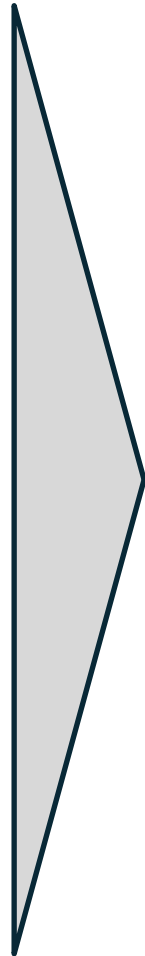


# PROBLEMS & OPPORTUNITIES SUGGEST AREA OF FOCUS

## PROBLEM & OPPORTUNITY

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We are under-delivering on workforce, visibility of careers, and many quality of life variables including the proximity of careers to workers, access to childcare, amenities, housing, and other quality of life variables



## STRATEGIC PILLAR

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#4 Help create a growing, strong workforce through coordination

### STRATEGIES

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- Identify and communicate workforce needs so that workforce system leaders can address them
- Enhance career visibility & pathways across municipalities
- Promote wealth building in underserved communities
- Combat systemic discrimination in housing, education, and employment

### EXAMPLE "DO NOW" ACTIVITIES

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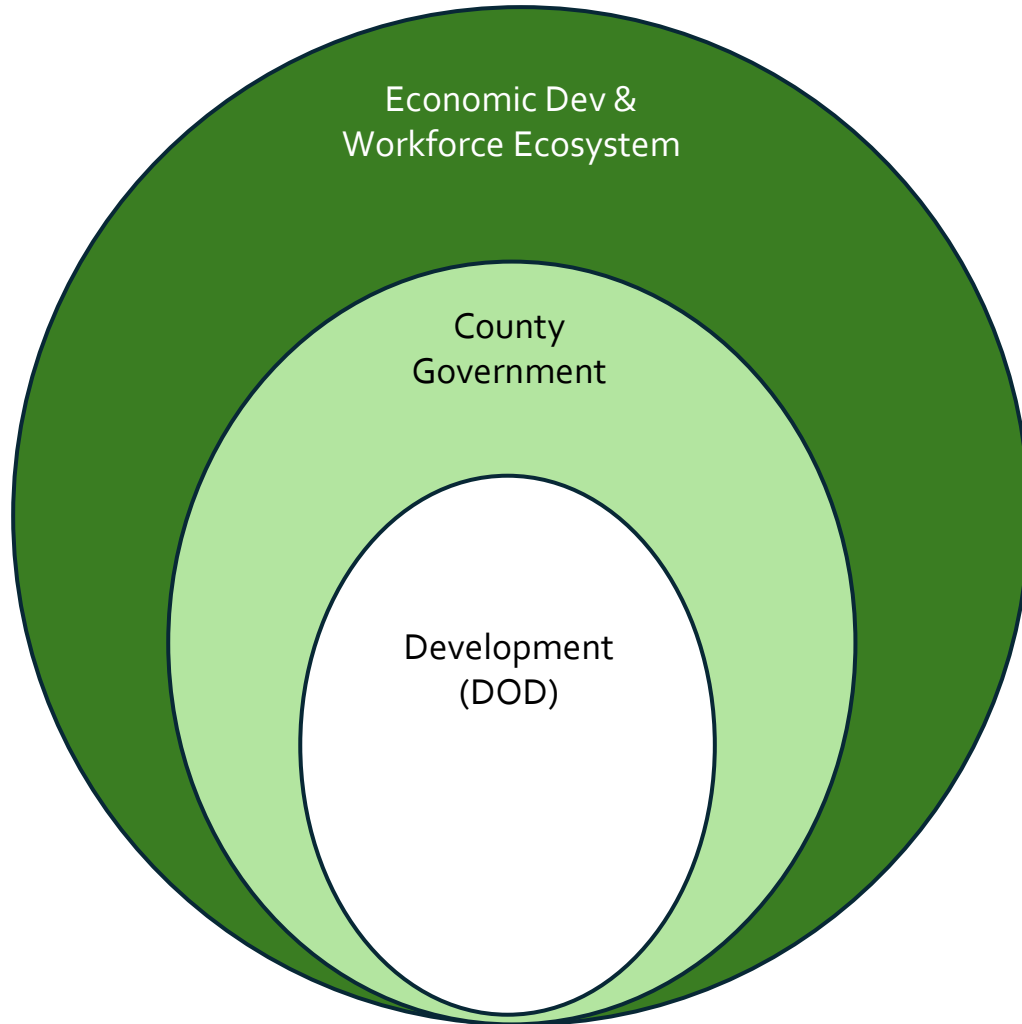
- Identify gaps and solutions regarding workforce funding sources, including minority-business funding needs
- Meet regularly with CCWDB, County Planning and others to prioritize investment in workforce
- Refer employers to help find job seekers, select geographies, build/access training programs
- Seek opportunity to build incentives for greater alignment between city and county development

# HELP CREATE A GROWING, STRONG WORKFORCE THROUGH COORDINATION

*What will it take (beyond funding) to execute?*

Pillar		Strategy	Activities	When to Start		
				NOW	Yr 2-3	Yr 4-5
Help create a growing, strong workforce through coordination	12	Identify and communicate workforce needs so that workforce system leaders can address them	Coordinate with partners who interact with employers & job seekers e.g., CCWDB, County planning, GCP, TRI-C, others (eg neighborhood analysis, refer employers)	x		
			Educate community on the ways employers can invest in people (e.g., contribute to the definition of quality jobs by leveraging the county's unique lens on what residents need, and investing in initiatives that further access to quality jobs)			x
			Invest in Sector partnerships, a proven approach to leveraging community impact for	x		
	13	Enhance career visibility & pathways across municipalities	Help our municipalities know about and access the workforce development programs and services available in their community. Consider dedicating a resource		x	
			Build awareness of needs and strategies to retain residents		x	
	14	Promote wealth building in underserved communities	Identify gaps and solutions regarding workforce funding sources, including minority-business funding needs	x		
			Seek opportunity to build incentives for greater alignment between city and county development		x	
	15	Combat systemic discrimination in housing, education, and employment	Support efforts that bring alternative solutions to finding workers and better access to jobs via improved transportation, childcare, and healthcare	x		
			Seek opportunity to promote rewards for companies that provide good livable wage jobs, promote inclusion in hiring and contracting, actively pursue programs that establish alternative workforce solutions, and that implement LEED/green construction			x

# WE ARE CRAFTING A SCORECARD



## Cuyahoga County Ecosystem Outcomes

- # Jobs Growth
- Household Income Growth
- Business (Gross Domestic Product) Growth
- Labor Force Participation Rate Growth
- Wealth Equity: Family-Sustaining Wages Growth (By Race)

## County *Government* Economic Plan Outputs

- Increase # of business and workforce growth and attraction opportunities on which multiple actors (programs) work together
- Nuanced support of municipality segments that results in business growth
- Increase in proportion of available land that is ready for development (acreage)
- Increase in amount of county funds and leveraged funds invested in business growth
- Increase in # good jobs created through county investment
- Increase in # businesses that are attracted and retained
- Utilization of workforce ecosystem resources
- Increase in # of residents placed in jobs through the public workforce ecosystem

## Department Of Development Outcomes

- Increase in OSB/Lending businesses retained, expanded, attracted; by race
- Increase in OSB/Lending jobs retained, expanded, attracted; by race
- Increase in # of TeamNeo identified sites promoted and used

# OUR REFRESH FRAMEWORK – LEADING to JUNE 1 EACH YEAR (starting 2026)



## Q1

- Take stock of what has changed in the environment
- Take stock of what is working well and not working well. Reflect on feedback from economic development partners, municipalities, business owners, and workforce leaders

## Q2

- Draft modifications to the plan. Consider things we want to add, strengthen, or remove
- Collaborate with Economic Development Commission members to recommend and advise modifications for submission to County Council