

Construction of an Economic Development Strategic Plan

for Fayette County, Georgia



Image: Explore Georgia

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RFP 2025-0301

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01. COVER LETTER

Ms. Niki Vanderslice
Director of Economic Development
Fayette County Development Authority
nvanderslice@fayettega.org

Dear Ms. Vanderslice:

We are excited to submit our proposal to support the Fayette County Development Authority in creating a forward-thinking, implementation-ready Economic Development Strategic Plan. At CivicSol, we believe that economic development doesn't happen to a community—it happens with one. That's why our approach is rooted in collaboration, data, and policy execution. We design strategies that not only inspire but also translate into measurable outcomes, capacity-building, and long-term success.

Fayette County: A Pivotal Suburban Leader in a Growing Region

Fayette County stands at a powerful moment—one where its next chapter will be shaped not by growth alone, but by how it defines its competitive identity within the Atlanta metro. Already, the county is home to extraordinary momentum: the arrival of the QTS Data Center, the new U.S. Soccer Federation headquarters and national training center, and the growth of employers in medical manufacturing and advanced building materials all suggest a region on the rise. You've demonstrated that Fayette can compete—and win.

Now, the task is to ensure these wins are not episodic, but part of a broader, cohesive strategy that fosters long-term economic resilience. That means coordinating efforts across all five municipalities, aligning infrastructure and workforce priorities, ensuring quality of place, and unlocking the potential of an increasingly diverse, highly educated population. With its limited undeveloped land and a shifting regional economy, Fayette must now transition from a reactive growth model to a proactive one—positioning itself for investment, opportunity, and shared prosperity. We believe Fayette County can define what it means to be a leading 21st-century suburb in the Atlanta region—where innovation, advanced industry, and inclusive growth are not just goals, but realities.

CivicSol: A Team of Strategists, Builders, and Implementers

CivicSol is not just a strategy firm—we are practitioners and problem-solvers. Our team includes former city managers, economic development directors, workforce leaders, and policy professionals who have led both strategy and implementation inside local government. We understand how to connect vision with governance, planning with operations, and data with decisions.

While we have not yet had the opportunity to work directly with the Fayette County Development Authority, we're deeply familiar with the dynamics of communities like yours—and we're all in. Our work in communities across the country will give you the benefit of lessons learned and best practices in action. What draws us to this project is the opportunity to partner on implementation. Our team has

served inside local governments, and we know what it takes to translate bold ideas into policies, partnerships, and results on the ground.

What sets us apart is our ability to deliver bold, actionable economic development strategies for fast-growing, suburban communities like Fayette—where the challenge is not whether growth is happening, but how to shape it in a way that benefits all residents, businesses, and institutions. We bring a proven track record working in over 100 communities across the country and an approach that integrates policy, public-private partnerships, workforce development, and land use planning into a unified framework for prosperity.

We have deep experience helping high-growth, high-potential communities define and deliver on their economic future. From launching a regional economic alliance across four jurisdictions in Arizona's Quad Cities, to advancing a workforce and business incubation strategy in Buda, TX, to designing a targeted industry roadmap in Mesquite, we've supported dozens of suburban and regional communities facing similar opportunities and constraints. Our portfolio spans small-town entrepreneurship, multi-jurisdictional coordination, downtown revitalization, regional workforce planning, and institutional design—from South Carolina to Texas to Kansas. We bring that experience forward with fresh eyes, tailoring every engagement to local context—while delivering national perspective and implementation muscle.

Our Team: Experienced, Strategic, and Built for Execution

At CivicSol, we don't just bring ideas—we bring senior-level expertise, real-world experience, and a track record of success implementing economic development strategies across the southern U.S. and beyond. Our principals, Steven Pedigo and Laura Huffman, lead every engagement, ensuring that strategy is not just visionary but built for execution. We know what works in fast-growing, regional communities like Fayette, and we bring the right mix of economic strategy, policy expertise, land use planning, and data-driven insights to deliver a plan that works. Through our partnership with Lightcast, we also bring best-in-class economic and workforce analytics to guide industry targeting, workforce strategy, and implementation design.



Steven Pedigo is a nationally recognized economic strategist with experience leading economic development planning efforts in more than 100 communities across the country. He specializes in helping places sharpen their competitive positioning, align stakeholders, and deliver actionable results. As CivicSol's co-founder, Steven brings national perspective with local fluency—and will serve as the lead strategist for Fayette's engagement.



Laura Huffman, co-founder of CivicSol and former Assistant City Manager in both Austin and San Marcos, brings decades of public-sector leadership in economic development, land use, and policy implementation. She will serve as CivicSol's co-lead on the project,

ensuring that the strategy is governable, fundable, and designed for real-world conditions inside City Hall and County operations.



Dustin, Vice President of Professional Services at Lightcast, will lead the labor market and industry cluster analysis. With over a decade of experience in economic development and workforce strategy, Dustin brings a practitioner's perspective and a data-driven approach to ensure Fayette's strategy is aligned with real-world conditions.



Clara Belk, CivicSol's economic research and storytelling lead, will help shape the strategic narrative—turning complex economic data and community input into compelling, actionable insight. Clara ensures the final plan resonates with residents, employers, and public officials alike.



Jade Rohloff, Research Analyst at Lightcast, will support the labor market and economic analysis with a strong foundation in data and applied research. With a background in economics and mathematics, he brings valuable insights to help communities—from rural to statewide—craft strategies that promote prosperity and growth.

Together, this team combines the strategic vision, implementation experience, and technical expertise needed to help Fayette County move from economic opportunity to long-term success.

A Blueprint for Implementation and Impact

Our deliverables won't just be recommendations—they'll be tools for execution. From an implementation matrix and Year 1 work plan to a performance dashboard and governance playbook, we provide the frameworks needed to track progress, adapt, and lead. We know this matters because we've been inside city and county governments ourselves. We understand what it takes to build a coalition, pass a budget, and drive results over time.

We are ready to help Fayette County elevate its position in the metro Atlanta region and build a more inclusive, resilient economy. Please don't hesitate to contact us at steven@civicsol.com or laura@civicsol.com if you have any questions. We would be honored to earn your trust and partner with you on this important initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven W. Pedigo".

Steven Pedigo
Co-Founder, CivicSol

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura J. Huffman".

Laura Huffman
President & Co-Founder, CivicSol

02. PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

Fayette County is entering a new era in its economic development journey—one shaped not by untapped land or conventional growth models, but by the ability to coordinate across jurisdictions, grow within, and compete in an increasingly innovation-driven metro economy. With five municipalities and a countywide development authority, Fayette's future will depend on its ability to act as a unified, strategic region while maintaining the distinct identities of its cities and towns.

This moment requires more than just a strategy—it calls for a clear, data-informed roadmap that helps the County maximize its limited land, validate and expand its target sectors, strengthen existing businesses, and prepare a resilient and inclusive workforce. The strategy must be practical and forward-looking, connecting talent development and industry growth to placemaking, infrastructure, and community well-being.

Fayette's increasingly diverse and highly educated population adds both urgency and opportunity. Economic development cannot be decoupled from broader community development. It must support entrepreneurship, ensure equitable access to opportunity, and amplify the County's identity as a place where people want to live, work, and invest.

Challenges and Opportunities



Limited developable land means Fayette must prioritize site readiness, reinvestment, and strategic land use tied directly to economic goals.



Emerging clusters—data infrastructure, sports, creative industries, and advanced manufacturing—need validation and growth through targeted business attraction.



A more structured, countywide approach to business retention and expansion (BRE) is essential to maintain momentum and support existing employers.



Fayette's workforce development ecosystem must better serve early- and mid-career workers—and underserved populations—through targeted pipelines and partnerships.



Entrepreneurial support systems—especially for small businesses, creatives, and women- and minority-owned firms—represent an opportunity for economic dynamism.



Community development efforts, including housing, infrastructure, and placemaking, are core to talent retention and must be embedded in the economic strategy.



Fayette's five municipalities need to align around a shared vision and countywide identity, even as they pursue place-specific strategies.



A successful strategy requires robust, countywide stakeholder engagement—not just for input, but to foster ownership, alignment, and accountability.

Fayette's Strategic Advantage

Fayette's assets are formidable. The County is home to a highly educated and affluent population, with a median household income of nearly \$95,000 and strong public schools. Its growing racial and ethnic diversity signals long-term demographic strength and opportunity. Its proximity to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, major highways, and metro Atlanta's employment base offers significant logistical advantages.

Recent wins like the U.S. Soccer Federation headquarters, QTS Data Centers, and expansions from Gerresheimer and CertainTeed demonstrate Fayette's competitiveness in site selection and corporate investment. These wins offer a foundation for building sector-specific talent, supplier networks, and marketing strategies.

Fayette has the rare opportunity to craft a next-generation suburban economy—one that balances livability with innovation, and local character with regional competitiveness. With intentional planning and coordinated implementation, the County can define its role in the metro Atlanta region and the broader Georgia economy.

Our Commitment to Fayette County

We approach community engagement as more than a project requirement—it's a commitment to equity, transparency, and shared ownership, so that economic development doesn't happen to you, it happens with you. We believe the people closest to the challenges often hold the most relevant insights and creative solutions. That's why we design our approach to meet people where they are—across geography, language, lived experience, and role in the workforce ecosystem. This means using trusted community partners to help lead outreach, creating multiple entry points for participation, and offering sessions in multiple languages.

CivicSol brings experience not just in developing strategy, but in implementing it. We understand how to help communities navigate transition moments like the one Fayette is experiencing—where growth alone is no longer enough, and the challenge is to deliver quality, inclusion, and long-term resilience. In working with Fayette County, our approach will be:



Collaborative and Staff-Driven—We will work hand-in-hand with FCDA and municipal staff to ensure the strategy is operational, feasible, and aligned with internal priorities.



Broadly Engaged and Community-Led—We will design a process that includes residents, employers, educators, small businesses, developers, and civic leaders.



Data-Driven and Targeted—We will validate target sectors and identify opportunities using advanced labor market analysis, cluster benchmarking, and commercial data.



Focused on Business Attraction and Retention—We will create actionable strategies for growing existing employers and recruiting new firms aligned with Fayette's vision.



Supportive of Entrepreneurship—We'll identify ways to strengthen Fayette's small business ecosystem through resource hubs, storytelling, and targeted investments.



Aligned with Workforce Priorities—We will assess workforce gaps and build talent strategies in coordination with local institutions, regional partners, and key employers.



Integrated with Community Development—We will link economic planning with infrastructure, placemaking, housing, and livability investments that support both workers and employers.



Built for Implementation—We will provide a clear governance framework, a Year 1 work plan, and performance metrics to guide progress and accountability.

We are excited to support Fayette County in crafting an economic strategy that is bold, equitable, and built to last—one that reflects not only where Fayette is, but where it's ready to go.

Our Approach: Implementation is the Plan

At CivicSol, we believe that implementation begins on day one—not after the plan is written. That's why every strategy we develop is grounded in deep community engagement and built for real-world execution. Our process generates early buy-in by giving stakeholders a meaningful seat at the table, ensuring that the final strategy isn't just visionary—it's owned.

Our philosophy is simple: a great strategy only matters if you can implement it. And the fastest way to get there is to build momentum while you build the plan. Our work is anchored in:



Systems Thinking—We design strategies that align with funding, staffing, and delivery capacity—not just vision.



Public-Sector Fluency—We understand how to design strategies that work within the real-world structures of local government.



Inclusive Growth and Opportunity—We center equity by designing processes that reflect the full diversity of the community and by producing strategies that support small businesses, talent development, and quality of place for all who live and work in Fayette County.



Engagement that Accelerates Implementation—Our approach invites participation from across the county—residents, employers, educators, elected officials, and more. This broad and intentional engagement doesn't just shape the strategy; it creates a shared sense of purpose that makes action easier and faster.

Fayette County is ready to scale what it has started. The wins are already coming in—but what's needed now is a strategy with structure, clarity, and staying power. That's what CivicSol delivers.

03. METHODOLOGY

To turn vision into reality for Fayette County, we propose a four-phase scope of work that is as ambitious as it is practical. This approach is grounded in our understanding of what it takes to catalyze meaningful and lasting economic development—beginning with research and community insight, and culminating in actionable strategies, implementation planning, and activation.

Each phase builds logically on the last, advancing from discovery to analysis, then to strategic direction and execution. Our plan directly addresses the core areas outlined in the RFP: validation and identification of target sectors, business attraction and retention strategies, entrepreneurial support, workforce development, and community development recommendations. But we also go further—embedding equity and innovation into every phase, co-designing solutions with local stakeholders, and producing a roadmap for long-term impact.

Our methodology is iterative and participatory. Throughout all four phases, we will engage Fayette County Development Authority staff, local businesses, entrepreneurs, workforce partners, educators, and residents. This ensures the final strategic plan is not only evidence-based, but truly community-owned.

CivicSol will lead the full lifecycle of this engagement, from kickoff through delivery, providing continuity, clarity, and shared accountability every step of the way. Together, we will help Fayette County harness its recent successes, embrace future opportunities, and position itself for sustainable economic growth.

Methodology

This project will run from **June 2025 through December 2025**, moving from discovery to implementation. Each phase includes defined deliverables, bi-weekly check-ins, and milestone moments for feedback and alignment. The timeline for each phase is clearly labeled in the pages that follow, and a visual summary is provided below:



Phase 01. LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

JUNE 2025

Why This Matters

A successful strategy begins with more than just data—it begins with trust, alignment, and a shared sense of purpose. Fayette County’s economic development plan must reflect the county’s distinct vision, priorities, and operational landscape. That starts by establishing a common understanding of success and designing a process that’s aligned with the leadership, stakeholders, and current initiatives from day one. This initial phase sets the groundwork for everything that follows: fostering relationships, integrating with ongoing efforts, and establishing clear expectations around collaboration, transparency, and measurable outcomes.

What We Will Deliver

1.1 Project Kickoff Meeting	Convene an in-person kickoff session and guided County tour and with County leadership, FCDA staff, and key partners to confirm the project scope, align on desired outcomes, clarify roles, and establish a shared cadence for communication and accountability..
1.2 Creation of a Project Steering Committee	Establish a Steering Committee composed of County leaders—members of the Board of Commissioners, representatives from the Fayette County Development Authority, municipal officials, and select community stakeholders—to guide the project and ensure strategic alignment.
1.3 Contextual Analysis	Conduct a review of relevant county plans and policies—including the most recent Comprehensive Plan, zoning and development ordinances, budgeting frameworks, and economic development strategies—to understand existing priorities, decision-making structures, and service delivery models.
1.4 Work Plan and Engagement Calendar	Develop a detailed, living work plan and engagement calendar that outlines project phases, key milestones, and stakeholder outreach activities. This tool will also identify benchmark communities for comparison and provide transparency for leadership, partners, and the public.

What Fayette County Gains



A dedicated Steering Committee to guide strategy and ensure alignment with leadership priorities;



A Work Plan and Engagement Calendar to track progress and keep stakeholders informed;



Strategic alignment between CivicSol, FCDA, and the County’s existing plans and initiatives.

Phase 02. MAPPING FAYETTE COUNTY’S ECONOMY

JUNE – AUGUST 2025

Why This Matters

Fayette County’s economic future starts with understanding its present. This phase provides a comprehensive, fact-based analysis of the County’s economic landscape, industry clusters, and business support systems. Through a combination of peer benchmarking, sector analysis, and organizational assessments, we’ll highlight Fayette County’s competitive advantages, identify strategic gaps, and surface actionable opportunities. The result: a data-informed foundation for making bold, future-focused decisions that reflect both the County’s strengths and its aspirations.

What We Will Deliver

2.1 Peer Benchmarking Assessment	Evaluate the County’s demographic, economic, and quality-of-life indicators, benchmarking performance against 8–10 peers across the region. This will illuminate areas where the County leads, where it lags, and how it stacks up in terms of growth, affordability, business climate, and resilience.
2.2 Cluster and Sector Analysis	Conduct a deep-dive into the County’s current and emerging industry clusters, validating existing target sectors and identifying new ones based on employment trends, investment potential, and workforce alignment, ensuring strategies are tailored to Fayette County’s real-time market position.
2.3 BRE and Incentive Structure Assessment	Analyze Fayette County’s current business retention and expansion (BRE) efforts and incentive tools, including how they are structured, evaluated, and aligned with community goals. We’ll compare these programs to those of peer counties to uncover areas for modernization or refinement.
2.4 Peer EDO Best Practices Analysis	Assess the Fayette County Development Authority’s organizational structure, funding mechanisms, staffing, programming, and strategic orientation—comparing it to 5–6 peer EDOs to identify strengths, gaps, and best practices in economic development governance and execution.

What Fayette County Gains



A comprehensive “State of Fayette County” report offering a clear snapshot of the county’s current economic position;



Strategic insights from peer benchmarking and best practices from comparable EDOs;



A clear SWOT analysis—to achieve long-term growth identifying where systems align—and where realignment is needed;



Targeted recommendations and tools to improve retention, attraction, and support.

Phase 03. LISTENING TO FAYETTE COUNTY

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2025

Why This Matters

This phase transforms Fayette County’s current economic landscape into a forward-looking vision rooted in local identity. We’ll facilitate targeted engagement across all five municipalities to gather local expertise, chart the County’s unique assets, and define the next chapter of strategic growth. Through structured roundtables, targeted surveys, and personalized one-on-one interviews, we’ll open channels for crucial dialogue between the public and private sectors, key employers, business leaders, educators, and regional partners to identify industry needs, opportunity barriers, and practical solutions reflecting both Fayette County’s current realities and aspirational goals.

What We Will Deliver

3.1 Sector and Partner Roundtables	Host 10–12 focused roundtables with key stakeholder groups, including business leaders, educators (K–12 and postsecondary), workforce development partners, nonprofit leaders, regional partners, and County department staff. Each session will include 12–15 participants and be designed to react to findings from the economic and workforce assessments, explore workforce alignment and system gaps, identify barriers to employment such as housing, transportation, childcare, and digital access, and shape redevelopment priorities and innovation opportunities.
3.2 Community Resident and Business Survey	Launch a public-facing survey and open feedback form to gather broader community input on economic development goals, employment needs, and perceptions of opportunity. The survey will be distributed via County channels and customized to reach businesses, residents, and underserved groups.
3.3 One-on-One Stakeholder Interviews	Conduct 10+ confidential one-on-one interviews with major employers, civic leaders, educators, real estate professionals, and other influential voices to gather insights into the economic landscape, challenges, and possibilities.

What Fayette County Gains



Rich qualitative input from key employers, educators, and stakeholders to guide strategic decisions;



Community-driven insights that elevate economic development priorities beyond data alone;



Actionable guidance on overcoming employment barriers and enhancing workforce mobility;



Strategic direction for marketing and positioning Fayette County as a destination for business, talent, and innovation.

Phase 04. FROM FRAMEWORK TO ACTION

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2025

Why This Matters

We're not just creating a document—we're crafting a living roadmap that will guide economic development decisions for the next five years. The strategic framework connects the county's recent successes with a sustainable future that benefits all municipalities, businesses, and residents. By aligning target sectors, business strategies, and community priorities, we're designing an environment where businesses thrive, talent flourishes, and innovation takes root. This phase matters because it transforms aspirations into action—setting clear priorities and committing to concrete steps that will strengthen Fayette County's economic resilience for years to come.

What We Will Deliver

4.1 Strategic Framework Development	Integrate findings from benchmarking, cluster analysis, stakeholder engagement, and BRE and EDO best practices into a comprehensive Strategic Framework for Fayette County, with a unified economic vision that acknowledges the unique characteristics of all five municipalities, measurable goals, and priority strategies tailored to strengths and opportunities.
4.2 Strategy Workshop	Facilitate interactive workshops with the FCDA Board, county leadership, and key stakeholders to review and refine the strategic framework. These sessions will ensure the final plan balances economic development objectives with the community's values and vision for Fayette County's future.
4.3 Implementation Roadmap, Year 1 Work Plan, and Responsibility Matrix	Develop a detailed implementation matrix that assigns each action to specific responsible parties, supporting partners, and realistic timelines. Provide a comprehensive Year 1 Work Plan with clear priorities and immediate action steps for the FCDA team to implement from day one. Create a Performance Monitoring System with key metrics and KPIs aligned to the plan's goals to track progress and provide regular updates to leadership and stakeholders.
4.4 Final 5-Year Strategic Plan and Presentation	Finalize the Economic Development Strategic Plan, incorporating all research findings, stakeholder input, and feedback from the FCDA Board, including target sector strategies, business attraction recommendations, retention initiatives, entrepreneurial support, workforce development, and community development priorities. Present the Final Plan to the FCDA Board of Directors, County Commissioners, and community stakeholders.

What Fayette County Gains



A Draft Strategic Framework with a cohesive vision for the next five years of growth;



A comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan supported by stakeholders;



Detailed Implementation and Year-1 Work Plans with clear priorities and roles;



A Performance Monitoring System providing ongoing transparency and accountability.

04. MEET THE CIVICSOL TEAM

CivicSol: From Strategy to Execution for Communities Like Fayette County

Fayette County has a track record of economic success—and a clear appetite for what comes next. But momentum alone isn't a strategy. The County needs a plan that connects emerging sectors, talent development, infrastructure, and small business growth into one cohesive, countywide vision. That's where CivicSol comes in: not just as strategists, but as implementation partners ready to help Fayette organize for long-term success.

We bring a rare blend of national experience and public-sector pragmatism. Our team includes former city managers, assistant city managers, economic development executives, and public-private partnership strategists. We've worked in over 100 communities across the U.S.—not just writing bold strategies but standing up the systems, structures, and partnerships that make them real. We understand what it takes to move a plan from concept to execution, from launch to institutionalization.

We don't just advise cities. We help them build what's next.

Who We Are: Strategy That Gets Done

CivicSol is a nationally engaged economic development and public strategy firm, headquartered in Texas, with deep experience in fast-growing suburban and regional communities. We help public agencies, cities, and coalitions translate big ideas into operating plans—workforce initiatives, innovation districts, governance frameworks, investment strategies, and everything in between.

We work at the intersection of research, policy, and operations. That means we ask big questions—about industry shifts, regional competitiveness, and equity—but always with an eye toward practicality. How will this strategy get funded? Who will run it? What systems are needed to sustain it?

We bring a strong bias toward action and accountability. That's what distinguishes CivicSol—and what makes us the right partner for Fayette County.

Relevant Experience: Building Plans in Places Like Yours



Quad Cities, Arizona – CivicSol created the region's first-ever regional economic development strategy, aligning four jurisdictions with a unified roadmap. Our work didn't stop with strategy—we helped stand up a new multi-jurisdictional economic development organization. We developed the governance structure, funding strategy, phased implementation plan, and director hiring framework. This is exactly the kind of cross-jurisdictional capacity-building Fayette County is ready for.



Buda, Texas – We supported a fast-growing Central Texas city in designing a five-year strategic plan focused on infill development, workforce alignment, and small business growth. Our work included a detailed implementation plan and a retail strategy grounded in data and community values. We also helped launch one of suburban Texas's first

business incubators inside a repurposed school facility, turning policy into place-based action.

- ✓ **Mesquite, Texas** – CivicSol designed a comprehensive economic development strategy for Mesquite that engaged over 200 stakeholders and prioritized inclusive growth. The plan included a complete cluster analysis, business attraction playbook, and implementation roadmap. The strategy has helped position Mesquite as one of the top ten investment-ready cities in North Texas.
- ✓ **Austin Infrastructure Academy** – We built the business case and delivery model for a first-of-its-kind public-private workforce platform linked to \$25B in regional mobility investments. The Academy includes integrated recruitment, wraparound services, and a regional talent pipeline strategy. It's now a national model for sector-based workforce development aligned with infrastructure investments.
- ✓ **Prescott, Arizona** – CivicSol supported a new vision for economic development in Prescott, developing a regional strategy that included the creation of an aviation and aerospace district anchored by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Our work helped align the city's land use, branding, and business recruitment with its innovation economy potential.
- ✓ **Greenville, South Carolina** – We authored Greenville's economic development strategy and are now leading the business planning and institutional design for the new Greenville City Economic Development Corporation (GCEDC). Our team is helping translate the city's vision into an operational entity—including the governance model, staffing structure, and performance accountability systems.
- ✓ **Arlington, Virginia** – CivicSol helped guide Arlington's economic development strategy by aligning industry clusters, walkable urbanism, and mixed-use development with regional and global positioning. Our research supported policy recommendations and investment priorities that reinforced Arlington's role as both a local and international innovation hub.
- ✓ **Olathe, Kansas** – In a community balancing suburban identity with logistics and manufacturing opportunity, CivicSol led a strategic planning process that engaged 150+ stakeholders and delivered a cluster roadmap, workforce plan, and BRE strategy designed for execution within the city's chamber-led model.

Our two founding principals, Laura Huffman and Steven Pedigo, bring both deep expertise in city management and a proven track record in strategic planning for local governments. Steven Pedigo, partner at CivicSol, will serve as the dedicated senior principal project manager for this engagement.

Steven Pedigo

Co-Founder, CivicSol

"I'm passionate about helping communities with strong identities—like those in Fayette County—leverage innovation and economic development to create lasting opportunities."



[Steven Pedigo](#) is a trusted advisor and strategist for city leaders, brands, and placemakers worldwide, helping them build better cities and communities. With over two decades of experience, he brings deep expertise in the challenges of fast-growing suburban communities and rural innovation ecosystems, with plans in Terrell, TX; Olathe, KS; Brookings, SD; Gilbert, AZ; Vancouver, WA, and more.

Education

BA, The University of Texas at Austin
MS, Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon University
MA, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Noteworthy

Professor of Practice at the LBJ School of Public Affairs

Certifications

Human Research

What Steven Brings to Fayette County

Steven is a nationally recognized expert in workforce strategy, innovation ecosystems, and place-based development. His work helps regions like Fayette County position themselves to excel in people-centered economies while driving innovation—leveraging proximity to major metroplexes, regional entrepreneurship programs, and workforce development opportunities.

Relevant Experience

- Steven led the development of more than 100 economic development plans and strategies, spanning transformative projects from New York City, Miami, and Jerusalem to the Yukon, San Diego, Tulsa, and Austin, Texas.
- He is an expert in anchor institutions and university engagement, crafting strategies for The University of Texas at Arlington, Drexel University, Thomas Jefferson University, Rutgers Newark, UT-Permian Basin, and others.
- Steven helped design the Austin Infrastructure Academy, a workforce development initiative supporting \$25 billion in regional investment.
- He is the primary author of the Texas Metropolitan Blueprint, a five-year policy framework for the state of Texas.
- He has founded two Urban Policy Labs—one at The University of Texas at Austin's Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, and a second at New York University.

Laura Huffman, MPAff

President and Co-Founder, CivicSol

"The real magic happens when sound policy meets practical implementation—and that only works when you hear directly from the community."



With over 25 years in city leadership and strategic planning, [Laura Huffman](#) has led workforce planning initiatives in both local government and the private sector, including as Assistant City Manager for Austin and Deputy City Manager for San Marcos—two of the nation's fastest-growing cities. Laura specializes in aligning workforce strategies with economic growth, helping governments navigate financial constraints while ensuring sustainable talent development and service delivery.

Education

BA, Texas A&M University

MA, LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin

What Laura Brings to Fayette County

Laura specializes in helping local governments turn strategy into action. With her background in city management, strategic planning, placemaking, and multi-jurisdictional collaboration, she ensures Fayette County's plan will be both visionary and practical. Laura will connect the county's economic vision to practical policy tools and implementation strategies, creating a sustainable economic growth framework that remains effective long after plan adoption.

Certifications

Artificial Intelligence, Cornell University

Honors

Shoal Creek Conservancy Bob Strong Award for Lifetime

Achievement in Conservation

City of Austin Office of Sustainability
Net Zero Hero

Relevant Experience

- As Assistant City Manager for the City of Austin, Laura oversaw the redevelopment of downtown Austin with local retail, small business development, live/work spaces, a state-of-the-art Central Library, entertainment districts, and major business relocation to downtown—all in service of making downtown Austin the living room of the community.
- In her role as Deputy City Manager for the City of San Marcos, Laura played a key role in the development of outlet malls as major retail destinations, as well as major sales tax generators. She forged a path to use economic development strategies around business recruitment and small business support to stabilize the City's dependence on sales tax, a notoriously volatile revenue stream.
- Serving as President and CEO of the Austin Chamber of Commerce, Laura successfully implemented the organization's vision, short- and long-range strategic plans, and annual operational plans, including financial goals, job growth, and business relocations and expansions.

Our team also benefits from a cast of intrepid specialists and associates, among whom are Clara Belk, who provides expertise in economic research and storytelling, and our long-time collaborators at [Lightcast](#), a best-in-class authority on labor market data and analytics.

Clara Belk, MPAff

Economic Research and Storytelling, CivicSol

"Research is only useful if it tells a story people can believe in—my job is to connect the data to Fayette County's future."



[Clara Belk](#) specializes in research and economic storytelling, ensuring Fayette County's strategy is data-driven, compelling, and actionable. With experience in economic and workforce development research, ecological conservation, and public affairs, Clara has worked on projects for Terrell, TX, Prescott, AZ, and South Burlington, VT, helping communities craft clear, strategic narratives around their economic and workforce development goals and helping bring them to life.

Education
BA, Tufts University
MPA, LBJ School of
Public Affairs at The
University of Texas
at Austin

Awards
Presidential
Volunteer Service
Award, Gold Tier
Noteworthy
Team Leader,
AmeriCorps
National Civilian
Community Corps,
Southern Region,
Vicksburg, MS

What Clara Brings to Fayette County
Clara has extensive experience in stakeholder engagement, transforming complex economic development trends into clear, actionable insights that build buy-in from businesses, community leaders, and residents. For Fayette County, she will leverage labor market data and analytics to identify workforce pathways that connect people to quality jobs, supporting strategies that drive inclusive economic growth and regional mobility.

- Relevant Experience
- Clara has conducted in-depth economic research on workforce trends, industry clusters, and labor market dynamics to support strategic workforce development plans in cities across the US. She has led occupational and workforce assessments, peer benchmarking, and stakeholder engagement process to align workforce strategies with regional economic needs.
 - Clara has worked as a community organizer in Des Moines, IA, Reno, NV, Denver, CO, and Saint Paul, MN, collaborating directly with diverse cultural and community groups, labor representatives, grassroots organizations, educators, and policymakers to boost civic participation and political engagement.

Dustin Lester, MPA

Vice President of Professional Services, Lightcast

"I love living out the mission of Lightcast: to unlock new possibilities in the labor market with the world's best workforce data and strategies."



Dustin leads Lightcast's team of public sector consultants, applying over a decade of expertise in economic development and workforce strategy. Prior to joining Lightcast, he served in practitioner and consulting roles, including managing business retention, foreign direct investment, and project development at regional economic development organizations in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky. He also held a leadership role at a national workforce consulting firm.

Education

BS, Bowling Green
State University

MPA, Northern
Kentucky University

What Dustin Brings to Fayette County

Dustin has deep expertise in leveraging labor market data to inform actionable regional workforce strategies. As a former economic development practitioner with extensive experience in county-level economic development authorities, he brings practical insights to strategic planning. As a senior consultant and professional services leader, he's managed numerous successful regional economic development strategic plans and sector talent strategy projects that align workforce development initiatives with business attraction and retention goals. His approach will help Fayette County build upon recent successes while identifying emerging opportunities across the county.

Relevant Experience

- Dustin is an economic development practitioner by trade, serving two regional economic development organizations in greater Cincinnati, including one in the JobsOhio network.
- He leads the professional services team that has delivered impactful labor market research and strategies for the Columbus region and over half of the counties in Ohio via the Greater Ohio Workforce Board (GOWB).

Jade Rohloff

Research Analyst, Lightcast

"I am passionate about leveraging skills to help organizations make strategic, data-driven decisions that unlock hidden talent and enable them to thrive in the future of work."



[Jade Rohloff](#) is a professional economic research analyst with an emphasis on economic development and labor analytics. He received his bachelor's degree in Economics and Mathematics from St. Norbert College. Previously, Jade served as a Senior Research Specialist for a national economic development and site selection firm, working with economic development organizations of all types, from rural counties to large regional and statewide organizations, as well as utility companies to help communities prosper.

Education

BA, St. Norbert College

Awards

St. Norbert College Presidential Scholarship for Academics

Pi Mu Epsilon member for excellence in the study of mathematics

Dean's List, St. Norbert College, De Pere, WI

Technical Skills

Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Sequel, C++, EViews, SPSS, Esri ArcGIS, IMPLAN, Alteryx, Python

What Jade Brings to Fayette County

Jade believes in an approach of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide meaningful solutions to questions and problems presented in a project that empowers the client to actionable solutions. Project experience that will support Fayette County includes economic development strategic plans, target industry studies, talent analyses and strategies, competitiveness assessments, economic impact analysis, site selection, and national labor trends reporting.

Relevant Experience

- Jade has led and supported communities in custom and productized projects, including workforce and skills demand assessments, site selection location data, workforce demographics and labor market information reporting.
- At Lightcast, he continuously seeks out new ways to present data visualization and improvements in methodological practices of projects including coding, project management, and data utilization.
- Jade leads and supports data procurement for consulting projects, including API access via Python and Snowflake for Lightcast data, in-house data access tools, and third-party data from credible sources where necessary.
- In his previous role as a Senior Research Specialist at ADY Advantage, Jade sought out and codified methodology of new sources and tools for research and reporting, such as use of Emsi economic data, updates to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' web data portal, and other third-party data sources to keep the company up to date.

05. EXPERIENCE

THE QUAD CITIES, ARIZONA: Bolstering a Dynamic, Innovative Regional Strategy

Community Snapshot: Quad Cities, AZ

The Quad Cities—Prescott, Prescott Valley, Chino Valley, and Dewey-Humboldt—located in north-central Arizona, emerges as a vibrant regional hub, welcoming entrepreneurs, intellectuals, skilled professionals, and visitors. With its array of higher educational institutions, a well-connected airport, thriving industries, and abundant outdoor recreation opportunities, the region shines bright. However, the area is grappling with increasing workforce shortages, as well as challenges related to childcare and housing affordability. These issues pose both short-term and long-term challenges.

The Opportunity

To fully realize its growth potential while effectively addressing the mounting workforce and affordability challenges, the Quad Cities needed to adopt a regional approach to economic prosperity. This involved bringing together communities across the Quad Cities and collaboratively leveraging the resources of the public, private, and philanthropic sectors. This meant concurrently planning for the long term, especially for a robust workforce pipeline development, preserving legacy businesses while attracting investment, and creating a narrative for destination development. This dynamic suite of needs meant employing a range of policies and partnerships to drive impactful change.



Image: Real Prescott Property

The **CivicSolution**

To support the creation of Quad Cities Regional Economic Development Strategy, CivicSol performed a comprehensive demographic and economic assessment. The team evaluated the Quad Cities' industry clusters to guide future business attraction and expansion efforts. Finally, the team complemented this research with stakeholder engagement to address Quad Cities' challenges and opportunities for the future. Over the course of this engagement, we spoke with more than 125 regional stakeholders. These efforts led to the creation of the Quad Cities' first-ever regional economic development strategy and action plan, providing a roadmap for future growth and reimagining the region's approach to innovation and prosperity. The strategy has also laid the foundation for a regional economic development alliance, which CivicSol is actively supporting to ensure sustained collaboration and impact.

Link: [Full Report](#)

October 2023–March 2024

Sheri Heiney, President & CEO, Prescott Chamber of Commerce, sheri@prescott.org

BUDA, TEXAS: Leveraging Partnerships to Build an Innovation Hub and Drive Inclusive Growth in Suburban Texas

Community Snapshot: Buda, TX

A highly desirable Central Texas destination, Buda attracts skilled professionals and investment alike. Despite its modest size—home to approximately 17,000 residents—the city packs a punch with its access to metropolitan amenities and assets: world-class educational institutions, an international airport, and a highly-skilled workforce. What truly sets Buda apart, however, is its small-town charm. Its downtown area is adorned with independent shops, its state-recognized schools emphasize a sense of belonging and training for a 21st-century economy, and its arts community reflects the creativity that makes the City unique.

The Opportunity

With its proximity to Austin and world-class educational institutions like Texas State University, and The University of Texas at Austin, and access to a talented workforce, Buda had an opportunity to position itself as a hub for innovation, small business growth, and workforce development. By leveraging partnerships with regional educational institutions and investing in entrepreneurial support systems, the City could chart new pathways for economic opportunity—attracting targeted knowledge-based industries, retaining highly-skilled talent, and ensuring long-term prosperity while maintaining the community's unique character.

January 2024–August 2024

Jennifer Storm, Buda Economic Development Corporation, jennifer.storm@budaedc.com



Image: Texas Monthly

The **CivicSolution**

In partnership with the Buda EDC, CivicSol developed a comprehensive 5-year Economic Development Strategic Plan to guide the city's future growth. This process included a comprehensive benchmarking analysis of Buda and its peer communities, an evaluation of best practices from other economic development corporations, and an assessment of the economic impact of a destination hospitality center. Additionally, the process involved a series of stakeholder roundtable discussions, one-on-one interviews, and workshops with BEDC Board members and City Council members. The resulting strategy emphasized workforce development, the creation of an innovation hub—fostering entrepreneurship and supporting the small businesses that are central to Buda's identity—and marketing Buda as a unique Central Texas experience for residents and visitors alike.

Link: [Full Report](#)

MESQUITE, TEXAS: Charting New Paths and Embracing Fresh Ideas to Build Better Lives and Grow Prosperity for All

Community Snapshot: Mesquite, TX

Situated in the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) metroplex, Mesquite is a city that enjoys close proximity to the urban core while maintaining a small-town charm with its outdoor activities and spectacular attractions. Mesquite has seen a recent uptick in development and business expansions thanks to forward-thinking investments in infrastructure, comprehensive strategic planning, and a strong marketing and branding approach that celebrates the community's diversity and family-friendly amenities.

The Opportunity

The City of Mesquite is home to a robust and diverse workforce, reflecting the skills and demographics of a multicultural population that brings invaluable experience to the industries they serve. While the City plays host to a robust and growing industrial economy, retail is Mesquite's largest employment sector—at nearly nine times the workforce concentration of the U.S. overall. Retaining the budding population of young, career-trained professionals has proven difficult because the City lacks the diverse housing options needed to holistically compete for high-skilled talent. The City is poised for a state-of-the-art economic development strategy to stake its claim on growth in the DFW region, while ensuring that all residents and enterprises have an equitable opportunity to thrive.

May – October 2022

Kim Buttram, City of Mesquite Department of Economic Development, kbuttram@cityofmesquite.com



Image: Downtown Mesquite TX

The **CivicSolution**

CivicSo's team led a comprehensive economic development planning process, evaluating Mesquite's competitive advantages and growth potential. The plan is data-driven, sector- focused, and leveraged by deep input and inclusive engagement from a diverse, multi- cultural group of stakeholders. This effort included competitive benchmarking and target cluster analyses, and engagement with more than 200 individuals through roundtable discussions, interviews, and workshops to ensure a community-driven approach. The result was a five-year economic development strategy and implementation plan that has helped position Mesquite as one of the top five cities in the DFW metroplex for investment. This plan has also laid the groundwork to attract and retain quality jobs that foster shared prosperity, grow a diverse entrepreneurial community, upskill for the jobs of tomorrow, and transform Mesquite into a destination for young professionals and families.

Link: [Full Report](#)

THE AUSTIN INFRASTRUCTURE ACADEMY: Leveraging Historic Investment in Infrastructure to Build Local Workforce Opportunities

Community Snapshot: Austin, TX

Austin—now the ninth-largest city in the nation—has experienced 14% population growth in the past five years, driving an increasing demand for infrastructure development. The City, and region, will invest \$25 billion in transformational regional infrastructure through the year 2040. Currently, Austin's Mobility and Infrastructure (M+I) sector employs more than 222,000 workers, making it the region's second-largest industry, surpassing healthcare and advanced manufacturing. However, to keep pace with ongoing and future investments, the city must fill a gap of 10,000 infrastructure jobs annually.

The Opportunity

CivicSol's labor forecast revealed a critical need for a skilled workforce to support Austin's rapid infrastructure expansion. Despite the high level of investment, accessible workforce training programs do not align with the needs of both employers and job seekers. The City saw a unique opportunity to address affordability challenges by creating family-supporting jobs and sustainable career pathways in M+I, all while enhancing super-regional mobility. By strategically integrating workforce development with infrastructure projects, Austin can ensure long-term economic growth, equitable job access, and increased mobility solutions for the region.



Image: LBJ School of Public Affairs

The **CivicSolution**

To address these challenges, CivicSol conducted a comprehensive labor forecast to project the gap in labor supply and demand, assessed existing training offerings and outcomes, facilitated rigorous stakeholder engagement with training providers, employers, job seekers, project sponsors, economic development entities, and community organizations, and conducted a dynamic, iterative service delivery model design process. From this research, we developed the Austin Infrastructure Academy—a first-of-its-kind public-private network designed to connect local talent with career pathways in construction and operations. The Academy integrates recruitment, a centralized training hub, and childcare support to remove barriers to workforce participation. Our work with the Austin Infrastructure Academy received the National Association of Workforce Board's 2024 [Trailblazer Award](#), naming it the most innovative workforce program in the country.

Link: [Full Report](#)

February 2023–February 2025

Kirk Watson, Mayor, City of Austin, kirkpwatson@gmail.com

PRESCOTT, ARIZONA: Leaving the Ordinary Behind to Build the Very Best of Opportunity in Arizona

Community Snapshot: Prescott, AZ

Nestled in the mountains of central Arizona, Prescott combines historic charm with natural beauty, creating a unique quality of place that has long attracted visitors and retirees. With its historic downtown centered around Courthouse Square, outdoor recreation opportunities, and Western heritage, Prescott enjoys unrivaled quality of place assets as a growing destination. The city has recently made strategic investments in infrastructure and amenities to further economic development, including airport expansion, greenspace initiatives, and land acquisitions that position it well for future growth.

The Opportunity

While the city has experienced impressive population growth in recent years, this expansion has primarily been driven by retirees. This demographic trend has created a significant imbalance, with a workforce participation rate well below national averages and a striking shortage of younger professionals needed to sustain long-term economic vitality. Despite these challenges, the regional airport, bolstered by significant infrastructure investments, creates a foundation for developing specialized industry clusters, while the presence of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University offers potential for innovation in aviation, aerospace, and cybersecurity.



Image: Expedia

The CivicSolution

Civic Solutions Partnership led a comprehensive strategic planning process, assessing Prescott's assets and challenges while convening diverse stakeholders to guide the city's economic future. The team conducted a competitive assessment, benchmarking Prescott against eight peer communities, and facilitated in-depth interviews with key business leaders, educational partners, City Council members, and the Mayor. The resulting five-year economic development strategy presents a new paradigm for Prescott's growth—one that balances development with preservation of the city's distinctive character. The plan focuses on workforce development, strategic investment in high-growth sectors, support for entrepreneurship, enhancement of Prescott's quality of place, and building strong partnerships for sustained growth. By targeting key sectors like aviation, cybersecurity, healthcare, and sustainable advanced manufacturing, the strategy positions Prescott to attract innovation while addressing workforce and housing needs.

February 2023–February 2025

John Heiney, City of Prescott, john.heiney@prescott-az.gov

GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA: Creating a Roadmap for Growth, Talent, and Innovation to Shape a Thriving Future

Community Snapshot: Greenville, SC

Greenville is one of the fastest-growing and most dynamic cities in the southeastern U.S.—home to a vibrant downtown, a strong manufacturing base, and emerging innovation sectors including life sciences, fintech, and advanced materials. With a global reputation and bold brand—“From Here, You Can Change the World”—the city is poised for the next chapter of growth. But leadership recognized the need for a cohesive strategy to guide its economic development efforts and ensure that all residents and industries benefit from future success.

The Opportunity

Greenville had momentum, but it needed a plan. The City lacked a comprehensive economic development strategy that could connect the dots across industry growth, workforce needs, real estate, equity, and institutional alignment. Leaders needed an actionable roadmap: not just what to do—but how to do it, who should lead, and how to measure progress.

The **CivicSolution**

Before founding CivicSol, Steven Pedigo led the development of Greenville’s first-ever Economic Development Strategic Plan—a data-driven, stakeholder-informed roadmap designed for action. The process included a comprehensive analysis of economic and occupational



Image: Style Blueprint

clusters, business leaders, residents, educators, and elected officials—participated through benchmarking Greenville against 15 peer cities and metros. More than 200 stakeholders—including roundtables and surveys. The strategy was built around seven core goals, spanning innovation, talent, equity, mobility, and livability. It included a range of actionable initiatives, such as launching the “Campus Greenville” talent initiative and promoting the city’s strengths in life sciences and advanced manufacturing. The process concluded with a detailed implementation roadmap, featuring recommendations for city staffing, external partnerships, and resource alignment. Now serving as the city’s guiding framework, the strategy has spurred partnerships with anchor institutions, evolved Greenville’s brand, and informed key investments. Greenville is now better positioned to fulfill its bold vision as a launchpad for entrepreneurs, thinkers, and makers worldwide.

Link: [Full Report](#)

February – October 2022

John DeWorken, City Councilmember, City of Greenville, jdeworken@greenvillesc.gov

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA: Reimagining the Future of a Knowledge Economic Hub

Community Snapshot: Arlington, VA

Located just across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C., Arlington, Virginia is a highly educated, economically vibrant community known for its exceptional quality of life, diverse neighborhoods, and thriving business ecosystem. With more than 76% of its local workforce holding a college degree or higher, and a rapidly evolving tech sector, Arlington offers a dynamic environment for companies, entrepreneurs, and creatives alike. The County has long been a national leader in business-friendly policy and public-private collaboration, further enriched by its walkable neighborhoods, cultural amenities, and robust public transit system.

The Opportunity

While Arlington's proximity to the nation's capital and influx of high-profile employers like Amazon and CoStar Group reinforce its stature as a premier destination for talent and innovation, the County faces evolving challenges. The rise of hybrid work has significantly impacted office space demand, contributing to rising vacancy rates and necessitating a transformation of its commercial districts. At the same time, persistent disparities in wealth and access among Arlington's residents—especially Black and Latino families—highlight the need for inclusive economic strategies. However, with a strong foundation in higher education, advanced industries, and a highly educated labor pool, Arlington is uniquely positioned to lead the next generation of equitable, tech-driven growth.

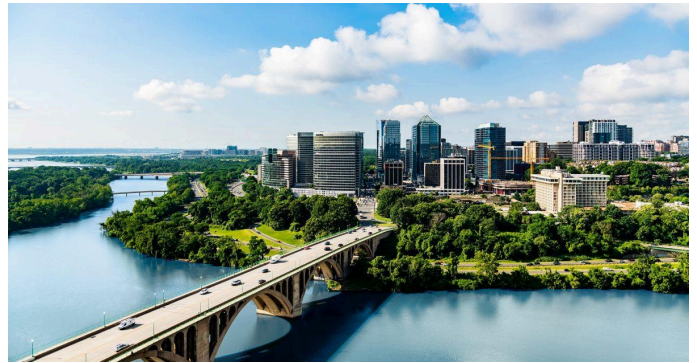


Image: All In Arlington

The **CivicSolution**

CivicSol partner Steven Pedigo supported Arlington Economic Development in delivering the County's first strategic plan in over a decade—a five-year roadmap designed to strengthen its economic foundation while embracing a bold, inclusive vision for the future. The planning process involved a comprehensive demographic and economic assessment, peer benchmarking, evaluating industry clusters, and engaging stakeholders across sectors and communities. The resulting strategy—framed by the "All in Arlington" brand—articulates five interconnected goals: attracting business investment, revitalizing commercial areas, building a robust tech economy, strengthening the small business ecosystem, and investing in arts, culture, and tourism. The plan emphasizes equitable development, inclusive talent pipelines, sector-based workforce readiness, and strategic reuse of commercial space. With plans to foster placemaking, entrepreneurship, and international investment, Arlington is charting a path forward as a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready economy.

Link: [Full Report](#)

September 2023 – January 2024

Ryan Touhill, Arlington Economic Development, rtouhill@arlingtonva.us

OLATHE, KANSAS: Building an Innovation Ecosystem through Strategic Collaboration and Intentional Growth

Community Snapshot: Olathe, KS

Olathe stands as Johnson County's seat and Kansas City metro's second-largest city with over 145,000 residents. As a rapidly growing community with a strong educational foundation, including the presence of institutions like Kansas State University Olathe and MidAmerica Nazarene University, the city enjoys a highly educated workforce and quality of life advantages. Despite these strengths, Olathe faced challenges in business retention, downtown activation, and creating a cohesive innovation ecosystem that could drive its next phase of economic growth.

The Opportunity

Olathe had the ingredients for economic success but needed a framework to capitalize on its advantages. The city sought a comprehensive strategy that could address immediate opportunities while positioning Olathe for long-term prosperity through intentional growth, talent attraction, and innovation. Leaders recognized the need to differentiate Olathe within the competitive Kansas City metro area while leveraging regional assets.

The **CivicSolution**

CivicSol led the development of Olathe's comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan through a multi-faceted approach combining rigorous data analysis with extensive community engagement. The process began by examining Olathe's industry composition, demographic



Image: Olathe Public Library

trends, and competitive position within the region. The engagement phase brought together over 180 stakeholders, including business leaders, educational institutions, regional partners, and residents, who collectively identified priorities around innovation, downtown development, workforce attraction, and quality of life enhancements. The resulting strategy organized Olathe's economic development approach into five strategic pillars: Business Growth and Innovation; Talent Development and Attraction; Place Development and Experience; Regional Leadership and Collaboration; and Organizational Enhancement. Since adoption, Olathe has made significant progress implementing key recommendations, including revitalizing its downtown development approach, establishing new business support programming, and creating stronger connections between educational institutions and target industries. The strategy has positioned Olathe as an emerging innovation hub within the Kansas City region while strengthening its existing industry base.

Link: [Full Report](#)

February – July 2023

Tim McKee, Olathe Chamber of Commerce, tmckee@olathe.org

06. REFERENCES

Reference	Title	Contact Information
Kirk Watson	Mayor, City of Austin	kirkpwatson@gmail.com
Carlton Tidwell	President, Terrell Economic Development Corporation	carlton@terrelltexas.com
Sheri Heiney	President and CEO, Prescott Chamber of Commerce	sheri@prescott.org

07. BUDGET

Phase	Item	Sub-Total
01. Laying the Groundwork	1.1: Project Kickoff and Planning Alignment	\$9,300
	1.2: Creation of a Project Steering Committee	
	1.3: Contextual Analysis	
	1.4: Work Plan and Engagement Calendar	
02. Mapping Fayette County's Economy	2.1: Peer Benchmarking Assessment	\$52,600
	2.2: Cluster and Sector Analysis	
	2.3: BRE and Incentive Structure Assessment	
	2.4: Peer EDO Best Practices Analysis	
03. Listening to Fayette County	3.1: Sector and Partner Roundtables	\$26,100
	3.2: Community Resident and Business Survey	
	3.3: One-on-One Stakeholder Interviews	
04. From Vision to Action	4.1: Strategic Framework Development	\$24,500
	4.2: Strategy Workshop	
	4.3: Implementation Roadmap, Year 1 Work Plan, and Responsibility Matrix	
	4.4: Final 5-Year Strategic Plan	
Total Professional Fees		\$112,500
Travel (4 Trips x 2 Partners)		\$11,200
Total Not-To-Exceed Cost		\$123,700