



**Choose Columbia**  
Columbia Economic Development Corporation

**2025**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

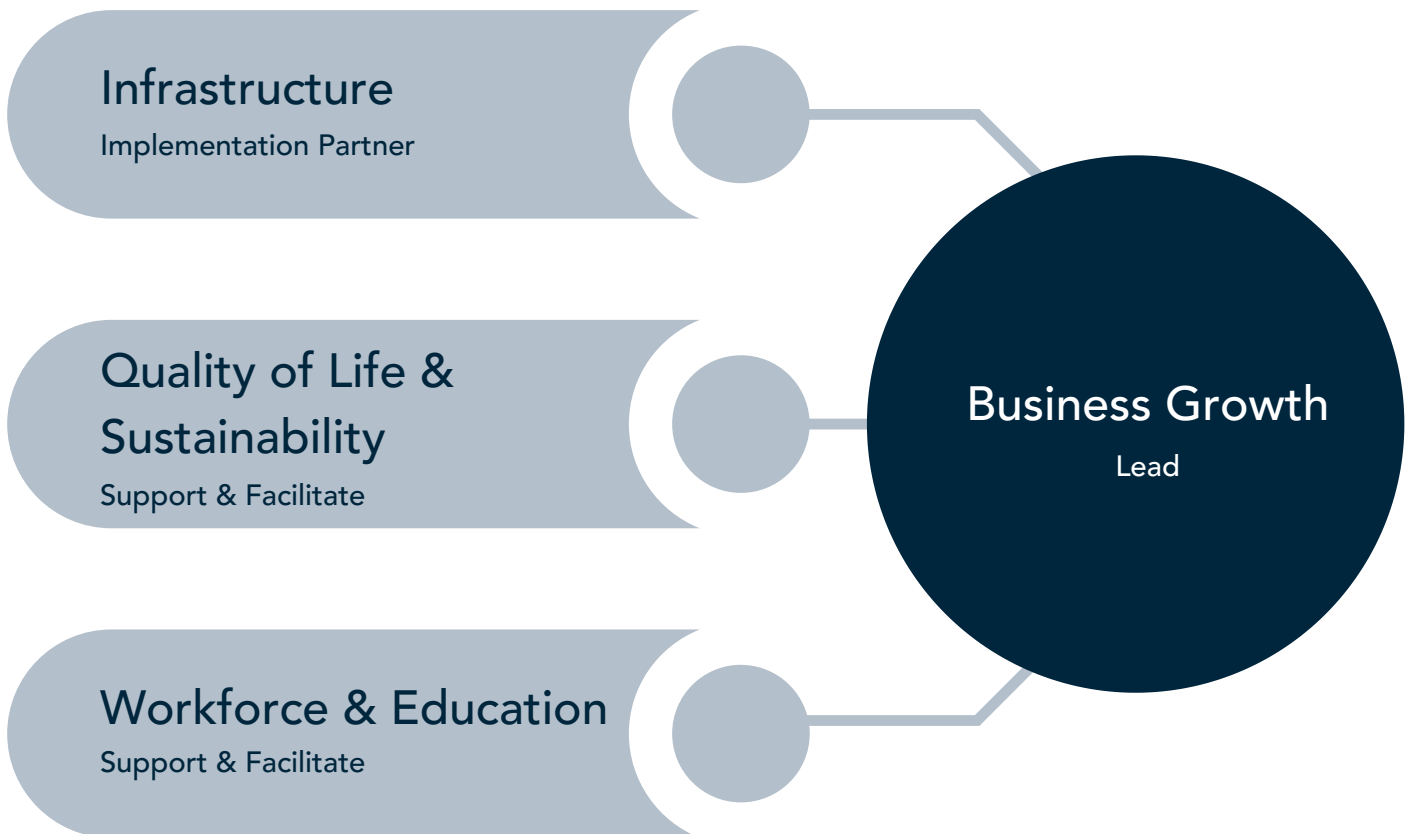
# MISSION

Columbia Economic Development Corporation's mission is to strengthen Columbia County's tax base through economic development and job creation, to assist businesses to locate and expand within the County, and to promote Columbia County as a premier habitat for business investment and personal opportunity.

# ABOUT THIS PLAN

This CEDC strategic plan update was developed in April 2025. It is informed by data about Columbia County's economic development context, input from the CEDC board via a questionnaire and a board working session, and strategy meetings with CEDC leadership.

This plan is organized around four focus areas. "Business Growth" reflects CEDC's overarching mission and core functions. The other three (Infrastructure, Quality of Life & Sustainability, and Workforce & Education) are key enablers of Business Growth in which CEDC plays a supportive or partnering role. For each focus area, this plan articulates component objectives and strategies.



# BUSINESS GROWTH

CEDC will help new and established businesses and not-for-profits succeed with targeted resources, direct business loans, and technical assistance.

## Objective: Support entrepreneurship and business growth.

- Provide direct lending and technical assistance to Columbia County businesses and not-for-profit organizations.
- Serve as a resource to businesses and not-for-profit organizations seeking loans, grants, and other financial assistance at the local, state, and federal levels.
- Assist and support Columbia County businesses and not-for-profit organizations with a focus on the County's strength in microbusiness, agriculture, hospitality, tourism, and the creative economy.

## Objective: Support new businesses.

- Serve as a "one-stop" resource center to assist and support start-up and early-stage businesses.
- Offer tailored technical assistance to enable start-up and early-stage businesses to establish operations and scale up efficiently.
- Coordinate business development seminars and targeted training to equip start-up and early-stage businesses with essential skills and knowledge.

## Objective: Support retention and expansion of existing businesses.

- Assist established businesses with expansion, infrastructure, and workforce development planning.
- Support businesses that are creating jobs by connecting them with funding opportunities and workforce programs.
- Provide assistance with grant writing to help businesses secure funding for job creation and retention initiatives.



# INFRASTRUCTURE

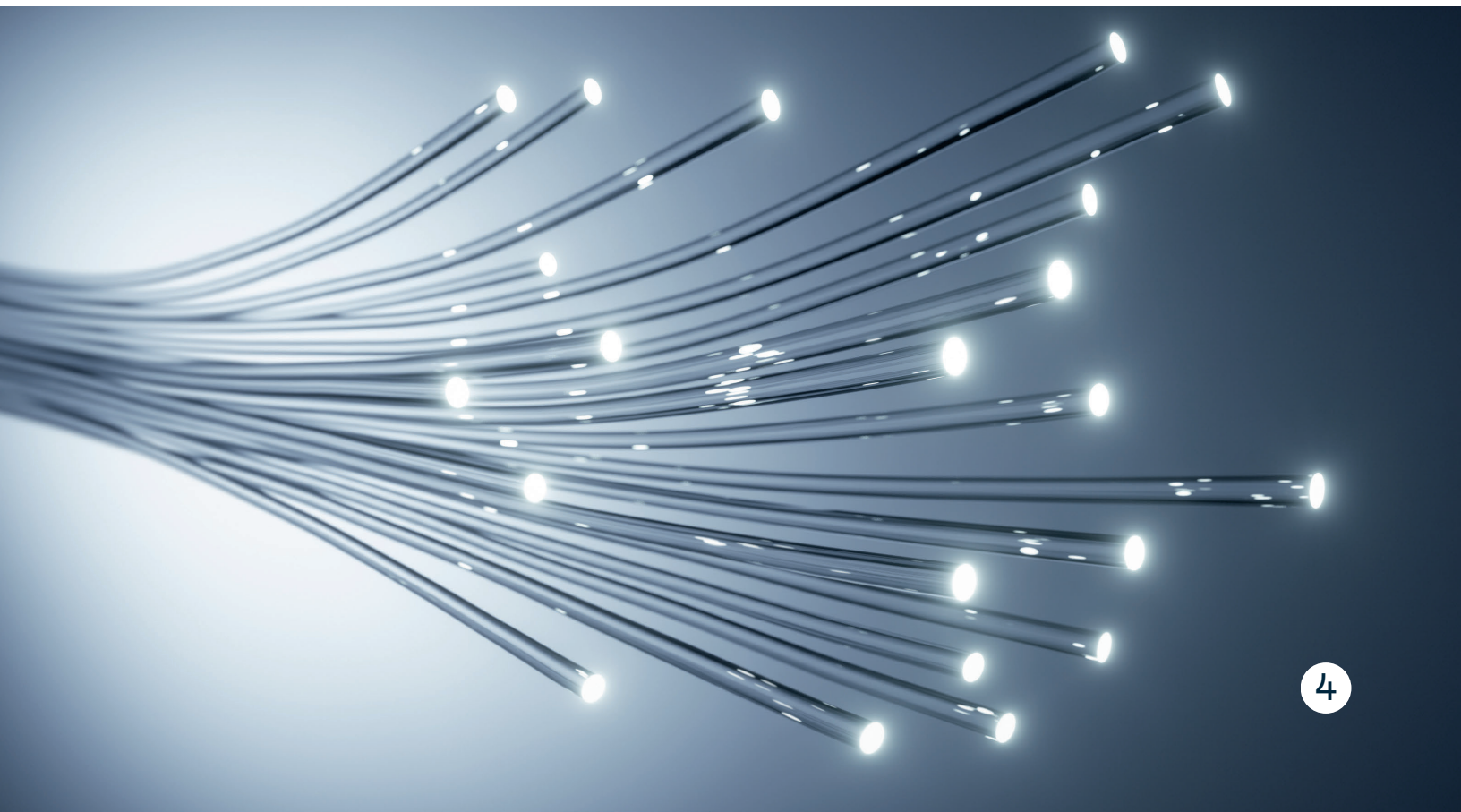
CEDC will support efforts to improve Columbia County's infrastructure investment.

**Objective:** Promote the need for adequate infrastructure and utilities to accommodate business expansion and growth.

- Complete universal broadband access and focus on improving cell service throughout the County.
- Work with partners and stakeholders to assess and address infrastructure needs (water, sewer, gas/electric, broadband, transportation).
- Advocate for and help secure funding to support critical infrastructure projects that align with local zoning and community needs.

**Objective:** Promote adequate sites to accommodate industry expansion and attraction.

- Explore opportunities for additional commercial and industrial sites, including repurposing existing commercial and manufacturing buildings, consistent with local zoning and community standards.
- Maintain an inventory of buildings and sites that have been listed that are suitable for sale or lease.
- Collaborate with local government, property owners, and businesses to identify and assess opportunities to develop "shovel-ready" sites for commercial development, consistent with local zoning and community standards.





# QUALITY OF LIFE & SUSTAINABILITY

CEDC will support efforts to enhance the livability and vibrancy of Columbia County's communities while fostering sustainable economic growth.

**Objective:** Help shape the housing market to meet the needs of current and future residents.

- Continue to focus on Columbia County's affordable housing crisis by raising public awareness of the economic benefits of ensuring multiple housing options in a community.
- Continue to advance affordable housing opportunities in collaboration with the Columbia County Board of Supervisors' Housing Task Force.
- Leverage the Land Bank, the Industrial Development Agencies, and state grant and federal funding resources in areas with suitable zoning and infrastructure to support residential development projects.

**Objective:** Leverage the agriculture, hospitality, tourism, and creative economy sectors as economic drivers.

- Collaborate with business owners and entrepreneurs in these targeted sectors to identify opportunities for new/expansion projects.
- Support targeted businesses with direct loans and technical assistance, along with assisting in securing and implementing state and foundation grants.
- Engage arts and cultural not-for-profit organizations in creative economy and tourism initiatives.

**Objective:** Enhance the vibrancy of local communities as destinations for new residents and visitors.

- Support businesses and local governments in advancing Main Street revitalization and vibrancy, including through infrastructure improvements.
- Protect the County's natural resources and environmental assets by encouraging local comprehensive planning and smart growth.
- Support municipalities in pursuing brownfield redevelopment opportunities.



# WORKFORCE & EDUCATION

CEDC will support and help facilitate the alignment of workforce development and education resources with business needs.

**Objective:** Partner with existing workforce and education partners to address the needs of businesses.

- Facilitate easy access for business owners and not-for-profit organizations to the County's existing workforce and education resources, including school districts, Questar III, Columbia-Greene Community College, Columbia-Greene Workforce NY, Columbia-Greene Workforce Development Board, and other regional workforce and education resources.
- Promote educational and workforce training initiatives to help potential employees acquire skills necessary to support existing and new businesses.

**Objective:** Support the workforce needs of Columbia County businesses.

- Engage with regional workforce development initiatives (e.g., ON-RAMP) to strengthen the talent pool for Columbia County businesses.
- Support initiatives that remove barriers to participation in employment and training opportunities (for example, by supporting efforts to develop more childcare offerings).



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**Choose Columbia**

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