



# Strategic Plan 2026-2030

Approved by Board of Directors  
3/25/2026

**Mission:**

Advance business. Facilitate solutions. Strengthen Communities.

**Vision:**

Building lasting economic prosperity by supporting business growth, investment, and innovation.

**Core Values:**

Our core values are the foundation upon which we function and the measure of our success. These include:

1. We will demonstrate Integrity in all we do
2. We will focus on the needs & priorities of our members
3. We will serve as innovators, catalysts, and conveners
4. We will always act in the best interest of Barry County

**Desired Outcomes:**

1. Organizational Financial Stability
2. Strong Workforce Development Ecosystem
3. Continued Housing Development and Supports
4. Continued Support for Infrastructure Development
5. Enhanced/Increased focus on placemaking
6. Enhance Chamber Member Experience and Engagement
7. Implement Rural Economic Development Strategy
8. Unification Through Communication and Collaboration

**Impact Areas:**

1. Community Development
2. Broadband accessibility
3. Business attraction, retention, and expansion
4. Childcare
5. Tourism
6. Placemaking
7. Entrepreneurialism
8. Housing
9. Agriculture (environment)
10. Legislative Advocacy
11. Infrastructure
12. Workforce Development
13. Education
14. Incubators
15. Career and Technical Education
16. Coworking studios
17. Creating Connections
18. Unifying Communities

## 2026–2030 Strategic Direction

The Barry County Chamber & Economic Development Alliance will focus on strengthening organizational sustainability, advancing workforce and housing solutions, improving infrastructure readiness, supporting placemaking, and enhancing regional collaboration to ensure Barry County remains competitive, connected, and opportunity-driven through 2030.

This plan builds on the Board’s identified priorities and aligns strategic initiatives with measurable outcomes to drive long-term countywide growth.

## Strategic Initiatives 2026-2030

### I. Organizational Financial Sustainability

#### Focus Area: Increase Revenue to Cover Costs of Growth

##### Action Items

- Increase membership by 10% by 2030 (351 members as of 2/6/2026)
- Hold membership drive in 2026
- Increase outreach to non-members
- Recalibrate non-member fees to reinforce the value of membership investment
- Implement travel program
- Sell ad space on window monitor and on website
- Grow coworking space and office rental income
- Expand strategic partner investments
- Create new event(s) to raise funds

#### Focus Area: Strong Governance & Representation

##### Action Items

- Continue to seek broader geographic and sector representation on the Board
- Improve communication and visibility of our efforts, successes, and key performance indicators (KPIs) to members and the broader community

#### Focus Area: Member Value & Engagement

##### Action Items

- Offer higher-quality educational workshops
- Increase strategic partner investment
- Increase value for members
- Improve communication of measurable results with stakeholders
- Focus more on networking, connections, and unifying communities

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Membership growth rate (goal: +10% by 2030)
- Revenue from advertising (window monitor + website banners)
- Revenue from coworking and office rentals
- Event revenue, including new event additions
- Number of strategic partners and total dollars invested
- Board diversity and representation across sectors/municipalities
- Engagement metrics (event attendance, workshop participation, partnerships)
- Communication reach and engagement (KPIs, email metrics, social analytics)

## II. Strong Workforce Development Ecosystem

### Focus Area: Thriving Career and Technical Education (CTE) & Workforce Development

#### Action Items

- Support the creation of a countywide CTE Center and coordinated CTE programming
- Assist in advancing and securing a CTE millage
- Strengthen talent pipelines serving students, adult learners, upskilling employees, and non-traditional workers

### Focus Area: Eliminating Barriers to Employment

#### Action Items

- Expand access to childcare across Barry County
- Advance employer-supported childcare access by implementing DuoShare (with Barry Community Foundation) to reduce childcare barriers
- Develop incentives and clear pathways to attract individuals into childcare careers
- Strengthen and grow the childcare workforce pipeline through strategic partnerships
- Convene employer, chief executive officer (CEO), and industry-specific roundtables to address workforce barriers

### Focus Area: Workforce Staying Local

#### Action Items

- Continue and expand placemaking initiatives across communities
- Partner with Hello West Michigan to attract and retain talent

### Focus Area: Entrepreneurship & Innovation

#### Action Items

- Develop coworking and innovation spaces
- Assist in establishing incubator models in Nashville, Delton, Woodland, and Hastings (retail incubator in partnership with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA))

- Launch Business Resource Center in Delton (as a pilot for other areas)

### **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

- Increase in CTE program participation (students, adult learners, incumbent workers)
- Support for passage of a CTE millage
- Number of workers upskilled or reskilled through training programs
- Growth in childcare availability (Duo-Share, Tri-Share, provider participation)
- Employer engagement metrics from CEO and industry roundtables
- Number of new startups and entrepreneurs supported
- Utilization rates of coworking studios
- Utilization rates of Business Resource Center

## **III. Continued Housing Development and Supports**

### **Focus Area: Expanding Barry County's Housing Stock**

#### **Action Items**

- Track housing unit increases across all municipalities
- Strengthen relationships with developers to encourage investment
- Identify blighted properties and pursue resources for infill development
- Support adaptive reuse of old or underutilized buildings
- Advance efforts to increase the overall housing supply in Barry County

### **Focus Area: Coordinated Housing Programs & Partnerships**

#### **Action Items**

- Partner with United Way, Barry Community Foundation (BCF), financial literacy educators, and others to develop the Barry County H.O.M.E.S. Program
- Update the countywide Housing Study tear sheets to reflect current needs and opportunities
- Build a coordinated system that supports residents from readiness → purchase → long-term stability

### **Focus Area: Homeownership Readiness & Long-Term Stability**

#### **Action Items**

- Provide education on homeownership and financial readiness
- Partner with local financiers and United Way to offer financial literacy and homeownership training
- Integrate homeowner support into the H.O.M.E.S. Program to ensure long-term sustainability

### **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

- Net increase in housing units countywide
- Number of blighted properties redeveloped or replaced with infill housing
- Number of new housing units created through adaptive reuse
- Number of households completing homeownership or financial literacy education

- Participation levels in the H.O.M.E.S. Program
- Developer engagement metrics (meetings held, projects advanced, partnerships formed)
- Completion of updated Housing Study and progress on implementation
- Growth in attainable housing options across all Barry County communities

## **IV. Continued Support of Infrastructure Development**

### **Focus Area: Water & Sewer System Improvements**

#### **Action Items**

- Support water and sewer improvement projects in Yankee Springs, Woodland, and Nashville
- Assist communities with planning, grant identification, and project coordination
- Strengthen relationships with municipalities to advance priority infrastructure upgrades

### **Focus Area: Broadband Expansion**

#### **Action Items**

- Continue to collaborate with partners to eliminate remaining broadband coverage gaps in Barry County
- Continue tracking access, availability, and build-out timelines
- Promote the inclusion of broadband infrastructure in all new development plans by partnering with local governments, developers, and utilities

### **Focus Area: Infrastructure Grants & Technical Assistance**

#### **Action Items**

- Connect communities to Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and other infrastructure funding opportunities
- Support municipalities in identifying and securing priority infrastructure grants
- Advocate for investments that strengthen long-term utility capacity and site readiness

### **Focus Area: Community Competitiveness for Site Selectors**

#### **Action Items**

- Identify and promote priority development sites with adequate utilities and broadband
- Support municipalities in strengthening infrastructure needed for business attraction and expansion
- Work with local communities to determine desired type of economic development and level of support

### **Focus Area: Integration of Childcare & Broadband in Development**

#### **Action Items**

- Incorporate childcare and broadband into housing developments, business attraction projects, and community improvements

- Collaborate early with developers and municipalities

### **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

- Identify and support water and sewer projects to be advanced within each priority community
- Monitor and actively pursue growth in total infrastructure grant dollars secured for Barry County
- Increase number of communities receiving TAP or technical assistance
- Reduction in countywide broadband gaps
- Increase percentage of development projects incorporating broadband and childcare planning
- Increase in site selector inquiries and visits
- Number of priority development sites evaluated and promoted
- Improvements in infrastructure readiness scores or assessments

## **V. Continued Development of Placemaking**

### **Focus Area: Strengthening Agritourism & Agricultural Partnerships**

#### **Action Items**

- Strengthening partnerships with the agricultural community
- Elevate visibility and support for local farmers and producers
- Leverage farmland preservation as a long-term tourism and community asset

### **Focus Area: Tourism Growth & Regional Promotion**

#### **Action Items**

- Increase year-round tourism outreach and targeted marketing efforts
- Develop and promote new recreational and destination-based experiences
- Position Barry County's lakes, trails, farmland, and natural assets as premier tourism draws

### **Focus Area: Recreation, Parks & Outdoor Amenities**

#### **Action Items**

- Continue support of trail systems and parks countywide
- Advance community gardens and local food access initiatives
- Promote outdoor recreation as a driver of health, wellness, and quality of life

### **Focus Area: Conservation & Land Stewardship**

#### **Action Items**

- Elevate protected habitats and conservation areas as recreation destinations
- Support land conservation and farmland preservation
- Promote sustainable stewardship of natural resources

## **Focus Area: Downtown Improvements & Public Art**

### **Action Items**

- Support streetscape enhancements in Delton, Nashville, and Woodland
- Expand public art, murals, and large-scale installations throughout the county
- Encourage student engagement in public art, including downtown displays and creative marketing initiatives

### **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

- Acres of farmland preserved and land conserved
- Number of community gardens supported or expanded
- Number of streetscape improvement projects completed
- Number of public art installations, including murals and student projects
- Engagement metrics from tourism marketing (web traffic, social media, visitor inquiries)

## **VI. Member Experience and Engagement**

### **Focus Area: Membership Growth & Retention**

#### **Action Items**

- Conduct consistent outreach to members
- Ensure each member receives three touches per year (call, visit, or personalized email + Project Thank You)
- Add more value to members through enhanced programming and services

### **Focus Area: Events, Networking & Community Engagement**

#### **Action Items**

- Maintain consistent networking events, including Quarterly Business Mixers, Quarterly Chamber 101, 102, or other Chamber-focused educational sessions, Biannual Business Team Collaborative Meetings, Chamber After Hours events, and Business Mixers
- Regularly refresh and reinvent events to maintain strong engagement
- Offer services and engagement opportunities tailored to young professionals

### **Focus Area: Education & Business Support**

#### **Action Items**

- Offer more educational opportunities
- Provide industry-specific educational sessions and networking events
- Provide ongoing business support through Business Resource Center

## **Focus Area: Marketing, Visibility & Communication**

### **Action Items**

- Increase visibility of Chamber successes through consistent, wide-reaching communication
- Continue Business of the Week Highlight Series
- Continue Fun Facts to promote various areas of the county
- Strengthen and modernize artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities to better support members and increase value

## **Focus Area: Revenue Generation & Program Growth**

### **Action Items**

- Reach \$1 million in annual Barry Bucks sales
- Expand Chamber sponsorship opportunities
- Increase revenue through new or reinvented events
- Strengthen overall member value to support long-term financial sustainability

## **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

- Total Barry Bucks sales (goal: \$1 million total sales)
- Chamber membership growth (goal: +10% by 2030)
- Year-over-year member retention rate
- Number of networking events held annually
- Attendance and engagement at mixers, workshops, and educational sessions
- Number of members receiving annual "three touches"
- Growth in participation in Business of the Week, Fun Facts, and other engagement programs
- Communication reach and engagement (email metrics, social media engagement)

## **VII. Implement Rural Economic Development Strategy**

### **Focus Area: Branding, Marketing & Tourism Promotion (Nashville focus)**

#### **Action Items**

- Develop branding and marketing materials for tourism promotion
- Implement wayfinding improvements

### **Focus Area: Workforce & Business Development (Nashville focus)**

#### **Action Items**

- Expand workforce development initiatives
- Support business incubator development

## **Focus Area: Downtown Revitalization & Physical Improvements (Nashville focus)**

### **Action Items**

- Implement streetscape improvements
- Advance retail attraction efforts

### **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

- Branding and marketing packages completed for each community
- Number of way-finding improvements installed countywide
- Workforce development partnerships or programs established
- Increase in number of businesses countywide
- Growth in downtown occupancy rates (Nashville, Delton, Woodland)
- Progress on streetscape improvements in each community
- Formation or advancement of Business Improvement Districts
- Visitor engagement metrics (website traffic, tourism inquiries, social analytics)
- Create Business Resource Center in Delton as a pilot for other areas

## **VIII. Unification Through Communication & Collaboration**

### **Focus Area: Strengthening Communication & Regional Relationships**

#### **Action Items**

- Maintain consistent communication with outlying communities
- Hold Quarterly Business Mixers
- Hold Quarterly Chamber 101, 102, or other Chamber-focused educational sessions
- Strengthen partnerships with Hastings and Middleville officials
- Clarify and improve coordination among the Hastings Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Hastings Downtown Business Team (HDBT), and Chamber

### **Focus Area: Legislative Relationships & Advocacy**

#### **Action Items**

- Build stronger legislative relationships at the regional, state, and federal levels
- Ensure Barry County has a strong regional and local voice at policy tables
- Create a Legislative Advocacy Group
- Host educational roundtables on key policy issues, when applicable
- Provide clear, timely, and nonpartisan updates to members on pending legislation and education policy, focusing on facts, business impact, and opportunities for engagement
- Create more safe spaces for elected officials and business owners to gather and collaborate
- Facilitate conversations that build trust and understanding across sectors
- Provide structured opportunities for leaders to learn, align priorities, and problem-solve

## **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

- Number of outlying communities engaged through direct outreach
- Attendance and engagement at Quarterly Business Mixers
- Attendance and engagement at Chamber educational sessions
- Number of collaborative meetings with Hastings and Middleville
- Documented improvements in DDA, HDBT, and Chamber coordination
- Formation and activity level of the Legislative Advocacy Group
- Number of policy roundtables held and participation levels
- Increase in presence or influence at regional/state policy tables
- Increased reach of communication platforms (email metrics, social media engagement, website analytics)
- Feedback from officials and business owners on communication and collaboration

## **Implementation & Accountability**

Progress on these initiatives will be reviewed regularly through established KPIs and reported to the Board and stakeholders. The organization will remain responsive to emerging opportunities while maintaining focus on long-term priorities that strengthen Barry County's economic competitiveness and community vitality.