

# Howard County Business & Tourism

Howard County Economic Development  
Cresco Industrial Development Corporation  
Cresco Area Chamber of Commerce  
Howard County Tourism

## Strategic Planning 2017-2019

Establishing Strategic Actions for Howard County

Prepared by  
Community and Economic Development Associates  
Howard County Business & Tourism  
July 2016



## The Process

Commissioned by the Board of Directors of Howard County Business & Tourism (HCBT) to prioritize and chart paths for the immediate future, two strategic planning sessions were held on April 13, 2016 and May 18, 2016. These sessions were open public meetings with community leaders and all Boards from Howard County Business & Tourism given a special invitation to participate. Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) facilitated the planning sessions held at NICC Cresco Center.

Following approval of the HCBT vision; *to develop and grow new and existing businesses, promote community involvement, encourage business alliances, and advance and increase tourism*, participants worked with the idea “***What should Cresco and Howard County look like in three years?***” and created eleven strategic categories to populate with ideas.

After brainstorming and coming up with ideas during the April session, participants were asked to bring additional ideas to the May session. A total of 72 ideas were generated and contributors were tasked with creating strategic actions. From the planning sessions and email contributions, participants framed these ideas into 39 strategic actions.

Recognizing all documented ideas and actions credible, participants were charged with voting for their top three strategic actions. First choice received three votes, second choice received two votes and third choice received one vote. Those unable to attend were afforded the opportunity to cast their priority votes via email. After the votes were cast, 17 action items were identified.

Howard County Business & Tourism will implement the strategic actions with the highest votes in the next three years with the understanding that when the opportunity arises to work on any idea or action identified through the planning process, it will do so. Ideas generated from this plan will be brought to future planning sessions. The findings in this plan will be communicated to all Howard County Boards and community leaders and will be available to the public and published on county websites.

The top three strategic categories by a wide margin were Housing (32%), Recruitment (22%), and Workforce (17%). A full breakdown of all categories, ideas, and actions complete this report.

**Vision:** To develop and grow new and existing businesses, promote community involvement, encourage business alliances, and advance and increase tourism.

## **What should Cresco and Howard County Look Like in Three Years?**

### **Strategic Categories**

Prioritized votes

#### **1. Housing (32%)**

##### **Actions**

- 18% Develop marketing plan and list of developers to recruit builders
- 13% Meet with housing developers on future needs for Howard County
- 1% Look into Community Land Trusts

#### **2. Recruitment (22%)**

##### **Actions**

- 14% Offer incentives to high school grads to return to Howard County
- 5% Encourage job shadowing and promote internships
- 3% Rent a billboard
- 0% Add job incentives to Cresco's Sesquicentennial packet

#### **3. Workforce (17%)**

##### **Actions**

- 12% Social Media Marketing
- 3% Establish International worker communication and community assistance
- 1% Attend job fairs
- 1% Create Job Boards on websites
- 0% Expand Home Base Iowa (HBI) marketing and outreach

#### **4. Tourism/Quality of Life (7%)**

##### **Actions**

- 6% Connect bike trails to MN
- 1% TV Marketing in large cities/college campuses
- 0% Add canoe landings
- 0% Join state boards to capture marketing opportunities
- 0% Develop Howard County/Cresco blog and join Good Blogs
- 0% Develop community garden
- 0% Develop trail system for 2x2 or side by side recreational vehicles
- 0% Develop Dog Park

**5. Education (6%)**

**Actions**

- 6% Develop youth leadership program

**6. Transportation (5%)**

**Actions**

- 5% Bus to Rochester
- 0% Affordable public transportation for employees, students, and residents
- 0% Repair/replace 7<sup>th</sup> St W (road to HC Fairgrounds)
- 0% Conduct an Uber workshop for drivers and riders
- 0% Bus rides to Lime Springs pool

**7. Industrial Development (3%)**

**Actions**

- 2% Flexible jobs for trailing spouse
- 1% Hold quarterly workshops for business development

**8. Technology (3%)**

**Actions**

- 2% Research alternative internet providers
- 1% Develop community owned and driven fiber connection to Cresco and Howard County

**9. Business Development (3%)**

**Actions**

- 2% Develop customer service workshops
- 1% Marketing existing businesses
- 0% Succession planning workshops
- 0% Meet with new hotel franchise
- 0% Hotel feasibility study

**10. Health (2%)**

**Actions**

- 2% Develop *Community Healthy Lifestyles* program with RSHHC
- 0% Broad community participation with RSHHC strategic planning

**11. Energy (0%)**

**Actions**

- 0% Hold energy efficiency workshops to become a more green community
- 0% Promote LED lighting

## **Strategic Ideas**

### **Housing**

- Upper Story rentals
- Clean up trailer parks
- Affordable homes for first-time home buyers
- Downtown curb appeal – sidewalks
- Follow up with completed Housing Study
- More assisted living
- Apartment complexes
- More retirement homes/complexes
- Rehab houses
- Investigate Community Land Trusts

### **Workforce**

- Where are we casting our net to recruit workers?
- Bring more of our workforce to live in HC
- Welcome International workers
- Help welfare recipients find work
- Address low wages

### **Education**

- Increase marketing of excellent school districts
- Move forward on school facility improvements
- Maintain and increase population
- Balance technology and tradition in classrooms
- Better promote connection with NICC
- Better communication and flexibility with alternative youth activities

### **Industrial Development**

- More jobs for women
- Retain and support existing businesses

### **Technology**

- Improve internet service
- Fiber optics conversation with OmniTel/other Providers
- Grow business collaborations
- Fiber infrastructure connected to homes
- More Broadband
- Better rural internet access
- Solar energy farms
- High speed internet for at-home workers

### **Health**

- Attract more MDs
- Promote healthy lifestyles
- Utilize DMC/Mayo connections
- Find out needs of RSHHC
- Establish greater communication with community organizations, businesses, and residents to meet the needs of the county

### **Recruitment**

- Encourage high school grads to move back to HC
- Signage/Advertisement on Hwy 63
- Attract people moving to HC as DMC develops
- How to attract 34 yrs+

### **Tourism/Quality of Life**

- Increase recreational programming for kids/< 1<sup>st</sup> grade
- Hunting leases from farmers
- Create 'Clean Up and Paint' programs
- Add canoe landings
- Create Community Garden programs
- Develop Upper Iowa River opportunities
- Connect bike trail systems to MN
- Encourage preference for work over welfare
- Address Industrial air quality issues
- Market unique location; close to metropolitan areas
- Incentives and improvements for Business District without the negatives – crime, costs, etc...
- Become more involved on state level marketing
- Develop Dog Park

### **Transportation**

- Improve secondary roads
- Bus rides to Lime Springs Pool
- Nighttime transportation (sober cab/taxi/Uber)
- Rideshare to Rochester
- Expand affordable public transportation in county
- Elderly Uber program / volunteer drivers

### **Business Development**

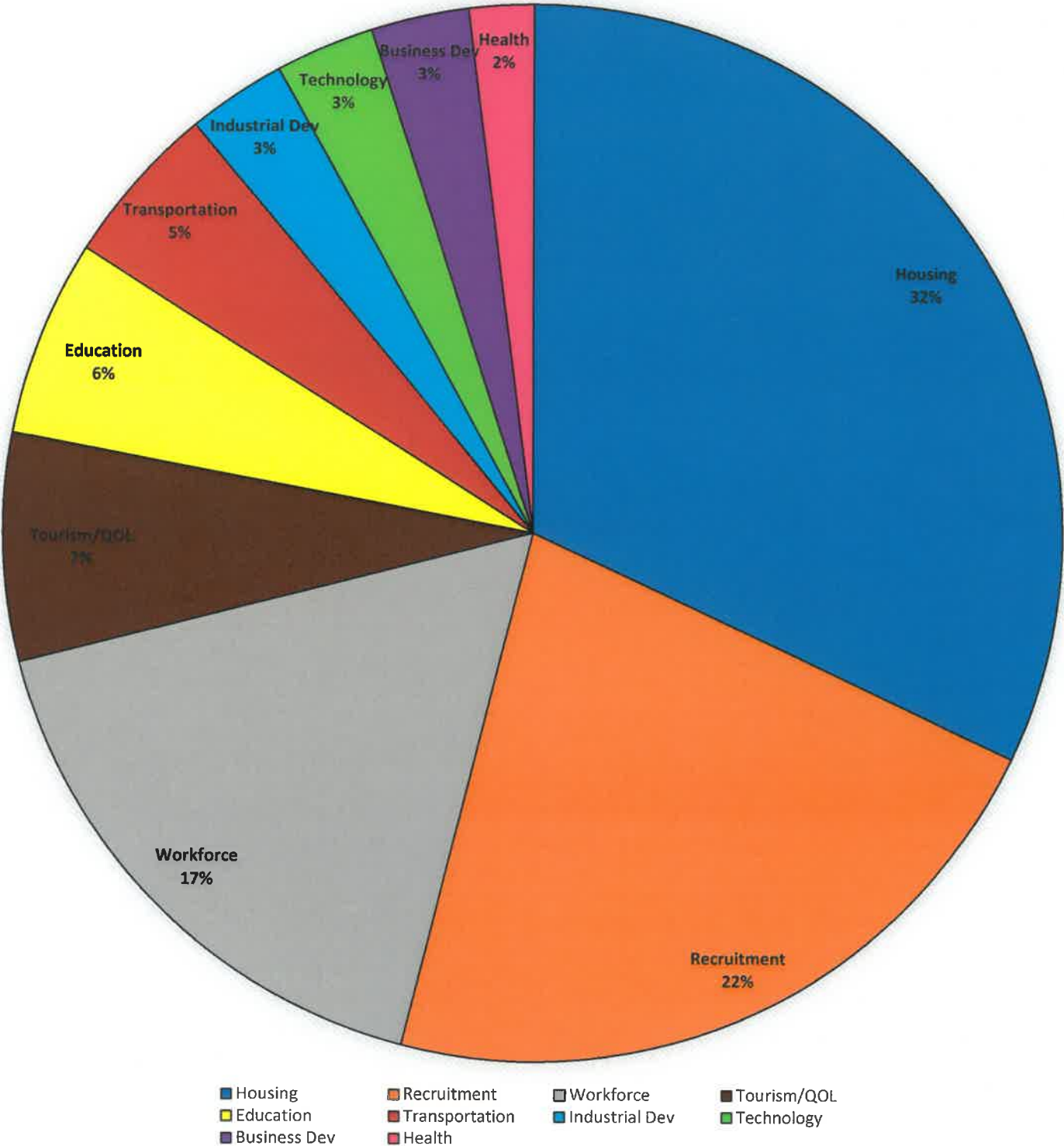
- New Mexican Restaurant
- More restaurants
- Populate main streets with retail businesses – not service industry
- Increased advertising for businesses
- Incentives for new businesses and renters
- Healthy restaurants
- Investigate needs for additional hotels

### **Energy**

- Long term sustainable community plan to achieve Green Communities
- Maximize efficiency in homes
- SMART homes; home energy management systems
- Solar farms
- Create sustainable movement and use to leverage attention
- Educate public why long-term environmental improvement plans are important including ethanol, biodiesel, etc...

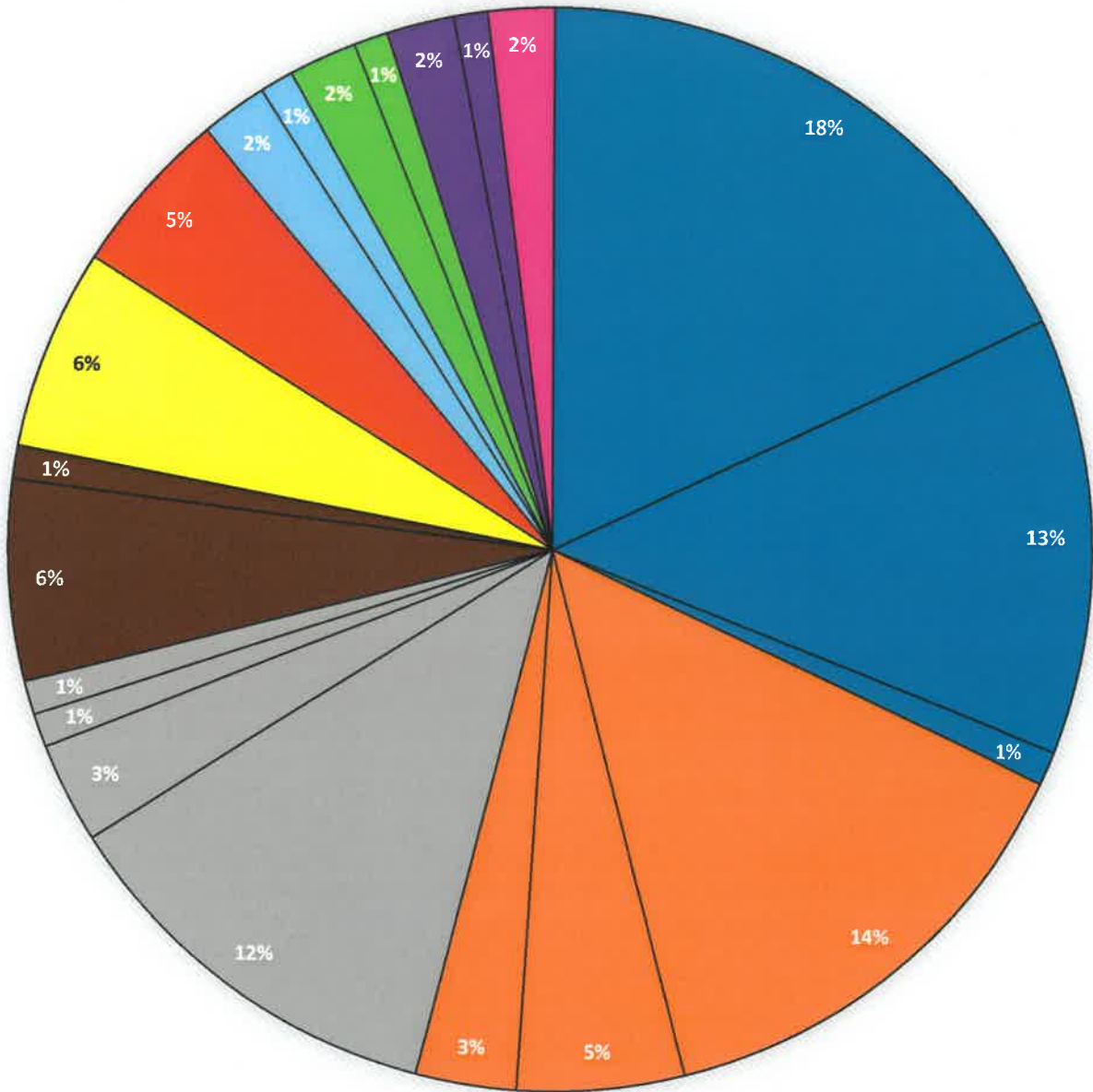
# 2016 HCBT Strategic Planning

## Priority votes based on STRATEGIC CATEGORIES



# 2016 HCBT Strategic Planning

## Priority votes based on STRATEGIC ACTION ITEMS



- Housing / Recruit Builders
- Housing / Community Trusts
- Recruitment / Job shadowing and Internships
- Workforce / Social Media Marketing
- Workforce / Job Fairs
- Tourism / Bike Trails to MN
- Education / Youth Leadership program
- Industrial Dev / Flexible jobs for trailing spouse
- Technology / Alternative providers
- Business Dev / Customer Service workshops
- Health / Community Healthy Lifestyles program
- Housing / Meet with Housing Developers
- Recruitment / Incentives for HS grads
- Recruitment / Billboards
- Workforce / International worker assistance
- Workforce / Job Boards on websites
- Tourism / TV Marketing
- Transportation / Bus to Rochester
- Industrial Dev / Quarterly workshops for businesses
- Technology / Fiber owned connection
- Business Dev / Market businesses

## 2016 HCBT Boards

### Howard County Business & Tourism (HCBT)

Andy Ludeking, President

Alison Holten, Vice President

Jerome Waterbeck

John Carver

Gary Gooder, CEDA Rep

Donna Thomas, Treasurer

Ryan McCarville

Pat Boyle

Mary Ann Neuzil, Secretary

Hillary Klimesh

Gary Kelm

### Howard County Economic Development (HCED)

Alison Holten, President

John Carver, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

Ken Fencil, Past President

John O'Byrne, Cresco

Shannon Gebel, Elma

Elaine Govern, Riceville

Robin Schluter, RSHHC

Pat Boyle, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Don Burnikel, Supervisor

Steve McCarville, Cresco

Jordan Guyer, Lime Springs

Jordan Oulman, Riceville

Craig Morrison, retired SCORE

Donna Thomas, Treasurer

Pam Wendel, Chester

Bart Wilson, CIDC

Adam Polashek, Protivin

Sue Barnes, ISU Extension

### Cresco Industrial Development Corporation (CIDC)

Andy Ludeking, President

Jerome Waterbeck, 1<sup>st</sup> VP

Chuck Malek, Past President

Donna Thomas

Gary Gooder

Scott Fortune

Mark Cuvelier

Craig Morrison\*

Tom Ryan\*

Gene Bourassa

Gary Kelm, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP

Bart Wilson

Dick Holten

Magda Hoffman

Tom Barnes

Amy Bouska, City Rep

Dale Turnmire\*

Jerry Wilson\*

Lowell Sovereign\*

Scott Thomson, Treasurer

Bob Story

Gary Aspenson

Dan Huiskamp

Steve McCarville

Don Burnikel, Supervisor

Dave Jacobson\*

John O'Byrne\*

\* Honorary Member

### Cresco Area Chamber of Commerce (CACCC)

Mary Ann Neuzil, President

Ryan McCarville, Vice President

Katie Ferrie

Jenn Burke

Jennalee Pedretti

Hillary Klimesh, Past President

Erin Powers Daley

Jan Carman, City Rep

Katie Hudek

Dan Evans

David Gosch

### Howard County Housing Board (HCHB)

Barb Prochaska, President

Gary Aspenson, Vice President

Brian McConnell

Julie Linderbaum

Rhonda Klapperich

Dan Ollendick

Don Burnikel

Shannon Gebel

Shawn Saltou

Laura Schmauss

Janel Langreck

Amy Bouska

Julie Stinson