

# DEKALB COUNTY THRIVING!

## *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISIONING SUMMIT*

Presented on May 24, 2016  
at the DeKalb County Farm Bureau



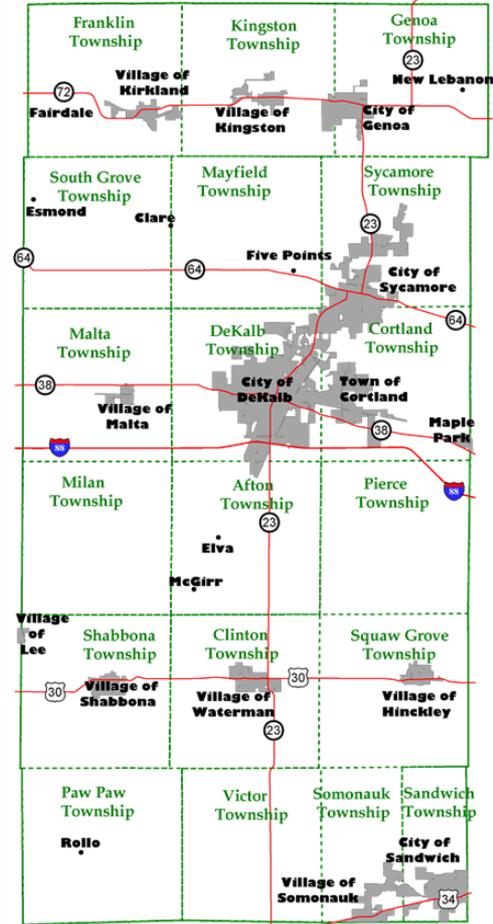
DEKALB COUNTY  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION



Northern Illinois  
University

# AGENDA

- Welcome, Mark Pietrowski, DeKalb County Board Chairperson
- Overview of Visioning Process, Melissa Henriksen, CGS-NIU
- Share Draft Vision and Priority Areas Based on Community Input, Melissa Henriksen
- Open Mic - Suggestions and Questions
- Updates and Next Steps, Mark Pietrowski, Kevin McArtor and Anita Zurbrugg, DCCF



# PARTNERS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISIONING

- This visioning process is co-sponsored by:
  - DeKalb County Government,
  - DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation;
  - DeKalb County Community Foundation;
  - DeKalb County Farm Bureau; and
  - NIU
- The CGS provides expertise that helps decision-makers implement efficient, sustainable, and cost-effective approaches to economic, social, and information management issues.
- **CGS Practice Areas**
  - **Community, Workforce, and Economic Development**
  - Human Services
  - Informatics
  - Public Management and Training
  - Survey Research

# WHY NOW? WHY STRATEGIC VISIONING?

- Communities are driving force; their uniqueness is the strength of the County.
- Formed an advisory council consisting of partners from different disciplines across the County.
- Focused on identifying the state of the county, creating many ways to gather community input, and establishing a vision, priority areas, and ultimately strategic action and opportunities for communities to succeed.
- The outcomes:
  - A proposed draft vision and priority areas that will shape the County's economic development action plan. While a synthesis report, all community input is captured.
  - Funding support for all 14 communities in DeKalb county for individual strategic planning and/or implementation of community supported projects.

# STATE OF THE COUNTY SUMMIT, NOVEMBER 17, 2015

- Two interactive 90-minute "summits" were held at the DeKalb County Farm Bureau.
- Small tabletop discussions were facilitated by CGS staff to obtain nearly 100 participants' ideas for the county's economic development future
- The summits were offered at no cost and open to anyone who lives, works, attends school, or owns property in any community in DeKalb County.
- Two questions were discussed by the small groups:
  - What are the top three important economic development assets in DeKalb County; and
  - How can local communities leverage these assets?

# STATE OF THE COUNTY SUMMIT, NOVEMBER 17, 2015

- **Overall Themes Identified from the Economic Development Summits**
  - DeKalb County
    - is a great place to live, work, and play **because of its people, competitive location, and business climate**. However, it **lacks a consistent identity** and cohesive marketing effort.
    - More good-paying **job opportunities** are needed throughout DeKalb County to encourage younger residents and families to stay in the area.
    - Can **build on current assets** and encourage a “Grow Your Own” environment anchored by three pillars: student retention, strategically important industries such as manufacturing and agriculture, and a collaborative business environment.

# STATE OF THE COUNTY SUMMIT, NOVEMBER 17, 2015

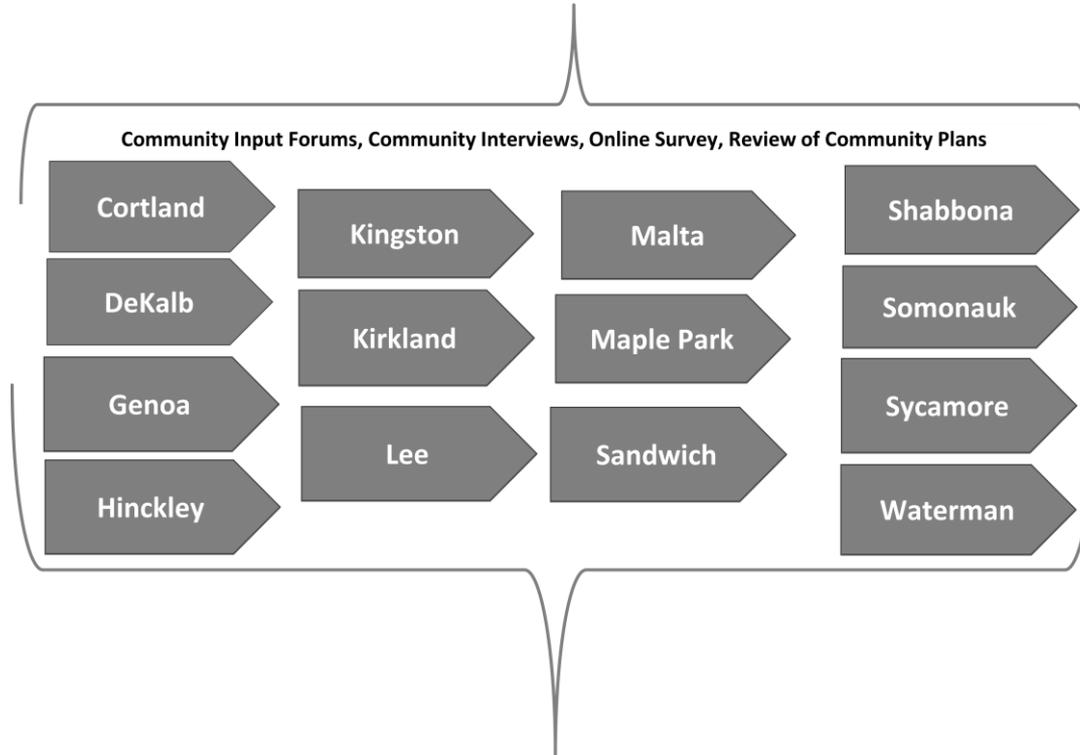
- **Overall Themes Identified from the Economic Development Summits**
  - NIU is an asset to the County and many community outreach efforts are under way. However, a greater effort should be made to reach smaller, more rural communities that have fewer resources but offer many opportunities to students and businesses.
  - Thriving, resilient communities are built on innovation and entrepreneurship in all sectors. The County and its partners need to enhance or create a built environment that fosters entrepreneurship at all ages and across all industries.

## COMMUNITY VOICES

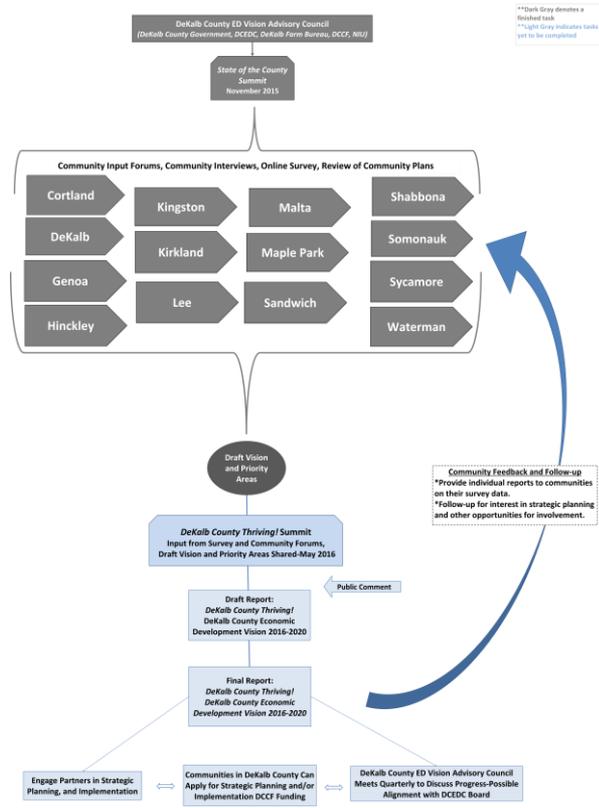
- As a next step—we took this show on the road...
- Wanted to offer different options for community input:
  - Community forum
  - Community interviews
  - Review of planning documents
  - Electronic survey open to all residents, businesses, and students
    - Gathered input on community and County assets, challenges, support needs

**What's  
Your  
Story?**

# COMMUNITY INPUT GATHERING



# DeKalb County Economic Development Visioning Process (2016)



\*\*Dark Grey denotes a finalized task  
\*\*Light Grey indicates tasks yet to be completed



# VISION STATEMENT



- Defines the **optimal desired future state** - the mental picture - of what an organization or community wants to achieve over time;
- Provides **guidance and inspiration** as to what an organization or community is focused on achieving in five, ten, or more years; and
- Is written **succinctly** in an inspirational manner that makes it easy for all stakeholders to **repeat it at any given time**.

Drilling down the survey information, community input, and other materials...the inspiration could be summed up in three words...



# CREATING A VISION TO BELIEVE IN...

- DeKalb County is stronger because of three main assets:
  - People
  - Place
  - Partnership



# DEKALB COUNTY DRAFT VISION

**“People + Place + Partnership Make DeKalb County Thrive!”**

# PRIORITY AREAS

<b>Asset</b>	<b>Priorities</b>
<b>People:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Developing local leadership</li><li>2. Helping connect people to jobs</li></ol>
<b>Place</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Retaining, expanding, and attracting business</li><li>2. Improving infrastructure</li></ol>
<b>Partnership</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Supporting community economic planning and coordination</li><li>2. Identifying and pursuing funding opportunities</li></ol>

# PRIORITY AREAS-PEOPLE

- **Priority 1: Developing local leadership.**

- Effective leadership is vitally important to small towns and rural communities. The **success of community development efforts often rests with the leadership of local citizens, volunteers, and organized business members.** DeKalb County communities need **effective and transparent communication,** community engagement, and collaboration across **communities to thrive.**

# PRIORITY AREAS-PEOPLE

- **Priority 2: Helping connect people to jobs.**
  - Ensuring that residents of DeKalb County have the skills and knowledge to **access good jobs that pay a living wage is fundamental** to the health and vitality of every community. Many DeKalb County residents have a solid work ethic on which to build and only need **technical skill training or career planning assistance** to help find gainful employment. An employment-ready workforce is also a **top consideration for attracting new business and helping existing businesses** expand in the County.

# PRIORITY AREAS-PLACE

- **Priority 3: Retaining, expanding, and attracting business.**
  - Existing businesses in any community shape the local business climate, provide jobs, and **improve the community's overall quality of life.** County-wide support from the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation has been effective for its industrial-focused responsibilities. Many smaller communities expressed interest in a **County-wide program focused on helping smaller, local businesses** stay and grow and attracting new businesses suited to their areas. This could include sharing leads, enhancing infrastructure (Priority 4), and marketing.

# PRIORITY AREAS-PLACE

- **Priority 4: Improving infrastructure**

- As with mature communities across the nation, many municipalities in DeKalb County struggle with aging infrastructure. Of particular concern are many vacant or dilapidated buildings that, with financial assistance, could be renovated or demolished to make way for new development. Further, as the economic recovery continues, many communities lack the infrastructure needed to support growth opportunities. The County could help by creating a renovation program with matching requirement and identifying funding sources to help with revitalization and planning.

# PRIORITY AREAS-PARTNERSHIP

- **Priority 5: Supporting community economic planning and coordination**
  - Efforts to **identify, preserve, and enhance the distinct character of each community** in DeKalb County must be undertaken in concert with the County-wide economic development plan. Many communities want to **continue their individual strategic planning initiatives** after the County has completed its planning efforts and look to the County for a framework and guidance. The **DeKalb County Community Foundation will be making funding available for planning and implementation** activities in the fall of 2016.

# PRIORITY AREAS-PARTNERSHIP

- **Priority 6: Identifying and pursuing funding opportunities**
  - Many communities are challenged to identify **funding to support their community and economic development goals**. County-wide funding enabled through grants, crowdfunding, and community and innovation funds, would allow for more impact, prevent duplicative or competing efforts, and **create a way to engage other partners in the work**. Supporting community-identified goals will **help maintain unique niches while contributing to the economic vitality of the entire County**.

# OPEN MIC-SUGGESTIONS & QUESTIONS



# UPDATES AND NEXT STEPS

- **Board Chair Mark Pietrowski**
  - What's next for Advisory Council?
  - Updates on some progress since visioning process began
  - Issues identified via input gathering
- **Kevin McArtor and Anita Zurbrugg, DeKalb County Community Foundation**
  - Community Planning Initiatives
  - Funding for Community Economic Development - September 2016

# DEKALB COUNTY COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

- Provided by the DeKalb County Community Foundation
- Purpose
  - Planning for local economic development incorporating what we've learned through the County visioning process.
  - Implementing economic development projects identified within a community's current economic development planning process.
- Eligible Communities
  - Cortland, DeKalb, Genoa, Hinckley, Kingston, Kirkland, Lee, Malta, Maple Park, Sandwich, Shabbona, Somonauk, Sycamore, and Waterman, and unincorporated communities.

# DEKALB COUNTY COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

- **Eligible Applicants**
  - A municipality, unincorporated community or an organization working in close partnership with the municipality.
- **Funding/Size of Grants**
  - Each community limited to a total of \$20,000 over the next 3 years (through 2019)
  - Can be used toward one or more planning and/or implementation projects.
- **Local Matching Requirements**
  - Minimum of 10% of project budget should be in cash matching funds.

# DEKALB COUNTY COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

- **Qualification Considerations**
  - Planning Grants – with a reputable or acknowledged economic planning organization.
  - Implementation Grants – involving a current economic development plan.
  - Both planning and implementation grants expected to be completed within one year.
  - Grantees should be expected to share results in the form of a report and presentation with interested communities.
  
- **Grant Application Process**
  - Available online through the DeKalb County Community Foundation:
    - Draft Guidelines: available July 1, 2016
    - First Grant Deadline: September 1, 2016

# DEKALB COUNTY COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

- Communities interested in a DeKalb County Community Economic Development Grant should contact:

Anita Zurbrugg, Program Director  
DeKalb County Community Foundation

[anita@dekalbccf.org](mailto:anita@dekalbccf.org)

815-748-5383

# CONTACT INFO

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