

## EVALUATION OF THE SYCAMORE CAMPUS

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The year was 1905 and the third DeKalb County Courthouse opened putting an end to a good deal of local controversy. The location was Sycamore, Illinois, and the price tag was around \$100,000. The County of DeKalb was 42 years old at the time and had acquired the land in 1850. The structure, built of Bedford buff stone, contained 41,000 square feet and occupied a land area of 2.35 acres. There had been numerous efforts to locate the County seat in places other than Sycamore, Illinois. Rufus Colton tried to have it located in Coltonville and even held an election that was subsequently thrown out to try and do so. Dr. Henry Madden wanted it to sit in Brush Point, a little northwest of Sycamore, in a place then called Orange. These early attempts were followed by an attempt by Jacob Haish and Isaac Ellwood who initially pledged \$20,000 apiece toward the current structure if it would be built in DeKalb. In response, residents of Sycamore collectively raised \$70,000 to keep it in their town. Haish ultimately escalated his offer to more than \$100,000 but Sycamore prevailed and the courthouse was constructed in its current location. (The foregoing was drawn from a virtual community guide by Ron Klein and Mac McIntire, available via the Internet.)

In the early 1900's the County's land use was limited to the courthouse square and the county jail/sheriff's residence, located on the site of the current administration building. In fact, the administration building is an adaptive reuse of the old "lace curtain" jail. These two facilities combined occupied a land area of approximately 141,600 square feet or 3.25 acres.

By state statute a county seat is defined as the corporate limits of the municipality in which it is located. In 1905 Sycamore covered a land area of 849.96 acres. In the ensuing 100 years the City of Sycamore has expanded to approximately 6 square miles or 3,840 acres. The county's land use in this same period has grown from 3.25 acres to 6.13 acres on the Sycamore campus. The county has additionally acquired approximately nine-tenths of an acre adjacent to the campus which is not yet being utilized. As illustrated in Table I below the county is currently utilizing 2 ½ times less of Sycamore's total land area than it did 100 years ago.

**TABLE I - COUNTY LAND USE/SYCAMORE**

	<b>1900</b>	<b>2000</b>
City of Sycamore - Land Area	849.96 acres	3,840 acres
County Campus - Land Area	3.25 acres	6.13 acres
% County Utilization	0.38%	0.15%

While not the focus of this particular study, it should be noted that the county continues to also own 12.3 acres of land for utilization by the DeKalb County Highway Department on Barber Greene Road within the City of DeKalb. The land use that has experienced a significant expansion for the county has been in the area of health care. The former site utilized by the DeKalb County Nursing Home and Public Health Department consisted of 18.8 acres in an unincorporated area on Sycamore Road between DeKalb and Sycamore. This site has recently been converted to commercial and forest preserve use with the county's new health facilities being built within the City of DeKalb at Annie Glidden and Dresser Roads on a 32.84 acre site. In the ten-year period ending in 1997, the public health department was clearly the fastest growing service in the county largely driven by increases in its much utilized home health care program.

In the last twenty years the county's Sycamore campus has undergone substantial change as well. The county has purchased 23 private residences and a former gas station. It has constructed a new public safety building, including an 89-bed jail. A garage for central plant vehicles was added. The old "lace curtain" jail and sheriff's residence were converted to an administration building and a conference room was added later. The historic DeKalb County Courthouse was completely remodeled. A 16,600 foot Legislative Center was completed and opened in 2002. Table II below lists the square footage of these facilities totaling 123,450 square feet.

**TABLE II - BUILDING AREAS/SYCAMORE CAMPUS**

<b><u>Facility</u></b>	<b><u>Square Footage</u></b>
Courthouse	41,000
Public Safety Building	47,000
Administration Building	17,000
Central Plant Garage	1,850
Legislative Center	<u>16,600</u>
	123,450 square feet

In summary, the current state of the Sycamore campus finds county holdings of just over 7 acres of land and 123,450 square feet of building space.

## GROWTH PATTERNS - COUNTY OF DEKALB

### Population Trends

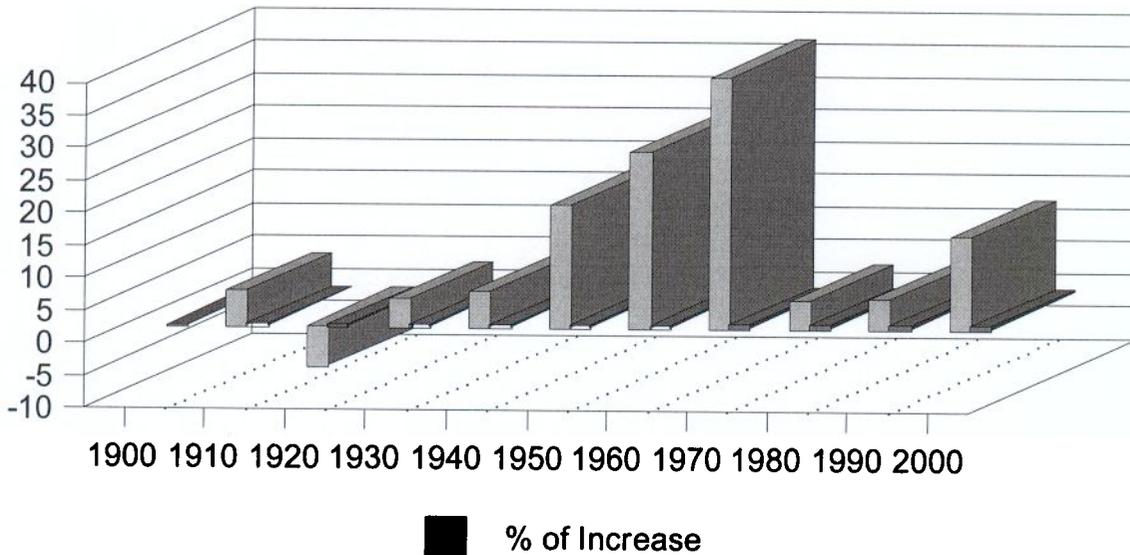
It is, of course, impossible to predict with scientific certainty what the demand for county services will be in the next 100 years. A key determinant is population growth. Trending DeKalb County's population has proven illusive indeed over the past 100 years. From the 1900's through the 1940's the county's population fluctuated in the low to mid-30,000's. Actually, declining 6.3% between 1910 and 1920. In post World War II, DeKalb County, however, NIU emerged as a major state university. As detailed in Table III below the population for censuses in 1950, 1960 and 1970 showed explosive growth in DeKalb County.

**TABLE III - DEKALB COUNTY  
POPULATION GROWTH RATES - 1900 - 2000**

	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>1900</u>
				31,756
1900 - 1910	+ 1,701	5.35%		33,457
1910 - 1920	- 2,118	- 6.33%		31,339
1920 - 1930	+ 1,305	+4.16%		32,644
1930 - 1940	+ 1,744	+5.34%		34,388
1940 - 1950	+ 6,393	+18.59%		40,781
1950 - 1960	+ 10,933	+26.81%		51,714
1960 - 1970	+ 19,940	+38.56%		71,654
1970 - 1980	+ 2,970	+ 4.14%		74,624
1980 - 1990	+ 3,308	+ 4.43%		77,932
1990 - 2000	+ 11,037	+14.20%		88,969
	+ 57,213	+115.25%	Avg: =	1.15%/yr.

Growth averaged more than 3.8% per year in the 10-year period from 1960 - 1970. Some planners, following the 1970 census, were predicting a turn of the century population upwards of 130,000 for DeKalb County. Graph I, through the wisdom of hindsight, shows how this was not to be.

# Graph I



As quickly as the growth rate had escalated in the thirty years from 1940 to 1970, it plummeted in the thirty years from 1970 to the year 2000. In the thirty-year period ending in 1970 the County population grew by 108%. In the 30-year period beginning in 1970 the rate declined to 24%. The annual growth rate for the most recent census was 1.4%. Speculation will certainly continue as to whether or not DeKalb County will experience significant growth pressures from the Chicago Metropolitan area of which the county is now a part or continue to be moderate as in the 1970's and 1980's.

Population growth, while a good indicator of future service expectations, is certainly not the only one. Changes in law and behavior, additional state and/or federal mandates, and heightened citizen expectations of services can all contribute significantly to service demand. While some service demands are tempered somewhat by the county's land use policies (see "Landside findings" following) population growth and public expectations of services still create growth pressures. In recent years, for example, the mood of the country has clearly encourage public officials to take an increasingly tough stand with regard to criminal behavior. Mandatory sentencing guidelines, tougher DUI laws, more aggressive judicial sentencing behavior and increased prosecutorial efforts by the State's Attorneys have been the response here and elsewhere. In a recent study by the county's administrative staff, the county's services committed the enforcement of laws and administration of justice, often lumped together in what is called the "public safety work group," experienced the strongest growth rates among all county services with the aforementioned exception of public health. In the ten-year period from 1987 to 1997 the sheriff and court security operations increased by more than 30% and the combined operations of

the public defender, state's attorney, judiciary, circuit clerk and court services were up nearly 20%. The county jail has been placed under increasing pressure. This facility, built in 1978, now has a capacity of 89 prisoners. That capacity is routinely being exceeded particularly on weekends with the addition of periodic prisoners. Absent some dramatic change in population growth and/or human behavior it seems inescapable that this facility will likely have to be expanded in the relatively near future.

Will the next 100 years replicate the past? Will the county's use of land area grow from its current 6.13 acres to approximately 12.26 by the year 2100? Or will the county's need for space and buildings accelerate at an exponential pace? The answer probably lies between the two and closer to a replication of the past 100 years with some fluctuations here and there. What should the county board's role be with regard to balancing financial considerations with land use decisions? Should, for example, multi-level parking structures, which are more expensive, be considered to conserve land area? Should multi-story buildings, which have obvious aesthetic and cost drawbacks, be likewise, considered in the interest of land conservation? Or should the board chart a new course, and look for space in a new location?

Again, scientific precision in these matters is simply not available. It is obvious from a public policy perspective that there are three broad options. Option A is to move everything to another site. Option B would be to move some parts of the Sycamore operation to another site. Option C would be to continue to maintain all services on the Sycamore Campus and continue to expand that campus to accommodate future needs. We will examine these options in order.

### **OPTION A - MOVE THE SYCAMORE CAMPUS TO A NEW LOCATION**

While many people dismiss this option out of hand others will argue that the truly long-range view would lead to a relocation of county facilities out of the current residential setting. Whether such a relocation were done incrementally or all at once, this option has some obvious advantages and disadvantages. Acquiring and clearing land for the expansion of the Sycamore Campus not only has a political downside but is expensive as well. These costs have recently been averaging in the \$10 - \$15 per square foot range or \$500,000 per acre. These prices are comparable to the highest commercial rates being paid for small parcels in the most desirable locations along Sycamore Road.

In examining the county's realistic options for a new location, it must first be understood that the county is not free to move the county seat anywhere it wishes. As mentioned earlier, the county seat is by law coterminous with the municipal boundaries of Sycamore, Illinois. The county board, may by resolution, extend the boundaries of the county seat outside the municipal boundaries of Sycamore provided it does so on contiguous property and may do so for no more than one mile from the existing boundary. Moves beyond these distances to another location require voter initiative and appear to be designed statutorily to be exceedingly difficult to accomplish. They require a petition gathered in a relatively short period of time and signed by

2/5ths of the voters in the last general election. None of those signing the petition can be residents of the current county seat. The statute further provides for numerous challenges and generally appears to make it purposely difficult to accomplish. However, given the openness of the area surrounding the existing Sycamore boundaries, it should not be difficult to find a location within the one mile limit. Buildable sites, that is sites equipped with necessary public utilities and infrastructure, are currently ranging in price from \$2.00 to \$4.50 per square foot. These per acre costs (\$87,000 to \$174,000/acre) may seem costly in comparison to bare farmland which can probably be acquired for \$4,000 per acre within one mile of Sycamore. The downside of such open area sites is, of course, the cost of extending infrastructure to them. Table IV below sets forth the most recent municipal estimates of extending necessary infrastructure.

<b>TABLE IV - MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS</b>	
<b>Per Lineal Foot</b>	
Street Extension	\$195.00/foot
Water Lines	\$ 75.00
Sanitary Sewer	\$ 80.00
Storm Sewer	\$ 80.00
Seed/Sod/Engineering/Sidewalk	\$ 40.00
	<u>\$470.00 Lineal Foot</u>

In addition each block requires .59/acre of right-of-way or 9.7 acres per mile.

At \$470.00 per lineal foot plus 9.7 acres of right-of-way per mile, a campus located 1 mile from the edge of town on a bare ground site will cost \$2,481,600 plus right-of-way to get to.

Clearly the cost for an open site of more than one acre would still be considerably less than the \$500,000 it currently costs to acquire an acre in and around the Sycamore campus. The cost of replicating the facilities on that site, of course, is another matter. As outlined in Table II 123,450 square feet of space would be needed initially.

Adding to the requirements for the new site would be parking, buffers and landscaping. Planners allocate four to five parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of building space. This would indicate a need for approximately 500 parking spaces requiring an additional 135,000 square feet of land area. Buffers and landscaping typically add 25% to the needed land area which would bring the total land area for the site up to approximately 325,000 square feet (7 - 7 ½ acres) assuming one-story construction. If the buildings could be replicated at a cost of \$200 per square foot, the building portion could be done for around \$25 million. Bonding the project would bring this cost to in excess of \$35 million. As a practical matter, a single building would probably not be feasible given the separate security requirements of jails and courthouses. Suffice it to say that moving the entire Sycamore campus to a new location would not be an inexpensive proposition.

One of the problems to be considered in taking a long-range view of such a relocation is illustrated in Map I. Map I shows at its center the areas owned by the county in 1905 and currently. It also overlays the City of Sycamore's 1905 boundaries, as well as, the current boundaries. A review of Sycamore's growth patterns in the last hundred years makes it difficult to imagine finding a county campus location within one mile that won't wind up in a new neighborhood within the next hundred years. It's also difficult to envision the local real estate market absorbing the abandoned county facilities if the current campus were to be relocated. Clearing the current seven or so acres owned by the county and making it available for redevelopment as residential would yield 40 - 50 city lots with a value of \$1.2 to \$1.5 million. This, of course, would be offset by the substantial cost of removing the structures. Moving the courthouse further exacerbates the problem of marketing facilities such as the administration building for commercial purposes. Potential buyers for a vacant jail could be similarly difficult to locate.

### **OPTION B - MOVE A PORTION OF THE SYCAMORE CAMPUS TO A NEW LOCATION**

This option obviously lends itself to the incremental approach, the next time a facility is outgrown and a new one is needed, the county could fix the Sycamore campus at its current size and locate any needed new facilities to a more open location. This option has the obvious advantage of escaping the problems delineated in Option A with moving facilities and trying to find sensible, adaptive reuses of the current owned real estate. This model employed by several neighboring counties who were pressed for space at their original locations has been put forth on a number of occasions as a reasonable future direction for DeKalb County to take.

There's no need to repeat the location analysis or costs from Option A, they would be essentially the same for this Option and obviously be reduced by the amount of land area needed for only a portion of the campus to be relocated. What is germane to the analysis of this Option are the questions of what functions would be relocated and what is the ongoing cost of such a separation?

To begin the analysis Table V below divides the seventeen county departments and their 200 employees into three distinct work groups. The Administration of Justice/Public Safety group; the Property Tax Administration group; and the Administrative Support group.

**TABLE V - SYCAMORE CAMPUS**  
**3 Work Groups**

**Administration of Justice/Public Safety Group**

<b>Departments:</b>	<b>Current Head Count</b>
Sheriff and Court Security	80.2
Circuit Clerk	20.5
Judiciary/Jury Commission	6.75
State's Attorney	16.0
Public Defender	7.0
Court Services	13.5
ESDA/Coroner	<u>2.0</u>
	145.95

**Property Tax Administration Group**

<b>Departments:</b>	<b>Current Head Count</b>
Treasurer	5.0
County Clerk/Recorder - Elections	14.5
Supervisor of Assessments	<u>6.0</u>
	25.5

**Administrative Support Group**

<b>Departments:</b>	<b>Current Head Count</b>
County Board	2.0
Finance	6.5
Planning/Zoning	5.5
IMO/GIS	8.5
Central Plant	<u>8.0</u>
	30.5

**GRAND TOTAL** **201.95**

The Administrative Support Group has a relatively high level of daily interaction both within its own ranks and with all of the other departments. The Property Tax Group has a high need to collaborate within its own ranks and to a lesser extent with the Judiciary and Administration of Justice Group. The Administration of Justice/Public Safety Group has a extremely high level of daily interaction with the courts and each other. This is important because the hidden cost of separating work groups lies in the productivity losses associated with transportation of individuals between locations over time.

In an attempt to quantify these costs, we conducted a number of round trips outlined in Table VI below. Round trips were made from one building to another on the existing Sycamore campus

and from the campus to the Farm Bureau Building to simulate a remote county location.

**TABLE VI - ROUND TRIP TIME ANALYSIS**

Inter Building	9.8 minutes
Campus To Remote	25.2 minutes

As can be seen in Table VI above the average trip times expressed in minutes vary considerably. The remote trip was 2 ½ miles one way or 5 miles round trip. The building to building trip was made from the second floor of the Administration Building to the second floor of the courthouse. There was no attempt on our part to time enough trips at enough different times of day to qualify this as anything approaching the scientific analysis. We do feel that the times are a fair approximation of the relative time differences associated with the trips.

The significance of these numbers is apparent over time. Assuming a 2% depreciation schedule and a fifty-year life expectancy for a new facility, the cost differential for as little as one employee trip per day adds up in a hurry. For the 200 employees currently assigned to the Sycamore campus the budgeted wage and benefit cost per minute of employee time is .426 cents. Using this figure and the current average transportation costs of .345 cents per mile, Table VII below sets forth the comparative costs of these trips.

**TABLE VII – TRIP COST COMPARISONS**

<b>A. Campus to Remote Location Trip Cost:</b>			
<u>Time Cost:</u>	25.2 minutes @ \$.426	=	\$10.73
<u>Transportation Cost:</u>	2.5 miles x 2 x \$.345	=	\$ 1.73
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$12.46</b>
<b>B. Building to Building Trip Cost:</b>			
<u>Time Cost:</u>	9.8 minutes @ \$.426	=	\$ 4.17
<u>Transportation:</u>	- 0 -		\$ -0-
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 4.17</b>
<b>C.</b>	Difference Per Trip:		\$ 8.29

As a reasonable person would have imagined in advance, the travel cost of employee interactions increases with distance. The capital cost associated with buildings and land acquisitions is a one time cost. Productivity losses not only continue over time but tend to grow as well.

To illustrate the effects of time; let's assume that only 50 of the Sycamore campus' 200 employees were relocated to a remote site. Let's further assume that an average of one employee

trip per day was maintained. The length of the visit doesn't matter, only the length of the trip. This average would also encompass employees from the Sycamore campus traveling to the remote campus and groups of employees periodically attending meetings. Assume also that inflationary increases average 2.5% over the life of the building.

**TABLE VIII - PRODUCTIVITY COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH  
REMOTE LOCATION**

!	50 Employees x 1 trip per workday	=	13,000 trips per year
!	Cost Differential between on and off campus trips	=	\$8.29 (Table VII)
!	First Year = 13,000 x \$8.29	=	\$107,770.00
!	Cost over 50 year building life at 2.5%/year average inflation rate	=	\$10,505,838.00

Clearly, one could manipulate the assumptions and get different results. Obviously, raising or lowering the number of employees at the remote location would have a dramatic effect as would changing the assumed number of trips. When all is said and done, what remains is that no reasonable recast of the assumptions will render the selection of a remote location for part of the county's operations a financially attractive option. Even the current land cost differential of approximately \$400,000 an acre is more than made up for by the lost productivity cost.

**OPTION C - MAINTAIN ALL FACILITIES AT THE CURRENT  
SYCAMORE CAMPUS**

The enclosed Map II outlines the current county holdings in and around the Sycamore campus. As discussed previously, the portion of the campus in use has grown over the last one hundred years from 3.25 to just over 6.1 acres. Additionally, the county has acquired approximately nine-tenths of an acre which is not yet in use. These acquisitions are outlined in red on Map II. Having reviewed the enormous potential costs of moving everything out of Sycamore from a facility standpoint and the substantial personnel cost of bifurcating the county facilities the remaining consideration is can the county's Sycamore campus be reasonably expanded in the future?

In 1976 the county commissioned a space utilization study and Master Plan by Phillips - Swager of Peoria, IL. Key findings and recommendations are summarized in *the box* below.

The County Board ultimately commissioned two additional studies one by Boettcher and Simmon of Rockford, Illinois and another by Burnidge Cassell of Elgin, Illinois, before ultimately deciding to build the new jail in block 280 east of the courthouse. This did maintain proximity to the courthouse but added to the pedestrian and vehicular traffic crossing Route 23 in the vicinity of Exchange Street. Shortly thereafter a decision was made to remodel the old jail for an administration building rather than build a new facility. That facility opened in 1982 and was expanded to include a conference room in 1994. In the fifteen years from 1985 through 2000 the board has pursued a consistent policy of acquiring private properties in proximity to the Sycamore campus as they became available. Those acquisitions have provided enough space when added to the now vacated one-block section of Exchange Street to accommodate the new Legislative Center and provide for reasonably ample parking.

A second master plan for future space needs was commissioned by the county in 1991. This study was done by Dulin and Associates of DeKalb, Illinois. Mr. Dulin's key findings and recommendations are summarized in *the box* on the right.

As noted previously, the county's 89-bed jail is increasingly under pressure from populations above capacity, particularly on the weekends. This phenomenon is hardly unique to DeKalb County and mirrors the situation found regionally and nationally.

Mr. Dulin's vision of the county's future has proved to be extremely accurate. His study and findings were conducted following another Public Building Commission financed study by Burnidge Cassell and Associates to do two things. This architectural firm was contracted to first estimate the cost of renovating the former Smith residence for office space for the county and alternatively to

**THE PHILLIPS SWAGER (1976)**  
**Master Plan Recommendations**

- ! Revitalize existing Courthouse.
- ! Negotiate Vacation of Exchange Street between Route 23 and Maple Street.
- ! Purchase 3 acres of private property from Exchange Street north to carriage house.
- ! Maintain County services in Sycamore the "Urban Alternative."
- ! Appropriate funds for new jail.
- ! Estimated County's 2000 population at 125,000+.

**THE DULIN STUDY (1991) Key**  
**Findings/Recommendations**

- ! The Public Safety Building will increase in size. The number of inmates will more than double from present levels.
- ! Exchange Street will be closed.
- ! The Administration Building will increase in size with the majority of space being utilized by court related functions, such as the State's Attorney.
- ! Expansion to the south of the Administration Building is the only logical choice to keep facilities in close proximity.
- ! The Courthouse will undergo internal changes.
- ! The Courthouse and Public Safety Building should be connected by a tunnel with provision made for an additional 9,000 square foot of record storage area underground.
- ! The tunnel link should also extend to the Administration Building.
- ! Parking will expand in two locations.
- ! The Health Department will have used its useful life and will need a new location.

estimate the cost of a combination offices space/detention facility to be constructed on the site of the former Smith residence. Their findings, relayed to the county board in February of 1991, estimated that bringing the Smith residence into compliance with applicable codes, laws, etc., for government use would cost between \$67,000 and \$79,000. This study recommended instead a new building of some 45,200 square feet. Their estimated cost in 1991 dollars was \$3.7 million exclusive of architectural fees, furnishings, moveable equipment, landscaping and site improvements. These “raw building costs” were given to the county’s bond counsel and in October of 1990 the total cost of \$6,319,900 was derived based on a bond issue of \$4.25 million. Had the project been authorized the bonds were scheduled to be retired in June 1<sup>st</sup> of this year.

The Sycamore campus was the subject of yet another study finished in August of 1996. This study conducted and presented by Landside Resources, of St. Louis, Missouri, was focused on the realistic possibilities of expanding the Sycamore campus in its current location and provided an evaluation of leasehold vs. ownership of real property. The Landside study opined that the county appeared to be a the beginning a period of “sustained, vigorous growth.” It further observed that the county’s zoning policy, which encouraged growth to attach to municipalities which then inherited many of the service responsibilities, had a significant impact on county services, that being “growth in the county does not translate into significant growth of the county government.” The study focused on the years 1990 through 1996 and its key findings are summarized in *the box* to the right.

In the period examined the greatest material growth was in the county health department and in the judicial and criminal justice departments.

The current building program will accommodate the relocation of the public defender from a rental space which is costing the county more than \$20,000 a year. It will also open sufficient space in the courthouse to

**LANDSIDE STUDY (1996)**  
**Key Findings/Recommendations**

! In the period examined, the greatest material growth was in the county health department and in the judicial and criminal justice departments.

! The imputed value of county owned land based on replacement costs, was estimated at somewhere between \$13 and \$18 per square foot.

! When land values reach this level it suggests optimization of use by consideration of 2 to 4 story construction and in some cases, structured parking.

! The study distinguished the costs between public borrowing and private borrowing as the difference between 4.5% and 9%.

! The county in leasing picks up the difference between not only the borrowing costs but also the private investors need for return on investment and taxes.

! If the county were willing to pay the same amount annually to own a building as it would be willing to pay to rent, in twelve years it would own the building.

! If the county intends to satisfy its space needs, it is most desirable to do so in close, physical proximity to other departments.

! Leasing property by the county carries with it a premium of 40% over ownership.

! With respect to residual value, the county, as a renter, will have no residual value in the leasehold interest. As an owner the county’s residual value (equity) will grow annually.

! For any period of time greater than 3 to 4 years, the county would have to make “gross errors” in judgment to end up in more disadvantaged financial position as an owner than it would experience as a tenant.

provide for a fifth courtroom when that becomes necessary. It is, as it was described initially, a good interim solution to the necessary growth of the campus. Land costs in the vicinity of the campus as mentioned previously are high and can be expected to go higher as time passes.

The properties acquired in blocks 278 and 281, east of the existing campus, were acquired for future parking and/or building space and were unrelated to the Legislative Center project. The acquisition of the private residence in block 253 north of the courthouse was accomplished for strategic purposes. While this location could be the site of the future parking facility, at this time it appears more likely that it may be better used for other purposes such resale or trade.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **CONCLUSION**

Were those “old timers” crazy? That was an awful lot of money to raise at the turn of the century. Dr. John Lewis and the N.I.U. Center for Governmental Studies assessment of the current economic impact of the County on Sycamore’s economy (*see box below*) suggests that they may have been pretty wise.

The county campus occupies a smaller portion of the county seat by far today than it did 100 years ago. Whether population growth rates level off or again spike upward again remains to be seen, but it appears inescapable that the county is growing. Population growth along with the inclination of other governments to shift responsibilities to counties would appear to make it an inescapable conclusion that service demands and the facilities and staff necessary to meet them will grow as well. It appears that despite the discomfort of some, DeKalb County would best be served by a continued commitment to and expansion of the Sycamore campus.

#### **ANNUAL IMPACT OF THE COUNTY SEAT ON SYCAMORE’S ECONOMY**

!\$1,600,000 in direct compensation to Sycamore residents.  
!\$3,300,000 in increased sales and services in Sycamore.  
!\$1,400,000 annual addition to the gross city product of Sycamore.

Source: Center for Governmental Studies, Dr. John Lewis

Not a point addressed in this review but worth considering are the other advantages of co-located facilities. If intangibles such as “team building,” collaboration/cooperation and “unity” are truly valued, co-location would seem to be the preferred option.

In the past one hundred years the county has expanded its land us from 3.25 to 6.13 acres. Map III attached extends these rates of growth on to blocks 278 and 281. It would appear that the fifty and hundred year land needs depicted on Map III can be accommodated within those two blocks if existing land uses are optimized..

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the board reaffirm its commitment to the Sycamore campus and continue its policy of orderly acquisition of private property adjacent to that campus.
2. The board continue to maintain an “opportunity fund” to facilitate future acquisitions in blocks 278 and 281 as properties become available.
3. That the board consider trading or reselling its recent acquisition in block 253.
4. That the board consider establishing a Route 64 frontage for future building space and consider leaving Locust Street open as an additional entrance to the government campus.
5. That the board work with the sheriff in beginning a study of future jail needs and expansion possibilities.
6. That the board pursue a policy of “land optimization” by:
  - a.) Considering expansion of the DeKalb County Courthouse by expansion to the north towards Exchange Street or by the addition of east and west wings. It would appear in everyone’s interest to consider the future reconsolidation of court related activities in a single building.
  - b.) Considering structured parking facilities.
  - c.) Considering multi-story buildings.
7. That the board consider accommodating future pedestrian traffic from the eastern portion of the campus to and from the courthouse by an underpass/overpass/elevated walkway or some other means.

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Dated: FY2001  
Revised: 10/22/2003

1905 Sycamore Area = 849.96 acres

County owned area = 2.35 acres

Percentage of County owned area = 0.28%

2000 Sycamore Area = 3,552.65 acres

County owned area = 6.89 acres

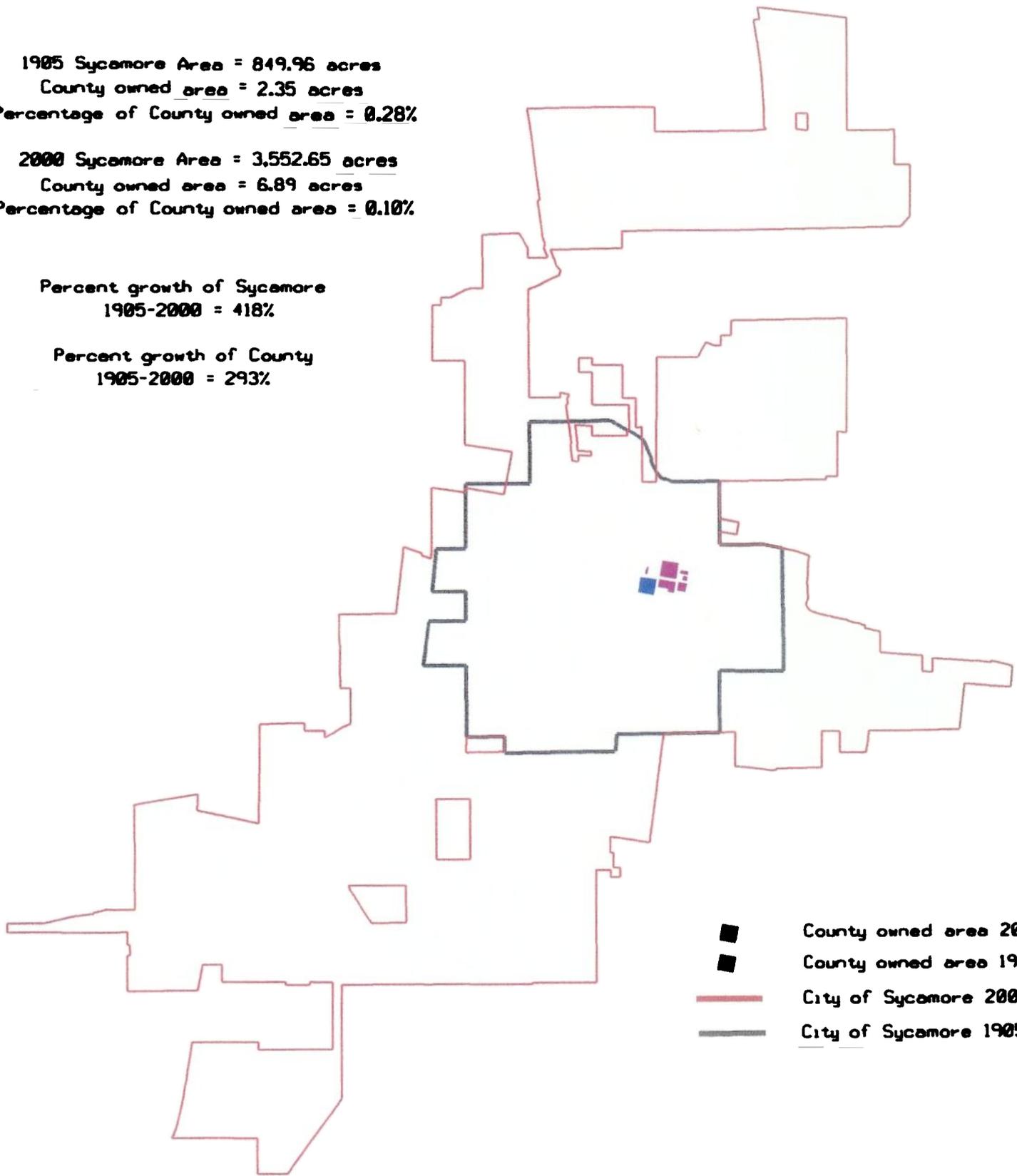
Percentage of County owned area = 0.10%

Percent growth of Sycamore

1905-2000 = 418%

Percent growth of County

1905-2000 = 293%



- County owned area 2000
- County owned area 1905
- City of Sycamore 2000
- City of Sycamore 1905



Unused County Property

Used County Property

# DEKALB COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## SYCAMORE COMPLEX

### Sycamore Township (06) Section (32)



DeKalb County Government  
Information Management Office  
110 E. Sycamore St.  
Sycamore, IL 60178  
815-885-1643  
[www.dekalbcounty.org](http://www.dekalbcounty.org)

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